Baseball Rules Interpretations - 2026

BY NFHS ON FEBRUARY 19, 2026 | BASEBALL, RULES

Download a PDF copy

Publisher's Note: The National Federation of State High School Associations is the only source of official high school interpretations. They do not set aside nor modify any rule. They are made and published by the NFHS in response to situations presented.
Dr. Karissa L. Niehoff, Publisher, NFHS Publications © 2026

SITUATION 1: Having already had a defensive player meeting in the inning, the catcher goes out and talks to his pitcher. As the plate umpire goes out to stop the meeting, the opposing coach wants the umpire to charge the defense with a defensive charged conference. **RULING:** A defensive player meeting, even if it is a second meeting in a half-inning, cannot be charged to the team as a defensive charged conference. No coach or non-playing team representative was in attendance. The plate umpire should work to prevent a second defensive player meeting, and if it occurs anyway, may warn (verbally or written) the coach that if more than one defensive meeting were to occur in future innings, the coach may be restricted or even ejected. (2-10-3, 3-3-1, 3-4-6)

SITUATION 2: The offensive team is having (a) an offensive charged conference, or (b) time has been called for an injury to a player of either team. During this time, several defensive players come together and talk. **RULING:** In both (a) and (b), this is not a defensive player meeting. Defensive players may gather when the game has been stopped for the reasons listed in (a) and (b). (3-4-6)

SITUATION 3: After completing warm-up throws (a) at the beginning of a half inning or (b) as substitute pitcher in the middle of the inning, the catcher and/or other fielders go to the mound to talk briefly with the pitcher. **RULING:** Neither (a) nor (b) is a defensive meeting. (3-4-6)

SITUATION 4: After a strikeout, the infield throws the ball to each other and the third baseman takes the ball, goes to the mound and gives to the pitcher with a pat on the back and an encouraging word. **RULING:** This is not a defensive meeting. (3-4-6)

SITUATION 5: After walking the first batter in the sixth inning, and having had no previous defensive player meetings, the catcher goes out to the mound to talk to the pitcher. As the plate umpire moves to the mound to end the defensive meeting, (a) the defensive coach comes out to the mound to talk to the players and does not make a change with the pitcher, or (b) comes out to the mound to talk to the players and does make a change with the pitcher, or (c) comes to the mound after the catcher has gone back to the plate, to talk with the pitcher and makes no change. **RULING:** In (a), this is a defensive charged conference only and no defensive player meeting should be recorded. In (b), this is neither a defensive meeting nor a defensive charged conference. In (c), this is both a defensive player meeting and a defensive charged conference. (2- 10-3, 3-4-1, 3-4-6)

SITUATION 6: May a team use, for the colored portion of the double-first base one of their school colors and/ or put their school logo on the base? **RULING:** Yes, provided the color for the non-white base is darker and not a similar color to the white base. A decal or logo may be placed on the colored portion of the double-first base provided it does not make the base slippery or unsafe. (1-2-9)

SITUATION 7: The batter legally contacts the pitch with the bat and the batter's lead foot then lands on the ground outside of the batter's box. The batted ball contacts the ground in front of home plate and spins back, contacting the batter's leg that is outside the batter's box. **RULING:** This is a foul ball. With one foot still in the batter's box, the batter is considered to be in the batter's box at the time the batter was contacted by the batted ball. (2-16-1g)

SITUATION 8: May a team (a) play music in the dugout, or (b) hang up a string outside their dugout facing the field of play and place "K" signs on that string? **RULING:** In (a), a team may play music provided it is not demeaning, unsporting or intimidating in nature during the time between half-innings. When the half-

inning begins the music must stop. In (b), the team may not use a string of “Ks” anywhere on their field. This is another form of “bench jockeying.” (3-3-1)

SITUATION 9: May a runner who chooses not to slide, go into a base in a force play situation and make contact with the fielder; be hit by the throw; or alter the play in any other way? **RULING:** No. In a force play slide situation (while a runner is never required to slide), if the runner chooses not to slide, the runner must run to the side of the base in a direction away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder. If the runner goes to the base standing up and makes contact with the fielder; gets hit by the thrown ball; or in any way alters the play, the runner is out and the batter- runner is also out. The only time the runner might be able to go into the base standing up on a force situation is if the fielder is nowhere in the vicinity of the base. (2-32-1, 8-4-2b)

SITUATION 10: As R3 attempts to score from third base, R3 is obstructed by the third baseman and decides to return to third base. As R3 nears third base, R3 slips and falls down and the third base coach, not thinking in the moment, reaches down and helps R3 to R3’s feet. **RULING:** While this is coach interference, the obstruction award must first be made before the penalty for the interference. Award R3 home. (3-2-2, 8-3-2, 8-4-2s)

SITUATION 11: With the bases loaded, B4 hits a line drive to F9. As R3 approaches home plate and R2 touches third, F4 maliciously knocks down R1 at second base. **RULING:** The ball becomes dead when the malicious contact occurs. F4 is ejected. The umpire shall score R3 and place R2, R1 and B4 where he believes they would have been had the malicious contact not ended the play. (3-3-1m PENALTY)

National Federation of State High School Associations
P.O. Box 690
Indianapolis, IN 46206