



April 21, 2025

NFHS Softball Weekly Rule Interpretations

Situation 1: Team A is batting with no outs and B1, a right-handed batter, hits a ball that rolls in front of home plate up the first base line. As B1 is running to first base and is just past the left-handed batter's box F2 is coming from behind the plate to field the batted ball that is in fair territory, F2 and B1 make contact with each other. The umpire rules that F2 was making the initial play on the batted ball and B1 is guilty of interference. They rule a dead ball and B1 is out. Team B's coach argues that their runner has the right to their basepath to run to first base and should not be guilty of interference. **RULING:** Correct ruling by the umpire. Only one fielder is ruled to be making the initial play on the batted ball. In this case the umpire judged F2 was the fielder that was making the initial play so they are the fielder that can be interfered with. Since B1 hindered or impeded F2 while making the initial play on a batted ball in fair territory they are guilty of interference. (2-31-1, 8-2-7a)

Situation 2: At the plate meeting Team A is using the DP/FLEX option and presents the lineup in Figure 1. The umpire rules that this is not a legal lineup as the FLEX must have a starting defensive position. Team A's coach disagrees saying it is legal for the DP to play defense for the FLEX. **RULING:** Correct ruling by the umpire. For a team to start with the DP/FLEX option, the DP must be placed in one of the nine batting positions in the lineup and the FLEX must be in the tenth position in the lineup with a defensive position listed. The FLEX is a defensive player and leaves the game if they are not playing defense. In order to start the game with the DP/FLEX option the FLEX is required to start the game on defense or have a defensive position listed in the starting lineup. If they do not have a defensive position listed, they are not in the game on the starting lineup and the DP/FLEX is not actually being used at the start of the game. For the starting lineup to be legal it should be filled out as shown in Figure 2. Once the umpire makes the lineups official, they should let the coaches know that both lineups are official and changes are now allowed to the lineup. Typically the umpire will state "Both lineups are official would either of you like to make any changes?" At this time the substitution rules apply and changes to the lineup are allowed. After the starting lineup is official and while still at the plate conference Team A's coach can tell the umpire "My DP is going to pitch and my FLEX is not going to play defense". This is considered a substitution as the FLEX is leaving the game and the umpire should note this on the lineup card as shown in Figure 3. They should also inform the coach "Ok coach the DP is pitching, and the FLEX has left the game, they still have their one reentry." (3-1-1, 3-1-3, 3-3-2d, 3-2-5, 3-3-6 a, b, e)

NO.	PLAYER		RE	POS.
19	1	A. Able		8
	SUB.			
17	2	B. Baker		DP/1
	SUB.			
20	3	C. Chang		3
	SUB.			
24	4	D. Dart		4
	SUB.			
15	5	E. Edil		7
	SUB.			
22	6	F. Fall		9
	SUB.			
25	7	G. Gold		2
	SUB.			
7	8	H. Happ		5
	SUB.			
3	9	J. Jax		6
	SUB.			
18	10	K. Karp		FLEX
	SUB.			
NO.	SUBSTITUTES			POS.
10	S. Jones			
4	J. Doe			
6	J. Johnson			

Figure 1

NO.	PLAYER		RE	POS.
19	1	A. Able		8
	SUB.			
17	2	B. Baker		DP
	SUB.			
20	3	C. Chang		3
	SUB.			
24	4	D. Dart		4
	SUB.			
15	5	E. Edil		7
	SUB.			
22	6	F. Fall		9
	SUB.			
25	7	G. Gold		2
	SUB.			
7	8	H. Happ		5
	SUB.			
3	9	J. Jax		6
	SUB.			
18	10	K. Karp		FLEX/1
	SUB.			
NO.	SUBSTITUTES			POS.
10	S. Jones			
4	J. Doe			
6	J. Johnson			

