



March 19, 2019

NFHS Softball Weekly Rule Interpretations

Situation: With R1 at second base, R2 at first base and B3 at bat, the offensive coach reports to the plate umpire that he wants to enter S2 to run for R2. As the coach and umpire are reviewing the change on their respective lineup cards, the substitute enters the game but mistakenly replaces R1, a starter who was previously substituted for and then re-entered earlier in the game. The plate umpire reports the change to the opposing head coach with nobody noticing that S2 has taken the incorrect position. On the next pitch, the ball eludes the catcher and both runners advance. The offensive head coach, in the third-base coaches box now realizes that S2 actually replaced R1 instead of R2. Realizing the mistake the offensive coach approaches the umpire, at the same time the defensive coach also asks for time to check the lineup as they realized the incorrect player is now on third base. **Ruling:** S2 would be considered an illegal substitute since they are occupying the incorrect position in the lineup and they are also in the game at the same time as the starter in their position (S2 and R2 are on the field at the same time). The correct penalty for this play should be S2 is called out and is restricted to the bench/dugout for the remainder of the game. Since S2 was reported into the game for R2 and has just been called out, R2 should be removed from the base. R1 would be returned to second base. Since S2 was reported for R2, R1 is still the active player in that lineup position and her reentry status would not be effected by this play. R1 would also not be out for abandoning her base as she did not abandon it, she had a player running in her position.

Situation: In the third inning S1, an eligible substitute, enters the game for F9 but is not reported to the plate umpire. B1 hits a fly ball that S1 catches in the air for an out. The defensive coach requests that the out be nullified since S1 is not legally in the game. **Ruling:** The out stands, S1 is legally in the game and the defensive team receives a warning for the unreported substitute. The next violation for an unreported substitute will result in the player and the head coach being restricted to the dugout/bench area for the remainder of the game.

Situation: In the top of the second inning S1 enters to run for B1 who is playing second base (F4), in the bottom of the inning B1 reenters and plays defense. In the bottom of the fifth inning S1 enters the game unreported reaching the centerfield position, where B4 has been playing. The next batter hits a long fly ball that is caught by S1 in centerfield. The offensive coach then approaches the umpire noting that S1 was never reported as a substitute. **Ruling:** S1 is an illegal substitute as they have entered the game in a different position in the lineup, originally as B1 and now in B4's position. S1 shall be restricted to the dugout/bench area for the remainder of the game and since the infraction was discovered before another pitch was thrown, the offensive coach has the option of taking the result of the play or nullifying the out and returning their batter to bat with the same count.

Situation: In the top of the third inning Team B's S1 enters for B2, who is playing centerfield, and hits a home run. In the bottom of the inning B2 reenters to play defense. In the sixth inning S1 takes F4's

position, where B6 has been playing defense. F1 throws a strike to Team A's first batter and the ball gets away from F1 with S1 retrieving the ball and returning it to F1. Team A's coach requests that the pitch be canceled since S1 is an illegal substitute and she handled the ball on the pitch. **Ruling:** Since the ball that was handled by the illegal substitute did not lead to a runner being put out or alter the play, all play stands and the illegal substitute is restricted to the dugout/bench.