

2024 GHSA Softball Study Guide

NFHS Rule and Case books

1. Bats with rattles, dents, burrs, cracks and sharp edges are considered damaged and removed from the game without penalty when they are initially detected.
2. The pitcher for Team A is using a tan and brown glove. The lacing for the fingers of the glove has been repaired by using an optic yellow shoestring. The umpire deems this legal, because the color of the laces doesn't matter.
3. Prior to the end of the game, appeals may be made during Live Ball or Dead Ball and must be made prior to the next pitch (legal or illegal) or prior to all infielders leaving fair territory and the catcher has left her normal fielding position.
4. A checked swing is the batter stopping the bat prior to the barrel passing the front of the batter's body towards the infield.
5. The strike zone is the space over home plate which is between the batter's forward armpit and the top of the knees when the batter assumes a natural batting stance.
6. With R1 on second base and no one out, B2 hits a high foul fly to right field which is not caught. R1, who was on second base, has passed third base before the ball becomes dead. The R1 must return to second base.
7. Without touching any person, a batted ball hits the pitcher's plate, or a fly ball touches fair ground between home and third base and bounces to foul ground without having passed first or third base the ball is fair in either case.
8. B1 fouls the ball off. The ball goes directly to the mitt of F2, and then ricochets forward toward incoming F5. F5 catches the ball in flight ten inches above the ground. B1 is out on the play.
9. With R1 on second base, B2 hits a grounder to F6. Just as F6 starts to throw to first base, R1 on the way to third base, yells at F6, which startles F6, causing the ball to be thrown over F3's head into dead-ball territory. The umpire calls B2 out immediately for interference and the ball is declared dead.
10. B1 hits the ball and overruns first base. In coming to a stop B1 turns toward second base but makes no attempt to advance or feint an advance but returns to touch first base. The first baseman tags the runner prior to returning to touch first base. U1 calls runner safe as she has the ability to return to first base without liability of being put out.
11. Each team MUST start with 9 fielders and a DP/Flex position.
12. A player who is not listed as a substitute on the lineup card will not be allowed to participate in the game.
13. The designated player (DP) may only play offense.

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14. At the pregame conference, any member of the coaching staff may attend and be responsible for verifying the lineup card is correct, all players are legally equipped, and that players and equipment are in compliance with the rules.
15. In a seven-inning game, a coach may have one charged defensive conference per inning without penalty.
16. The visiting team's head coach submits and verifies a lineup card with No. 4, L. Brown listed eighth in the batting order and playing first base. However, L. Brown is actually wearing uniform No. 21. After reaching base in the top of the third inning, the home coach appeals to the umpire that L. Brown is batting out of order. The umpire issues a team warning to the visiting head coach, the error is corrected on the lineup card and play is resumed. Any subsequent name or number correction (including adding a substitute) to the lineup card will result in the visiting coach being restricted to the team dugout/bench area for the remainder of the game.
17. In the third inning, S1 reports to the plate umpire, S1's name is not on the lineup card even though S1 was on the bench at the start of the game. The umpire does not allow S1 to enter the game.
18. L. Jones is a starting player in center field and batting second in the batting order. In the second inning, B. Smith replaces L. Jones. Subsequently, the coach desires to re-enter L. Jones as catcher and have the player batting in the eighth position. This is a legal substitution.
19. In the first inning, the DP-L. Jones, listed in the fourth spot of the batting order, hits a double. Substitute-C. Cooper replaces DP-L. Jones on second base. In the fourth inning, substitute-A. Green bats for C. Cooper and has a 1-1 count. The coach elects to replace A. Green with the FLEX - B. Smith. The umpire deems this legal.
20. DP-L. Jones is on first base and is replaced by substitute-A. Green. Later in the game, starting DP-L. Jones re-enters as a batter and reaches first base safely. Substitute-C. Cooper then replaces DP-L. Jones as a runner. During extra innings, starting DP-L. Jones is at the plate with a 1-2 count when the situation is brought to the plate umpire's attention. This is an illegal re-entry, DP-L. Jones is called out if at bat or on base, disqualified and replaced by a legal substitute.
21. Umpires are responsible for deciding whether or not the field conditions are suitable for starting the game.
22. At the Pregame Conference, the Umpires shall ask head coaches to verify that their players are legally and properly equipped and shall remind participants about proper sporting behavior.
23. After the game starts, coaches may decide whether or not conditions are suitable for continuing play.
24. A game shall be forfeited if a team cannot provide 8 players in the batting order to finish the game.
25. It is a delayed dead ball when there is interference by a batter-runner, runner or a retired runner.

