

2023



BAR623

BASEBALL RULES BOOK

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



**2023 NFHS
BASEBALL
RULES BOOK**

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To maintain the sound traditions of this sport, encourage sportsmanship and minimize the inherent risk of injury, the National Federation of State High School Associations writes playing rules for varsity competition among student-athletes of high school age. High school coaches, officials and administrators who have knowledge and experience regarding this particular sport and age group volunteer their time to serve on the rules committee. Member associations of the NFHS independently make decisions regarding compliance with or modification of these playing rules for the student-athletes in their respective states.

NFHS rules are used by education-based and non-education-based organizations serving children of varying skill levels who are of high school age and younger. In order to make NFHS rules skill-level and age-level appropriate, the rules may be modified by any organization that chooses to use them. Except as may be specifically noted in this rules book, the NFHS makes no recommendation about the nature or extent of the modifications that may be appropriate for children who are younger or less skilled than high school varsity athletes.

Every individual using these rules is responsible for prudent judgment with respect to each contest, athlete and facility, and each athlete is responsible for exercising caution and good sportsmanship. These rules should be interpreted and applied so as to make reasonable accommodations for athletes, coaches and officials with disabilities.

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2023 Baseball Points of Emphasis
(For comments on the 2023 Points of Emphasis, page 67)

1. Sportsmanship
2. Obstruction and Interference
3. Jewelry
4. Eye Black

DISCLAIMER – NFHS Position Statements and Guidelines

The NFHS regularly distributes position statements and guidelines to promote public awareness of certain health and safety-related issues. Such information is neither exhaustive nor necessarily applicable to all circumstances or individuals, and is no substitute for consultation with appropriate health-care professionals. Statutes, codes or environmental conditions may be relevant. NFHS position statements or guidelines should be considered in conjunction with other pertinent materials when taking action or planning care. The NFHS reserves the right to rescind or modify any such document at any time. Please pages 74-77 for these position statements.

FACILITIES

Because facilities used for high school athletics come in many shapes, sizes and conditions, on-site event management may on occasion conclude that compliance with NFHS directives about event configuration is not feasible. Under all circumstances, on-site event management should utilize set-ups that minimize risk. If a given facility cannot be made reasonably hazard-free, the event should be relocated.

Table of Contents

Rule 1.	Players, Field and Equipment.....	6
Rule 2.	Playing Terms and Definitions	16
Rule 3.	Substituting – Coaching – Bench and Field Conduct – Charged Conferences	26
Rule 4.	Starting and Ending Game	33
Rule 5.	Dead Ball – Suspension of Play.....	36
	Dead Ball Tables.....	37-38
Rule 6.	Pitching.....	40
Rule 7.	Batting	44
Rule 8.	Baserunning.....	47
	Baserunning Awards Table.....	51
Rule 9.	Scoring – Record Keeping	57
Rule 10.	Umpiring.....	63
	Suggested Speed – Up Rules.....	66
	Suggested Double First Base Rules	66
	Rules by State Association Adoption	67
	Points of Emphasis	67
	Comments on the Rules.....	69
	Official NFHS Baseball Signals	71
	NFHS Appendices	73-79
	Index.....	93

players as to special ground rules as announced by the umpire-in-chief. Lineups become official after they have been exchanged, verified and then accepted by the umpire during the pregame conference. The umpire shall not accept the lineup card until all substitutes are listed. There is no penalty assessed.

ART. 3 . . . A player is designated on the line up card and in the scorebook by name, shirt number, batting order position and fielding position. A customary arrangement of the fielders is shown in Diagram 1.

ART. 4 . . . At the time of the pitch, all fielders shall be on fair ground except the catcher who shall be in the catcher's box. A fielder is in fair ground when at least one foot is touching fair ground.

PENALTY: Illegal pitch. (2-18)

ART. 5 . . . A player may change to a different fielding position at any time except that a pitcher, after being listed as such on the official lineup card handed the umpire, cannot change until conditions in 3-1-1 and 3-1-2 are met. Changes should be reported to the umpire-in-chief and scorekeeper.

SECTION 2 THE FIELD

ART. 1 . . . A diamond (or infield) shall be a 90-foot square. When measuring the distance to first base and third base, measure from the apex of home plate to the back edge of the base. The outfield is the area between two foul lines formed by extending two sides of the diamond as in Diagram 2. The infield and outfield, including the boundary marks from home plate to first and third and their extended foul lines, are fair ground. All other area is foul ground.

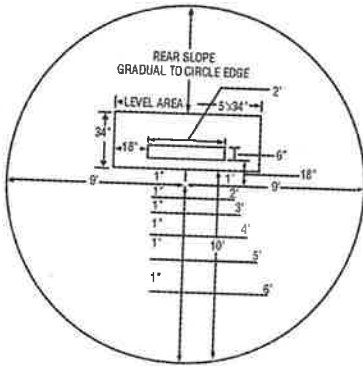
ART. 2 . . . All lines on the playing field shall be marked with a material which is not injurious to the eyes or skin. All non-permanent lines should be white. Lime or caustic material of any kind is prohibited.

ART. 3 . . . The on-deck circle should be to the side and away from home plate, 37 feet if space allows. Neither team's players shall warm up in the other team's on-deck circle. The on-deck circle does not have to be occupied, but a player may choose to do so, provided the on-deck circle is located safely away from home plate. (2-23)

ART. 4 . . . When the dugout area is temporarily extended, for any reason, it shall be extended toward the outfield on a line parallel to the foul line. The extension of the dugout area shall be equally applied for both teams.

ART. 5 . . . When constructing a new field for high school play, the distance from home plate to the nearest obstruction on fair ground should be at least 300 feet down the foul lines and at least 350 feet to center field. It is recommended that the line from home plate through the pitcher's plate to second base run east-northeast. This line, using a steel tape or a strong tape or a cord, must measure 127 feet, 3 3/8 inches from the rear tip of home plate to the middle of second base. The catcher's box, home plate, bases, coaches' boxes, batters' boxes, and three-foot running lane shall be as in Diagram 2. The recommended width of a foul line is 2½ inches.

Diagram 3
Suggested Layout of Pitcher's Mound



ART. 6 . . . On a sodded field, an unsodded area, commonly referred to as the "pitcher's mound," should have a radius of about nine feet centered $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet in front of the midpoint of the front edge of the pitcher's plate.

The top of the pitcher's plate must be 10 inches above the top surface of home plate. Inside the circle, a pitcher's mound should be constructed according to the specifications shown in the diagram.

The degree of slope from a point 6 inches in front of the pitcher's plate to a point 6 feet toward home plate shall be one inch to one foot, and such degree of slope shall be uniform.

The pitching mound is an 18-foot diameter circle, the center of which is 59 feet from the back point of home plate.

Locate the front edge of the rubber 18 inches behind the center of the mound.

The front edge of the rubber to the back point of home plate is 60 feet, 6 inches.

The slope starts 6 inches from the front edge of the rubber.

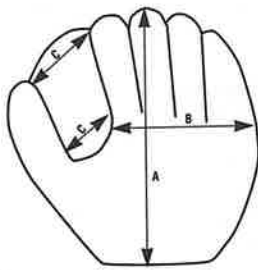
The slope shall be 6 inches from the starting point, 6 inches in front of the rubber to a point 6 feet in front of the rubber.

The level area surrounding the rubber should be 6 inches in front of the rubber, 18 inches to each side and 22 inches to the rear of the rubber. The total level area is 5 feet x 34 inches.

ART. 7 . . . The pitcher's mound may consist in part of synthetic material that is commercially manufactured for that purpose. If a mound pad is composed of natural soil and synthetic material, the synthetic material must be securely attached to the ground and be installed at least flush or slightly below the surface of the ground. The mound area shall meet suggested height and slope specifications found in the Suggested Layout of the Pitcher's Mound. (Diagram 3)

- ART. 2 . . .** The bat shall have the following characteristics and components.
- a. Each legal wood, aluminum or composite bat shall:
 1. Be one piece, multi-pieces and permanently assembled, or two pieces with interchangeable barrel construction.
 2. Not have exposed attachments, rivets, pins, rough or sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a potential hazard.
 3. Be free of rattles, dents, burrs, cracks and sharp edges. Bats that are broken, altered or that deface the ball are illegal. Materials inside the bat or treatments/devices used to alter the bat specifications and/or enhance performance are prohibited and render the bat illegal.
 - b. Each legal wood, aluminum or composite bat shall have the following components:
 1. Knob – The bat knob shall protrude from the handle. The knob may be molded, lathed, welded or permanently fastened. Wrappings are permitted except those that cause the knob to become flush with the handle. A one-piece rubber knob and bat grip combination is illegal.
 2. Handle – The bat handle is the area of the bat that begins at, but does not include, the knob and ends where the taper begins.
 3. Taper – The taper is an optional transition area which connects the narrower handle to the wider barrel portion of the bat. Its length and material may vary but may not extend more than 18 inches from the base of the knob.
 4. Barrel – The barrel is the area intended for contact with a pitched ball. The barrel shall be round, cylindrically symmetric, with a smooth contour. The barrel may be aluminum, wood or composite (made of two or more materials). The type of bat (wood, aluminum or composite) shall be determined by the composition of the barrel.
 5. End Cap – The end cap is made of rubber, vinyl, plastic or other approved material. It shall be firmly secured and permanently affixed to the end of the bat so that it cannot be removed by anyone other than the manufacturer, without damaging or destroying it. By definition, a one-piece construction bat does not have an end cap.
 - c. Each bat not made of a single piece of wood shall:
 1. Have a safety grip made of cork, tape (no smooth, plastic tape) or commercially manufactured composition material. The grip must extend a minimum of 10 inches, but not more than 18 inches, from the base of the knob. Slippery tape or similar material shall be prohibited. Resin, pine tar or any drying agent to enhance the hold are permitted only on the grip. Molded grips are illegal.
 2. Be $2\frac{5}{8}$ " or less in diameter at thickest part and 36 inches or less in length.
 3. Not weigh, numerically, more than three ounces less than the length of the bat (e.g., a 33-inch-long bat cannot be less than 30 ounces).
 - d. Bats that are not made of a single piece of wood shall meet the Batted Ball Coefficient of Restitution (BBCOR) performance standard, and such bats shall be labeled with a silkscreen or other permanent certification mark. No BBCOR

Diagram 4



SECTION 4 UNIFORMS

ART. 1 . . . Uniforms of all team members should be of the same color and style. Caps and shoes are required equipment (no track spikes allowed). When a player is required to wear a head protector, it replaces the cap as mandatory equipment.

ART. 2 . . . For individual players, uniform sleeve lengths may vary. However, sleeves of each individual player shall be approximately the same length and shall not be ragged, frayed or slit. If the pitcher's undershirt sleeves are exposed, the sleeves shall not be white or gray. Compression sleeves that are solid black or solid dark-colored shall be the only colors allowed to be worn by the pitcher below the elbow. A pitcher shall not wear any item on the hands, wrists or arms which may be distracting to the batter. A pitcher shall not wear white or gray exposed undershirt sleeves or any white or gray sleeve that extends below the elbow. A vest and coordinating shirt that is worn underneath is viewed as a type of uniform top.

ART. 3 . . . A uniform shall not have any dangerous or reflective buttons or ornaments. Each player shall be numbered on the back of the shirt with a plain number of solid color contrasting with the color of the shirt. This number shall be a plain Arabic style and shall be at least eight inches high, and no players on the same team shall wear identical numbers. A number may have a border of not more than one-quarter inch in width.

