

The Indicator

Association Newsletter

Serving Hunterdon, Morris, Sussex, Warren, Essex, Union, Middlesex, Somerset Counties

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2



MARCH
2025

Message From The President

Hello RVUA members,

Our meeting schedule this year is robust and it is my hope that you all see the amount of effort that is being put forth to make sure you can attend meetings in person and/or on a virtual platform.

My goal is that every umpire registered with RVUA is eligible to participate in officiating High School Baseball and Softball for the State of New Jersey. But this cannot be accomplished without everyone's participation and getting yourselves ready to umpire.

It is not simply showing up to a meeting or a game or just passing the certification test. We need your attention and willingness to do the work required to meet the NJSIAA and the RVUA standards.

With my best wishes.

Gary Peckman
RVUA President



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Membership Information Up-date

Has any of your personal information changed in the last 6 to 8 months?

Did you get a new phone number, email address, or move to a new mailing address?

If so the RVUA would like to know about it.

The RVUA roster is being finalized for the 2025 season and is given to Members, Assigners and Athletic Directors. Make sure to send any roster changes to Keith Hoffman.

His email address is KHOFFCRAN@aol.com

The roster is being updated on the RVUA website.

RVUA 2025 Meeting Info & Dates

Remaining meeting dates

- Wednesday 3/12 (Flemington)
- Wednesday 3/19 (Mount Olive)
- Wednesday 3/26 (Flemington)
- Wednesday 4/2 (Cranford)
- Wednesday 4/9 (Flemington)



Flemington Meetings will be at **JP Case Middle School** in the cafeteria.

- 301 Case Blvd. Flemington NJ

Cranford Meetings at **Cranford Community Center** room to be determined.

- 220 Walnut Avenue, Cranford NJ

Mt Olive Meetings at **Mt Olive Middle School** in the cafeteria.

- 160 Wolfe Rd, Budd Lake

Assigners Corner

For the cadets from our Flemington, Mt. Olive and Cranford classes, we will be using the March pre-season for mentoring, where more seasoned umpires will be paired with cadets, so we can reinforce during real game situations that which you learned in class, and what you are learning during our on-field instruction.

We will also be announcing certain games as "group instruction games," during which multiple cadets will get on the field, with instruction from seasoned umpires. We will be tracking participation in these events, and all cadets will need to take part in some, so they will be ready to take the field with confidence in April.

Keith Hoffman

NFHS Pace of Game Play

The NFHS has identified 4 areas that are in need of improvement that detract from what otherwise is an exciting and enjoyable game. If the Umpires follow these simple guidelines the Pace of the game will speed up.

1. *Enforce the batter's box rule when ever possible (the batter must generally keep one foot in the box during an at-bat).*
2. *Handling offensive and defensive charged conferences in a timely manner.*
3. *Speeding up the time between innings and during pitching changes.*
4. *Umpires diligently counting the number of warm-up pitches between innings.*

NFHS DP/FLEX

The DP/FLEX rule in NFHS softball is a lineup management tool that enables strategic substitutions and increases player participation.

The rule provides strategic flexibility by allowing coaches to utilize players with specialized offensive or defensive skills effectively. It enables them to optimize the lineup for both offense and defense without unnecessary substitutions. Additionally, the DP/FLEX rule increases participation by creating opportunities for more players to actively contribute to the game, promoting player development and inclusion.

