INTRODUCTION

In competitive athletic contests, the game official represents the ultimate in integrity for any competition. By their very nature, officials are neutral and are responsible to keep the contests played on equal terms. Through actions on and off the field, officials must earn the respect and confidence of players, coaches, and spectators. This confidence and respect is not earned by words, but by unquestioned honesty, demonstrated ability, obvious devotion to, and full understanding of the game.

The rules of competitive athletics are, for the most part, complex. They are difficult to read, understand, and interpret. Mere book knowledge of the rules does not make an official. To an official, knowledge of the rules is basic. To achieve excellence, an official must combine knowledge with good officiating techniques. To assist in this goal, we have provided the following meeting guides. Hopefully, these guides will assist in having each play considered with consistent judgment, intelligence, understanding, courage, and without intimidation.

Athletic officiating is a vigorous avocation and it demands that an official be in excellent physical condition, able to give the very best, on every play, in every contest. To that end, the American Medical Association has stated that before one attempts any vigorous physical activity they should first visit their family physician for a check-up. It is part of good personal health maintenance to have an annual physical exam and participate in an exercise program. This type of exercise program should be minimally three days per week and include cardiovascular conditioning, strength training, flexibility, and muscle endurance. These components, along with proper nutrition, will assist in developing one’s optimum body composition.

The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) Sports Medicine Committee recommends that each registered sports official have an annual physical examination and practice good health habits. Being physically fit and conveying an appropriate, positive image through proper health and nutrition habits will greatly assist all officials in keeping up with the game. After all, the game, the schools, players, coaches, spectators, and fellow officials deserve no less. As importantly, officials owe good health habits to themselves and their families if for nothing more, than the health of it.
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# 2017 PIAA BASEBALL CHAPTER MEETING GUIDE

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEETING</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEETING 1</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 NFHS Baseball Rule Changes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 UMPIRES MANUAL</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Points of Emphasis</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEETING 2</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIAA Approved Uniform</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIAA Adoptions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEETING 3</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Two Man System PowerPoint</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEETING 4</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working the Plate PowerPoint</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEETING 5</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working the Bases PowerPoint</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEETING 6</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Situations PowerPoint</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEETING 7</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEETING 8</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEETING 9</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base Running</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE: BLUE TYPE INDICATES A RULE CHANGE OR NEW ADDITION TO THE CHAPTER MEETING GUIDE FOR 2017.**
MEETING 1:

Rule 2-32-2c Clarifies when a base runner can slide through home plate in a straight line.

“At home plate, it is permissible for the slider’s momentum to carry him through the plate in the baseline extended, and make legal contact with or alter the play of the fielder.”

The committee altered this rule since the physical design of home plate makes it difficult for a runner to break momentum on a slide – as opposed to the other three bases which are elevated.

In order to stop at or on home plate, the runner would have to run slower or begin his slide earlier, which would give the defense an advantage.

The catcher is protected because he has choices of locations where he can position himself to receive the ball and possibly avoid contact.

Rule 3-2-2 PENALTY. Clarifies when a coach-assisted runner is declared out.

3-2-2 ...No coach may physically assist a runner during playing action.

PENALTY: The runner shall be called out immediately. (8-4-2s)

The old rule required the umpire to wait until the end of playing action, signal dead ball, call the assisted runner out, let any additional outs stand, and return all runners not put out to bases occupied at the time of the infraction.

THE ASSISTED RUNNER WILL NOW BE CALLED OUT IMMEDIATELY AND PLAY WILL CONTINUE AS IT WOULD WITH ANY OTHER ORDINARY OUT.

Note: To be considered a “physical assist,” the coach must have helped (or attempted to help) a runner gain an advantage. The act of touching a runner does not necessarily
constitute physical assistance.

**Rule 3-3-1 Penalty**

To promote preventive officiating, beginning with the 2017 season, umpires may issue a verbal warning, as part of a new penalty progression, before ejecting a coach to promote preventive officiating.

The new rule change has initiated a penalty progression:

1. Starting with a verbal statement followed by
2. A written warning (which includes restriction to the bench/dugout) and finally
3. Ejection from the contest.

Unless the situation calls for a drastic response, an ejection should not be the umpires’ first reaction.

If a coach has previously received a verbal warning, he shall receive a written warning (10-2-3j).

The written warning referred to in this rule is nothing more than a brief notation on the line-up card. **WE ARE NOT TO ISSUE A CITATION.**

![Base Umpire]

Note: If the base umpire is involved in any of these “minor offenses” and he issues a written warning and restricts the coach to the bench, the plate umpire will record the warning on the line-up card.

Over all, the majority of umpires are going to be just fine calling the game as always:

1. Handle situations with even temperament.
2. Be courteous at all times and, under all conditions, firm and confident.
3. Draw the line, when needed, and do what is necessary when someone crosses it.
NEVER FORFEIT a game. In extreme situations, especially those involving team safety, TERMINATE the game. Send a report to the PIAA, and let the Administrators determine the consequences.

RULE 6-1-6. Requires pitching restrictions to be based on the number of pitches thrown.

Each NFHS member state association will be required to develop its own pitching restriction policy based on the number of pitches thrown during a game to afford pitchers a required rest period between pitching appearances.

Pursuant to NFHS Rule 6-1-6, the PIAA has adopted the following Baseball Pitching Restriction Procedure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pitch Count Range</th>
<th>Required Rest Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 25 pitches</td>
<td>no rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 50</td>
<td>1 day rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 75</td>
<td>2 days rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76 to 100</td>
<td>3 days rest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a pitcher reaches 100 during a time at bat, he may continue pitching until the batter is retired or the inning ends, whichever occurs first, and the pitch count will revert back to 100 pitches.

A pitcher cannot pitch on more than 2 consecutive days.

A pitcher is limited to 200 pitches in a calendar week.

A pitch is defined as a live ball delivered to the batter that results in a strike,
ball, or batted ball fair or foul.

Each team will designate a pitch counter, with the home team being the official counter. The pitch counters are to confer with each other frequently. If there is a discrepancy, the HOME BOOK is to be used.

Each team must record their pitch counts in MaxPreps before the next game, so others can check them.

The only involvement an umpire has in this process is to inform the pitch counters when a pitch does not count, such as but not limited to, time being called followed by a delivery, a ball slipping out of the hand that does not cross the foul line, an illegal pitch, or a pitch delivered after a balk.

**Umpires are not to get involved in the enforcement of the PIAA Baseball Pitching Restriction Rule.**

**Example:** Umpire Smith had the plate on a game in which Pitcher Jones threw 50 pitches. Umpire Smith has the same team the next day. Pitcher Jones tries to enter the game in the 5th inning, as a relief pitcher. Umpire Smith informs the coach that Jones cannot enter the game or they will forfeit.

**Ruling:** Umpire Smith’s actions are incorrect. He should say nothing and accept the substitution.

**RULE 8-3-6.** Clarifies when an umpire hinders the actions of the catcher in a defensive attempt and how base-running awards are administered.
A NEW ARTICLE 6 was added to Rule 8-3 to provide a rules reference for existing rulings in the Baseball Case Book. The new article reads:

RULE 8-3 ART. 6 “When a plate umpire hinders, impedes or prevents a catcher’s throw attempting to prevent a stolen base or retire a runner on a pickoff play, if an out is not made at the end of the catcher’s initial throw, the ball shall be dead and all runners shall return to the bases occupied at the time of the interference.”

Previously, the penalty for CASE BOOK plays 5.1.2 SITUATIONS B and C did not appear in the RULE BOOK.

NFHS UMPIRE MANUAL

NEW UMPIRE’S DOUBLE TAG-UP SIGNAL

The “Double Tag-Up Signal” is one that the umpires give to one another when there are runners on first and second base, with less than two outs, to indicate that the plate umpire will take any play at third base involving the runner on second base should he tag-up and try to advance. The signal is simply a pounding together action of the closed fists.

CHANGING DESIGNATION OF PLATE UMPIRE AND BASE UMPIRES
In a 2-man system, the nomenclature of identifying the plate umpire has been changed to Plate Umpire (PU), and U1 now represents the first base umpire.

- In a 3-man system, the plate umpire has been changed to Plate Umpire (PU), and U1 now represents the first base umpire and U2 represents the third base umpire.

- In a 4-man system, the plate umpire would be recognized as PU, U1 now represents the first base umpire, U2 represents the second base umpire and U3 would represent the third base umpire.

**2017 POINTS OF EMPHASIS:**

**NFHS Authenticating Mark Program (AMP)**

All Baseballs are required to display the NFHS Authenticating Mark. The balls are manufactured to NFHS standards, which increases the assurance of consistency.

![NFHS Authenticating Mark](image)

**Umpire Asking Assistance from his Partner**

At times, during a contest, a coach will request that an umpire seek assistance from his partner(s) for a particular call or play situation. Asking assistance from a partner is not mandatory. It is at the discretion of the umpire. If he feels that his view was obstructed, or that his partner had a better angle on the play, then he should honor the request for assistance.