ART. 4 . . . The school's official uniform (including uniform pants, jersey, visible undergarments, socks, stockings, caps and headwear) may bear only a visible single manufacturer's logo (partial or whole) or trademark. A manufacturer's logo/trademark shall not exceed $2\frac{1}{4}$ square inches with no dimension exceeding $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches. No more than one manufacturer's logo/trademark or reference shall be permitted on the outside of each item. (The same restriction shall apply to either the manufacturer's logo/trademark or reference.) One American flag 2 inches x 3 inches may be worn or occupy space on each item of uniform apparel.

full ear protection (dual ear flaps). A throat protector, which is either a part of or attached to the catcher's mask, is mandatory. A throat protector shall adequately cover the throat. The commercially manufactured catcher's head, face and throat protection may be a one-piece or multi-piece design. While in a crouch position, any non-adult warming up a pitcher at any location shall wear a head protector, a mask with a throat protector and a protective cup (male only). (1-5-9)

PENALTY: Failure by a player to wear proper equipment after being so ordered by the umpire, shall result in ejection.

ART. 5 . . . Defensive players are permitted to wear face/head protection in the field. If a pitcher or any defensive player wears face/head protection, its outer covering shall have a non-glare (not mirror-like) surface.

ART. 6 . . . Defective equipment must be repaired or replaced immediately.

ART. 7 . . . If a ball is touched with an illegal glove or mitt, that is discovered by the umpire, the coach or captain of the team at bat has the choice of taking the result of the play or having the award (8-3-3a, b, c) for use of an illegal glove or mitt. The illegal glove or mitt must be replaced immediately. A foul fly caught with an illegal glove/mitt shall be nullified and treated as a foul ball, unless the team at bat elects to take the result of the play.

ART. 8 . . . Hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, splints, etc.) must be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½" thick. Knee and ankle braces which are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production do not require any additional padding. Each state association may, in keeping with applicable laws, authorize exceptions to NFHS playing rules to provide reasonable accommodations to individual participants with disabilities and/or special needs, as well as those individuals with unique and extenuating circumstances. The accommodations should not fundamentally alter the sport, allow an otherwise illegal piece of equipment, create risk to the athlete/others or place opponents at a disadvantage.

ART. 9 . . . Any player equipment judged by the umpire to be unreasonably dangerous is illegal.

ART. 10 . . . Any questions regarding legality of a player's equipment shall be resolved by the umpire-in-chief.

ART. 11 . . . Non-traditional playing equipment must be reviewed by the NFHS Baseball Rules Committee before it will be permitted to be used.

SECTION 5 FAIR BALL/BASE HIT

ART. 1 . . . A fair ball is a batted ball which:

- a. settles on fair territory between home and third base or between home and first base; or
- b. contacts fair ground on or beyond an imaginary line between first and third base; or
- c. is on or over fair ground when bounding to the outfield past first or third base; or
- d. first falls on fair ground on or beyond first or third base; or
- e. touches first, second or third base; or
- f. while on or over fair territory, touches an umpire or player, or the umpire/player's clothing or equipment; or
- g. while over fair ground passes out of the playing field in flight.
 1. A fly ball or line drive, which passes over or inside first or third base in flight and curves to foul ground beyond such base, is not a fair hit; but a hit which goes over or through the fence is a fair hit if it is over fair ground when it leaves the field.

ART. 2 . . . A base hit (also called a safe hit or single) is one which enables the batter to advance to first base without being put out. (9-3-2)

ART. 3 . . . An extra base hit is one which enables the batter to advance to first base and then to one or more succeeding bases (9-3-3). A two-base hit (double), three-base hit (triple) or home run enables the runner to reach second, third or home base, respectively.

SECTION 6 BATTED BALL

ART. 1 . . . A batted or thrown ball is in flight until it has touched the ground or some object other than a fielder.

ART. 2 . . . A fly ball is a batted ball which rises an appreciable height above the ground.

ART. 3 . . . A line drive is a batted ball which travels parallel, or nearly so, with the ground through most of its flight.

ART. 4 . . . A ground ball is one which is neither a fly nor a line drive.

SECTION 7 BATTER, BATTER'S BOX, BATTER-RUNNER

ART. 1 . . . The batter is the player of the team at bat who is entitled to occupy either of the two batters' boxes as shown in Diagram 2.

ART. 2 . . . The batter's box is the 4 foot x 6 foot area in which the batter shall stand when batting. The lines are part of the box. (Official Measurements in Diagram 2)

ART. 3 . . . A batter-runner is a player who has finished a time at bat until put out or until playing action ends.

conference is to exchange and check each team's lineup cards and to discuss ground rules. Umpires also shall ask the head coaches of the two opposing teams if their players are legally and properly equipped. In addition, the expectation of good sporting behavior is shared with both teams and representatives (4-1-3a). Both teams shall remain in their dugout (bench) or bullpen area until this meeting has concluded.

SECTION 11 DEAD BALL

The ball becomes dead when acts listed in 5-1 occur or play is suspended as in 5-2-1. See table in Rule 5.

SECTION 12 ERROR

ART. 1 . . . An error is a misplay by a fielder or a team (9-5-5), which is recorded in the error column of the player's or team's record.

ART. 2 . . . Other misplays that are not recorded in the error column but are included in the game summary include a balk (6-2-4), wild pitch (9-6-1), batter hit by pitched ball (8-1-1d) and passed ball (9-6-1).

SECTION 13 FIELDER

ART. 1 . . . A fielder is any one of the nine players of the defensive team.

ART. 2 . . . The players who play left field, right field and center field are outfielders.

ART. 3 . . . The others are infielders.

ART. 4 . . . The pitcher and catcher are the battery.

ART. 5 . . . In the play rulings, a fielder is referred to as F1, F2, etc. Refer to Diagram 1.

SECTION 14 FIELDER'S CHOICE

ART. 1 . . . A fielder's choice is the act of a fielder with a live ball, who elects to throw for an attempted putout or to retire unassisted any runner or batter-runner, thus permitting the advance of another runner(s). The scorer decides whether the batter is credited with a safe hit or an extra base hit in accordance with 9-2-2, 9-3-3. Scorers use the term in the following ways:

- a. to indicate the advance of the batter-runner who takes one or more bases when the fielder who handles the batted ball plays on a preceding runner;
- b. to indicate the advance of a runner (other than by stolen base or error) while a fielder is trying to put out another runner; and
- c. to indicate the advance of a runner due to the defensive team's refusal to play on the runner (an undefended steal).

SECTION 15 FORFEITED GAME

A forfeited game is one awarded to the opponent of the offending team. (4-4)

if there is a delayed out declared by the umpire for a baserunning infraction, a possible fourth out may be recognized. (9-1-1d, 9-1-1e)

ART. 3 . . . An extra inning is one which extends the game in an attempt to break the tie score.

SECTION 21 INTERFERENCE — OFFENSIVE, UMPIRE, SPECTATOR

ART. 1 . . . Offensive interference is an act (physical or verbal) by the team at bat:

- a. which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play; or
- b. when a runner creates malicious contact with any fielder, with or without the ball, in or out of the baseline.

ART. 2 . . . It is umpire interference when the umpire inadvertently moves so as to hinder a catcher's attempt to throw, or when a fair ball touches an umpire as in 5-1-1f, or thrown ball as in 5-1-1g.

ART. 3 . . . Spectator interference is an act by a spectator which impedes the progress of the game.

ART. 4 . . . Follow-through interference is when the bat hits the catcher after the batter has swung at a pitch and hinders action at home plate or the catcher's attempt to play on a runner.

ART. 5 . . . Backswing interference is when a batter contacts the catcher or the catcher's equipment prior to the time of the pitch.

SECTION 22 OBSTRUCTION AND FAKE TAG

ART. 1 . . . Obstruction is an act (intentional or unintentional, as well as physical or verbal) by a fielder, any member of the defensive team or its team personnel that hinders a runner or changes the pattern of play as in 5-1-3 and 8-3-2; or when a catcher or fielder hinders a batter as in 5-1-2b, 8-1-1e, 8-3-1c and 8-3-2. When obstruction occurs, the ball becomes dead at the end of playing action and the umpire has authority to determine which base or bases shall be awarded the runners according to the rule violated. (EXCEPTIONS 8-4-2c, 8-4-2d)

ART. 2 . . . A fake tag is an act by a defensive player without the ball that simulates a tag. A fake tag is considered obstruction.

ART. 3 . . . The fielder without possession of the ball denies access to the base the runner is attempting to achieve.

SECTION 23 ON-DECK CIRCLE

An on-deck circle for each team is a circle five feet in diameter located 37 feet to the side and away from home plate if space permits. Otherwise, it should be a safe distance to the side and away from home plate. (Diagram 2)

SECTION 24 OUT: FORCE-OUT, PUTOUT, STRIKEOUT, TAG OUT, THROW-OUT

ART. 1 . . . A force-out is a putout during which a runner who is being forced to advance is tagged out, or is put out by a fielder who holds the ball while touching the base toward which the forced runner is advancing. (9-1-1 for special case)

ART. 2 . . . A live ball delivered to the batter is a pitch. The term implies a legally delivered ball unless otherwise stated. When a pitcher commits a balk and completes the delivery to the batter, or delivers an illegal pitch, it is not considered a pitch, because the ball became dead at the time of the infraction.

ART. 3 . . . Time of the pitch is when the pitcher has committed to delivering the pitch to the batter. For the windup position, the "time of the pitch" occurs when the pitcher, (a) first starts any movement of the arm(s) or leg(s) after stepping onto the pitcher's plate with the hands already together in front of the body; (b) with both hands at the side, first starts any movement with both arms or leg(s) prior to the pitch; (c) with either hand in front of the body and the other hand at the side, after bringing the hands together, first starts any movement of the arm(s) or leg(s) prior to the pitch. For the set position, the "time of the pitch" occurs the instant the pitcher, after coming to a complete and discernible stop, starts any movement with arm(s) and/or leg(s) that commits the pitcher to pitch.

ART. 4 . . . A pitch ends when the pitched ball:

- a. is secured by the catcher;
- b. comes to rest;
- c. goes out of play;
- d. becomes dead; or
- e. the batter hits the ball (other than a foul tip).

ART. 5 . . . A feint is a movement which simulates the start of a pitch or a throw to a base and which is used in an attempt to deceive a runner.

ART. 6 . . . The pitcher's pivot foot is that foot with which the pitcher contacts the pitcher's plate when the pitcher delivers the ball. For example, the pivot foot is the left foot for a left-handed pitcher. (6-1-1)

SECTION 29 PLAY, DOUBLE PLAY, FORCE PLAY, PLAY RULING, SQUEEZE PLAY

ART. 1 . . . "Play" is the order given by the umpire when it is time for the game to begin, or to be resumed after having been suspended when the umpire called "time." The term is also used to denote a unit of action which begins when a pitcher has possession of the ball while in the pitching position and ends when ball becomes dead or pitcher again holds the ball while in pitching position.

ART. 2 . . . A double play is continuous activity which results in two putouts during a play as defined in Article 1.

ART. 3 . . . A force play is a play in which a runner (or two or three runners) loses the right to the base the runner(s) occupies and is forced to advance because the batter becomes a batter-runner. For a given runner, a force play ends as soon as the runner touches the next base or a following runner is put out at a previous base. When a runner advances beyond a base to which the runner is forced without touching it, the force play remains. Also, a force situation is reinstated when a runner retreats past the base to which the runner was forced to advance.

SECTION 33 SPEED-UP RULES

Rule modifications to speed up the game may be adopted by state associations (Page 65).

SECTION 34 STOLEN BASE, DOUBLE STEAL, TRIPLE STEAL

ART. 1 . . . A stolen base is an advance of a runner to the next base without the aid of a base hit, a putout or a fielding (including battery) error. (9-4)

ART. 2 . . . A double steal is two runners advancing on such a play.

ART. 3 . . . A triple steal is three runners advancing on such a play.

SECTION 35 STRIKE ZONE

The strike zone is that space over home plate, the top of which is halfway between the batter's shoulders and the waistline, and the bottom being the knees, when the batter assumes a natural batting stance. The height of the strike zone is determined by the batter's normal batting stance. If the batter crouches or leans over to make the shoulder line lower, the umpire determines height by what would be the batter's normal stance.

