

Differences between NFHS and Official Baseball Rules (OBR)

OBR is used by most Youth Sports Baseball Leagues
(Pony/Colt, Little League, Babe Ruth, American Legion)
as well as most adult baseball leagues

The rules differences shown on the next several pages are the MAJOR differences between NFHS and OBR rules. There are other, more subtle, differences that the umpire needs to know and understand. During any game called as an umpire, it is critical that you know WHICH rules the teams are playing under. If they are playing under OBR, then you also need to know the revisions to those rules the league has adopted. (e.g.: American Legion uses OBR, but has adopted some of the slide rules from NFHS for play in that league)

NFHS Rule Reference	OBR Rule Reference	Subject	NFHS Rule
1-3-2,3,4,5	1.10	Legal Bat	<p>NFHS allows both wood and non-wood bats</p> <p>Wood Bats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be not more than 2-3/4" in diameter • Must have no more than a negative three ratio between weight and length (a 36" bat must weigh at least 33 ounces) • May have tape or other substance not more than 18" from the handle end of the bat <p>Non-Wood bats must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be not more than 2-5/8" in diameter • Have no more than a negative three ratio between weight and length (a 36" bat must weigh at least 33 ounces) • Be certified and labeled as meeting the BBCOR standard (permanently imprinted or silk-screened by the manufacturer) • Have a safety grip that extends a minimum of 10", but not more than 18", from the handle end of the bat
2-4-3	6.08a	Intentional Base on Balls	<p>NFHS allows an intentional base on balls simply by request of either the coach or the catcher. It is NOT necessary to "pitch out" for four balls. The request can be made at any time while the batter is still at bat.</p> <p>Upon request, call TIME and award the batter first base</p>

2-22-1	7.06	Obstruction	Obstruction of a runner is ALWAYS a delayed dead ball in NFHS
2-32	No Rule	Illegal Slide	<p>An illegal slide is specifically defined</p> <p>A LEGAL slide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be either head first or feet first • If feet first, must have at least one leg and one buttock on the ground • Must slide within reach of the base with either a hand or foot <p>An ILLEGAL slide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rolling, cross-body, or pop-up slide that makes contact with a fielder • The runner's raised leg/foot is higher than the fielder's knee would be if the fielder were in a standing position • The runner slides beyond a base, and THEN makes contact with a fielder or alters the play of the fielder • The runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg • The runner tries to injure the fielder • The runner, on a FORCE PLAY, does not slide on the ground, and in a direct line between the two bases, UNLESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The runner is sliding or running away from the fielder to avoid contact or altering the play of the fielder <p>NOTE: A runner is NEVER required to slide. However, if he does, it must be a legal slide ----- There is NOT a "mandatory slide rule".</p>
3-1-1		Illegal Substitute	<p>Illegal substitute, when identified, is restricted to the bench for the remainder of the game. He is not "ejected".</p> <p>If the same player re-enters the game, he is "ejected".</p>
3-1-3	No Rule	Re-entry of starting players	<p>Starting players may be pulled out of the game (substituted for) and then re-enter the game later, but only ONE TIME. The re-entered player must remain in the same spot in the batting order.</p> <p>NOTE: This applies ONLY to starting players, not to substitutes.</p> <p>This applies to the PITCHER, who may RE-ENTER AS PITCHER even though he was put on the bench, unless that player or coach has violated certain other provisions (See "Troublesome Rules – Substitution for clarification)</p>
3-1-4	6-10b	Designated Hitter	The Designated Hitter may hit for ANY player in the lineup, not just the pitcher
3-3-1a 8-3-2 2-22-2	No Rule	Fake Tag	<p>A fake tag is, by definition, obstruction. Bases may be awarded by the umpire for obstruction.</p> <p>A fake tag is, by definition, an illegal act. First instance by a team results in a bench warning, Subsequent instances result in ejection of the player involved.</p>
3-3-1n (Penalty)	No Rule	Malicious Contact by Runner	Malicious contact is interference by the runner and results in ejection of the player involved. If the runner has not scored prior to the contact, he is also out.
3-3-1n (Penalty)	No Rule	Malicious Contact by Fielder	Malicious contact by a fielder results in ejection of the player involved. The runner is either safe or out on the play. If the player was obstructed by the contact, then the umpire may enforce the obstruction rule.

