LEGAL AND ILLEGAL SLIDES

Sliding directly toward a base VS sliding and being able to “reach” it with a hand or foot. The statements below are quoted from one of the slides in the NFHS Rules presentation and from the 2017 POINTS of EMPHASIS and have caused much confusion, especially on plays at the plate.

1. “During a force play situation, the runner does not slide on the ground and in a direct line between the two bases.”

2. “When a runner slides, he must slide within reach of the base with either hand or a foot.”

These two statements seem to contradict each other and further explanation is necessary.

**Statement 1** refers to a legal slide in a force play situation, except at home plate, where he is required to slide in the baseline established from his starting point, which is usually somewhere in foul territory near 3rd base.

**Statement 2** refers to a legal slide in a situation where there is no force play. In this case one of five things usually occur.

a. The runner slides straight into the base/plate. If the slide is legal, not malicious, does not go beyond the base resulting in contact or altering of the play, we have nothing except out or safe.

b. The runner slides away from the fielder and the base/plate and the base/plate is within reach. We have nothing.

c. The runner slides away from the fielder and the base and the base/plate is out of reach. We might have an out because he ran more than three feet away from his direct line to avoid a tag.

d. The runner slides at the fielder on the side of the base and is within reach of the base/plate. If contact is made with the fielder or the slide alters the fielder’s play, this is an illegal slide. Interference (possibly malicious contact) should be called.

e. The runner slides at the fielder on the side of the base and is not within reach of the base/plate. This is an illegal slide and should be judged as interference. If the runner makes contact with the fielder on this type of slide, malicious contact should be the ruling.
THE HYBRID PITCHING POSITION

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

♦ Wind Up Position

In a wind up position the pitcher’s PIVOT FOOT must be IN CONTACT WITH the pitching rubber and the NON-PIVOT FOOT SHALL BE ON 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. The non-pivot foot is not to be entirely in front of and not touching the front edge line.

WE must consider this an illegal pitching position and call it illegal when we see it!!

Let’s make sure our coaches understand the Wind-up and Set positions and our job will be much easier when we get on the field.

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.
2. Step backwards (not to the side) off of the rubber with his pivot foot.

WHEN IN THE WIND-UP POSITION THE PITCHER CAN NOT THROW TO A BASE. PENALTY : ILLEGAL PITCH
IDEAL FOOT POSITION – PIVOT FOOT IS BLACK

ACCEPTABLE FOOT POSITIONS

UNACCEPTABLE FOOT POSITIONS
Recently a contradiction between a statement in the Chapter Meeting Guide and statement in the Case Book, concerning the 3rd to 1st move, has been brought to our attention.

Listed under COMMON TYPES OF BALKS in the Chapter Meeting Guide is:

19. It is a balk if the pitcher, “steps toward occupied third base and then turns to throw to first base without disengaging the rubber before the move or throw to first.”

The statement above is INCORRECT as pointed out by Paul Novak of the Lycoming Chapter in District 4.

The RULING for Case Book Play 6.2.4 SITUATION C clearly states “The pitcher might, while he is on the plate, step toward occupied third and feint a throw, and then turn to step toward first and throw there with or without disengaging the pitcher’s plate. If the pitcher steps and feints to first, he must first disengage the pitcher’s plate or he is guilty of a balk.”

INTERPRETATION:

On the 3rd to 1st move, the pitcher may feint to 3rd then turn and throw to first with or without disengaging the rubber.

On the 3rd to 1st move, the pitcher may not feint to 3rd then turn and feint to 1st without disengaging the rubber before the feint.

PLAY: With runners on first and third the pitcher, in the set position:

   A. Steps directly to third base, feints a throw, spins and throws to first base, all without losing contact the rubber.

   B. Steps directly to third base, feints a throw, spins and feints towards first base, all without losing contact with the rubber.

RULING: In “A” this is a legal move, since there was a throw to first base.

In “B” this is a balk. The pitcher must disengage the rubber before feinting to first base.