



New York State  
**Softball Officials**  
Organization, Inc.  
**Stealing Signs Interpretation**

**Question:** I was wondering if you could help with me a question that was posed to me. During a HS Varsity game, the visiting coach is yelling out location of pitches once he sees where the catcher is setting up. I think this would be classified as unsporting but wanted to see if there were any case plays that you were aware of that would help.

The umpire (wasn't my game) did tell the coach to knock it off but the coach asked me for basis that he could reference.

**Ruling 5/8/2019, Brad White:** There is no prohibition on stealing signs, pitches or location; nor is there a prohibition against using that information; provided in both cases it is not done illegally. Illegally is limited to cases involving the use of electronic equipment, game personnel going where they don't belong, etc.

The solution is for the defensive team to set up later or more subtly. There are other solutions, but I can not recommend they be implemented. Because, as described, there was no illegal conduct, there is nothing for which to issue a warning. Warnings should only be used when an actual violation occurs and there must be a penalty for a subsequent violation.

For what it is worth, just this past weekend a runner on second was gesturing location to the batter and the third base coach would yell "sit" when he knew the pitcher would throw a changeup. Both are perfectly legal.

The umpire was in error to issue a directive to the coach to stop calling location.