2026 NFHS BASEBALL RULES BOOK

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NFHS Publications

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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2026 Baseball Rules Changes

(For comments on the 2026 rules changes, page 69)

1-2-9, 2-5-1h, 2-16-1h, 8-2-1, 8-2-2(a)1-7, 8-2-7, 8-4-1g(1) — Modified that the double first base will be mandatory effective January 1, 2027 and associated rule changes.

1-4-4 — Clarified what is allowed on a school's official baseball uniform.

1-6-3 — Clarified what is not allowed to be worn by a player to record or transmit audio or video feeds.

2-10-3 — Clarified the definition of a player-to-player defensive meeting.

3-4-6 — Clarified the difference from a player-to-player meeting and a charged conference.

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 see pages 76-79 for these position statements.

Each state high school association adopting these rules is the sole and exclusive source of binding rules interpretations for contests involving its member schools. Any person having questions about the interpretation of NFHS rules should contact the rules interpreter designated by the respective state high school association.

The NFHS is the sole and exclusive source of model interpretations of NFHS rules. State rules interpreters may contact the NFHS for model rules interpretations. No other model rules interpretations should be considered.

2026 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 2026 high school baseball season, attention is being called to: Discipline (of Players and Coaches), Sportsmanship (Bench Jockeying), Proper Pitching Positions, and Running Lane Awareness. When a topic is included in the Points of Emphasis, these topics are important enough to reinforce throughout the academic year because they are not being given the proper attention.

Discipline

In the game of baseball, umpires serve as impartial authorities whose primary role is to ensure that the contest is conducted fairly, safely, and within the framework of established NFHS rules. Respecting their decisions is foundational to the integrity of the sport and models appropriate behavior. When coaches and players accept umpire rulings—whether or not they agree—it promotes sportsmanship, discipline, and respect for the game. It also helps maintain focus, keeps the pace of play steady, and fosters a positive environment for all participants, including opponents and spectators. Disputing or showing visible dissent toward an umpire's decision undermines their authority and disrupts the game. More importantly, it sets a poor example for younger players and fans. Such behavior, if left unchecked, can escalate tensions and compromise the spirit of competition.

Any unsportsmanlike conduct, arguing, or disrespect directed toward umpires will result in disciplinary action, which may include warnings, restriction to the bench, or ejection from the game found in NFHS Baseball Rule 3 (3-3 Articles 1-4) and Rule 10 (10-2-3). These penalties are not punitive in nature—they are protective of the values that define high school sports: respect, integrity, and personal responsibility. Respect for officials isn't just a rule—it's a reflection of the maturity, leadership, and character we hope to instill in all participants through educational athletics.

Sportsmanship (Bench Jockeying and Props)

High school baseball exists within the framework of education-based athletics, where the primary goals extend beyond competition to include character development, sportsmanship, and mutual respect. With that in mind, bench jockeying has no place in the high school game. Bench jockeying—defined as negative verbal comments, taunting, or attempts to distract, intimidate, or embarrass opponents or officials from the dugout—violates the standards of conduct expected in interscholastic competition. It detracts from the integrity of the sport and undermines the core values of respect and self-control that high school sports are intended to teach. More importantly, bench jockeying often escalates tensions, provokes retaliation, and leads to unsportsmanlike behavior that can tarnish the contest and damage the experience for players, coaches, umpires, and spectators alike. High school athletes are still learning how to carry themselves with dignity and class under pressure. Allowing or ignoring bench jockeying sends the wrong message. By rule, sportsmanship (bench jockeying) is prohibited and will result in warnings, restrictions, or ejections as deemed appropriate by the umpire. Enforcement of this rule is not about silencing enthusiasm—it is about upholding the spirit of fair play and modeling appropriate conduct for students, schools, and communities.

Like Bench Decorum, there is no logical purpose to have props at an education based athletic event. They are not enhancing the educational value of the contest. In fact, they deter from any valuable lesson gained from competing. Unlike the collegiate and professional models, the use of props or any items to demean or embarrass one's opponent is contrary to the reason the NFHS writes playing rules for high school age and skilled students.

The dugout should be a place of encouragement and unity, not derision and distraction. Let the game be decided by skill, preparation, and respect—not by unnecessary noise and antics.

Proper Pitching Positions

The premise of the pitching positions is very basic and a violation is enforceable regardless if there is a runner on or not on base. Pitching positions have evolved over the years to stay current with existing teaching styles and the increasing skill levels of high school age students. It is one of the most talked about and modified rules in the history of NFHS rules writing. We should always be cautious and concerned that the reasons to change the rule is never associated to the whims or trends of other levels of baseball. Pitchers are required to use one of two positions: the wind-up or the set. It is important that umpires, coaches, and players know what position the pitcher is using so they know which part of Rule 6 is in play. The position of the pivot foot determines which of the pitching positions is being used. In the wind-up position, the pitcher's pivot foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate and is not parallel to it. They may only deliver a pitch or step backward off the pitcher's plate with the pivot first. In the set position, the pivot foot is in contact with or directly in front of and parallel to the pitcher's plate.

Running Lane Awareness

Enforcing the running lane rule (NFHS Rule 8-4-1g) is vital for player safety, fairness, and the educational goals of high school baseball. The batter-runner must use the designated lane in foul territory during a play at first base.

1. Safety – The lane prevents collisions and protects both the runner and the fielder.
2. Fair Play – Staying in the lane avoids unfair interference with defensive plays.
3. Consistency – Regular enforcement promotes accountability and discourages rule violations.
4. Education – Teaching proper lane use reinforces respect for the rules and the game.

Violations result in interference, with the batter-runner out and runners returned. This rule is more than a technicality—it's essential to a safe, fair, and respectful game.

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.

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Rule 1 Players, Field and Equipment

The NFHS does not perform scientific tests on any specific items of equipment to determine if the equipment poses undue risks to student-athletes, coaches, officials or spectators. Such determinations are the responsibility of equipment manufacturers.

SECTION 1 POSITIONS OF PLAYERS

ART. 1 . . . In high school baseball, each team is permitted seven turns at bat (4-2-2) during which it attempts to score runs by having its batters become base runners who advance to and touch first base, second base, third base and home plate. The team in the field attempts to end each turn at bat of the opponent by causing three of its batters or base runners to be out. Each of the two teams consists of at least nine players throughout the game (EXCEPTION 4-4-1f), one of whom must be designated captain.

ART. 2 . . . The captain and head coach represent the team in communications with umpires. The captain's and head coach's duties shall include: (1) providing the umpire-in-chief with the team's lineup card which shall include the name, shirt number, position and batting order of each starting player, the name and shirt number of each eligible substitute should also be listed; and (2) informing all

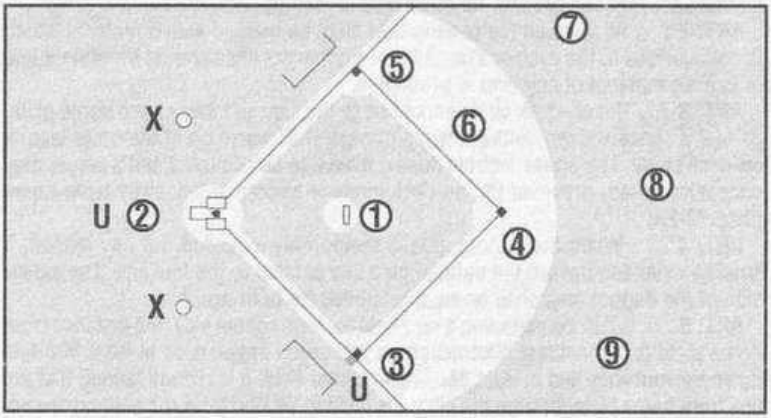


Diagram 1

KEY: 1 (Pitcher); **2** (Catcher); **3** (1st Baseman); **4** (2nd Baseman); **5** (3rd Baseman); **6** (Shortstop); **7** (Left Fielder); **8** (Center Fielder); **9** (Right Fielder); **U** (Umpire); **X** (On-Deck Circle; **Stippled Area** (Grass).

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.

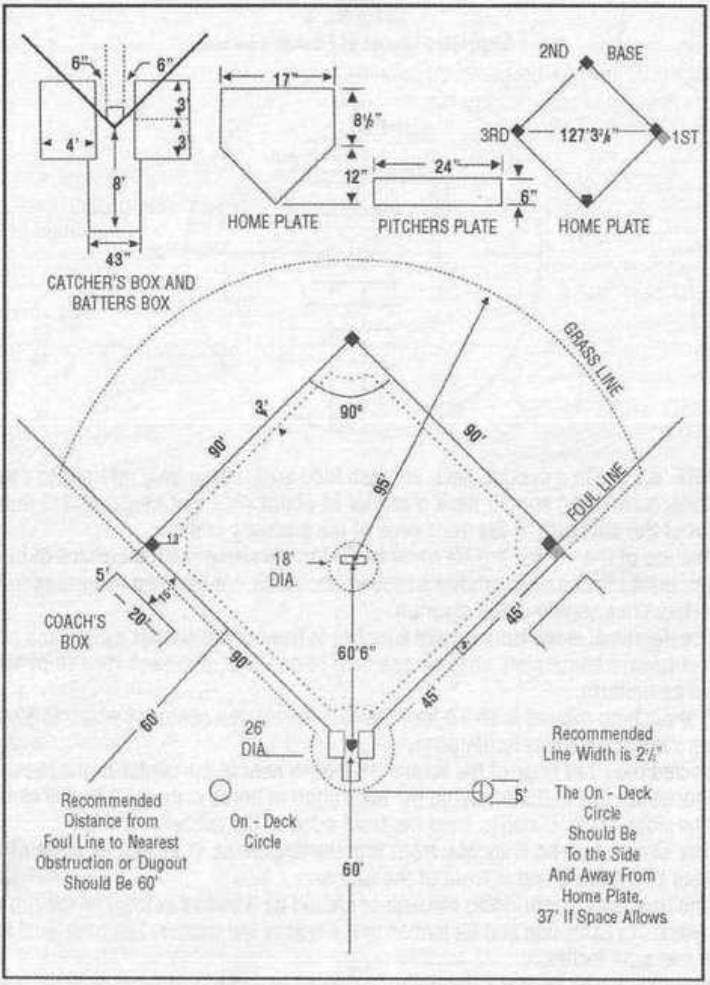
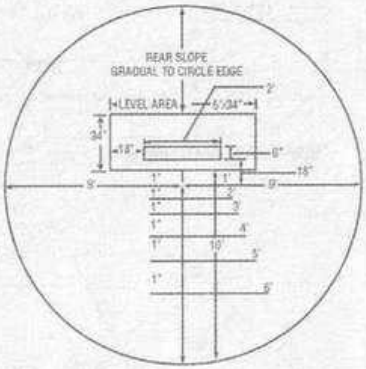


Diagram 2
Official Measurements . . . for laying out baseball field

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 1½ 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. 8 . . . Media shall be prohibited from being in live-ball area. If a designated media area is to be used, it shall be established before the game begins. The home team or game management shall designate a lined area for the media, which shall be considered dead-ball area.

ART. 9 . . . Effective January 1, 2027, the double first base will be required. The double first base shall be a white base and a contrasting solid color. The white portion of the base is located in fair territory and the colored base shall be located in foul territory. The double first base is split by the first base foul line. They shall be installed with no space between the two portions of the double first base. Both double first bases (white and colored), second and third bases shall be white bags, 15 inches square and 2 to 5 inches in thickness, and made of canvas filled with a soft material, or molded rubber or synthetic material, and shall be securely attached to the ground or an anchor system as in Diagram 2. Bases may have tapered edges and/or be designed to disengage from their anchor systems.

ART. 10 . . . Home plate shall be a five-sided slab of whitened rubber or other suitable similar material. One edge is 17 inches long, two are 8½ inches and two are 12 inches. It shall be set in the ground so that the two 12-inch edges coincide with the diamond lines extending from home plate to first base and to third base, with the 17-inch edge facing the pitcher's plate.

ART. 11 . . . The pitcher's plate shall be a rectangular slab of whitened rubber or suitable material, 24 inches by 6 inches. It shall be set in the ground as shown in Diagram 2 so that the distance between the nearer edge of the pitcher's plate and the rear tip of home plate shall be 60 feet, 6 inches.

ART. 12 . . . Any game started on a nonregulation facility by mutual agreement of the opposing coaches shall not be protested for this reason.

SECTION 3 BATS, BALLS AND GLOVES

ART. 1 . . . The ball shall meet the current NOCSAE standard for baseballs at the time of manufacture and is required on balls that will be used in high school competition. The SEI/NOCSAE mark (below) is required on all balls that meet the NOCSAE standard that will be used in high school competition. A minimum of three umpire-approved baseballs shall be provided to start the game. Unless otherwise mutually agreed upon, the home team has this responsibility. No less than two baseballs shall be used to complete a game.

The NFHS Authenticating Mark is required on all balls that will be used in high school competition.

NFHS NFHSa

SEI Certified MEETS NOCSAE STANDARD ®

A current list of NFHS authenticated products can be found on the website: www.nfhs.org.

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 on the bat, not to exceed beyond 18 inches from the base of the knob. Molded grips are illegal.
   2. Be 2⅝" 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 label, sticker or decal will be accepted on any non-wood bat. The certification mark shall be rectangular, a minimum of one inch on each side and located on the barrel of the bat in any contrasting color to read: "BBCOR .50."

NOTE: The NFHS has been advised that certain manufacturers consider alteration, modification and "doctoring" of bats to be unlawful and subject to civil and, under certain circumstances, criminal action.

