



# 2016-17 Rules Supplement - Baseball

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**2-32-2c:** Clarified when a base runner can slide through home plate in a straight line.

**3-2-2 PEN:** Clarified when a coach-assisted runner is declared out.

**3-3-1 PEN:** Developed a three-step process when administering disciplinary action to a player(s) or coach(es) for inappropriate behavior on the bench and in the field.

**6-2-6:** Clarified that the pitching restriction is based on number of pitches thrown.

**8-3-6:** Clarified when an umpire hinders the actions of the catcher in a defensive attempt and how baserunning awards are administered.

**8-4-2s:** A companion rule to support the above-mentioned 3-2-2 PEN modification regarding coaches' and players' conduct.

## **2016-2017 Points of Emphasis**

### **NFHS AUTHENTICATING MARK PROGRAM (AMP)**

By using conforming equipment, players, coaches and officials can rest assured that the baseballs used are designed for the age group for which playing rules are written for interscholastic competition. All such balls are required to display the NFHS Authenticating Mark. Using non-AMP balls puts players, coaches, fans and umpires at risk of injury and in consistent playability which hurts high school baseball.

### **UMPIRE ASKING ASSISTANCE FROM HIS PARTNER**

Often during contests, a coach will request that an umpire seek assistance from his partner for a particular call or play situation. Asking assistance from a partner is not mandatory. It is the discretion of the calling umpire if he feels that his view was obstructed or that his partner had a better angle on the play. If he does feel that his partner's perspective will provide additional input to his final decision, then he has the flexibility to request his partner's help. Once the opinion is shared, it is the calling umpire who will make the final determination on the call or play. This entire exchange will be quick and intentional using umpire signals that are relayed to players, coaches and spectators.

### **LOCATION OF TEAM PERSONNEL**

Coaches, players, substitutes, attendants or other bench 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 or to make "cat-calls" or any other disparaging remarks while the other team is taking infield practice. This is unsportsmanlike behavior and shall not be tolerated. It is these game situations that provide coaches and umpires excellent "teachable moments" to reinforce proper behavior and perspective.

### **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" 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 then 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 his play, 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 a foot. The consequence is that the runner is called out and based upon his actions there could be malicious which causes the player to be ejected. Attention to legal slides will improve the overall process of baserunning, and reduce unnecessary injuries to the runner and the covering fielder.

### **PITCH COUNT POLICY**

All states must now have a pitch count policy. The actual policy will be available through the Baseball online rules meeting or can be accessed on the baseball activity page of the MSHSL website, if you are interested. Umpires are not directly involved in the enforcement of this policy. Coaches are responsible for keeping track of pitches and comparing numbers with their opponents after every half inning. Final numbers will be entered on the MSHSL web site where the pitch counts for each individual pitcher will be tracked for the entire season.

As mentioned, umpires are not involved in the enforcement of these policies. However, if you become aware that a pitcher is approaching their pitch count limit, use preventative officiating techniques to warn the coach, so that you can help them avoid violations of this policy. If you become aware that the pitch count rule was violated, please file an incident report with the League office.