*An umpire should render a decision before asking for assistance.*

**Example:** On a swipe tag at first base an umpire, in the “B” position, should make the call according to what he sees from his angle. Then, if necessary, ask for help. If the base umpire asks for help before making the call and his partner cannot help, we now have two umpires who did not see the play!

**Mechanics to be used when asking for assistance.**
First, explain that the results of the conference between umpires will be final and there will be no further discussion.

Then have the coach(s) and players move to their positions or bench area.

**Once the opinion is shared, and a decision is made, it is the umpire making the original call who will make the final determination and announce the ruling on the call or play to each of the coaches.**

If the request for assistance involves the interpretation of a rule, and the umpires cannot agree, they should move to an area out of sight and reference the rule book. **Helpful Suggestions:** No umpire should refuse a brief conversation on a respectful FIRST request. This being said, there are going to be discussions that arrive at an impasse. To avoid an ugly situation and in an attempt to make sure the decision is correct there are times you should go to your partner for help.

Umpires should have a predetermined private signal, such as one hand in the pocket, that lets each other know if help is available. If help is available, ask in these situations:

1. After a pitch is called a ball and there was a checked swing and the coach states “the batter went around”, or “can you ask for help” - **You should ask.** Under NFHS rules we **DO NOT HAVE** to ask, but you should ask.

2. If you are blocked out of a play or straight lined - **You should ask.**

3. If there is a possibility the ball was dropped or juggled, during a tag play, and you did not see it – **You should ask.**

4. Unusual situations out near the outfield fence, such as whether the ball bounced over or went over on a fly. **You should ask.**

There are also times when you should **NOT** ask for help:

1. If the rule book does not allow it, such as a foul call (except for a ball over the fence on a fly) or a check swing called a strike.

2. A close call on a force play.

3. Tags on non-force situations where the ball is not dropped or juggled.

4. If changing the call will get you into a crazier situation, such as changing a catch or no catch of a fair fly ball with runners on base.

5. You should not go to your partner for help after an extended discussion.

**After making a call,** there are times when you should go to your partner immediately after the play happens without an appeal from a coach.
These situations include:

1. Check swing on a 3rd strike followed by a play.

2. You are the base umpire in the B or C position and there is pulled foot play at 1st base.

3. A swipe tag at 1st base and you are straight lined in the A position or you are in the B or C position.

When you are working a game, all you have out there is your partner and your knowledge. Do everything in the power of two umpires to get it right!

**Location of Team Personnel**

Coaches, players, substitutes, attendants, or other team personnel shall not leave the dugout, during live ball, for any unauthorized purpose. Coaches or team personnel MAY NOT sit outside the dugout/bench on buckets or stools. Players are not allowed to stand or kneel outside their dugout/bench area while the other team is taking infield practice.

**Legal Slides**

There has been a misnomer that on any given play the base runner has to slide into the base he is trying to acquire. Even the universally accepted “force play slide rule” is misconstrued as the player having to slide into the base. NFHS rules are specific and very clear – runners are never required to slide. However, if they choose to slide, the slide must be legal. A player can legally slide either feet first or head first. If a player chooses feet first, then at least one leg and buttock shall stay in contact with the ground.
A slide is illegal if the runner uses a rolling, cross-body or pop-up slide, into the fielder, or if the runner’s raised leg is higher than the fielder’s knee (while he is in a standing position), if the runner goes beyond the base and then makes contact with the fielder or alters the play (**there is an exception at home plate**), if the runner slashes or kicks the fielder, if the runner intentionally tries to injure the fielder and during a force play situation, the runner does not slide on the ground and in a direct line between the two bases. When a runner slides, he must slide within reach of the base with either hand or foot. The consequence is that the runner is called out and based upon his actions there could possibly be malicious contact and the runner would be ejected from the game.
MEETING #2 - PIAA APPROVED UMPIRES’ UNIFORM and PIAA ADOPTIONS.

PIAA APPROVED UMPIRES’ UNIFORM:

Shirt

One of the following shirts is to be worn: (1) Navy blue pullover with red and white stripe trim on sleeves and collar. (2) Light blue pullover with navy blue and white stripe trim on the sleeves and collar with the standard buttons (no zipper style shirts permitted). The pullover style shirt shall only be of a micromesh material. (The silk/shiny dazzle type material is not approved.) Long-sleeve shirt is now approved.

Patch

The ONLY patch that is permitted to be worn is the PIAA patch which MUST be worn on the left sleeve of the shirt 3” down from the shoulder seam. If you are wearing a jacket or sweater while umpiring, you are NOT required to have a PIAA patch on your jacket or sweater. Jackets or sweaters must be navy blue only. The jacket may have your PIAA umpires’ chapter identification on the left breast area or left sleeve ONLY. Jackets or sweaters with identification other than PIAA are NOT permitted to be worn while umpiring.

NOTE: The State Championship patch that is given to each umpire that officiates a state championship game it is to be on the right sleeve of your shirt 3” down from the shoulder seam. The patch is to be worn during the State Championship Game ONLY! Following the State Championship Game, you may wear the patch on your warm up jacket and not on the shirt once the State Championship Game is completed.

Undershirt

Navy blue - All umpires must wear the same color undershirt during the game.

Slacks

Charcoal Gray - Shorts are NOT permitted.

Ball Bag

Navy blue only.

Socks

Black – “footies” are NOT permitted.

Shoes

Solid black - black with NO WHITE MARKINGS of any kind.

Belt

Black - large metal buckles NOT permitted.

Cap

Navy blue - caps are to be fitted type only, not adjustable style. Both male and female umpires must wear caps properly in all positions. Cap with Gold 1½” high “PIAA” letters are REQUIRED for all regular season, district and inter-district advanced play.
Jewelry  Umpires are NOT permitted to wear jewelry, with the exception of your wedding band and a Medical Alert Bracelet or Necklace while umpiring. The restrictions that pertain to a player for a Medical Alert Bracelet or Necklace also pertain to umpires.

NOTE: ALL UNIFORM ITEMS MUST BE IDENTICAL TO PARTNER(S), DRESS ALIKE!!

OFFICIALS’ UNIFORM - AMERICAN FLAG DISPLAY

Registered PIAA sports’ officials may display the American flag (maximum size 2 inches by 3 inches) on the right sleeve of their uniform shirt approximately three inches down from the shoulder seam. This will be the same position the PIAA official patch is displayed on the left sleeve. Thank you for your patriotism, support of interscholastic education, and the recognition and remembrance of our fellow Americans. An American flag may be displayed on umpires’ jacket.

2017 PIAA ADOPTIONS

Adopt the 2017 NFHS Baseball Rules Book.

Pursuant to Rule 6-1-6, adopt the Baseball Pitching Restriction. Rule See Page 7.

Adopt suggested speed-up rule Courtesy Runner only.

Adopt Rule 1-2-9 NOTE, permitting the optional use of the Double First Base.

Adopt the suggested Double First Base Rules, as set forth in the NFHS Baseball Rules Book.

Modify Rule 3-1-5 (Concussion Rule), to clarify that “an appropriate health-care professional” is a licensed physician of medicine or osteopathic medicine (MD or DO).

Adopt Rule 4-2-2, ten runs after five innings.

Modify Rule 4-2-2, to include 15 runs after three innings.

Modify Rule 4-2-2 to permit a time limit for those contests played in community/public parks that prohibits a new inning from starting after a predetermined time, at all levels (varsity, junior varsity, or otherwise) of competition.

Modify Rule 4-2-2b, Sub-varsity level (junior varsity, junior high, and middle school) participating member schools, by mutual agreement prior to the start of a doubleheader, may limit the number of innings played, in each game of that doubleheader, to five (5).

Adopt Rule 4-2-4, relative to suspended games:
The PIAA has adopted this game ending procedure:

Once the game has started, if play is halted because of weather, darkness, or light failure, we have a suspended game to be continued from the point of interruption at a later date.

Exception: If at least 4 1/2 innings have been completed and the home team is ahead, the game is over because a winner can be determined.

**SITUATION A:** At any point in the game before the 5th inning (a) the game is tied or (b) the visitors are ahead or (c) the home team is ahead and rain, darkness, or light failure halts play.

**RULING:** In (a), (b), and (c) the game is suspended and is to be continued from the point of interruption at a later date.

**SITUATION B:** During the top of the 5th inning with (a) the visitors ahead or (b) the home team ahead rain halts the game.

**RULING:** In (a) and (b) the game is suspended. Neither team has completed its time at bat in the 5th inning.

**SITUATION C:** In the bottom of the 5th the home team is ahead and the game is halted because of rain.

**RULING:** The home team is declared the winner.

**SITUATION D:** At the end of 5 innings of play the home team leads 5 – 4. In the top of the 6th inning the visitors go ahead 6 – 5 and the game is halted because of rain.

