



## RULE CLARIFICATION – Rule 1-8-6 ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

After a rule change this year, Rule 1-8-6 now reads: (new wording is underlined)

“During the game, the use of electronic devices by team personnel to transmit or record information pertaining to their players or team’s performance shall be permitted for coaching purposes within the team’s dugout/bench area only, provided the point of origin of the electronic communications is outside of the field of play.”

This new rule change has generated several questions from both umpires and coaches. We have been asked if coaches can now transmit signals from the dugout to their catcher and/or pitcher. Can they use a one-way device to relay signals, such as a radio or a watch? I believe some of these questions have emerged both because of the rule change and the fact that baseball, this year, is now allowing this communication.

We have inquired with representatives of the UIL and NFHS. The short answer to these questions is that this type of communication is **NOT CURRENTLY ALLOWED**. It is my understanding that the NFHS Rules Committee has discussed this issue and is aware that baseball has started using it this year. I believe the committee is waiting to see what issues, if any, arise with baseball and may consider this issue again next year.

Rule 1-8-1 states that non-traditional game equipment must be reviewed by the NFHS Softball Rules Committee before it is permitted. So, what action should you take if you discover that this type of communication/equipment is being utilized? My recommendation is that if the discovery is “minor in nature” ... i.e. the subject has not been previously come up, discussed, or mentioned during the game or your pre-game meeting with the coaches... you have the equipment removed and warn the coach. If you have previously discussed or addressed the issue and a player is discovered utilizing electronic communication equipment, have the equipment removed and that player will be ejected from the game. See the NFHS Softball Case Book 2024 Rule 1.8.6 SITUATION B

Hopefully, this addresses your questions and concern about electronic devices. Please contact me if you have questions.

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