



SOFTBALL RULES & POLICIES

UPDATED JULY 2026

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SECTION 1 — LEAGUE AUTHORITY & RULE HIERARCHY

Establishes the governing authority for FBSA Softball and defines how league rules, official softball rules, and approved amendments are applied and enforced.

Rule 1.1 — PRIMARY RULE SET

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- FBSA Recreational Softball rules are the primary authority for all league games.
- Any situation not addressed in FBSA rules will follow **USA Softball Official Rules of Softball**.
- USA Softball rule modifications approved by the FBSA Softball Rules Committee supersede standard USA Softball language.
- Coaches and umpires are responsible for applying FBSA rules first, then USA Softball rules when needed.

Rule 1.2 — AMENDMENTS

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- No umpire, coach, or team official may create, modify, waive, or reinterpret any FBSA rule during a game.
- All amendments to these rules must be formally approved by the FBSA Board and authorized by the Softball Commissioner before taking effect.
- Any deviation from the approved rule set is invalid unless explicitly issued through an official FBSA policy update.



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Rule 1.3 — UMPIRES

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Two FBSA umpires officiate each game.
- Umpires have full authority over:
 - Rule enforcement
 - Game pace
 - Safety decisions
 - Stopping play
 - Applying the look-back rule (10U–15U)
- Umpires may declare **NO PITCH** when:
 - A batted ball hits the coach pitcher (8U, 10U)
 - The coach pitcher interferes with a defensive play (8U, 10U)



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SECTION 2 — EQUIPMENT & SAFETY

Defines approved equipment standards, player safety requirements, uniform regulations, injury procedures, and conduct related to safe participation in games and practices.

Rule 2.1 — APPROVED BATS

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- All bats must be marked “**official softball**” by the manufacturer.
- Bats marked “**baseball**” are not permitted.
- The ASA/USA Softball certification mark is **not required** for recreational league play.
- All bats must be unaltered and free of cracks, dents, or tampering of any kind.

Rule 2.2 — GAME BALLS

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Balls must be in good condition and approved by the umpire prior to play.
- Softball divisions use the following ball specifications:
 - 11-inch yellow optic, red stitch
 - .47 core or under, 375 compression or under



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Rule 2.3 — PLAYER SAFETY EQUIPMENT

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- All batters and base runners must wear a protective helmet with a facemask.
- Catchers must wear full protective gear, including:
 - Catcher's helmet with facemask
 - Chest protector
 - Shin guards
- Catchers must wear full gear during games, practices, and pitcher warm-ups.
- **Fielder's facemasks:**
 - Strongly encouraged for all defensive players
 - **Mandatory** for the pitcher position in all divisions
- All defensive players must use a glove appropriate for softball play.

Rule 2.4 — UNIFORMS

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- All players must wear matching team uniforms consisting of:
 - Jersey
 - Shorts or pants
 - Socks
- Jerseys must be tucked in at all times.
- Players not in uniform may not participate until the uniform requirement is met.
- Coaches on the field or in the dugout must wear:
 - Team uniform jersey **or**
 - Team-matching color-coded apparel



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Rule 2.5 — CLEATS

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Metal cleats are **not permitted** in 8U–12U divisions.
- Metal cleats are **allowed** in 15U.
- Molded cleats are permitted for all age groups.

Rule 2.6 — EQUIPMENT USE DURING PLAY

2.6.1 — Training Equipment

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- No training or warm-up equipment — including nets, tees, or weighted balls — may be used on the field during a game.
- The on-deck batter may use a bat weight (donut) for warm-up swings in the on-deck area.
- All other warm-up activities must occur outside the field of play.

2.6.2 — Thrown Equipment

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Throwing a bat or helmet may result in ejection, at the umpire's discretion.
- If a thrown bat strikes the catcher or umpire, the batter is automatically out, regardless of intent.
- Umpires may issue warnings or immediate penalties based on the severity of the action.



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Rule 2.7 — MEDICAL & INJURY PROTOCOLS

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Any player with visible bleeding must immediately leave the field.
- The player may return only after the bleeding has stopped and the affected area is properly covered.
- Free substitution is permitted while the player is being treated; there is no automatic out if the player is due to bat while being treated.
- Any injury involving an FBSA participant — player, coach, umpire, or spectator — must be documented.
- The manager, coach, or responsible official must submit an accident report to the FBSA Board within 24 hours of the incident.