SECTION 36 SUBSTITUTIONS

ART. 1 . . . A substitute is a player who is eligible to replace another player already in the lineup.

ART. 2 . . . An unreported substitute is a player who, by rule, can be in the game but has entered without reporting.

ART. 3 . . . An illegal substitute is:

- a. a player who enters or re-enters the game without eligibility to do so; or
- b. a player who re-enters the game in the wrong position in the batting order; or
- c. a player who enters the game on defense while the player for whom is batting is also on defense; or (available only for player/DH option 1)
- d. when the player for whom the DH is batting enters the game as a batter or runner in a different position in the batting order; or (available only for player/DH option 1)
- e. a player who violates the courtesy runner rule.

SECTION 37 THROW

A throw is the act of voluntarily losing possession through having the ball leave the hand for a purpose other than a pitch. It may result in the ball being bounced, handed, rolled, tossed or thrown.

SECTION 38 TIME

"Time" is the command of the umpire to suspend play. The ball becomes dead when it is given (5-2-1). The term is also used in recording the length of the game.

any reported substitutions on the lineup card and then announce immediately any change(s) to the opposing team. Projected substitutions are not allowed. In each of the following situations, the ball is declared live by the umpire-in-chief. Should there be no announcement of substitutions, a substitute has entered the game when the ball is live and:

- a. a runner takes the place of a runner who has been replaced;
- b. a pitcher takes a position on the pitcher's plate;
- c. a fielder reaches the position usually occupied by the fielder who has been replaced; or
- d. a batter takes a position in the batter's box.

PENALTY: If the starting pitcher does not face one batter, that player may play another position, but not return to pitch.

For discovery of an illegal substitute (2-36-3) on offense by an umpire or either team, that player shall be called out and restricted to the bench/dugout for the duration of the game. An illegal player discovered on defense shall be restricted to the bench/dugout for the duration of the game. If a restricted player re-enters the game on offense, the player shall be called out immediately and ejected upon discovery by an umpire or either team. If a restricted player re-enters on defense, the player shall be ejected upon discovery by an umpire or either team.

The penalty for illegal substitution shall supersede the penalty for batting out of order.

If the illegal substitute should score a run, advance or cause a play to be made that allows another runner(s) to advance, discovery must be made by an umpire or either team before the first pitch to the next batter of either team. This would invalidate the action of the illegal offensive substitute. Any out(s) made on the play stands and all other runners return to the base(s) occupied at the time of the pitch.

In a game-ending situation, discovery must be made before all infielders leave the diamond (i.e., all infielders cross the foul lines).

An illegal substitute on defense shall be replaced immediately upon discovery by the umpire or either team. If an illegal player on defense is involved in a play, and the infraction is discovered by an umpire or either team prior to the first pitch to the next batter of either team, the team on offense has the option to let the play stand or to allow the batter to bat again.

Any player who is substituted for by an illegal substitute may re-enter only if the player is eligible to do so under the re-entry rule. (3-1-3)

ART. 2 . . . If a pitcher is replaced while the pitcher's team is on defense, the substitute pitcher shall pitch to the batter then at bat, or any substitute for that batter, until such batter is put out or reaches first base, or until a third out has been made. To ensure that the requirements of this article be fulfilled, the umpire will deny any coach-defensive player conference that will violate the rule. If a pitcher is incapacitated or guilty of flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct, this rule is ignored. A player may be removed as pitcher and returned as pitcher only once

ART. 5 . . . Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional. (NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion, Appendix B.)

ART. 6 . . . A player or coach who is bleeding or who has an open wound shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment has been administered. If medical care or treatment can be administered in a reasonable amount of time, the individual would not have to leave the game. The length of time that is considered reasonable is umpire judgment. The re-entry rule applies to starters. If there is any amount of blood on the uniform, it shall be changed or cleaned before that individual participates again. (Communicable Disease Procedures, Appendix D)

SECTION 2 COACHING

ART. 1 . . . One player or coach may occupy each coach's box while the player or coach's team is at bat. A coach who is not in the uniform of the team shall be restricted to the bench/dugout. However, a coach may leave the bench/dugout to attend to a player who becomes ill or injured. The coach may address base runners or the batter. Coaches may wear prostheses and use mobility devices. Any member of the team at bat, who has not been ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct, may occupy a coach's box.

ART. 2 . . . No coach shall physically assist a runner during playing action.

PENALTY: The runner shall be called out immediately. (8-4-2s)

ART. 3 . . . No offensive team personnel, other than the base coach, shall be near a base for which a runner is trying so that a fielder may be confused; nor be on or near the baseline in such a way as to draw a throw; nor shall the base coach or members of the team at bat fail to vacate any area needed by a fielder in an attempt to put out a batter or runner.

If a thrown live ball unintentionally touches a base coach in foul territory, or a pitched or thrown ball touches an umpire, the ball is live and in play. If the coach is judged by the umpire to have interfered intentionally with the thrown ball, or interferes in fair territory, the interference penalty is invoked.

PENALTY: The ball is dead immediately and the runner is out. The batter-runner or runner may be out as in 7-4-1f and 8-4-2g. Other runners return as in 8-2-8.

ART. 4 . . . The head coach must attend the pregame conference, if available.

PENALTY: The head coach will be restricted to the dugout for the remainder of the game (except to attend to a sick or injured player) if the coach refuses to attend the pregame conference.

For coaches who violate f (1-5), g, h, i, j or k, the umpire may: (1) issue a verbal warning to the offender, (2) issue a written warning to the offender (any offender receiving a written warning shall be restricted to the bench/dugout for the remainder of the game), or (3) eject the offender for a major offense. For violation of f(6) both the head coach and offending coach shall receive a written warning and be restricted to the dugout for the remainder of the game unless the offense is so severe the umpire may eject the offender and restrict or eject the head coach. A coach may leave the bench/dugout to attend to a player who becomes ill or injured. In f (7), the state association shall determine appropriate action.

- l. deliberately throw a bat, helmet, etc.;
- m. initiate malicious contact on offense or defense;
- n. call "Time" or use any command or commit any act for the purpose of causing a balk;
- o. use tobacco or tobacco-like products within the confines of the field;
- p. leave their positions or bench area during a fight or physical confrontation; or
- q. have physical contact, spit, kick dirt or engage in any other physical action directed toward an umpire.

PENALTY: The umpire shall eject the offender from the game. Failure to comply shall result in game being forfeited. In (m), the ball is immediately dead, if on offense, the player is ejected and declared out, unless the player has already scored. If the defense commits the malicious contact, the player is ejected; the umpire shall rule either safe or out on the play and award the runner(s) the appropriate base(s) the umpire felt the runner(s) would have obtained if the malicious contact had not occurred. In (p), a coach who attempts to prevent a fight or restore order is not in violation of the rule.

ART. 2 . . . A coach who is ejected shall leave the vicinity of the playing area immediately and is prohibited from further contact, direct or indirect, with the team during the remainder of the game. The coach may return when requested to attend to an ill or injured player.

ART. 3 . . . Players loosening up to bat shall remain in the area of their team's on-deck circle while the pitcher is warming up. (1-2-3)

PENALTY: The umpire shall issue a team warning to the coach of the team involved. The next offender on that team shall be ejected.

ART. 4 . . . Whenever team members are loosening up in an area which is not protected by a fence or other structure, another member of the team with a glove must be positioned between them and the batter to protect them from a batted or thrown ball within the confines of the playing field. No one is to interfere with a live ball.

Rule 4 Starting and Ending Game

SECTION 1 STARTING A GAME

ART. 1 . . . The home coach shall decide whether the grounds and other conditions are suitable for starting the game. After the game starts, the umpires are sole judges as to whether conditions are fit for play and as to whether or not conditions are suitable for starting the second game of a scheduled double-header (two games between the same teams during the same day).

ART. 2 . . . If there are unusual conditions, such as spectators or obstacles too near the playing field, the home coach shall propose special ground rules. If sanctioned by the visiting team, these shall be in force. If the teams cannot agree, the umpires shall formulate ground rules. Ground rules do not supersede a rules book rule. All special rules shall be announced.

- a. The field should be clearly marked. Markings should include poles along the foul lines at least 210 feet past first and third and vertical foul line markings on any wall that limits the outfield.
 - b. When a fair or foul fly comes down near a stand or fence, 7-4-1d applies. If there is a screen behind the catcher or other permanent obstruction in front of the stand, a batted ball that goes behind these becomes dead and cannot be caught. It is recommended that no such obstruction be less than 60 feet from the diamond.
 - c. Wild pitches, overthrows and batted balls that go over, through or wedges in a fence are governed by Rule 8-3-3. If the field has unusual obstructions, ground rules should, as nearly as possible, be similar to this rule.
 - d. For a special field condition, such as a drain pipe that makes a spot where it is impossible or very difficult for a fielder to retrieve the ball, the ball should become dead if it goes to that spot and each runner's advance should be limited to two bases.
 - e. In an unfenced field where cars are parked along the foul lines, umpires should consider these the same as bleachers and ball becomes dead if it bounces into the line of cars. The umpires should anticipate such a situation and announce the ground rule in advance.
- ART. 3 . . .** Before game time, the home team and then the visiting team shall deliver their respective batting orders in duplicate to the umpire-in-chief. The umpire then shall permit inspection by both head coaches and/or captains if available. Each team's lineup card shall list a minimum of nine players to start the game. (See 4-4-1f for game to continue with less than nine players.) The substitution regulations, as in Rule 3, are then in effect.

- a. The umpire-in-chief shall emphasize to both head coaches and captains that all participants are expected to exhibit good sporting behavior throughout the game(s).

ART. 3 . . . If weather or darkness interferes with play so that the game is called (ended) by the umpire, it is a regulation game:

- a. if five full innings have been played, or if the home team has scored an equal or greater number of runs in four or four and a fraction turns at bat than the visiting team has scored in five turns at bat; or
- b. if play has gone beyond five full innings.

If the game is called when the teams have not had an equal number of completed turns at bat, the score shall be the same as it was at the end of the last completed inning; except that if the home team in its half of the incomplete inning, scores a run (or runs) which equals or exceeds the opponent's score, the final score shall be as recorded when the game is called.

ART. 4 . . . A state association may adopt game-ending procedures that determine how games are ended, including suspended games. However, if a state does not adopt game-ending procedures, or by mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the umpire-in-chief, any remaining play may be shortened or the game terminated. If a state association has adopted game-ending procedures, only those game-ending procedures may be used, unless the opposing coaches wish to terminate the game.

SECTION 3 CALLED GAME

If a game is called before completion of the number of innings and conditions as specified in 4-2-3, the umpire shall declare the contest "no game," unless play is terminated by 4-2-4. By state association adoption, a regulation called game where a winner cannot be determined (4-2-3) shall be counted as $\frac{1}{2}$ game won and $\frac{1}{2}$ game lost for each team.

SECTION 4 FORFEITED GAME

ART. 1 . . . A game shall be forfeited to the offended team by the umpire when a team:

- a. is late in appearing or in beginning play after the umpire calls "Play." State associations are authorized to specify the time frame and/or circumstance before a forfeit will be declared for a late arrival by one of the teams; or
- b. refuses to continue play after the game has started; or
- c. delays more than a reasonable amount of time in resuming play, or in not obeying the umpire's order to remove a player for violation of the rules; or
- d. persists in tactics designed to delay or shorten the game; or
- e. willfully and persistently violates any of the rules after being warned by the umpire; or
- f. is unable to provide at least nine players to start the game or cannot provide eight players to finish the game; or

NOTES:

1. An out will be called each time that spot in the batting order comes to bat. If the offensive player must be substituted for after reaching base, the most recent batter not on base is allowed to run for that player.
2. A team playing with fewer than nine players may return to nine players.

