



# 2023 HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL

National Federation of State  
High School Associations





# ***NEW for 2023***

## **Eye Black**

There no longer are restraints on how an individual player wears eye black. Coaches are to police their own players.

If an official thinks that an individual is wearing eye black in a manner inconsistent with the NJSIAA Sportsmanship Statement, official is only to speak to his coach. The player is not to be addressed.

Eye Black is not to be worn in a taunting manner and bear no reference to gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion.



***NEW for 2023***

## **Sunglasses**

There no longer are restraints on how an individual player wears sunglasses. Coaches are to police their own players.



# ***NEW for 2023***

## **Umpire Uniform**

Baseball Umpires may wear the powder blue umpire shirt with embedded NJSIAA logo that traditionally is worn by softball umpires.

**RATIONALE:** Cost saving for umpires working baseball and softball.

Only powder blue may be worn; not Columbia blue or colors worn in collegiate or professional ball. Default color continues to be Navy Blue.





# ***Registration for 2023***

**Complete Registration on NJSIAA website.**

**Online Concussion Course [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com)**

**Online Baseball Exam Zebra Web**

**Member in Good Standing with Chapter**



# ***On line Test 2023***

**Opens February 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**Closes March 15th**





# NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

National Federation of State  
High School Associations



2023 Baseball Rules Changes and Points of Emphasis



## IMPORTANT FACTS AND DATES

- 2021-22 Participation Results
  - Baseball (4<sup>th</sup> largest) 481,004 (boys)[down from 2018-19 {482,740}]
  - Girls': 1,156 (down from 2018-19 1,284)
- Online Interpretation Meeting Date
  - January 19, 2023
- Mid-Season Webinar Date
  - April 21, 2023
- Rule Change Proposal Submission Dates
  - Open Date: September 1, 2022
  - Close Date: May 1, 2023
- Rules Committee Date
  - June 4-6, 2023







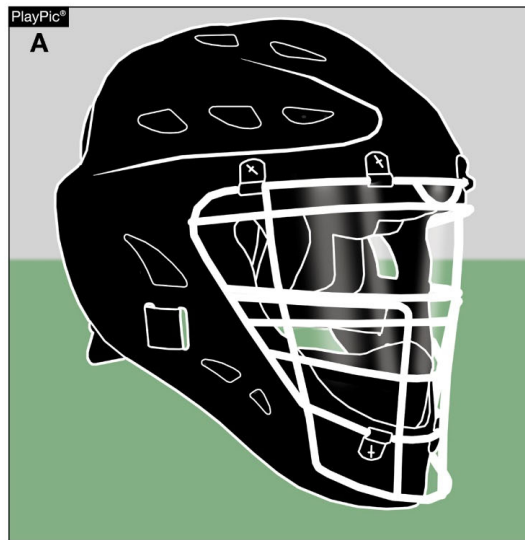
# RULE CHANGES



Rule Change

1-5-4

# PLAYER EQUIPMENT- CATCHER'S HELMET AND MASK



Illegal



Legal



## 1-5-4

# PLAYER EQUIPMENT- CATCHER'S HELMET AND MASK

- **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...and a protective cup (male only). (1-5-9)

## 1-5-4

# PLAYER EQUIPMENT- CATCHER'S HELMET AND MASK

### RATIONALE:

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

Rule Change



## 1-5-12, 3-3-1d PLAYER EQUIPMENT – WEARING OF JEWELRY



Legal





## 1-5-12, 3-3-1d PLAYER EQUIPMENT – WEARING OF JEWELRY

~~ART. 12 . . . Jewelry shall not be worn be permitted (3-3-1d) except for including religious and medical medals. Any jewelry that poses harm or injury to the wearer or the opponent shall be immediately removed. (1-5-9) A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical alert must be taped and may be visible.~~

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

Sub-articles a-e remain the same.

d. ~~wear jewelry (players participating in the game)~~ or wear bandannas;