**RULING:** The game reverts back to the 5th inning and the home team wins.

**Weather** – Error on the side of caution when dealing with inclement weather conditions. If you see lightening or hear thunder, get the teams off the field into safe shelter and wait the prescribed amount of time before resuming (30 minutes from the last bolt).

We do have suspended game rules in effect; therefore there is no need to rush trying to complete a game.

If you are in the 4th inning of a close game and it is raining, it is probably best to get the teams off of the field until the weather improves. You might agree, after reading situation “D” above.

**DISQUALIFICATION RULE**

Any coach ejected from baseball contest by any state association registered official for unsportsmanlike conduct or flagrant misconduct shall leave the vicinity of the playing area (out of sight and sound) immediately and is prohibited from further contact, direct or indirect, with the team for the remainder of the day and
for the next contest or next play day at the same level (Rule 3-3-2). He may return when requested to attend to and ill or injured player.

Any player ejected from baseball contest by any state association registered official for unsportsmanlike conduct or flagrant misconduct shall be disqualified from participating in the remainder of the day and in the next contest at the same level.

Other than filing a report with the PIAA office ON-LINE WITHIN 24 HOURS, officials ARE NOT to get involved in the enforcement of the disqualification rule.

The PIAA has adopted a format pertaining to Team Warnings for second time team offenders. These same Team Warnings under NFHS rules would be ejections. Since these Team Warnings are not "unsportsmanlike acts" and since an ejection causes a player or a coach a one game suspension, this provision has been adopted:

Second time team offenders shall be restricted to the bench, without ejection, for the remainder of the game. There will be no ejection report filed and no additional disqualification penalties.

These Case Book Plays are examples of situations that require restriction to the bench without an ejection:

1.3.5 F Using a heating device on bats (natural or artificial)
1.5.1 A, B, C, D Deliberately removing helmet (live ball)
1.5.4 A Catcher’s equipment
1.5.12 A, B Jewelry
3.3.1 A thru E Leaving dugout/bench area (live ball)
3.3.1 L Unauthorized items in coaches box
3.3.1 EE Carelessly throwing bat
3.3.1 GG Jewelry
3.3.1 HH/II Video replay (dugout/coaches box)
3.3.1 KK/LL Use of tobacco
3.3.1 NN Player’s wearing bandana
3.3.3 On-Deck Circle violation
8.3.2 B Fake Tags
8.3.2 E Fake Tags

COACHES UNIFORM

PIAA policy is that all coaches of PIAA member schools must be in full school baseball uniform when on the field or in the dugout.

Note: Although Rule 1-1-5 mentions that all team members SHOULD be of the same color and style, PIAA’s policy is that all players and field coaches
MUST be dressed in uniforms of identical color and style.

Coaches may wear a team wind shirt, jersey or jacket.

MEDIA AREA

PIAA policy places the media area outside the confines of the field of play.

SPORTSMANSHIP MESSAGE

PIAA requires all registered sports' officials to enforce the sportsmanship rules for coaches and contestants. Actions meant to demean opposing contestants, teams, spectators, and officials are not in the highest ideals of interscholastic education and will not be tolerated. Let today’s contest reflect mutual respect. Coaches please certify to the officials’ that your players are legally equipped and uniformed according to NFHS rules and PIAA adoptions. Good luck in today’s contest.

For distribution purposes, this message is printed on the back of all PIAA registered sports officials’ identification cards. Chapter interpreters are requested to remind all officials to READ this message at each contest they officiate.

Protest Procedure – PIAA does not allow any forms of protests.

If there is a question about a rule that was possibly misapplied, the team’s coach or captain shall inform the umpire at the time of the play and before a pitch to the next batter of either team, or before the umpires leave the field if the play in question was the last play of the game (10-2-3i #1). The umpires will then meet and arrive at a proper ruling. Umpires are to use whatever means necessary to reach a correct final decision.

Exception: Video replay may not be used to correct a call.
MEETING #3: UMPIRE MECHANICS. WORKING THE TWO MAN SYSTEM

A. REVIEW UMPIRE MECHANICS (TWO-MAN SYSTEM):

1. If possible, view the Two Man Mechanics PowerPoint “PIAA 2-Man System of Umpiring” available on the Baseball Document page of the PIAA web site.

2. Distribute to the members a packet of 2–man mechanics diagrams, which are available in the PIAA Umpires Manual on the PIAA website baseball page.

3. Use blackboard or magnetic board to illustrate proper 2-man mechanics.

4. Use available video presentations.

5. If possible, utilize indoor/outdoor facilities to provide actual experience.
MEETING #4: Working the Plate.

A. Review Plate Mechanics by presenting the PowerPoint “Working the Plate” available in the document section of the PIAA baseball page.

B. Use the information and diagrams available in the PIAA Baseball Umpires Manual
MEETING #5: Working the Bases.

A. Review Base Umpire Mechanics by presenting the PowerPoint “Working the Bases” available in the document section of the PIAA baseball page.

B. Use the information and diagrams available in the PIAA Baseball Umpires Manual
MEETING #6: Special Situations.

A. View and discuss the PowerPoint “Special Situations” available in the document section of the PIAA baseball page
MEETING #7: PITCHING

The Wind-Up Position  In a wind up position the pitcher’s pivot foot must be somewhere on the pitching rubber and the NON-PIVOT FOOT MUST BE TOUCHING OR BEHIND A LINE EXTENDING THROUGH THE FRONT EDGE OF THE RUBBER. When in this position the TOES WILL BE POINTED TOWARDS HOME PLATE OR SLIGHTLY SLANTED. Under no conditions is the non pivot foot to be entirely in front of the front edge line.

In these diagrams the non-pivot foot could also be on the rubber

When in the wind-up position the pitcher can only do two things (NFHS RULES):

1. Begin the pitching motion with his non-pivot foot or
2. Step backwards (not to the side) off of the rubber with his pivot foot.

WHEN IN CONTACT WITH THE RUBBER IN THE WIND-UP POSITION THE PITCHER CAN NOT THROW TO A BASE.

PENALTY: ILLEGAL PITCH

THE HYBRID PITCHING POSITION

The pitching stance shown in the diagram is called the Hybrid Position and is illegal in High School Baseball.
THE SET POSITION:

In the set position the pitcher must have his ENTIRE pivot foot on or ENTIRELY in front of and ENTIRELY in contact with and PARALLEL TO the rubber. Not beyond either right or left edge.

The non-pivot foot must be ENTIRELY anywhere in front of the line (extended in both directions) that determines the front edge of the pitching rubber.

BALKS:

Tips on calling balks:

Here are some things to remember when calling balks:

a. When a balk occurs, the ball is dead immediately.

b. At the time of the balk, the calling umpire should say “TIME, THAT’S A BALK”

c. The call of “balk” should be made VERY loudly and emphatically.

d. At the proper moment, other members of the crew should loudly and emphatically call “TIME.”

e. Remember to give the proper ball/strike count before resuming play.

f. Put the ball back in play when play is ready to resume. (5-1-4)

COMMON TYPES OF BALKS:

1. Takes sign while not on the rubber.

2. Makes an illegal pitch from any position.

3. Attempts a pick-off move, from the rubber, in the windup position.

4. Assumes the set position without keeping his pitching hand at side or behind back.
5. Comes to his stop with the glove above his chin.
6. Brings pitching hand to mouth and then delivers without wiping off that hand.
7. Interrupts pitching motion.
8. Pitches from the set position with pivot foot outside the end of the rubber or not parallel to the rubber.
9. Steps forward off the rubber from the set position.
10. Pitches from the set position without coming to a complete stop.
11. Drops the ball while on the rubber when the ball does not cross the foul line.
12. Feints toward home.
13. Feints toward first.
14. Fails to step with the non-pivot foot toward any base before making a throw.
15. Feints or throw to an unoccupied base except when making a play.
16. Fails to pitch after making any motion habitually connected with delivery.
17. Stands astride or within five feet of the rubber, without the ball, during a hidden ball trick.
18. After bringing the hands together in the set position, feints with any part of the upper body, except the head.
19. Steps toward occupied third and then turns to throw to first without disengaging the rubber before the move or throw to first.
20. Commits any act, which in the umpire’s judgment, is an illegal attempt to deceive the runners.

SPECIAL BALK REGULATIONS:

The pitcher shall not be charged with a balk if he attempts a pick-off at first base and throws to the first baseman who is either in front of (coming into cover a bunt) or behind first base and obviously not an attempt at retiring the runner. As long as the fielder attached to that base is in the “proximity” (umpire judgment) of the base.

Also, note that there is no violation if the pitcher attempts a pick-off at second or third and throws to an infielder who is in front of or behind or to the side of either of those
bases; i.e., this violation is only in reference to pick-offs at first base. There is no violation if a pitcher attempts a pick-off at second base and seeing no fielder covering the bag, throws to the short stop or second baseman, neither of whom is in the vicinity of the bag nor is making an actual attempt to retire the runner.