DEAD BALL AND DELAYED DEAD BALL TABLE
BALL DEAD IMMEDIATELY

Activity	References
1. Illegal pitch (no runner)	5-1-1k
2. Pitch touches batter	5-1-1a
3. Pitch touches runner	5-1-1a
4. Illegally batted ball	5-1-1b
5. Intentionally hitting ball second time	5-1-1b
6. An uncaught foul	5-1-1d
7. Interference by runner or retired runner (including malicious contact)	5-1-1e
8. Interference with fielder by runner attempting to catch foul fly ball	5-1-1e
9. Interference by others connected with team	5-1-1e
10. Fair ball over fence in flight or prevented by spectator or player's detached equipment	5-1-1f
11. Fair ball touches a spectator	5-1-1f
12. Fair ball bounces over through or lodges in fence or lodges in player's or umpire's uniform or equipment (except ball lodges in glove)	5-1-1f
13. Fair ball touches runner before it touches an infielder or after it passes any infielder except the pitcher and another fielder has a play	5-1-1f
14. Fair batted ball touches umpire before it touches a fielder or passes any fielder except the pitcher	5-1-1f
15. A thrown ball, not by pitcher from plate, goes into bench, stand, through or over fence	5-1-1g
16. A pitch or ball thrown by pitcher from plate goes into stand, bench, over through fence, backstop, or touches a spectator (in the ball area) or lodges in umpire's or pitcher's equipment	5-1-1g
17. Umpire handles a live ball or calls time to inspect ball or for an equipment violation	5-1-1h
18. Fair or foul ball is caught by a fielder, who then steps or falls with both feet from the field of play, over any boundary or barrier such as a fence, roof, chalk line or pre-game determined imaginary line or into a stand, bench or dugout	5-1-1i
19. Infielder intentionally drops a fair fly, fair line drive or fair bunt in flight with at least first base occupied and with less than two outs	5-1-1j
Awards or Penalties	References
1. The pitch is ruled a ball	6-1-2, 6-1-3, PEN, 8-3-1a
2. Batter awarded first base except when the batter permits the ball to touch oneself or pitch is a strike	8-1-10
3. All runners advance one base except when pitch is a strike for third out	8-3-1a, 6-1-4
4. Batter is out. Runners return	7-3-2, 7-4-1a, 8-2-2
5. Batter is out. Runners return	8-4-1d, 8-2-2
6. Runners return to bases occupied at time of pitch	8-2-2
7. Interferer is out, also batter-runner if interference prevented a double play at first base. Interferer is out and so is another runner if interference prevented a double play on the batter. Other runners return. For malicious contact the player guilty of the infraction is ejected	3-3-1m, 8-2-6, 8-4-1a, h, 8-4-2b, l, g, k, 8-4-2g
8. Runner is out and another runner is out if interference prevented a possible double play	8-4-2g
9. Runner is out. Other runners return	8-4-2g, 3-2-3, 8-2-6, 7-3-5
10. Award all runners home base	8-3-3b
11. Award or penalize according to umpire's judgment	8-3-3e
12. Award all runners two bases from base occupied at time of pitch	8-3-3c
13. Hit runner is out. Batter awarded first base and credited with single. Others return to base occupied at time of interference unless forced by batter-runner	8-4-2k
14. Runners return to bases occupied at time of pitch unless forced by batter-runner. Batter awarded first base and credited with a single	8-1-2b, 8-3-3c, 8-3-4
15. Award all runners two bases	8-3-3d
16. Award all runners one base	8-3-3d
17. Runners return to bases they had reached or passed when ball becomes dead	8-2-9
18. Award all runners one base except when caught ball is third out	8-3-3d
19. Batter is out and all runners return to base occupied at time of pitch	8-4-1c

- g. a pitch or any other thrown ball:
 1. is touched by a spectator;
 2. is intentionally touched by a non-participating squad member;
 3. goes into a stand or other dead-ball area or players' bench (even if it rebounds to the field), or over or through or wedges in the field fence (8-3-3c or 8-3-3d);
 4. lodges in an umpire's, catcher's or offensive player's equipment or uniform; or
- h. the umpire handles a live ball or calls "Time" for inspecting the ball or for any other reason, including items in Section 2 or gives the "Do Not Pitch Signal" or inadvertently announces "Foul" on a ball that touches the ground; or
- i. a fielder, after catching a fair or foul ball (fly or line drive), leaves the field of play by stepping with both feet or by falling into a bench, dugout, stand, bleacher, or over any boundary or barrier such as a fence, rope, chalk line, or a pregame determined imaginary boundary line; or
- j. an infielder intentionally drops a fair fly, fair line drive or fair bunt in flight with at least first base occupied and with less than two outs.
EXCEPTION: Infield-fly rule. (2-19)
- k. a balk or an illegal pitch is committed; or
- l. a batted, thrown or pitched ball touches a designated media area or anyone or anything that is entirely or partially in the designated media area.
 1. The umpire has the authority to remove any member of the media for not staying in or keeping media equipment in the designated dead ball area.
- m. when malicious contact (offensive or defensive) occurs;
- n. Backswing interference occurs.

ART. 2 . . . It is a delayed dead ball when:

- a. there is interference by a batter (Exception 7-3-5 Penalty),
 1. When the batter interferes with the catcher attempting to play on a runner, if an out does not result at the end of the catcher's throw, the ball shall become dead immediately.
- b. a catcher or any fielder obstructs a batter or runner; or obstructs the ball through use of detached player equipment (8-3-3);
- c. umpire interferes with the catcher who is attempting to throw;
- d. any personnel connected with the offensive team calls "Time" or uses any other command or commits any act for the purpose of trying to cause the opposing pitcher to balk;
- e. anyone who is required to wear a batting helmet deliberately removes the helmet, while the ball is in live-ball territory and the ball is live; or
- f. a ball touches an illegal glove/mitt.

ART. 3 . . . The ball becomes dead when time is taken to make an award when a catcher or any fielder obstructs a runner, when an intentional base on balls is to be awarded, or when baserunning penalties are imposed.

ART. 4 . . . After a dead ball, the ball becomes live when it is held by the pitcher in a legal pitching position, provided the pitcher has engaged the pitcher's plate, the batter and the catcher are in their respective boxes, and the umpire calls "Play" and gives the appropriate signal.

plate in the set position is legal. Turning the shoulders after bringing the hands together during or after the stretch is a balk. The pitcher shall not make a quick-return pitch in an attempt to catch a batter off balance. The catcher shall have both feet in the catcher's box at the time of the pitch. If a pitcher is ambidextrous, the umpire shall require the pitcher to face a batter as either a left-handed pitcher or right-handed pitcher, but not both.

ART. 2 . . . For the wind-up position, the pitcher is not restricted as to how to hold the ball. A pitcher assumes the windup position when the hands are: (a) together in front of the body; (b) both hands are at the side; (c) either hand is in front of the body and the other hand is at the side. The pitcher is limited to not more than two pumps or rotations. After the pitcher starts the movement to pitch, the pitcher must continue the motion without interruption or alteration. With the pitcher's feet in the wind-up position, the pitcher may only deliver a pitch or step backward off the pitcher's plate with the pivot foot first. After the pitcher has placed the pivot foot clearly behind the plate, the pitcher has the right to change to the set position or throw or feint to a base the same as that of any infielder. During delivery, the pitcher may lift the non-pivot foot in a step forward, a step sideways, or in a step backward and a step forward, but the pitcher shall not otherwise lift either foot.

ART. 3 . . . For the set position, the pitcher shall have the ball in either the gloved hand or the pitching hand. The pitching hand shall be down at the pitcher's side or behind the pitcher's back. Before starting the delivery, the pitcher shall stand with the pivot foot in contact with or directly in front of and parallel to the pitcher's plate. The pitcher shall go to the set position without interruption and in one continuous motion. The pitcher shall come to a complete and discernible stop (a change of direction is not considered an acceptable stop) with the ball in both hands in front of the body and the glove at or below the chin. Natural preliminary motions such as only one stretch may be made. During these preliminary motions and during the set position until a delivery motion occurs, the pitcher may turn on the pivot foot or lift it in a jump turn to step with the non-pivot foot toward a base while throwing or feinting as outlined in 6-2-4 and 2-28-5, or the pitcher may lift the pivot foot in a step backward off the pitcher's plate which must be in or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. In order to change to the wind-up position, the pitcher must first step clearly backward off the pitcher's plate with the pivot foot first. After the pitcher has placed the pivot foot on the ground clearly behind the plate, the pitcher then has the right to throw or feint to a base the same as that of any other infielder.

PENALTY (Arts. 1, 2, 3): The ball is dead immediately when an illegal pitch occurs. If there is no runner, a ball is awarded the batter. If there is a runner, such illegal act is a balk. In both situations, the umpire signals dead ball.

- b. consuming time as the result of the coach or the team's non-playing representative conferring with a defensive player or players after being charged with three conferences (3-4-1);

PENALTY: The pitcher shall be replaced as pitcher for the duration of the game.

- c. failing to pitch or make or attempt a play, including a legal feint, within 20 seconds after the pitcher has received the ball.

PENALTY: The batter shall be awarded one ball.

NOTE: Umpires shall require that the ball be returned promptly to the pitcher.

EXCEPTION: The starting pitchers may warm up by using not more than eight throws, completed in one minute (timed from the first throw). When a pitcher is replaced during an inning or prior to an inning, the relief pitcher may not use more than eight throws completed in one minute (timed from the first throw). At the beginning of each subsequent inning, the pitcher may warm up by using not more than five throws, completed in one minute (timed from the third out of the previous half-inning) (3-1-2). In either case, the umpire-in-chief may authorize more throws because of an injury, ejection or inclement weather.

ART. 3 . . . Intentionally pitch close to a batter.

PENALTY: The pitcher shall be ejected if the act is judged to be intentional. In case of doubt, the umpire may first warn the pitcher.

ART. 4 . . . Balk. If there is a runner or runners, any of the following acts by a pitcher while the pitcher is touching the pitcher's plate is a balk:

- a. any feinting toward the batter or first base, or any dropping of the ball (even though accidental) and the ball does not cross a foul line (6-1-4);
- b. failing to step with the non-pivot foot directly toward a base (occupied or unoccupied) when throwing or feinting there in an attempt to put out, or drive back a runner; or throwing or feinting to any unoccupied base when it is not an attempt to put out or drive back a runner;
- c. making an illegal pitch from any position (6-1, 6-2-1a-d);
- d. failing to pitch to the batter in a continuous motion immediately after any movement of any part of the body such as the pitcher habitually uses in the delivery;
 - 1. If the pitcher, with a runner on base, stops or hesitates in the delivery because the batter steps out of the box (a) with one foot or (b) with both feet or (c) holds up a hand to request "Time," it shall not be a balk. In (a) and (c), there is no penalty on either the batter or the pitcher. The umpire shall call "Time" and begin play anew. In (b), a strike shall be called on the batter for violation of 7-3-1. In (a), (b) and (c), if the pitcher legally delivers the ball, it shall be called a strike and the ball remains live. Thus, two strikes are called on the batter in (b). If the umpire judges the batter's action to be a deliberate attempt to create a balk, the batter will be penalized according to 3-3-1n.
- e. taking a hand off the ball while in a set position (6-1-3), unless the pitcher pitches to the batter or throws to a base or the pitcher steps toward and feints a throw to second or third base as in (b); or

shall declare the proper batter out and return all runners to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

3. When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out and a legal pitch or illegal pitch has been delivered to the succeeding batter, or an intentional base on balls has occurred, or all infielders have left the diamond if a half inning is ending, and before an appeal is made, the improper batter becomes the proper batter and the results of the improper batter's time at bat become legal.
4. When the proper batter is called out because the proper batter failed to bat in turn, the next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of the proper batter thus called out.
5. When an improper batter becomes a proper batter because no appeal is properly made as above, the next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of such legalized improper batter. The instant an improper batter's actions are legalized, the batting order picks up with the name following that of the legalized improper batter.