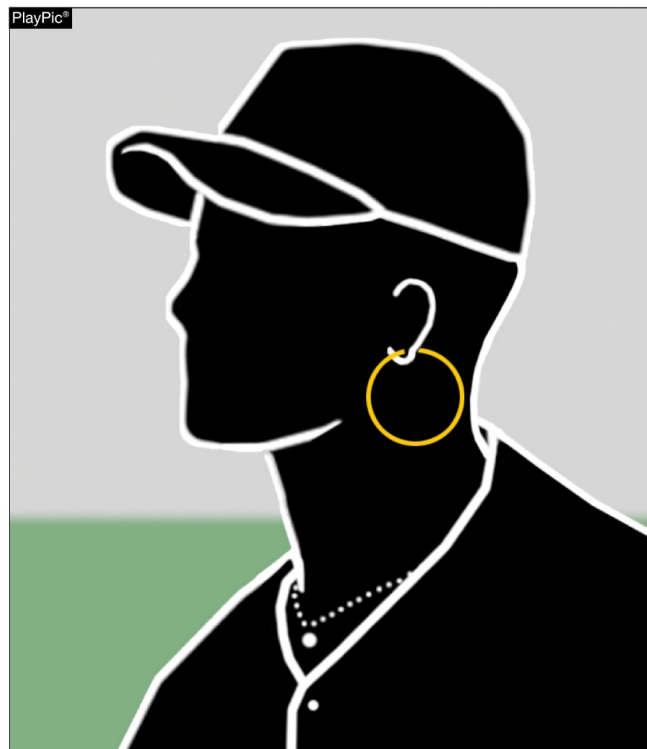




Rule Change



# 1-5-12, 3-3-1d PLAYER EQUIPMENT – WEARING OF JEWELRY





## **1-5-12, 3-3-1d PLAYER EQUIPMENT – WEARING OF JEWELRY**

### **RATIONALE:**

- Pain in the side for decades to rules committee.
- Initially created as a Health & Safety Concern. Any jewelry worn that poses harm or injury to the player or their opponent is covered in existing rules.
- No data exists that jewelry is contributing to injury.
- Rule 3 is a companion rule change with the deletion of Rule 1-5-12.
- If jewelry is worn that poses harm to the player, teammate or their opponent, there are existing rules support to handle the situation.
- Bandannas are still prohibited.



## Rule Change



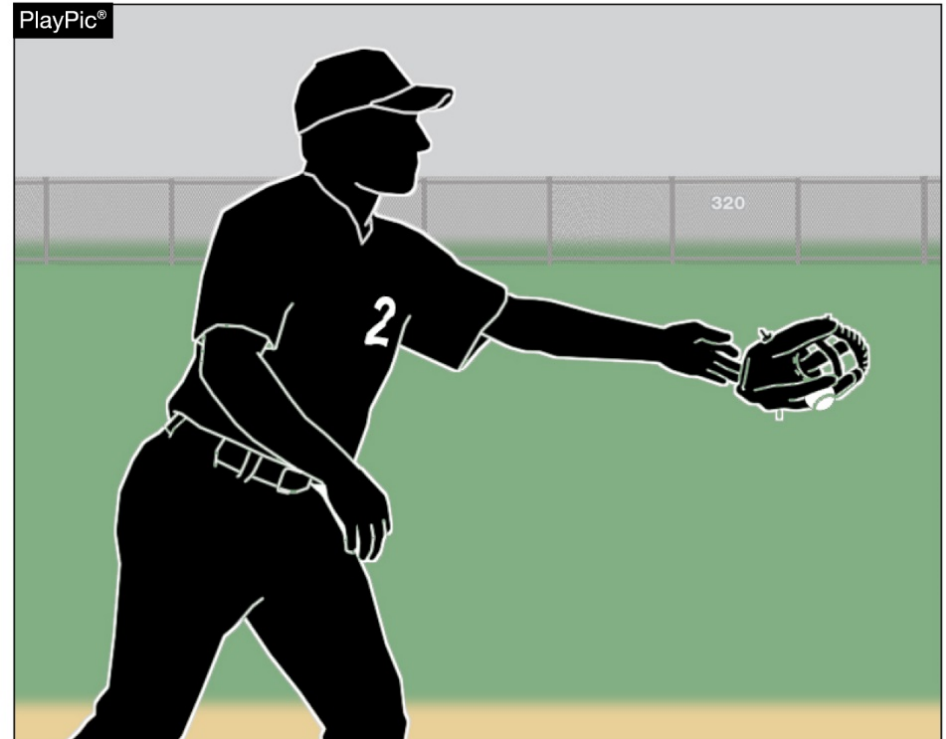
Any jewelry that presents an offensive symbol is unsportsmanlike and must be removed.

Any jewelry that poses a safety risk to student-athletes is not permitted.





## 2-4-4 LODGED BALL DEFINITION





## 2-4-4 LODGED BALL DEFINITION

**ART. 4 . . .** A baseball that remains on the playing field but has become wedged, stuck, lost, or unreachable, is defined to be a lodged ball. If the ball impacts any object in the course of play, stops abruptly, and does not fall or roll immediately, it is considered lodged. It is a dead ball (5-1-1f-3,4; 5-1-1g-4).

Exception: if a ball becomes stuck in the webbing of the fielder's glove, it remains in play. The glove/ball combination is treated as a live ball.



## 2-4-4 LODGED BALL DEFINITION

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### RATIONALE:

A definition of a lodged ball was necessary and appropriate to differentiate when it is stuck on the field or in an apparatus, compared to when it is stuck in a glove.



Rule Change

**6-1-1, 6-1-2, 6-1-3**

## **PITCHING – DETERMINATION OF PITCHING POSITION**

**ART. 1 . . .** The pitcher shall pitch while facing the batter from either a windup (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...but not both.