**Rationale:** A pitcher must throw to first and home; he does not have to throw to second.

**THROWING TO AN UNOCCUPIED BASE:**

NFHS Rules provide that the pitcher be charged with a balk if, while in contact with the rubber, he throws to an unoccupied base except for the purpose of making a play.

**Play:** Runners on first and second pitcher in a set position, runner breaks for third and pitcher throws to third base.

**Ruling:** Legal play – runner attempted to steal.

**PITCHER’S GLOVE/MITT:**

Color (two-tone shade of same color, acceptable). No “sizeable” amount of white or gray, manufacturer’s logos acceptable; umpire discretion is advised (no penalty – remove glove).

**Pitching Regulations:**

After the umpire has received the official lineup card prior to the game, the player listed as pitcher shall pitch until the first opposing batter has been put out or has advanced to first base (3-1-1). The starting pitcher may warm up by using not more than eight throws, completed in one minute. At the beginning of each subsequent inning, the pitcher may warm up by using not more than five throws. In either case, the UIC may authorize more throws because of an injury or inclement weather (6-2-2c exception).

**Replacing the Pitcher:**

A player may change to a different fielding position at any time except that a pitcher, after being listed as such on the official lineup card, cannot change until certain conditions are met (3-1-1).

The starting pitcher shall pitch until the first opposing batter has been put out or has advanced to first base (3-1-1). If the starting pitcher does not face one batter, he may play another position, but not return to pitch (3-1-1 penalty).

If a pitcher is replaced while his team is on defense, the substitute pitcher shall pitch to the batter then at bat, or any substitute for that batter, until such batter is put out or reaches first base, or until a third out has been made. A player may be removed as pitcher and returned as pitcher only once per inning, provided the return as pitcher does
not violate either the pitching, substitution or charged conference rule (3-1-2).

When a pitcher is replaced during an inning or prior to an inning, the relief pitcher may not use more than eight throws (within one minute). The UIC may authorize more throws because of an injury or inclement weather (6-2-2c exception). Should there be no announcement of a substitution, a substitute pitcher is considered to have entered the game when the ball is live and the pitcher takes his place on the pitcher’s plate (3-1-1b).

If the pitcher, because of an injury or being incapacitated, is replaced before meeting the requirements of facing one batter or recording the third out, or if his replacement requires more warm-up throws than permitted in 6-2-2 exception, he cannot return to the game as a pitcher (3-1-2).

**Defensive Conferences:**

**Number Allotted Defensively:**

Each team, when on defense, may be granted not more than three charged conferences during a seven-inning game, without penalty, to permit coaches or their non-playing representatives to confer with a defensive player or players. In an extra-inning game, each team shall be permitted one charged conference each inning while on defense without penalty. The number of charged conferences permitted is not cumulative. A request for time for this purpose shall be made by a coach, player, substitute, or an attendant. Time granted for an obviously incapacitated player shall not constitute a charged conference. Prior to accumulating three charged conferences in seven-innings or less, a conference is not charged if the pitcher is removed as pitcher. After three charged conferences in a seven-inning game, or for any charged conference in excess of one in each extra-inning, the pitcher shall be removed as pitcher for duration of the game (3-4-1).

**Defensive Conference Ends:**

A defensive charged conference is concluded when the coach or non-playing representative crosses the foul line if the conference was in fair territory. If the conference was in foul territory, the conference concludes when the coach or non-playing representative initially starts to return to the dugout/bench area (3-4-3). If a coach who has been restricted to the dugout-bench area is involved in a charged conference, that conference shall end when the players involved initially start to return to their positions on the field (3-4-3). The coach shall be given a reasonable amount of time for the charged conference as determined by the UIC (3-4-4).
MEETING #8: BATTING

POSITION AND BATTING ORDER:

1. Umpire-in-Chief must inspect lineup cards (home team first):
   
   Any obvious error must be brought to coaches’ attention and changed before the call of "Play Ball" (Rules 4-1-3, 7-1-1).

2. Line-ups become official after they are exchanged verified and then accepted by the umpire in charge during Pregame meeting (Rule 4-1-3).

ERRORS IN BATTING ORDER:

Obvious errors in the batting order which are noticed by the UIC before calling “Play Ball” for the start of the game should be called to the attention of the coach of the team in error so the correction can be made before the game starts.

Example: If a coach has inadvertently listed only eight players in the batting order or has listed two players with the same last name but without an identifying initial and the error is noticed by the umpire before the umpire calls “Play Ball" the umpire shall cause such error or errors to be corrected before he calls “Play” to start the game. Teams should not be penalized for some mistake that obviously was inadvertent and which can be corrected before the game starts.

BATTING OUT OF ORDER (7-1 AND 2) PENALTY:

1. Only the defensive team can appeal batting out of order after the hitter has completed his time at bat.

2. Any outs made while improper batter is at bat stand; i.e., steal; pick off; double play.

3. If the improper batter becomes a runner or is put out and the defensive team appeals, the umpire shall declare the proper batter out and return all runners to the base occupied at the time of pitch. Any outs made on play stand. An out for batting out of order supersedes an out by the improper batter on the play.
**Batter’s Box Rule:**
A batter may leave the batter’s box when he swings at a pitch, is forced out of the box by the pitch or attempts a “drag bunt.” He may also leave the box when the pitcher or catcher feints or attempts a play at any base, the pitcher leaves the dirt area of the pitching mound, or takes a position more than five feet from the pitcher’s plate after receiving the ball, or a member of either team requests and is granted “Time,” or the catcher leaves the catcher’s box to adjust his equipment or give defensive signals or the catcher does not catch the pitched ball (7-3-1).

For failure of the batter to be ready within 20 seconds after the ball has been returned to the pitcher, the umpire shall call a strike. If the batter leaves the batter’s box, “delays” the game, which is the key word to the rule, “delays” and none of the above exceptions apply, the plate umpire shall charge a strike to the batter. The pitcher need not pitch, and the ball remains live (7-3-1 penalty).

The lines defining the batter’s box are considered “within” the batter’s box. When the batter assumes his position in the batter’s box, he shall have both feet completely within the batter’s box; i.e., “no part” of either foot may extend beyond the lines defining the box when the batter assumes his position. **CB 7.3.2 A**

If a batter hits a ball (fair, foul, or foul tip) with one or both feet on the ground entirely outside the batter’s box, he shall be declared out. **NFHS Baseball Case Book** plays 7.3.2a thru 7.3.2d.

**A BATTER IS OUT WHEN:**
1. Enters batter’s box with an illegal bat (7-4-1a) (live or dead ball).
2. A third strike is caught.
3. Foul (other than a foul tip not a third strike) is caught by a fielder.
4. An attempt to bunt on third strike is foul.
5. A third strike is not caught, provided a runner occupies first base and not more than one is out.
6. An infield-fly is declared.
7. Any member of the offensive team or coach other than runner(s) interferes with a fielder who is a tempting field a **foul fly ball**.
8. A team playing with one less than the starting number.
9. Is an illegal substitute.
10. He intentionally deflects a foul ball which has a chance of becoming fair.
BATTER INTERFERES WITH CATCHER’S THROW BACK TO PITCHER:

If the batter interferes with the catcher’s throwback to the pitcher by stepping out of the batter’s box while he is at bat (no runners attempting to advance), it shall not be considered interference.

In such cases, the umpire shall call “TIME” only (no interference).

The ball will be dead and no runner shall advance on the play.

This interpretation does not, of course, give the batter license to intentionally interfere with the catcher’s throwback to the pitcher and in such cases the batter shall be ruled out. If the batter becomes a runner on ball four and the catcher’s throw strikes him or his bat, the ball remains alive and play (provided no intentional interference by the batter-runner) continues.

If the batter interferes with the catcher’s throw to retire a runner by stepping out of the batter’s box, interference shall be called on the batter under the interference rule.

However, if the batter is standing in the batter’s box and he or his bat is struck by the catcher’s throwback to the pitcher (or throw in attempting to retire a runner) and in the umpire’s judgment there is no intent on the part of the batter to interfere with the throw consider the ball alive and in play.

BATTER-RUNNER AND CATCHER COLLIDE:

When a catcher and batter-runner going to first base have contact while the catcher is attempting to field the ball, there is generally no violation and nothing should be called. This cannot be interpreted to mean however that flagrant contact by either party would not call for either an interference call or an obstruction call. Either one should be called if the violation is flagrant in nature. A fielder has right of way to make a play.

BATTER-RUNNER OVERRUNNING A BASE:

To overrun a base is to run or slide by a base without an attempt to advance to the next base. A batter-runner overrunning first base who subsequently takes a (single step or steps) toward second base with the intent to advance is no longer overrunning and is subject to being tagged out while off base. Simply turning toward second base after overrunning first base does not necessarily show an attempt to advance (8-4-2h1).

