

National Federation of State
High School Associations



NFHS Softball

Pitching

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Rule 6-1-1

Pitching Regulations

Prior to starting the delivery (pitch), the pitcher shall take a position with the pivot foot on or partially on the top surface of the pitcher's plate and the non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.



Rule 6-1-1

Pitching Regulations

- a. Prior to pitching, the pitcher must take a position with shoulders in line with first and third base with the ball in the glove or pitching hand, and with the hands separated.
- b. While in this position, the pitcher shall take (or simulate taking) a signal from the catcher.
- c. After completing “b” above, the pitcher shall bring the hands together in front of the body for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball. The hands may be motionless or moving.
- d. The pitcher shall not be considered to be in pitching position unless the catcher is within the lines of the catcher’s box and in position to receive the pitch.



Rule 6-1 Art 1 (con't)

- e. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on or near the pitcher's plate without having possession of the ball.
- f. The pitcher may remove herself from the pitching position as follows:
 1. before the hands come together, the pitcher may legally step back from the pitcher's plate with both feet;
 2. when the hands are together and no part of the windup motion has been made, the pitcher may legally step back from the pitcher's plate with both feet;
 3. either foot may be removed first.



Rule 6-1-1, Penalty

PENALTY: An illegal pitch shall be declared immediately by the umpire (delayed dead-ball signal). The batter is awarded a ball and base runners are awarded one base without liability to be put out.

EXCEPTION: When the pitcher completes the delivery of the ball to the batter and the batter hits the ball fair or foul, or becomes a base runner, the coach of the team at bat shall have the option of the result of the play or the penalty for an illegal pitch.



Rule 6-1-2

2. About the Pitch:

- a. The pitch starts when one hand is taken off the ball or the pitcher makes any motion that is part of the windup after the hands have been brought together.
- b. Once the hands are brought together and are in motion, the pitcher shall not take more than one step which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery. Any step backward shall begin before the hands come together. The step backward may end before or after the hands come together.

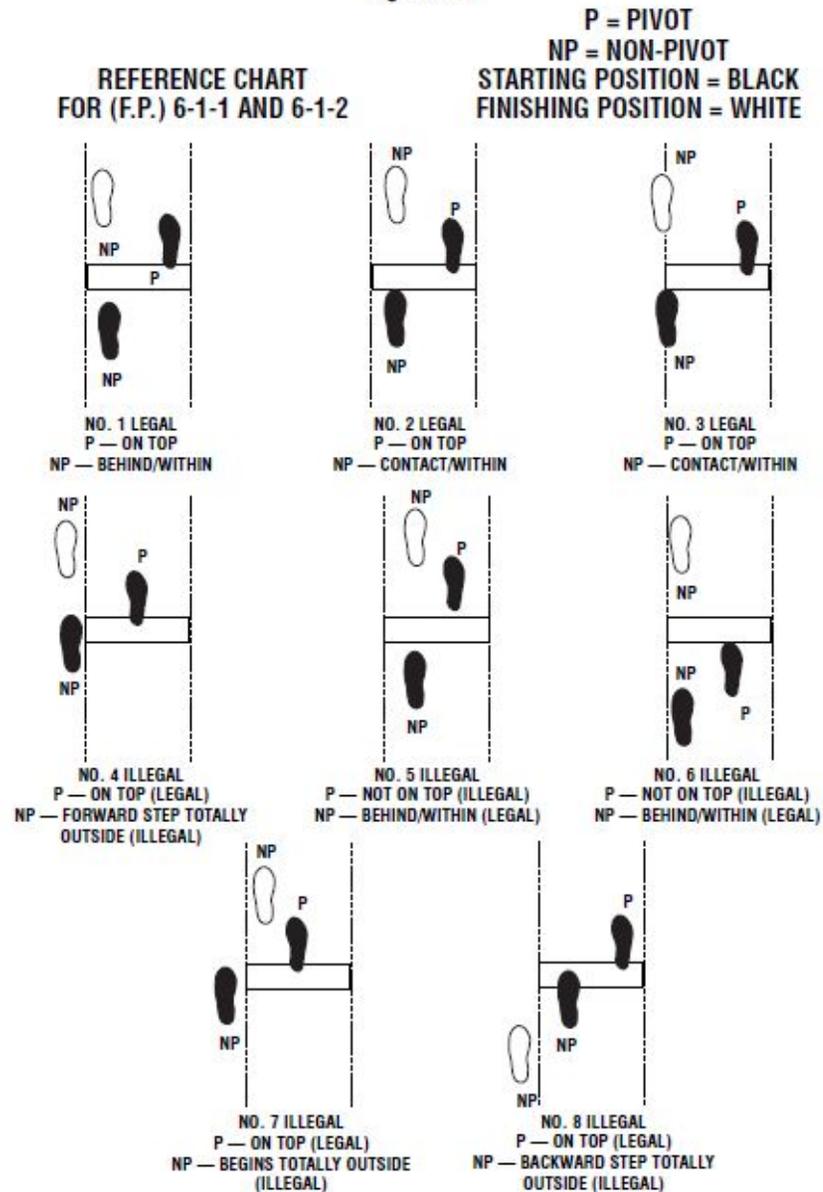
EXCEPTION: See Rule 6-1-1f(2) - When removing self from the pitcher's position.