Rule Change

**6-1-1, 6-1-2, 6-1-3**

## **PITCHING – DETERMINATION OF PITCHING POSITION**

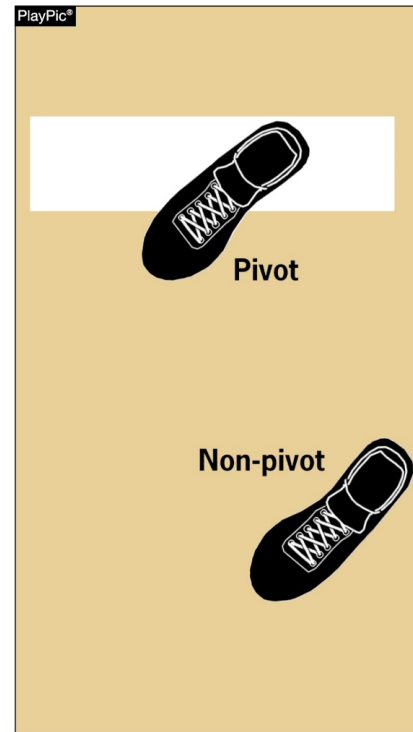
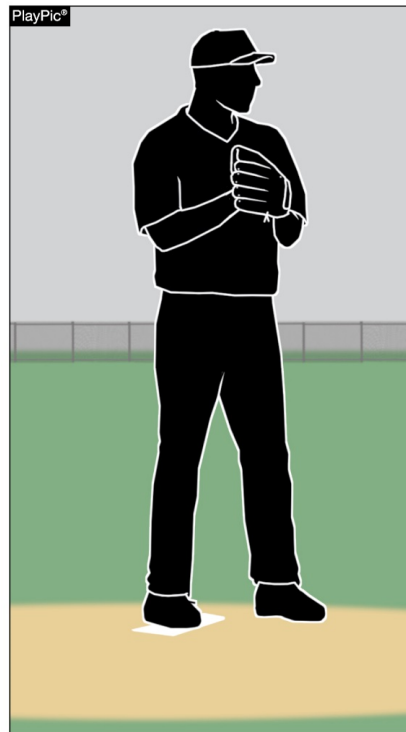
**ART. 2 . . .** For the wind-up position, the pitcher is not restricted as to how they shall hold the ball. A pitcher assumes the windup position when the hands are: (a) together in front of the body; (b) both hands are at the side; (c) either hand is in front of the body and the other hand is at the side. ~~The pitcher's non-pivot foot shall be in any position on or behind a line extending through the front edge of the pitcher's plate.~~ The pitcher is limited...lift either foot.



Rule Change

6-1-1, 6-1-2, 6-1-3

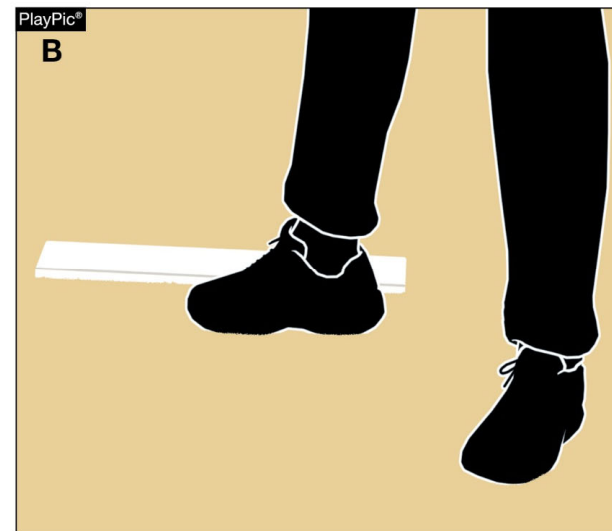
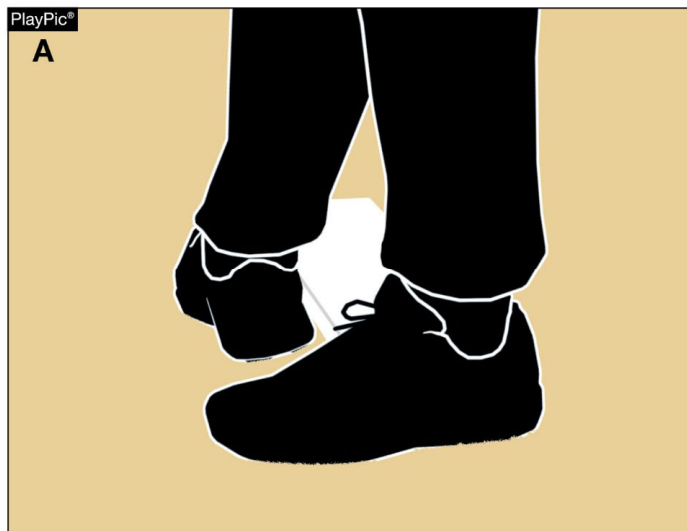
# PITCHING – DETERMINATION OF PITCHING POSITION



