



December 2023 Recruits Newsletter

What's Happening!

The softball year is finished. CASO umpires are taking a well-deserved rest. Over the year, CASO umpires worked on many games. These included:

Level	Games	Slots
High School Scrimmages	53	106
High School Regular Season	340	650
High School Playoffs	24	54
Allied for Special Needs Athletes	32	32
Middle School Slow-Pitch	129	129
Youth Spring	314	329
Youth Fall	229	229
College Club Softball	16	22
Senior Slow Pitch	439	439
Totals	1578	1992

Prospective New Recruits

January is just around the corner, so there is a lot in this quarterly newsletter. The reason is it is time to start preparing for the upcoming season. Here are the things the new recruits can start doing.

In early January you will receive information via email on training as well as several CASO registration forms. Everybody needs to complete the necessary forms quickly, and snail mail the original signed version to AI. They cannot be scanned and emailed. We must get the original forms.

These forms give CASO what it needs to provide you with information about doing your taxes. Make sure to save all receipts and to start to keep track of mileage. This will come in handy during tax time.

NOTE: If you are a student umpire or only interested in umpiring Allied Softball, special needs students, you can skip to paragraph 2.

1. Folks working high-school games should also register with the Maryland Public Secondary School Athletic Association (MPSSAA) anytime they want in January, but the sooner the better. This registers you with the State of Maryland and is different from the CASO registration. Registering with MPSSAA costs \$40.

Included is a registration with the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) and copies of the NFHS rules and case books. CASO will provide you with the books if you list it as your primary organization. This registration provides you with liability insurance for any game in a sport sanctioned by the state.

Registering with MPSSAA is through DragonFly Athletics. [Click here to go to the DragonFly site](#). If you need help with DragonFly, you can email or call Joe Holonich. His contact information is included at the end of this newsletter and in the transmittal email.

2. Student umpires and umpires interested in only Allied Softball do not need to register with the MPSSAA. However, once they receive them, they still need to complete the forms and snail mail them.

Plus, they should contact Al Palmer to obtain a rules and case book. These umpires will have to pay for the rules and case books. Al Palmer's telephone number will be in the information sent on training. You can also purchase them at www.nfhs.org.

Because you are not registering with the NFHS via Dragonfly, you will need to purchase liability insurance. [You can purchase insurance here](#). Simply fill out the application (make sure you select "sports officials' insurance" on the first screen) and pay online with a check or credit card (Visa or MasterCard only).

Student umpires 14-17 need a work permit. [Here is a link](#) to the Maryland Department of Labor site on work permits. Once you and your parents have signed the permit, bring it to training.

For folks umpiring any high-school games or Allied Softball, classroom sessions will be held every Thursday from January 18, 2024, to February 22, 2024. Student umpires working youth leagues will have two sessions on Wednesday, February 7 and 21. Time for all training is 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm, and the location is the media center at Sherwood High School for all sessions.

On Saturday, February 24, 2024, there will be a session covering on-field mechanics. We are working with MCPS on a location. New recruits working high-school games will be trained on the different umpire locations in a two-umpire system. Student umpires and umpires working only Allied Softball will work as a separate group covering single-umpire mechanics. Some two-umpire mechanics will be covered with these umpires to help them with their training games.

In addition, Joe Holonich will add you to Arbiter Sports. Once you receive the welcome email, please activate your account. There will be a short training session on Arbiter Sports on a Monday evening in January or February. High-school games will be assigned in early January, so once you register you will be getting assignments.

Student umpires will get assignments as youth games become available, usually in the middle of March. The full schedule for youth games is usually available in early April. Student umpires will be assigned their first few games, four to six, with a senior umpire. These are not paid but SSL hours can be earned. In the past, many times the senior umpires split their game fees.

In all cases, high school, and youth, please accept your assignments quickly. It is important for the assigner to know if he must find a replacement, especially given the limited number of umpires working. Setting blocks is an important way to ensure you do not have to decline assignments where you were shown available.