Infield Fly:

An infield fly is a fair fly (not including a line drive nor an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, (rule does not preclude outfielders from being allowed to attempt to make the catch) and provided the hit is made before two are out and at the time when first and second bases or all bases are occupied. When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire immediately announces it for
the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near a baseline, the umpire shall declare “Infield Fly, if fair” (2-19). The batter-runner is out when he hits an infield fly and the rule is in effect (8-4-1j). If the rule is in effect and there is no announcement, the infield fly rule is still enforced.

**Remember: It’s not the “Declaration” that counts; it is the “situation” that counts.**

**Interference by Batter and Penalty:**

A batter is out when he intentionally deflects a foul ball which could become fair (7-4-1i).

The batter-runner is out when he “intentionally” interferes with the catcher’s attempt to field the ball after a third strike (8-4-1a).

**Comment:**

A batter shall not interfere with catcher’s fielding or throwing by leaning over home plate, stepping out of the batter’s box, making any other movement which hinders action at home plate, or the catcher’s attempt to play on a runner or failing to make a reasonable effort to vacate a congested area when there is a throw to home plate and there is time for the batter to move away (7-3-5).

A batter shall not disconcert the pitcher by stepping from the box on one side of home plate to the box on the other side while the pitcher is in position ready to pitch. The penalty for this; the ball becomes dead immediately and the batter is out (7-3-3 penalty).

**Follow-Through Interference:**

On his natural follow-through, the batter has made contact with the catcher.

The ball is delayed-dead on follow-through interference and if F2 isn’t able to throw out the runner attempting to steal, the runner must be returned to first base and the batter is out.
**Back-Swing Interference:**

Before the time of the pitch, if the batter’s practice swing makes contact with the catcher or his equipment, the umpire shall call an immediate dead ball. There is no penalty.

**Throwing Equipment:**

A coach, player, substitute, attendant, or other bench personnel shall not carelessly throw a bat (3-3-1c), or deliberately throw a bat or helmet (3-3-1L).

If the umpire judges it to be a careless throw, he shall, at the end of playing action, issue a team warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender on that team shall be ejected (3-3-1c penalty). If deliberate, the offender is ejected from the game. Failure to comply shall result in the game being forfeited (3-3-1L penalty).

If the bat breaks and is hit by the ball or hits a runner or a fielder, no interference shall be called. If a whole bat is thrown and interferes with a defensive player attempting a play, interference will be called. The batter is out and runners return. If in the umpire’s judgment, interference prevented a possible double play, two players may be ruled out (7-3-6).
MEETING #9: BASE RUNNING

WHEN A BATTER BECOMES A RUNNER:

1. He hits a fair ball (Rule 2-5-1).

2. He is charged with a third strike.
   a. Note: If third strike is caught, he is out the instant after he becomes a runner.

3. An intentional base on balls is awarded or a fourth ball is called.

4. A pitched **ball hits his person** or clothing, provided he does not strike at the ball (Rules 5-1-1a, 8-1-1d).
   a. Exception - **If the batter makes no effort to avoid** being hit, (7-3-4) or if the umpire calls the pitched ball a strike, the hitting of the batter is disregarded except the ball is dead. It is a strike/ball depending on location of the pitch.

5. The catcher or any other defensive player obstructs him. The coach/captain of the team at bat, "after being informed" by the UIC of the obstruction, shall indicate whether or not he elects to decline the obstruction penalty and accept the resulting play. Such election shall be made:
   a. Before the next pitch (legal or illegal).
   b. Before the award of an intentional base on balls.
   c. Before all six infielders leave the diamond.
   d. Obstruction of the batter is ignored if B/R reaches first and "all other runners" advance at least one base (the rest is at the runner’s own risk).
   e. Note: Or play or attempted play 5-1-2b.

6. **Note #1:** Any runner attempting to steal on a catcher’s obstruction of the batter shall be awarded the base he is attempting. If a runner is not attempting to advance on the catcher’s obstruction, he shall not be entitled to the next base, if not forced to advance because of the batter being awarded first base.
Note #2: If obstruction is enforced, all other runners on the play will return to base occupied at time of the pitch.

Note #3: If obstruction is not enforced, all other runners advance at their own risk.

**A BATTER-RUNNER IS AWARDED FIRST BASE IF:**

1. He is a runner because of a base on balls - hit batsman - catcher's obstruction (Rule 8-1-1, c, d, or e).

2. His fair ball, other than an infield fly, becomes dead (Rule 5-1-1d, e, f) and provided a preceding runner or retired runner does not interfere in such a way as to prevent a potential double play (Rule 8-4-1h).

**TOUCHING, OCCUPYING, AND RETURNING TO A BASE:**

1. An advancing runner shall touch first base, second base, third base, and then home plate in order, including awarded bases.

2. A returning runner. If the ball is dead because of an uncaught foul, it is not necessary for a returning runner to retouch intervening bases. The umpire will not make the ball live until the runner returns to within proximity of the appropriate base.

3. A runner who misses a base while advancing may not return to touch it after a following runner has scored.

4. If a batted ball (fair or foul other than foul tip) is caught. Each runner shall touch his base after batted ball has "touched" a fielder.

5. If a batter-runner is entitled to return to first base after overrunning it or if a runner fails to touch home base and desires to return, he shall return immediately.

6. Penalty for advancing, returning, or failure to tag up after a foul ball (Rules 8 -2- Art. 1-5).

7. If the ball becomes dead and the runner is "on or beyond a succeeding base," he cannot return to the missed base and is subject to being declared out upon proper and successful appeal.

8. For a given runner, a force play ends as soon as he touches the next base or a following runner is put out at a previous base. When a runner advances beyond a base to which he is forced without touching it, the
force remains. Also, a force situation is reinstated when a runner retreats back past the base to which he was forced to advance.

9. A force in effect at the time of the pitch remains in effect for the following play only if a base running error occurs BEFORE a following runner is put out (8-2 pen; 9-1-1b).

BASE-RUNNING AWARDS:
1. Each runner other than the batter-runner is awarded one base when:
   
a. There is a balk (Rule 6-2-4 Penalty) or a pitch strikes a runner (Rule 6-1-4).
   
b. He is forced from the base (Rules 5-1-1-f-g).
   
c. He is attempting to steal (Rule 8-1-1-e).
   
d. When a runner is obstructed (Rule 8-3-2).

EACH RUNNER IS AWARDED:

1. Four bases (home) if a fair ball goes over a fence in flight or hits a foul pole above the fence, or is prevented from going over by being touched by a spectator or is touched by an illegal glove/mitt or detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, kicked, or held by a fielder; or

2. Three bases if a batted ball (other than in item a) is touched by an illegal glove or mitt, or by detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, kicked, or held by a fielder provided the ball, when touched is on or over fair ground, or is a fair ball while on or over foul ground, or is over foul ground in a situation such it might become a fair ball; or

3. Two bases if a fair batted or thrown ball becomes dead because of bouncing over or passing through a fence; or lodges in a defensive players or umpires equipment or uniform a live thrown ball: (1) including a pitched, is touched by an illegal glove or mitt, or by detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder; or (2) goes into a stand for spectators, dugout or player's bench or over or through or lodges in a fence, and provided it is not by a pitcher from his plate as in 8-3-3-d; or

Note: When two runners are between the same bases on an overthrow into dead ball territory, the lead runner receives two bases and the following runner is awarded one, since both runners cannot share the same awarded base.
EXCEPTION: Runners between second and third would score, because the award does not result in both runners occupying the same base.

4. One base if a pitch or any throw by the pitcher from his pitching position on his plate goes into a stand or bench or over or through or lodges in a fence or backstop or touches a spectator or lodges in an umpire’s or catcher’s equipment, or with less than two out, the batter hits a fair or foul ball (fly or line drive) which is caught by a fielder, who then leaves the field of play by stepping with both feet or by falling into a bench, dugout, stand, bleacher, or over any boundary or barrier such as a fence, rope, chalk line, or pregame determined imaginary boundary line. Note: The act shall not be deliberate.

5. Bases as determined by the umpire who shall also impose such penalties as in his judgment will nullify the act of spectator interference with any thrown or batted ball. The ball shall become dead at the moment of the interference.

6. Illegal use of detached player equipment 8-3-3a, b, and c or an illegal glove/mitt does not cause ball to immediately become dead. If each runner advances to or beyond the base, which he would reach as a result of the award, the infraction is ignored. Any runner who advances beyond the base he would be awarded does so at his own risk and may be put out.

AN AWARD IS FROM THE BASE DETERMINED AS Follows:

1. If the award is the penalty for an infraction such as a balk or use of detached player equipment or an illegal glove/mitt, the award is from the base occupied at the time of the infraction.

2. If any pitch (batted or not batted) is followed by a dead ball, before the pitcher is in position for the next pitch, and before there is any throw by the fielding team, any award is from the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

3. When a runner, who is returning to touch a base after a batted ball has been caught, is prevented from doing so because a thrown live ball has become dead his award shall be from the base he occupied at the time of the pitch (Rule 8-3-5-B).

