

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



NEWS RELEASE

Baseball Rules Committee Addresses Batter Interference with Catcher

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elliot Hopkins

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (July 2, 2013) — Changes to high school baseball rules will include an additional example of how a batter can interfere with the catcher's ability to field or throw.

This year's rules changes were approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Baseball Rules Committee at its June 2-4 meeting in Indianapolis. The rules changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

"The committee felt that the game is in a very good state," said Elliot Hopkins, NFHS director of sports and educational services and staff liaison for baseball.

The committee voted to add "including backswing interference" to Rule 7-3-5c to address that specific type of batter interference. The rule now reads, "A batter shall not interfere with the catcher's fielding or throwing by making any other movement, including backswing interference, which hinders action at home plate or the catcher's attempt to play on a runner.

The committee also revised Rule 6-1-3 to state that the pitcher's entire pivot foot must be in contact with or directly in front of and **parallel** to the pitcher's plate.

The committee also established several points of emphasis for the 2014 season, including malicious contact, coaching attire and umpire authority and enforcement.

“These are topics that I get calls and e-mails about during the course of a season,” Hopkins said. “I share those with the committee and if they are seeing the same types of problems, then the red flag goes up.”

Contact or a collision is considered to be malicious if:

1. The contact is the result of intentional excessive force;
2. The contact occurs close to the bag or home plate or above the waist of the receiving player; or
3. There was intent to injure.

Malicious contact can occur without these conditions if determined by the umpire, but these provide a starting point.

Even with cutbacks for uniform funds, coaches should still be dressed in a similar fashion to the players as a means of helping umpires recognize members of the coaching staff.

The final point of emphasis deals with umpires’ authority. The committee noted that coaches must set the example of appropriate behavior so the team and its fans can follow.

Disputing the umpire’s calls, failing to comply with an umpire’s command, exaggerating the time for offensive conferences, gamesmanship and challenging the umpire’s authority cannot be tolerated, the committee stated.

“We want coaches to be role models for civility,” Hopkins said. “The umpire has to make a final decision and the coach has to handle it with class and character.”

Baseball is the fourth-most popular sport for boys at the high school level, according to the 2011-12 NFHS Athletics Participation Survey, with 474,219 participants nationwide. The sport ranks third in school sponsorship with 15,838 schools offering the sport.

This press release was written by Jason Haddix, a 2013 spring/summer intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. He is a senior at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis studying journalism and medical imaging.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.6 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.

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