

Softball Umpires of Maryland (SUM)

2018 Points of Emphasis

Coaches,

As you may be aware, the Softball Umpires of Maryland provides umpiring services for USSSA fast pitch softball for tournaments in the Maryland region. Each year, we make efforts to improve by focusing on a few points of emphasis to better the game. Our goal is to have consistent interpretations of the rules by our officials, so as to provide professional services to each team. Below are this year's focuses ...

Illegal pitches: As a pitcher steps onto the pitching plate with hands together or is in process of putting them together, prior to taking a signal, this is an illegal pitch. The rule is stated to prevent the potential for "quick" pitches and give the batter a fair opportunity to know the pitcher is ready to throw. To comply with the rule, the pitcher needs to step onto the pitching plate with the hands separated and then, take or simulate taking a signal from the catcher. This means a pause (signal) is needed with both feet on the rubber and hands not together. When completed, the hands come together and their separation begins the pitch. We are asking all of our umpires to be more aware of this and call the illegal pitch when it occurs. Strict enforcement will be done at the 14, 16 & 18 year old levels. At the 10 & 12 year divisions, which are more instructional, illegal pitches will be liberally called. Should a coach have concern, as to the calling or not of illegal pitches, he or she may speak with the umpire.

Time between innings: The rules book states that the next inning begins at the completion of the last out of the previous half inning. The oncoming pitcher has 5 warmup pitches or 1 minute, whichever comes first, to loosen up. Much time can be lost, impacting the number of innings actually played. Coaches should be aware that huddles outside the dugout areas, a slow pace of players coming onto the field, etc. may leave a pitcher with less warmup pitches than she is accustomed to throw. Bench players with a proper catcher's mask or coaches, may help out to loosen up the pitcher.

Lineup cards: This year at the pregame conference, USSSA has initiated an option to bat the entire roster, should they wish. If chosen, the lineup card will need to have 9 fielding positions listed amongst the total lineup with the other players as AP's (additional players). A late arriving player would be placed at the end of the lineup. There will be no DP/Flex, should the team "bat the roster." The coach will still have options to bat a "straight 9", add 1 AP or a 2nd AP. A DP/Flex can be added in those instances. In all cases the lineup card needs to include the player's full first and last name, along with their number & position.

The Softball Umpires of Maryland work very hard and enjoy officiating your games. We want coaches and players to feel they are receiving the best and most consistent umpiring possible. Feel free to ask an umpire for clarifications.

Thank you.