NOTE: When several players bat out of order before discovery so that a player's time at bat occurs while that player is a runner, such player remains on base, but that player is NOT out as a batter.

SECTION 2 STRIKES, BALLS AND HITS

ART. 1 . . . A strike is charged to the batter when:

- a. a pitch enters any part of the strike zone in flight and is not struck at;
- b. a pitch is struck at and missed (even if the pitch touches the batter);
- c. a pitch becomes a foul when the batter has less than two strikes;
- d. a pitch becomes a foul tip (even on third strike) or a foul from an attempted bunt;
- e. a batter delays [6-2-4d(1), 7-3-1]; or
- f. a batted ball contacts the batter in the batter's box (foul ball).

ART. 2 . . . A ball is credited to the batter when a pitch is not touched by the bat and is not a strike or when there is an illegal pitch (6-1 PENALTY, 6-1-4) or pitcher delay. (6-2-2c)

ART. 3 . . . A foul ball or a fair hit (which may be a bunt) occurs when a pitch is touched by the bat of the batter who is in the batter's box. (2-5-1, 2-16-1, 2-16-2)

SECTION 3 BATTING INFRACTIONS — A BATTER SHALL NOT:

ART. 1 . . . Delay the game by failing to take a position promptly in the batter's box within 20 seconds. The batter must keep at least one foot in the batter's box throughout the time at bat.

EXCEPTION: A batter may leave the batter's box when:

- a. the batter swings at a pitch,
- b. the batter is forced out of the box by the pitch,
- c. the batter attempts a "drag bunt,"
- d. the pitcher or catcher feints or attempts a play at any base,

SECTION 4 BATTER IS OUT

ART. 1 . . . A batter is out when:

- a. the batter enters the batter's box with an illegal bat (1-3-5) or is discovered having used an illegal bat. If the infraction is discovered before the next pitch following the turn at bat of the player who used an illegal bat, the defense may take the penalty or the result of the play;
- b. a third strike is not caught, provided a runner occupies first base and there are less than two outs;
 1. If there are two outs or if no runner occupies first base, the batter is not out unless the third strike is caught. The batter is entitled to try to reach first base before being tagged out or thrown out.
- c. a third strike (7-2) is caught;
- d. a foul ball (other than a foul tip not a third strike) is caught by a fielder or such catch is prevented by a spectator reaching into the playing area (8-3-3e);
- e. an attempt to bunt on third strike is a foul;
- f. any member of the offensive team or coach other than the runner(s) interferes with a fielder who is attempting to field a foul fly ball;
- g. a team playing with one less than the starting number and that turn to bat is reached;
- h. the batter enters the game as an illegal substitute and is discovered; or
- i. the batter intentionally deflects a foul ball which has a chance of becoming fair.

Rule **8** Baserunning

SECTION 1 WHEN BATTER BECOMES A RUNNER

ART. 1 . . . A batter becomes a runner with the right to attempt to score by advancing to first, second, third and home bases in the listed order when:

- a. the batter hits a fair ball (2-5-1);
 1. The batter becomes a batter-runner when entitled to run.
- b. the batter is charged with a third strike;
 1. If third strike is caught, the batter is out an instant after the batter becomes a runner.
- c. an intentional base on balls is awarded, or a fourth ball is called by the umpire;
- d. a pitched ball hits the batter or the batter's clothing, provided the batter does not strike at the ball; or
 1. If the batter permits the pitched ball to touch oneself (7-3-4), or if the umpire calls the pitched ball a strike, the hitting of the batter is disregarded except that the ball is dead. It is a strike or ball depending on location of the pitch.
 2. If a batter's loose garment, such as a shirt that is not worn properly, is touched by a pitched ball, the batter is not entitled to first base.

PENALTY (Arts. 1-5): For failure to touch a base (advancing and returning), or failure to tag up as soon as the ball is touched on a caught fly ball, the runner may be called out if an appeal is made by the defensive team. The defense may appeal during a live ball immediately following the play and before a pitch (legal or illegal), granting an intentional base on balls, or before the next play or attempted play. If the offensive team initiates a play before the next pitch, the defensive team does not lose the right to appeal. A live-ball appeal may be made by a defensive player with the ball in the defensive player's possession by tagging the runner or touching the base that was missed or left too early. A dead-ball appeal may be made by a coach or any defensive player with or without the ball by verbally stating that the runner missed the base or left the base too early. Appeals must be made (1) before the next legal or illegal pitch; (2) at the end of an inning, before the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory; (3) before an intentional base on balls is granted; or (4) on the last play of the game, an appeal can be made until the umpire(s) leave the field of play.

NOTE: When a play by its very nature is imminent and is obvious to the offense, defense and umpire(s), no verbal appeal is necessary, e.g. runner attempting to retouch a base that was missed, or a failure to tag up and a throw has been made to that base or plate while a play is in progress.

ART. 6 . . . Appeal procedures and guidelines

- a. Types
 1. Missing a base
 2. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched.
- b. Live Ball – In all games an appeal may be made during a live ball by any fielder in possession of the ball touching the base missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball, or by tagging the runner committing the violation if the runner is still on the playing field.
- c. Dead Ball – The dead-ball appeal may be made: 1) Once all runners have completed their advancement and time has been called, a coach or any defensive player, with or without the ball, may make a verbal appeal on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. The administering umpire should then make a decision on the play. 2) If the ball has gone out of play, runners must be given the opportunity to complete their base-running responsibilities before the dead-ball appeal can be made.
- d. May Not Return – A runner may not return to touch a missed base or one left too soon on a caught fly ball if:
 1. the runner has reached a base beyond the base missed or left too soon and the ball becomes dead,
 2. the runner has left the field of play, or
 3. a following runner has scored.
- e. Advance – Runners may advance during a live-ball appeal play. If a time out is requested for an appeal, the umpire should grant it, and runners may not advance until the ball becomes live again.
- f. More Than One Appeal – Multiple appeals are permitted as long as the appeals do not become a travesty of the game.

BASERUNNING AWARDS TABLE

NO. BASES	DETERMINED FROM BASE AWARDED OCCUPIED AT TIME OF:
ONE BASE (runners)	
1. Balk	1. Infraction
2. Pitch from pitcher's plate thrown out of play	2. Pitch
3. Throw from pitcher's plate goes out of play	3. Throw
4. Unintentional catch and carry	4. Pitch
5. *Catcher obstruction (if attempting to advance)	5. Pitch
6. Forced (because batter is awarded 1st base)	6. Pitch
7. Pitch strikes runner	7. Pitch
ONE BASE (batter)	
1. Walk	1. Pitch
2. Pitch thrown out of play on ball four	2. Pitch
3. *Batter is obstructed	3. Pitch
4. Hit by pitch	4. Pitch
5. Runner interference (unintentional)	5. Pitch
6. Umpire interference (hit by batted ball)	6. Pitch
7. Pitch lodges in defensive player's or umpire's uniform or equipment on ball four	7. Pitch
TWO BASES (batter and runners)	
1. Fair batted ball bounces over, through, goes under, lodges in or under fence	1. Pitch
2. #Fair batted ball or thrown ball lodges in defensive player's or umpire's uniform or equipment (except ball lodged in glove)	2. Pitch
3. *#Live thrown ball or pitch touched by illegal glove or mitt	3. Infraction
4. *#Live thrown ball or pitch touched by detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by fielder	4. Infraction
5. First throw by infielder and ball goes out of play or lodged in or under fence	5. Pitch
6. For any subsequent play by an infielder or for any throw by an outfielder and ball goes out of play or lodges in or under fence.	6. Throw
7. Intentional catch and carry (runners only)	7. Pitch
THREE BASES (batter and runners)	
1. Fair batted ball contacted with detached player equipment or illegal glove/mitt	1. Infraction
FOUR BASES (batter and runners)	
1. Fair batted ball over fence in flight	1. Pitch
2. Fair batted ball hits foul pole above fence in flight	2. Pitch
3. Fair batted ball prevented from going over fence because it is touched by spectator	3. Pitch
4. Fair batted ball prevented from going over fence because of contact with detached player equipment or illegal glove/mitt	4. Pitch
UMPIRE JUDGMENT	
1. Spectator interference	1. Infraction
2. *Runner(s) obstruction (minimum of one base)	2. Infraction
3. Defensive malicious contact	3. Infraction

*Award only if infraction is not ignored

#An award to the batter-runner on a pitch is only made if the batter-runner has the right to advance to first base.

ball (fly or line drive) which is caught by a fielder, who then leaves the field of play by stepping with both feet or by falling into a bench, dugout, stand, bleacher or over any boundary or barrier such as a fence, rope, chalk line or pre-game determined imaginary boundary line. A runner shall not be declared out if the fielder deliberately throws or carries the ball into dead ball territory to prevent that runner who has touched or advanced beyond a succeeding base from returning to a missed base or a base left too soon. Award the runner two bases. This allows the runner(s) to correct any base-running error. Defense may still appeal the play.

- e. bases as determined by the umpire, who shall also impose such penalties as in the umpire's judgment will nullify the act of spectator interference with any thrown or batted ball. The ball shall become dead at the moment of the interference (8-3-3a-d). It is not spectator interference if a spectator physically hinders a fielder who is reaching into a dead ball area to make a play on a batted or thrown ball.
- f. one base beyond the last legally acquired base, if in the umpire's judgment the runner was attempting to advance at the time the ball becomes lodged in an offensive player's uniform or equipment. If the lodged ball occurs during play when the batter-runner was attempting to reach first base, the batter-runner will be awarded first base. Preceding runners will be awarded bases needed to complete the award.

ART. 4 . . . Illegal use of detached player equipment (8-3-3a-c) or an illegal glove/mitt does not cause ball to immediately become dead. If each runner advances to or beyond the base which the runner would reach as a result of the award, the infraction is ignored. Any runner who advances beyond the base the runner would be awarded does so at the runner's own risk and may be put out.

ART. 5 . . . An award is from the base determined as follows:

- a. If the award is the penalty for an infraction such as a balk, use of detached player equipment, or an illegal glove/mitt, the award is from the base occupied at the time of the infraction.
- b. If any pitch (batted or unbatted) is followed by a dead ball before the pitcher is in position for the next pitch and before there is any throw by the fielding team, any award is from the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

When a runner, who is returning to touch a base after a batted ball has been caught is prevented from doing so because a thrown live ball has become dead (5-1-1g), the runner's award shall be from the base the runner occupied at the time of the pitch. In any situations other than (a) or (b), on a batted ball which is the first play by an infielder, all runners including the batter-runner are awarded two bases from their positions at the time of the pitch. For purposes of this rule, the act of fielding is not considered a play. If every runner, including the batter-runner, has advanced one base at the time of the first play, the award is two bases from the time of the throw. For any subsequent play by an infielder or for any throw by an outfielder, the award is two bases from the time of the throw.

ART. 2 . . . Any runner is out when the runner:

- a. runs more than three feet away from a direct line between bases to avoid being tagged or to hinder a fielder while the runner is advancing or returning to a base;
 1. This is not an infraction if a fielder attempting to field a batted ball is in the runner's proper path and if the runner runs behind the fielder to avoid interfering with the fielder.
 2. When a play is being made on a runner or batter-runner, the batter-runner's baseline is established as directly between the batter-runner's position and the base toward which the batter-runner is moving.
- b. does not legally slide and causes illegal contact and/or illegally alters the actions of a fielder in the immediate act of making a play, or on a force play, does not slide in a direct line between the bases; or
 1. A runner may slide in a direction away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder.
 2. Runners are never required to slide, but if a runner elects to slide, the slide must be legal. (2-32-1, 2-32-2) Jumping, hurdling, and leaping are all legal attempts to avoid a fielder as long as the fielder is lying on the ground. Diving over a fielder is illegal.