Rule Change

6-1-1, 6-1-2, 6-1-3

## PITCHING – DETERMINATION OF PITCHING POSITION



Rule Change

**6-1-1, 6-1-2, 6-1-3**



## **PITCHING – DETERMINATION OF PITCHING POSITION**

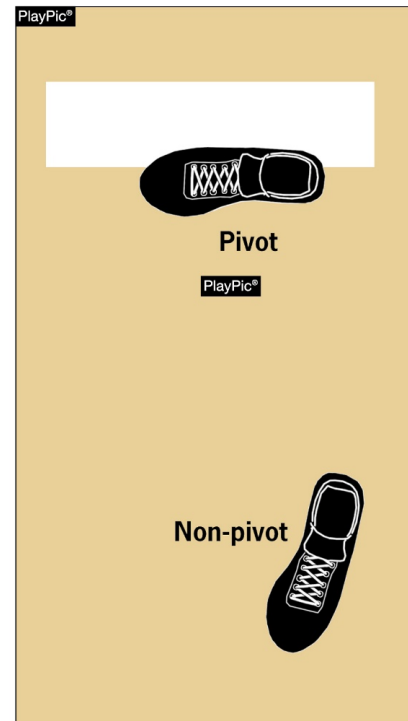
**ART. 3 . . .** For the set position, the pitcher shall have the ball in either the gloved hand or the pitching hand. The pitcher's hand shall be down at the side or behind the back. Before starting the delivery, the pitcher shall stand with the pivot foot in contact with or directly in front of and parallel to the pitcher's plate. The pitcher shall go...any other fielder.



Rule Change

6-1-1, 6-1-2, 6-1-3

# PITCHING – DETERMINATION OF PITCHING POSITION





## 6-1-1, 6-1-2, 6-1-3

# PITCHING – DETERMINATION OF PITCHING POSITION

### RATIONALE:

- In reference to the high school pitching rule, the position of both the pivot and non-pivot foot was the determining factor to deem if a pitcher was pitching from the windup position or the set position.
- The game has evolved throughout high school baseball for the pitcher to pitch with the pivot foot in a windup description with the non-pivot foot in a set description.
- This "hybrid" position was previously illegal by NFHS rule.



## 6-1-1, 6-1-2, 6-1-3

# PITCHING – DETERMINATION OF PITCHING POSITION

- What is important is that umpires, coaches, and players know what position the pitcher is using so they know which part of Rule 6 is in play.
- Deleting the use of the non-pivot foot does no damage to the existing pitching position rule and having only the pivot foot determine makes it clean and easily discernible for all involved.



## PITCHING – DETERMINATION OF PITCHING POSITION

- Rules Committee has changed the rule wording to make it easier for coaches, players and umpires to determine whether a pitcher is in the windup or set position.
- If an umpire cannot determine whether a pitcher is in the windup or set position, NFHS has clarified that the umpire is to consider F1 in the windup position.





## ILLEGAL PITCH

Pitcher must come to a complete and discernible stop prior to delivery of pitch.

**RATIONALE:** Batter's use the stop as a timing mechanism. To not enforce this portion of the rule puts the batter at a disadvantage.

**PENALTY:** With no runner on base, this is an illegal pitch. The ball is dead immediately and a ball is awarded to the batter. With runner(s) on base, this is a balk. The ball is dead immediately and each base runner awarded one base.





## ILLEGAL PITCH

In the set position, the pitcher shall stop with hands together and both feet set on the ground. From this position, the pitcher may throw to a base, deliver a pitch or step off the pitcher's plate.

He may not make any other movement, such as a windup, from this position.

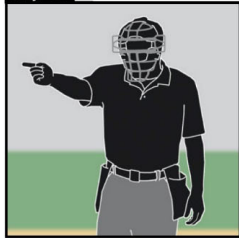
**PENALTY:** This results in an illegal pitch and the ball dead immediately. Coaches are responsible for teaching this pitching fundamental to student-athletes.



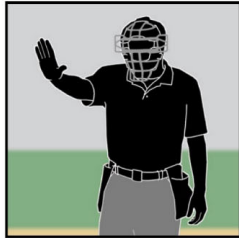


# NFHS OFFICIALS SIGNALS PRE-PITCH SITUATIONAL SIGNALS

PlayPic®



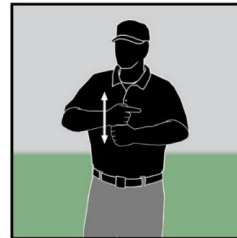
**1. Play** Right hand point to pitcher "Play." Ball is live.



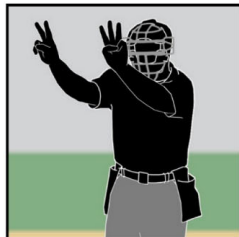
**2. Do Not Pitch** Right palm facing out. Ball is dead.



**3. Infield Fly** Point up with index finger.



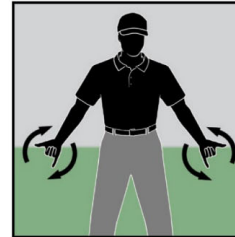
**4. Double Tag Rotation** PU covers 3rd on double tag.