Rule 2.8 — NO CONTACT RULE

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Base runners must avoid contact with defensive players.
- “No contact” **does not mean** “must slide.”
- This rule applies even if the defensive player is out of position or obstructing the base path.
- If the umpire determines the contact was intentional, the runner is called out and ejected from the game.
- If the contact is deemed unintentional, the runner is called out but not ejected.



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SECTION 3 — CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR

Sets expectations for sportsmanship and behavior for coaches, players, and spectators, including disciplinary actions and standards for the game environment.

Rule 3.1 — GENERAL CONDUCT

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Coaches are accountable for their own behavior and that of their players and fans.
- Umpires may eject a coach, player, or spectator for unruly behavior.
- Game forfeiture may occur if behavior interferes with safe or fair play.
- Any coach ejected from a game must serve a mandatory one-game suspension.
- Additional discipline may be imposed by the League Director or Rules Committee.

Rule 3.2 — BANNED SUBSTANCES

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Smoking, vaping, and all tobacco use are prohibited at all FBSA events.
- Alcohol and illegal drugs may not be used, possessed, or consumed at any FBSA activity.
- These restrictions apply to coaches, parents, players, and spectators.
- This policy covers games, practices, team events, and all other FBSA-related activities.
- Violations may result in removal from the premises and further disciplinary action.



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Rule 3.3 — GAME ENVIRONMENT STANDARDS

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- No artificial noisemakers of any kind are permitted, including but not limited to train horns, air horns, whistles, cowbells, or amplified sound effects.
- Warm-up and walk-up music is permitted.
- Music may be controlled only by the offensive team during their half-inning.
- Volume must remain reasonable and must not delay play or interfere with umpire communication.
- Chants may not be derogatory, mocking, or directed at any opposing player.
- Chants must not occur during live play — defined as the period from when the pitcher becomes set until the play has fully ended.
- Razzing, screaming at, taunting, or verbally targeting any opposing team, coach, or player is strictly prohibited.

Rule 3.4 — DUGOUT CONDUCT

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- All offensive players must remain inside the dugout except:
 - The batter
 - The on-deck hitter
 - Active base runners
- Adults in the dugout must:
 - Be rostered coaches
 - Produce FBSA ID badge when asked
 - Not exceed the maximum number of coaches allowed per division
- Unauthorized adults must leave the dugout immediately upon request.
- Failure to comply may result in ejection or forfeiture.



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SECTION 4 — ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Provides rules for scorekeeping, player eligibility, lineup management, fair play requirements, scheduling, standings, reporting, and protest procedures.

Rule 4.1 — SCORE KEEPING & REPORTING

4.1.1 — Official Score Keeping

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- The Home Team must provide the official scorekeeper.
- All games must be scored using the **GameChanger app**, with all active players entered with correct names and uniform numbers before the plate meeting.
- Each team must provide the official scorekeeper with a scannable or clearly readable lineup before the game begins.
- The Visiting Team must provide a scoreboard operator for the duration of the game.

4.1.2 — Reporting Results

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- The Home Team coach must record the final score for both teams in TeamSideline within 24 hours of the game's scheduled start time.
- For forfeited games, the officially recorded score is:
 - **One run per maximum inning allowed** for the division
 - Example: 10U softball plays 6 innings → forfeit score is **6-0**
 - A note describing the forfeit must be entered in the comments or pitch-count box.



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Rule 4.2 — PLAYER ELIGIBILITY & PICK-UP PLAYERS

4.2.1 — Eligibility

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- All players must be registered with FBSA and rostered to participate.
- Players may not be rostered in more than one FBSA league during the same season.
- A minimum of **eight (8)** players must be present and ready to play to start a game.
 - If a team begins with eight players:
 - They must maintain at least eight players at all times
 - Dropping to seven players results in a **forfeit**
 - The ninth batting spot becomes an **automatic out**
- If a team does not have eight players at game time:
 - The umpire starts the game clock
 - If the Home Team caused the delay, they lose home-team status
 - If after **10 minutes** the team still has fewer than eight players, the game is a **forfeit**

4.2.2 — Pick-up Player Requirements

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Teams with fewer than nine rostered players may add up to **two (2)** pick-up players.
- Pick-up players must:
 - Be registered in the current FBSA recreational softball season
 - Be rostered in the same age group or one age group lower
 - Wear their original team uniform
 - Play **only** in outfield positions
 - Bat last in the lineup
- Pick-up players count toward the minimum number required to start a game.
- Pick-up players may **not** be added after the game begins.
- Rostered players arriving late must replace pick-up players in the lineup.
- Any player used in violation of these rules is considered **illegal**.



