

Softball Umpires of Maryland

Points of Emphasis 2018

Rules Interpretations

Pitching Rule (Rule 6, Section 1, A to E; pgs. 32-33).

A pitcher can dominate the game of fast pitch. To reduce the potential for a “quick” pitch & give the batter a fair chance to know the pitcher is ready, a pitching sequence is required.

- A) Both feet must be on the pitcher’s plate & **hands apart**.
 - B) The **ball can be in either the glove or the pitching hand**.
 - C) In this position, the **pitcher takes or simulates taking a signal**. There is an acknowledgement of a signal by a nod/shake of the head or **at least a pause**, stare or look towards the catcher (armbands & calls from the dugout, although permissible, are some of the reasons the signal is not being taken on the pitching plate).
 - D) With the three (3) previous steps done, the hands come together for no more than 10 seconds.
 - E) The pitch begins when the hands are then separated & cannot be discontinued.
- Up to the hands coming together, the pitcher could call time or step back to negate a violation. Once the hands separate, the pitcher has begun an **illegal pitch**.

Between Inning Procedures (Rule 6, Sec.1, L; pg. 34); the Warm-up time.

Fairness of the game can be impacted by time between innings. A regulation game is 7 innings (Rule 4, Section 3; pg.25). The umpire’s job is to provide a “level playing field” for the game. Time is only important or unimportant when it benefits the team. ****In a 90-minute game, each inning takes about 13 minutes.**** If we allow only 1 extra minute per each half-inning, a 7 inning game is reduced by 1 inning. Teams want to play a full game.

- A) At the beginning of each half-inning, the **pitcher is allowed one minute to deliver not more than 5 pitches** to the catcher, coach or a properly equipped teammate.
 - B) The rule **applies to a relief pitcher** coming in during an inning or at the start of the inning.
 - C) A player may return in the same inning, but is not allowed additional pitches.
 - D) The number of pitches could be reduced; depending on the length of time the pitcher & catcher get into position. “Huddle” time or conference time is included in the time frame.
 - E) We are not “clock watchers”, but we need to be aware of the time.
- For excessive warm-ups or time, awarding a ball to the batter penalizes the team.

Lineup Card (Rule 5, Section 1, A&B; pg.28)

All players, in the game or substitutes, must be listed on the lineup card. The plate umpire needs to have the card to know who is pitching & catching, if additional players are used, if there is a designated player (hitter) & flex player (fielder) being used & if there are substitutes that could enter the game. Teams require lineups to keep scorebooks. Overall, we must keep good records to promote fairness of the game in the event of a possible ineligible player.

- A) The **lineup card includes first name, last name, jersey # & fielding position**. A lineup card with only first names, only last names or first initial and last name is incorrect & should not be allowed. Request the coach to either correct it or write up another.
- B) Starting players are listed in **proper batting order**. Must have 9 players batting (unless playing 1 player short), but could have a 10th or 11th, if the AP is used. May have up to 12 starters (1 non-batting), if the DP/Flex option is utilized.
- C) Substitutions should be listed on the bottom of the card.
- D) Additional players (AP), Designated player (DP) & Flex player (fielder) must be submitted prior to the game when the lineup is given to the plate umpire (Rule 5, Sec.3&4; pg.29).
- E) Beginning this year, a team has the option to bat the entire roster/lineup. The card will have 9 fielding positions listed, with all others listed as AP’s.

Protests, if made, would go through the plate umpire or tournament director & a possible penalty of disqualification (Rule 13, Sec.5; pg. 58).