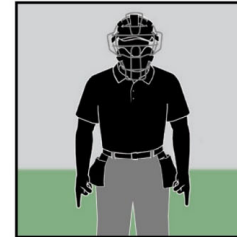
**5. Count** Left hand indicates balls and right hand strikes. Verbal count given.



**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.

- Eight signals have been approved to be used pre-pitch between umpires to demonstrate situations, situational changes and their explanations.





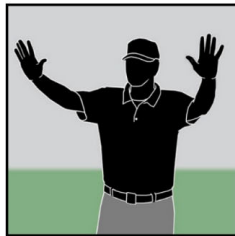


# NFHS OFFICIALS SIGNALS DURING PLAY AND RESULTS

PlayPic®



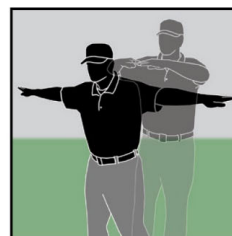
**1. Strike** Verbal only without swing.



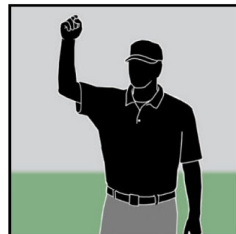
**2. Foul Ball, Time Out, Dead Ball**



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



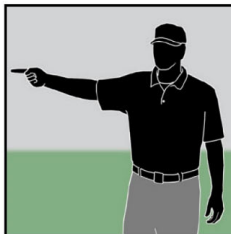
**4. Safe, Uncaught 3rd Strike, "Did Not Go"** Arms extended in front and swing open.



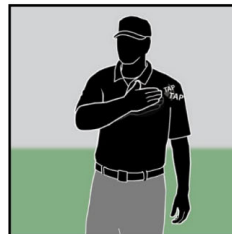
**5. Out** Right arm up with fist hammering motion. "He's out."



**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.

- Eight signals have been approved to be used to demonstrate calls during play and their results.





## POINTS OF EMPHASIS





# SPORTSMANSHIP





## SPORTSMANSHIP

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





## SPORTSMANSHIP

- NFHS playing rules are written to encourage sportsmanship. Participation in these programs should promote respect, integrity and sportsmanship. However, for these ideals to occur, everyone involved in these programs must be doing their part.
- The NFHS is concerned that unsporting behavior in education-based athletics has increased across all sports. As a result, the NFHS has made sportsmanship the No. 1 Point of Emphasis for the 2022-23 school year.





## SPORTSMANSHIP

- Sportsmanship, or good sporting behavior, is about treating one another with respect and exhibiting appropriate behavior. It is about being fair, honest and caring. When these types of appropriate behavior occur, competitive play is more enjoyable for everyone.
- Coaches set the tone at athletic contests with their display of sportsmanship. If these individuals act in a sportsmanlike manner, their behavior sets the tone for players, spectators and others. If coaches, however, are complaining constantly about the decision of contest officials, spectators are more likely to do the same.





## SPORTSMANSHIP

- There must be a collaborative, working relationship between contest officials and game administration to promote good sportsmanship and safely conduct the contest. Everyone has their roles to play in creating a positive, sportsmanlike atmosphere at contests.
- Officials should focus on the actions of players, coaches and other bench/sideline personnel. A positive, open line of communication between officials and coaches ultimately results in a better contest for everyone involved.





## SPORTSMANSHIP

- Contest officials, however, should never engage with spectators who are exhibiting unsporting behavior. Once the contest begins, school administration is responsible for dealing with unruly spectators.
- A proactive approach by school administration includes monitoring the behavior of spectators and intervening as needed.
- If spectators are using demeaning or profane language at officials – or at others in the stands – those individuals should be removed from the contest by school administration.







## SPORTSMANSHIP

- In recent years, a heightened level of unsportsmanlike behavior has been occurring by spectators at high school sporting events, and it must be stopped.
- The use of demeaning language, or hate speech, by students, parents and other fans must cease.
- High school sports and other activities exist to lift people up, not demean or tear people down. The goal is to treat everyone fairly and treat each other with respect. Any speech or harassment that is insulting, demeaning or hurtful will not be tolerated.





