

Plays and Clarifications

May 2025

As the 2025 USA Softball Championship season gets underway, this is a good time to continue your review of USA Softball rules and mechanics, including any 2025 rule changes that may affect you. It's also a good time to take a close look at your uniform and equipment and make sure everything is clean and ready for Championship play. Remember, if you have the opportunity to work in a National Championship, you are not only representing yourself, but you are representing your local association, the USA Softball Umpire program and all of USA Softball.

Umpires selected for a National Championship should be prepared for umpiring in the heat of summer. Temperatures can be very extreme. Now is the time to get in shape to be ready to handle whatever weather you may experience. Start hydrating now and prepare yourselves to stay healthy and focused in order to give your best to each game. Take care of yourselves starting now. It's never too soon to begin.

As a reminder, in 2024 USA Softball adopted the recommendation to make charcoal grey pants part of the official umpire uniform. Since this change is being phased in over a three-year period beginning with the 2025 season, this year's National Championship umpires may wear either heather grey or charcoal grey pants. All umpires on the field together must wear the same shade of grey. It is your responsibility to follow the instructions of your National Championship UIC as well as USA Softball regarding uniform requirements.

UIC Clinic

The 2025 UIC Clinic will be held this year October 23-25 in Oklahoma City at the Oklahoma City Convention Center with instruction starting on October 24. Just a friendly reminder, if you haven't already registered for this event, information is available at the following link:

www.usasoftball.com/umpires/uic-clinic

Plays

Play: With a single runner at 1B, B2 hits a hard ground ball between F3 and F4. As F3 makes an attempt to field the ball, the ball glances off F3's glove and hits the runner who is a couple steps off of 1B. F4 is in position behind R1, ready to field the ball. (a) Should the umpire call dead ball and declare the runner out since the ball hit the runner after passing a fielder and another fielder had the opportunity to make an out? (b) What would the correct ruling be if F3 did not touch the hit ball?

Ruling: (a) No. Since the ball was touched by F3, the ball remains live. The runner is not declared out by rule. *Rule 8-1E {1}*

(b) In this case, after the ball passes the fielder and contacts the runner and another fielder has the opportunity to make an out, the ball is dead, the runner is out, the batter-runner is awarded first base, and runners are advanced one base if forced. *Rule 8-1E {5}*

Play: No Runners on and no outs. There is a dropped third strike. The ball rolls into foul territory toward the first base dugout. The batter-runner runs toward 1B completely in fair territory. The throw from F2 to F3 strikes the batter-runner two steps from 1B. Should the batter-runner be called out for interference?

Ruling: No, this is not interference. The batter-runner may run outside the three-foot running lane if the defensive player uses the foul portion of the double base and the throw is coming from foul side of first base. *Rule 8-2E, 8-2N {4}*

Play: In a fast pitch game with bases loaded and two outs, B6 hits a high fly ball near the right field fence that eventually goes over the fence for a home run. On the hit, both R1 and R2 immediately start running the bases. R1 scores easily from 3B and R2 is more than halfway to the plate. However, R3 is watching the hit ball and is about 20 feet off 1B when the batter-runner, who is also watching the ball, passes them. What is the correct ruling? Do any runs count?

Ruling: When a runner physically passes a preceding runner, the ball remains live and the runner who passes the preceding runner is out. If this is the 3rd out, any runs scored prior to the passing would count. In this case, the batter-runner is called out for the 3rd out. And because R1 scored prior to the batter-runner passing R3, one run would count. *Rule 8-7D*