**April Plays and Clarifications**

As spring arrives and the weather starts to get warm, the world of softball begins to come to life as well. We feel that umpires should start to spring into action as well, and that this is an appropriate time to review some of the simpler rules as an umpire. In this month's plays and clarifications, we hope to do that as we review the Look Back Rule (LBR) along with a couple of scenarios below.

**PLAY:** R1 on 1B. B2 takes a pitch and F2 returns the pitch to F1 inside the circle and R1 returns to 1B. F1 with the ball in the glove removes the glove and 1) Puts the glove on the ground, and 2) puts the glove in between her legs while she fixes her mask and hair. R1 advances to 2B. Is this advancement legal?

**RESULT:** In both scenarios R1 may advance to 2B. Rule 8-7T as quoted directly from the USA Softball Rule Book states that

*(Fast Pitch) Look Back Rule.*

*The “Look Back” rule shall be in effect for all runners when:*

*1 The ball is live.*

*2 The batter-runner has reached first base or has been declared out.*

*3 The pitcher has possession and control of the ball within the pitcher’s circle. The pitcher is considered to be in the pitcher’s circle when both feet are on or within the lines.*

*a. When a runner is legitimately off a base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing a turn at bat, and while the pitcher has control of the ball within the eight**foot radius of the pitcher’s plate, the runner may stop once then must immediately return to the base or attempt to advance to the next base.*

*b. Once the runner stops at a base for any reason the runner will be declared out if leaving the base.*

*c. Responsibilities of the batter-runner after reaching first base, and while the pitcher has control of the ball within the eight foot radius of the pitcher’s plate, including a base on balls or a dropped third strike, are as follows:*

*1. A batter-runner who rounds first base toward second base may stop once, but then must immediately non-stop return to first base or attempt to advance non-stop to second base.*

*2. A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, turns left and immediately stops, must then return non-stop to first base or attempt to advance non-stop to second base.*

*3. A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, turns left and moves directly toward second base and stops, is committed to second base and must attempt to advance non-stop to second base.*

*4. A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, turns left and moves back toward the infield in any direction except directly toward second base, is committed to first base and must return non-stop to first base.*

*5. A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, and turns right, is committed to first base and must return non-stop to first base.*

***Effect - Section 7T[A-C]:***

*1 The ball is dead.*

*2 The runner is out.*

*3 When more than one runner is off base, only one runner is called out.*

*4 All other runners are returned to the last base touched.*

***Exception - Section 7T[A-C]: The runner will not be declared out if:***

*1 A play is made on any runner. A fake throw is considered a play,*

*2 The pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the eight foot radius, or*

*3 The pitcher releases the ball on a pitch to the batter.*

We can decide from the rule cited above that in:

Scenario 1) the pitcher has neither possession nor control of the ball as it lays on the ground.

and in

Scenario 2) the pitcher has possession, but not control of the ball.

Like a catch control is determined by the ball being in the hand or glove and the glove being held by the hand.

We hope this has refreshed your knowledge of the Look Back Rule and hope that you have a wonderful season moving forward.