NOTE: "Toward" is interpreted as within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. (See Figure 6-1)



Rule 6-1-2

Figure 6-1



Rule 6-1-2

- c. the pivot foot may remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front foot touching the ground, as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground and within the 24-inch length. Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher's plate is illegal.

NOTES:

1. It is not a step if the pitcher slides her foot in any direction on the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained.
2. Techniques such as the "crow hop" and "the leap" are illegal. (See 2-16; 2-33)



Rule 6-1-3

A legal delivery shall be a pitched ball that is delivered to the batter with an underhand motion.

- a. The release of the ball and the follow-through of the hand and wrist must be forward past the vertical line of the body.
- b. The hand shall be below the hip and the wrist not farther from the body than the elbow.
- c. The pitch shall be delivered on the throwing arm side of the body and not behind the back or between the legs.
- d. The pitch is completed with a step toward the batter.



Rule 6-1-4

The pitcher may use any windup desired provided:

- a. no motion to pitch is made without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
- b. the pitcher does not use a rocker action in which, after having the ball in both hands in pitching position, she removes one hand from the ball, takes a backward and forward swing and returns the ball to both hands in front of the body.
- c. the pitcher does not use a windup in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion.



Rule 6-1-4

- d. the pitcher does not make more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ clockwise revolutions of the arm in the windmill pitch. The ball does not have to be released the first time past the hip.
- e. the pitcher does not continue to wind up after taking the forward step or after the ball is released.

NOTE: Continuation of the windup is considered any action that, after the ball is released, causes the arm to continue to rotate past the shoulder.



Penalty

- **PENALTY:** (Arts. 2, 3, 4) Illegal pitch. The ball is dead at the end of playing action, if the ball is pitched. A ball is called on the batter, and base runners are awarded one base without liability to be put out. (See 6-2-2 Exception)



Rule 6-2-1

The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, roll, bounce, etc., the ball while in pitching position in order to prevent the batter from striking it.

PENALTY: Any infraction is an illegal pitch. The ball is dead at the end of playing action. The batter is awarded a ball and base runners are awarded one base without liability to be put out.



Rule 6-2-2

The pitcher shall not at any time during the game be allowed to use tape or other substance on the ball or contact points of the pitching hand or fingers; nor shall any other player apply a foreign substance to the ball. A pitcher who licks her fingers shall wipe them off before bringing them in contact with the ball. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin or any comparable drying agent may be used to dry the hand. The pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, arm or thighs which the umpire judges to be distracting to the batter.