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4.2.3 — Penalty For Use of Ineligible Player

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Use of an ineligible player results in immediate forfeiture of the game.
- The head coach receives a mandatory one-game suspension for any ineligible player violation.

Rule 4.3 — LINEUPS

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- All teams use a **continuous batting order** for all players, regardless of defensive participation.
- Late-arriving rostered players are added to the end of the lineup.
- Free defensive substitutions are permitted at any time.
- If a team has 10 or more players and one leaves due to injury or emergency:
 - The batting spot is **skipped with no out**
- If a team has only 9 players and one leaves:
 - The batting spot becomes an **automatic out**



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Rule 4.4 — FAIR PLAY

4.4.1 — Sitting Out

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- No player may sit out two (2) consecutive innings during a game.
- No player may sit out more than two (2) total innings in a regulation game.
- A player may not sit out a second inning until every other player has sat out at least one (1) inning.
- Pitchers of record are exempt from the rotation requirement while actively pitching.

4.4.2 — Attendance Exception

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- If a player attends less than 50% of scheduled team practices, the coach may sit that player for up to two (2) consecutive innings, but no more than four (4) total innings per game.
- Before applying this exception, the coach must notify both the player's parents and the League Director.

4.4.3 — Penalty For Violating Fair Play

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Coaches who violate Fair Play rules may face disciplinary action, including game forfeiture and/or suspension.



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Rule 4.5 — STANDINGS & TIEBREAKERS

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- End-of-season standings and tournament seeding (regular season only) are determined using:
 - Head-to-Head Record
 - Runs Against (season total)
 - Runs For (season total)
 - Coin Toss

Rule 4.6 — GAME SCHEDULING & CANCELLATIONS

4.6.1 — Delays & Shortened Games

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Umpires or the League Director may delay or shorten a game due to weather or unsafe field conditions.
- A delay may last up to thirty (30) minutes before the game is canceled.
- A shortened game is considered official after four (4) innings, or once 60% of regulation time has been played.
- When a game becomes official, the score from the last completed inning is recorded as final.

4.6.2 — Make-Up Games

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Incomplete games or rainouts may be rescheduled when possible.
- The League Scheduler determines whether a game can be made up, based on field availability and scheduling constraints.
- Some games may not be rescheduled due to time or field limitations.



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Rule 4.7 — PROTESTS

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- No protest will be allowed on a judgment call by an umpire. Protests are accepted only on the misapplication of a rule.
- A protest must be declared to the head umpire, opposing coach, and official scorekeeper immediately following the disputed call, before any play is resumed.
- The protest must then be submitted in writing within 24 hours to the League Director via email.
- Resolution will be made by league officials after hearing from the protesting coach, the opposing coach, and the umpire. A meeting may or may not be required.
- If a meeting is required, no more than two (2) representatives from each team shall attend.



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SECTION 5 — GAMEPLAY

Outlines the rules governing game structure, mercy rules, coach participation, base running, pitching, and division-specific gameplay modifications.

Rule 5.1 — Game Length & Structure

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

A regulation game consists of division time limit or inning limit, whichever comes first. Games begin at the scheduled time; the umpire starts the official clock.

- No new inning may begin after time expires.
- If time expires mid-inning, the inning is completed unless the trailing team cannot tie or take the lead.
- Tie games at the end of regulation remain ties.
- A called game is official when the losing team has completed **4 innings** or **60%** of the scheduled time.
- Incomplete games resume at the exact point of suspension.

Time Limits and Inning Limits by Division

Division	Time Limit	Innings	Run Limit	Mercy Rule Application
8U	70 minutes	6	5 per inning	12 runs after 4 innings, 8 runs after 5 innings
10U	75 minutes	6	5 per inning	12 runs after 4 innings, 8 runs after 5 innings
12U	75 minutes	6	5 per inning	12 runs after 4 innings, 8 runs after 5 innings
15U	75 minutes	7	5 per inning	12 runs after 4 innings, 8 runs after 5 innings



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Rule 5.2 — Stopping Play

5.2.1 — Coach Pitch Stopping Play

Applies to: 8U, 10U Divisions

- Play stops when **the player-pitcher or any infielder controls the ball inside the infield base paths.**
- If runners are advancing at that moment:
 - They may continue **to the base they are already advancing toward**, at risk.
- They may **not** advance past that base unless the defense attempts a play on a runner.