From the Case Book

Situation 1:

R1 is on third base and R2 is on first base with one out. B1 hits a fly ball to centerfield. R2 on first base leaves the base on contact and arrives at second base as the fly ball is caught by the

centerfielder, F8. R3 makes a proper tag and heads home on the initial touch. F8 throws home but R1 is safe. Then F2 throws to first base and R2 is declared out for the third out.

Ruling:

R2 is out on an appeal and the inning finished with the third out made at first base. The R1 run counts because the third out was a timing out, not a force out as many believe.

Rule 2, "Definitions," Section 24, "Force Play"

ART.3...If a batted ball is caught before it touches the ground there can be no force play(s).

Section 63, "Timing Play"

A timing play is a play when the last out of an inning is not the result of a force out and the exact time of the out may or may not allow a run to score. If a runner should touch home plate an instant before the last out (which is not a force out) is made, then the run would be scored.

Situation 2:

B4 is at bat with a 1-2 count, and a) while standing still and completely in the batter's box gets hit on the hands, b) swings, hits a grounder off her hands, and safely reaches first base, c) hits a fair ball with one foot partially on the line of the batter's box and partially out of the batter's box; and d) hits a foul ball with one foot completely out of the batter's box.

Ruling: In a) the ball is dead immediately and the batter is awarded first base as long as she did not make an obvious attempt to get hit by the pitch; b) the ball is dead immediately, batter has swung and not hit the ball with the bat, hands are not part of the bat, so she is out on strike three; c) fair, live ball; and d) the ball is dead and the batter is out on an illegally batted ball.

Rule 8, "Batter-Runner and Runner," Section 1, "The Batter Becomes a Batter-Runner,"

ART. 2...A batter is awarded first base when:

b. (F.P.) a pitched ball not swung at nor called a strike, that is entirely within the batter's box, and it strikes the batter or clothing. No attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch is required. However, the batter may not make an obvious attempt to get hit by the pitch.

Rule 7, "Batting," Section 2, "Strikes, Balls, and Hits,"

ART.1...A strike is charged to the batter when:

g. a pitched ball contacts the batter while swinging at the ball or the batter is hit by the pitch that is in the strike zone (dead-ball strike)

Rule 7, Section 2, ART. 1

f. a batted ball contacts the runner in the batter's box (foul ball)

Rule 8, Section 2, "Batter-Runner Is Out"

ART. 7...The batter-runner interferes:

e. by making contact with a fair batter ball before reaching first base.

Situation 3:

R1 is on second base when B2 hits a ground ball between F6 and second base. F6 does not have a play on the ball. As R1 heads to third base, F6 is in her basepath causing R1 to stop, take two steps to the side and continues to third base then home. F8 throws to home and a) R1 is tagged out two steps from the plate or b) R1 is tagged out 10 feet from home plate.

Ruling:

In both scenarios, bases would be awarded based on the umpires' judgement. In a) if the umpires believe the additional time from stopping and the two sidesteps caused R1 to delay her arrival at home plate, she would be awarded home. For scenario b), R1 is too far to be awarded home plate. An obstructed runner cannot be put out between the bases where she was

protected. If the umpires were protecting the runner to home, then she would be returned to third base. If the umpires were protecting the runner to only third base, then she would be out.

Rule 8, “Batter-Runner and Runner,” SECTION 4, “RUNNERS ENTITLED TO ADVANCE”

ART 3... A runner is entitled to advance without liability to be put out when:

b. a fielder not in possession of the ball or not making an initial play on a batted ball, impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases.

PENALTIES: (Art. 3b) When an obstruction occurs (including a rundown), the umpire will signal a delayed dead ball. The ball will remain live.