Figure 2

NO.	PLAYER		RE	POS.
19	1	A. Able		8
	SUB.			
17	2	B. Baker		DP
	SUB.			1
20	3	C. Chang		3
	SUB.			
24	4	D. Dart		4
	SUB.			
15	5	E. Edil		7
	SUB.			
22	6	F. Fall		9
	SUB.			
25	7	G. Gold		2
	SUB.			
7	8	H. Happ		5
	SUB.			
3	9	J. Jax		6
	SUB.			
18	10	K. Karp		FLEX
	SUB.			
NO.	SUBSTITUTES			POS.
10	S. Jones			
4	J. Doe			
6	J. Johnson			

Figure 3

Situation 3: At the plate meeting Team A is using the DP/FLEX option and presents the lineup in Figure 1 below. The umpire rules that this is not a legal lineup as B7 does not have a starting position. Team A's coach disagrees saying it is legal for the DP to play defense for B7 and B7 will play offense only.

RULING: Correct ruling by the umpire. Although the coach is correct that during the game the DP can play defense for a player other than the FLEX and that player continues to play offense and has not left the game, on the starting lineup all players are required to have a starting position. For the starting lineup to be legal it should be filled out as shown in Figure 2 below. As mentioned in Situation 2, once the umpire makes the lineups official, they should let the coaches know that both lineups are official and changes are now allowed to the lineup. Typically the umpire will state "Both lineups are official would either of you like to make any changes?" At this time the substitution rules apply and changes to the lineup are allowed. After the starting lineup is official and while still at the plate conference Team A's coach can tell the umpire "My DP is going to pitch and #25 Gold will play offense only". The umpire would notate this as shown in Figure 3 below. Although this is not a substitution, as Gold will continue to play offense and has not left the game, it should be noted as the DP is now the pitcher and would be eligible for a courtesy runner if they earn their way on base. (3-1-1, 3-1-3, 3-3-2d, 3-2-5, 3-3-6 a, b, e, 8-9-2)

NO.		PLAYER	RE	POS.
19	1	A. Able		8
	SUB.			
17	2	B. Baker		DP/1
	SUB.			
20	3	C. Chang		3
	SUB.			
24	4	D. Dart		4
	SUB.			
15	5	E. Edil		7
	SUB.			
22	6	F. Fall		9
	SUB.			
25	7	G. Gold		
	SUB.			
7	8	H. Happ		5
	SUB.			
3	9	J. Jax		6
	SUB.			
18	10	K. Karp		FLEX/2
	SUB.			
NO.		SUBSTITUTES		POS.
10		S. Jones		
4		J. Doe		
6		J. Johnson		

Figure 1

NO.		PLAYER	RE	POS.
19	1	A. Able		8
	SUB.			
17	2	B. Baker		DP
	SUB.			
20	3	C. Chang		3
	SUB.			
24	4	D. Dart		4
	SUB.			
15	5	E. Edil		7
	SUB.			
22	6	F. Fall		9
	SUB.			
25	7	G. Gold		1
	SUB.			
7	8	H. Happ		5
	SUB.			
3	9	J. Jax		6
	SUB.			
18	10	K. Karp		FLEX/2
	SUB.			
NO.		SUBSTITUTES		POS.
10		S. Jones		
4		J. Doe		
6		J. Johnson		

Figure 2

NO.		PLAYER	RE	POS.
19	1	A. Able		8
	SUB.			
17	2	B. Baker		DP
	SUB.			1
20	3	C. Chang		3
	SUB.			
24	4	D. Dart		4
	SUB.			
15	5	E. Edil		7
	SUB.			
22	6	F. Fall		9
	SUB.			
25	7	G. Gold		1
	SUB.			
7	8	H. Happ		5
	SUB.			
3	9	J. Jax		6
	SUB.			
18	10	K. Karp		FLEX/2
	SUB.			
NO.		SUBSTITUTES		POS.
10		S. Jones		
4		J. Doe		
6		J. Johnson		

Figure 3