



National Federation of State High School Associations



2015 NFHS Baseball Rule Changes

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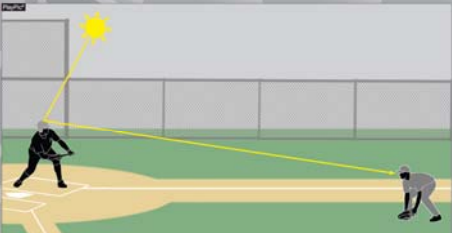


Take Part. Get Set For Life.™

Welcome and thank you for your efforts



Legal Batting Helmets Rule 1-5-1




RULE CHANGE

Batting helmets shall have a non-glare, not mirror-like surface and shall meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture.


REFEREE

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"Non-glare" or "matte" finish



Defective Batting Helmet Rule 1-5-1, 4-1-3b



RULE CHANGE

Even though this helmet met the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture, the crack makes the helmet illegal. The batter must replace the helmet immediately.


REFEREE

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Immediate removal upon discovery, no penalty

Rule 1-5-1

- **ART.1 . . .** It is mandatory for on-deck batters, batters, runners, retired runners, players/students in the coaches boxes as well as non-adult bat/ball shaggers to wear a batting helmet that has a non-glare (not mirror-like) surface and meets the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture.




non-Adult ball/bat shaggers must wear a helmet when retrieving foul balls

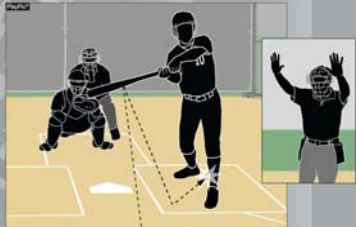
**Rule 1-5-1
(continued)**

- **Rationale:** Batting helmets are a key component for minimizing risk in high school baseball. It is critical that the surface of the helmet does not pose any risk for those who are wearing the helmet and for their opponents.

It is equally important that the batting helmet not only meet the prescribed NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture, but that they are monitored regularly for excessive use and kept in good functioning order.




**Foul Ball
Rule 2-16-1f**



A batted ball that rebounds and hits the batter while he is still legally in the batter's box shall be called a foul ball.

RULE CHANGE

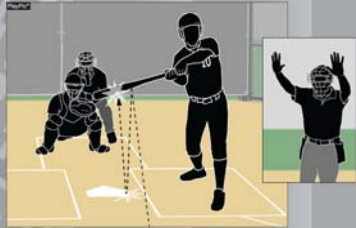


REFEREE

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"TIME, FOUL BALL!", from plate or base umpires

Foul Ball
Rule 2-16-1f

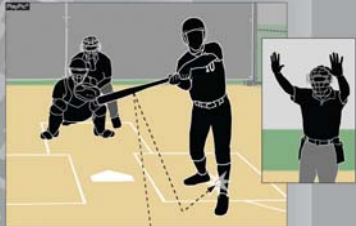


A batted ball that rebounds and hits the bat while the batter is still holding it while in the batter's box shall be called a foul ball.

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"TIME, FOUL BALL!"

Foul Ball
Rule 2-16-1f



Even though this batter has one foot completely outside the batter's box, he has one foot still in. Therefore, when the batted ball rebounds and hits him, it shall be called a foul ball.

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"TIME, FOUL BALL, IN THE BOX!"

Rule 2-16-1f and 1g

- **ART. 1 . . .** A foul is a batted ball:
Sub-articles a-e unchanged.
f. that hits the batter in the batter's box; or
g. that hits the ground or home plate and then his the batter or the bat which is held by the batter, while he is in the batter's box.
- **Rationale:** Foul balls are often topics that yield a tremendous amount of discussions. Given the opportunity to identify additional foul ball scenarios, it provides more education that is helpful to coaches and umpires.

Video Permitted
Rule 3-3-1



The rule that prohibited using video for coaching purposes during a game has been removed. Therefore, it is legal for a coach or player to use a camera, tablet or phone to record video during a game from the dugout.

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Coaching purposes only

Video Equipment in Coaching Box
Rule 3-3-1h




Although it is now legal to use video for coaching purposes during a game, a coach is not permitted to record while in the coaching box. A coach may only have a stopwatch, rule book (hard copy) and scorebook while coaching in the box.

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Never allowed in play

Video Equipment
Rule 3-3-1



Not only may teams record video during the game, but they may also watch it for coaching purposes.