ART. 3 . . . A bat made of a single piece of wood may be roughened or wound with tape not more than 18 inches from the handle end of the bat. No foreign substance may be added to the surface of the bat beyond 18 inches from the end of the handle. Each bat made of a single piece of wood shall be:

a. 2¾ inches or less in diameter at the thickest part
b. 36 inches or less in length

ART. 4 . . . Only bats may be used in warming up (including weighted bats used for this purpose) at any location. Only bats and items designed to remain part of the bat, such as weighted bats, batting donuts, and wind-resistant devices are legal at any location.

ART. 5 . . . Bats that are altered from the manufacturer's original design and production, or that do not meet the rule specifications, are illegal (7-4-1a). No artificial or intentional means shall be used to control the temperature of the bat. No foreign substance may be inserted into the bat. Bats that are broken, cracked or dented or that deface the ball, i.e., tear the ball, shall be removed without penalty. A bat that continually discolors the ball may be removed from the game with no penalty at the discretion of the umpire.

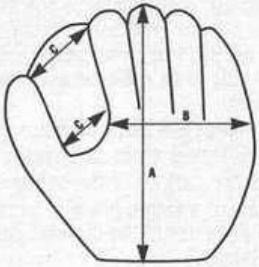
ART. 6 . . . Gloves/mitts made of leather shall be worn by all fielders and not be altered to create an adhesive, sticky, and/or tacky surface. The glove/mitt worn by the catcher may be any size. The glove/mitt worn by the pitcher that includes the colors white and/or gray shall be removed from the game upon discovery by either team and/or umpire. The glove/mitt worn by all fielders except the catcher shall conform to the following maximum specifications (found in Diagram 4):

a. Height (measured from the bottom edge or heel straight up across the center of the palm to a line even with the highest point of the glove/mitt): 14 inches
b. Width of palm (measured from the bottom edge of the webbing farthest from the thumb in a horizontal line to the outside of the little finger edge of the glove/mitt): 8 inches
c. Webbing (measured across the top end or along any line parallel to the top): 5¾ inches

ART. 7 . . . Loose equipment, such as gloves, bats, helmets or catcher's gear, of either team may not be on or near the field.

PENALTY: If loose equipment interferes with play, the umpire may call an out(s), award bases or return runners, based on the umpire's judgment and the circumstances concerning the play.

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 2¼ square inches with no dimension exceeding 2¼ 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.)

Effective, January 1, 2027, The school's name, school's nickname, school's logo, school's mascot, and/or the player's name are permitted on the uniform top and/or pants. One American flag 2 inches x 3 inches may be worn or occupy space on each item of uniform apparel.

By state association adoption, 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.

SECTION 5 PLAYER EQUIPMENT

ART. 1 . . . It is mandatory for on-deck batters, batters, runners, retired runners, players/students in the coaches boxes as well as non-adult bat/ball shaggers to wear a batting helmet that has a non-glare (not mirror-like) surface and meets the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture. The batting helmet shall have extended ear flaps that cover both ears and temples and also display the NOCSAE stamp and the exterior warning statement. The warning statement may be affixed to the helmet in sticker form, or it may be embossed at the time of manufacture. A violation by a non-adult bat/ball shagger shall result in a warning to the coach of the team and the individual. A subsequent violation may result in the individual not being allowed on the field.



PENALTY: When an umpire observes anyone who is required to wear a batting helmet deliberately remove the batting helmet while in live-ball territory and the ball is live (non-adult ball/bat shaggers required to wear batting helmet in live-ball area even if ball is dead), the umpire shall issue a warning to the coach of the involved team, unless the ball becomes dead without being touched by a fielder or, after being touched, goes directly to dead-ball area. A subsequent violation of the rule shall result in ejection.

ART. 2 . . . A face mask/guard may be attached to batting helmets at the time of manufacture. All face mask/guards shall meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture. A face mask/guard specifically designed for a particular helmet model may be attached after manufacture, provided that procedure is approved by the manufacturer and meets the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture.

ART. 3 . . . The catcher shall wear, in addition to a head protector, a mask with a throat protector, body/chest protector that has been certified by SEI to meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture, protective cup (male only), and baseball protective shin guards. The SEI/NOCSAE mark is required on all body/chest protectors that has been certified by SEI and meets the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture that will be used in high school competition. Please see the accompanying mark.



ART. 4 . . . The catcher's helmet and mask combination shall meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture. Eye shields shall not be attached to the catcher's mask after manufacture. Eye shields that are attached to the catcher's mask at the time of manufacture will be constructed of a molded rigid material and be clear without the presence of any tint. Tinted eyewear worn on the face and under the face mask is permitted. Any helmet or helmet and mask combination shall have 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 or 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 6 PLAYER COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT

ART. 1 . . . Any wristband with defensive shifts/offensive plays/pitching choices or game directions attached shall be considered non-electronic equipment and is permitted as long as it is a single, solid color. For pitchers, it may not contain the colors white, gray or be distracting. It does not have to match the color of the uniform or the sleeves worn underneath the uniform jersey. It shall only be worn on a player(s) wrist or forearm and pitchers shall wear it on their non-pitching arm.

ART. 2 . . . One-way electronic communication devices are permissible from the dugout to the catcher while the team is on defense for the purpose of calling pitches. When using the electronic communication device, the coach cannot be outside the dugout/bench area.

ART. 3 . . . No player shall wear any audio (microphone) or video (camera) device during the game.

PENALTY (Section 6): The umpire shall issue a team warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender(s) of that team will be ejected along with the head coach.

Rule 2 Playing Terms and Definitions

SECTION 1 ABBREVIATIONS

ART. 1 . . . For brevity in the play rulings, the home team is H and the visiting team V.

ART. 2 . . . Players of the team at bat are B1, B2, etc. The player who bats first in the team's half of an inning is designated B1. The second player to bat is B2, etc. Substitutes are S1, S2, etc. Runners are R1, R2, or R3. R1 occupies first base, R2 occupies second base, and R3 occupies third base.

ART. 3 . . . Fielding players are F1, F2, etc., in accordance with Diagram 1.

SECTION 2 AWARDED BASES

When bases are awarded, it is the responsibility of the runner to legally touch those bases. In actuality, it is the right to advance without a play being made that is awarded.

SECTION 3 BALK

A balk is an illegal act committed by the pitcher with a runner(s) on base which entitles each runner to advance one base.

SECTION 4 BALL, BASE ON BALLS, INTENTIONAL BASE ON BALLS, LODGED BALL

ART. 1 . . . The ball is one of the playing implements (1-3-1). The term is also used to designate a pitch which is not touched by the bat and is not a strike as in 7-2-1 and 7-2-2.

ART. 2 . . . A base on balls is an award of first base (often referred to as a "walk") if a batter receives four such balls. The batter must go immediately to first base before time-out is called.

ART. 3 . . . An intentional base on balls may be given by the defensive team by having its catcher or coach request the umpire to award the batter first base. This may be done before pitching to the batter or on any ball and strike count. The ball shall be declared dead before making the award.

ART. 4 . . . A baseball that remains on the playing field but has become wedged, stuck, lost or unreachable is defined as a lodged ball. If a ball impacts something, stops abruptly, and does not fall or roll immediately, it has become lodged. It is a dead ball. (5-1-1f-3,4; 5-1-1g-4)

EXCEPTION: A ball that becomes stuck in a glove remains in play. The glove/ball combination is treated as a live ball.

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; or
    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.
h. hits or bounds over any portion of the white portion of the double first base.

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.

SECTION 8 BUNT

A bunt is a fair ball in which the batter does not swing to hit the ball, but holds the bat in the path of the ball to tap it slowly to the infield. If an attempt to bunt is a foul ball, it is treated the same as any other foul ball, except that if the attempt is by a batter who has two strikes, such batter is out as in 7-4-1e.

SECTION 9 CATCH, CATCHER, CATCHER'S BOX

ART. 1 . . . A catch is the act of a fielder in getting secure possession in the hand or glove of a live ball in flight and firmly holding it, provided the fielder does not use the cap, protector, mask, pocket or other part of the uniform to trap the ball. The catch of a fly ball by a fielder is not completed until the continuing action of the catch is completed. A fielder who catches a ball and then runs into a wall or another player and drops the ball has not made a catch. A fielder, at full speed, who catches a ball and whose initial momentum carries the fielder several more yards after which the ball drops from the fielder's glove has not made a catch. When the fielder, by the action of stopping, removing the ball from the glove, etc., signifies the initial action is completed and then drops the ball, will be judged to have made the catch. The same definition of a catch would apply when making a double play. It is considered a catch if a fielder catches a fair or foul ball and then steps or falls 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 from the field of play. Falling into does not include merely running against such object. (2-24-4 for fielder juggling ball and 8-4-1c for intentionally dropped ball; 2-16-2 and 5-1-1d for ball striking catcher before touching the glove.) It is not a catch when a fielder touches a batted ball in flight which then contacts a member of the offensive team or an umpire and is then caught by a defensive player.

NOTE: When a batted ball or a pitch is involved, the above definition of a catch applies. For any other thrown ball, the term is used loosely to also apply to a pick-up or to the trapping of a low throw which has touched the ground. The ball is considered to be in the fielder's grasp even though the ball is touching the ground while in the fielder's glove.

ART. 2 . . . The catcher is the player to whom the pitcher throws when delivering the ball to the batter.

ART. 3 . . . The catcher's box is an area 43 inches by 8 feet. Official measurements in Diagram 2.

SECTION 10 CONFERENCES/MEETINGS

ART. 1 . . . A charged conference is a meeting which involves the coach or a non-playing representative of the team and a player or players of the team. Defensive (3-4-1); Offensive (3-4-2).

ART. 2 . . . A pregame conference is a meeting involving the umpires, both head coaches and team captains (if available) near home plate. The meeting should begin approximately five minutes prior to the game. The purpose of the pregame 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.

ART. 3 . . . A player-to-player defensive meeting includes two or more defensive players (3-4-6).

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 9-3-2, 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)

SECTION 16 FOUL, FOUL TIP

ART. 1 . . . A foul is a batted ball:

a. which settles on foul territory between home and first base or between home and third base; or
b. that bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory; or
c. that first falls on foul territory beyond first or third base; or
d. that, while on or over foul territory, touches the person of an umpire or a player or any object foreign to the natural ground; or
e. that touches the ground after inadvertently being declared foul by an umpire.
f. that hits the batter in the batter's box; or
g. that hits the ground or home plate and then hits the batter or the bat which is held by the batter, while the batter is in the batter's box; or
h. hits or bounds over the contrasting color portion of the double first base without first being a fair ball.

ART. 2 . . . A foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly to the catcher's hands and is legally caught by the catcher. It is a strike and the ball is in play.

SECTION 17 GAME, CALLED GAME, SUSPENDED GAME

ART. 1 . . . A regulation interscholastic game is seven innings (turns at bat) for each team unless shortened as in 4-2-2 and 4-2-3, or unless extra innings are necessary to break a tie score.

ART. 2 . . . A called game is one which is ended by order of the umpire in accordance with 4-3.

ART. 3 . . . A suspended game is a called game to be completed at a later time.

SECTION 18 ILLEGAL PITCH

An illegal pitch is an illegal act committed by the pitcher with no runner on base, which results in a ball being awarded the batter. When an illegal pitch occurs with a runner, or runners, on base, it is ruled a balk.

SECTION 19 INFIELD FLY

An infield fly is a fair fly (not including a line drive nor an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, (rule does not preclude outfielders from being allowed to attempt to make the catch) and provided the hit is made before two are out and at a time when first and second bases or all bases are occupied.

When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire immediately announces it for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near a baseline, the umpire shall declare, "Infield fly, if fair." (8-4-1j for batter being out and right of base runner to advance after retouching the base.)

SECTION 20 INNINGS

ART. 1 . . . An inning is that portion of the game which includes a turn at bat for each team.

ART. 2 . . . A half-inning is the interval during which one team is on offense (batting) and the other is on defense (fielding). A half-inning ends when there is a third out or when, in the last inning, the winning run is scored. In either case, 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 putout is the act of a fielder in retiring a batter or runner. For putouts credited to the catcher and to other fielders, see 9-5-2. An "out" is one of the three required retirements of players of the team at bat.

ART. 3 . . . A strikeout is the result of the pitcher getting a third strike charged to a batter. This usually results in the batter being out, but does not so result if the third strike is not caught and the batter-runner legally reaches first base.

ART. 4 . . . A tag out is the put out of a runner, including the batter-runner, who is not in contact with the base when touched with a live ball, or with the glove or hand when the live ball is held securely therein by a fielder. The ball is not considered as having been securely held if it is juggled or dropped after the touching, unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand of the fielder. [8-4-2h(2)]

ART. 5 . . . A throw out is a putout caused by a throw to first base to retire a batter-runner, or to any other base to which a runner is forced or is required to retouch.

SECTION 25 OVERRUNNING OR OVERSLIDING

ART. 1 . . . Overrunning or oversliding is the act of a runner who, after touching the base to which the runner is advancing, allows the runner's momentum to carry the runner past the base so that the runner loses contact with it.

For the right to overrun first base, see 8-2-7. For cases where a runner is not credited with a stolen base or a batter with an extra base hit, see 2-5-3, 9-3-3 and 9-4-1. If a force is involved, 2-29-3 states that touching a base ends a force.

SECTION 26 PASSED BALL

A passed ball is a pitch which the catcher fails to stop or control when the catcher should have been able to do so with ordinary effort, and which enables a runner including the batter-runner to advance.

