



Oregon School Activities Association

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To: Athletic Directors and Head Baseball Coaches
From: Peter Weber, Assistant Executive Director
Subject: 2015 Baseball Reminders

Included within this memo are reminders regarding OSAA policies and NFHS rules specific to baseball that each staff should review as we begin the season. Each school offering baseball should have received one copy of the NFHS Baseball Rules Book from the OSAA. If your school didn't receive your copy, please let me know. Feel free to contact me if you have questions.

1. **OSAA Baseball Plan** – The 2015 OSAA Baseball Plan is available on the OSAA website at www.osaa.org/docs/bbl/bblplan.pdf. We've expanded our plan books this year to include all necessary information coaches and administrators need for the upcoming season. Please take a few minutes to review this material.
2. **Practice Limitation Rule Change for Pitchers and Catchers** – The Executive Board passed a change to the Practice Limitation Rule (Rule of 2) allowing baseball coaches to begin pitching instruction and throwing workouts with pitchers and catchers only (maximum of eight total per day) two weeks prior to the Spring Sports First Practice Date (February 16, 2015). Specifics related to this change may be found here: www.osaa.org/docs/sbl/Ruleof2.pdf.
3. **Practice Model Consecutive Day Limits** – Last Spring, the Executive Board created a new policy surrounding in-season practices. The main component that impacts baseball teams is the requirement that a student may not practice or participate in a contest for more than six consecutive days without a rest day. A rest day must be complete rest – no organized team physical activity is allowed. Travel is allowed on a rest day, just no physical activity. Please be aware of this change, especially for those teams traveling to Spring Break tournaments.
4. **USA Baseball Pitch Smart Guidelines** – The OSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) supports the new Pitch Smart guidelines created by USA Baseball and MLB. The two entities have teamed up to help young players reduce arm injuries by providing a comprehensive resource for safe pitching practices. Research has shown that pitching too much, particularly at a young age, can increase a pitcher's risk of injury. Pitch Smart is a series of practical, age-appropriate guidelines to help parents, players and coaches avoid overuse injuries and foster long, healthy careers for youth pitchers. Coaches can get more information here: <http://m.mlb.com/pitchsmart/>.
5. **Game Balls** – Schools are reminded that per NFHS Baseball Rules, the NFHS Authenticating Mark is required on all baseballs used for high school competition. This includes all levels of play (Varsity, JV, JV2, Frosh). For the regular season, any brand of baseball is legal provided it has the NFHS Authenticating Mark. At no time are baseballs required to have an OSAA stamp. During the OSAA state playoffs, teams are required to use the Wilson A1010-Pro. Also, remember that a minimum of three legal baseballs are required to start a game. Given our typical Spring weather, it's a good idea to have more than that available.
6. **Officials – Host School Responsibilities** – As with last season, a game manager shall be designated by the host school for all contests. It's a good idea for the game manager to introduce themselves to the umpires upon arrival. A member of the coaching staff of the home team is not eligible to serve as game manager during a **varsity** contest at which he or she is coaching. A coach of a sub-varsity team may act as the game manager at a sub-varsity contest at which he or she is coaching. The game manager shall wear easily recognizable identification, shall be physically present and/or readily accessible by phone, and shall be responsible for:
 - a. Designating reserved parking for officials as close as possible to the contest site where available if requested by the commissioner of the Local Association providing the officials;
 - b. Designating dressing facilities for officials where available if requested by the commissioner of the Local Association providing the officials;
 - c. Monitoring and responding to inappropriate crowd conduct during and after the contest; and
 - d. Providing an escort to the designated dressing facilities or vehicle for officials following each contest unless that offer is declined.

7. **Tie Games** – Listed below are the procedures on interrupted contests as there are no ties in Oregon high school baseball. Games don't have to be continued, but if they are it shall start from the point of interruption. If teams choose not to continue, the game should be deleted from each team's schedule and won't count against either team's participation limitation. Innings thrown by pitchers in the tie game are still counted toward the individual pitching limitation.

Baseball Interrupted Contest Board Policy

- i. For darkness and/or weather:
 1. If fewer than 4 and 1/2 or 5 innings have been played, the contest shall continue from the point of interruption. (February 2013)
 2. If 4 and 1/2 (home team ahead) or 5 innings have been played and the score is not tied, the contest is declared an official game.
 3. If play has gone beyond five full innings, teams have had an equal number of completed turns at bat and the score is tied, the contest shall continue from the point of interruption. (February 2013)
 4. If play has gone beyond five full innings and 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, unless the home team in its half of the incomplete inning, scores a run (or runs) which equals or exceeds the opponent's score, in which case, the final score shall be recorded when the game is called. If the score was tied at the end of the last completed inning, contest shall continue from the point of interruption. (February 2013)
 5. If the two schools mutually agree or if there is an athletic district policy, the game need not be continued if it has no bearing on state championship representation. (February 2013)
- ii. For other reasons, among which include light failure, sprinkler system, etc., the contest shall continue from the point of interruption unless the teams mutually agree otherwise or there are athletic district rules that apply.

8. **Lightning Safety Guidelines (Updated for 2015)** – 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.

