



March 3, 2025

NFHS Softball Weekly Rule Interpretations

Situation 1: Team A has #13 D. Smith listed as an eligible substitute on the starting lineup. In the bottom of the seventh inning with two outs, bases loaded and a 0-0 score, #13 arrives at the field and comes to bat without being reported to the plate umpire. On the third pitch #13 hits an over the fence home run. After all runners touch home plate Team B's coach appeals that #13 was unreported and they should be ruled the third out of the inning, their at bat should be negated and no runs should score. The plate umpire agrees and rules no runs score as the unreported sub was the third out of the inning. **RULING:** Incorrect ruling. #13 was an unreported substitute, the first offense is a team warning to the head coach, the unreported substitute is officially in the game and all play stands. All runs would score and the game is over. (3-6-7)

Situation 2: Team A is at bat with R1 on third base and no outs, and B2 hits a ground ball that F8 fields in shallow centerfield. As B2 is rounding first base they are obstructed by F3 standing on the edge of first base. The base umpire verbalizes "obstruction" and signals a delayed dead ball. B2 takes a couple steps toward second but seeing F8 throwing to F6 at second base they return to first base. After F6 looks B2 back to first base they see R1 is still off third base and they throw to F5 to make a play on R1. B2 now attempts to advance to second base and is thrown out on a close play. The umpire rules that since the obstructed runner had reached the base they would have reached had there been no obstruction and there was a subsequent play on a different runner the obstructed runner is no longer protected and they remain out. **RULING:** Correct ruling. Once the obstructed runner obtains the base they would have been awarded, in the umpire's judgement, had there been no obstruction and there is a subsequent play on a different runner, the obstructed runner is no longer protected. This is one of the exceptions where an obstructed runner may be called out between the two bases where they were obstructed. (8-4-3b, Penalties 1, Exception a)

Situation 3: Team A is at bat with no runners on base and no outs. B1 hits a ground ball that F8 fields in shallow centerfield. As B1 is rounding first base they are obstructed by F3 standing on the edge of first base. The base umpire verbalizes "obstruction" and signals a delayed dead ball. B1 takes a couple steps toward second but seeing F8 throwing to F6 at second base they return to first base. After F6 looks B1 back to first base, they throw the ball to F1. When F6 releases the ball, B1 attempts to advance to second base and is thrown out by two steps at second base. When B1 is put out, the umpire calls a dead ball and awards B1 first base as that is the base they would have reached in the umpire's judgement, had there been no obstruction. **RULING:** Correct ruling. Although the obstructed runner obtained the base they would have been awarded, in the umpire's judgement, had there been no obstruction there was NOT a subsequent play on a different runner, so the obstructed runner is still protected between the two bases where they were obstructed (first base and second base in this case). When the obstructed runner was put out, the ball becomes dead and the obstructed runner is awarded the base they would have reached, in the umpire's judgement, had there been no obstruction. (8-4-3b, Penalties 1, Exception a)