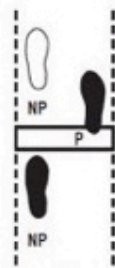




FASTPITCH RULES REVIEW AND INTERPRETATIONS

PITCHER'S FEET POSITIONING UNDER THE UNIFIED PITCHING RULE

Courtesy of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)



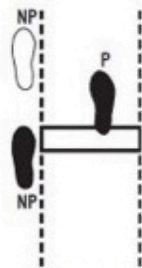
No. 1 LEGAL
 P = In Contact (Legal)
 NP = Behind/Within (Legal)



No. 2 LEGAL
 P = In Contact (Legal)
 NP = Contact/Within (Legal)



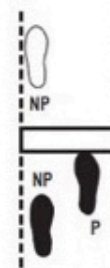
No. 3 LEGAL
 P = In Contact (Legal)
 NP = Contact/Within (Legal)



No. 4 ILLEGAL
 P = In Contact (Legal)
 NP = Forward Step Totally Outside (Illegal)



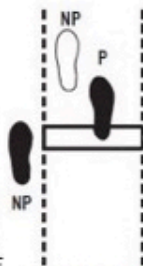
No. 5 ILLEGAL
 P = Not In Contact With (Illegal)
 NP = Behind/Within (Legal)



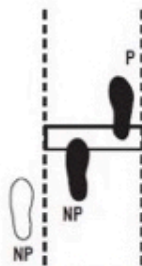
No. 6 LEGAL
 P = In Contact (Legal)
 NP = Behind/Within (Legal)

KEY

P = Pivot Foot
 NP = Non-pivot Foot
 Black = Starting Position
 White = Finishing Position
 USSSA Rule Ref 6.1.A & E



No. 7 ILLEGAL
 P = In Contact (Legal)
 NP = Begins Totally Outside (Illegal)



No. 8 ILLEGAL
 P = In Contact (Legal)
 NP = Backward Step Totally Outside (Illegal)

Effective January 1, USSSA (and USA Softball) have adopted the "Step-Back" pitching rule used by NFHS for many years. Pictured above are 8 different scenarios which illustrate how to enforce the **UNIFIED** pitching rule.

NOTE: The Unified "Step-Back" rule has no relevance to the NCAA "Start-Back" rule used for collegiate play. Also, the pitching rule for USSSA, USA Softball and NFHS is unified only with respect to **positioning of the pitcher's feet**. There are minor variations in each code related to other aspects of delivering the pitch.

Rules cases presented below are based on the 15th Edition (2019-2020) of the USSSA Fastpitch Rules Book. The Rules Book is available online at <https://www.ussa.com/Fastpitch/Fastpitch-Rules-legal-information>.

NOTE: The printed edition of the Rules Book (printed 1-2019) will be superseded by the Online Revised Edition (1-2020). The Online Revised Edition is expected to be uploaded by January 31, 2020. Rules changes for 2020 (including the Unified pitching rule) are **NOT** included in the printed version, but will be included in the revised online edition.

Thursday, January 16, 2020 cases:

1. F1 has taken a legal position on the pitching plate and then a) steps backward, then brings her hands together; b) starts, bringing her hands together as she is stepping backward; c) brings her hands together, then steps backward. In all cases, the step backward is started prior to F1 separating her hands. Ruling?

2. B3 is at bat with a 3-0 count and two outs. The pitcher uses a legal delivery. In a) the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the backswing. In b), she deliberately tosses the ball in the air and in c), she deliberately drops or rolls the ball -- both cases are a deliberate attempt to put the batter on base without pitching to the batter. Ruling?

3. The assistant coach of Team A is ejected for arguing balls and strikes. His team wins the next game in the tournament a) 7-0 in a game actually played, b) 7-0 in a game actually started but forfeited (with the other team ahead) because the opponent could not field the required number of players to continue, or c) 7-0 in a forfeit game which was never started because the opponent went home. Ruling?

4. In an 8U coach-pitch game, B2 squares to bunt and a) contacts the ball, or b) does not contact the ball. Ruling?

5. The opposing teams get in an argument over which team should be the home team. Ruling?

Answers next time

Don Briscoe, CPA
National Rules Coordinator - Fastpitch
United States Specialty Sports Association
770-757-4268