



# **2021 MECHANICS REVIEW**

NJSIAA COVID19 SOFTBALL PROTOCOLS

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## **CONSIDERATIONS FOR UMPIRES**

- 1. Bring personal hand sanitizer, tissues, towels, etc.***
  - 2. Don't share equipment.***
  - 3. Bring your own filled water bottle.***
  - 4. Players should always handle the game balls.***
  - 5. Umpires should not handle bats, helmets, gloves, etc.***
  - 6. Follow social distancing guidelines. Consider six feet minimum distance when talking to players, coaches, and other umpires.***
  - 7. The NJSIAA Sportsmanship statement will be read to one coach and one captain from each team, maintaining social distance.***
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# CONSIDERATIONS FOR UMPIRES CONTINUED

8. Meetings with coaches and captains should be conducted maintaining social distance and face masks should be worn.
  9. Do not shake hands. Follow pre- and post- game ceremony guidelines established by the state association.
  10. Umpires are expected to wear face coverings, unless doing so would inhibit the officials health, or the umpire is in extreme heat conditions.
  11. School protocols will dictate temp. checks, questionnaires, etc.
  12. Umpires should not expect a changing area. Bathrooms will be at the discretion of the site. Follow all protocols in place by that site.
  13. Umpires not feeling well should turn back their assignment and contact the school and the assignor immediately.
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# SOFTBALLS

1. The home team should have 8 game balls available. The visiting team will be given 4 game balls.
2. The defensive team is responsible for game ball use, which should include foul ball retrieval and periodic replacement or sanitizing the balls, as needed.
3. After the game the visiting team will return any remaining balls to the home team
4. UMPIRES DO NOT HANDLE THE SOFTBALLS

# NFHS SOFTBALL RULES

1. **PITCHERS:** May not wear an optic yellow face covering. Pitchers are encouraged to use a rosin bag, and should not put their fingers in their mouth or blow on their hands prior to pitching.
2. **Pregame conference:** Coaches and captains should stay outside the width of the batter's box at home plate, maintaining six feet distance.
3. **Substitutions:** The verbal exchange should occur 6 feet from the coach to the scorer and opposing team when making lineup changes.
4. **Coaching:** Umpires do not handle equipment on the field during play. Contact with the game ball should be as limited as possible. Coaches who wish to discuss a rule or a ruling on the field must maintain at least 6 feet of distance from the umpire. Base coaches should stay 6 feet away from runner after suspension of play.

# NFHS SOFTBALL RULES CONTINUED

5. Players are not permitted to leave the dugout area to congratulate players when scoring or after home runs.
6. NFHS rules allow for dugouts/ designated warm-up areas to be extended to provide for social distancing.
7. **CHARGED CONFERENCES:** Coaches holding defensive conferences must stay on the home plate side of the pitchers circle, and the player or players must be on the opposite side maintaining social distancing. No more than two players plus the pitcher are allowed. Only one coach is allowed . If a coach visits a pitcher all other players should stay outside the circle.
8. Lineups should be handed to the umpires and the umpire will verbally approve or ask any questions about the lineup.

# NFHS SOFTBALL RULES CONTINUED

8. **PLATE UMPIRES:** The plate umpire may stand deeper than normal to call balls and strikes. The umpire may wear disposable gloves.
  9. Base umpires should maintain 6 feet of distance from any player as a starting position when rotated and / counter rotated. This distance of 6 feet should also be made when positioning to make a call on a play in the field.
  10. The catcher and the batter should be 6 feet apart when the umpire is dusting off the plate.
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# **PREGAME WITH PARTNER**

