

September/October 2024

1. With R3 on third base, and one out, F1 throws a low pitch to B3. The ball hits the plate, bounces over F2 and hits the plate umpire in the chest. The ball then falls in the plate umpire's ball bag.
 - a. The ball remains live and R3 may advance at her own risk with liability to be put out.
 - b. The ball is dead and R3 is automatically awarded home.
 - c. The ball is dead and R3 is only awarded home plate if the plate umpire judges she would have advanced to home plate if the ball had not become lodged in his bag.
 - d. Umpire interference is declared. If the umpire dislodges the ball, and R3 reached home safely, she is returned to third base. If R3 is put out, the out stands.

Under the National Federation of State High Schools Associations (NFHS) the correct answer is C). Once the ball lodges in the umpire's ball bag, it has contacted a equipment not in the game. Therefore, by definition, it is a blocked ball and immediately dead. Under penalty for NFHS rule 8-4-3k, if, in the umpire's judgment, R3 would have reached home, R3 is awarded home.

Rule 2, "Definitions," SECTION 2, "BALL, BATTED, BLOCKED, DEAD, DELAYED DEAD, FLY, GROUND, PASSED, ROTATION,"

ART 3... Blocked Ball -- A blocked ball is a live ball, pitched, batted or thrown, ... which touches any object which is not part of the official equipment...

ART 4...Dead Ball -- A dead ball is a ball not in play.

Rule 5, "Dead Ball and Suspension of Play," SECTION 1, DEAD BALL,"

ART 1... Ball becomes dead immediately when (Table 5-1):

- g. a pitch or any other thrown ball:
5. lodges in an umpire's equipment, or touches loose equipment.

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:

- k. a ball gets lodged in (a) umpire's gear or clothing or (b) in an offensive player's clothing.

PENALTY: (Arts. 3j, 3k) The ball is dead, and the umpire should award the runners the bases in the umpire's judgment they would have reached.

2. In the top of the fourth inning team A substitutes A1 for A2 as a pinch runner. In the bottom of the fourth inning, A2 returns to her position at first base. The head coach forgets to tell the plate umpire of the re-entry. B1, with a 3-2 count, hits a ground ball to F4 who throws to F3 (A2) at first base for the out. Team B's coach then notifies the plate umpire that A2 was never re-entered in the game.
 - a. B1 is out at first base
 - b. B1 is allowed to stay at first base
 - c. This is an unreported substitute, and the substitute is now official declared in the game.
 - d. This is an illegal substitute, and the substitute is now ejected
 - e. The offensive coach may take the result of the play or have B1 return to the plate with a 3-2 count
 - f. The umpire shall issue a team warning to the defensive coach

The correct answer is a., c., and f. The penalty for an unreported substitution is a warning the first. The penalty for an illegal substitute is stricter. Because of that, it is important to know which action occurred, unreported versus illegal substitute.

Rule 3, “Players, Substitutes, and Coaches,” SECTION 3, “SUBSTITUTIONS,”

ART 3... [...] If there is not announcement of substitutions, a substitute has entered the game when:

- c. a fielder reaches the position usually occupied by the fielder who has been replaced.
- e. and, in each of the above situations, when the ball is declared live by the plate umpire.

Art. 4...A substitute or courtesy runner shall not enter the contest unreported. (3-6-7 PENALTY, 8-9-7)

SECTION 6, “BENCH AND FIELD CONDUCT,”

ART. 7...Players and substitutes shall not enter the contest unreported.

PENALTY: (Arts. 2 through 10) The umpire shall issue a team warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender on that team shall be restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game. [...] (Art. 7) The head coach is also restricted to the dugout/bench or the remainder of the game for a second violation.