3-3-1 (Penalty)	9.0.1d	Umpire discipline of coach	NFHS allows the umpire to restrict the coach to the bench for the remainder of the game rather than ejecting him. Once restricted to the bench, any further infractions results in ejection.
3-3-1	No Rule	Team Warnings	NFHS provides for "bench warnings" for several violations rather than ejecting the first player violating certain rules
3-3-1 (Penalty)	8.06b	Defensive Conferences	A coach is allowed 3 "charged" conferences during a regular 7-inning game. There is no restriction as to when these conferences can be used. They could, if a coach desired, be used all in one inning or all during one batter's at-bat. After three "charged" defensive conferences, the coach must replace the pitcher on each subsequent visit. For extra inning games, each team is allowed one "charged" defensive conference in each extra inning
3-3-2	4.07	Ejections	COACH A coach who has been ejected must "leave the vicinity of the playing field" and is prohibited from further contact, direct or indirect, with his players. EXCEPTION: The coach may return to the field to attend to an injured player "when requested by the umpire" PLAYER (Official Interpretation from NFHS) A player who has been "ejected" from a game is NOT required to leave the field. He may, if the coach so desires, remain in the dugout so that he is still under the direct supervision of the coaching staff.
3-4-2	No Rule	Offensive Conferences	Each team is allowed one "charged" offensive conference in each inning of regular or extra-inning play
4-2-2	No Rule	10-Run Rule	The game shall end when the visiting team is behind 10 or more runs after 4 ½ innings, OR after the fifth inning, if either team is behind by 10 or more runs, and both teams have had an equal number of times at bat.
4-4-1f	4.17	Finishing game with 8 players	NFHS requires a team to start a game with nine (9) players, but allows them to finish the game with (8) players. Once they have gone to eight players, they can return to having nine players, if additional eligible substitutes show up for the game. An out is called each time the vacant batting slot comes up to bat
5.1.1h	5.10e	Umpire handles live ball	In NFHS, the ball is dead IMMEDIATELY if an umpire handles a live ball
5-1-1k	8.05 (Penalty)	Balk	In NFHS a balk is an IMMEDIATE DEAD BALL . All playing action after the balk is automatically negated (steals, home runs, etc.)
6-1-2	8.01a	Allowable movements from the windup position	In NFHS, no pickoff move can occur from the windup position. The pitcher can only do one of two things: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitch to the batter • Step off the rubber legally

8-2 (Penalty)	7.10	Missed base or leaving base too soon on caught fly ball (Appeals)	<p>In NFHS, an appeal for a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball can be made either during a LIVE ball or DEAD ball situation.</p> <p>During a live ball appeal, it is NOT necessary for the pitcher to contact the rubber and then step off and throw to the fielder making the appeal.</p> <p>READ AND KNOW THE APPEALS SECTION !!</p>
8-3-3d	5.10f 7.04c	Fielder steps into dead ball territory after a catch	<p>There is no “catch and carry” in NFHS. If a fielder steps into dead ball territory with both feet after having caught a ball, it is an immediate dead ball and bases are awarded</p> <p>NOTE: If he “slides” into dead ball territory and the upper part of his body is still in live ball territory, then he has not “stepped” out of play. If he throws from this position the ball is alive. If he stands up and BOTH FEET remain in dead ball territory, then he HAS “stepped” out of play and the ball is dead and bases are awarded.</p>
8-4-2g	7.09g	Interference on a double play	Interference does not have to “intentional”. Any illegal contact that alters the play is interference by definition
8-4-2d	No Rule	Hurdling or Jumping over fielder	<p>It is ILLEGAL to jump or hurdle a fielder, <u>with or without</u> the ball, who is standing or kneeling. (NFHS Casebook 3.3.1 Situation G; 8.4.2 Situations T, U)</p> <p>Hurdling, Jumping, or Leaping over a fielder is LEGAL -- ONLY IF the fielder is lying on the ground. This means laying flat on the ground in a prone position (NFHS Casebook 3.3. Situation G; 8.4.2 Situation T, U)</p> <p>It is LEGAL to jump or hurdle over an outstretched arm (NFHS Casebook 8-4-2 Situation D)</p> <p>The key to this is jumping or hurdling over the torso or head is ILLEGAL unless the fielder is laying flat (prone) on the ground. It does not matter if the fielder has the ball, is attempting to make a play, or just in the base path.</p> <p>DIVING over a fielder, regardless of the reason, is ALWAYS ILLEGAL. For purposes of this rule, diving means “headfirst”. (NFHS Casebook 8.4.2 Situation W)</p>