- 1. Plate umpire will review with his partner any new rules or new mechanics along with Covid19 protocols. They shall keep social distance in the parking lot for the goal of safety and appearance. ( Politics ) When getting your equipment on go over the following:**
  - 2. Foul line coverages and when the coverage changes.**
  - 3. Coverages when the base umpire turns and goes.**
  - 4. Base umpires starting position to fielder is 6 ft. min distance.**
  - 5. Go over a hand signal for killing anything in the box,**
  - 6. Tag up responsibilities, missed bases, and leaving base early, which umpire is responsible for which base and call.**
  - 7. Pick off at first when the base umpire is in the C position (hand signals reminding each other play is on }.**
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# PREGAME WITH PARTNER

8. Look back rule (hand signals).
  9. Running lane and quick tags before lane begins.
  10. Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike (a hand signal from base umpire on catchers catch/no catch).
  11. Pitching rules, and who is looking for what (hands, pausing, leaping, 24inch violation).
  12. Check swing procedure .
  13. Any known ground rule field situations referring to safety.
  14. Make sure both you and your partner have a brush and indicator.
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# UMPIRE JURISDICTION

Once the umpire enters the confines of the field his/her jurisdiction over the game and the players begins.

When walking on the field with your partner keep a social distance, once approaching coaches, players and spectators, you are expected to mask up.

Umpires are to wear masks unless health or extreme heat prevents you from doing so. If this is the case then be sure to over emphasize your social distance of 6 plus ft.

# PRE-GAME CONFERENCE AT HOME PLATE

1. Attended by the head coach and captain from each team wearing a mask, standing outside each batters box.
  2. No balls are to be hit or thrown in live ball area during this conference.
  3. Welcome the visiting team, and then have everyone introduce themselves. No handshakes or fist pumps.
  4. Read the Sportsmanship statement from a written statement, then give the option to Captains to leave.
  5. Verify legality of the players and equipment.  
( A verbal response is required from coaches )
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# **PREGAME CONFERENCE AT HOME PLATE**

- 6. Accept lineups from coaches, check names, positions, and numbers. Check list for substitutions.**
- 7. Confirm where DP and Flex fall on line up card, and the number of batters is accurate.**
- 8. Have coaches verify satisfaction with their cards. Once verified any change will be a substitution.**
- 9. Have the home team coach go over ground rules.**  
**If no home team, the plate umpire will confer with home site manager ahead of time and give the ground rules.**

# PLATE MECHANICS

1. Work the slot (Heel to Toe. Head and Torso slanted perpendicular through plate).
2. Watch catcher's shoulders. (First to move).
3. Exit catcher to the left, (Move towards play and responsibilities).
4. Extend the strike zone into the "River ". The river is the area between the plate and batter's box. Consider the following: Home plate is 17 inches wide, the softball is 3.8 inches wide. Any part of the ball touches the plate it is a strike by rule, making the strike zone 24.6 inches wide. Use it all.

# BASE MECHANICS

1. Ball goes out, umpire comes in, ball stays in, umpire stays out (exceptions Calling from Rim).
  2. The Rim is the circle outside the dirt infield. With runners on base, a HARD DIRECT BALL is hit to the outfielder, get your best position from the rim, rather than miss it moving in. ( It's over in under 5 seconds).
  3. When the base umpire turns and goes (what responsibilities change for the umpires?)
  4. Possible indicator for when a runner is stealing (3 step method).
  5. Watching for Obstruction on runners. (No play coming, no ball, fielder shall not be there).
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## **AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE GAME**

- 1. Once the game is over leave the confines of the field with your partner.**
  - 2. No handshaking with coaches or players.**
  - 3. Once back in the parking lot go over any game situations that need to be discussed with your partner.**
  - 4. Leave school grounds together when finished and avoid any unnecessary conflicts with spectators involving the contest.**
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# IN CONCLUSION

For 2021, the mechanics committee is urging all to participate in reviewing these basic duties expected as an umpire, in an attempt to have all our members appear the same while performing their field functions, both as the plate and the base umpire.

Good game control begins with the basic principles along with the umpires appearance. Remember when entering the ball park your sole duty is to umpire the ballgame as a representative of this association.

HAVE A GREAT SEASON