1. **If the obstructed runner is put out prior to reaching the base that would have been reached had there not been obstruction, a dead ball is called and the obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base or base which would have been reached in the umpire’s judgment, had there not been obstruction. An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where the runner was obstructed.**

Situation 4

There's one out with R1 on second base and R2 on first base. B6, with a 1-1 count, hits a popup. The plate umpire declares infield fly. Just as the F6 is preparing to catch the ball, R1, who has begun to run, collides with her. The ball is dropped and rolls foul because of the collision.

Ruling:

B6 is out on the infield fly, immediate dead ball and R2 is out on interference. The batter was declared out on the infield fly while the ball was still live so the out stands. Then R1 interfered with F6 catching the popup, and at that point the ball is dead immediately. The interference occurred while the ball was over fair territory, and under 2-20-1g., the ball is defined as a fair ball. R1 is out on interference. The infield fly and interference outs end the half inning.

The definition in 2-20-1g. was added and the one in 2-25-1e. revised by the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) in 2023 to clarify the ball’s status at the point of interference. The ball does not have to be touched to be fair, it only needs to be over fair territory when the interference occurs. Technically, an interference could result in the defensive players never having a chance to touch the ball.

To be a foul ball, the interference would have to occur while the ball is over foul territory per the revised definition of a foul ball in 2-25-1e. The interference occurred while the ball was over fair territory and after it was dead rolling foul had no effect.

Here is the rationale NFHS had for the rule change.

Rationale: The ball’s status is determined at the point of interference. If an offensive player interferes with the defensive player while the ball is in fair territory, the ball is dead. Adding this language to the definition section mirrors the foul ball definition in Rule 2-25-1e.

1. “Definitions,”

SECTION 20, “FAIR BALL,”

ART 1... A fair ball is a batted ball that: *(Original bold)*

g. **while over fair territory**, an offensive player interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a batted ball. *(Emphasis added)*

SECTION 25 “FOUL BALL, FOUL TIP,”

ART 1... Foul Ball. A foul ball is a batted ball that:

e. While over foul territory, an offensive player interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a batted ball;

SECTION 30, "INFIELD FLY RULE,"

Infield fly rule is, when declared by the umpire, a fair fly (not including a line drive or an attempted bun) that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when runners are on first and second or all three bases are occupied and before there are two outs in the inning.

SECTION 32, "INTERFERENCE (OFFENSE),"

Art 1...Interference is an act (physical or verbal) by a member of the team at bat who illegally impeded, hinders or confuses any fielder...

SECTION 47, "'PLAY BALL,' MAKE A PLAY, INITIAL PLAY"

Art 2...Make a play—

b. Any action by a fielder who is attempting to catch or gain control of a batted or thrown ball.

ART 3...Initial Play— A fielder is considered to be making an initial play on a fair batter ball when the fielder:

b. Has reasonable chance to catch the ball in flight or catch the ball in flight after being touched by another fielder.

8, "Batter-Runner and Runner," SECTION 2, "BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT,"

The batter-runner is out when:

ART 9... The batter-runner hits an infield fly. (2-30)

SECTION 6, "THE RUNNER IS OUT,"

A runner is out when:

ART 10...The runner interferes:

a. With a fielder attempting to make the initial play on a fair batter ball. (2-47)

Today's Question

Question:

What if my daughter is still playing for her high school or I am a high school player with practices and games?

For recruits who are eligible to umpire high school games, the scheduling application lets CASO block your daughter's high school, so you are not scheduled when she has a game. Similarly, high school games for student umpires can be blocked so they are not scheduled on game days. Still, the best thing they can do is block days they have games and practices so they will not be scheduled on those days.

Anybody can always block days they are unable to work. When an umpire blocks days, they will not show as available when assignments are being made.

[Visit our webpage](#) on becoming and umpire to get more information. Plus, you can see more about becoming an umpire on our [FAQs page](#).

If you have recruiting questions, feel free to email [Jim Morton, Second Vice President](#)

If you have any questions, feel free to [email our assigner, Joe Holonich](#).

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