

NFHS / Pro Baseball Rules Differences



compiled & edited by Steve Orinick

For 2015 the OBR book was completely revised and reorganized. I have updated to current numbers and sections in contrasting color.
Beginning with the major rules differences in the NFHS rulebook (which was originally one short page), I initially expanded this umpiring aid some time ago by adding rule excerpts to the simple list to assist high school umpires working baseball under the OBR. I have extended the content significantly, attempting to be as all-inclusive as possible.
Please send an [email](#) if you can add to the list.

[2019 OBR / 2015 OBR including 2014 format](#)

NFHS Rules / Official Baseball Rules

RULE	Reference	Reference	RULE
Defense in fair territory at time of pitch with minimum one foot in fair territory (except catcher): penalty-illegal pitch (2-18)	1-1-4	4.03 5.02(c) Interp.	Two feet necessary (except catcher) when ball put in play - MiLB Umpire Manual (3.16) states not to insist 1st baseman play with both feet in fair territory unless offensive team protests
Jewelry shall not be worn...religious and medical exception	1-5-12, 3-3-1(c)	3.15 MiLB Umpire Manual	No "distracting" jewelry
Playing Field: Distance/Size: 300 ft foul lines, 350 ft. center, etc.	1-2-5	1.04 2.01	320 ft foul lines, 400 ft. center, etc.
If designated media area is to be used, it shall be established before the game begins...dead ball area	1-2-8	4.07(b)	No person shall be allowed on the field during a game except...news photographers authorized by the home team...
Bases 15" square, 2"-5" thickness, disengage from anchor system, double 1st base permitted by state adoption (1 colored base in foul territory), etc.	1-2-9	1.06 2.03	Bases 15" square, 3"-5" thickness
Legal Bat. Non-wood bats must meet BBCOR standard. 36" in length or less. Diameter @ thickest part: 2 7/8" or less (wood), 2 5/8" or less (non-wood). Max. minus 3 weight differential	1-3-2,3,4,5	1.10 3.02	Maximum diameter 2.61", not more than 42" in length, no length minus weight differential. Wood only. No BBCOR
Pitcher may wear two-tone glove (no white or grey)	1-3-6	1.15 3.07	Colors limited, not distracting, no white or grey

Catcher's glove may be any size	1-3-6	1.12 3.04	Size of catcher's glove limited
1st baseman's glove can be worn by any fielder	1-3-6	1.13 3.05	1st baseman's glove has specific size specifications which differ from fielder's gloves
Uniform requirements - should / shall	1-4	1.11 3.03	Uniform requirements - 2 sets, etc.
Pitcher may wear batting glove if not distracting to the batter	1-4-2	3.12 - MiLB Umpire Manual	Pitcher may not wear batting glove while pitching
Catcher's helmet testing restrictions-must be full helmet or two piece tested together, full ear protection, NOCSAE standard	1-4-8	No rule	Ear protection not required, no testing standards
Helmets must have non-glare surface. meets NOCSAE standard at time of manufacture	1-5-1	No rule	
Intentional base on balls. Dead ball award	2-4-3	6.08(a) 5.05	Starting in 2017, manager may signal for an intentional walk, Dead ball award
Catch definition	2-9-1	2.0 Def. of terms	Catch definition: includes voluntary & intentional release
7 inning game	2-17-1	4.10 (a-d) 4.03	9 inning game
Verbal obstruction	2-22-1	No rule	
Obstruction: Always a delayed dead ball. Any obstruction entitles runner to minimum of one base beyond his position when it occurs	2-22-1, 8-3-2	7.06 6.01	If no play is being made on obstructed runner, play proceeds, award if necessary (type B). If play is made on obstructed runner (type A), ball is dead and runner is awarded a minimum of one base. Dead ball immediately if the batter-runner is obstructed before reaching 1st base
Illegal slide: See rule 2-32-2 a-f	2-32	6.01(j), 5.04(b)(4)	See 2016 change
Courtesy runner for pitcher or catcher	2-33-1	No rule	Not permitted
Unreported sub in game when ball is live and is in position	3-1-1c	5.10j3	Not entered game until play commences
Tobacco (all) chewing illegal	3-1p	No rule	No longer permitted in minors
If the pitcher is replaced while on defense...shall pitch to the batter then at bat, or sub until put out or 3rd out is made	3-1-2	5.10l, 5.61	Must pitch to a minimum of 3 consecutive batter or until the offensive team is put out
Re-entry of starting players	3-1-3	No rule	No re-entry
Designated Hitter for any player, DH and player must remain in same spot in batting order; no multiple substitution to alter batting order permitted	3-1-4	6.10(b) 5.11	No DH, NL. Pitcher only, AL. Pitcher may only bat in same slot in order if enters game as batter or runner for DH. If DH enters game on defense, pitcher must bat in slot vacated by player replaced on defense,