4. If any situations other than (1) or (2), on a batted ball which is the first play by an infielder, all runners including the batter-runner are awarded two bases from their positions at the time of the pitch.
5. For any subsequent play by an infielder, or for any throw by an outfielder, the award is two bases from the time of the throw.

6. Approved-Ruling (When every runner, including the batter-runner has advanced one base at the time of the first play, the award is two bases from the time of the throw.

**BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT WHEN:**

1. He intentionally interferes with the catcher's attempt to field the ball after a third strike.

2. His fair hit or his foul (other than foul tip which is not a third strike) is caught by a fielder or such catch is prevented by a spectator.

3. His fair fly ball, fair line drive, or fair bunt in flight is intentionally dropped by an infielder with at least first base occupied before two are out and the ball is dead (5-1-1j).

   NOTE: In this situation the batter is not out if the infielder permits the ball to drop untouched to the ground, except when the infield-fly rule (2-19-1).

4. After hitting or bunting a ball, he "intentionally" contacts the ball with the bat a second time in fair or foul territory. The ball is dead and no runner(s) advance.

   EXCEPTION: If the bat and ball accidentally come in contact with each other a second time while the batter is holding the bat in the batter's box. It is a foul ball.

5. A third strike is caught (by the catcher) or third strike is not caught while a runner is on first base and fewer than two are out.

6. After a third strike or a fair hit; if the ball held by any fielder touches the batter before the batter touches first base; or if any fielder, while holding the ball in his grasp, touches first base, or touches first base with the ball before the batter-runner touches first base.

7. He runs outside the three-foot lines (last half of the distance from home base to first base) while the ball is being fielded or thrown there. If the runner is out of the running lane (except to avoid a fielder), and a THROW IS MADE FROM BEHIND THE RUNNER and not caught by the fielder at first base, we have interference. It does not matter if the ball slipped out of the hand, or the player making the throw had a mental block. We only have to judge whether or not the runner was in or out of the lane.
8. Any runner or retired runner interferes in a way, which obviously hinders an obvious double play.

9. With two out, on a dropped third strike, does not attempt to reach first base before all infielders leave the diamond, the half inning ends, or he gives up by entering the bench or dugout area.

10. Enters the game as an illegal substitute and is discovered.

11. Stops and retreats back and touches or passes home plate. CB 8.1.1.A

ANY RUNNER IS OUT WHEN:

1. Runs more than three feet from a direct line between bases to avoid being tagged.

   Note: When a play is being made on a runner, he establishes his baseline as directly between his position and the base toward which he is moving.

   Note: As a rule of thumb - Any runner, who goes beyond a fielder's arm reach, shall be considered out of his base path.

2. Intentionally interferes with a throw or a thrown ball, or he hinders a fielder who is attempting to field a batted ball, or his being put out is prevented by an illegal act by anyone connected with the team or by the batter-runner for a runner returning to base (8-2-6) and for a runner being hit by a batted ball (Rule 8-4-2-K). If in the "Judgment" of the umpire, a runner (including the batter-runner) interferes in any way and prevents a double play "anywhere", two shall be declared out (the interferer and the other runner involved). If a retired runner interferes and, in the judgment of the umpire, another runner could have been put out, the umpire shall declare the other runner out. If the umpire is uncertain who would have been played on, the runner closest to home shall be called out also. If the batter-runner interferes, the umpire shall call him out and the runner who has advanced the nearest to home base.

3. Is touched by a live ball securely held by a fielder or is touched by a fielder's glove or hand with the live ball therein, while the runner is not touching his base.

   Note: A batter-runner who safely touches first base and then over-slides or overruns it, except on a base on balls may return immediately to first base without liability of being tagged out.

4. Does not retouch his base before a fielder tags him out or holds the ball while touching such base after any situation (Rules 8-2-1, 2, 3 and 4). Umpire may also call him out at "end of playing action" upon proper appeal.
5. Fails to reach the next base before a fielder either tags him out or holds the ball while touching such base, after runner has been forced from the base he occupied because the batter became a runner (with ball in play) when other runners were on base. There shall be no accidental appeals on a force play.

6. When hit by a fair batted ball before it passes a fielder other than pitcher, or when a fair ball contacts him before passing through, but is not touched by an infielder other than the pitcher. (The umpire in this situation is convinced that another "infielder" had a chance to make a play on the ball had it not contacted the runner.)

**Exception:** If a runner is touching his base when he is hit by an infield fly, he is not out, but the batter is out by the infield fly rule.

7. Attempts to advance to home base when the batter interferes with a play at home base provided two are not already out.

Note: With two out, the batter is out.

8. Passes an unobstructed preceding runner before such runner is out.

9. Runs bases in reverse to confuse opponents, occurs when pitcher is in contact with pitching rubber.

10. Positions himself behind a base to get a running start.

11. When he does not slide or attempt to avoid a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag or if he "maliciously" runs into a fielder (Rule 3-3-1M) (malicious contact supersedes obstruction). Hurdling is prohibited (unless the fielder is lying on the ground or the runner hurdles over a fielder’s outstretched arm).

12. On a force play at any base (except first base) the runner or retired runner fails to execute a legal slide or if he does not slide, fails to avoid the fielder on the play. At home plate, it is permissible for the slider’s momentum to carry him through the plate in the baseline extended.

Note: If such action by the runner, the batter-runner or retired runner causes illegal contact and or illegally alters the play, interference "shall be called."

13. After at least touching first base, he leaves the baseline, obviously abandoning his effort to touch the next base.
OBSTRUCTION Rule 8-3-2:

Definition (Rule 2-22-1): Obstruction is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding the ball, impedes the progress of any runner.

Note: If a fielder is about to receive a thrown ball and if the ball is in direct flight toward and near enough to the fielder so he must occupy his position to receive the ball, he may be considered “in the act of fielding a ball.” A fielder without possession of the ball must give the runner “access” to the base or plate. Access is umpire judgment.

After a fielder has made an attempt to field a ball and “has missed” he can no longer be in the “action of fielding the ball.”

Example: If an infielder dives at a ground ball and the ball passes him and he continues to lie on the ground and delays the progress of the runner, “he very likely has obstructed the runner.”

In all cases of obstruction, the umpire calling the play should have the benefit of the advice of his partner(s). The umpire watching the obstruction will have difficulty in determining the position of other runners. It is recommended that when “time” is called on obstruction, if there is any doubt in the minds of the umpires about where the runner/runners shall be placed, the umpires “shall” confer.

Obstruction Mechanic:

NFHS rules have only “one” type of obstruction. NFHS is always a “delayed-dead-ball.” This is “pointing” and “verbal.” The following are examples of obstruction.

1. Runner is obstructed during a rundown.

2. Runner is obstructed as a fielder is making a direct throw to a base in an attempt to retire that runner.

3. Batter-runner is obstructed before first base on a ground ball to an infielder.

4. Any other examples where a play is being made directly on the runner at the moment he is obstructed.

Note: Under “other codes” this section of obstruction; i.e., runner obstructed while play is being made on him, “time” would be called, “ball is dead immediately.” Not so under NFHS Rules. These obstruction plays would be “delayed-dead-ball” calls (Rule 8-3-2).

Under NFHS Rules, regardless if a runner is obstructed while “a play is being made on
him” or “no play is being made on him,” we always will use “delayed-dead-ball mechanics.” The umpire points and calls “that's obstruction” and allows for playing action to continue, call “time” identify the infraction and make his award (8-3-2). If an award is to be made, the ball becomes dead when time is taken to make the award.

Other examples of “obstruction” that are “delayed-dead-ball”.

1. Batter-runner is obstructed rounding first base on a hit while the ball is in the outfield.
2. Runner from first steals second. F2s throw is wild and goes into centerfield; then the runner is obstructed in attempting to advance to third base. Ball is loose in the outfield when obstruction occurs.
3. Runner from second is obstructed while rounding third base on a hit to the outfield.
4. Any other example where no play is being made directly on the runner at the moment he is obstructed.
5. “Pick-offs” - “Fake tags” - “Pitch hits runner in the strike zone” (NFHS Baseball Case Book 8.3.1a) “Catcher in the baseline (no play) NFHS Baseball Case Book 8.3.2c.

Fake tags: By definition it is an act by a defensive player without the ball that “simulates a tag.” This new definition eliminates the possibility that a fielder who simply moves toward a base as if to receive an “imaginary” throw might be judged guilty of taking a tag.

Under this section and last section listed as examples of “obstruction,” when obstruction occurs. The umpire is to point directly at the obstruction while calling loudly and clearly “obstruction.” The ball is not dead; however, the umpire shall allow play to continue until all play has ceased and no further action is possible. At that moment, the umpire shall call “time” and impose such penalties, if any, that in his judgment will nullify the act of obstruction.

**Penalty:** The obstructed runner is awarded a minimum of one base beyond his position on the base when the obstruction occurred. If any preceding runner is forced to advance by the awarding of a base or bases to an obstructed runner, the umpire shall award this preceding runner the necessary base or bases. (Remember: malicious contact “supersedes” obstruction Rule 8-3-2.)