8-4-2 b-f	No Rule	Runner shall slide or avoid contact on a force or tag play	<p>The Runner is OUT if:</p> <p>8-4-2(b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not legally slide makes illegal contact that alters the actions of a fielder in the immediate act of making a play • Does not legally slide that does not make contact, but alters the actions of a fielder in the immediate act of making a play • On a force play, does not slide on the ground, and in a direct line between the two bases, UNLESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The runner is sliding or running away from the fielder to avoid contact or altering the play of the fielder • NOTE: Runners are never required to slide, but if a runner elects to slide, the slide must be legal • PENALTY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interference is called ○ Ball is dead ○ Runner is out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a FORCE PLAY, both the runner and the batter-runner are out ○ Other runners return to bases occupied at the time of the pitch <p>8-4-2(c)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not legally attempt to avoid a fielder in the immediate act of making a play on him (tag, force play, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NOTE: See section below on Hurdling, Jumping a fielder for further clarification • PENALTY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Runner is out ○ Ball remains alive unless interference occurs <p>8-4-2(d)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dives over a fielder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diving over a fielder (headfirst) is ALWAYS illegal • PENALTY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Runner is out ○ Ball remains alive <p>8-4-2(e)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiates malicious contact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Malicious contact supersedes obstruction • PENALTY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Runner is ejected ○ If the runner scored before the contact, the run counts ○ If the runner has not scored, then the runner is also called out ○ If the malicious contact interferes with a fielder in the act of making a play, it is also interference and the ball is dead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Runners return to bases occupied at the time of the infraction ▪ Award other outs that, in the umpires judgment, would have been made <p>8-4-2(f)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a runner or retired runner, fails to execute a legal slide, or does not attempt to avoid the fielder or the play on a force play at any base
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Speed-Up Rules	No Rule	Courtesy Runner	<p>A team may use courtesy runners for the pitcher and/or catcher. If a courtesy runner is used, the following rules apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The UIC shall record courtesy runner participation 2. A courtesy runner is not a substitution and the catcher and pitcher do not have to leave the game, nor is the courtesy runner considered to be a substitute (however, see case play below for an exception to this for “projected substitutions”) 3. The courtesy runner runs for the <i>position</i>, NOT the individual. 4. More than one player may run for a position during the game 5. The same player may not run for both the catcher and the pitcher positions 6. The courtesy runner must be an eligible substitute. A player who has entered the game in any other capacity is not eligible to be a courtesy runner. 7. A player may not run as a courtesy runner and also be used as a substitute for any other player in the same half inning. (EXCEPTION: If an injury, illness, or ejection occurs and there are no other runners available, the courtesy runner may be used as a substitute) 8. A player who violates the courtesy runner rule is an illegal substitute 9. A coach is not required to use a courtesy runner 10. A courtesy runner can replace the catcher or pitcher at any time during the half inning <p>NOTE: “Projected” substitutions for the pitcher/catcher during the team’s time at bat are not allowed. The pitcher/catcher are the players who were in those positions during the last half inning when the team was on defense</p> <p>CASE PLAY 3.1.1-N: Adams is the pitcher and Smith is the courtesy runner. In the bottom half of the sixth inning, Baker pinch hits for Adams and gets a single. The coach sends Smith out as a courtesy runner for Baker after advising the umpire that Baker will be the pitcher in seventh inning. RULING: Illegal. “Projected” substitutions are not allowed. Baker is a substitute and is not the pitcher until he actually takes the mound in the next half inning. A courtesy runner is only allowed for the player, in this case Adams, who was the pitcher on defense before coming to bat. If Smith runs, he is a substitute, not a courtesy runner.</p>
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