			multiple substitution permitted which terminates DH
...any amount of blood on uniform...changed or cleaned before individual participates again	3-1-6	9.17 MiLB Umpire Manual	.. garment penetrated by blood or other infectious material...removed immediately or as soon as feasible...In most cases it is expected...can be resolved between innings...may be cases...must be acted upon immediately
Base coaches: "One player or coach may occupy each coach's box..."	3-2-1	4.05(a) 5.03	"The offensive team shall station two base coaches...". Implies that the offensive team must have two base coaches
Assistant coach leaving dugout or coaching box to argue: he and head coach restricted to bench	3-2-3	No rule	
Fielder without ball fakes tag: Obstruction	3-3-1a, 8-3-2	No rule	Permitted
Malicious contact, collisions	2-21-1b, 3-3-1n	No rule	
Umpire discipline of coach: restriction to dugout	3-3-1 Penalty	9.01(d) 8.01	Ejection. No restriction to dugout provision
Team warnings	3-3-1 Penalty	No rule	
Defensive conferences. Pitcher must be removed on 4th trip. Can have 3 conferences in 1 inning with no pitching change. 1 conference per inning in extra inning game	3-4-1Penalty	8.06(b) 5.10	The second trip to the same pitcher in the same inning results in the pitcher's removal from the game. After conference with pitcher is complete, pitcher must complete pitching to current batter or retire the side before he can be removed, unless offense pinch-hits after conference. 5 visit max.for mound visits/game
Offensive conferences: 1 per inning	3-4-2	No rule	
Umpires decide if 2nd game of doubleheader is started (unsuitable weather or unfit field)	4-1-1	3.01(b) 4.01	Umpire-in-Chief of 1st game makes the decision
"Mercy" (10 run) rule after 5 innings or 4 1/2 if home team is leading; can end after 3 full innings if both head coaches & UIC agree (Casebook 4.2.4)	4-2-2	No rule	
Game called after visiting team takes lead or ties the score in top half of inning, score reverts back to last completed inning	4-2-3	4.12(5i) 7.02	Game is suspended
Backswing interference - ball is dead	5-1-n	No rule	
Fair batted ball lodged in equipment: ball is dead immediately	5-1-1f	Pro interpretation	Fielder may toss glove with lodged ball in attempt to make a play
Player removing helmet in live ball territory w/live ball - delayed dead	5-1-2e	No rule	

