

Oregon School Activities Association

Baseball SRI Bulletin – #1

March 21, 2014

PITCHING RULE CHANGES

This bulletin will focus on some confusion created by the 2014 pitching rule changes. I have received numerous email and phone calls asking me to clarify the requirements of the pitcher in the set position. 6-1-3 reads: "Before starting the delivery, he shall stand with his entire non-pivot foot in front of a line extending through the front edge of the pitcher's plate and with his entire pivot foot in contact or **directly** in front of and **parallel** to the pitching plate." The word "**directly**" in front of the pitching plate is where some of the confusion begins. Coaches have been asking, and some umpires have been misinterpreting this statement. This wording came in your 2014 packet containing the new rule changes governing the position of the pitcher's feet.

6-1-1 A Case book reads: F-1 pitches with the toe of his pivot foot (right foot for right handed pitcher) in contact with the pitchers plate but his heel is outside a line extending through the end of the pitching plate. He pitches from the set position. **RULING:** Illegal pitch or balk. This is *not* a new rule; it has always been the rule. After consulting the NFHS national rules interpreter on this matter, the rule clarification is as follows: "By the strictest interpretation of the rule their foot cannot be outside the edges of the pitching plate." *However, with so many fields being used are community fields, their upkeep leaves much to be desired. Sometimes those holes in front are huge and both pitchers have to move just for self-preservation. We allow the umpires the latitude not to call an illegal pitch/balk as long as no one is gaining an advantage.* This is the MLB rule as well. Unfortunately, they do not enforce it. A good rule of thumb is no more than half the foot of the pitcher extending past the edge of the pitching plate. I hope this clears up the enforcement of this rule, and it does not coincide with the newer guidelines that have eliminated the "hybrid stance".

The next topic I want to address also deals with pitching. The fake to third, throw to first pick move. This is enforced at the MLB level only. High school rules still allow this move, and we do not call a balk here.

Tad's Tip....

Understand what motivates coaches. Players go to their coach when a play doesn't work. Who do the coaches go to when something goes wrong? The umpires. Often, when a coach is yelling at or pleading with you, the coach is just venting. If you understand the reasoning behind why a coach is yelling at you, you can diffuse the situation in diplomatic fashion. Not understanding a coach's motivation can set the stage for an unneeded showdown. This will help your game management. See you at the yard.

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