SECTION 27 PENALTY

ART. 1 . . . A penalty is the action taken by the umpire against a player, coach or team for a rule infraction. Penalties include:

a. restricting the coach to the dugout;
b. ejecting an offending player or coach;
c. declaring a batter or runner out;
d. awarding a base to a batter or runner;
e. awarding a ball to a batter (for an illegal pitch when there is no runner or for delay by the pitcher);
f. charging a batter with a strike (for delay);
g. forfeiting a game; or
h. removing nonplayers from the bench or field.

SECTION 28 PITCHER, PITCH, PIVOT FOOT

ART. 1 . . . The pitcher is the player who is designated in the lineup as being responsible for delivering (pitching) the ball to the batter.

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.

ART. 4 . . . A play ruling is a statement of a play situation and the correct ruling. It is considered an integral part of the rules and applies to analogous situations.

ART. 5 . . . A squeeze play is one in which a runner advances toward home plate from third base as the ball is being pitched, and during which the batter bunts to permit the runner to score.

ART. 6 . . . A defensive appeal of a runner failing to touch a base or tag up is not a play.

SECTION 30 RUN, RUNNERS, RETIRED RUNNERS

ART. 1 . . . A run is the score made by a runner who legally advances to and touches home plate. (9-1)

ART. 2 . . . A runner is a player of the team at bat who has finished the time at bat and has not yet been put out. The term includes the batter-runner and also any runner who occupies a base.

ART. 3 . . . A retired runner is a player of the team at bat who has been put out, or who has scored and is still in live-ball area.

SECTION 31 SACRIFICE

A sacrifice is a bunt which enables any runner to advance, or a fly ball (sacrifice fly) which enables a runner to score. In either case, the result is the batter-runner being put out before the batter-runner reaches first base, or would have resulted in the batter-runner being put out if the batted ball had been fielded without error, and provided two were not out when the ball was hit. A sacrifice is not listed as a time-at-bat. (9-3-4)

SECTION 32 SLIDE

ART. 1 . . . A legal slide can be either feet first or head first. If a runner slides feet first, at least one leg and buttock shall be on the ground. If a runner slides, the runner must slide within reach of the base with either a hand or a foot. A runner may slide or run in a direction away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder. (8-4-2b)

ART. 2 . . . A slide is illegal if:

a. the runner uses a rolling, cross-body or pop-up slide into the fielder; or
b. the runner's raised leg is higher than the fielder's knee when the fielder is in a standing position; or
c. except at home plate, the runner goes beyond the base and then makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder. At home plate, it is permissible for the runner's momentum to carry through the plate in a straight line (baseline extended); or
d. the runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg; or
e. the runner tries to injure the fielder; or
f. the runner, on a force play, does not slide on the ground and in a direct line between the two bases.

SECTION 33 SPEED-UP RULES

Rule modifications to speed up the game may be adopted by state associations. (Page 67)

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.

SECTION 39 TIME AT BAT

Time at bat is the period beginning when a batter first enters the batter's box and continuing until the batter is put out or becomes a runner. A batter is not charged in the records with a time at bat when the batter makes a sacrifice hit, is hit by a pitched ball, is awarded a base on balls, is replaced before being charged with two strikes, is replaced after being charged with two strikes and the substitute does not strike out, or when the batter advances to first base because of obstruction by a fielder.

SECTION 40 TOUCHING BALL, BASE OR RUNNER

Touching is contact with, and there is no distinction between the act of touching or by being touched. The term applies to contact with any part of the person or the person's clothing if the clothing is reasonably well fitted. This includes:
a. a pitched ball touching a batter; or
b. a batted ball touching a batter or any runner; or
c. the catcher touching the bat; or
d. a player touching a base; or
e. a ball touching a player or nonplayer.

NOTE: For failure to touch home plate, see 8-2-5 PENALTY; for retouching base, see 8-2-8; for base coming loose, see 8-4-2h; and for oversliding, see 2-25-1.

SECTION 41 WILD PITCH

A wild pitch is one which cannot be handled by the catcher with ordinary effort. (9-6-1)

SECTION 42 PLAYING FIELD

The playing field includes both fair and foul territory. Any other areas beyond the playing field are defined as being outside the playing field (dead ball area). Any wall, fence, barricade, rope, wire, marked or imaginary line is considered a part of the playing field. Any areas beyond those boundaries are outside the playing field.

Rule 3 Substituting – Coaching – Bench and Field Conduct – Charged Conferences

SECTION 1 SUBSTITUTING

ART. 1 . . . After the lineup cards are official (1-1-2) prior to the game, the player listed as pitcher shall pitch until the first opposing batter has been put out or has advanced to first base. In any other case, a substitute may replace a player when the ball is dead and time has been called. The umpire-in-chief shall record 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 per inning, provided the return as pitcher does not violate either the pitching, substitution or charged conference rule. If the pitcher, because of an injury or being incapacitated, is replaced as pitcher and the above rule is not satisfied, or if the pitcher's replacement requires more warm-up throws than permitted in 6-2-2 EXCEPTION, the player cannot return to the game as a pitcher.

ART. 3 . . . Any of the starting players may be withdrawn and re-entered once, including a player who was the designated hitter, provided such player occupies the same batting position whenever the player is in the lineup. The pitcher is governed by the provisions of Article 2 above. A substitute who is withdrawn may not re-enter. A starting pitcher who is replaced in the top of the first inning while the pitcher's team is at bat shall be governed by the provisions of Articles 1 and 2 above.

ART. 4 . . . A hitter may be (not mandatory) designated for any one starting player (not just pitchers) and all subsequent substitutes for that player in the game. A designated hitter for said player shall be selected prior to the start of the game, and the player's name shall be included on the lineup cards presented to the umpire-in-chief and to the official scorer. A team forfeits the use of a designated hitter if it fails to declare a designated hitter prior to the game. The player who was the designated hitter may re-enter as the designated hitter under the re-entry rule. A designated hitter and the player for whom the designated hitter is batting are

locked into the batting order. No multiple substitutions may be made that will alter the batting rotation. A designated hitter may be used in one of the two scenarios:

a. The designated hitter may be a 10th starter hitting for any one of the nine starting defensive players. If a pinch hitter or pinch runner for the designated hitter is used, that player becomes the new designated hitter. If the designated hitter (DH) is used in this manner, the role of the DH is terminated for the remainder of the game when:
   1. The defensive player, or any previous defensive player for whom the designated hitter batted, subsequently bats, pinch-hits or pinch-runs for the designated hitter; or
   2. The designated hitter or any previous designated hitter assumes a defensive position.
b. The starting designated hitter may be any one of the starting defensive players. In this manner, the starting defensive player has two positions: the defensive player and the designated hitter. The role of the defensive player may be substituted for by any legal substitute. If the defensive player has been substituted for, the original player/DH may re-enter one time. The role of the DH is terminated for the remainder of the game when:
   1. A substitute or former substitute for the defensive role subsequently participates in an offensive role; or
   2. The starting defensive player/DH is substituted for either as a hitter or a runner.

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 in Sports, 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. (General Guidelines for Sports Hygiene, Skin Infections and Communicable Diseases, 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 8-2-9.

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.

ART. 5 . . . A coach may use a one-way electronic communication device to communicate to the catcher for the purpose of calling pitches. Coaches may not use electronic communication device(s) to communicate with any other team member while on defense or any team member while on offense. When using the electronic communication device, the coach cannot be outside the dugout/bench area.

PENALTY: The umpire shall issue a team warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender(s) of that team will be ejected along with the head coach.

SECTION 3 BENCH AND FIELD CONDUCT

ART. 1 . . . A coach, player, substitute, attendant or other bench personnel shall not:

a. leave the dugout during a live ball for an unauthorized purpose;
b. fake a tag without the ball;
c. carelessly throw a bat;
d. wear bandannas;
e. hit the ball to players on defense after the game has started;

PENALTY: At the end of playing action, the umpire shall issue a warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender on that team shall be ejected. In (b), it is also obstruction. (8-3-2)

f. commit any unsportsmanlike act to include, but not limited to,
   1. use of words or actions to incite or attempt to incite spectators demonstrations,
   2. use of profanity, intimidation tactics, remarks reflecting unfavorably upon any other person, or taunting or baiting. The NFHS disapproves of any form of taunting.

3. use of any language intended to intimidate,
4. behavior in any manner not in accordance with the spirit of fair play;
5. being in live ball territory (excluding team's bullpen area) during the opponent's infield practice prior to the start of the game.
6. any member of the coaching staff who is not the head coach (or designee) in 3-2-4 leaving the vicinity of the dugout or coaching box to dispute a judgment call by an umpire.
7. Confronting or directing unsportsmanlike conduct to the umpires after the game has concluded and until the umpires have departed the game site.

g. enter the area behind the catcher while the opposing pitcher and catcher are in their positions;
h. use any object in the coach's box other than a stopwatch, rules book (hard copy), scorebook;
i. be outside the designated dugout (bench) or bullpen area if not a batter, runner, on-deck batter, in the coach's box or one of the nine players on defense;
j. charge an umpire;
k. use amplifiers or bullhorns for coaching purposes during the course of the game;

PENALTY: The umpire shall warn the offender unless the offense is judged to be major, in which case an ejection shall occur. A warning may be verbal or written. If written, the offender shall be restricted to the bench/dugout for the remainder of the game. If a coach has previously received a verbal warning, the coach shall receive a written warning (10-2-3j) and be restricted to the bench/dugout for the remainder of the game. If a coach has previously received a written warning, the coach shall be ejected for any subsequent offense. Any offense judged to be major in nature shall result in an immediate ejection. 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. (4-4-1a)

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.

SECTION 4 CHARGED CONFERENCES/DEFENSIVE PLAYER MEETINGS

ART. 1 . . . Each team, when on defense, may be granted not more than three charged conferences during a seven-inning game, without penalty, to permit coaches or their non-playing representatives to confer with a defensive player or players. In an extra inning game, each team shall be permitted one charged conference each inning while on defense without penalty. The number of charged conferences permitted is not cumulative. A request for time for this purpose shall be made by a coach, player, substitute or an attendant. Time granted for an obviously incapacitated player shall not constitute a charged conference. Prior to accumulating three charged conferences in seven innings or less, a conference is not charged if the pitcher is removed as pitcher.

PENALTY: After three charged conferences in a seven-inning game, or for any charged conference in excess of one in each extra inning, the pitcher shall be removed as pitcher for duration of the game.

ART. 2 . . . Each team, when on offense, may be granted not more than one charged conference per inning to permit the coach or any of that team's personnel to confer with base runners, the batter, the on-deck batter or other offensive team personnel. The umpire shall deny any subsequent offensive team requests for charged conferences.

ART. 3 . . . A defensive charged conference is concluded when the coach or non-playing representative crosses the foul line if the conference was in fair territory. If the conference was in foul territory, the conference concludes when the coach or non-playing representative initially starts to return to the dugout/bench area.

ART. 4 . . . An offensive charged conference is concluded when the coach or team representative initially starts to return to the coach's box or dugout/bench area. For Articles 3 and 4, if a coach who has been restricted to the dugout/bench area is involved in a charged conference, that conference shall end when the players involved initially start to return to their positions on the field. The coach shall be given a reasonable amount of time for the charged conference as determined by the umpire-in-chief.

ART. 5 . . . When either team has a charged conference, the other team may also have a conference, which is not charged, provided the conference concludes when the opposing team's charged conference concludes, so that the game is not further delayed.

ART. 6 . . . Each team, when on defense, may be granted not more than one player-to-player meeting during an inning to permit players to confer with defensive personnel. The umpire shall deny any subsequent player-to-player defensive team requests for meetings for that half-inning.

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).
b. Prior to the start of the game, the umpire-in-chief shall receive verification from each head coach that the team's participants are properly equipped in accordance with NFHS rules. In addition, each coach shall verify that the team's participants are using only legal equipment, including bats and balls that are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design and production and that meet the provisions of 1-3-1 and 1-3-2, and helmets that meet the provisions of 1-5-1 and are free of cracks and damage.

PENALTY: On the first violation of 4-1-3b for entering the box with an illegal bat, the penalty for an illegal bat is applied (7-4-1a) and the head coach shall be restricted to the bench/dugout for the remainder of the game. On the second violation for entering the box with an illegal bat, the penalty for an illegal bat is applied and the head coach shall be ejected. On subsequent violations for entering the box with an illegal bat, the penalty for an illegal bat is applied and the designated head coach shall be ejected. On detected violations of 4-1-3b for the use of a damaged helmet, the helmet shall be immediately removed from play.

ART. 4 . . . The visiting team shall be the first to take its turn at bat. On a neutral field or by agreement, either team may be designated as Home Team.

ART. 5 . . . The game begins when the umpire calls "Play" after all infielders, pitcher, catcher and batter are in position to start the game.

SECTION 2 ENDING A REGULATION GAME

ART. 1 . . . A regulation interscholastic game consists of seven innings (turns at bat) unless extra inning(s) are necessary because of a tie score, or unless shortened because the home team needs none of its half of the seventh or only a fraction

of it (Art. 2); or because of weather, or darkness (Art. 3). Each team must have nine players in its lineup throughout the game (4-4-1f NOTE 2). Otherwise, the game will be forfeited. A forfeited game is regulation, regardless of innings played. (4-4-2)

ART. 2 . . . The game ends when the team behind in score has completed its turn at bat in the seventh inning, or any inning thereafter if extra innings are necessary. If the home team scores a go-ahead run in the bottom of the seventh inning, or in any extra inning, the game is terminated at that point. Any game that is tied at the end of 4½ or at least five full innings when the game is called shall be a tie game, unless the state association has adopted a specific game ending procedure. Batting and fielding records are counted, but the game is not counted in computing percentages of games won and lost. 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.

a. If an over-the-fence home run is hit, all runs score before the game is terminated.
b. Two seven-inning games shall constitute a doubleheader.

