Baseball Rules Changes - 2023

By NFHS on August 11, 2022

1-5-4: Change:

ART. 4 . . . The catcher's helmet and mask combination shall meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture. Eye shields shall not be attached to the catcher's mask after manufacture. Eye shields that are attached to the catcher's mask at the time of manufacture will be constructed of a molded rigid material and be clear without the presence of any tint. Tinted eyewear worn on the face and under the face mask is permitted. Any helmet or helmet and mask combination...and a protective cup (male only). (1-5-9)

Rationale: There has been an increase of catchers attaching aftermarket eye shields to their face masks that are tinted and not approved by the face mask manufacturer. Attaching a product that was not manufactured for the specific face mask is a risk to the wearer. The tinted eye shield is problematic because it would prevent a medical professional from accessing the eyes of the catcher to determine their condition.

1-5-12: Change:

~~ART. 12 . . . Jewelry shall not be worn be permitted (3-3-1d) except for including religious and medical medals. Any jewelry that poses harm or injury to the wearer or the opponent shall be immediately removed. (1-5-9) A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical alert must be taped and may be visible.~~

Rationale: Any jewelry worn that poses harm or injury to the player or their opponent is covered in existing rules.

2-4-4 (New): Change:

Note: Add Lodged Ball to Section Title

ART. 4 . . . A baseball that remains on the playing field but has become wedged, stuck, lost, or unreachable, is defined to be a lodged ball. If the ball impacts any object in the course of play, stops abruptly, and does not fall or roll immediately, it is considered lodged. It is a dead ball (5-1-1f-3,4; 5-1-1g-4). Exception: if a ball becomes stuck in the webbing of the fielder’s glove, it remains in play. The glove/ball combination is treated as a live ball.

Rationale: A definition of a lodged ball was necessary and appropriate to differentiate when it is stuck on the field or in an apparatus, compared to when it is stuck in a glove.

3-3-1d: Change:

ART. 1 . . . A coach, player, substitute, attendant or other bench personnel shall not:

sub-articles a-e remain the same.

d. ~~wear jewelry (players participating in the game) or~~ wear bandannas;

Rationale: This is a companion rule change with the deletion of Rule 1-5-12. If jewelry is worn that poses harm to the player or their opponent, there is existing rules support to handle the situation. Bandannas are still prohibited.

6-1-1,2,3: Change:

ART. 1 . . .The pitcher shall pitch while facing the batter from either a windup (Art.2) or a set position (Art. 3). The

position of the pitcher's feet determine whether ~~his~~ the pitcher will pitch from the windup or the set position. The pitcher ~~He~~ shall take or simulate taking the sign from the catcher with the ~~his~~ pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate. The pitcher will be considered to be in the set position when the pivot foot is in contact with or directly in front of and parallel to the pitcher's plate. The pitcher will be considered to be in the windup position when the pivot foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate and is not parallel to it. The pitching regulations ...but not both.

ART. 2 . . . For the wind-up position, the pitcher is not restricted as to how they shall hold the ball. A pitcher assumes the windup position when the ~~his~~ hands are: (a) together in front of the body; (b) both hands are at the ~~his~~ side; (c) either hand is in front of the body and the other hand is at the ~~his~~ side. ~~The pitcher's non-pivot foot shall be in any position on or behind a line extending through the front edge of the pitcher's plate.~~ The pitcher is limited...lift either foot.

ART. 3 . . . For the set position, the pitcher shall have the ball in either the ~~his~~ gloved hand or the ~~his~~ pitching hand. The pitcher's ~~His~~ hand shall be down at the ~~his~~ side or behind the his back. Before starting the delivery, the pitcher shall stand with the pivot foot in contact with or directly in front of and parallel to the pitcher's plate. ~~Before starting his delivery, he shall stand with his entire non-pivot foot in contact with or directly in front of and parallel to the pitcher's plate.~~ The pitcher ~~He~~ shall go...any other fielder.

Rationale: In reference to the high school pitching rule, the position of both the pivot and non-pivot foot was the determining factor to deem if a pitcher was pitching from the windup position or the set position. The game has evolved throughout high school baseball for the pitcher to pitch with the pivot foot in a windup description with the non-pivot foot in a set description. This "hybrid" position was previously illegal by NFHS rule. What is important is that umpires, coaches, and players know what position the pitcher is using so they know which part of Rule 6 is in play. Deleting the use of the non-pivot foot does no damage to the existing pitching position rule and having only the pivot foot determine makes it clean and easily discernible for all involved.

NFHS Official Signals: Change:
NFHS Official Baseball Signals
A—PRE-PITCH SITUATIONAL CHANGES - 8 signals to demonstrate situations & their explanations!

B--DURING PLAY & RESULTS - 8 signals to demonstrate calls

[Editor's note: The proposed Umpire Signals are attached as separate documents.]

Rationale: Updating signals to further enhance umpire mechanics and communication between officials, coaches, players and fans.