A runner obstructed while “no play” is being made. In determining what base a runner will be awarded under this section of the obstruction rule, the umpire is to consider the position of the runner, ball, and fielder at the moment the obstruction occurs. However, the decision on placing the runners shall not be made until all play has ceased and shall
be based on the principle that the obstructed runner will be entitled to the base he would have reached had no obstruction occurred.

Example: Batter-runner hits a fair ball down the right-field line and is obstructed in rounding first base. At the moment obstruction occurs, the right-fielder has not yet fielded the ball, and it appears (at that moment) that the batter-runner will end up with a stand-up double. However, as play proceeds, the ball gets by the right-fielder, and batter-runner continues on to third base. The batter-runner is thrown out at third base.

Ruling: Since it is permissible for the umpire to consider the position of the runner-ball-fielder (rule of thumb) at the moment the obstruction occurs, the umpire may initially plan on “protecting” the batter-runner as far as second base. However, as play continued, it becomes apparent that had the batter-runner not been obstructed in rounding first base, he would have reached third safely. Therefore, the moment the batter-runner is tagged out at third base, “time is called and batter-runner is awarded third on the obstruction. This decision is made on the principle that the umpire, in making awards on this type of obstruction, shall allow play to continue until no further action is possible and then shall make awards if any that will nullify, the obstruction. In this example, if the umpire felt that the obstruction had no bearing on the fact that the batter-runner was thrown out at third, then the out would stand.

Note: When the batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base, it is not always the case that the batter-runner will be awarded first base on this type of obstruction.

Example: If the batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a fly ball or line drive that is “caught,” the batter-runner is out. The reasoning here is that the obstruction had no bearing on the fact that the batter hit a fly ball that was caught by the defense. Similarly, should the batter-runner be obstructed before reaching first base on a foul ball “not caught,” the foul ball prevails. Again, the reasoning is that the obstruction had nothing to do with the fact that the batter hit a foul ball.

Situations where the batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base can generally be divided into “three cases.” Again, note that in these types of obstruction, “time” is not always called immediately and the batter-runner awarded first base.

Case #1: Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a ground ball to an infielder. It appears that the infielder will have an easy play on the ball.

Ruling: Obstruction, delayed-dead-ball - Batter-runner is awarded first base unless an overthrow happened on the play and the ball landed in dead-ball territory, then naturally an extra base would be awarded to the batter-runner.

Case #2: Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a pop-up/line-drive to an infielder.

Ruling: Call the obstruction by pointing at the action and calling “obstruction.” However, leave the ball in play. If the pop-up or line-drive is “caught,” batter-
runner is out. However, if the pop-up or line-drive is dropped and is a fair ball and if the batter-runner has not yet reached first base when the ball is dropped let the play go to it is completion, then make the award. Other runners would be awarded bases they would have reached had no obstruction occurred.

**Case #3:** Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a ball hit to outfield.

**Ruling:** Call the obstruction by pointing at the action and calling, “obstruction;” however, leave the ball in play until all action ceased. Then call “time” and impose such penalties, if any that will nullify the act of obstruction. If the fly ball is caught in this situation, the batter-runner is out. If the batted ball was a fair ball and not caught, the batter-runner will always be “protected” to at least first base.

**BATTED BALL STRIKING THE RUNNER:**
The concept of the runner being in jeopardy after the ball goes past an infielder and strikes him in a situation where another infielder still has a chance to make a play on the ball applies, “ONLY” when the ball “Passes”, the first infielder without being touched or deflected by him. This concept does “Not Apply” if the ball is touched or deflected by the first infielder, even though another infielder has a chance to make a play on the ball. The reasoning for the above concept is that a runner cannot be expected to avoid a deflected ball while he is running and should not, therefore, be in jeopardy of being called out for being struck by such a deflected ball. Of course, a runner may still be guilty of intentional interference “even” after an infielder deflects the ball if he (the runner) deliberately deflects it or allows it to strike him when he could have reasonably avoided it. The fact that the ball has been deflected by an infielder should not be taken as a license for a runner to “intentionally interfere.”

**Example 1:** Runner on second base, one out. The batter hits a ball on the ground toward the hole. The third baseman charges in on the grass to try to cut it off as the shortstop breaks deep toward the hole while runner is advancing. The ball gets past the third baseman without being touched by him and strikes the runner in the base path. The shortstop had a play on the ball.

**Ruling:** Runner from second is out and the batter runner is awarded first base. The ball passed by, but was not touched by an infielder other than the pitcher before striking the runner. However, another fielder behind the runner was deprived of an opportunity to field the ball.

**Example 2:** Same situation as above except this time the ball is deflected by the third baseman in the direction of the shortstop. The shortstop would have had a play on the ball, but the ball struck the runner, resulting in no play being possible.
**Ruling:** Runner from second is not out and the ball is alive and in play, (assuming no intentional interference by runner from second). The fact that the shortstop would have been able to have a play on the ball had it not struck the runner is disregarded because the ball was deflected by the first infielder.

Example 3: Bases loaded no outs. The infield playing in, the batter hits a sharp ground ball, which the third baseman deflects in the direction of the shortstop. Runner, from second, seeing that the shortstop definitely will have a good chance of making a play on the ball, allows it to strike him. The ball caroms into leftfield.

**Ruling:** Runner from second is guilty of intentionally interfering with a batted ball to break-up a possible double play. Runner from second is out and so is the batter-runner. Other runners return to base they acquired at the time of interference.

Example 4: Runner on second base, no one out. Batter bunts the ball down the third baseline. Pitcher and third baseman hover over the ball and let it roll down the line toward third, hoping the ball will go foul. The ball continues to roll down the line in fair territory with the pitcher and third baseman following it. The ball ends up rolling to third base, strikes the base, and then strikes the runner from second base who is now standing on third.

**Ruling:** Even though the ball has technically not passed a fielder, the ball is alive and in play because the fielders had an opportunity to field the batted ball but chose not to. The runner is “not out” in this situation.

**RUNNER MISSES HOME PLATE**

Should a runner in scoring fail to touch home plate and continue on his way to the bench, he may be put out by the fielder touching home plate and the umpire calling the runner out (end of playing action) upon proper appeal. However, this rule applies only where a runner is on his way to the bench and the catcher, would be required to chase him.

**Note #1** It does not apply to the ordinary play where the runner “misses” the plate and then immediately makes an effort to touch the plate before being tagged.

**Note #2** On a play at the plate, should the runner miss home plate and the fielder miss the tag on the runner, the umpire shall make “No Signal” on the play. As outlined in the previous paragraph, the runner must then be tagged if he attempts to return to the plate; if he continues on his way to the bench, the defense may make an appeal, or the umpire will call him out at the end of playing action. See NFHS Umpires Manual Number.
RUNNER MISSES FIRST BASE MECHANICS

Should the batter-runner fail to touch first base after beating the throw, the proper procedure for the umpire is to call the runner “Safe?”

Reason: It was not the defense that put the runner out, it was the runner himself who caused the out and that happened “during a live ball.”

BASERUNNING

Becoming a Runner:

A batter becomes a runner with the right to attempt to score by advancing to first, second, third, and home bases in the listed order when:

He hits a fair ball. He becomes a batter-runner when entitled to run (8-1-1a).

He is charged with a third strike. If third strike is caught by catcher, he is out the instant after he becomes a runner (8-1-1b).

He is awarded an intentional base on balls or a fourth ball is called by the umpire (8-1-1c).

He or his clothing is hit by a pitched ball, provided he does not strike at the ball. If he makes no effort to avoid being hit, or if the umpire calls the pitched ball a strike, the hitting of the batter is disregarded except that the ball is dead. It is a strike or ball depending on location of the pitch (8-1-1d). If a batter’s loose garment, such as a shirt, pants pocket that is not worn properly, is touched by a pitched ball, the batter is not entitled to first base (8-1-1d #2).

The catcher or any other defensive player obstructs him. The coach or captain of the team at bat, after being informed by the UIC of the obstruction, shall indicate whether or not he elects to decline the obstruction penalty and accept the resulting play. Such election shall be made: 1) before the next legal-illegal pitch, 2) before the award of an intentional base on balls, 3) before the infielders cross the foul line (catcher is considered an “infielder”). Obstruction of the batter is ignored if the batter-runner reaches first base and all other runners advance at least one base. Any advancement beyond that, the runner is on his own “peril” (8-1-1e).

Any runner attempting to advance; i.e., steal or squeeze play, on a catcher’s obstruction of the batter shall be awarded the base he is attempting. If a runner is not attempting to advance on the catcher’s obstruction, he shall not be entitled to the next base, if not forced to advance because of the batter being awarded first base. If obstruction is enforced, all other runners on the play will return to base occupied at T.O.P. The batter is awarded first base if he did not reach base. If obstruction is not enforced, all other runners advance at their own risk (8-1-1e #2).
Touching Bases:

Right to Base: A runner acquires the right to an unoccupied base when he touches it before he is out. He is then entitled to it until he is put out or forced to vacate it for another runner “legally entitled to that base.” If a runner legally acquires title to a base, and the pitcher assumes his pitching position, the runner may not return to a previously occupied base. The umpire automatically calls runner out.

