



March 2017 Plays and Clarifications

2017 Biennial UIC Clinic Survey

We want to thank all 279 participants that responded on Survey Monkey. Your responses have been read, recorded and are being looked at to determine how we can make 2019 better than ever. Those of you that took the time to provide comments along with your numbers on the survey were a great help. We would like to say a special thank you to those of you that signed the survey, as that allows us to see who has the ideas and suggestions that can only improve the clinic and help the Umpire Program.

We are in the process of digesting the suggestions and comments and the UIC Clinic planning committee is working to incorporate many of these suggestions into the Clinic for in 2019. We feel a lot of these comments will allow us to make it even better in 2019.

The questions that were not answered by the panel of Donna Vavernic, Sandy Searcy and Kevin Ryan during the group session are currently being reviewed and answered. They will be included in this month and future editions of Plays and Clarifications. When the question was asked of all three we will give you all three panelist's answers. If they were asked specifically of NCAA, NFHS or USA Softball then that person will provide the answer.

Here are a couple of those questions for USA Softball with many more to come.

Questions from the three panel discussion for USA Softball

Why don't we have evaluations on UIC's?

We presume this question is in regards to a National Championship Umpire-in-Chief. Being an Umpire-in-Chief of a National Championship is a tough job and they have to make decisions based on what they see and hear. Years ago we had UIC Evaluations did and some felt that umpires would grade the Umpire-in-Chief based on what assignments they received or did not received versus the information the Umpire-in-Chief gave them in the review process. I have been in that situation where some felt the assignments they received did not match their performance and they wrote to whoever would listen to complain. We will consider this for the future but it would require a well thought out evaluation form that would not include numbers but would include specific questions based on how an Umpire-in-Chief did their job.

Who do we contact when we feel we have a play that we feel should be on the national test or casebook?

You can send them to your Local Association Umpire-in-Chief, Regional Umpire-in-Chief, Deputy Director of Umpires or Kevin Ryan. Every month we ask for ideas on issue to discuss in our Plays and Clarifications. We want good plays to help teach our umpires rules and mechanics and we want subjects that need addressing on the National Stage. Please send them to any National Staff Member or to Kevin Ryan. My email is kryan@usasoftball.com

Why does HQ (National Office) always make executive decisions regarding uniforms? We need a light weight shell type jacket just to keep rain off. Not one with a lining and neck cover so we roast on the field?

The National Office does not make these decisions. In the past they have been made by USA Softball Council members by the way of a rule change because our umpire uniform was part of the rule book. All changes suggested by anyone had to be voted on by the complete council. Normally any uniform change was brought to the council by the Properties Board who oversees the umpire uniform. Now that the uniform is no longer a part of the rule book we take the suggestions or ideas of the Properties Board and get their ideas out to the umpire community and ask questions. There are several umpires on the Properties Board and they all have a vote. I can bring this up to the committee and have them review and make a suggestion based on your comments. The Board always has to walk the thin line between offering something new and wanted versus appearing only to want to sell more uniforms. I will discuss your request with the Properties Board at our next Council meeting and see if there is something that we can offer.

We should expand the mechanics manual every year, how can this be accomplished?

Having a written manual somewhat prohibits the expansion because cost is related to the number of pages. We constantly look at how we can expand and improve the mechanics manual but also keep it within the cost guidelines that do not raise the price of the manual and registration. Since we have decided to put the 2018 Umpire Manual on the web we now have an avenue to add to it without affecting cost. It will also be printable so that any umpire may print it in the size and font they want. It will also allow us to post mechanic clarifications on this document during the year for all to see and read. Our plan is to try to do this in 2018 based on feedback by our umpires, at the UIC Clinic and the USA Softball Council.

National Umpire Schools

The 2017 National Umpire Schools have been a resounding success with record numbers at schools in location that in the past may not have had very good attendance. The last of the 5 Umpire schools is the weekend of April 1st and 2nd with 110 students already registered to attend.

We are now collecting and reviewing locations for 2018 National Umpire Schools. If your Local Association is interested in 2018 please contact your Regional Umpire-in-Chief so they can get that information to Jim Craig the Chairman of the National Umpire School Committee. We are

looking hard at all requests so that areas do not overlap and the school will be a success as far as number of attendees and curriculum.

Fast Pitch Camp

Our Fast Pitch Camp is being held in Cumming, Georgia this year, June 15 – 18 2017. We currently have 34 paid attendees, 14 committed to attend and completing applications. If you are attending the camp remember the tournament is a National Qualifier therefore you will be required to be registered and background checked as an USA Softball Umpire. If you are interested in attending please contact Rick Hearn, UIC of USA Softball of Georgia at 770-560-3754 or email rick.hearn@qaasablue.net

Playing Rule Changes

We have received several questions on exactly how new rules are agreed upon and entered into the rule book. Any Council Member can submit a rule change proposal. There are several Council Members in every Local Association some of which are your Commissioner, JO Commissioner, Regional Umpire-in-Chief and several others. The Director of Umpires and the Deputy Staff are not Council Members and do not write or vote on any proposals. These proposals are due to the USA Softball National Office annually on September 15th. They are compiled and reviewed to make sure the rule and section number is correct, then sent to all council members. These proposals are then reviewed at the Council Meeting by several Committees and the complete Council. Once this is done the complete Council votes for approval or rejection of those proposals. Those that pass with a 60% approval vote are put into the rule book for the next year.

Plays and Clarifications

PLAY: One out and B2 bunts the ball and drops their bat and in (a) the ball accidentally rolls into the bat in fair territory and ends up foul before it is touched, (b) the bat rolls and unintentionally hits the ball while in fair territory. In (a) the umpire rules foul ball and in (b) the umpire makes no call since there was no intent to hit the ball by the batter.

Ruling: In (a) the umpire has ruled correctly. Since the ball rolled against the bat and the ball was touched in foul territory the ball is judged to be foul. **Rule 7 Section 6M Exception (2)** and Rule Supplement number 24. In (b) the ruling is incorrect. Since the bat rolled against the ball regardless of intent the ball is dead and the batter is out. **Rule 7 Section 6M**

Play: (Slow Pitch) R1 on 1B, with B2 at bat. R1 steals on the pitch which is judged as ball four and B2 is awarded 1B. The ball gets away from the catcher and R1 continues to 3B. The play ends with R1 on 3B and R2 on 1B.

Ruling: Since the Ball is dead the runner on 1B is only allowed to go to second base and we should have had R1 on 2B and R2 on 1B

Rule 8 Section 5 A reads: When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded a base on balls.

Effect: (Fast Pitch)

1 The ball remains live unless it is blocked.

2 Any runner affected is entitled to one base and may advance farther with liability to be put out.

3 (Slow Pitch) The ball is dead.