5.2.2 — Player Pitch Stopping Play

Applies to: 10U, 12U, 15U Divisions

- Play stops when **the pitcher has control of the ball inside the pitcher's circle.**
- This triggers the **Look-Back Rule** (see Rule 5.4.3).



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Rule 5.3 — Base Running

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Obstruction by a fielder without the ball awards the runner the next base.
- Fake tags are prohibited.
- Intentional interference by a runner results in an out.
- A fielder may not catch a ball with detached equipment.
- Runners may advance at risk on live-ball overthrows unless division rules restrict advancement.
- To assist pace of play, a courtesy runner may be used for the catcher of record.
 - Runner is the last batted out.
 - If that player was the pitcher, use the next last batted out.

Division Differences — Stealing, Lead-Offs, Advancement

Division	Lead-Offs	Stealing	Stealing Home	Advancement on Overthrows
8U	Must stay on base until ball is hit (“tight bases”)	No	No	Restricted (see below)
10U	May leave when ball leaves pitcher’s hand	Yes	No	May advance until pitcher controls ball in circle
12U	USA Softball rules	Yes	Yes	USA Softball rules
15U	USA Softball rules	Yes	Yes	USA Softball rules

5.3.1 — Coach Pitch Advancement Rules

*Applies to: **8U** Division*

- On an **infield hit**, batter may only reach **2B** on an overthrow; otherwise remains at 1B.
- On an **outfield hit**, batter may advance freely at risk.
- On an overthrow to a base → runner may advance **one base at risk**.
- On an infield overthrow → runner may attempt **one additional base** at risk.
- If a second overthrow occurs → runner must stop at the base they were advancing to.



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- Runners on **3B must be hit in**; cannot score on an infield overthrow.
- Outfield → cutoff → overthrow is treated as an outfield play; runner may continue advancing.

Additional Coach Pitch scoring restrictions:

- Runner on **1B** may advance to **3B** on an infield hit, at risk.
- Runner on **1B or 2B** must have the ball hit to the **outfield** to score.

5.3.2 — Modified Player Pitch Advancement Rules

*Applies to: **10U** Division*

- Runners may steal **one base per pitch**.
- Runners may not steal home.
- After a pitch, if the catcher overthrows third base, the runner **cannot** advance home.
- Runners may advance at risk on overthrows **until** the pitcher controls the ball in the circle.
- Tight bases apply: runner may not leave base until ball leaves pitcher's hand.

5.3.3 — Player Pitch Advancement Rules

*Applies to: **12U, 15U** Divisions*

- Governed by **USA Softball Official Rules**.
- Stealing home is allowed.
- Runners may advance freely at risk on live-ball overthrows.



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Rule 5.4 — Look-Back Rule

Applies to: 10U, 12U, 15U Divisions

When the pitcher has the ball in the circle:

- A runner between bases must **immediately** choose to advance or return.
- Hesitation, stopping, or reversing direction results in an **out**.
- The pitcher must not fake a throw.

Rule 5.5 — Pitching

Pitching Format by Division

Division	Pitching Format	Pitching Distance
8U	Coach pitch only (innings 1–6)	30 feet
10U	Modified player pitch (innings 1–6)	35 feet
12U	Player fast pitch	40 feet
15U	Player fast pitch	

5.5.1 — Coach Pitch

Applies to: 8U Division

- Coach pitches **underhand** from **30 ft**.
- Batter receives **6 pitches** or **3 swinging strikes**.
- Sixth-pitch foul extends the at-bat unless caught.
- No walks.
- If batted ball hits coach pitcher → **NO PITCH**.
- If coach interferes with a defensive play → **NO PITCH**.
- Coach must exit fair territory immediately after ball is hit.
- Backstop coach may return balls but may not instruct players.



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5.5.2 — Modified Player Pitch

Applies to: 10U Division

USA Softball rules apply except as modified:

Pitching Sequence

- Player pitcher begins each at-bat.
- After **four balls**, offensive coach assumes strike count.
- Coach pitch allotment:
 - **0 strikes thrown** → coach gets **3 pitches**
 - **1–2 strikes thrown** → coach gets **remaining 1–2 pitches**
- Coach pitches underhand from **35 ft.**
- Player pitcher must keep **one foot inside the circle** during coach pitches.