PENALTY: The runner is out. Interference is called and the ball is dead immediately. On a force-play slide with less than two outs, the runner is declared out, as well as the batter-runner. Runners shall return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch. With two outs, the runner is declared out. The batter is credited with a fielder's choice.

- c. does not legally attempt to avoid a fielder in the immediate act of making a play on the runner; or

PENALTY: The runner is out, the ball remains live unless interference is called.

- d. dives over a fielder; or

PENALTY: The runner is out and the ball remains live unless interference occurs and is declared.

- e. initiates malicious contact;
 1. Malicious contact always supersedes obstruction. Runner(s) will be awarded appropriate base(s) per umpire's judgment.
- f. as a runner or retired runner, fails to execute a legal slide, or does not attempt to avoid the fielder or the play on a force play at any base; or
- g. intentionally interferes with a throw or a thrown ball; or the runner hinders a fielder on the fielder's initial attempt to field a batted ball. A fielder is not protected, except from intentional contact if the fielder misplays the ball and has to move from the fielder's original location; or the runner's being put out is prevented by an illegal act by anyone connected with the team (2-21-1, 3-2-2, 3-2-3) or by the batter-runner; for runner returning to base (8-2-6); and for runner being hit by a batted ball (8-4-2k). If, in the judgment of the umpire, a runner including the batter-runner interferes in any way and prevents a double play anywhere, two shall be declared out (the runner who interfered and the other runner involved). If a retired runner interferes, and

- n. runs bases in reverse to confuse opponents to make a travesty of the game; or
 - o. takes a position behind a base to get a running start; or
 - p. after at least touching first base, leaves the baseline, obviously abandoning the runner's effort to touch the next base; or
- NOTE:** Any runner, after reaching first base, who leaves the baseline heading for the dugout or a defensive position believing that there is no further play, shall be declared out if the umpire judges the act of the runner to be considered abandoning an effort to run the bases.
- q. is on or beyond a succeeding base when the ball is declared dead (5-2-2b-1) after having left a base too soon on a caught fly ball, or the runner failed to touch a preceding base, or continues and touches a succeeding base after the ball has become dead and the defense initiates a proper and successful appeal;
 - r. deliberately knocks the ball from a fielder's hand.
 - s. is physically assisted by a coach. (3-2-2)

Rule 9 Scoring – Recording Keeping

SECTION 1 HOW A TEAM SCORES

ART. 1 . . . A runner scores one run each time the runner legally advances to and touches first, second, third and then home plate before there are three outs to end the inning.

EXCEPTION: A run is not scored if the runner advances to home plate during action in which the third out is made as follows:

- a. by the batter-runner before the batter-runner touches first base; or
- b. by another runner being forced out; or
- c. by a preceding runner who is declared out upon appeal because the runner failed to touch one of the bases or left a base too soon on a caught fly ball; or
- d. when a third out is declared during a play resulting from a valid defensive appeal, which results in a force out (this out takes precedence if enforcement of it would negate a score); or
- e. when there is more than one out declared by the umpire which terminates the half inning, the defensive team may select the out which is to its advantage as in 2-20-2. Credit the putout to the nearest designated baseman.

EXAMPLE: If second base is involved, credit the second baseman with the putout.

NOTES:

1. If a fielder illegally obstructs a runner and is responsible for failure of that runner to reach home plate, the umpire has authority to award home plate to that runner.
2. When the winning run is scored in the last half inning of a regulation game, or in the last half of an extra inning, as the result of a base on balls, hit batter or any other play with the bases loaded which forces the runner on third base to advance, the umpire shall not declare the game over until all runners have advanced to the next base.

ART. 2 . . . A base hit is credited to a batter when the batter advances to first base safely:

- a. because of the batter's fair hit (rather than because of a fielder's error);
 1. It is not a base hit if any runner is out on a force play caused by the batter advancing toward first base.
 2. Base hits include any fair hit which cannot be fielded in time to throw out or tag out a batter-runner or any other runner when the runner is being forced to advance. Illustrations are: ball is stopped or checked by a fielder in motion who cannot recover in time, or ball moves too slowly; or ball is hit with such force to a fielder that neither that fielder nor an assisting fielder can handle it.
- b. without liability of being put out because: a runner is declared out for being hit by the batted ball (8-4-2k), or the umpire is hit by a batted ball (8-1-2b); or
- c. because of a fielder's choice (2-14-1) when a fielder attempts to put out another runner but is unsuccessful and the scorer believes the batter-runner would have reached first base even with perfect fielding.

ART. 3 . . . A base hit for extra bases is credited to the batter when it is the sole reason for the batter's safe arrival at second (double), third (triple) or home base (home run).

ART. 4 . . . A sacrifice is credited to the batter when, with not more than one out, the batter's bunt enables any runner to advance or the batter's fly ball enables a runner to score but which, in either case, results in the batter-runner being out before reaching first, or would have resulted in the batter being put out if the batter's bunt or batted ball had been fielded without error.

ART. 5 . . . A run batted in is credited to the batter when a runner scores because of a base hit, including the batter-runner's score on a home run; a sacrifice; any putout; a forced advance, such as for a base on balls or batter being hit; or an error, provided there are not two outs and that action is such that the runner on third would have scored even if there had been no error.

a. It is not a run batted in if there is a double play from a force or one in which the batter is put out or should have been put out on a batted ground ball.

ART. 6 . . . When a strikeout involves more than one batter, it is charged to the one who received at least two strikes. If no batter received more than one strike, it is charged to the batter who received the third strike.

SECTION 4 PLAYER'S BASERUNNING RECORD

ART. 1 . . . A stolen base shall be credited in the summary to a runner each time the runner advances a base without the aid of a base hit, a putout, a fielding (including battery) error or fielder's choice.

EXCEPTION: No runner is credited with a steal if:

- a. after reaching the base, the runner overslides and is put out; or
- b. in an attempted double or triple steal, any runner is put out; or
- c. opponents are in collusion as in a deliberate attempt to help establish a record; or
- d. there is defensive indifference and no play is attempted.

4. A fielder is not charged with an error for accurately throwing to a base whose baseman fails to stop or tries to stop the ball, provided there was good reason for the throw. If the runner advances because of the throw, the error is charged to the team or fielder who should have covered that base.
5. If a fielder drops a fair fly ball but recovers in time to force out a runner, the fielder is not charged with an error. It is recorded as a force-out.

SECTION 6 PITCHER'S RECORD

ART. 1 . . . A wild pitch shall be charged in the summary to the pitcher when a ball legally delivered to the batter is so high, or so low (including any pitch that touches the ground in front of home plate), or so far away from home plate that the catcher does not stop or control it with ordinary effort so that the batter-runner advances to first base or any runner advances a base. When the catcher enables a runner, other than the batter-runner, to advance by failing to control a pitch that the catcher should have been able to control, it is not a wild pitch but a "passed ball."

ART. 2 . . . The number of bases on balls, batters being hit by a pitch, strikeouts, and base hits allowed by each pitcher shall be recorded in the summary. If a batter is hit by what would have been the fourth ball, it is recorded as a hit batter.

ART. 3 . . . In order for a run to be earned, it must be scored without the aid of errors, or passed balls. To determine whether runs are earned or not, reconstruct the inning without the errors and passed balls. If there is doubt as to whether or not a run is earned, the pitcher shall be given the benefit.

ART. 4 . . . A strikeout is credited to the pitcher when a third strike is delivered to a batter even though the batter might reach first base because the third strike is a wild pitch or is not caught. It is also a strikeout if an attempted third strike bunt is an uncaught foul.

ART. 5 . . . A relief pitcher shall not be charged with any earned run scored by a runner who was on base when such pitcher entered, nor with any hit or advance by a batter who had more balls than strikes when such pitcher entered.

ART. 6 . . . Winning and losing pitchers are determined as follows:

- a. If the starting pitcher has pitched the first four innings or more and the pitcher's team is ahead when the pitcher is replaced and the team holds the lead for the remainder of the game, that pitcher shall be the winning pitcher.
- b. If a game ends for whatever reason, having gone less than seven innings, then the starting pitcher shall have pitched three or more consecutive innings to be declared the winning pitcher. If the starting pitcher cannot be declared the winning pitcher, and more than one relief pitcher is used, the winning pitcher shall be determined using the following criteria:
 1. If the score is tied, it results in the game becoming a new contest so far as judging who is the winning and losing pitcher.
 2. If the starting pitcher is removed before having pitched four or more innings and that pitcher's team is ahead, the official scorer shall determine the winning pitcher to be the relief pitcher who has been the most effective.

- m. Names of winning and losing pitchers.
- n. Name of pitcher to receive credit for a save.

ART. 2 . . . Percentage records are computed as follows:

- a. Percentage of games won and lost – divide the number of games won by total games played.
- b. Batting percentage – divide the total number of base hits, not the total bases on hits, by the total times at bat.
- c. Fielding percentage – divide the total putouts and assists by the total of putouts, assists and errors.
- d. Pitcher's earned run average – divide the total runs earned during the pitching by the total number of innings the pitcher pitched and multiply by seven.
 - 1. In items a, b, c or d, if there is a fraction of $\frac{1}{2}$ or more, a full point is added.

Rule 10 Umpiring

SECTION 1 GENERAL

ART. 1 . . . Game officials include the umpire-in-chief and one, two, three or more field umpires. Whenever possible, at least two umpires are recommended. Any umpire has the authority to order a player, coach or team attendant to do or refrain from doing anything that affects the administration of these rules and to enforce prescribed penalties.

ART. 2 . . . Umpire jurisdiction begins upon the umpires arriving at the field (within the confines of the field) and ends when the umpires leave the playing field at the conclusion of the game. The game officials retain clerical authority over the contest through the completion of any reports, including those imposing disqualification, that are responsive to actions occurring while the umpires had jurisdiction. State associations may intercede in the event of unusual incidents after the umpires' jurisdiction has ended or in the event that a game is terminated prior to the conclusion of regulation play.

ART. 3 . . . If there is only one umpire, the umpire has complete jurisdiction in administering the rules and may take any position, preferably behind the catcher.

ART. 4 . . . Any umpire's decision which involves judgment, such as whether a hit is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or a ball, or whether a runner is safe or out, is final. But if there is reasonable doubt about some decision being made. The umpire making the decision may ask another umpire for information before making a final decision. No umpire shall criticize or interfere with another umpire's decision unless asked by the one making it.

- a. The umpire-in-chief sometimes asks for aid from the base umpire when there is a question as to whether a batter's "half swing" is such as to be called a strike. As an aid in deciding, the umpire may note whether the

- h. Forfeit the game for prescribed infractions by spectators, coaches, players or attendants.
- i. When game is played under the auspices of an organization which permits protests to be filed, the umpire-in-chief shall report the protest to the organization along with all related conditions at the time of the protested play, provided the protest is brought to the attention of an umpire by the offended team at the time of the play and before the next pitch after such play, or before the umpires leave the field if the play in question is the last play of the game. The umpire-in-chief shall then inform the coach of the opposing team and the official scorekeeper.
 - 1. If there is a question about a rule that was possibly misapplied, the team's coach or captain shall inform the umpire at time of the play and before a pitch to the next batter of either team, or before the umpires leave the field if the play in question was the last play of the game.
- j. Keep a written record of defensive and offensive team charged conferences for each team and notify the respective coach each time a conference is charged to the coach's team. The umpire-in-chief shall also be responsible for keeping a lineup card and recording all substitutes, courtesy runner participation, and warnings. (1-1-5, 3-4-1, Courtesy Runner Rule #6)
- k. Prohibit any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) from returning to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.
- l. Rectify any situation in which an umpire's decision that was reversed has placed either team at a disadvantage.
- m. Correct a scorekeeping error if brought to an umpire's attention before the umpires leave the field when the game is over.
- n. Order the lights turned on whenever the umpire-in-chief believes darkness could make further play hazardous. Whenever possible, lights should be turned on at the beginning of an inning.