Here are some helpful hints to understand the DP/ FLEX:

1. The use of the DP/FLEX is optional.
2. There are still only NINE hitters.
3. FLEX is listed in the tenth (10) position in the batting order and does NOT bat.
4. DP Must always bat in the same position in the batting order.
5. A starter and a sub may NOT be in the game at the same time.
6. DP may be substituted for by:
 - a) FLEX
 - b) Legal sub *In either case the DP has left the game;*
 - c) If DP is replaced by a legal sub, the DP position remains in the game
7. Any player may reenter once. (Starting player or substitute)
8. If the DP is replaced by the FLEX, there are now nine players in the game. The game may end with 9 players. (*GAME MAY STILL END WITH EIGHT*)
9. If DP re-enters or a substitute as DP, if FLEX was batting, FLEX may:
 - a) Return to tenth (10) position and play defense.
 - b) Leave the game if the DP plays defense for the FLEX.
10. DP may play defense, if the DP plays defense for a player OTHER than the FLEX, this player may bat but NOT play on defense. She has NOT left the game.
11. If the DP plays defense for the FLEX or the FLEX bats for the DP she must report to the umpire.

REMINDERS

- A. DP can never be on defense only
- B. FLEX can never be on offense only
- C. DP and FLEX can never be on offense at the same time.
- D. DP and FLEX can play defense at the same time



Softball Case Plays (2024 Case Book)



Question 1: 8.3.3 SITUATION A:

With F6 trying to tag out R1 between second and third, R2 advances to second. R1 escapes to second. If one or both are on the base when tagged, which one can be put out?

Question 2: 8.3.3 SITUATION B:

With R1 on third, R2 on second and R3 on first, R3 legally steals second but R2 does not advance. The pitcher receives the ball in the circle from the catcher and makes no play on any runner. May both runners remain at second?

Question 3: 8.3.3 SITUATION C:

With R1 on first, B2 hits a ground ball to F3 who (a) steps on first and then tags R1 who has remained on first, or (b) tags R1 while R1 is on first and then steps on first.

Question 4: 8.3.3 SITUATION D:

With R1 on second base and R2 on first, B3 hits a deep fly ball over F8's head. R2 advances to third as R1 gets in a rundown between home and third. R1 gets back to third base safely but is obstructed on her way to the bag. With both runners standing on third base, the defense then tags R2.

Question 5: 8.4.1 SITUATION A:

R1 is on first when B2 hits a line drive that bounds off F4's glove to F8 who catches it. R1 leaves first after F4 touched the ball but before the catch.

Answer 1: *If both are on the base, only R2, when tagged, is out. If only one is on the base when tagged, neither is out.*

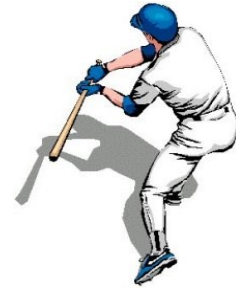
Answer 2: *No. The umpire, after permitting a reasonable amount of time for a play to be made, shall declare the ball dead and call R3 out.*

Answer 3: *In (a), R1 is not out since the force was removed when B2 was put out. In (b), both R1 and B2 are out. (Rule 2, Section 24)*

Answer 4: *When obstruction occurred, the umpire should verbally call out "obstruction" and signal a delayed dead ball. The obstructed runner would be protected. When R1 returned back to the bag safely, obstruction was ignored since this was the base she would have reached had there been no obstruction. Since R1 is the runner entitled to the base, R2 would be ruled out on the tag. (2-36; 8-3-7)*

Answer 5: *This is a legal advance by R1. B2 is out. (8-4-1e; 8-8-12)*

Baseball Case Plays (2025 Case Book)



Question 1: 1.6.1 SITUATION A:

The pitcher comes to the mound wearing a wristband containing defensive plays and pitch selections. The wristband is on the non-throwing arm. The opposing coach protests saying the pitcher cannot wear an item while pitching.

Question 2: 1.6.1 SITUATION C:

The pitcher's wristband containing defensive plays and instructions is of a single, solid color but does not match the color of the jersey or undersleeves.

Question 3: 1.6.1 SITUATION C:

The pitcher is wearing a communication wristband on the belt. The coach tells the umpire that in the last game the team was told the pitcher could only wear it on the belt as it was distracting if worn on the forearm.