Advancement & Hit-By-Pitch

- Batter must hit ball in play to advance; **no walks** from coach pitch.
- Batter hit by player pitch → treated as ball four; coach takes over; **no free base**.
- Hit-by-pitch from coach pitcher does not award 1B.

Ending the At-Bat

- Failure to put ball in play after allotted pitches → **batter is out**.
- Foul ball on final pitch extends the at-bat unless caught.

Interference / Dead Ball

- Batted ball hits coach pitcher → **NO PITCH**.
- Coach interference → **NO PITCH**.



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Pitching Limits

- Max **3 innings** per pitcher per game.
- May not pitch **three consecutive innings**.
- One legal pitch = one full inning pitched.
- After pitching **two consecutive innings**, pitcher may not pitch in the next inning.

Hit-By-Pitch Limits

- 3 HBP in one inning → pitcher removed for that inning.
- Removed for HBP in 2 innings → pitcher removed for the game.

Warm-Ups

- Max **1 minute or 5 pitches** between innings.
- Excess → **ball awarded to batter** for each extra pitch.

5.5.3 — Player Pitch

*Applies to: **12U, 15U Divisions***

- Governed entirely by **USA Softball fast-pitch rules**.
- Walks allowed.
- Stealing home allowed.
- Dropped third strike is live.
- IFR is in effect (see Rule 5.6.2).
- Pitching limits may be set by league policy.



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Rule 5.6 — Batting

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Continuous batting order.
- Incorrect batting order:
 - If discovered before at-bat completes → correct batter assumes count.
 - If discovered after at-bat completes but before next pitch → batter is out.

Division Differences — Bunting & Slapping, Dropped Third Strike, Infield Fly Rule

Division	Bunting	Slapping	Dropped Third Strike	Infield Fly Rule
8U	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not in effect	Not in effect
10U	Allowed vs player pitcher only	Allowed vs player pitcher only	Not in effect	Not in effect
12U	Allowed	Allowed	In effect (USA Softball rules)	In effect (USA Softball rules)
15U	Allowed	Allowed	In effect (USA Softball rules)	In effect (USA Softball rules)



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SECTION 6 — FACILITIES & LOGISTICS

Defines field specifications, age-appropriate field dimensions, league facility requirements, and dugout assignments.

Rule 6.1 — FIELD SPECIFICATIONS

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Bases are set at 60 feet.
- Outfielders must be positioned on the edge of the grass to be considered in the outfield.
- Infielders may not position themselves more than 10 feet inside the baseline toward home plate (8U only; older divisions follow USA Softball positioning rules).

Division	Pitching Distance	Base Distance
8U	30 ft	60 ft
10U	35 ft	60 ft
12U	40 ft	60 ft
15U	43 ft	60 ft

Rule 6.2 — DUGOUT ASSIGNMENTS

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- The Home team uses the First Base dugout.
- The Visiting team uses the Third Base dugout.
- During live play, only the following may be outside the dugout: the batter, the on-deck hitter, and active base runners.
- All other offensive players must remain inside the dugout.



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Rule 6.3 — FIELD USE & RESTRICTIONS

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Teams may warm up only in designated warm up areas.
- No warm ups or practices are permitted on prepared or closed fields.
- No pregame warm ups are allowed on the infield.
- Players may not be outside the dugout unless:
 - Playing defense
 - Batting
 - Running bases
 - Serving as the on deck batter

Rule 6.4 — COACH PARTICIPATION

6.4.1 – Coach Limitations

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- All coaches must be registered, rostered and badged. The maximum number of coaches (on-field and/or in-dugout) varies by division as outlined below.

Division	Coaches Allowed
8U	Maximum of five (5) total coaches are permitted
10U – 15U	Maximum of four (4) total coaches are permitted

6.4.2 — Coach Appearance & Identification

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Coaches should wear FBSA-issued jersey and hat, matching their team.
- All coaches on the field or in the dugout must produce digital badge when asked by an umpire or other league official



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6.4.3 – Discussions with Umpires

*Applies to: **ALL** Divisions*

- Only the head coach (manager) may request and discuss a rule interpretation or call with an umpire.
- Assistant coaches, players, and team personnel may not join the discussion unless specifically invited by the umpire.