



## **May Plays and Clarifications**

### **From the National Umpire Staff**

It is getting close to time for the USA Softball Fast Pitch National Championships. By now you should know if you are umpiring a National Championship and should be in the process of completing all the necessary requirements to attend your Championship. As we all know we have on field and off field responsibilities as a USA Softball National Championship Umpire

Before you can officially attend a USA Softball Championship you must be registered, passed a USA Softball background check and have completed the Safe Sport curriculum requirement. This means you have taken the full course for the first time or have completed the refresher course requirement for 2019. If you have not, please do so as you can not be an umpire at a National Championship without completing the Safe Sport requirement. Also be sure that you have completed the National Championship Contract completely and legibly and included a digital photograph; and returned it to the proper leaders of your local association.

Now that you have completed the off-field requirements it is time to get into physical shape for your Championship. If you live in the southern states, you probably have already been calling games for a while. If you live in the northern states, not so lucky and could literally be just knocking the snow off your equipment. Either way start the process of staying in shape or getting in shape to umpire your Championship. As we all know the heat of the summer can be intense and now is the time to prepare. Do not wait until the week before your National Championship to start acclimating your body. The players have been playing a while and staying in shape, they deserve the same from us.

### **National Indicator Fraternity (NIF)**

In continuing to highlight the many award programs we have for our umpires one of the most popular is the NIF Award. This is a program that was established to reward those who had achieved status by umpiring or working as an umpire at three (3) USA Softball National Championships, which includes the Armed Forces Championships. (Men and Women). In addition, if you have attended a USA Softball Advanced Camp from 1998 to the present, that camp coupled with two USA Softball National Championships would give you the combination of three (3) to qualify for this award. In order to apply you must

have been a USA Softball registered umpire for seven (7) years. If you meet these qualifications, you may apply whether you are an active or inactive umpire.

The cost of applying is \$25.00. In return you will receive a NIF Certificate, a membership card, a luggage tag and a lapel pin. In addition, your name will be listed in a kiosk in the National Softball Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City.

You can see the requirements for the program by going to the USA Softball Website, clicking on umpires, then clicking on Umpire Awards, then scrolling down to click on National Indicator Fraternity program and then the application form. These qualifications are listed on page two (2) of the application.

For more information on how the program is administered in your area, contact your Local Association Umpire-In-Chief.

### **International Championships**

One of the highest awards a USA Softball Umpire can achieve is WBSC Status. When you achieve WBSC Certified status this allows you to represent USA Softball on the world stage. In today's world there are several opportunities for our umpires once they achieve the WBSC level. Some of the opportunities are as follows:

- USA Softball International Cup
- Canadian Cup
- Japan Cup
- Japan All-Star Series
- Men's Pan Am Qualifier
- Men's Pan Am Games
- Women's Pan Am Qualifier
- Women's Pan Am Games
- Jr Men's World Championship
- Men's World Championship
- Jr Women's World Championship
- Women's World Championship
- Olympic Qualifiers
- Olympic Games

Not all these Championships are held every year but as you can see the opportunities are huge. If you strive to become a WBSC Certified Umpire talk to you State or Metro UIC, your Regional UIC, Deputy Director, or the Director of Umpires and we can help you achieve your goal.

## **Obstruction?**

The video in the link below was sent to us asking if there is obstruction or not according to USA Softball Rules. This is where video can help but also hinder a ruling. In the video it appears to show the catcher has the ball, blocks the plate and the runner does not alter their path to home plate prior to the catcher having possession of the ball. There does not appear to be any hinderance, or impedance on this play. The fact the base is blocked, and the runner jumps over the catcher does not become a factor since the catcher has possession the ball at that point. However, where the video becomes difficult, the camera angle only gives us one view, perhaps with a larger view there could have been more information and we could have had obstruction. These are the items we must take into consideration when making a ruling. When we see a video, we must take the video for what we see not what we think could possibly be happening. Our opinion based solely on this video is no obstruction from what we can see.