Question 4: 1.6.2 SITUATION B:

The catcher is wearing an electronic device that has the capability of being a two-way communication instrument. The coach tells the umpire that the device is muted so that the catcher cannot talk to the coach.

Question 5: 1.6.2 SITUATION C:

The catcher is wearing an earpiece from a one-way communication device along with an electronic bracelet that displays codes to the catcher only. The opposing coach wants a team warning to be given claiming the catcher cannot be wearing both.

Answer 1: It is legal for the pitcher to wear the wristband on the non-throwing arm provided it is a solid color, not white or gray, and is non-distracting.

Answer 2: The wristband is not required to match the color of the uniform or the sleeves worn underneath the uniform jersey.

Answer 3: Illegal. The wristband can only be worn on a player's wrist or forearm and only on the non-throwing arm of the pitcher. This being the first offense, the coach is issued a warning.

Answer 4: This is an illegal electronic device and must be removed. The coach of the team involved will be issued a team warning.

Answer 5: Both electronic communication devices are one-way only to the catcher; it is legal for both devices to be worn.

A standard NFHS softball has 88 stitches

NFHS Batting Out Of Order—Who What Where

The current batting order is Abel, Baker, Charles, Daniel, Edward. Charles, who had batted leadoff the entire season, is put in the third position for this game. Charles strikes out. Baker comes to bat next and doubles. The home team head coach appeals that Baker batted out of order.

- Rule Baker out and bring Charles up to bat again.
- Do nothing as this is legal. Baker is the second batter on the lineup card and the second batter up in the game.
- Rule Baker out and bring Daniel up to bat.
- Rule Daniel out, remove Baker from second and bring Edward up to bat.

The Answer is D

Here is how handle batting out of order.

1 - Go back 2 batters. We know the person two batters ago was legal because the batter one batter ago legalized him. - Charles, who batted in the wrong position was legalized by Baker's at bat.

2 - Who should have hit after Charles? Daniels name follows Charles' on the lineup card so Daniels should have hit. He didn't. OOPS.

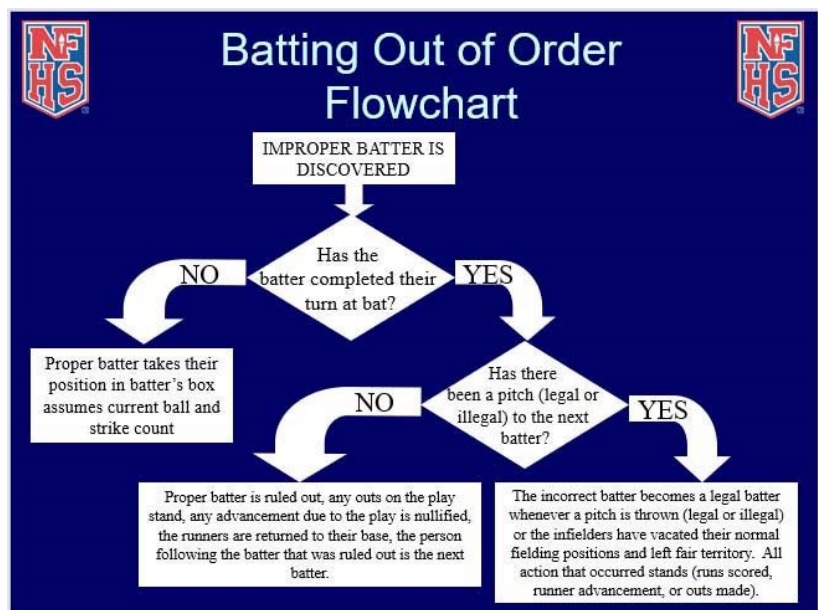
3 - Call out the guy who should have hit but didn't. "Daniels, y'er out."

4 - Undo anything done by the guy who hit illegally. That's Baker. "Baker, go sit on the bench and try to pay attention in the future."

5 - Bring up the guy whose name follows Daniels on the lineup card "Edward, grab a bat. Y'er up."