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Video Equipment
Rule 3-3-1, 10-1-5



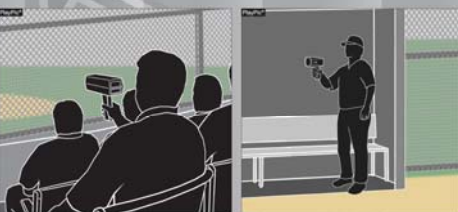
A coach is not permitted to show a play to umpires, as umpires are not allowed to use video equipment during a game. If a coach persists, he can be warned, restricted to the dugout or ejected.

RULE CHANGE

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NO REPLAY VIDEO ALLOWED

Radar Guns
Rule 3-3-1



The use of radar guns is permitted.

RULE CHANGE

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Out of play only

Rule 3-3-1f

- ART. 1. . . Sub-articles a-e are unchanged.
- f. ~~Use of television monitoring or replay equipment for coaching purposes during the course of the game;~~

The rest of the sub-articles will be renumbered.

- Rationale:** The game of baseball has developed and technology is more affordable and available. Videotaping a game or players' performances adds to the evolution of the game and enhances the educational ability for a coach to provide real-time instruction.



Follow-through Interference
Rule 2-21-4

On his natural follow-through, the batter has made contact with the catcher. The ball is delayed-dead on follow-through interference and if F2 isn't able to throw out the runner attempting to steal, the runner must be returned to first base and the batter is out.

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Post-pitch, delayed dead ball

Backswing Interference
Rule 2-21-5

Before the time of the pitch, if the batter's practice swing makes contact with the catcher or his equipment, the umpire shall call an immediate dead ball. There is no penalty.

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Pre-pitch, immediate dead ball, NO PENALTY

Rule 2-21-4 and 5

- **ART. 4 . . .** Follow-through interference is when the bat hits the catcher after the batter has swung at a pitch and hinders action at home plate or the catcher's attempt to play on a runner.
- **ART. 5 . . .** Backswing interference is when a batter contacts the catcher or his equipment prior to the time of the pitch.


**Rule 2-21-4 and 5
(continued)**

- **Rationale:** Identifying the various types of offensive interference is pivotal when discussing the role of the batter in that manner. Follow-through and backswing interference are two separate and distinct acts and the penalties reflect their differences.




Rule 7-3-5c

- c. making any other movement, including follow-through interference, which hinders actions at home plate or the catcher's attempt to play on a runner or...
- **Rationale:** After reviewing this rule change from last year, it became evident that the term "backswing" did not accurately capture the infraction, the term "follow-through" was more descriptive.



Rule 7-3-7 and Corresponding Penalty

- **ART. 7 . . .** Commit backswing interference.
- **PENALTY: The ball is immediately dead.**
- **Rationale:** Clarification.



**Optional Speed-Up Rules
Courtesy Runner**

First at bat in the first inning

Second at bat in the first inning

No. 44 is the courtesy runner for the catcher, No. 2. If his team bats around in an inning, No. 2 has not been substituted for and may bat when it is his turn.

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Courtesy runners are not substitutes

**Optional Speed-Up Rules
Courtesy Runner**

First at bat in the first inning

Second at bat in the first inning


If the offense bats around and No. 2 reaches base a second time in the inning, he may run for himself and is not required to be replaced by a courtesy runner.

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Courtesy Runner

- At any time, the team at bat may use courtesy runners for the pitcher and/or the catcher. In the event that the offensive team bats around, the pitcher and/or catcher who had a courtesy runner inserted on their behalf may bat in their normal position in the batting order.
- Rationale:** Clarification when a particular scenario occurs and how that affects the role of courtesy runner for the pitcher and catcher.

National Federation of State
High School Associations



Points of Emphasis



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Helmet Care



Coaches need to ensure helmets (and all equipment) are in suitable condition for use, particularly when reviewing equipment prior to the start of a season. While this helmet met NOCSAE standards at the time of manufacture, it is no longer suitable for use.


POINT OF EMPHASIS

REFEREE

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Helmet Care



Tape is not permitted on a batting helmet, since it could be covering up a crack or defect. Also, it could compromise the ability of the helmet to protect a player.

