



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

NEWS RELEASE

Adjustment Made to Pre-Pitch Sequence in High School Baseball

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elliot Hopkins

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (July 9, 2021) — High school baseball pitchers who do not receive signals from the catcher must now simulate taking a sign with one foot on the pitcher’s plate before proceeding with a pitch.

This addendum to Rule 6-1-1 was the lone rule change forwarded by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Baseball Rules Committee and was subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors. The baseball committee’s annual rules meeting was held June 6-8 in a virtual format.

A pitcher leaning forward to receive a sign from the catcher is fundamental to the pre-pitch phase of the game as it indicates to both the batter and the players in the field that the ball is about to be put in play and is the typical signal for any runners on base to begin taking their leadoffs.

Further, most high school baseball coaches deliver their defensive play calls – including pitch selections – from the dugout, which allows a pitcher to throw toward the plate abruptly (“quick-pitch”) and catch opposing batters by surprise. This new mandate within Rule 6-1-1 forces the pitcher to pause, providing ample time for all participants to prepare for the pitch.

“While this rule change might appear to be a small change, the significance of what it represents is huge!” said Elliot Hopkins, NFHS director of sports and student services and liaison to the NFHS Baseball Rules Committee. “We have been extremely fortunate that our Baseball Rules

Committee recognizes that the high school game is in wonderful shape and that is because our coaches and umpires around the country teach the necessary skills and arbitrate the appropriate rules to make the game fun, exciting and educational.”

The NFHS Baseball Rules Committee also spent part of its rules meeting compiling its Points of Emphasis (POEs) for next season. The five POEs, which prioritized healthy and safety and sportsmanship during the 2022 season, are as follows:

- 1.) Monitoring Excessive Celebration
- 2.) Wearing Equipment as Intended by Manufacturers
- 3.) Safety of Coaches Sitting on Buckets Outside Bench/Dugout Area
- 4.) Umpiring Procedure for Lodged Ball
- 5.) Sportsmanship

“Points of Emphasis are used in an educational setting and fashion,” Hopkins said. “The rules committee is telling the baseball community that these topics – elaborately choreographed celebrations, wearing of equipment inappropriately, sitting on buckets, understanding the lodged ball and a call for increased positive sportsmanship – are paramount in education-based athletics. This is a wonderful game that allows an abundant number of participants to find a role on the team, and we want students to want to play for their school and be a part of something bigger than themselves.”

A complete listing of the baseball rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Activities & Sports” at the top of the home page and select “Baseball.”

According to the most recent NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, baseball is the fourth-most popular sport for boys with 482,740 student-athletes in 16,170 high schools nationwide. The survey also indicated that 1,284 girls across the country play high school baseball.

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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 19,500 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 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 website at www.nfhs.org.

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