ball - team warning - 2nd violation same team: bench restriction				
Umpire handles live ball: Ball immediately dead	5-1-1h	5.10(e) 5.12	No effect on play if immediately released, ball remains live	
Umpire makes inadvertent foul call: Ball immediately dead	5-1-1h	No rule		
Fielders momentum carries him into dead-ball territory after catch. Ball is dead, no throw permitted	5-1-1i	5.6b3C	Ball remains in play unless fielder falls or loses body control, otherwise throw from dead-ball territory permitted	
Balk: Ball immediately dead	5-1-1k	8.05 Penalty 6.02	If balk is followed by a pitch, play continues. If all runners including the batter-runner advance at least one base, balk is nullified, runners liable to be put out. If there is a balk to a base and ball is thrown to the base, ball remains alive. If runner from first advances to second and continues to third while missing second, he is out on appeal	
Fair ball lodges in players equipment or uniform - dead ball	5-1-1f (5)	No rule		
Making ball live: ...held by pitcher...umpire calls "Play"...	5-1-4	5.11 5.12	See rule: ...with a new ball...	
Injury during live ball...time shall not be called until no further advance or putout is possible. However, if there is a medical emergency or if the umpire's judgement further play could jeopardize the injured player's safety, play should be stopped immediately and bases awarded accordingly	5-2-1d	No rule	Practice is to continue play until no further advance or putout is possible	
Obstruction: Delayed dead ball	5-1-2b	6.01h	Ball dead immediately if obstructed runner is being played on	
Illegal pitch: Ball dead immediately...	6-1 (1-2-3 pen.)	8.01(d) 6.02	Illegal pitch: Ball unless batter reaches 1st...	
If a pitcher is ambidextrous, the umpire shall require the pitcher to face a batter as either a left-handed pitcher or a right-handed pitcher, but not both	6-1-1	8.18 MiLB Umpire Manual	Pitcher must visually indicate which way he will pitch...pitcher must throw one pitch to the batter before any "switch" by either player is allowed...afterwards each may switch once per at bat Click here for video behind rule	
Allowable movements from the windup position: Can't throw to a base without stepping back off the rubber	6-1-2	8.01(a) 6.02	The Windup Position. The pitcher shall...	
Pitching restrictions - state association mandated rest period	6-1-6	No rule		
Pitcher must distinctly wipe pitching	6-2-1e, 6-2-1a	8.02(a)	Pitcher may go to mouth if not in	

hand after bringing in contact with mouth before touching ball		6.02c1, 6.02c2	contact with pitcher's plate and clearly wipes the fingers dry
8 warm-up pitches for starting pitcher, 5 in subsequent innings. Within 1 minute from 1st pitch (starting pitcher), from last out of previous 1/2 inning (relief pitcher)	6-2-2(c) exception	8.03 5.07	2:15 to throw unlimited warm-ups (nationally televised game) or 1:55 (locally televised game)
Pitcher must pitch within 20 seconds of receiving ball	6-2-2c	8.04 5.07	With bases unoccupied, pitcher must deliver ball within 12 seconds after receiving ball
Pitcher feet on or astride pitchers plate or within approx. 5 feet of the plate without ball or makes any movement naturally associated with his pitch while off plate-balk. (hidden ball trick)	6-2-5	8.05(i), 8.05 comment 6.02a9, 6.02a comment	Pitcher without ball on or astride rubber or while off the plate, feins pitch: Balk
Batter must have one foot in batter's box throughout time at bat (see exceptions). Leaving box with both feet and delaying game: called strike	7-2-1(e), 7-3-1	6.02(d) 5.04	Same. Will be enforced in 2015.
Batter delays after 20 sec: strike, ball is live	7-3-1	6.02(c) 5.04	Batter refuses to take position in box: strike, ball is dead
Batter is out for hitting ball w/foot completely out of the box OR stepping on home plate: (heel on line, foot on plate... out)*	7-3-2	6.06(a) 5.09	Batter is out for hitting ball with entire foot out of box
Batter interference on strike 3 with runner stealing, batter is out, runner may be called out	7-3-5 Penalty		Batter and runner automatically out
Batter follow-thru contact w/catcher in act of throwing to retire a runner, batter is out, runners return	7-3-5c	6.003a3 comment	Time called at end of playing action, batter only out on a 3rd strike, runners return unless throw retires runner
Playing short: one less than in starting lineup, out recorded when at-bat reached	7-4-1	Not permitted	Forfiet
Batter-runner on uncaught 3rd strike out when he enters the dugout	8-1-1b case book	5.05a2 comment	Batter out once he leaves the dirt circle surrounding home base
If a batter's loose garment...not worn properly, is touched by a pitched ball, the batter is not entitled to 1st base	8-1-1d2		No applicable rule
Missed base or leaving too soon on a caught ball (Verbal appeal)	8-2 Penalty	7.10 5.06	No verbal appeals. No dead ball appeals. Must throw to base while time is in. If defense attempts a play, even if initiated by the offense, they lose the right to appeal. Feint of a throw is not a play. Throw to retire a runner is a play
Ball hit over any fence is a home run	8-3-3a	1.04 2.01	Ball hit over fence less the 250 feet from plate can be a ground rule award
Fair batted ball deflected over fence	8-3-3a	5.06b4f	Two bases