POINT OF EMPHASIS

REFEREE

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See tape, replace helmet

Helmet Maintenance and Usage

- Reviewing the number of players (and some coaches) who are wearing batting helmets, it becomes clear that a lot of individuals are invested in protecting their head and brain by wearing a batting helmet that meets the NOCSAE performance standard.
- There should be a routine scheduled review and assessment of the condition of the batting helmets established by coaches and school administrators.




Helmet Maintenance and Usage (continued)

- They should also be maintained in a manner that your team can enjoy several seasons of functional use.
- Batting helmet manufacturers normally provide a routine maintenance schedule either with the product or on their company's website.



**Pitching Substitution:
Coach Delaying the Game**




A replacement pitcher gets eight warm-up throws. The defensive team shall be ready to resume play upon completion of the eighth throw. A coach is permitted to observe the throws, but must be off the field when they are completed.

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Relievers have 1 minute from first pitch, 8 or less


**Pitching Substitutions:
Coach Delaying the Game**

- Pitching is critical in our game and substituting the pitcher is a key personnel strategy.
- By rule, there are some specific time guidelines provided for the execution of substituting the game pitcher.
- It is becoming more noticeable that the defensive coach is extending his time around the mound while the substitute pitcher completes his warm-up pitches.




**Pitching Substitutions:
Coach Delaying the Game
(continued)**

- This delay of the game by lingering around the mound has become problematic.
- While it provides the coach an opportunity to speak to the rest of the defensive team, it is also lengthening and delaying the game.




**Pitching Substitutions:
Coach Delaying the Game
(continued)**

- The coach should make his substitution known to the umpire-in-chief, scorekeeper, relieve the game pitcher, instruct his defensive players quickly and leave the diamond area heading back to the dugout/bench area.
- For the sake of continuity, It is a better game when it is fluid and with minimal interruptions.



POINT OF EMPHASIS

CELEBRATIONS



During a home-run celebration, team members must remain clear of the plate, allowing the umpire to ensure all runners legally touch.

REFEREE

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UMPIRE RESPONSIBILITY


Sportsmanship – Celebrations around or near Home Plate

- Any walk-off game winning base hit or home run generates immediate excitement for the player who hit the ball, his teammates and fans.
- Everyone on the winning team wants to congratulate the successful runner as he turns the corner at third base and heads to home plate.
- The problem is that the umpire-in-chief has to be able to verify that the runner scores.

REFEREE

POINT OF EMPHASIS

CELEBRATIONS



A team is permitted to be outside the dugout and celebrate during a dead-ball, such as after a home run. However, Rule 3-3-1f (4) does not permit unsporting behavior and can result in the ejection of players who taunt.

REFEREE

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Be aware of game situations

**Sportsmanship – Celebrations
around or near Home Plate
(continued)**

- It is important to keep that area around home plate clear of bodies (and equipment) so the umpire can do his job correctly.
- In addition, hovering around the third base line and home plate is a perfect opportunity for bad sportsmanship actions with taunting and other boorish behavior.
- Celebrations should be more diligently observed because of the number of poor sportsmanship incidents being reported throughout the country.



Postgame Conduct



POINT OF EMPHASIS


Umpires retain jurisdiction and can eject players or coaches until all umpires have left the field. Even though the game is over, this coach is subject to being ejected.

REFEREE

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**Umpires must still warn, when possible, before
issuing post-game ejections**

Postgame Conduct



POINT OF EMPHASIS

Since the umpires have left the field, umpires cannot issue a post-game ejection. However, if confronted by a coach, player or fan, umpires are expected to report the conduct to their state association office.


REFEREE

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**This must always be reported to your
commissioner, then to OSAA**

Postgame Conduct


- An occurrence that is becoming all too common is that the game has concluded and the losing team members, coaches or fans wait for the umpiring crew to leave the confines of the field and then verbally attack the umpires.




Always leave as a "crew", especially after a heated contest

Postgame Conduct (continued)


- By rule, the umpires have the latitude through their local state association's intervention to make a post-game report and forward it to the state association describing the type of bad behavior and based on the severity of the infraction, the umpires' jurisdiction can be extended after the game has ended.
- Please discuss this with your local state association for their guidance and procedure.



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Editorial Changes




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3-3-1PEN

- Deleted the accompanying penalty for use of television monitoring or replay equipment.


- **Rationale:** Clarification.



Rule 5-5-1n

- Added n. Backswing interference occurs.

- **Rationale:** Consistent with the aforementioned definitions of follow-through and backswing interference.



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