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 ½ game won and ½ 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, coach or team personnel (3-3-2) 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.

g. on its home field, fails to comply with the umpire's order to put the field in condition for play.

ART. 2 . . . Score of a forfeited game is 7 to 0 except if the game is forfeited after the number of innings required for a regulation game and the offending team is behind. Then the score remains as recorded. If the offending team is leading, the score shall be 7 to 0.

SECTION 5 PROTESTED GAME

It is optional on the part of a state association as to whether protests are permitted. When allowed, protests are permitted regarding rules one through nine only. When protests are submitted to organizations which do allow the filing, such protest must be submitted using a prescribed procedure (10-2-3i). All individual and team averages shall be included in the official records, except that no pitcher shall be credited with a victory or charged with a loss in such a game, if the game is not regulation.

Rule 5 Dead Ball – Suspension of Play

SECTION 1 DEAD BALL

ART. 1 . . . Ball becomes dead immediately when:

a. a pitch touches a batter or the batter's clothing (8-1-1d), a runner (8-3-1a);
   1. The ball becomes dead even though the batter strikes at it. (8-1-1d)

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 lodged 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 or through fence, backstop, or touches a spectator (in live ball area) or lodges in umpire's or catcher's equipment	5-1-1g
17. Umpire handles a live ball or calls time to inspect ball or for other reason, including items in 5-1 or umpire inadvertently declares "Foul" as in 2-16-1e	5-1-1h
18. Fair or foul ball is caught by a fielder, who then steps or falls with both feet from field of play over any boundary or barrier such as a fence, rope, 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	8-1-1d
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 latter. Other runners return. For malicious contact the player guilty of the infraction is ejected	3-3-1m, 8-2-9, 8-4-1a, h; 8-4-2b, f, g, k,
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	3-2-3, 7-3-5, 8-2-9, 8-4-2g
10. Award all runners home base	8-3-3a
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
15. Award all runners two bases	8-3-3c, 8-3-4
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

Activity	References
20. Balk	5-1-1k
21. Umpire gives "do not pitch signal"	5-1-1h
22. Award intentional base on balls	5-1-3
23. Batter enters box with an illegal bat	5-1-1c
24. Batter refuses to enter box after being warned by umpire	7-3-1
25. Interference by batter who hits throw from the pitcher, not in contact with pitcher's plate when runner is advancing to home base	5-1-1b
26. 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	5-1-1l
27. Defensive Malicious Contact	5-1-1m
28. Batter contacts the catcher or the catcher's equipment prior to the time of the pitch	5-1-1n

Awards or Penalties	References
20. All runners advance one base. Batter remains at bat	6-2-4, 6-2-5, 8-3-1a, 8-3-5a
21. No play can take place	5-2-1
22. Batter awarded first base	8-1-1c
23. Batter is out. Coach is restricted to the dugout/bench upon first offense, then ejected after second offense	7-4-1a, 1-3-5, 4-1-3b PEN.
24. Strike is called	7-3-1 PEN.
25. With less than two outs, the runner is out. Otherwise batter is out.	7-3-5 PEN.
26. Award each runner the following: two bases — fair batted ball or thrown ball not by pitcher in contact with the pitcher's plate; one base — throw or pitch by pitcher	8-3-3c
27. Umpire will rule safe or out on the play and award runner(s) appropriate base(s) per the umpire's judgment	3-3-1m PEN.
28. The ball is dead immediately and there is no penalty	2-21-5, 7-3-7 PEN.

AFTER INFRACTION, BALL NOT DEAD UNTIL UMPIRE CALLS "TIME"

Activity	References
1. Interference by batter when attempted put out is on runner other than at home	5-1-2a
2. Interference by batter when runner is advancing to home plate (other than hitting a throw from the pitcher, not in contact with pitcher's plate)	5-1-2a
3. Obstruction with batter by catcher or fielder	5-1-2b
4. Obstruction	5-1-2b, 5-1-3
5. Intentionally touching batted ball with detached player equipment over fair ground, or over foul ground which might become fair ball	5-1-2b
6. Intentionally touching thrown ball (including a pitch) with detached player equipment	5-1-2b
7. Offensive team personnel calls "Time" or uses any other command or commits an act for the purpose of trying to cause opposing pitcher to balk	5-1-2d
8. Interference with catcher by umpire	5-1-2c
9. Deliberately removing batting helmet in live ball territory while ball is alive	5-1-2e
10. Use of illegal glove/mitt	5-1-2f

Awards or Penalties	References
1. With two out, batter is out. Otherwise, if attempt on runner is unsuccessful, ball is dead, batter is out and runners return. If third strike, batter is out and umpire can call a second out	7-3-5, 8-4-2g
2. Runner is out unless two are out, then batter is out. If runner is put out, ball remains alive	7-3-5, 8-4-2f
3. If batter and all runners attempting to steal or who are forced do not advance, award each one base	8-1-1e, 8-3-1c
4. If obstructed runner and all other runners hindered by the obstruction do not reach bases they otherwise would have reached, award runner or runners such bases (min. one base)	8-3-2
5. Award batter-runner and runners three bases if not made	8-3-3b
6. Award runners two bases if not made	8-3-3c
7. No runners allowed to advance. Eject offender from the game	3-3-1n
8. If runner is not put out, runners return	8-3-6
9. Team warning. Subsequent players on that team to violate rule are ejected	1-5-1
10. Award four bases for home run over fence, three bases for other fair batted ball, two bases for thrown or pitched ball	8-3-3a-c

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b. the ball is illegally batted (7-3-2, 7-4-1a) or is intentionally struck a second time with the bat as in 8-4-1d;
c. the batter enters the batter's box with an illegal bat;
d. a foul ball (2-16-1):
   1. touches any object other than the ground or any person other than a fielder; or
   2. goes directly from the bat to the catcher's protector, mask or person without first touching the catcher's glove or hand;
   3. or becomes an uncaught foul; or
e. there is interference by a runner, batter-runner (8-4-1g), or a retired runner (3-3-1m, 8-4-1a, 8-4-1h or 8-4-2b, 8-4-2e, 8-4-2f, 8-4-2g or 8-4-2k), the batter (7-3-5), or by any person (3-2-3);
f. a fair batted ball:
   1. touches a runner or an umpire before touching any fielder and before passing any fielder other than the pitcher;
   2. touches a runner after passing through or by an infielder and another infielder could have made a play on the ball;
   3. touches a spectator;
   4. goes over or through or wedges in the field fence; or
   5. lodges in player's or umpire's equipment or uniform; or
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.

SECTION 2 SUSPENSION OF PLAY

ART. 1 . . . "Time" shall be called by the umpire and play is suspended when:

a. the ball becomes dead (5-1-1, 5-1-3);
b. the umpire considers the weather or ground conditions unfit for play;
   1. After 30 minutes, the umpire may declare the game ended.
c. a player or bench personnel is ordered from the grounds, or a player is ordered to secure protective equipment;
d. an umpire or player is incapacitated, except that if injury occurs during a live ball, time shall not be called until no further advance or putout is possible;
   1. If there is a medical emergency or if, in the umpire's judgment, further play could jeopardize the injured player's safety, "Time" shall be called.
e. a player or coach requests "Time" and it is granted by the umpire for a substitution, conference with the pitcher or for similar cause; or
f. the umpire suspends play for any other cause, including an award of a base after an infraction, or for inspection of the ball.

ART. 2 . . . When the ball becomes dead:

a. no action by the defense can cause a player to be put out (unless it is a dead-ball appeal);
b. a runner may return to a base the runner left too soon on a caught fly ball or that was not touched during a live ball;
   1. A runner who is on or beyond a succeeding base when the ball became dead, or advances and touches a succeeding base after the ball became dead, may not return and shall be called out upon proper and successful appeal. (8-4-2q)

c. any runner may advance when awarded a base(s) for an act which occurred before the ball became dead provided any base in (b) above is retouched and all bases are touched in the proper order. (8-1-2, 8-2-1, 8-3)

Rule 6 Pitching

SECTION 1 PITCHING

ART. 1 . . . The pitcher shall pitch while facing the batter from either a windup position (Art. 2) or a set position (Art. 3). The position of the pitcher's feet determine whether the pitcher will pitch from the windup or the set position. The pitcher shall take or simulate taking the sign from the catcher with the pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate. The pitcher will be considered to be in the set position when the pivot foot is in contact with or directly in front of and parallel to the pitcher's plate. The pitcher will be considered to be in the windup position when the pivot foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate and is not parallel to it. The pitching regulations begin when the pitcher intentionally contacts the pitcher's plate. Turning the shoulders to check runners while in contact with the pitcher's 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.

ART. 4 . . . Each legal pitch shall be declared by the umpire as a strike, ball, fair or foul hit or a dead ball. A pitch dropped during delivery and which crosses a foul line shall be called a ball. Otherwise, it will be called no pitch. A pitch dropped during delivery with at least one runner on base would be a balk if it does not cross a foul line.

ART. 5 . . . When a pitcher is attempting to field a batted or thrown ball or is throwing to a base while the pivot foot is clearly off the pitcher's plate, the pitcher's status is that of an infielder except that if a batted ball passes but does not touch the pitcher and then strikes an umpire or a runner, the ball may become dead because of interference. (8-4-2g, 8-4-2k)

ART. 6 . . . Each state association shall have a pitching restriction policy based on the number of pitches thrown to afford pitchers a required rest period between pitching appearances.

SECTION 2 INFRACTIONS BY PITCHER

ART. 1 . . . Illegal acts include:

a. applying a foreign substance to the ball;
b. spitting on the ball or glove;
c. rubbing the ball on the glove, clothing or person if the act defaces the ball;
d. discoloring the ball with dirt;
e. bringing the pitching hand in contact with the mouth without distinctly wiping off the pitching hand before it touches the ball;
f. wearing any items on the hands, wrists or arms that may be distracting to the batter;
g. wearing or placing tape, bandages or other foreign material (other than rosin) on the fingers or palm of the pitching hand that could come in contact with the ball;
h. wearing a glove/mitt that includes the colors white or gray;
i. wearing exposed undershirt sleeves that are white or gray.

NOTE: Under umpire supervision, the pitcher may dry the hands by using a finely meshed cloth bag of powdered rosin. The pitcher may rub the ball with bare hands to remove any extraneous coating.

PENALTY: For defacing the ball (a-d), the ball is dead immediately. The umpire may eject the pitcher. If such defaced ball is pitched and then detected, it is an illegal pitch. For infraction (e), a ball shall be awarded each time a pitcher violates this rule and subsequently engages the pitching plate. For infraction (f-i), the infraction must be corrected before the next pitch. In (f), the umpire has sole authority to judge whether or not an item is distracting and shall have that item removed.

ART. 2 . . . Delay of the game includes:

a. throwing to any player other than the catcher, when the batter is in the batter's box, unless it is an attempt to retire a runner;

PENALTY: The pitcher shall be ejected from the game after a warning.

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
f. failing to pitch to the batter when the entire non-pivot foot passes behind the perpendicular plane of the back edge of the pitcher's plate, except when feinting or throwing to second base in an attempt to put out a runner.

ART. 5 . . . It is also a balk if a runner or runners are on base and the pitcher, while the pitcher is not touching the pitcher's plate, makes any movement naturally associated with the pitch, or the pitcher places the feet on or astride the pitcher's plate, or takes a position within approximately 5 feet of the pitcher's plate without having the ball.

Rule 7 Batting

SECTION 1 POSITION AND BATTING ORDER

ART. 1 . . . Each player of the team at bat shall become the batter and shall take a position within a batter's box, on either side of home plate, in the order in which each player's name appears on the lineup card as delivered to the umpire prior to the game (4-1-3). This order shall be followed during the entire game except that an entering substitute shall take the replaced player's place in the batting order. A batter is in proper order if the person follows the player whose name precedes his in the lineup, even though such preceding batter may have batted out of order. An improper batter is considered to be at bat as soon as the improper batter is in the batter's box and the ball is live. When the improper batter's infraction is first discovered by either team, time may be requested and the improper batter replaced by the proper batter with the improper batter's ball and strike count still in effect, provided the infraction is detected before the improper batter is put out or becomes a base runner. Only the defensive team may appeal batting out of order after the batter has completed the time at bat. Any outs made on the play stand. An out for batting out of order supersedes an out by the improper batter on a play. While the improper batter is at bat, if a runner advances because of a stolen base, balk, wild pitch or passed ball, such advance is legal.

ART. 2 . . . After the first inning, the first batter in each inning shall be the player whose name follows that of the last batter who completed the time at bat in the preceding inning.

PENALTIES: For batting out of order (Arts. 1 and 2):

1. **A batter shall be called out, on appeal, when the batter fails to bat in the batter's proper turn and another batter completes a time at bat in the proper batter's place.**
2. **When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out and the defensive team appeals to the umpire before the first legal or illegal pitch, or, play or attempted play, or prior to an intentional base on balls or before the infielders leave the diamond if a half-inning is ending, the umpire 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 (2-16-2);
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)

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,
e. the pitcher leaves the dirt area of the pitching mound or takes a position more than five feet from the pitcher's plate after receiving the ball,
f. a member of either team requests and is granted "Time,"
g. the catcher leaves the catcher's box to adjust the catcher's equipment or give defensive signals; or
h. the catcher does not catch the pitched ball.

PENALTY: For failure of the batter to be ready within 20 seconds after the ball has been returned to the pitcher, the umpire shall call a strike. If the batter leaves the batter's box, delays the game, and none of the above exceptions apply, the plate umpire shall charge a strike to the batter. The pitcher need not pitch, and the ball remains live.

