

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



NEWS RELEASE

Revisions Made to Four Baseball Rules

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elliot Hopkins

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (June 30, 2008) — The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Baseball Rules Committee adjusted four rules at its annual meeting June 8-10 in Indianapolis. The rules changes subsequently were approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

A revision was made to Rule 6-2-3 regarding infractions by a pitcher. The rule states it is illegal for a pitcher to intentionally pitch close to a batter, replacing the prior phrasing of to “throw” close to a batter. The change was necessary for clarification and in order to be consistent with other pitching rules.

“This rule is violated while the pitcher is pitching, and not just throwing the ball,” said Elliot Hopkins, NFHS director of educational services and liaison to the Baseball Rules Committee.

Infractions by a batter were also addressed. The committee is concerned that batters are still attempting to be hit by pitches and earn an undeserved awarded base by "taking one for the team." Rule 7-3-4 clearly prohibits a batter allowing himself to be hit by a pitch.

In such a situation, the pitched ball is deemed either a strike or a ball and the player who permitted the ball to touch him remains at bat unless the pitch results in a third strike or ball four. The phrase "or ball four" was added to the rule to clarify the pitch needed to be called a strike or ball.

Revisions were also made to Rule 1-2-2 regarding painted field lines. All non-permanent lines on the playing field shall be marked white with a material not injurious to the eyes or skin.

Non-permanent refers to all lines that must be painted on the field. Only permanent lines, such as on artificial turf, may be a color other than white.

Lastly, umpires will be given more flexibility with their uniforms beginning in 2009. An adjustment to Rule 10-1-9 eliminated the need for umpires to specifically wear heather gray pants.

"Equipment dealers are transitioning to charcoal gray slacks," Hopkins said. "This rule change will provide umpires the opportunity to purchase any shade of dark gray and be in compliance."

In addition to the four rules changes, the committee identified four points of emphasis: 1) simplifying illegal pitch penalty administration, 2) re-emphasizing that team personnel remain in dugouts, 3) keeping the pace of play steady and 4) having all coaching staff members display professional behavior.

Baseball is the fourth-most popular sport among boys at the high school level with 477,430 participants during the 2006-07 season, according to the High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS. It also ranks third in school sponsorship across the nation with 15,458 participating schools.

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This press release was written by Steve Appelhans, a summer intern in the NFHS publications/communications department and a senior at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, majoring in sport management.

About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more

than 18,500 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, speech and debate coaches and music adjudicators; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.

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