

May 2, 2010

2010 SRI Bulletin #5

Proper Field Markings

Rule 1-2-2

All lines on the field shall be marked with a material which is not injurious to the eyes or skin.

All non-permanent lines should be white.

Permanent lines such as sewn in artificial turf, may be a color other than white.

Proper field markings have always been the rule. Enforcement of this rule has been lax at times. It is a requirement for every baseball contest to have the field properly marked. That includes batters boxes, catcher's box, baselines, foul lines, runner's lane and coaches' boxes. These markings are necessary to administer the game of baseball. Some markings are there for the safety of the players and coaches as well.

Please ask the home coach to put in any missing lines or markings prior to the start of the game. If this cannot be done, please proceed with the game. Notify your commissioner and have them notify the school administration of the issue.

Dugouts/Bench Area

Location of team personnel Rule 3-3-1a,3-3-1j,. (a point of emphasis)

Rationale: Risk minimization.

Coaches, players, substitutes, attendants or other bench personnel shall not leave the dugout during a live ball for any unauthorized purpose.

Coaches and team personnel may not be outside the dugout, or on buckets or stools.

The dugouts can only be extended away from home plate (Oregon interpretation).

Players are not allowed to leave the dugout/bench area during live ball. They may come out after an over the fence home run. Teammates are allowed to leave the dugout to congratulate the hitter because the ball is dead. Keep them out of the dirt circle area of home plate. Allow a coach to step out of the dugout to adjust his defensive players. He must be inside of the bench/dugout area at the time of the pitch. Do not allow personnel to stand outside the bench/dugout area during live ball.

Between Innings (Dugouts and Pace of Play)

Rule 3-3-1j

As the opposing pitcher is completing his warm up pitches only the batter, on deck hitter, coaches in the coaches box or the nine players on defense can be outside the dugout. As plate umpire, position yourself on either the offensive teams side or the defensive team's side of home plate somewhere between the baseline and the area behind the batters boxes. From here monitor the number of warm up pitches and the offensive team's dugout and personnel. Do not allow others than the batter and on deck hitter to be out in front of the dugout.

Pace of Play

While positioned here as plate umpire, notify the pitcher and the waiting batter when there are two warm up pitches left, hold up two fingers. With one pitch left, hold up one finger and notify the batter to be ready. This practice will help speed up the time between innings.

Malicious Contact

Rules 2-21-1b, 3-3-1n, 8-3-2

There have been incidents that have raised some questions regarding malicious contact. The NFHS Baseball Rules Book and Baseball Case Book do not give enough information to accurately describe this.

The NFHS Baseball Rules Book does not have a written definition for malicious contact. Refer to rule 3-3-1. Umpires must rule on all contact. The umpires must determine if it is a violation of the rules and determine if the contact was incidental, obstruction, interference or interference and malicious. Keep in mind that not all contact is malicious. Some interference calls involve contact. Some contact is malicious and can be either by the offensive or defensive player.

Remember, if all players are doing what they are supposed to be doing there may not be an interference ruling. In most cases, by rule, there will be an interference or obstruction ruling. If a defensive player is initiating contact with an offensive player in possession of the ball, there will be an interference ruling. More must occur to result in a ruling of malicious contact.

Oregon Ruling:

Malicious contact is any willful or reckless action or behavior by any player either on offense or on defense, with intent to commit an unsportsmanlike act and/or cause harm or injure a player. This usually centers on an attempt to dislodge a baseball, go through a player to get to a base, take the player out of the play, to inflict pain or punishment on a player or to strike an opponent.

Additional Clarification: When a player on offense attempting to get to a base contacts a defensive player in possession of the ball, keep in mind the action of the players and the base is on the ground. If contact is at or above the waist of the defensive player, then consider that not a valid attempt to get to the base. It can be interference and malicious contact.

Please contact Terry Fischer (terrylf5@mail.com) with questions.