ART. 2 . . . Hit the ball while either foot or knee is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box or touching home plate.

ART. 3 . . . Disconcert the pitcher by stepping from the box on one side of home plate to the box on the other side while the pitcher is in position ready to pitch.

PENALTY: For infraction of Articles 2 and 3, the ball becomes dead immediately and the batter is out.

ART. 4 . . . Permit a pitched ball to touch the batter's person.

PENALTY: The batter remains at bat (pitch is a ball or strike) unless pitch was a third strike or ball four.

ART. 5 . . . Interfere with the catcher's fielding or throwing by:

a. leaning over home plate,
b. stepping out of the batter's box,
c. making any other movement, including follow-through interference, which hinders actions at home plate or the catcher's attempt to play on a runner; or
d. failing to make a reasonable effort to vacate a congested area when there is a throw to home plate and there is time for the batter to move away.

PENALTY: When there are two outs, the batter is out. When there are not two outs and the runner is advancing to home plate, if the runner is tagged out, the ball remains live and interference is ignored. Otherwise, the ball is dead and the runner is called out. When an attempt to put out a runner at any other base is unsuccessful, the batter is out and all runners must return to bases occupied at the time of the pitch. If the pitch is a third strike and in the umpire's judg-

ment interference prevents a possible double play (additional outs), two may be ruled out. [8-4-2g, 8-4-2l(1)]

ART. 6 . . . If the bat breaks and is hit by the ball or hits a runner or a fielder, no interference shall be called. If a whole bat is thrown and interferes with a defensive player attempting a play, interference will be called.

PENALTY: The batter is out and runners return. If, in the umpire's judgment, interference prevented a possible double play, two players may be ruled out.

ART. 7 . . . Commit backswing interference.

PENALTY: The ball is immediately dead.

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.
e. the catcher or any other defensive player obstructs the batter. The coach or captain of the team at bat, after being informed by the umpire-in-chief of the obstruction, shall indicate whether or not the team elects to decline the obstruction penalty and accept the resulting play. Such election shall be made before the next pitch (legal or illegal), before the award of an intentional base on balls, or before the infielders leave the diamond. Obstruction of the batter is ignored if the batter-runner reaches first and all other runners advance at least one base.
   1. Any runner attempting to advance (i.e., steal or squeeze) on a catcher's obstruction of the batter shall be awarded the base the runner is attempting. If a runner is not attempting to advance on the catcher's obstruction, the runner shall not be entitled to the next base, if not forced to advance because of the batter being awarded first base. If obstruction is enforced, all other runners on the play will return to base occupied at time of the pitch. The batter is awarded first base, if the runner did not reach base.
   2. If obstruction is not enforced, all other runners advance at their own risk.

ART. 2 . . . A batter-runner is awarded first base if:
a. the batter-runner is a runner because of 8-1-1c, d, e; or
b. the batter-runner's fair ball, other than an infield fly, becomes dead [5-1-1f(1),(2)] and provided a preceding runner or retired runner does not interfere in such a way as to prevent a potential double play. (8-4-1h)

NOTE: Unless awarded first base as above, a batter-runner is entitled to first base only if the batter-runner reaches it before being tagged out or thrown out or called out for hitting an infield fly. (8-4-1)

SECTION 2 TOUCHING, OCCUPYING AND RETURNING TO A BASE

ART. 1 . . . An advancing runner shall touch first, second, third and then home plate in order, including awarded bases. A batter-runner shall use the colored base on the initial play at first base unless the fielder is drawn to the side of the colored base (dropped third strike only), in which case the batter-runner would touch the white base and the fielder to the colored base. On a dropped third strike, fielder and batter-runner may touch white or colored base.

ART. 2 . . . A returning runner shall retouch the bases in reverse order. If the ball is dead because of an uncaught foul, it is not necessary for a returning runner

to retouch intervening bases. The umpire will not make the ball live until the runner returns to the appropriate base.

a. Runners tagging up on fly balls, leading off on a pitch, or returning to first base on an attempted pick-off can only use the white portion of the base. A defensive player may use only the fair portion of the base when a play is being made on the batter-runner on any live ball from within the foul lines or from third base foul line. It is interference when the batter-runner, on a force play, touches only the white portion of the base and collides with the fielder in the process of catching a thrown ball while on the white portion of the base. Obstruction is called on the defense when there is a force play on the batter-runner, who touches only the colored portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball while also on the colored portion of the base. (2-22-1)
   1. The batter-runner shall use the colored base on the initial play at first base, unless the fielder is drawn to the colored base because of a dropped third strike, in which case the batter-runner would go to either the white or colored base.
   2. Once the batter-runner reaches first base, the runner must always return to the white base.
   3. On extra base hits or other balls hit to the outfield when there is no chance for a play to be made at the double first base, the batter-runner may touch either the white or colored section of the base.
   4. When tagging up on a fly ball, the white section of the base must be used by the runner. One foot is permitted to extend behind or on the colored base provided the front foot is touching the white section of the base.
   5. On attempted pick-off plays, the runner must return to the white section of the base only. This includes a throw from the pitcher, catcher, or any other player, in an attempt to retire the runner at the double first base.
   6. The double first base does not change any other rule concerning interference or obstruction at first base. The batter-runner must still avoid interference with the fielder attempting to field a batted ball.
   7. On base on balls, the offense or the defense may touch either the white or colored base.

ART. 3 . . . Any runner who misses a base while advancing may not return to touch it after a following runner has scored.

NOTE: Any runner who misses the first base to which the runner is advancing and who is later called out shall be considered as having advanced one base.

ART. 4 . . . If a fair or foul batted ball is caught, other than a foul tip, each base runner shall touch the base after the batted ball has touched a fielder. (8-4-1c for fielder intentionally dropping the ball and 8-4-2i for runner being put out.)

ART. 5 . . . If a runner who misses any base (including home plate) or leaves a base too early, desires to return to touch the base, the runner must do so immediately. If the ball becomes dead and the runner is on or beyond a succeeding base, the runner cannot return to the missed base and, therefore, is subject to being declared out upon proper and successful appeal.

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.

g. Awards – An appeal must be honored even if the base missed was before or after an award, unless it was subsequently corrected.
h. Tag-Ups – If a runner leaves a base too soon on a caught fly ball and returns in an attempt to retag, this is considered a time play and not a force out. If the appeal is the third out, all runs scored by runners in advance of the appealed runner and scored ahead of the legal appeal would count.
i. Fourth-Out Appeal – An appeal may be made after the third out as long as it is made properly and the resulting appeal is an apparent fourth out.
j. End of Game – If any situation arises which could lead to an appeal by the defense on the last play of the game, the appeal must be made while an umpire is still on the field of play.
k. Third-out Baserunning Infraction – If a baserunning infraction is the third out, runs scored by the following runner(s) would not count. With two outs, if the base missed was the first to which the batter or runner was forced to advance, no runs would score. When a runner is legally returning after a fly ball has been caught, the runner can be put out by being tagged with the ball by a defensive player or merely by the defensive player with the ball touching the base occupied by the runner at the time of the pitch.
l. Last Time By – If a runner correctly touches a base that was missed (either in advancing or returning), the last time the runner was by the base, that last touch corrects any previous baserunning infraction. (8-4-2q EXCEPTION)

ART. 7 . . . A batter-runner who reaches first base safely and then overruns or overslides may immediately return without liability of being put out provided the batter-runner does not attempt or feint an advance to second. Once the batter-runner reaches first base (colored), the runner shall use the white base.

ART. 8 . . . A runner acquires the right to the proper unoccupied base if the runner touches it before being put out. The runner is then entitled to this base until the runner is put out, or until the runner legally touches the next base while it is unoccupied or until a following runner is forced (2-24-1) to advance to the base the runner has occupied. A runner need not vacate a base to permit a fielder to catch a fly ball in the infield, but the runner may not interfere.

a. If two runners are on the same base, at the same time and both are tagged, the following runner is declared out. On a force play situation, the runner who is forced to advance shall be declared out when tagged on the base or the base to which the runner is forced is touched by a fielder while in possession of the ball.

ART. 9 . . . Each runner shall touch the base after the ball becomes dead. All awarded bases must be touched in the proper order. The runner returns to the base the runner had reached or passed when the ball became dead. In the event of interference, a runner returns to the base the runner had legally reached at the time of the interference. If the interference does not cause the batter to be out and any other runner cannot return to the base last legally occupied at the time of the interference, the runner is advanced to the next base.

a. The runner returns to the base occupied at the time of the pitch if the batter-runner advance was during an uncaught foul.

BASERUNNING AWARDS TABLE

NO. BASES AWARDED	DETERMINED FROM BASE 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.

SECTION 3 BASERUNNING AWARDS

ART. 1 . . . Each runner other than the batter-runner (who is governed by 8-1-2) is awarded one base when:

a. there is a balk (6-1-4, 6-2-4) or a pitch strikes a runner (5-1-1a);
b. the runner is forced from the base the runner occupies by a following runner who must advance because a batter receives a fourth ball, or is hit by a pitched ball, or hits a fair ball which becomes dead (5-1-1f);
c. the runner is attempting to steal or is forced from the base the runner occupies by a batter-runner or runner who must advance because the catcher or any fielder obstructs the batter, such as stepping on or across home or pushing the batter to reach the pitch or touching the bat (8-1-1e). Instances may occur when the infraction may be ignored. (8-1-1e)

ART. 2 . . . When a runner is obstructed while advancing or returning to a base, the umpire shall award the obstructed runner a minimum of one base beyond the runner's position on base when the obstruction occurred. The umpire shall award the obstructed runner and each other runner(s) any additional bases that would nullify the obstruction.

ART. 3 . . . Each runner is awarded:

a. four bases (home) if a fair ball goes over a fence in flight or hits a foul pole above the fence, or is prevented from going over by being touched by a spectator, or is touched by an illegal glove/mitt or detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder;
b. three bases if a batted ball (other than in item a) is touched by an illegal glove or mitt, or by detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder, provided the ball when touched is on or over fair ground, or is a fair ball while on or over foul ground, or is over foul ground in a situation such that it might become a fair ball;
c. two bases if a fair batted or thrown ball becomes dead because of bouncing over or passing through a fence, or lodges in a defensive player's or umpire's equipment or uniform (except ball lodged in glove); or if a live thrown ball:
    1. including a pitch, is touched by an illegal glove or mitt, or by detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder; or
    2. goes into a stand for spectators, dugout or player's bench or over or through or lodges in a fence and it is not thrown by a pitcher from the pitcher's plate as in 8-3-3d;
    3. When two runners are between the same bases on an overthrow into dead ball territory, the lead runner receives two bases and the following runner is awarded one, since both runners cannot share the same awarded base.
    4. Runners between second and third would score, because the award does not result in both runners occupying the same base.
d. one base if a pitch or any throw by the pitcher from the pitching position on the pitcher's plate goes into a stand or bench or over or through or lodges in a fence or backstop or touches a spectator or lodges in an umpire's or catcher's equipment; or with less than two outs, the batter hits a fair or foul

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. 6 . . . When a plate umpire hinders, impedes or prevents a catcher's throw attempting to prevent a stolen base or retire a runner on a pickoff play, if an out is not made at the end of the catcher's initial throw, the ball shall be dead and all runners shall return to the bases occupied at the time of the interference.

SECTION 4 RUNNER IS OUT

ART. 1 . . . The batter-runner is out when:

a. the batter-runner intentionally interferes with the catcher's attempt to field the ball after a third strike;
b. the batter-runner's fair hit or foul (other than a foul tip which is not a third strike) is caught by a fielder, or such catch is prevented by a spectator reaching into the playing field;
c. the batter-runner's fair fly, fair line drive or fair bunt in flight is intentionally dropped by an infielder with at least first base occupied and before there are two outs. The ball is dead and the runner or runners shall return to their respective base(s).
    1. In this situation, the batter is not out if the infielder permits the fair fly, fair line drive or fair bunt in flight to drop untouched to the ground, except when the infield fly rule (2-19) applies (5-1-1j).
d. after hitting or bunting a ball, the batter-runner intentionally contacts the ball with the bat a second time in fair or foul territory. The ball is dead and no runner(s) advance.
    1. In the case of a foul ball, it must have a chance to become fair in the umpire's judgment.
    2. If the bat and ball accidentally come in contact with each other a second time while the batter is holding the bat in the batter's box, it is a foul ball.
e. a third strike is caught by the catcher; or the third strike is not caught with first base occupied and there are less than two outs (8-1-1b);
f. after a dropped third strike (8-4-1e) or a fair hit, if the ball held by any fielder touches the batter before the batter touches first base; or if any fielder, while holding the ball in the fielder's grasp, touches first base or touches first base with the ball before the batter-runner touches first base: or
g. the batter-runner runs outside the three-foot running lane (last half of the distance from home plate to first base), while the ball is being fielded or thrown to first base; or
    1. This infraction is ignored if it is to avoid a fielder who is attempting to field the batted ball.
    2. The batter runner is considered outside the running lane lines if either foot is outside either line.
h. any runner or retired runner interferes (2-21-1, 2-30-3) in a way which obviously hinders an obvious double play; or
i. on a dropped third strike, the batter-runner gives up by entering the bench or dugout area, or with two outs and does not attempt to reach first base before all infielders leave the diamond at the end of the half-inning;
j. hits an infield fly and the infield-fly rule is in effect;
k. enters the game as an illegal substitute and is discovered.

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.