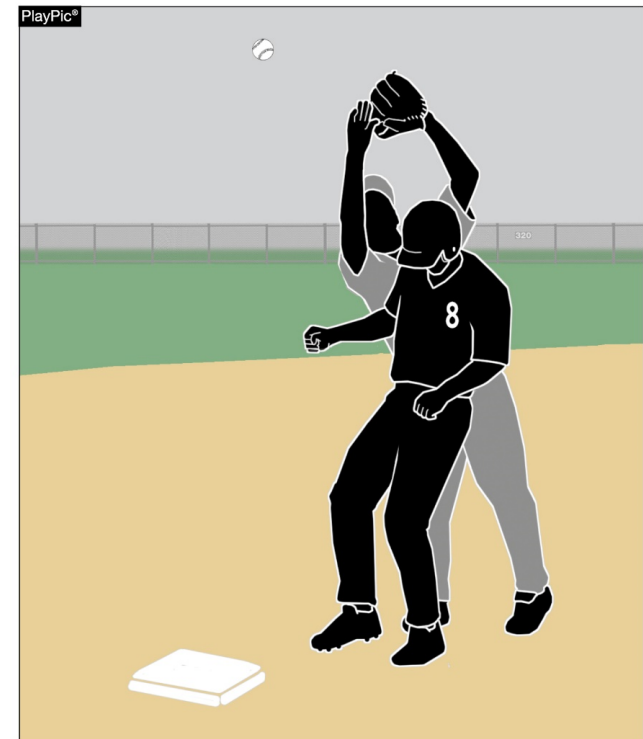
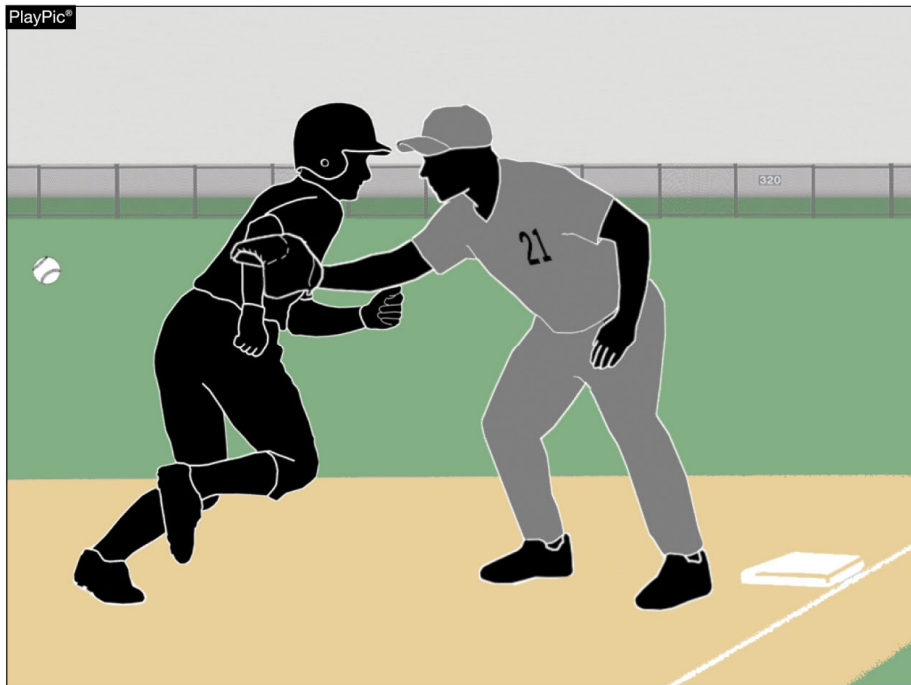
## SPORTSMANSHIP

- High schools must establish a culture that values the worth of every single person – both players on the school’s team and players on the opposing team. There must be a no-tolerance policy regarding behavior that shows disrespect for another individual.
- Good sports win with humility, lose with grace and do both with dignity. It takes the efforts of everyone every day to ensure that sportsmanship remains one of the top priorities in education-based activity programs.





# OBSTRUCTION AND INTERFERENCE





## OBSTRUCTION AND INTERFERENCE

- Obstruction and interference are two familiar terms that have been in the game of baseball since the early beginnings of the sport.
- Simply stated, obstruction is any act accidental, intentional, verbal, or physical that a fielder or any member of the defensive team (or team personnel) that hinders a runner or affects the pattern of play.
- Besides affecting scoring plays, obstruction can occur anywhere on the field resulting in some unsportsmanlike behaviors.
- That is why the penalty for obstruction is some of the sternest penalties in our rules code.





## OBSTRUCTION AND INTERFERENCE

- Interference is very similar to obstruction; it addresses the behavior of the offensive team.
- It is any act, verbal or physical by the team at bat that impedes, hinders or confuses any defensive fielder attempting to make a play.
- There are several other types of interference: umpire, spectator, follow-through, and backswing.
- Umpire interference is when the umpire-in-chief accidentally moves in the way of the catcher's attempt to throw or when a live ball or thrown ball touches them.





## OBSTRUCTION AND INTERFERENCE

- Spectator interference is when a spectator for either team impedes the progress of the game in any way.
- Follow-through interference is when the bat of the batter in the batter's box hinders action at home plate or when the catcher is attempting to make a play on a runner.
- Backswing interference is when the batter contacts the catcher or their equipment prior to the pitch.