- 3. With no outs and R1 on second base, B2 hits a ground ball to F6. F6 fields the ball and makes an errant throw that sails past F3. R1 seeing the overthrow touches third base and continues toward home. As she is rounding first base, B2 is tripped by F3 and falls to the ground between first and second base. F9 who was backing up the throw retrieves the ball throwing it to F4 who tags B2 out while B2 is still trying to get untangled from F3. R1 is one step from home when B2 is put out.
 - a. B2 is awarded first base and R1 returns to third base.
 - b. B2 is awarded first base and R1 is awarded home.
 - c. B2 is awarded second base and R1 is returned to third base.
 - d. B2 is awarded second base and R1 is awarded home.

The correct answer to last week’s question is b. B2 is on the ground immediately after first base so it would not be appropriate to award second base. However, an obstructed runner cannot be put out between bases so B2 should be placed on first base.

R1 is a step from home plate. Under the penalty for obstruction, “...each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base or bases...” R1 should be awarded home given she was just a step from home.

Rule 8, ‘Batter-Runner and Runner,’ SECTION 4, “RUNNERS TENTITLED 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 batter ball, impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases.

PENALTIES: (Art. 3b) When any 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 bases which 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.**
4. In the third inning, Team A is at bat with B2 due to bat with two outs, B3 bats instead and is called out on strikes for the third out of the inning. As Team A comes up to bat in the fourth inning, B2 comes up to bat and gets a single. Team B's coach then appeals, stating that B4 should be the proper batter since B3 was the last batter to complete their turn at bat. The umpire agrees and rules B4 out for failure to bat in the proper position and removes B2 from first base, announcing B5 as the next proper batter with one out.
 - a. B2 has taken a pitch, is now the legal batter, and continues to bat.
 - b. B2 has taken a pitch, that makes B3 the legal batter, and B4 replaces B2.
 - c. B2 has taken a pitch, that makes B3 the legal batter, and B2 is out.
 - d. B2 is the improper batter and is out for stepping in the batter's box.

The closest correct answer is c but not written correctly. My apologies for not wording the response correctly. B3 did bat out of order in the third inning. The coach did not appeal prior to all fielders leaving fair territory and the catcher vacating the normal fielding position so the improper batter, B3, became the proper batter. At the start of the next inning, B4 was the proper batter, and B2 was an improper batter. Bating out of order was appealed prior to a pitch to the next batter so B4 is pronounced out, B2 is removed from first base, and B5 bats.

Rule 7, "Batting," SECTION 1, "POSITION AND BATTING ORDER,"

ART2 1...after the first inning, the first batter in each inning shall Be the player whose name follows that of the last batter who completed a time at bat in the preceding inning.

PENALTIES: (Arts 1,2)

3. **When an improper batter has completed a time at bat and no appeal has been made before:**
 - c. **all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher vacates the normal fielding position if a half-inning has ended.**

EFFECTS: The improper batter becomes the proper batter and the results of the batter's time at bat becomes legal.

5. B1 hits a ground ball up the middle that is fielded by F4. F4's throw to first base is high and causes F3 to jump off the base to catch the ball. While F3 is in the air, B1 leaps for first base and never touches it. After B1 passes the bag, F3 comes down on the base with the ball.
 - a. This is a force out and the base umpire should initially rule B1out.
 - b. The umpire should initially call and signals B1 safe.
 - c. B1 is ruled out if F3 tags B1before she returns to first base
 - d. B1 is ruled out if F3 makes a proper appeal by stepping on first base and indicating B1 missed the base
 - e. b. and c.
 - f. b., c. and d.

The correct answer is f. The runner is assumed to achieve first base unless a live ball appeal is made. The umpire should signal the batter-runner safe. The first baseman just landing on first base is not an appeal. She must make the appeal in either one or two ways.

If the first baseman makes a live ball appeal by tagging the runner before she returns to first base, this is a live ball appeal, and she is then pronounced out. Similarly, if she appeals that the runner missed first base and touched first base, the runner will be pronounced out on appeal.

Rule 2, “Definitions,” SECTION 1, “APPEALS,”

ART. 1...A play or rule violation on which the umpire does not make a ruling until requested by a coach or player.

ART. 10...Missing First Base Before the Throw Arrives – If a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, the runner is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal is made. If an appeal is made, it must be made prior to the runner returning to first base while the ball is live.