SECTION 3 FIELD UMPIRE

ART. 1 . . . A field umpire shall aid the umpire-in-chief in administering the rules. The field umpire shall make all decisions on the bases except those reserved for the umpire-in-chief. The field umpire shall have concurrent jurisdiction with the umpire-in-chief in calling time, balks, infield fly, defacement or discoloration of ball by the pitcher, illegal pitches, when a fly ball is caught, or in ejecting any coach or player for flagrant, unsportsmanlike conduct or infraction as prescribed by the rules. In some instances, the field umpire will rule on the ball being fair or foul.

ART. 2 . . . When there is only one field umpire, the field umpire shall make all calls primarily at first, second and third unless the calls are more conveniently made by the umpire-in-chief.

ART. 3 . . . If additional field umpires are used, the field umpires are referred to as base umpires and their normal positions are behind third and second bases. The field umpires have concurrent jurisdiction with the first field umpire.

RULES BY STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTION

1-2-9: A double first base is permitted.

1-4-4: To allow for special occasions, commemorative or memorial patches, that will be uniformly placed, not to exceed 4 square inches, to be worn on jerseys in an appropriate and dignified manner without compromising the integrity of the uniform.

2-33-1: Suggested speed-up rules.

4-2-2: By state association adoption, the game shall end when the visiting team is behind 10 or more runs after 4½ innings, or after the fifth inning, if either team is 10 runs behind and both teams have had an equal number of times at bat.

4-2-4: Game-ending procedures may be determined.

4-3-1: A regulation called game where a winner cannot be determined shall be counted as ½ game won and ½ game lost for each team.

4-4-1a: State associations are authorized to specify the time frame and/or circumstances before a forfeit shall be declared for a late arrival by one of the teams.

4-5-1: It is optional on the part of the state association as to whether protests are permitted.

10-1-9: Umpires shall wear the navy blue pullover shirt or state association-adopted shirt

2023 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

The NFHS Baseball Rules Committee and the NFHS Board of Directors believes there are areas of the game of interscholastic baseball that need to be addressed and given special attention. These areas of concern are often cyclical – some areas need more attention than others, and that is why they might appear in the rules book for consecutive editions. These concerns are identified as "Points of Emphasis." For the 2023 high school baseball season, attention is being called to: Sportsmanship, Obstruction and Interference, Jewelry and Usage of Eye Black. When a topic is included in the Points of Emphasis, these topics are important enough to reinforce throughout the academic year because additional attention is warranted.

Sportsmanship

Good sporting behavior is one of the fundamental ingredients to the continued success and enjoyment of education-based high school sports and activities. In fact, in the 103-year history of organized high school sports in the United States, good sportsmanship has been one of the most important outcomes of high school activity programs.

NFHS playing rules are written to encourage sportsmanship. Participation in these programs should promote respect, integrity and sportsmanship. However, for these ideals to occur, everyone involved in these programs must be doing their part.

The NFHS is concerned that unsporting behavior in education-based athletics has increased across all sports. As a result, the NFHS has made sportsmanship the No. 1 Point of Emphasis for the 2022-23 school year.

Sportsmanship, or good sporting behavior, is about treating one another with respect and exhibiting appropriate behavior. It is about being fair, honest and caring. When these types of appropriate behavior occur, competitive play is more enjoyable for everyone.

Coaches set the tone at athletic contests with their display of sportsmanship. If these individuals act in a sportsmanlike manner, their behavior sets the tone for players, spectators and others. If coaches, however, are complaining constantly about the decision of contest officials, spectators are more likely to do the same.

Jewelry

Jewelry in baseball was originally defined as any item on the body of the player that was not a natural part of the person. That also included medical-alert bracelets and some religious, cultural or tribal adornments. The elimination of the jewelry rule will permit players to wear these items freely. Additionally, with that freedom to wear jewelry, please note that any jewelry that contains profanity, taunting, language to intimidate or baiting an opponent would not be allowed under our sportsmanship rule, bench and field conduct policies. Besides those examples, there is existing rule coverage that gives guidance on any player equipment that presents a danger to the player, teammate or opponent.

Usage of Eye Black

Eye black has been a staple in the sport of baseball since the 1930s. Originally, the first introduction of eye black was a grease substance made out of beeswax, paraffin and carbon to help players reduce glare from the sun. It has evolved to a less messy version as a plastic sticker placed under the eye socket that does not run when wet from perspiration or soils the uniform. The grease version of eye black is now being used as a face decoration. Images and/or sayings are being drawn on the faces of the players to try to intimidate and/or taunt an opponent. There are existing sportsmanship rules available to mitigate any use of eye black (in any version) in an inappropriate or unfavorable way. We are hopeful that coaches direct their players to use this convenient tool in a more productive way.

COMMENTS ON THE 2023 RULES CHANGES**Clarified that eye shields that are not intended for baseball catcher's helmet and mask combination and any tinted eye shields should not be attached to face masks (1-5-4) —**

There has been an increase of catchers attaching aftermarket eye shields to their face masks that are tinted and not approved by the face mask manufacturer. Attaching a product that was not manufactured for the specific face mask is a risk to the wearer. The tinted eye shield is problematic because it would prevent a medical professional from accessing the eyes of the catcher to determine their condition.

Deletion of the jewelry rule. Exceptions are covered under other existing rules (1-5-12) — Any jewelry worn that poses harm or injury to the player or their opponent is covered in existing rules.

Clarified the definition of a lodged ball (2-4-4) — A definition of a lodged ball was necessary and appropriate to differentiate when it is stuck on the field or in an apparatus, compared to when it is stuck in a glove.

Deletion of the jewelry rule. Exceptions are covered under other existing rules (3-3-1d) — This is a companion rule change with the deletion of Rule 1-5-12. If jewelry is worn that poses harm to the player or the opponent, there is existing rules support to handle the situation. Bandannas are still prohibited.



OFFICIAL NFHS BASEBALL SIGNALS

A. Pre-pitch Situational Signals

PlayPic



1. Play Right hand point to pitcher "Play." Ball is live.



2. Do Not Pitch Right palm facing out. Ball is dead.



3. Infield Fly Point up with index finger. Verbal on way down "If fair."



4. Double Tag Rotation PU covers 3rd on double tag.



5. Count Left hand indicates balls and right hand strikes. Verbal count given.



6. Time Play With 2 out potential run score 2 fingers on left wrist.



7. Rotation Thumbs and pinkie fingers extended. Arm down by side. Rotate hand.



8. Stay Home Both arms with index finger straight down.

PlayPics courtesy of **REFEREE** (www.referee.com)



National Federation of State High School Associations

MISSION STATEMENT

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) serves its members by providing leadership for the administration of education-based high school athletics and activities through the writing of playing rules that emphasize health and safety, educational programs that develop leaders, and administrative support to increase participation opportunities and promote sportsmanship.

CORE BELIEFS AND VALUES

WE BELIEVE

Student participation in education-based high school athletics and activities:

- Is a privilege.
- Enriches the educational experience.
- Encourages academic achievement.
- Promotes respect, integrity and sportsmanship.
- Prepares for the future in a global community.
- Develops leadership and life skills.
- Fosters the inclusion of diverse populations.
- Promotes healthy lifestyles and safe competition.
- Encourages positive school/community culture.
- Should be fun.

THE NFHS:

- Serves as the national authority that promotes and protects the defining values of education-based high school athletics and activities in collaboration with its member state associations.
- Serves as the national authority on competition rules while promoting fair play and seeking to minimize risk of injury for student participants in education-based high school athletics and activities.
- Promotes lifelong health and safety values through participation.
- Develops and delivers impactful, innovative and engaging educational programs to serve the changing needs of state associations, administrators, coaches, directors, officials, students and parents.
- Provides professional development opportunities for member state association staffs.
- Promotes cooperation, collaboration and communication with and among state associations.
- Collects and provides data analysis in order to allow its membership to make informed decisions.



National Federation of State High School Associations

EQUIPMENT GUIDELINES

1. Each NFHS sports rules committee is responsible for recommending the official playing rules to the NFHS Board of Directors for adoption. The committee is **NOT** responsible for testing or approving playing equipment for use in interscholastic sports. Equipment manufacturers are responsible for the development of playing equipment that meets the specifications established by the committee, and that is otherwise of good design and quality. The NFHS urges manufacturers to work with the various independent testing agencies to ensure the production of safe products. Neither the NFHS nor the applicable NFHS sport rules committee certifies the safety of any sport equipment. Non-compliant equipment is inappropriate for use in competition under NFHS sports rules. While the committee does not regulate the development of new equipment and does not set technical or scientific standards for testing equipment, the committee may, from time to time, provide manufacturers with guidance as to the equipment-performance levels it considers consistent with the integrity of the game. The committee reserves the right to intercede to protect and maintain that integrity.
2. Each NFHS sport rules committee suggests that manufacturers planning innovative changes in sports equipment submit the equipment to the applicable NFHS sport rules editor and/or rules committee for review before production.
3. Protective headgear is required by NFHS rules in some sports and is permissive in others. Hard helmets can decrease the incidence of certain head trauma, such as skull fractures and subdural hematomas. Soft headgear may protect against cuts and bruises to the scalp and forehead. Coaches, athletes and parents/guardians should review the manufacturers' warnings about proper usage and performance limits of such products. **No helmet or headgear can eliminate the risk of concussion and all sports should be played, coached and officiated in recognition of that fact.**



National Federation of State High School Associations

GUIDELINES ON HANDLING PRACTICES AND CONTESTS DURING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES

These guidelines provide a default policy to those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder. The preferred sources from which to request such a policy for your facility would include your state high school activities association and the nearest office of the National Weather Service.

PROACTIVE PLANNING

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safer areas and determine the amount of time needed to get everyone to a designated safer area:
 - a. A designated safer place is a substantial building with plumbing and wiring where people live or work, such as a school, gymnasium or library. An alternate safer place from the threat of lightning is a fully enclosed (not convertible or soft top) metal car or school bus.
3. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
 - a. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen*, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.
 - b. 30-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed* prior to resuming play.
 - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning* after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
 - d. When independently validated lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location. However, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning* should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning-detection device.
4. Review the lightning safety policy annually with all administrators, coaches and game personnel and train all personnel.
5. Inform student-athletes and their parents of the lightning policy at start of the season.

Revised and Approved January 2021

** – At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.*



National Federation of State High School Associations

OFFICIALS CODE OF ETHICS





Officials at an interscholastic athletic event are participants in the educational development of high school students. As such, they must exercise a high level of self-discipline, independence and responsibility. The purpose of this Code is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for all interscholastic officials.

- **Officials** shall master both the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to enforce the rules, and shall exercise authority in an impartial, firm and controlled manner.
- **Officials** shall work with each other and their state associations in a constructive and cooperative manner.
- **Officials** shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession in all interaction with student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, school administrators, colleagues, and the public.
- **Officials** shall avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco products beginning with the arrival at the competition site until departure following the completion of the contest.
- **Officials** shall prepare themselves both physically and mentally, shall dress neatly and appropriately, and shall comport themselves in a manner consistent with the high standards of the profession.
- **Officials** shall be punctual and professional in the fulfillment of all contractual obligations.
- **Officials** shall remain mindful that their conduct influences the respect that student-athletes, coaches and the public hold for the profession.
- **Officials** shall, while enforcing the rules of play, remain aware of the inherent risk of injury that competition poses to student-athletes. Where appropriate, officials shall inform event management of conditions or situations that appear unreasonably hazardous.
- **Officials** shall take reasonable steps to educate themselves in the recognition of emergency conditions that might arise during the course of competition.
- **Officials** shall maintain an ethical approach while participating in forums, chat rooms and all forms of social media.