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26. The ball becomes dead when a pitch or any other thrown ball lodges in an umpire's equipment.
27. If the base runner leaves early, it is ruled a delayed dead ball in order to give the catcher an opportunity to throw her out.
28. If an illegal pitch is released by the pitcher and the batter swings and hits the ball, it is an immediate dead ball and a ball is called on the batter.
29. Obstruction is always an immediate dead ball.
30. If the player's entire foot (no part of the foot is touching in live-ball territory) is beyond the line and touches dead-ball territory at the time the player catches, fields or throws the ball, the player has entered dead-ball territory, the ball is dead, and the batter is out.
31. The ball becomes dead immediately when a batter-runner or runner violates the look-back rule.
32. After a dead ball situation, the ball becomes live when the umpire calls and/or signals "Play Ball".
33. When the ball becomes dead, a runner may return to touch a base that she had previously missed.
34. With two strikes on B3, B3 swings at and misses a pitch. The ball strikes the batter's arm. This is a dead-ball strike and B3 is out.
35. R1 is on third base and R2 is on second base. As B3 attempts to hit, F2 touches the tip of B3's bat or steps on home plate to catch the pitch. Catcher's obstruction is called. Umpire signals delayed dead ball. If B3 reaches first base and R1 and R2 each advance at least one base, ball remains live and the obstruction is ignored. Had B3 and all runners not advanced at least one base, the umpire shall give the coach or captain of the team at bat the option of the play or penalty. If the penalty is enforced, B1 is awarded first base and R1 and R2 return to third base and second base, respectively, unless either player had been attempting to advance on the pitch.
36. The pitcher must take a position with both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate before starting the delivery.
37. The pitcher may take her signal from anyone however while in contact with the pitcher's plate, she must take or simulate taking a signal from the catcher
38. The pitcher may remove herself from the pitching position at any time as long as no part of her windup motion has been started.
39. When pushing off the pitcher's plate, it is legal to leap (both feet off the ground), as long as the feet remain within the 24" width of the pitcher's plate and a replant of the pivot foot is not created.
40. Dirt is not a foreign substance and does not have to be wiped from the hand prior to contacting the ball.

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41. The pitcher must release the next pitch within 20 seconds after the ball has been returned to her from the catcher.
42. At the beginning of each half-inning, the pitcher make take as long as necessary to throw 5 warm up pitches.
43. If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the backswing or forward motion, it is considered a pitch.
44. The pitcher can throw to a base while a foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate after taking the pitching position.
45. The catcher, thinking there are 2 strikes on the batter, throws the ball to 3rd base after the next pitch is called a strike, however, it's only strike 2. There is no penalty for this action.
46. F1 takes the pitching position with hands already together. This is an illegal pitch, because F1 is required to take a position on the pitching plate with the hands separated.
47. F1, after stepping onto the pitching plate with the hands separated and taking a signal, brings the hands together. F1 immediately begins the wind-up motion. This is an illegal pitch.
48. After the first inning, the first batter in each inning shall be the player whose name follows the last player who was called out.
49. A strike is called on the batter when a pitched ball contacts the batter while swinging at the ball.
50. A batter may take as long as necessary to prepare herself to enter the batter's box for the next pitch.
51. If a pitch is not entirely in the batter's box, the batter must make an attempt to avoid the ball. If she is hit, it is simply a dead ball, ball or strike depending on the location.
52. With a runner on first and less than 2 out, the batter is out on a dropped 3rd strike.
53. A bunt attempt that results in a foul ball with two strikes is considered a strikeout.
54. If a batter contacts a ball twice with the bat while the bat is still in her hands and she is still in the batter's box, it is a dead ball foul unless the second hit was intentional.
55. With R1 on first base, B8 erroneously bats in place of B7. The error is discovered by the opposing team after B8 has received two strikes, B7 takes the place of B8 at the plate with a no-ball, two-strike count. If R1 has advanced by stealing or by a wild pitch while the wrong batter was batting, it is a legal advance.
56. With R1 on first base and no outs, B2, who has two strikes, swings at the next pitch. F2 drops the ball and fails to throw to F3 at first base. Ruling is B2 is out.
57. The batters hands are considered part of the bat.

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58. The Batter-Runner is out if she steps back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.
59. A Batter-Runner is out if they run outside the three-foot lane and interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base.
60. The Batter-Runner is out when they hit an "infield fly" whether or not it is initially called.
61. If two Runners occupy the same base, the last runner to obtain the base is entitled to it if she has been forced to advance.
62. A Runner may return to touch a missed base after scoring even if the Runner behind her has also scored.
63. Every Runner is awarded one base when a wild pitch or passed ball lodges in or goes under, over or through the backstop.
64. If an umpire interferes with a catcher's attempt to throw out a runner stealing, it is an immediate dead ball and all runners must return to the previous base.
65. A runner is out if they run more than 3 feet from the base path to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand of a fielder.
66. A runner is out if they pass a preceding runner before that runner is out.
67. A Runner may run over a defensive player because she is standing on top of the base/plate without penalty.
68. The look-back rule will be in effect when the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched first base or has been declared out, and the pitcher has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle.
69. A runner is not out if they overrun first base after touching it and immediately return to it.
70. A courtesy runner may run for another courtesy runner.
71. With one out, R1 is on second base and R2 is on first base. An infield fly by B4 touches R2 who is standing on first base. B4 is out. R2 is not out unless R2 intentionally interferes.
72. The pitch is not in the strike zone but not entirely inside the batter's box when it hits the batter. The batter makes no attempt to avoid being hit, the ball is dead but the batter is not awarded first base since the batter obviously tried to get hit by the pitch.
73. The pitch is in the strike zone and it hits the batter. The ball is dead and the batter awarded first base.
74. With a one-ball, one-strike count, B1 hits a pop fly down the first base line in foul territory that F3 is in position to catch. B1 interferes with F3 causing F3 to drop the ball. The umpire rules a foul ball and returns B1 to bat with a one-ball, two-strike count.

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GHSA Rules Clinic

75. In fast pitch all bats must bear either the USA/ASA 2004 or USA Softball All Games (2019) Certification Mark and not be on the USA Softball Non-Approved Bat List.
76. All Gorilla Gold Towels are legal in Georgia.
77. Eye black shall only be used for glare reduction and not as an individual or team expression/adornment. It may be any color but the same color must be used under each eye.
78. Teammates of a player who has hit a homerun must remain behind the batter's box lines nearest their dugout.
79. The NFHS Membership card/pass allows the legal bearer (individual named on pass) admission to GHSA events.
80. A coach can use a one-way electronic communication device to communicate with a catcher for the purpose of calling pitches.