into foul territory is a home run			
Each runner is awarded two bases if a fair batted or thrown ball becomes dead because of ... if a live thrown ball including a pitch, is touched by an illegal glove or mitt, or by detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder.	8-3-3c-1	7.04(e) 5.06 3e	Each runner, other than the batter, may without liability to be put out, advance one base when a fielder deliberately touches a pitched ball with his cap, mask or any part of his uniform detached from its proper place on his person. The ball is in play, and the award is made from the position of the runner at the time the ball was touched.
Fielder steps into dead ball territory after catch: Each runner awarded one base	8-3-3d	5.10(f), 7.04(c) 5.12, 5.06	Any boundary lines are out of play. To make a catch the fielder must have both feet in live area. If catch is made in live area and fielder enters dead ball area while standing ball remains live. It becomes dead if any part of the body, other than hands or feet, touches ground in dead area
Runner interference: Not in 45-ft. lane. Must be in lane up to bag. Any throw. Fielder must be in possession of ball to legally obstruct runner.	8-4-1g	6.05(k) 5.09	Last stride before touching base may be outside lane. Must be "true" throw (legitimate chance to be caught by fielder). Fielder may be in immediate act of receiving a throw to legally obstruct runner.
Runner is out: On a dropped 3rd strike, he gives up by entering the bench or dugout area or with 2 outs does not attempt to reach 1st base before all infielders leave the diamond...	8-4-1i	5.05a2 comment	...once he leaves the dirt circle surrounding home plate
Illegal to dive over fielder	8-4-2d	No rule	Permitted
Runner shall slide or avoid contact on a force or tag play	8-4-2b,c,d,e,f	No rule	
Interference on a double play attempt	8-4-2g	7.09(g) 6.01	Interference must be willful and deliberate for a double play to be called. Otherwise, only the runner is out. If interference is on the first play, runners return to base occupied at time of pitch. Four additional requirements for 2016 on take-out slides. See rules change
No bowling over catcher	8-4-2f	7.13 6.01	Limited collisions at home plate See new rule for 2014
When the winning run is scored in the last half inning of a regulation game, or in the last half of an extra inning, as the result of a base on balls, hit batter or any other play with the bases loaded which forces the runner on third base to advance, the umpire shall not declare the game over until all	9-1-1 note 2	4.09(b) 5.08	When the winning run is scored in the last half-inning of a regulation game, or in the last half of an extra inning, as the result of a base on balls, hit batter or any other play with the bases full which forces the runner on third to advance, the umpire shall not declare the game ended until the runner

runners have advanced to the next base. All runners must touch up.				forced to advance from third has touched home base and the batter-runner has touched first base. Only runner on 3rd & B-R must touch up.
Winning starting pitcher must pitch 4 innings	9-6-6a	10.19(a) 9.19		Winning starting pitcher must pitch 5 innings
Umpire jurisdiction - begins when the umpires arrive at the confines of the field for the purpose of officiating the game; ends when umpires leave the playing field, but retain clerical authority	10-1-2	4.01 4.03		Umpire jurisdiction - begins when the home team's lineup is presented to the plate umpire; no rule addressing end of jurisdiction
UIC may ask for help on checked swing, not required	10-1-4a	9.02(c) notes 8.02c comment		If requested by catcher or manager, plate umpire must ask for help
Rectify any situation in which a reversed umpire's decision has placed either team at a disadvantage (example: an overturned check swing)	10-2-3l	No rule		
Not a balk	No rule	8.05 (c) comment 6.02		Balk: 3rd to 1st move from the rubber
Replay prohibited				Limited replay

Have another difference or an update? Email Steve with the rule references for inclusion.



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