

New NFHS Rule: A Step and a Reach

Much confusion exists about whether the runner or a fielder has priority on the bases. When a fielder is in the act of fielding a batted ball, that fielder becomes the privileged player. As the privileged player, the fielder is granted unimpeded priority to field the ball and is protected under the interference rule.

Under the new NFHS rules for 2007, a fielder is still considered to be making her initial play when the ball remains

within one step and a reach for the errant ball. In PlayPic A, the fielder would still be protected because the ball remains within a step and a reach of her grasp. Should a runner collide into her, interference would be the call.

A fielder is not protected when the batted ball goes beyond a step and a reach away. In PlayPic B, the ball is no longer within the protected zone, so the fielder is no longer protected. It becomes her responsibility to avoid the runner. Should contact occur, obstruction would be the call.