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 in the judgment of the umpire, another runner could have been put out, the umpire shall declare that runner out. If the umpire is uncertain who would have been played on, the runner closest to home shall be called out; or

1. If two fielders try to field a batted ball and the runner contacts one or both, the umpire shall decide which one is entitled to field the ball and that fielder only is entitled to protection. If a fielder drops a batted ball and contact with a runner occurs during a subsequent attempt to field the ball, the fielder has the greater responsibility for avoiding contact.

h. is touched by a live ball securely held by a fielder or is touched by a fielder's glove or hand with the live ball held therein, while the runner is not touching a base.
   1. If a batter-runner safely touches first base and then overslides or overruns it, the batter-runner may immediately return to first base without liability of being tagged out, provided the batter-runner did not attempt to run or feint to second. Also, if any base comes loose from its fastening when any runner contacts it, such runner cannot be tagged out because the base slides away from the runner.
   2. The ball is not securely held if it is dropped or juggled after the runner is touched.

i. does not retouch the base before a fielder tags the runner out or holds the ball while touching such base after any situation (8-2-1, 8-2-3, 8-2-4). An umpire may also call the runner out at the end of playing action upon proper and successful appeal. Also, it is not necessary for runner to retouch the base after a foul tip (2-16-2); or

j. fails to reach the next base before a fielder either tags the runner out or holds the ball while touching such base, after runner has been forced from the base the runner occupied because the batter became a runner (with ball in play) when other runners were on first base, or on first and second, or on first, second and third. There shall be no accidental appeals on a force play.
   1. No runner may be forced out if a runner who follows in the batting order is first put out (including a batter-runner who is out for an infield fly).

k. is contacted by a fair batted ball before it touches an infielder, or after it passes any infielder, except the pitcher, and the umpire is convinced that another infielder has a play. (5-1-1f, 6-1-5)
   1. If a runner is touching the base when the runner is hit by an infield fly, the runner is not out, but the batter is out by the infield fly rule. The ball is dead, even in the exception.
   2. If a runner is hit by an infield fly when the runner is not touching the base, both the runner and the batter are out.

l. attempts to advance to home base when the batter interferes with a play at home base, with less than two outs; or
   1. If there are two outs, the batter is out because of interference and since the batter is the third out, the runner cannot score. But if there are not two outs, the runner is out and the batter is not penalized.

m. passes an unobstructed preceding runner before such runner is out (including awarded bases); or

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 – Record 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 . . . The number of runs scored by each team is entered in the scorebook for each inning. The team whose runners score the greatest total number of runs for the entire regulation game is the winner. (4-2)

SECTION 2 RECORDING GAME ACTIVITY

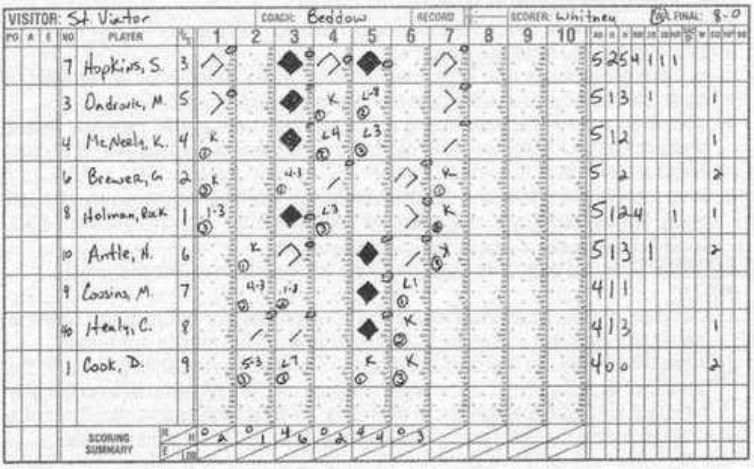
ART. 1 . . . Uniformity in records of game activity is promoted by use of a standard tabulation sheet containing columns as shown in the diagram below.

ART. 2 . . . The official scorer shall keep records as outlined in the following rules. The official scorer has the final authority when judgment is involved in determining whether a batter-runner's advance to first base is the result of an error or of a base hit. The scorebook of the home team shall be the official scorebook, unless the umpire-in-chief rules otherwise.

SECTION 3 PLAYER'S BATTING RECORD

ART. 1 . . . Each player's batting record shall include:

a. in columns 1, 2 and 3 after name and position, the number of times the player batted (2-39-1), the runs the player scored (9-1-1), and the base hits the player made (9-3-2);
b. in the summary, the number of total base hits and the type (single, double, triple or home run), sacrifices, and number of runs the player batted in;
c. slugging percentage, which is total bases (i.e., double = two bases, triple = three bases, etc.) divided by official at bats; and
d. on-base percentage, which is the number of hits, walks and hit by pitch divided by the number of official at-bats, walks, hit by pitch and sacrifice flies).



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.

SECTION 5 PLAYER'S FIELDING RECORD

ART. 1 . . . Each player's fielding record shall include the times the player put out a batter or runner, the times the player assisted a teammate in putting out a runner, and the number of errors the player committed. These shall be recorded respectively in columns 4, 5, and 6.

ART. 2 . . . A putout is credited to a fielder who catches a batted ball in flight, or who tags out a runner, or who puts out a runner by holding the ball while touching a base to which a runner is forced to advance or return.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. Catcher is credited with the putout when batter is out for illegally batting the ball, for a third strike bunted foul, for being hit by the batter's own batted ball, for batting out of turn or for batter's interference.
2. For an infield fly, the putout is credited to the fielder who would ordinarily have made the catch.
3. For runner being out because of being hit by a batted ball, the putout is credited to the fielder who is nearest the ball at the time.
4. For runner called out for missing base, credit putout to fielder at that base.
5. For malicious contact by a runner, credit the putout to the involved fielder.

ART. 3 . . . An assist is credited to a fielder each time the fielder handles or deflects the ball during action which is connected with the putout or the fielder handles the ball prior to an error which prevents what would have been a putout. If several fielders handle the ball or one fielder handles it more than once during a play, such as when a runner is caught between bases, only one assist is credited to each of such fielders.

a. After a pitch, if catcher tags out or throws out a runner, the pitcher is not credited with an assist.

ART. 4 . . . A double play or triple play is credited to one or more fielders when two or three players are put out between the time a pitch is delivered and the time the ball next becomes dead or is next in possession of the pitcher in pitching position.

ART. 5 . . . An error is charged against a fielder or a team for each misplay that prolongs the time at bat of the batter or the time a player continues to be a runner, or permits the runner to advance one or more bases.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. A pitcher is not charged with an error for a base on balls; or a batter being hit, or a balk, or a wild pitch.
2. A catcher is not charged with an error for a wild throw in the catcher's attempt to prevent a stolen base unless the runner advances another base because of the wild throw.
3. Neither catcher nor infielder is charged with an error for a wild throw in an attempt to complete a double play, unless the throw is so wild that it permits a runner to advance an additional base. But if a player drops a thrown ball, when by holding it the player would have completed the double (or triple) play, it is an error. A passed ball is a pitch the catcher fails to stop or control when the catcher should have been able to do so with ordinary effort and on which a runner, other than the batter, is able to advance. When a passed ball occurs on a third strike, permitting a batter to reach first base, score a strikeout and a passed ball.

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 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.

3. If the opposition goes ahead, pitchers up to that time in the game cannot be credited with the win. However, if the pitcher pitching subsequently takes and maintains a lead the remainder of the game, said pitcher is credited with the win.
4. Generally the relief pitcher credited with the win is the pitcher when the pitcher's team takes the lead and holds it for the rest of the game. However, if the relief pitcher pitches only a short while or not effectively and a succeeding relief pitcher replaces the player and does better work in keeping the lead, the latter shall be granted the win.

c. If a pitcher is removed for a pinch-hitter or a pinch-runner, the runs scored by the pitcher's team during the inning of the pitcher's removal are to be credited to that pitcher's benefit to decide the pitcher of record.
d. The starting pitcher shall be charged with the loss when replaced and the pitcher's team is behind or falls behind because of runs assessed to the starting pitcher after being replaced and the pitcher's team does not subsequently tie the score or take the lead.
e. A pitcher cannot be given credit for pitching a shutout when the player does not pitch the complete game except when entering the game with no one out before the opponents have scored in the first inning and does not permit the opposition to score during the game.

ART. 7 . . . In order for a pitcher to be credited with a save, the pitcher shall:
a. be the last pitcher in a game won by the pitcher's team;
b. not be the winning pitcher; and
c. meet at least one of the following:
   1. the pitcher enters the game with a lead of not more than three runs and pitches at least one inning; or
   2. the pitcher enters the game regardless of the count on the batter with the potential tying run either on base, at bat or on deck; or
   3. the pitcher pitches effectively for at least three innings.
   4. A starting pitcher who is replaced and then re-enters as pitcher can be credited with a win but not a save.

SECTION 7 GENERAL SUMMARY

ART. 1 . . . The game summary includes the following:
a. Total score and runs scored in each inning.
b. Stolen bases for each runner.
c. Sacrifices by each batter.
d. Base hits by each batter and total against each pitcher.
e. Two- or three-base hits and home runs.
f. Times at bat for each player and total against each pitcher.
g. Strikeouts by each pitcher.
h. Bases on balls by each pitcher.
i. Wild pitches by each pitcher.
j. Times each pitcher hits batter with pitch and names of those hit.
k. Passed balls by catcher.
l. Time required to play game and name of each umpire.

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 ½ 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 in conflict with the rules, the coach or captain may ask that the correct ruling be 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

swing carried the barrel of the bat past the body of the batter, but final decision is based on whether the batter actually struck at the ball.

ART. 5 . . . The use of videotape or equipment by game officials for the purpose of making calls or rendering decisions is prohibited.

ART. 6 . . . No umpire may be replaced during a game unless the umpire becomes ill or is injured. The umpire's right to disqualify players or to remove nonplayers for objecting to decisions or for unsportsmanlike conduct is absolute. Ejections will be made at the end of playing action.

ART. 7 . . . Casts, splints and braces may be worn, if padded. Umpires may wear prostheses and use mobility devices.

ART. 8 . . . Umpires shall not use tobacco or tobacco-like products on or in the vicinity of the playing field.

ART. 9 . . . Umpires shall wear gray slacks, and navy pullover shirt or state association-adopted shirt.

SECTION 2 UMPIRE-IN-CHIEF

ART. 1 . . . If there are two or more umpires, the umpire-in-chief shall stand behind the catcher. The umpire-in-chief, when behind the plate, shall wear proper safety equipment including, but not limited to, chest protector, face mask, throat guard, plate shoes, shin guards and protective cup (if male). The umpire-in-chief shall call and count balls and strikes; signal fair balls; call out "Foul Ball," except on a caught foul fly ball, while signaling a foul ball, except on fair/foul situations commonly called by the field umpire(s); and make all decisions on the batter. The umpire-in-chief shall make all decisions except those commonly reserved for the field umpire.

ART. 2 . . . The umpire-in-chief has sole authority to forfeit a game and has jurisdiction over any rules matters not mentioned in 10-2-1 and not assigned to the field umpire in 10-3.

ART. 3 . . . The umpire-in-chief's duties include those listed in 10-2-1, 10-2-2 and the following:

a. Inspect the condition of the field, receive batting order of both teams, announce special ground rules and formulate such if the two teams cannot agree, designate the official scorer (9-2-2) and that each player takes his glove and other loose equipment to the bench at the end of the player's term in the field.
b. Call "Play" and use the correct hand signal to start the game or to resume play; and call "Time" whenever ball becomes dead.
c. Eject a player or coach or clear the bench or send a coach from the field or restrict a coach or player (illegal substitution) to the bench/dugout if it becomes necessary.
d. Announce each substitution.
e. Call the game if conditions become unfit for play.
f. Penalize for rule infractions, such as balk, interference, baserunning infractions, delay, unwarranted disputing of decision, or unsportsmanlike conduct.
g. Make final decision on points not covered by the rules.

h. Forfeit the game for prescribed infractions by coaches, players or team/bench personnel.
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.

SUGGESTED SPEED-UP RULES

By state association adoption any, all, or any part of the suggested speed-up rules may be used.

Courtesy Runners

1. At any time, the team at bat may use courtesy runners for the pitcher and/or the catcher. In the event that the offensive team bats around, the pitcher and/or catcher who had a courtesy runner inserted on their behalf may bat in their normal position in the batting order.
2. The same individual runner may not be used for both positions (pitcher and catcher) during the game.
3. Neither the pitcher nor the catcher will be required to leave the game under such circumstances.
4. Players who have participated in the game in any other capacity are ineligible to serve as courtesy runners.
5. A player may not run as a courtesy runner for the pitcher or the catcher and then be used as a substitute for another player in that half inning. If an injury, illness or ejection occurs and no other runners are available, the courtesy runner may be used as a substitute.
6. The umpire-in-chief shall record courtesy runner participation and also announce it to the scorer.
7. A player who violates the courtesy-runner rule is considered to be an illegal substitute.
   a. Should an injury, illness or ejection occur to the courtesy runner, another courtesy runner for the pitcher or catcher may run.

After Putouts

1. After a putout in the outfield and with no runners on base, the ball shall be thrown to a cutoff player and, if desired, to one additional infielder before being returned to the pitcher for delivery to the next batter.
2. After a putout in the infield and with no runners on base, the ball shall be returned directly to the pitcher.

RULES BY STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTION

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

COMMENTS ON THE 2026 RULES CHANGES

Mandating Double First Base (Effective January 1, 2027) and associated rules (1-2-9, 2-5-1h,2-16-1h, 8-2-1, 8-2-2(a) 1-7, 8-2-7, 8-4-1g(1) — A double first base enhances player safety by reducing the risk of collisions between the batter-runner and the first baseman on close plays. It provides a separate space for each player—fair territory for the fielder and foul territory for the runner—helping to prevent injuries while maintaining the integrity of the game.