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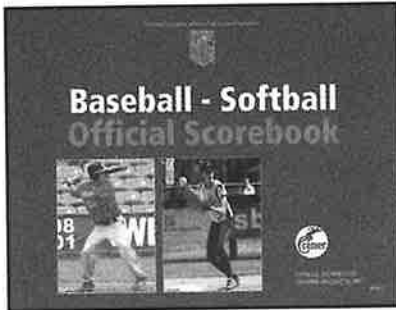
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INDEX**REFERENCES ARE TO RULE, SECTION AND ARTICLE**

Abbreviations		Base Coaches	3-2-1, 3-2-2, 3-2-3
Player Positions	2-1-1, 2-1-2, 2-1-3	Base Hits	2-5, 9-3-2
Rule Book Play	2-1-1, 2-1-2, 2-1-3	Base Line	
Accident to Player or Umpire	3-1-5, 3-1-6, 5-2-1d, 10-1-6, 10-2-3k	Abandoning	8-4-1i, 8-4-2p
Announcements		Definition	8-4-2a(2)
By Umpires	10-2-3	Runner Leaves	8-4-1g, 8-4-2a
Appeals		Base on Balls	
Improper Batter	7-1-2 PEN. (1-5)	Called	8-1-1c, 8-3-1b
Half Swing	10-1-4a	Definition	2-4-2
On Runner	8-2-5 PEN. (1-5), 8-2-6	Intentional	2-4-3, 5-1-3, 8-1-1c
On Umpire Decision	10-1-4	Scoring	9-6-2
Assists	9-5-3	Base Runner	2-30-2
At Bat	2-39, 9-3-1a, 9-7-1	Bat	
Averages	9-7-2	Altered	1-3-5
Awards	1-5-7, 2-2, 8-1-1e(1), 8-2-6g	Carelessly Thrown	3-3-1c
Balk		Deliberately Thrown	3-3-1i
Acts Which Result in	6-1-1, 6-1-2, 6-1-3 PEN., 6-1-4, 6-2-1 PEN., 6-2-4, 6-2-5	Broken	7-3-6
Ball dead	5-1-1k	Illegal	1-3-5, 7-4-1a
Definition	2-3	Loose	1-3-7
Improper Batter	7-1-2 PEN. (1-5)	On-Deck Devices	1-3-4
Penalty	6-1-3 PEN., 8-3-1a, 8-3-5a	Specification	1-3-2, 1-3-3, 1-3-4, 1-3-5
Scoring	8-3-1a, 9-1-1	Thrown	7-3-6
Ball		Touched by Batted Ball	8-4-1d
Awarded	6-2-2 PEN. (c)	Batter	
Bases on	2-4-2, 2-4-3, 5-1-3, 8-1-1c	Awarded First	8-1-2
Batted	2-6	Becomes Runner	8-1
Bounces Out of Play	5-1-1f, 8-3-3c	Definition	2-7-1
Called	6-1-4	Delays	6-2-4d(1), 7-2-1e, 7-3-1
Dead	2-11, 5-1, 5-2-2, 6-1-4	Disconcerts Pitcher	3-3-1n, 7-3-3
Dead Ball Table	Pgs. 36-37	Half Swing	10-1-4a
Defined	2-4-1	Hit by Batted Ball	7-2-1f
Defaced	6-2-1a-d	Hit by Pitch	2-39, 5-1-1a, 7-3-4, 8-1-1d, 9-6-2
Delayed Dead	5-1-2, 5-1-3, 7-3-5 PEN., 8-1-1e, 8-3-2, 8-3-3	Illegal Action	5-1-1b, e; 7-3
Fair	2-5-1	Improper	7-1-1, 7-1-2 PEN.
Foul	2-16-1	Interference by	5-1-2a, 7-3-5, 7-3-6, 8-4-2i
Hits Batter	2-40, 5-1-1a, 7-3-4, 8-1-1d, 8-3-1a, 8-3-1b	Obstructed	8-1-1e
Hits Runner	5-1-1f, 8-4-2k	Out	7-3, 7-4
Hits Umpire	5-1-1f, 8-1-2b	Position	2-7-2, 7-1-1, 7-3-2
Illegally Batted	5-1-1b, 7-3-2, 7-4-1a	Strike Out	7-4-1b, d, e; 8-4-1e, f
In Flight	2-6-1	Batter-Runner	2-7-3, 8-1-1, 8-1-2, 8-4-1
Live	5-1-4	Batter's Box	1-2-5, 2-7-2, 7-3-1, 7-3-2, 7-3-3
Official Game Balls	1-3-1	Battery	2-13-4
Passed	2-26, 9-6-1	Batting Helmet	1-5-1
Pitched	7-2-1, 7-2-2	Batting Order	3-1-1, 4-1-3, 7-1
Specification	1-3-1	Batting Out of Order	7-1-1, 7-1-2 PEN.
Thrown into Stands	5-1-1g, 8-3-3c, d	Bench Conduct	3-3
When in Play	5-1-4	Blood	3-1-6
Base		Bunt	2-8, 7-2-1d, 7-4-1e, 8-4-1c, d
Dislodged	8-4-2h(1)	Casts	1-5-6, 10-1-7
Double	1-2-9	Catch	2-9-1
Home Plate	1-2-10	Catcher	
Missed	8-2-3, 8-2-3 PEN., 9-1-1c	Definition	2-9-2
Retouch	8-2-2, 8-2-5, 8-4-2i	Error Not Charged	9-5-5 EXC. (2 and 3)
Specification	1-2-9	Glove	1-3-6, Diagram 4
Touch Requirements	8-2	Helmet	1-5-4
		Obstruction	5-1-2b, 8-1-1e, 8-3-1c
		Interference With	7-3-5, 8-4-1a, 8-4-2i
		Position	1-1-4

Specification	1-3-6
Throw	8-3-3a, b, c
Ground Ball	2-6-4
Ground Rules	4-1-2, 10-2-3a
Helmet	1-5-1, 5-1-2e
Base Hits	2-5-2
Home Plate	Diagram 2, 1-2-1, 1-2-10
Home Run	4-2-2a
Illegally Batted Ball	7-3-2, 7-4-1a
Illegal Pitch	2-18, 2-27-1e, 6-1-3 PEN, 6-2-1 PEN, 6-2-4c, 7-2-2
Infielder	2-13-1
Infield Fly	2-19, 5-1-1j EXC., 8-4-1c(1)
	8-4-2j(1), 8-4-2k(1, 2)
Inning/Half Inning	2-20
Intentional Base on Balls	2-4-3, 5-1-3, 8-1-1c
Intentionally Dropped Ball	5-1-1j, 8-4-1c
Interference	
Defensive	See Obstruction
Double Play	8-4-1h, 8-4-2g
Offensive	2-21-1, 8-2-9
Ball Hits Runner	5-1-1f, 8-4-2k
Bat Hits Ball Twice	8-4-1d
Bat Hits Fielder	7-3-6
Batter Impedes Fielder	5-1-2a, 8-4-1a, 8-4-2g
Coach	3-2-3, 7-4-1f
Offensive Team Hinders	3-2-3, 5-1-2d, 7-4-1f
Runner Impedes Fielder	5-1-1e, f, 8-4-1h, 8-4-2, 8-4-2f
Follow-through	2-21-4, 5-1-2a, 7-3-5
Backswing	2-21-5, 5-1-1n, 7-3-7
Runner Impedes Thrown Ball	8-4-2g
Spectator	2-21-3, 5-1-1f, g, 7-4-1d, 8-3-3e, 8-4-1b
Umpire	2-21-2, 5-1-1f, 5-1-2c
Verbal	2-21-1, 3-3-1f, n, 5-1-2d
Jewelry	1-5-12, 3-3-1d
Light Failure	4-2-3
Line Drive	2-6-3
Line Up Cards	3-1-1, 4-1-3, 7-1-1
Logos	1-4-4
Losing Pitcher	9-6-6
Malicious Contact	2-21-1b, 3-3-1m, 8-4-2e
Media	1-2-8
Missed Base	9-1-1c
Mobility Devices	
Coaches	3-2-1
Umpires	10-1-7
Objective	1-1-1
Obstruction	2-22, 5-1-2b, 5-1-3, 8-1-1e, 8-3-1c, 8-3-2
Official Scorer	9-2-2, 10-2-3a
On-Deck Circle	1-2-3, 2-23-1
Overrunning/sliding Base	8-2-7, 8-4-2h(1), 9-4-1 EXC. a
Passed Ball	
Definition	2-26
Improper Batter	7-1-2 PEN. (1-5)
Leaves Playing Field	8-3-3d
Scoring	9-6-1
Penalties	
Definition	2-27-1
Ignored	5-1-2, 8-1-1e, 8-3-4
Imposed	5-1-3, 8-3-2, 8-3-3
Percentages	9-7-2
Pitch	2-28-2
Pitcher	
Ambidextrous	6-1-1
Balks	6-1-3 PEN., 6-1-4, 6-2-4, 6-2-5
Becomes Fielder	6-1-5
Changes Field Position	1-1-5, 3-1-2
Conferences	2-10-1, 3-4-1, 10-2-3j
Defaces Ball	6-2-1, 10-3-1
Definition	2-28-1
Delay	6-2-2
Disconcerted	3-3-1n, 5-1-2d, 7-3-3
Faint	2-28-5, 6-1-3, 6-2-2c, 6-2-4a, b, f
Foreign Substance	6-2-1a
Glove	1-3-6
Illegal Equipment	1-5-7
Illegal Pitch	6-1-3 PEN., 6-2-1 PEN., 6-2-4, 7-2-2
Infractions	6-2-1
Legal Pitch	6-1-4
Legal Position	6-1-1, 6-1-2, 6-1-3
Pivot Foot	2-28-6, 6-1-1, 6-1-2, 6-1-3
Plate	1-2-11
Preparatory Pitches (Warmups)	6-2-2c EXC.
Quick Pitch	6-1-1, 6-1-3, 6-2-4c, 6-2-5
Record	9-6
Saves	9-6-7
Set Position	6-1-3
Substitution	3-1-2
Take Signs On Rubber	6-1-1
Throwing at Batter	6-2-3
Throwing to a Base	6-1-3, 6-1-5, 6-2-4b, e, f
Windup Position	6-1-2
Winning/Losing	9-6-6
Pitching Mound	Diagram 3, 1-2-6, 1-2-7
Pitching Restriction	6-1-6
Play	2-29-1
Play Ruling	2-29-4
Player(s)	
Captain	1-1-2
Concussion	3-1-5, 10-2-3k
Conduct	3-2-3, 3-3-1
Loosening Up to Bat	3-3-3
Positions	Diagram 1, 1-1-2, 1-1-3, 1-1-4
Required Number	1-1-2, 4-1-3, 4-4-1f, 7-4-1g
Playing Field	1-2, 2-42-1
Points of Emphasis	Pgs. 66-67
Postponement Responsibility	4-1-1
Pre-Game Procedures	1-5-10, 4-1-3, 10-2-3a
Protested Games	1-2-12, 4-5, 10-2-3i
Putouts	2-24-2, 9-5-2
Records	9-2 thru 9-7
Re-entry	3-1-3
Regulation Game	2-17-1, 4-2
Relief Pitcher	3-1-1, 6-2-2 EXC. 9-6-5
Removal from Game	See Ejection
Resuming Play after Dead Ball	5-1-4
Restrictions on Players	3-3-1, 3-3-3
Rule Revisions	Pg. 2
Runner	
Advance	8-1-1, 8-2-5, 8-3-3
Awarded Base	8-3-1, 8-3-2, 8-3-3
Batter-Runner	8-1-1, 8-1-2, 8-4-1
Courtesy	See Speed Up Rules
Definition	2-30-2
Hit by Batted Ball	2-39, 5-1-1f(1, 2), 6-1-5, 8-1-1, 8-4-2k
Hit by Pitch	2-40, 5-1-1a, 6-1-4

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