PENALTY: An illegal pitch shall be called immediately. (See 6-1-1 Penalty)



Rule 6-2-3

Once the ball has been returned to the pitcher to prepare for the next pitch, she has 20 seconds to release the pitch.

PENALTY: The batter is awarded a ball.

EXCEPTION: Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter. See 3-6-13 for additional penalties.



Rule 6-2-4

No pitch shall be declared when:

- a. the pitcher pitches during a suspension of play.
- b. the pitcher attempts a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken position or is off balance as a result of a previous pitch.
- c. the runner is called out for leaving the base too soon.
- d. the pitcher pitches before a base runner has retouched the base occupied after a foul ball has been declared and the ball is dead.
- e. a player, manager or coach calls “Time” or employs any other word or phrase or commits any act, while the ball is live and in play, for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal pitch.



Rule 6-2-4

PENALTY: (Art. 4a through d) The ball is dead immediately and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled. (Art. 4e) If the batter tries to cause the pitcher to commit an illegal pitch after the pitcher has started her delivery, the ball remains live if the pitcher legally delivers the pitch. (See 3-6-9 and 7-3-1 Effect 2)



Rule 6-2-5

At the beginning of each half-inning or when a pitcher relieves another, no more than one minute may be used to deliver no more than five balls to the catcher or other teammate. The one-minute time limit begins from the third out of the previous half-inning. Play shall be suspended during this time.

NOTES:

1. A pitcher returning in the same half inning will not be granted any warm-up pitches.
2. Umpire is authorized to allow more pitches when weather is inclement or if pitcher was removed due to an injury.



Rule 6-2-5

PENALTY: For excessive warm-up pitches, a pitcher shall be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each pitch in excess of five. This does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, etc.



Rule 6-2-6

When the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the backswing or forward motion, it is a pitch.

EFFECT: A ball is awarded to the batter, and the ball remains in play and runners may advance with liability to be put out. A defensive player may immediately retrieve the ball as long as the batter has no opportunity to contact the pitch.

EXCEPTION: If the batter has a legitimate opportunity to hit the ball and swings at the pitch, a strike is called if she does not make contact and the ball is in play if it is batted.



Rule 6-2-7

The pitcher shall not throw to a base while a foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate after having taken the pitching position.

PENALTY: Illegal pitch, the ball is dead immediately. A ball is called on the batter and all runners advance one base without liability to be put out.

NOTE: The pitcher may remove herself from the pitching position by stepping backwards off the pitcher's plate with both feet before separating her hands or making any motion that is part of the windup after the hands have come together. She may step with either foot first. Stepping forward or sideways constitutes an illegal pitch.



Rule 6-2, Art. 8-9

8. A fielder shall not take a position in the batter's line of vision or, with deliberate unsporting intent, act in a manner to distract the batter; a pitch does not have to be released.
9. The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch until all defensive players are positioned in fair territory, except the catcher, who must be in the catcher's box.

PENALTY: (Arts. 8, 9) Illegal pitch. (See 6-1-1 Penalty)



Rule 6-3, Art 1-2

1. The catcher shall be inside the lines of the catcher's box when the pitcher takes a position to pitch and when the pitch is released.

PENALTY: Illegal pitch. (See 6-1-1 Penalty)

2. The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, except after a strikeout or putout made by the catcher, or to play on a base runner.

PENALTY: The batter is awarded a ball.

EXCEPTION: Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded the batter. (See 3-6-13 for additional penalties)

