

Key 2026 NFHS Softball Rule Changes

- **Technology & Recording (1-9-6):** Players are prohibited from using devices to record or transmit audio/video from the playing surface.
- **Double First Base Usage (8-2-1):** The runner must use the colored base on the initial play at first base unless it is a dropped third strike. The colored base is not used for tagging up or returning to first on a pickoff.
- **Pitcher Drying Agents (6-2-2):** Dirt is not considered a foreign substance and does not need to be wiped off, but approved drying agents (like rosin) must be under umpire supervision.
- **Wristbands (3-2-7):** Playcard wristbands must be worn on the arm or wrist, not the belt. Pitchers must wear them on their non-pitching arm.
- **Rule Book Reformatting (Rule 8):** Rule 8 has been reorganized to improve clarity regarding running, base touch, and penalties.
- **Uniform Update (10-4-2):** Effective January 1, 2027, heather gray umpire pants are removed. Only charcoal gray or navy blue will be permitted.

2026 Points of Emphasis

- **Obstruction:** Emphasizes that obstruction occurs only when a runner's progress is actually impeded, creating a negative effect on their path, with a focus on evaluating interactions between the runner, fielder, and ball.
- **Pitching Techniques:** Continued focus on differentiating legal leap from illegal "crow hopping".

For the most updated information, including interpretations, you can visit the 2026 Softball Rules Interpretations page on the NFHS website.