



March 11, 2026

NFHS Softball Weekly Rule Interpretations

It should be noted that due to some restructuring of the rule book performed between the 2025 and 2026 NFHS Softball Rules Book that some of the rule references have been updated. Please note the rule references will utilize the 2026 Rules Book.

SITUATION ONE: Team A is taking the field and the umpire notices that a player is wearing sunglasses that have the capability to record or transmit audio and video. The umpire rules these glasses illegal and forces the player to remove them prior to taking the field. **RULING:** Incorrect ruling by the umpire. It is correct that a player cannot transmit or record audio or video from the playing surface. However, to parallel with the previous interpretation in regard to smartwatches, a device is not limited due to its capabilities it is limited in the way a player can use the device. A player other than the catcher can wear a smartwatch provided they do not utilize the communication features of the device. Similarly in this case a player is allowed to wear sunglasses that have the ability to record or transmit, provided they do not utilize those features. If an umpire were to become aware that a player is utilizing features that are prohibited then the appropriate penalty for the violation shall be enforced. In this case the penalty for this is ejection unless the offense is judged to be minor in nature. (1-9-6)

SITUATION TWO: Team A has #1 listed as their pitcher, in the second inning the coach reports #10 batting for #1. #10 bats and reaches first base safely and the coach reenters #1 then requests that #8, an eligible substitute, be allowed to courtesy run for #1 since they are the last player who physically occupied the pitching position. The umpire does not allow #8 to courtesy run for the pitcher as they did not bat and legally reach base. **RULING:** Correct ruling by the umpire. Although #1 is the last player who physically occupied the pitching position, they must bat and reach base legally (or earn the base) in order to be eligible for a courtesy runner. (8-10-2)

SITUATION THREE: Team A, the visiting team, has #1 listed as their pitcher and in the top of the first inning: In a) Team A's coach requests to enter #3 for #1 prior to #1 coming to bat. In b) #1 bats and reaches base safely and utilizes a courtesy runner. In c) #1 does not utilize a courtesy runner in the top of the first inning. In b) and c) the coach request to enter #3 as their pitcher prior to a pitch being thrown in the bottom of the first inning. In all cases the umpire does not allow the substitution since, except for injury, #1 must throw at least one pitch to a batter prior to being replaced at the pitching position. **RULING:** Correct ruling in b) incorrect ruling in a) and c). The only time that a pitcher or catcher is required to face the first batter (one pitch), with an exception for injury, is in the bottom of the first inning when they have utilized a courtesy runner in the top of the first inning. (8-9-2)