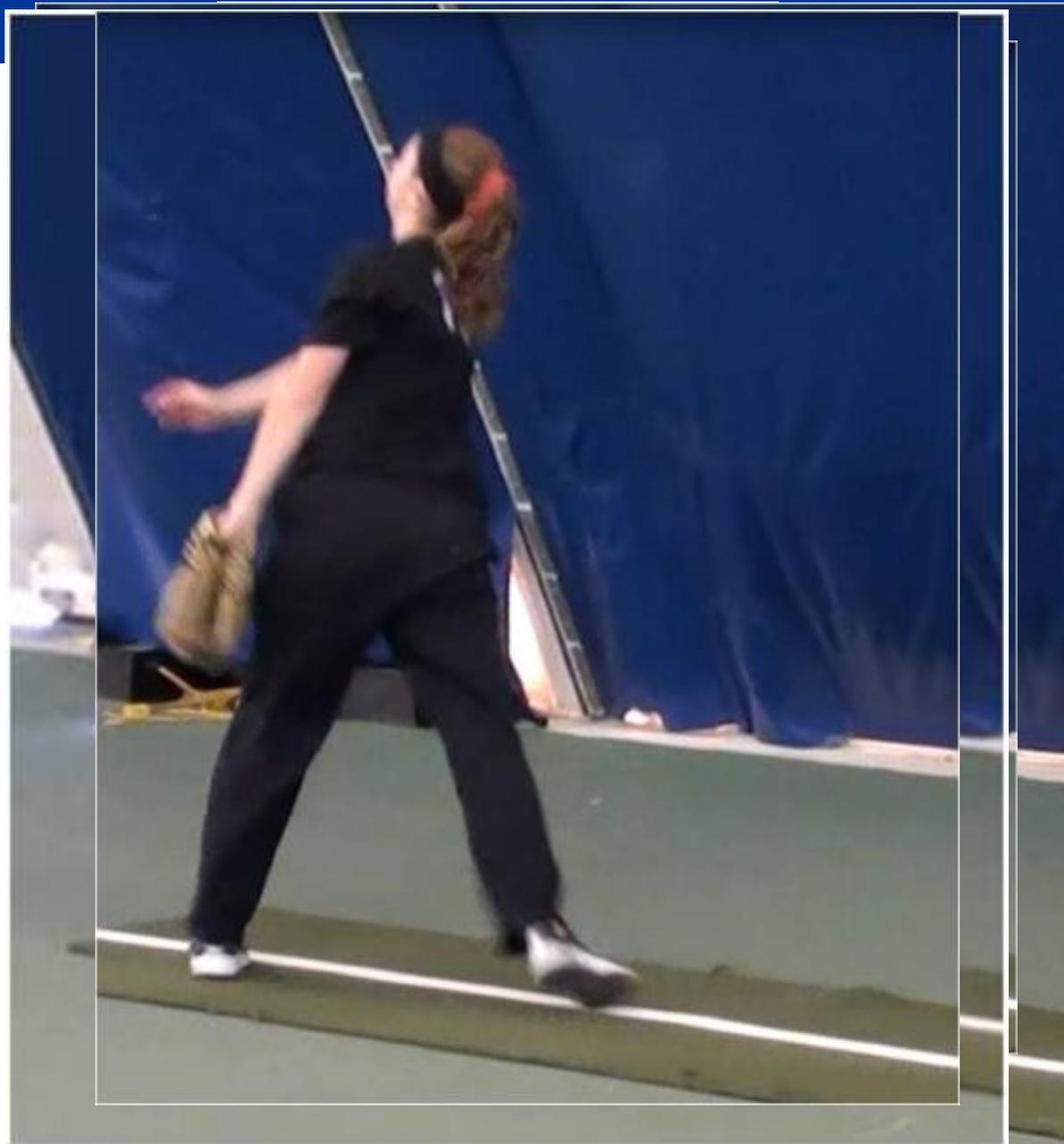


Rule 6-5, Art. 1-2

1. 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.
2. The pitcher may request the other ball before throwing a warm-up pitch by giving the ball in her possession to the plate umpire, the pitcher has now made a choice and must pitch that ball until such time as the ball goes out of play or becomes blocked.



Legal-Unorthodox but her back foot never leaves the ground.



Illegal, no more to be said
Would the toe drag if the ground was level?
If it would then she's legal, if not illegal.



e of



Would the call be legal if the pitcher was level?

If it would then she's legal, if not illegal.

Illegal, I believe I can fly



Legal, toe down and dragging