Proactive Planning:

- 1) Assign a staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during ***practices and contests***.
- 2) Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby ***safe areas***.
- 3) Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
 - a) When thunder is heard ***within 30 seconds of a visible lightning strike***, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. ***Suspend play for 30 minutes*** and take shelter immediately.
 - b) Thirty-minute Rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to 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 should begin.
- 4) ***Review annually with all administrators, coaches and game personnel.***
- 5) ***Inform student athletes of the lightning policy at start of season.***

For more detailed information, refer to the "***Lightning and Thunder Safety***" section contained in the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook.

9. **Game Ending and "Speed-Up" Procedures**
 - a. Varsity: 10-Run Rule is allowed, per league adoption.
 - b. Sub-Varsity: 10-Run Rule and Time Limits are allowed, per league adoption.
10. **Adding Games to Schedules After April 6** – Remember that results from contests added to a team's schedule after April 6 **vs. a team more than one classification away** will not be included in the rankings.

11. **Courtesy Runners** – When a player enters as a courtesy runner, it counts as an inning played for that individual.
12. **Ejections** – Multiple ejection reports came through the OSAA office last season where a player or coach had been ejected in the first game of a doubleheader. A reminder that when this happens, the player or coach is done for the rest of the day (**Ejection Period**) and is also suspended through the next contest at that level of competition (**Suspension Period**). Some schools have mistakenly thought that the 2nd game of the doubleheader counts as the suspension period.
 - a. Example #1 – A varsity coach is ejected in the first game of a doubleheader. The coach is done for the rest of the day (**Ejection Period**). The coach is also suspended through the next varsity contest (**Suspension Period**).
 - b. Example #2 – A JV player is ejected in a game on Friday (single game that day) and the JV team has a doubleheader the next day on Saturday. The player is done for the rest of the day on Friday (**Ejection Period**). The player sits out the 1st game of the Saturday doubleheader (**Suspension Period**) but is eligible to play in the 2nd game of the doubleheader on Saturday.
13. **Multiple Batters Warming Up During Dead Ball Time** – We receive questions every year about multiple batters warming up during dead ball time. The batter and one on-deck batter are the only players that should be in live ball territory warming up during infield warmups, the pre-game plate meeting, just prior to the first pitch of the game, in between innings or during a stoppage of play. This is first and foremost a safety issue as we've all seen incidents occur with overthrows, wild pitches, etc. Any other players wanting to warm up need to be in a dead ball area protected from live ball play (i.e. behind the dugout or batting cages, etc.).
14. **Appropriate Equipment for Shaggers/Protectors/Warm-Up Catchers** – In order to continue low incident rates, we must be ever vigilant to identify potential risk areas and address them immediately. One area of concern is the “shagger” or “protector” — the non-player who is allowed on the field to keep foul balls from striking players warming up in the bullpens. Remember that in Oregon, that person is required to have a glove and wear a legal batting helmet that meets the NOCSAE standard. It's also important that the shagger/protector be facing the plate and paying attention to the action taking place. A second area of concern is protective gear worn by non-adult catchers warming up pitchers. These players should be wearing a hockey-style mask and a protective cup when squatting to warm up a pitcher while the regular catcher is putting on gear. This same protective gear should also be worn by non-adult catchers warming up pitchers in the bullpen.
15. **Verbal Verification From Coaches** – The umpire-in-chief shall receive verbal verification from both head coaches that all participants are properly uniformed and equipped with bats that are unaltered from the original manufacturer's design and production and helmets that meet NFHS and NOCSAE standards are free of cracks or damage. There have been a few reports of coaches responding with “I hope so” or “As far as I know”. An answer along these lines is unacceptable. The appropriate answer is “Yes”.
16. **Jewelry** – Remember that rubber bracelets are considered jewelry and shall not be worn during games. NFHS rules are very clear in this area. *“Jewelry shall not be worn (see 3-3-1d) except for religious or medical medals. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical alert must be taped and may be visible.” (Rule 1-5-12)*
17. **Field Markings and Game Preparation** – A reminder to schools to have fields properly marked before a game begins. This includes all appropriate lines for batters boxes, coaches' boxes, the catcher's box, foul lines, runner's lane to 1st base, etc. It is recommended that all outfield fence signs are properly secured to the fence and off the ground. Follow this link for a NFHS field diagram: www.osaa.org/docs/bbl/baseballfielddiagram.pdf.
18. **OSAA Line-up Cards** – The OSAA, in conjunction with the OAOA, created line-up cards a few years back. These line-up cards are recommended, but not required for use by the OSAA. Follow the link below to purchase a package with 35 forms. Cost is \$6 per package. www.osaa.org/docs/forms/BB-SBLineUpCardsOrderForm.pdf.
19. **Website Reminders and Tracking Out of State Opponents** – Varsity teams are required to update their schedule and results through the OSAA website throughout the season. Schools are also required to track records of out of state opponents. Each Oregon school is ultimately responsible for making sure their own schedule and results are accurate, including the records of their out of state opponents. Here is a link to instructions for managing your out of state records: www.osaa.org/docs/osaainfo/ManagingOutofStateRecordsInstructions.pdf.