

Subject: Huff-N-Puffers Umpires -- "View From Behind The Plate" Issue 47 -- FOR MANAGERS
From: "Peter E. Toomey" <peter.e.toomey@gmail.com>
Date: 5/29/2026, 18:49
To: undisclosed-recipients: ;
BCC: JimKosakowski@yahoo.com, RCBrown24@yahoo.com, mayslaw@sbcglobal.net, REXX7777@sbcglobal.net, P-FLEMING@sbcglobal.net, FRANKYAROSHAK@gmail.com, dgroversbar@aol.com, ref922@aol.com, KNECZYPOR@gmail.com, TomStopak@gmail.com, bowled812@aol.com, DonEvans.III@gmail.com, BEA5AL@aol.com, RLOPARO026@gmail.com, scott0516@hotmail.com, RADuray@sbcglobal.net, BarryBlues54@gmail.com, terrydempsey20@yahoo.com, GeraldBacher@att.net, TerryRauckhorst@yahoo.com, JesseWebb@msn.com, LWKeating@aol.com

MANAGERS:

1.
Keeping you informed of what your Umpires are hearing.
Especially **emphasis** that I have added, which I hope you might share with your Players?

2.
As I state below to Umpires, I am always interested in hearing from you --
-- if you have questions or issues
-- if you wish to compliment or evaluate any of the Umpires who work your games

DIVISION DIRECTORS:

Please review with your Managers and advise if any questions?

~~~~~

Umpires --  
We have the best view of the game.  
Here are a couple thoughts to make it even better? Hopefully this helps:

**PHRASE FOR THE DAY**

For this season, let's work on: Simple.

About Game Day: In your Pre-Game with Managers, share your expectations.  
**If a Player wants to debate, say "Tell your Manager" and walk away.**

About Rules: There must have been a situation.  
Somebody spent the energy to solve it and write down the rule.  
Life is easier if we *simply* enforce the rule they wrote.

When you hear "there's no HnP Rule \_\_\_\_".  
Then remind them and note that our Guidebook cites on Page One that our local rules rest upon USASoftball's international rulebook. So *those* rules apply.

## SPRING CLINICS

Two dozen guys in attendance. Good questions. My thanks.

Reviewed some pointers about issues from last season.

Got the chance to get up on our feet to practice and fine-tune our "Out" and "Safe" calls. Got better.

For those who attended, I'd love to hear back on --

-- what you felt was most valuable?

-- anything we can improve next year?

## CATCHING UP

I apologize for not having written sooner.

Let's chat about what the opening weeks have shown us?

## HEATING BATS

Especially on the shoulder weeks of a season, cool morning temperatures. **We've seen aluminum foil reflecting or black absorbent bags that heat the bats inside.**

**These will not be allowed.**

**USASoftball 2026 Rule 3, Section 7 A states:**

**“The characteristics of any approved equipment cannot be unnaturally changed. Examples include icing, cooling, or heating of any equipment. ... Warming devices for bats are not approved.”**

Effect: For a first offense, you may choose to issue a warning. Or you may declare the bat "altered" with the appropriate penalty: batter is out (cf: Rule 7, 6, B-C-and Note).

If you should decide you want to educate a complainant, USA's own language is compelling: "renders a player's performance more a product of the player's equipment rather than the player's individual skill." Solely your call.

Players have always had and do have the right to use any legal bat. That is not infringed.

This message will be shared with all Managers and Division Directors.

## PITCH STRIKING THE BOARD AND DIRT AT THE SAME TIME

-- This year was declared a Strike for Division 3 only. In D1 and 2 games, you must still decide whether it was a Strike.

-- This applies in D3 only "on the fly".

## BATTED BALL HITTING HOME PLATE

What matters is where the ball is when touched (or it finally stops rolling).

So a poorly struck **ball that hits the Strike Board** and goes into **Fair** ground is **live** and can be fielded with liability to the Batter-Runner.

## PLATE MECHANICS

Include --

-- Announcing the count before second and subsequent pitches, hopefully using the "N balls, N strikes, 1 foul, 1 screen" format.

-- On every struck ball, coming out in front of Home to observe the fielder's foot in contact with the base, control of the catch, etc, should your partner request help.

-- Confirming "N runs scored" with both Managers at the end of each half inning.

-- Not repeating the Base Umpire's calls on the bases.

## BASE MECHANICS

Include --

-- Not repeating the Plate Umpire's calls

-- Making calls at 1B from inside the field, not behind the First Baseman where you cannot judge control of the ball.

## BOTH

Knowing that we're not perfect. If we blow a call, it's not only acceptable but recommended: reverse your call.

## D3 NON-RUNNER RULES

The D3 Non-Runner rules are complex.

### 31.1 -- ball not get to the outfield: **Out / Dead.**

This year, the "once a non-runner" rule is changed:

A **non-runner** must elect **at each at bat** whether he will run.

He **must declare** to the Plate Umpire each time.

The PU will signal to the defense by either crossing his wrists or spinning his hands, over his head.

Failing a declaration, like any other batter the assumption will be that he is running. Umpires will so instruct Managers in their Pre-Game.

An Ump addressed the problem that continues of outfielders creeping in.

"Managers and Umpires will insure that outfielders will stay in place and not move in for Non-Runners."

I suggested:

A. the much better preventive measure -- as soon as a Non-Runner is declared, the Base Umpire:  
-- face the outfield  
-- repeat the signal  
-- correct any fielder who attempts to move in. Stare them down and they'll stay in place!

B. the Umpire could address the Manager.

If necessary, issue a warning.

If flagrant disregard of both the Rule and the Umpire's directive, told him that I would consider Ejecting the offender.

### **31.1 -- ball not get to the outfield: rolls Foul *passed* the base but *not* to the grass**

Ball **did not achieve** the Rule's "reach the outfield grass" -- **Batter is Out, Dead Ball.**

### **33.2 -- Fly Ball Caught:**

-- Outfielder (fair or foul) or Infielder (foul) = Out / but still Live Ball

-- Infielder fair grass (which means on the outfield) = Safe / but Dead Ball

So on **foul flies caught**, although the Non-Runner is out, the fly is like any batter's fly: runners can advance with liability.

(The confusion comes because the Non-Runner not getting a **ground ball** to the grass is a *dead* ball.)

### **AND TO END ON A HIGH NOTE:**

1.

Players have expressed appreciation for your work.

2.

Thanks to those Umpires, Officers, Managers, and Players who have offered me suggestions.

I always appreciate reports from the field -- that's the only way I can learn what can be made better.

Keep 'em coming (hopefully in writing because "Hey Toomey..." yelled across the parking lot might not get remembered!).

With respect and appreciation, Peter

Huff-N-Puffers Umpire-In-Chief 2022-

[peter.e.toomey@gmail.com](mailto:peter.e.toomey@gmail.com)

440-669-0750

Video of the 2024 Clinics, Schedules, Rules, Umpire Information, and the Umpire Guide are *always* at [www.huff-n-puffers.com/Rules-and-Regulations.html](http://www.huff-n-puffers.com/Rules-and-Regulations.html)

The USA Softball rulebook has not changed *for us* from 2025-25, but can be downloaded as a PDF from [www.usasoftball.com/official-rulebook/](http://www.usasoftball.com/official-rulebook/)

and the USA Umpire Manual at [https://cdn1.sportngin.com/attachments/document/0144/3128/2023\\_Umpire\\_Manual.pdf](https://cdn1.sportngin.com/attachments/document/0144/3128/2023_Umpire_Manual.pdf)

Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail -- but if it makes you a better umpire ...