Baseball Rules Changes - 2022

By NFHS on July 15, 2021

6-1-1: Change: ART. 1 . . . The pitcher shall pitch while facing the batter from either a windup position (Art.2) or set position (Art.3). The position of his feet determine whether he will pitch from the windup or the set position. He shall take or simulate taking his sign from the catcher with his pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate. The pitching regulations begin when he intentionally contacts the pitcher's plate. Turning the shoulders after bringing the hands together during or after the stretch is a balk. He shall not make a quick-return pitch in an attempt to catch a batter off balance. The catcher shall have both feet in the catcher's box at the time of the pitch. If a pitcher is ambidextrous, the umpire shall require the pitcher to face a batter as either a left-handed or right-handed pitcher, but not both.

Rationale: The pitcher acquiring the sign from the catcher is one of the fundamental rules of baseball. It not only signals the defensive team that action is about to be initiated, but it also establishes when an offensive base runner(s) can take a lead-off from his/her base. That simple act has evolved over the last decade but was not supported by an accompanying rule. This change validates the pitcher taking the sign from the dugout/bench via "call" signs, numbers, colors, or an arm wristband/placard that contains printed cards where the defensive set up/pitching repertoire is located. This aspect of the game has become more sophisticated to match the skill level and ability of today's high school baseball player.