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To: Baseball Commissioners and Playoff Umpires  
From: Peter Weber, OSAA Assistant Executive Director  
Tad Cockerill, OSAA Baseball State Rules Interpreter  
Subject: 2016 OSAA Playoff Procedures and Points of Emphasis

Thank you for all of your efforts this season. We are looking forward to the playoffs and hope that you are as well. As we approach the playoffs, we want to make sure that all umpires are following the same procedures.

*NOTE: With the exception of the Wilson baseball requirement, these same procedures and points of emphasis should be followed at all 6A, 5A, and 4A "Play-In" games.*

### **NFHS RULES**

National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) rules and signals, as modified by the Oregon adoptions, are in effect for all games. Please be aware of the differences, albeit slight, from the NCAA/CCA mechanics. Please refer to the **Oregon Umpires Manual** for two and three person crews as a final determinant.

### **UMPIRE UNIFORM**

Please wear only approved uniforms. The acceptable shirt colors for high school baseball in Oregon are navy, black, and "delta" blue w/black collar. Jackets may be navy or black. Umpires should match, although the base umpires can choose to wear black shirts or jackets if the plate umpire is wearing delta. Similarly, base umpires can wear delta shirts when the plate umpire is wearing a black shirt.

### **ARRIVAL TIMES**

Umpires should arrive 45 minutes before the scheduled start time. The early arrival will allow you to complete your pre-game responsibilities before player introductions, etc. Allow enough transit time to get to the game by this time, even if traffic is heavy.

### **SITE ADMINISTRATOR INTRODUCTION**

Please identify and introduce yourselves to the site administrator when all umpires have arrived at the game. Confirm with the site administrator that they will provide an escort for umpires to their cars following the contest. Umpires should have access to a private and secure changing facility for playoff games, if possible.

### **PRE-GAME MEETING**

Please conduct a thorough pre-game conference, particularly if any member(s) of the crew is new to three-person mechanics. The crew chief, as named by your commissioner, should lead the pre-game conference. If no one is specifically named as crew chief, then those responsibilities default to the plate umpire. **Communication is key to the success of the officiating crew!** A good pre-game focuses everyone's attention on this game and conveys expectations and needs for help in various situations. A good pre-game discussion makes for a better game.

### **START OF GAME**

The umpires should arrive on the field about ten minutes prior to the designated start time. Shortly thereafter, the pre-game conference should be conducted at home plate. Please refer to the **Oregon Umpires Manual** for the proper methodology in conducting this meeting.

## **BASEBALLS**

Wilson is the officially adopted baseball of the OSAA. Remember that the baseballs used for OSAA state playoff contests must be the Wilson A1010 Pro and have the proper NFHS stamp. Playoff baseballs do not need to have the OSAA logo. The umpires should make sure the baseballs will be rubbed down before game time and/or should offer to do so. If the home team does not have Wilson baseballs, please check with the visiting team. If neither school has Wilson baseballs, the umpires should obtain NFHS-approved balls from the home team, and play the game using those balls, and note that no Wilson baseballs were provided by the home team in the game report. If the host team does not provide Wilson baseballs for the contest, that should be reported to Peter Weber by the commissioner.

## **PROPERLY EQUIPPED PLAYERS**

Be sure that each head coach positively verifies that their team is legally and properly equipped. "I hope so," or "They'd better be" is not sufficient. Players must remove all jewelry, including bracelets and rings, no matter where they are found. Additionally, please confirm with each coach that their bats and helmets are legal. Umpires do not need to physically inspect the bats and helmets prior to beginning the game.

## **FIELD CONDITIONS AND MARKINGS**

The crew chief should make note of any irregular ground rules and/or field markings. If such conditions are easily correctible prior to starting the game, then do so. An example would be chalking in a catcher's box. If the situation is such that it cannot be rectified **and** does not create a serious threat to the players' safety, then play the game and file a report with your commissioner following the contest. An example would be a turf field that does not have on deck circles painted. If the situation cannot be corrected and provides a realistic safety hazard, the game should not be played at that location. An example would be a broken sprinkler head near home plate.

## **SPEED UP / 10-RUN RULES**

Speed up rules are **NOT** in effect for OSAA playoff games. The 10-run rule is **NOT** in effect for OSAA playoff games.

## **DUGOUTS**

During the game, coaches, trainers, substitutes, etc. are confined to the dugouts. No unauthorized personnel shall be in the dugouts. Do not allow coaches to wander out of the dugouts, except to properly conference with their team after the umpires have signaled "time." Do not allow either team to ever have more than one batter on deck.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP**

Do not allow taunting or trash talking, whether by players in the game, or those in the dugouts. Please be particularly aware of any coordinated display (verbal or non-verbal) being directed at the opposing team from the dugout. You must deal with this immediately. It will not get better by itself. If spectators are repeatedly using loud, offensive language, stop the game and have the site administrator deal with the situation. This sort of behavior is not acceptable in a high school setting. Umpires do not eject spectators, but the site administrator may if warranted.

## **RESTRICTIONS/EJECTIONS**

One of the OSAA's primary goals is to promote participation, both by the players and the coaches. For 2016, the NFHS Rules Committee reworded the penalty to make it clearer that for minor offenses umpires should give a written warning and record it on the lineup card (10-2-3j) before restriction to the dugout and subsequent ejection if the coach's behavior doesn't change. This gives the umpires and schools a more defined penalty progression. An ejected coach must immediately leave the vicinity of the field such that he is not within "sight or sound." If a player is ejected from the game, that player must remain in the dugout for the remainder of the contest. Remember to complete an ejection report as soon as possible, and no later than midnight of the day of the game, following the completion of the game.

### **DELAYS/INCOMPLETE GAMES**

The home team will make the determination as to whether or not a scheduled contest will begin on time, or at all. Once the line-up cards have been properly turned over to the plate umpire at the pre-game conference, it becomes the responsibility of the umpiring crew, and ultimately the crew chief, as to playability related to rain, darkness, or other conditions. There is a reason our best umpires work these games and I trust the umpiring crews will properly balance the importance of getting the games played with the safety of the student-athletes.

**Please be aware of when games are considered to be “official” and remember that all playoff games in Oregon that are not played to the point of meeting those criteria are continued from the point of interruption.** Your commissioner should be in contact with you regarding any games to which you are assigned that are canceled or “called.”

### **LIGHTNING SAFETY GUIDELINES**

- A. 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.
- B. **Proactive Planning:**
  - 1) Assign 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 or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, ***the leading edge of*** 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.

### **END OF GAME PROCEDURES**

At the conclusion of the game, the umpires should come together near first or third base, depending on the location of the exit, and leave the field together. **DO NOT WAIT FOR THE TEAMS TO SHAKE HANDS. LEAVE. GO DIRECTLY TO YOUR CHANGING FACILITY.** Do not stop to talk with players, coaches or spectators. NFHS rules allow umpires to eject personnel after the game for gross misconduct. Since you are leaving immediately after the game, this should not be necessary unless someone really goes out of their way to interfere with your departure. Do not respond to shouted complaints, opinions, etc. Just keep going. However, if a player or coach blocks your exit or otherwise gets face to face with you, then you will have to deal appropriately with what is said or done. That may involve “ejecting” the individual. However, since you are being escorted to your cars by the home school representative, let them deal with it first. Post-game disorder should always be included in a game report to your commissioner.

Please contact Tad ([cockerill51@gmail.com](mailto:cockerill51@gmail.com)) or me ([peterw@osaa.org](mailto:peterw@osaa.org)) with any questions. Thanks in advance for your efforts during the playoffs. Have fun!