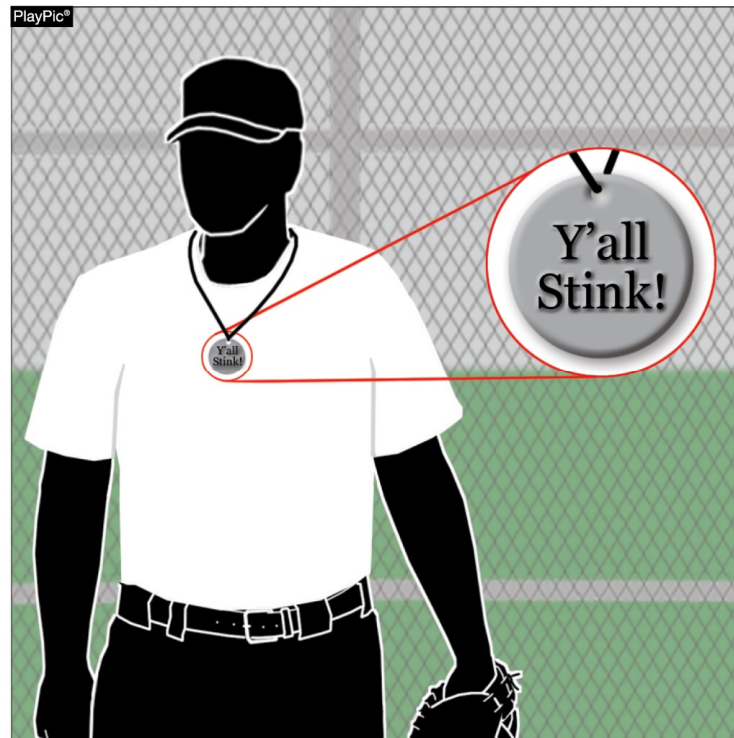
## OBSTRUCTION AND INTERFERENCE

- As one might realize, there are many nuances to both obstruction and the multi-layers of interference.
- Coaches, umpires and players have a roll in understanding the rules of two extremely powerful rules.
- Because both violations are sportsmanship-centered at their core, the penalties are commensurate to the overarching concern regarding fair and equitable play in interscholastic baseball.





## ELIMINATION OF JEWELRY







## ELIMINATION OF JEWELRY

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





## ELIMINATION OF JEWELRY

- Besides those examples, there is existing rule coverage that gives guidance on any player equipment that presents a danger to the player, their teammates or opponent.



## USAGE OF EYE BLACK



- The high school game is now experiencing eye black that is being used as face decoration, with images and/or sayings being drawn on the faces of players to try to intimidate and/or taunt an opponent.
- Existing sportsmanship rules are available to prohibit any use of eye black in an inappropriate or unfavorable way.

## TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGES

### Coach to player communication.

- Wearing of technological devices to facilitate coach-player communication is not allowed.
- NFHS considers the use of earpieces and other technological aides to be non-traditional equipment.
- Only State Associations may request to experiment with rules and have a trial period.





## TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGES

- Bat manufacturers continue to produce new products that circumvent existing rules in an attempt to increase sales.
- NFHS is aware of new technology that is being inserted inside bats with the ability to transmit to bench area.
- Previous technology allowed umpires to visualize the transmission.
- NFHS continues to advocate a balance between offense and defense and is concerned about “Haves” vs. “Have Not's”





## PURPOSE OF HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL

- Players are taught the fundamentals of the game.
- Players improve skills over the course of a season.
- Players are provided an opportunity to excel.

Evidence of bad sportsmanship continue to rise across the country.

**If a behavior is not acceptable in a school setting, it is not appropriate on a baseball diamond.**





# 2023 HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL

National Federation of State  
High School Associations



## Baseball Umpire Mechanics

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## NFHS UMPIRING MECHANICS

- Proper umpiring mechanics are essential in attaining the best coverage.
- When you agree to work a high school game, you agree to officiate the game pursuant to NFHS rules and mechanics.
- Using any other mechanics in a high school game is inappropriate and, in fact, constitutes unprofessional and unethical conduct by the umpire.





## HOME PLATE MEETING

- PU behind the plate; U1 on infield side of home plate.
- Coaches and Captains on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base side of home plate.

Ground Rules

Plate Umpire does the talking

Confirm with Head Coaches that their teams are legally and properly equipped.



**NJSIAA Sportsmanship  
Statement read to both teams.**



## GETTING INTO PROPER POSITION

Hustle on every play to be in the best position to make your call.

1. Starting

Umpire's position prior to the pitch.

2. Reacting

Umpire's initial movement based on reading the ball and the need to adjust positioning.

3. Adjusted

Umpire's follow-on movement, after the reacting position is achieved, that is required to attain the best position for a call.



## POSITION “B”

- Approximately halfway between the pitcher’s mound and 2<sup>nd</sup> base on the first-base side of the infield.
- This is the position used with 1<sup>st</sup> base occupied in the two-man system.
- Deep B is slightly deeper toward the infield dirt and used in 3 man and 4-man mechanics.



## POSITION “C”

- Approximately halfway between the pitcher’s mound and 2<sup>nd</sup> base on the third-base side of the infield.
- This position is used when runners are occupying bases other than 1<sup>st</sup> base in the two-man system.
- Deep B is slightly deeper toward the infield dirt and used in 3-man and 4-man mechanics.



