**2024 May Plays and Clarifications**

**2024 National Championships:**

USA Softball Fastpitch National Championships are swiftly approaching. It’s time to complete your preparation whether it be uniforms, reviewing rules or brushing up on USA Softball mechanics. As you prepare for your National Championship, be sure to review the 2024 rule changes and make sure you understand what has changed for 2024. Your job doesn’t begin when you step on the field at a National Championship, your preparations should have already begun. Now is the time to solidify your early preparation, so when you do walk onto the field, you shine.

**Play:** Team A is playing in a JO Fast Pitch game. During the plate meeting the manager of Team A wants the DP, #11, to enter the game to pitch for the FLEX who is listed as the pitcher. In the 3rd inning the FLEX re-enters the game as the pitcher, and the DP moves to F9. The DP and the FLEX are in the game at the same time defensively. 1) Is this allowed? The original F9, #3, is still batting and gets a base hit. 2) The manager wants to bring in the FLEX to run for #3 since she is now acting as the DP. Is this allowed?

**Ruling:** 1) The DP and the FLEX may be on the field together at the same time while on defense. 2) This is not allowed. Even though #3 is not playing defense they are not the DP. For this game the DP will be #11 or their substitute. The FLEX may only enter the game offensively for the DP who is currently #11 in this game.
Rule 4, Section 3E and Rule 4, Section 3C & 3D

**Play:** Bases loaded, no outs. Fly ball to F9 is caught. All the runners tag and advance. R1 and R2 score. A throw to the plate for a play on R2 gets away. F3 retrieves the ball and throws to F2 who tags R3 out at the plate for out number two. Defensive team coach appeals that R1 left early. Appeal is granted for out number three. How many runs score?

This is a 9-5-2-3-2-3-5 triple play by the way.

**Ruling:** No run shall be scored if the third out of the inning is the result of a preceding runner being declared out on an appeal play. In this play, out #1 is the result of the caught fly ball, out #2 is the result of R3 being tagged out at the plate, and out #3 is the result of the appeal on R1 leaving 3B early. Since the third out is the result of the appeal, no trailing runners are scored. Rule 5, Section 5B [3] and Rule 8, Section 3F

**Play:** With R1 at 3B and R2 at 2B, B3 hits a ground ball to the infield but is safe at 1B as R1 and R2 return to 3B and 2B, respectively. The plate umpire has ruled there was catcher’s obstruction on the play and at the conclusion of the play, gives the manager of the offensive team the option of taking the result of the play or taking the award. 1) Is this a correct implementation of the rule? 2) Where are the runners placed after the offensive team manager chooses to take the award? 3) Where would the runners be placed if the base runners started at 1B and 2B and the award was chosen?

**Ruling:** 1) This is correct. If all runners, including the batter-runner, do not advance at least one base, the offensive manager has the option of taking the result of the play or enforcing catcher’s obstruction. 2) R1 at 3B, R2 at 2B, and batter at 1B. 3) R1 at 3B, R2 at 2B, and batter at 1B.
If the award for catcher’s obstruction is chosen, the batter is awarded 1B and runners are advanced one base if forced.
Rule 8, Section 1D [2]

**Play:** In a Fast Pitch game, Team A starts the game with 10 players in the lineup including a DP and FLEX. The FLEX, #9, is listed as the pitcher. In the 3rd inning, the coach of Team A notifies the plate umpire they want to substitute the FLEX with #15 to enter the game to pitch. In the 4th inning, the coach of Team A substitutes the FLEX again, this time with #6. In the 7th inning, with Team A on defense and two outs, the coach of Team A notifies the plate umpire they want to substitute #9 back into the FLEX position to pitch. The plate umpire allows this substitution. After the batter hits a fly ball to right field that is caught for the 3rd out, the coach of Team B appeals that #9 is an illegal player. Will this appeal be upheld?

**Ruling:** No, these were all legal substitutions for the FLEX. The original FLEX, #9, may re-enter the game one time in the 10th position. The substitute becomes the FLEX and has all the options of the FLEX position.
Rule 4, Section 3F and Rules Supplement 15E & 15I [1]