2018 NFHS RULE CHANGES
The only rule change for 2018 that will affect play in 2018 is, Rule 8-2-7. Batter Overruns First Base.

A batter-runner who reached first base safety 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. This now applies to a player who is awarded first base on a base on balls as well as who has a base hit.

Rationale:
This change is easy to coach, officiate and execute as a player. All batter-runners are treated equally and consistently. In the past, the problem we had with this rule was in the situation where the hitter made a check swing on ball four, and not knowing the call, sprinted to first base and overran the bag. Under the old rule the batter-runner, could have been tagged out beyond the bag.

The Skunk in the Grass Tactic:

Situation: With speed (R3) on third base, the hitter (B1) receives ball four. B1 does not stop at first base. Instead he overruns the bag and continues to a position next to the right fielder and refuses to move. If the pitcher makes a play on B1, R3 will score. The ball is live. The game is at an impasse, neither the pitcher nor the hitter (B1) are willing to cause an action.

Possible action to be taken by the umpires:
Call time and order the batter-runner (B1) back to first base with the threat he will be called out for making a travesty of the game, or for delaying the game, neither of which is backed by a NFHS rule. Additionally, who is delaying the game? The batter-runner or the pitcher?

Recommendation: DO NOT call TIME. Just say “LET’S PLAY”. The runner in right field (causing this situation) is farther from second base, than he would be in a normal position at 1st base, and is at a self imposed disadvantage. The coach from his (the runner in right field) team will probably request “time”. Grant the time out, have your discussion, and move the runner in right field back to first base to begin play.
CLARIFICATION CASE BOOK PLAY 5.1.4 SITUATION B: B1 goes to first because (a) he is hit by a pitched ball, or (b) of ball four, or (c) he Hits a Single to the outfield and he returns to first base. After B1 has touched first base, he steps off the base and F3 tags him by use of the “hidden ball” trick. RULING: In (a), B1 is safe. The ball remains dead until held by the pitcher on his plate, B1 and F2 are in their respective boxes and the umpire then calls “Play.” In (b) and (c), B1 is out.

The rulings in this play are correct, but the wording should be changed to read: B1 goes to first because (a) he is hit by a pitched ball, or (b) of ball four, or (c) he hits a single to the outfield and he returns to first base. After B1 has touched first base, AND RETURNS, he steps off the base and F3 tags him by use of the “hidden ball” trick. RULING: In (a), B1 is safe. The ball remains dead until held by the pitcher on his plate, B1 and F2 are in their respective boxes and the umpire then calls “Play.” In (b) and (c), B1 is out.

TEAM WARNINGS FOR SECOND TIME OFFENDERS.
There has been some confusion as to the penalty for second time offenders when they commit an “unsportsmanlike act” for which their team has been given a previous warning. This statement has been drafted by the PIAA:

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 are some examples of situations that require restriction to the bench (after a warning) without an ejection because they are NOT considered to be “unsportsmanlike acts”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Using a heating device on bats (natural or artificial)</th>
<th>Carelessly throwing bat</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deliberately removing helmet (live ball)</td>
<td>Use of tobacco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal catcher’s equipment</td>
<td>Player wearing a bandana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewelry</td>
<td>On-Deck circle violation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving dugout/bench area during a live ball</td>
<td>Fake tags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unauthorized items in coach’s box</td>
<td>Hit the ball to players on defense after the game has started</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SITUATION: In the 2nd inning, first time offender, Jones of Team A enters the batter’s box wearing a necklace. RULING: The umpire should require Jones to remove the necklace and issue a written warning to Team A. This warning will require the next offender (does not have to be the same player) from team A, caught wearing jewelry, to be RESTRICTED to the bench. No ejection report is to be sent to the PIAA. The second offender is not required to sit out a game.