A runner need not vacate his base to permit a fielder to catch a fly ball in infield, but he may not interfere (8-2-8).

If two runners are on the same base at the same time and both are tagged with the ball alive, the following runner shall be out when tagged.

Exception: On a force play situation, the runner who was forced to advance shall be declared out when tagged (8-2-8a).

Fly Ball Caught: If a fair or foul batted fly ball is caught, other than a foul tip, each base runner shall touch his base after the batted ball has “touched” a fielder (8-2-4).

Any runner is out when he does not retouch his base before a fielder tags him out or holds the ball while touching such base after a fly ball is caught. The umpire may also call him out at the end of playing action upon proper and successful appeal (8-4-2i).

Overrunning First Base: A batter-runner, who reaches first base safely and then overruns or over-slides, may immediately return without liability of being put out provided he does not attempt or feint an advance to second. A player who is awarded first base on a base on balls does not have this right (8-2-7).

Comment: A runner who touches first base in overrunning and is declared safe by the umpire has, within the intent of Rule (8-2-7) “reached first base,” and any run which scores on the play counts, even though the runner subsequently becomes the third out for failure to return “at once.”

Note: Any runner who misses first base to which he is advancing and who is later called out shall be considered as having advanced one base (8-2-3).

Runner Advancing – Runner Returning: An advancing runner shall touch first, second, third, and then home plate in order, including awarded bases (8-2-1).

A returning runner shall retouch the bases in reverse order. If the ball is dead because of an uncaught foul it is not necessary for a returning runner to retouch intervening bases.

Note: The umpire will not return a ball to the pitcher and will not make the ball live until the runner returns to the appropriate base (8-2-2).
Scoring:

A runner scores one run each time he legally advances to and touches first, second, third, and then home plate before there are three outs to end the inning (9-1-1).

A run is not scored if the runner advances to home plate during the following actions in which the third out is made:

By the batter-runner before he touches first base.

By another runner being forced out.
By a preceding runner who is declared out upon appeal because he failed to touch one of the bases or left a base too soon on a caught fly ball.

When a third out is declared during a play in which an umpire observed a base-running infraction resulting in a force-out (this takes precedence if enforcement of it would negate a score).

When there is more than one out declared by the umpire who terminates the half-inning, the defensive team may select the out which is to its advantage (9-1-1 exception).

If a fielder illegally obstructs a runner and is responsible for failure of that runner to reach home plate, the umpire shall not declare the game over until “all runners” have advanced to the next base (9-1-1 note #1).

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 runners” have advanced to the next base (9-1-1 note #2).

Note: About runs scoring on third outs - If a runner leaves a base too soon on a caught fly ball and returns in an attempt to retag, this is considered a “time play” and not a force out. If the appeal is the third out, all runs scored by runners in advance of the appealed runner and scored ahead of the legal appeal would count (8-2-6h).

An appeal may be made after the third out as long as it is made properly and the resulting appeal is an apparent fourth out (8-2-6i).

If a base-running infraction is the third out, runs scored by the following runner(s) would not count. With two outs, if the base missed was the first to which the batter or runner was forced to advance, no runs would score. When a runner is legally returning after a long fly ball has been caught, he can be put out by being tagged with the ball by a defensive player or merely by the defensive player with the ball touching the base occupied by the runner at the T.O.P. (8-2-6k).
Spectator Interference:

The umpire shall award bases or impose penalties that, in his judgment will nullify the act of spectator interference with any thrown or batted ball. The ball shall become dead at the moment of the interference (8-3-3e). It is not spectator interference if a spectator physically hinders a fielder who is reaching into a dead ball area to make a play on a batted or thrown ball.

Abandons Effort to Advance:

A runner is out when, after at least touching first base, he leaves the baseline, obviously abandoning his effort to touch the next base. Any runner, after reaching first base, who leaves the baseline heading for the dugout/bench area or defensive fielding position believing that there is no further play, shall be declared out if the umpire judges the act of the runner to be considered abandoning his efforts to run the bases (8-4-2p). A runner is out when he deliberately knocks the ball from a fielder’s hand (8-4-2r).

Runner Leaves Baseline:

Any runner is out when he runs more than three feet away from a direct line between bases to avoid being tagged or to hinder a fielder while the runner is advancing or returning to a base (8-4-2a).

This is not an infraction if a fielder attempting to field a batted ball is in the runner’s proper path and if the runner runs behind the fielder to avoid interfering with him. When a play is being made on a runner or batter-runner, he establishes his baseline as directly between his position and the base toward which he is moving (8-4-2a).

Avoiding a Fielder Fielding the Ball:

Any runner is out when he does not legally attempt to avoid a fielder in the immediate act of making a play on him (8-4-2c). Jumping, hurdling, and leaping are all legal attempts to avoid a fielder as long as the fielder is “lying on the ground,” but a runner is out when he dives over a fielder (8-4-2d). The ball remains live unless interference is called.

Interference by Runner/Retired Runner:

A runner is out when he intentionally interferes with a throw or a thrown ball; or he hinders a fielder on his initial attempt to field a batted ball (8-4-2g). If a runner interferes with a fielder who is attempting to field a “foul fly ball,” the batter is out (7-4-1f).

A fielder is not protected, except from intentional contact, if he misplays the ball and has to move from his original location (8-4-2g).
Any runner is also out when he is contacted by a fair batted ball before it touches an infielder, or after it passes any infielder, except the pitcher, and the umpire is convinced that another “infielder” had a play (8-4-2k). If a runner is touching his base when he is hit by an infield fly, he is not out, but the batter is out by the infield fly rule. If a runner is hit by an infield fly, when he is not touching his base, both he and the batter are out. The ball is dead (8-4-2k).

If, in the judgment of the umpire, a runner, including the batter-runner, interferes in any way and prevents a second out anywhere, both runners shall be declared out (the runner who interfered and the other runner involved). If the runner could have been put out, the umpire shall declare that runner out. If the umpire is uncertain who would have been played on, the runner closest to home shall be called out (8-4-2g).

The base runner is out when any runner or retired runner interferes in a way which obviously hinders an obvious second out. (8-4-1h).

Malicious Contact:

A coach, player, substitute, attendant, or other bench personnel shall not initiate malicious contact on offense or defense. The ball is dead immediately, if on “offense” the player is ejected and declared out, unless he has already scored. On a force-play slide rule with less than two outs, the runner is declared out, as well as the batter-runner. Runners shall return to the bases occupied at the T.O.P. With two outs, the runner is declared out. The batter is credited with a fielder’s choice (8-4-2b penalty).

Missed Base or Leaving Too Early:

For missing a base, a runner may return by retouching the bases in reverse order (8-2-2). Any runner who misses a base while advancing may not return to touch it after a following runner has scored (8-2-3).

When the ball becomes dead, a runner may return to a base he left too soon on a caught fly ball or that was not touched during a live ball (5-2-2b). *A runner who is on or beyond a succeeding base “when the ball became dead” or advances and touches a succeeding base “after the ball became dead,” may not return and shall be called out upon “proper and successful appeal” (5-2-2b #1).

A runner may also not return to touch a missed base or one left too soon on a caught fly ball if he has left the field of play or a following runner has scored, keeping in mind that these infractions still need “proper appeals” (8-2-6d).

A dead ball appeal play on runners leaving the base early or on runners missing the base may be made by a coach or any defensive player with or without the ball by verbally stating “the runner missed the base or left the base too early”.

49
Defense Creating Confusion:

No member of a team may be near a base for which a runner is trying so that a fielder may be confused, nor be on or near the base line in such a way as to draw a throw; nor shall the base coach or members of the team at bat fail to vacate any area needed by a fielder in his attempt to put out a batter or runner.

If a thrown live ball accidentally touches a base coach in foul territory, or a pitched or thrown ball touches an umpire, the ball is live and in play. If the coach is judged by the umpire to have interfered intentionally with the thrown ball, or interferes in fair territory, the interference penalty is invoked (3-2-3).

A runner is also out when he runs bases in reverse to confuse opponents or makes a travesty of the game (8-4-2n).

Passing a Runner: Running Start:

A runner is out when he passes an “unobstructed” preceding runner before such runner is out, including awarded bases (8-4-2m).

A runner is out when he positions himself behind a base to get a running start (8-4-2o).

*Once a runner has been declared out for passing another, the “force is removed” for all runners ahead of where the violation occurred.

This concludes the Chapter Meeting Guide for 2017.

Reminder:

The PIAA Officials Convention is Friday August 4 and Saturday August 5, 2017 and is being held at the Hilton Hotel in Harrisburg, PA.