There are now two outs

Charles, who K'd and Daniels and no one on base.



Keeping and Signaling the Count

The plate umpire is responsible for keeping and signaling the count during a batter's plate appearance. To keep the count, use an indicator. This plastic or metal device is designed to be used in your left hand only. **Use it.** Even with the best of memories, it's possible to lose the count. That is especially true after a conference that occurs during the middle of a batter's plate appearance or a pickoff play at a base.

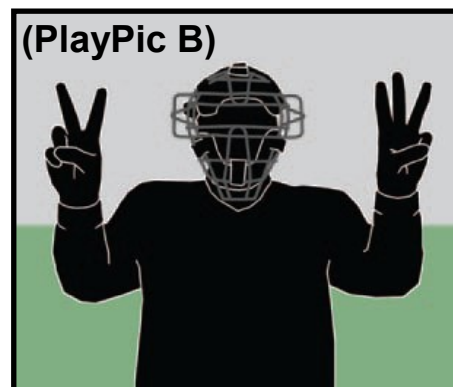
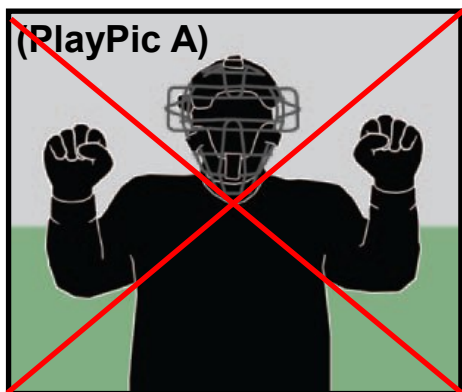
While scoreboards are great for fans, they do not display the official count. A plate umpire should be diligent in displaying the count and trying to ensure that what is displayed on the scoreboard is correct. But the only count that is official is that of the plate umpire.

The plate umpire should never bring the indicator up to eye-level as if it is the only place he/she is focusing attention. The umpire should keep the indicator below chest or belt level and glance at it while keeping the playing action as his main focus.

One way to avoid losing the count is to say it frequently during every plate appearance. It is recommended that you say the count on the third pitch and then on decision pitches. Showing and saying the count frequently will avoid the problems of the base umpire and players not knowing the count or the count being lost.

Another reason that the indicator should be held in the left hand is that one-handed calls (putting the ball in play and signaling strikes and outs) are made with the right hand.

As more umpires go to a hands-on knees stance behind the plate, it is more comfortable to not have anything in the hands. In those cases, umpires will keep the indicator in their pocket or ball bag. That is OK, as long as umpires are maintaining the count and outs actively. Relying on the scoreboard is a bad idea because the people in the press box will get distracted or will inadvertently reset the count after a pickoff.



A full count should **NEVER** be indicated with two fists (PlayPic A), but just as any other count, by extending three fingers on the left hand and two on the right (PlayPic B).

Keeping White On Shoes Clean

Have you ever asked yourself how do I keep the white stripes on my umpire shoes white?

Use Toothpaste! Yep, the abrasiveness in toothpaste helps remove the stains on umpire shoes. Simply apply the toothpaste directly onto the white area of the shoes, additives such as toothpaste with sodium tripolyphosphate will help break down or dissolve stains. Use your finger or a small stiff brush to work the toothpaste into the white area.

Rinse with water and towel dry. The area will be whiter.

For stubborn stained shoes use a bleaching gel toothpaste.



Your Mask Is Not A Purse

A good mark of an Umpire is to not hold his/her mask by the strap. Holding the mask by the strap weakens the elastic in the straps. **ALWAYS** remove it with your left hand.

Walking around while your mask swings from the straps is a bad and silly-looking habit that some umpires have. Hold your mask tucked under you left arm tightly up against your body.

