



Oregon School Activities Association
25200 SW Parkway Avenue, Suite 1
Wilsonville, OR 97070
503.682.6722 fax: 503.682.0960 <http://www.osaa.org>



February 8, 2017

To: All Baseball Commissioners and Umpires
From: Kris Welch, Assistant Executive Director
Tad Cockerill, Baseball State Rules Interpreter
Subject: 2017 NFHS Baseball Rule Change – Written Warning, Restriction, Ejection Progression

We hope that each of you is doing well! We understand that there has been some confusion regarding the main NFHS Baseball rule change for the 2017 season. Our goal is to clarify, in writing, our expectations for baseball umpires when implementing this rule change for the upcoming season.

The NFHS changed the rule prior to the 2016 season in an effort to give umpires more clarity in progressing through a warning, a restriction, and, ultimately, an ejection. Prior to the season, the NFHS modified the rule just slightly. The current wording of rule 9-9-1 (PEN) indicates that the wording of rule 3-3-1 (PEN) indicates clearly that “Coaches who receive a written warning (10-2-3j) **shall be restricted** to the bench or dugout for the remainder of the game.” However, much of the preseason literature produced by the NFHS is very ambiguous about implementation of this rule.

As stated by Elliot Hopkins, NFHS director of sports and student services and liaison to the Baseball Rules Committee, “The new rule change has initiated a penalty progression, starting with a written warning, restriction to the bench/dugout and subsequent ejection from the contest.” The changes will help to de-escalate contentious situations and allow coaches to dictate their status in the game by their behavior, Hopkins said.

Hopkins added, “A successful game official practices preventive officiating, and this new penalty progression will allow the official to issue penalties that give the coach the opportunity to remain in the game and teach his players.”

Beginning with the 2017 season, umpires will be required to issue a warning to coaches **before** restricting them to the bench/dugout or ejecting them as part of a new penalty progression to promote preventive officiating. The rule is not to be construed such that umpires do not utilize verbal warnings, when appropriate. Remember, coaches can still be ejected on a first offense if it is deemed to be major.

Oregon high school umpires are to follow a three-step process once a situation with a coach has escalated beyond verbal warning(s): 1) written warning 2) restriction 3) ejection. Oregon umpires are strongly encouraged to follow the exact terminology below when a situation such as this arises in a contest:

“Coach, this is your warning. By rule, if you continue to (list minor offense here), you will be restricted to the dugout or ejected.”

We thank you in advance for your efforts on behalf of high school baseball in Oregon.

Questions or comments should be directed to Kris Welch (krisw@osaa.org) or Tad Cockerill (cockerill51@gmail.com).