## ASKING FOR HELP

- Umpires must strive to get call correct.
- Judgment calls cannot be changed.
- Ask if you need help, not because a coach requested you to ask.
- Check swing, pulled foot, swipe tags, dropped ball after a tag and if the ball was juggled on a force play.



## PAUSE, READ AND REACT

Base Umpire should not automatically go out on a batted ball to outfield from position A.

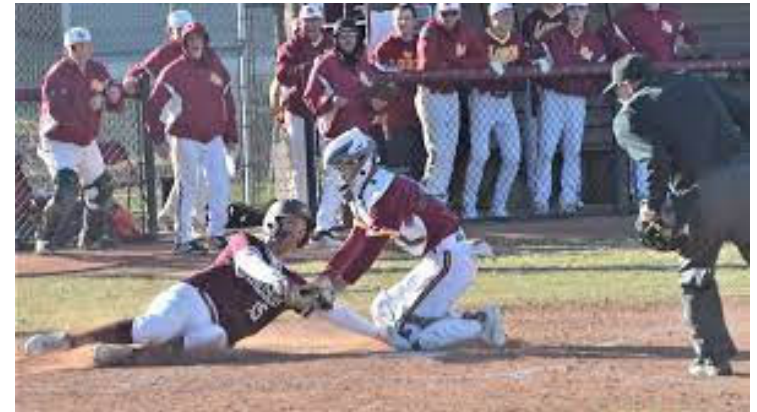
- Pause Momentarily.
- Read difficult catch.
- Move to best position.



## UMPIRING PLAYS AT THE PLATE

Traditionally, umpires choose a pre-determined place to stand, either at the point of the plate or at the first-base or third-base line extended. That puts umpires in a pretty good position to see most plays.

In some cases, umpires need to adjust position as play develops.



## UMPIRING PLAYS AT THE PLATE

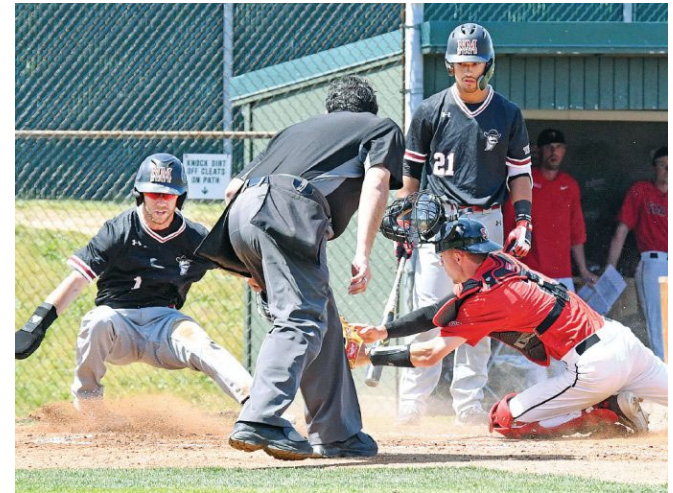
- **Swipe tags** (when the catcher applies a tag using a swipe motion)
- **Crash plays** (when the catcher and runner collide)
- **Block plays** (when the catcher blocks the runner from reaching the plate)
- **Dropped balls** (when the catcher drops the ball)





## UMPIRING PLAYS AT THE PLATE

- Locate the ball
- Move with the catcher
- Take purposeful steps to get position that gives you the best window to see the play.



## PLATE UMPIRE COVERS 3RD

- U1 must be alert and cover home plate if Plate Umpire is at 3<sup>rd</sup> base.
- U1 must rotate to home if he/she has gone to the outfield to rule on a catch/no catch or fair/foul down the right field line and Batter-Runner attempts to score.



## RUNNING LANE VIOLATION

- Plate Umpire has primary responsibility for running lane violations.
- With runner on 1<sup>st</sup>, do not move to quickly to cover 3<sup>rd</sup> base. Stay with potential running lane violation, swipe tag and pulled foot until play is completed.
- Batter-Runner does not have to be hit with throw to first baseman in order to rule interference.



## ILLEGAL SLIDE

- U1 has the out calls at 2<sup>nd</sup> and at 1<sup>st</sup> in a 2-man system.
- PU must move out to watch the play at second base for possible illegal slide or runner interference.

**MALICIOUS CONTACT** an act that involves excessive force with an opponent



NFHS places the responsibility on the base runner to avoid these type of collisions.

## ILLEGAL PITCH / BALK ENFORCEMENT

- “That’s a Balk” Immediately followed by the dead ball signal.
- Partner(s) shall echo the call.
- When challenged by Head Coach, state without explanation, that there was a violation of the pitching rule.



## DEFUSE RATHER THAN IGNITE

One of the most difficult tasks an official can have is interpreting a rule or explaining a call to an upset coach.

- Stay calm and give a complete explanation of the rule and its application.
- Let go of your need to win.
- When it's over, let it be over.





# THANK YOU

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