



## August 2020 Plays and Clarifications

### **National Championships**

With our Junior Olympic Championships being completed and our Slow Pitch National Championship getting ready to begin, it is safe to say it has been a complicated year. Covid-19 has had its effect on our Championships when it comes to umpiring. This is the first year we have had over 40% of the umpires chosen to attend National Championships have to return their assignments for a myriad of reasons.

However, the umpire program came through and others stepped up to help make our larger USA Softball Championships a huge success. Our 18U Gold was the largest it has been in years. We had most of the top 18U teams attend the event held at three facilities in Oklahoma including the USA Softball Hall of Fame Complex. We had 71 umpires at this event and 72 umpires at our JO Cup in Spartanburg SC. In a lot of cases we had umpires step up and call at each event when we needed to add umpires due to cancellations.

We had more teams at our 16U Gold than we have had in a long time. This allowed us to send umpires to this event that may not have had the opportunity to attend. We had 42 umpires from around the country attend this event.

The Umpire Program added to the success of all these events. We had positive comments from a lot of the teams at all these events complimenting the quality of umpiring. This is not to say we did not have our issues at these events. We had a few rules issues that we need to work on for the future.

Overall, we could not be prouder of the umpire program. We stepped up when we needed more umpires. We stepped up when we needed umpires to go from the 18U Gold to the JO Cup. We stepped up and did the job we have always expected from our umpires. From veterans who have been there before to the rookies who attended for the first time overall a great job.

**Play:** R1 on 1B and no outs. B2 at bat. R1 leaves legally on the pitch. B2 swings and hits the catcher's glove and then hits the ball. The ball is fair and picked up by F2. On the throw to 1B the ball hits the Batter-Runner, (B2) outside the running lane. At the time of the interference R1 has already touched 2B. What is the ruling?

**Ruling:** The offensive manager has the option to take the play, or enforce the obstruction by awarding the batter first base and R1 would be advanced to 2B as they were forced by the batter being awarded 1B. Rule 8, Section 1D [2]

At the moment of catcher's obstruction the batter is awarded first base (the award is implied at the moment the delayed dead ball signal was given), and can achieve more depending on the circumstances, but is guaranteed first base. When the batter-runner was hit with the thrown ball

the play was called dead and the batter-runner called out. The umpire would then enforce (8-1D [2] to protect the batter-runner, who has earned the protection with the obstruction. Rule 8-5B [1] is there to punish runners who have been obstructed from committing illegal acts (basically taking away their free pass). This rule says "runner" instead of "runner or batter-runner" because the batter-runner has been guaranteed 1st base and cannot be guilty of one of the 5 punishable sins until they reach 1B and become a runner.