2025 Softball Comments On The Rules

1-8-6 EXCEPTION & PENALTY: A high school softball coach will be able to use electronic devices in the dugout for one-way communication to the catcher while the team is on defense beginning in 2025. This change is the result of analysis of current data, state association experimentation and a positive response from the membership. The committee has made these changes to support the use of emerging technology within the sport of softball. Being a permissive rule, the use of this one-way electronic communication will allow those who choose to embrace the technology an additional option to communicate with the catcher while on defense. It will also maintain the ability for those who prefer a more traditional approach to communicate using signals or a playbook/play card to continue that approach. Accommodating one-way communication to the catcher brought new language to two different sections of the NFHS Softball Rules Book, starting with Rule 1-8-6. Devices such as earpieces, electronic bands and smartwatches are now permitted as an EXCEPTION within the rule provided the player does not utilize said device to return correspondence to the coaching staff. Since both rules were updated for this change, the penalty from Rule 3-6-11 was added to Rule 1-8-6 as well, with violators subject to ejection unless the offense is ruled to be of a minor nature. This penalty has been in place for Rule 3-6-11 allowing the umpire to issue a warning if the offense is minor and then eject if the offense is repeated.

3-6-11: This penalty has been in place for Rule 3-6-11 allowing the umpire to issue a warning if the offense is minor and then eject if the offense is repeated. In addition to permitting the one-way communication devices, the updated version of Rule 3-6-11 regarding Bench and Field Conduct specifies that coaches are prohibited from using the device to communicate with any other team member while on defense or any team member while on offense and the coach cannot use the device outside the dugout/bench area.

9-3-2b: For the purpose of official scorekeeping, if a baserunner is declared out for being hit by a fair batted ball the batter-runner is credited with a fielder’s choice in the scorebook. A runner being hit with a batted ball is a form of interference and is covered in Rule 8-6-11 which specifies that the runner is out and it also lists that the batter-runner is credited with a fielder's choice. Previously, this play was scored as a base hit for the batter.