By holding your mask in this position shows players and coaches that you are a Professional Umpire. As an umpire you should perfect the mechanic of taking off your mask without pulling your cap off with it. Make certain that your cap is not too loose or your mask is not too tight.



Baseball Balk Mechanic (*The Dreaded Balk Mechanic*)

NFHS Rule 2-3-1 states that “a balk is an illegal act committed by the pitcher with a runner(s) on base which entitles each runner to advance one base”.

When a **BALK** occurs by a defensive player, the ball is

DEAD IMMEDIATELY at the time of the balk.

Whenever a BALK occurs, the umpire will point and announce

“**THAT’s A BALK**” **FIRST** followed by the **Dead-Ball Signal**.



2025 NFHS Mandatory Concussion Training.

Concussion in Sports - What You Need To Know.

Reminder to all RVUA members that each you are required to complete the Concussion is Sports training EACH YEAR.

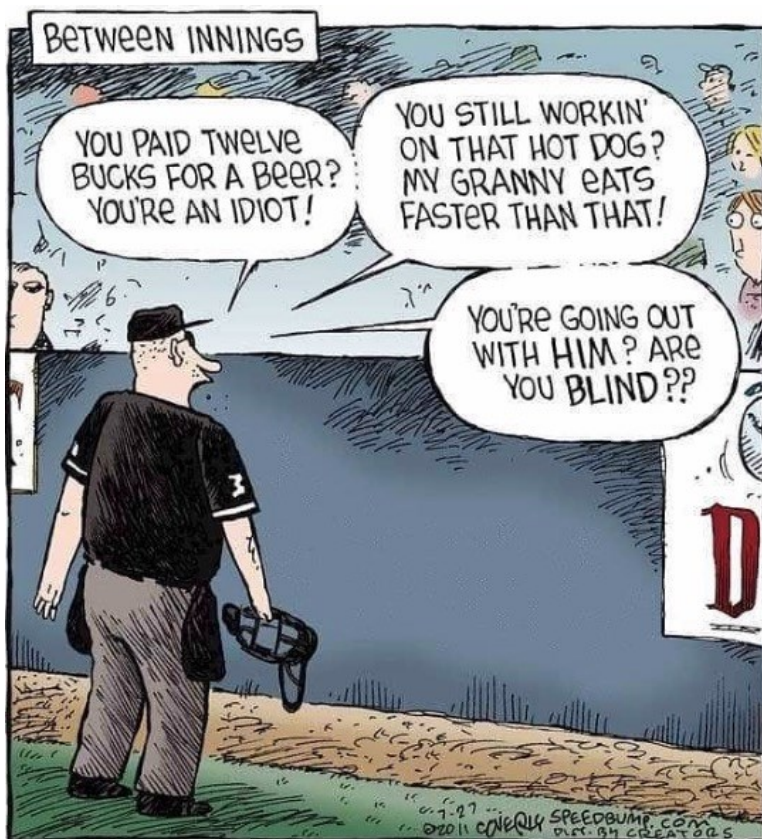
www.nfhslearn.org

The NFHS has teamed up with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to educate officials on the importance of proper concussion recognition and management in high school sports. This course highlights the impact of sports-related concussion on athletes, teaches how to recognize a suspected concussion, and provides protocols to manage a suspected concussion with steps to help players return to play safely after a concussion.



If you took the course by yourself online and completed the training, please forward a copy of your completion certification to Keith Hoffman at KHOFFCRAN@aol.com.

**We are accepting the certificates NOW,
so don't delay.**



RVUA

Setting The Standard In Officiating

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Vice President
TBD

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Softball Interpreter
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Liaison to NJUCA
Gary Peckman

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Reminder

Getting the call right

No one will dispute the ultimate goal of each umpire is to get every call correct.

And while umpires would like to do that, it is well known that it is not going to happen. Umpires will make mistakes.

The goal of the getting the call right philosophy is to correct the mistake that can be reasonably addressed.

www.RVUA.INFO