

2026 GHSA Softball Study Guide

1. The Catcher's box, bases, coaches boxes, batter's box, and the three-foot running lane to first base shall be marked.
2. The pitcher for Team A is using a tan and brown glove. The lacing for the fingers of the glove has been repaired by using an optic yellow shoestring. The umpire deems this legal, because the color of the laces doesn't matter.
3. During the game, the use of electronic devices by team's personnel to transmit or record information pertaining to their players or team's performance shall be permitted for coaching purposes within the team's dugout/bench area only, provided the point of origin of the electronic communication is outside of the field of play.
4. If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses the tag, the umpire should hesitate slightly. If no tag is made, the umpire should declare the runner safe. If an appeal play is then made by tagging either the runner or home plate, the umpire should then signal safe as this play is not one that can be appealed.
5. For a legal catch, a fielder must catch and have secure possession of the ball before stepping, touching, or falling into dead-ball area. A fielder who falls over or through the fence after making a catch shall be credited with the catch. A fielder who catches a ball while contacting or stepping on a collapsible fence, which not completely horizontal, is not credited with a catch.
6. With R1 on second base and no one out, B2 hits a high foul fly to right field which is not caught. R1, who was on second base, has passed third base before the ball becomes dead. The R1 must return to second base.
7. With R1 on second base, B2 hits a grounder to F6. Just as F6 starts to throw to first base, R1 on the way to third base, yells at F6, which startles F6, causing the ball to be thrown over F3's head into dead-ball territory. The umpire calls B2 out immediately for interference and the ball is declared dead.
8. With R1 on second base, B2's batted ball is deflected by F1. The ball goes directly to F6 who makes an attempt to field the ball and make a play. R1 makes contact with F6 preventing F6 from getting to the ball. The umpire does not rule R1 out for interference because they determined F6 was not making the initial play on the batted ball.
9. The team's lineup card shall include first initial and last name, jersey number, position and batting order of each starting player and shall include each eligible substitute. Lineups become official after they have been exchanged, verified and then accepted by the plate umpire during pregame conference.
10. A player who is not listed as a substitute on the lineup card will not be allowed to participate in the game.
11. In the third inning, S1 reports to the plate umpire, S1's name is not on the lineup card even though S1 was on the bench at the start of the game. The umpire does not allow S1 to enter the game.
12. F1 is removed from the game and replaced by S1. After S1 has faced two batters, F1 re-enters the game in the same position in the same inning. The umpire allows F1 to throw 5 warm up pitches.
13. In the fifth inning, L. Jones enters the game as the DP and is placed at the end of the batting order, this is legal as a team can add the DP at anytime going from 9 to 10 players on the lineup card.
14. In the first inning, the DP-L. Jones, listed in the fourth spot of the batting order, hits a double. Substitute-C. Cooper replaces DP-L. Jones on second base. In the fourth inning, substitute-A. Green bats for C. Cooper and has a 1-1 count. The coach elects to replace A. Green with the FLEX-B. Smith. The umpire deems this legal.

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15. Illegal offensive or defensive players may be discovered by the umpire or either team anytime after the ball becomes live and an illegal substitute has taken a position as a runner the illegal substitute has replaced or as a batter in the batter's box. The head coach is ejected, and the runner is restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game and called out.
16. At the pregame conference, any member of the coaching staff may attend and be responsible for verifying the lineup card is correct, all players are legally equipped and that players and equipment are in compliance with the rules.
17. An ejected coach leaves but returns to stand behind the outfield fence. The umpire shall instruct the coach to leave. If the coach refuses, the game shall be forfeited, and the proper authorities should notify the state association.
18. Team A has had two charge conferences. The coach of Team A is granted time to visit with the pitcher. At the same time the assistant goes out to talk to the first base person without delaying the game. The umpire notifies Team A that since the Assistant coach went out to talk to the first person that would be another conference, and they must remove the pitcher.
19. Umpires are responsible for deciding whether or not the field conditions are suitable for starting the game.
20. At the Pregame Conference, the Umpires shall ask head coaches to verify that their players are legally and properly equipped and shall remind participants about proper sporting behavior.
21. After the game starts, umpires may decide whether or not conditions are suitable for continuing play.
22. It is a delayed dead ball when there is interference by a batter-runner, runner or a retired runner.
23. Obstruction is always an immediate dead ball.
24. If the player's entire foot (no part of the foot is touching in live ball territory) is beyond the line and touches dead ball territory at the time the player catches, fields or throws the ball, the player has entered dead ball territory, the ball is dead, and no play is allowed.
25. After a dead ball situation, the ball becomes live when the umpire calls and/or signals "Play Ball".
26. When the ball becomes dead, a runner may not advance nor return to touch a base that she had previously missed if she has advanced to or beyond a succeeding base.
27. With two strikes on B3, B3 swings at and misses a pitch. The ball strikes the batter's arm. This is a dead-ball strike and B3 is out.
28. R1 is on third base and R2 is on second base. As B3 attempts to hit, F2 touches the tip of B3's bat or steps on home plate to catch the pitch. Catcher's obstruction is called. Umpire signals delayed dead ball. If B3 reaches first base and R1 and R2 each advance at least one base, ball remains live and the obstruction is ignored. Had B3 and all runners not advanced at least one base, the umpire shall give the coach or captain of the team at bat the option of the play or penalty. If the penalty is enforced, B1 is awarded first base and R1 and R2 return to third base and second base, respectively, unless either player had been attempting to advance on the pitch.
29. After F1 has started the delivery, B1 steps out of the batter's box without requesting time. The pitcher stops or hesitates in the delivery. The umpire calls an illegal pitch.