School Uniform (1-4-4) — Clear uniform guidelines help maintain the integrity, fairness, and educational purpose of high school baseball. Uniforms represent the team and school, not individual expression, and must comply with NFHS rules. Defined standards prevent confusion, promote equality, and teach values like respect, discipline, and accountability—hallmarks of education-based athletics.

Player Communication Equipment (1-6-3) — In high school baseball, players are not permitted to wear any audio or video equipment for the purpose of broadcasting or live recording while actively participating in the contest. This rule protects safety, fairness, competitive integrity, privacy of others, focus on education and the educational mission of high school sports.

Definition of Player to Player Meeting (2-10-3, 3-4-6) — Utilizing the rule additions, clarifies that the defensive players can offer support and provide camaraderie to their pitcher and limits the occurrences. The new rule also clarifies that it is not a charged conference and maintaining the integrity of the existing rule. It is hopeful that these changes prevent teams from stalling to gain an unfair advantage when weather or darkness is approaching.

WARNINGS, RESTRICTIONS AND EJECTION TABLE

	Activity	References	Penalties
1.	Deliberately remove batting helmet in live-ball territory while ball is live; Non-adult ball shagger not wearing batting helmet live or dead ball territory	1-5-1	Warn coach; eject individual who subsequently violates for that team
2.	Not wearing the required catcher's equipment;	1-5-4	Failure to wear proper equipment after ordered by the umpire, player shall be ejected;
3.	Discovery of illegal substitute	3-1-1	While on offense: Player declared out and restricted to bench/ dugout for remainder of game; re-entry to game of restricted player shall result in player called out and ejection. While on defense: Player restricted to bench/dugout for remainder of game; re-entry of restricted player shall result in ejection
4.	Coach who is not in the uniform of the team;	3-2-1	Restricted to bench/dugout; (except to attend to injured or ill player)
5.	Head coach must attend pre-game conference, if available;	3-2-4	Head coach restricted to dugout (except to attend to sick or injured player)
	Coach, player, substitute, attendant or other bench personnel shall not:		
6.	leave the dugout during live ball for unauthorized purpose;	3-3-1a	Warn coach of team involved; next offender is ejected;
7.	fake a tag without the ball;	3-3-1b	Same as 6.; also obstruction in 3-3-1b
8.	carelessly throw a bat;	3-3-1c	Same as 6.
9.	wear bandannas;	3-3-1d	Same as 6.
10.	hit the ball to players on defense after game starts;	3-3-1e	Same as 6.
11.	Commit unsportsmanlike acts including but not limited to; inciting spectators, use of profanity, intimidation, behavior not in accordance with spirit of fair play, being in live ball territory during opponent's infield practice, taunting, etc.;	3-3-1f(1.-5.)	Umpire may warn the offender first; warning may be verbal or written; if written, offender restricted to dugout/bench for remainder of game; Coach who previously received verbal warning, shall received written warning and restriction; Coach who previously received written warning and restriction shall be ejected; Any offense judged to be major in nature shall result in immediate ejection;

	Activity	References	Penalties
12.	enter the area behind the catcher while opposing pitcher and catcher are in their positions;	3-3-1g	Same as 11.
13.	use of any object in the coach's box other than stop-watch, hard-copy rule book or scorebook;	3-3-1h	Same as 11.
14.	be outside the dugout/bench or bullpen area if not batter, runner, on-deck batter in coach's box or one of nine defensive players;	3-3-1i	Same as 11.
15.	any member of coaching staff who is not the head coach leaves the vicinity of dugout or coach's box to dispute an umpire's judgment call;	3-3-1f.6	Both the head coach and offending coach shall receive written warning and restriction to dugout unless offense by assistant coach offense is judged so severe that assistant coach shall be ejected and head coach is also restricted to dugout.
16.	confronting or directing unsportsmanlike conduct to the umpires after the game has concluded and until the umpires have departed the game site;	3-3-1f.7	State association determines appropriate action;
17.	charge an umpire;	3-3-1j	Same as 11.
18.	use amplifiers or bullhorns to coach;	3-3-1k	Same as 11.
19.	deliberately throw a bat, helmet, etc.,;	3-3-1l	Eject offender
20.	initiate malicious contact on offense or defense;	3-3-1m	If on offense, ball is dead, player declared out and ejected; if on defense, player is ejected and umpire rules out or safe on the play and base awards;
21.	call 'Time' or commit act to cause a balk;	3-3-1n	Eject offender
22.	use tobacco or tobacco-like products on field;	3-3-1o	Eject offender
23.	leave positions or bench area during a fight or physical confrontation;	3-3-1p	Eject offender, unless a coach is attempting to prevent a fight or restore order.
24.	have physical contact, spit, kick dirt or engage in any physical action toward an umpire;	3-3-1q	Eject offender
25.	Player's loosening up to bat shall remain in area of their team's on-deck circle while pitcher warming up. (1-2-3)	3-3-3	Team warning issues to offending team's coach; next offender for that team is ejected

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	Activity	References	Penalties
26.	Two or more players having more than allowed one team meeting.	3-4-6	Umpire shall deny any subsequent defensive team meeting in the half inning.
27.	Batter enters batter's box with illegal bat;	4-1-3b	Illegal bat penalty per (7-4-1a) and head coach shall be restricted to dugout for remainder of game; subsequent violations shall also result in ejection of head coach and designated head coaches thereafter;
28.	Infractions by the pitcher including: applying a foreign substance to the ball, spitting on the ball or glove, defacing the ball, discoloring the ball with dirt;	6-2-1 (a-d)	The umpire may eject the pitcher. The ball is dead and if pitched it is an illegal pitch;
29.	Pitcher delaying the game by throwing to any player other than the catcher, when the batter is in the box, unless it is an attempt to retire a runner;	6-2-2a	After a verbal warning, the pitcher shall be ejected;
30.	Pitcher intentionally pitches close to a batter;	6-2-3	Pitcher shall be ejected if the act is judged intentional. If there is doubt the umpire may first warn the pitcher;

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)

OFFICIAL NFHS BASEBALL SIGNALS

B. During Play and Results

PlayPic



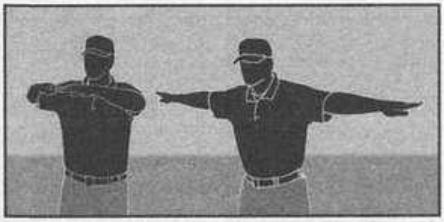
1. Strike Verbal only without swing.



2. Foul Ball, Time Out, Dead Ball



3. Foul Tip Right hand pass over left hand. Strike call. Live ball.



4. Safe, Uncaught 3rd Strike, "Did Not Go" Arms extended in front and swing open.



5. Out Right arm up with fist hammering motion. "He's out."



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



7. Fair Ball Point only. No verbal.



8. Information Tap chest. Has relevant information for partner.

PlayPics courtesy of REFEREE (www.referee.com)



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.

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SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION IN SPORTS

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION INCLUDE:

- **Headache** or "pressure" in head;
- **Neck pain**
- **Dizziness**
- Dazed or stunned or vacant appearance;
- Confusion about assignment or position;
- Forgetfulness;
- Uncertainty of game, score, or opponent;
- Clumsy movements;
- Slow response to questions;
- Mood, behavior or personality changes;
- Can't recall events prior to or after hit or fall;
- Nausea;
- Balance problems or dizziness;
- Double or blurry vision;
- Sensitivity to light or noise;
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy;
- Concentration or memory problems;
- Emotions of "not feeling right" or "feeling down."

Activate the Emergency Medical System or Call 9-1-1 if, after a blow, or jolt to the head or body, an athlete has one or more of these danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other;
- Drowsiness or inability to wake up;
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away;
- Slurred speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination;
- Repeated vomiting or nausea;
- Convulsions or seizures (shaking or twitching);
- Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation;
- Loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out). Even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously. Consider activating EMS for prolonged loss of consciousness.

SUGGESTED CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT:

1. No athlete should return-to-sport (RTS) or practice on the same day of a concussion.
2. Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional as soon as possible.
3. Any athlete with a concussion should be medically cleared by an appropriate health-care professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition.
4. After medical clearance, RTS should follow a step-wise protocol with provisions for delayed RTS based upon return of any signs or symptoms at rest, while doing school work or with physical activity.

For further details, please see the "NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports" at *www.nfhs.org*.

Revised and Approved October 2023



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.**

Revised and Approved March 2019

SDC-2026-10-0269 · scan 14/14 · 7/26



GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SPORTS HYGIENE, SKIN INFECTIONS AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Proper precautions are needed to minimize the potential risk of the spread of communicable disease and skin infections during athletic competition. These conditions include skin infections that occur due to skin contact with competitors and equipment. The transmission of infections such as Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and Herpes Gladiatorum, blood-borne pathogens such as HIV and Hepatitis B, and other infectious diseases such as Influenza and COVID-19 can often be greatly reduced through proper hygiene. The NFHS SMAC has outlined and listed below some general guidelines for the prevention of the spread of these diseases.

UNIVERSAL HYGIENE PROTOCOL FOR ALL SPORTS:

- Shower immediately after every competition and practice, using liquid soap and not a shared bar soap;
- Wash all workout clothing after each practice, washing in hot water and drying on a high heat setting;
- Clean and/or wash all personal gear (knee pads, head gear, braces, etc.) and gym bags at least weekly;
- Do not share towels or personal hygiene products (razors) with others;
- Refrain from full body and/or cosmetic shaving of head, chest, arms, legs, abdomen, and groin;
- Students should clean hands with an alcohol-based gel or soap and water before and after every practice and contest to decrease bacterial load on the hands;
- Covering up coughs and sneezes in the bend of the elbow instead of the hand;
- Stay home from school and athletic participation if frequent cough, diarrhea, vomiting or fever.

INFECTIOUS SKIN DISEASES

Strategies for reducing the potential exposure to these infectious agents include:

- Students must notify a parent/guardian and coach of any skin lesion prior to any competition or practice. An appropriate health-care professional must evaluate all concerning skin lesions before returning to practices or competition;
- If an outbreak occurs on a team, especially in a contact sport, all team members should be evaluated to help prevent the potential spread of the infection. All shared equipment shall be properly cleaned/disinfected prior to use;
- Coaches, officials, and appropriate health-care professionals must follow NFHS or state/local guidelines on "time until return to competition." Participation with a covered lesion may be considered if in accordance with NFHS, state or local guidelines and the lesion is no longer contagious.

BLOOD-BORNE INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Strategies for reducing the potential exposure to these agents include following Universal Precautions such as:

- A student who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on a uniform, or has blood on their body, shall be directed to leave the activity (game or practice) until the bleeding is stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or the uniform is changed before returning to activity;
- Athletic trainers or other caregivers must wear gloves and use Universal Precautions to prevent blood or body fluid-splash from contaminating themselves or others;
- In the event of a blood or body fluid-splash, immediately wash contaminated skin or mucous membranes with soap and water. Skin antiseptics (e.g., isopropyl alcohol) or moist towelettes may be used if soap and water not available;
- Clean all contaminated surfaces and equipment with disinfectant before returning to competition. Be sure to use gloves when cleaning;
- Blood on an opponent's uniform during competition or teammate's uniform during practice should be cleaned at that time by wiping with a disinfectant such as isopropyl alcohol;
- Any blood exposure or bites to the skin that break the surface must be reported and immediately evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional.

OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Means of reducing the potential exposure to these agents include:

- Make certain that students, coaching staff, and medical staff are current on all required vaccinations (MMR, Hepatitis B, Chickenpox, Meningitis, Hepatitis A). COVID-19 vaccine and yearly influenza vaccine are strongly encouraged;
- During times of outbreaks, follow the guidelines set forth by the CDC as well as State and local Health Departments.

For more detailed information, refer to the "Blood-Borne Pathogens," "Infectious Mononucleosis" and "Skin Conditions and Infections" sections contained in the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook.

Revised and Approved in January 2022



GUIDELINES ON HANDLING PRACTICES AND CONTESTS DURING LIGHTNING OR THUNDER DISTURBANCES

It is important that state associations continue to educate their member schools on the importance of having an established Lightning Policy/Plan in place for all outdoor high school sports and activities and for indoor swimming pools and that this Policy/Plan is current, practiced and executed.

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 association and the nearest office of the National Weather Service.

PROACTIVE PLANNING

1. Assign a specific staff member to monitor local weather conditions before and during practices and contests. This staff member is charged with suspending outdoor activities and determining when to resume activities. Any individual following these guidelines shall not be challenged.
2. Develop an emergency action 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 going outdoors and 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 will begin.
   d. If available, data from a nationally connected network for lightning detection network should be monitored closely when storms are possible or during lightning delays. Play shall be suspended when lightning is within a 10-mile radius of the event and will not be resumed until at least 30 minutes have passed since the last lightning within the 10-mile radius. However, never depend on the reliability of any detection device if the sky looks threatening, you hear thunder, or see lightning*. Visual and audio indications of a storm should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning-detection device.