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30. R1 who is on second base, advances to home plate when B2 hits safely to right field. However, R1 misses third base while advancing to home plate. After all, playing action, the umpire calls "time" to sweep off home plate. F2 tags R1 with the ball. R1 cannot be called out even if the defense makes a proper appeal since R1 does not have the opportunity to touch the missed base.
31. The pitcher must take a position with both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate before starting the delivery.
32. The pitcher may remove herself from the pitching position at any time as long as no part of her windup motion has been started.
33. When pushing off the pitcher's plate, it is legal to leap (both feet off the ground), as long as the feet remain within the 24" width of the pitcher's plate and a replant of the pivot foot is not created.
34. F1, after stepping onto the pitching plate with the hands separated and taking a signal, brings the hands together. F1 immediately begins the wind-up motion. This is legal.
35. In delivering a pitch, F1's pivot foot breaks contact with the pitcher's plate but not the ground before the non-pivot foot has touched the ground. This is legal.
36. The pitcher must release the next pitch within 20 seconds after the ball has been returned to her from the catcher.
37. At the beginning of each half-inning, the pitcher may take as long as necessary to throw 5 warm up pitches.
38. If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the backswing or forward motion, it is considered a pitch.
39. While the umpire is reporting a substitute to the official scorer, a pitcher continues to throw in excess of the five warm-up pitches. The umpire awards a ball for every warm up pitch thrown over 5.
40. The catcher, thinking there are 2 strikes on the batter, throws the ball to 3rd base after the next pitch is called a strike, however, it's only strike 2. There is no penalty for this action.
41. The bases are empty, and the batter has a count of no balls and one strike. On the next pitch, the batter hits a foul ball which the catcher retrieves and throws to third base. A ball is awarded to the batter, and the count becomes on ball and two strikes.
42. The pitcher has a choice of balls at the start of each half inning unless both balls do not get put into play. In that case, the pitcher in the bottom of the first inning must throw the unused ball. Thereafter, the ball in play should be returned to the 16-foot circle after every half inning.
43. Each player of the team at bat shall become the batter and shall take a position within the batter's box (on either side of home plate), in the order their name appears on the lineup card delivered to the umpire and the opposing team prior to the game.
44. With R1 on first base, B8 erroneously bats in place of B7. The error is discovered by the opposing team after B8 has received two strikes, B7 takes the place of B8 at the plate with a no-ball, two-strike count. If R1 has advanced by stealing or by a wild pitch while the wrong batter was batting, it is a legal advance.
45. After the first inning, the first batter in each inning shall be the player whose name follows the last player who was called out.
46. A batter may take as long as necessary to prepare herself to enter the batters box for the next pitch.

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47. If a pitch is not entirely in the batters box, the batter must make an attempt to avoid the ball. If she is hit, it is simply a dead ball, ball or strike depending on the location.
48. The batter enters the batter's box with a damaged bat or is discovered using a damaged bat and the infraction is detected before the next legal or illegal pitch (only the umpire or defense may detect a damaged bat). The ball is dead immediately. All runners not put out on the play must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. The batter and head coach are ejected.
49. If a batter contacts a ball twice with the bat while the bat is still in her hands and she is still in the batters box, it is a dead ball foul unless the second hit was intentional.
50. On an intentional walk, the ball is dead and runners may not advance unless forced. If the defensive coach, pitcher or catcher desires to walk a batter intentionally, this may be done by notifying the plate umpire who shall award the batter first base.
51. F2 drops the third strike with two outs. B3 starts towards the dugout but F2 doesn't throw to first base. Prior to entering the dugout, B3 then makes a quick dash to first base. This is legal.
52. The pitch is in the strike zone and it hits the batter. The ball is dead and the batter awarded first base.
53. A Runner may return to touch a missed base after scoring even if the Runner behind her has also scored.
54. Every Runner is awarded one base when a wild pitch or passed ball lodges in or goes under, over or through the backstop.
55. With R1 on first base, B2 hits a pitch with one foot completely outside the batter's box. F6 fields the ball. F4 obstructs R1 advancing to second base. The defensive team coach has the option to take the result of the play or a strike on the batter and runner returns to first base.
56. With R1 on first base, B2 hits a ground ball to F9. A throw to third base drives R1 back to second base. B2 rounds second base and passes R1. B2 runs back and finally reach first base without being tagged out. B2 is out as soon as B2 passed R1.
57. Just after ball four is called on B2 while on the way to first base, R1 dances off third base and is moving back and forth between third base and home. F2 throws the ball immediately back to F1 in the 16-foot circle. The runner at third base is called out by the look back-rule.
58. If an umpire interferes with a catchers attempt to throw out a runner stealing, it is an immediate dead ball and all runners must return to the previous base.
59. A runner is out if they run more than 3 feet from the base path to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand of a fielder.
60. A runner is not out if they overrun first base after touching it and immediately return to it.
61. In fast pitch, all bats that bear the USA/ASA 2000 Certification mark are no longer allowed for play in GHSA.
62. All Gorilla Gold Towels are legal in Georgia.
63. In order to be used, the tie-breaker procedure for varsity games shall be agreed upon by both teams during the pregame meeting with the umpires. If implemented, the procedure shall begin in the 8th inning (and any subsequent half-inning).

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64. In any softball game, if a team does not show up within 30 minutes of the scheduled game time, a forfeit shall be declared unless the delay is unavoidable, and the visiting team notifies the home team. In emergency situations, the game may be started late or may be rescheduled.
65. Varsity games played in invitational tournaments may have a time limit no less than 90 minutes and the game may not be less than five innings regardless of the time limit (4.5 home team is ahead).