** – 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.*

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 October 2024

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COACHES CODE OF ETHICS

The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in interscholastic competition. An interscholastic program should be designed to enhance academic achievement and should never interfere with opportunities for academic success. Each student should be treated with the utmost respect and the student's welfare should be considered in decisions by the coach at all times. Accordingly, the following guidelines for coaches have been adopted by the NFHS Board of Directors:

- **Coaches** shall be aware that they have a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of the student and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.
- **Coaches** shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. In all personal contact with students, officials, athletic directors, school administrators and staff, the state high school athletic association, the media, parents, and the public, coaches shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct. Communication with all parties should be wholesome, appropriate and positive.
- **Coaches** shall respect and support contest officials. Coaches shall not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical and inappropriate.
- **Coaches** shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol, tobacco and other substance abuse.
- **Coaches** shall avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco products when in contact with players.
- **Coaches** shall promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct the program in harmony with the total school program.
- **Coaches** shall master the contest rules and shall teach the rules to their team members.
- **Coaches** shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.
- **Coaches** shall utilize their positive influence to enhance sportsmanship by spectators, both directly and by working closely with cheerleaders, other school club sponsors, booster clubs and administrators.
- **Coaches** shall promote a culture that encourages diversity and inclusion.
- **Coaches** shall ensure they familiarize themselves and their teams with their schools' emergency action plans and, where applicable, with concussion and heat illness prevention plans.
- **Coaches** should meet and exchange cordial greetings with the opposing coach to set the positive example and correct tone for the event before and after the contest.
- **Coaches** shall not exert pressure on faculty members to give students special consideration.
- **Coaches** shall not scout opponents by any means other than those adopted by the league and/or state high school association.



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. This includes, but is not limited to, positive verbal and nonverbal communication with coaches, bench personnel and players.
- **Officials** shall not use any form of alcohol or tobacco, or be under the influence (i.e., impaired by) a controlled or illicit substance(s), beginning with 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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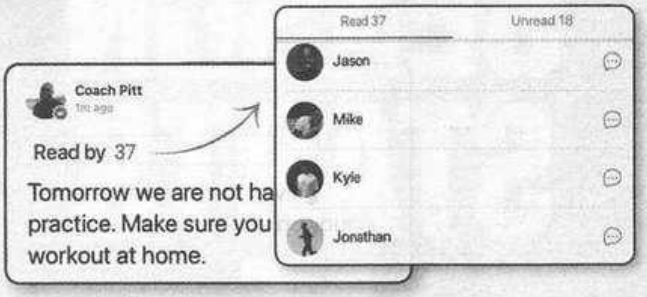
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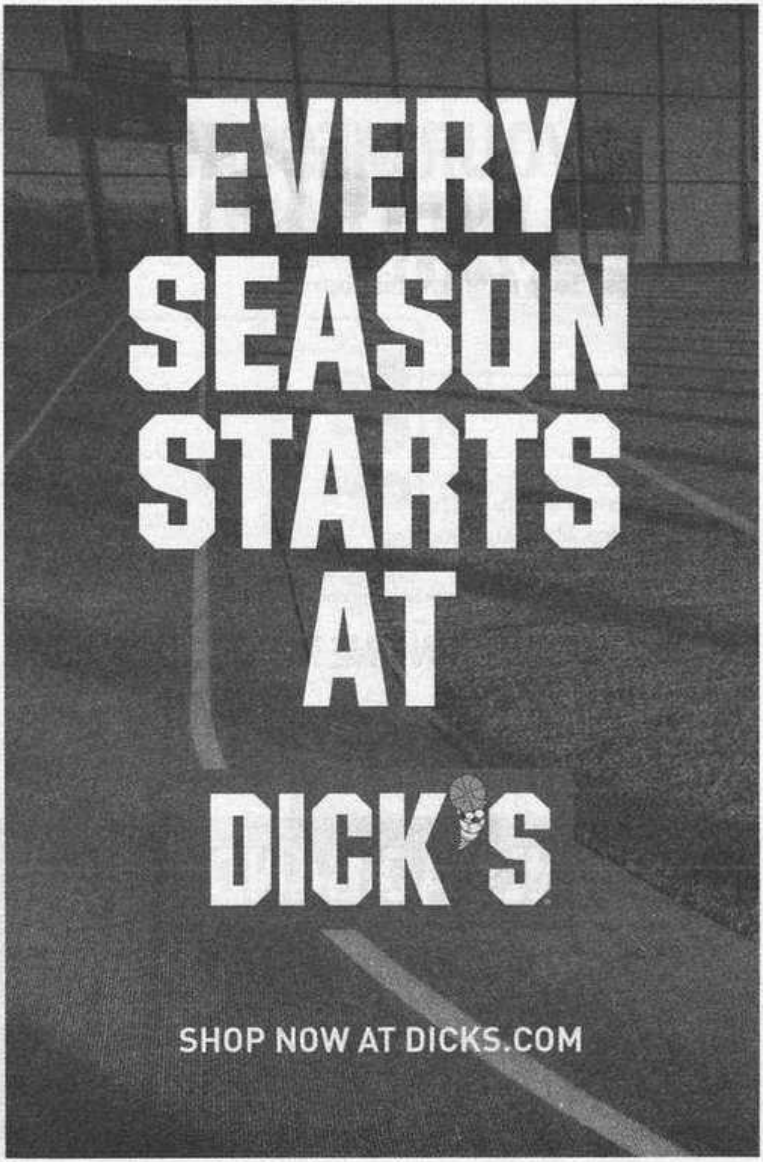
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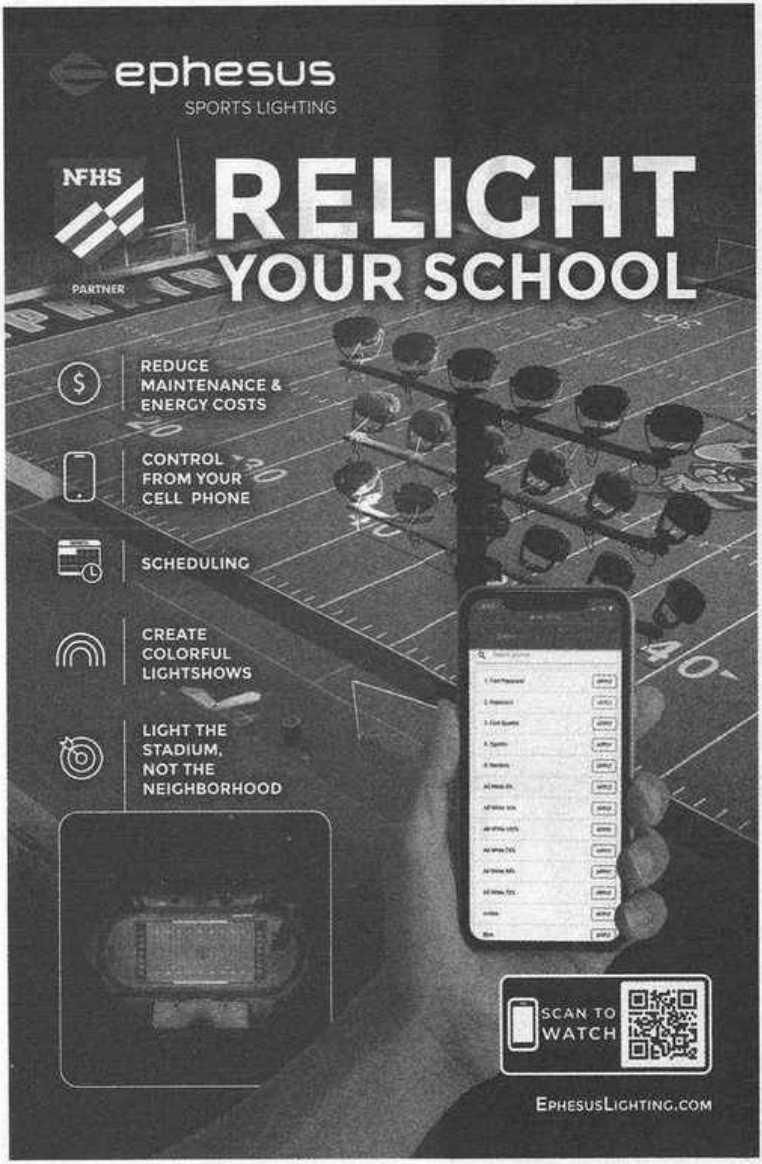
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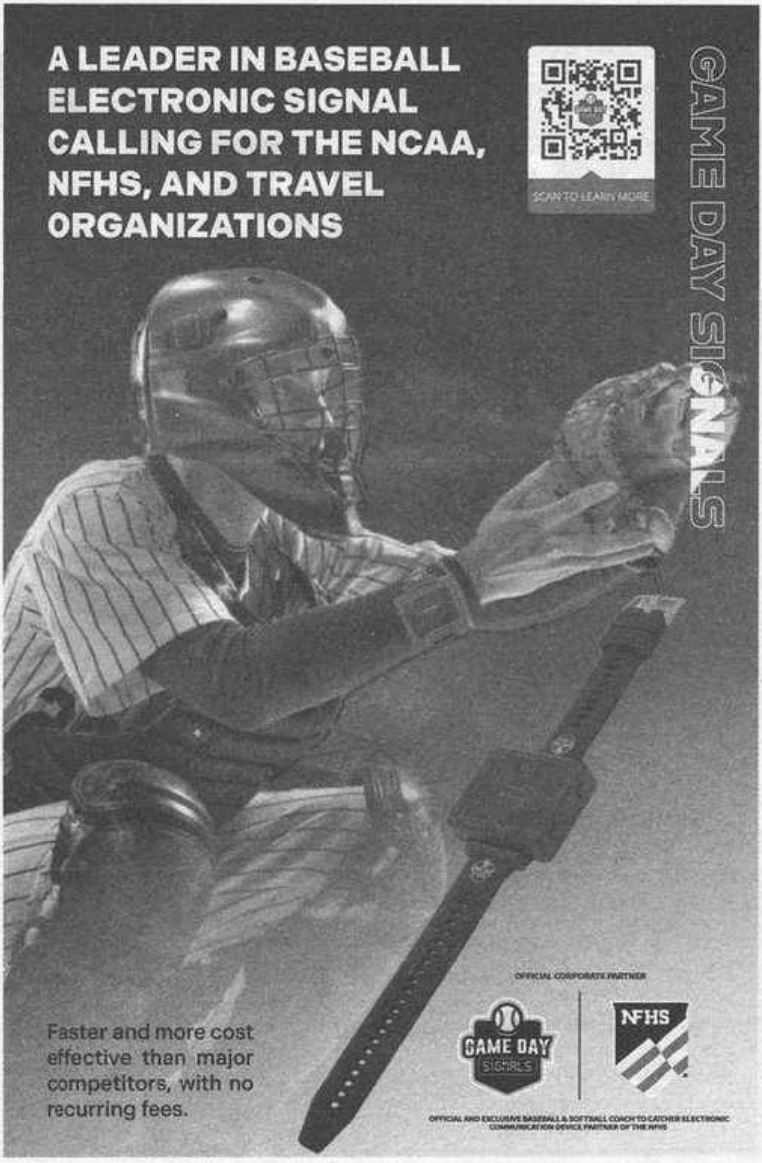
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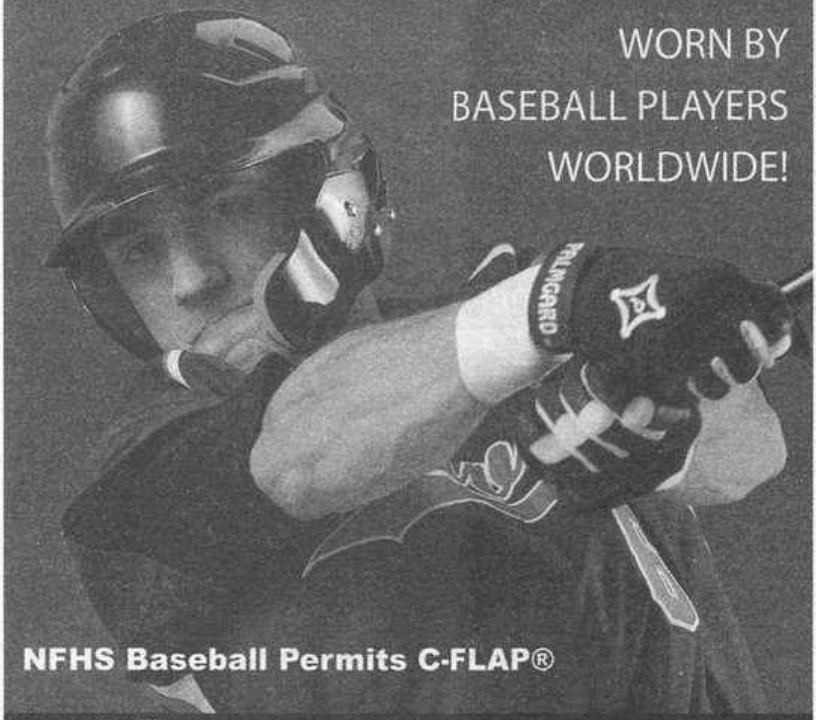

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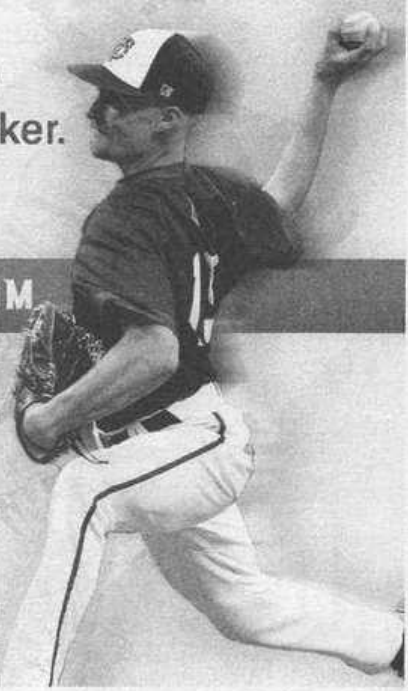
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