

2023 S.M.B.U.A. INTERPRETER'S CLINIC

Presented by

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Sunday, February 12th

CLINIC AGENDA

- 1) NFHS Rule Changes
- 2) NFHS Points of Emphasis
- 3) Plays & Situations
- 4) Mechanics Review
- 5) Questions & Other Areas For Discussion

RULES CHANGES – CATCHER'S HELMET

1-5-4: Change:

ART. 4 . . . The catcher's helmet and mask combination shall meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture. Eye shields shall not be attached to the catcher's mask after manufacture. Eye shields that are attached to the catcher's mask at the time of manufacture will be constructed of a molded rigid material and be clear without the presence of any tint. Tinted eyewear worn on the face and under the face mask is permitted. Any helmet or helmet and mask combination...and a protective cup (male only). (1-5-9)

RULES CHANGES – CATCHER'S HELMET

Rationale: There has been an increase of catchers attaching aftermarket eye shields to their face masks that are tinted and not approved by the face mask manufacturer. Attaching a product that was not manufactured for the specific face mask is a risk to the wearer. The tinted eye shield is problematic because it would prevent a medical professional from accessing the eyes of the catcher to determine their condition.

RULES CHANGES – CATCHER'S HELMET



RULES CHANGES - JEWELRY

1-5-12: Change:

~~ART. 12 . . . Jewelry shall not be worn be permitted (3-3-1d) except for including religious and medical medals. Any jewelry that poses harm or injury to the wearer or the opponent shall be immediately removed.~~

~~(1-5-9) A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical alert must be taped and may be visible.~~

Rationale: Any jewelry worn that poses harm or injury to the player or their opponent is covered in existing rules.



RULES CHANGES – BANDANNAS

3-3-1d: Change:

ART. 1 . . . A coach, player, substitute, attendant or other bench personnel shall not:

sub-articles a-e remain the same.

d. ~~wear jewelry (players participating in the game)~~
or wear bandannas;

Rationale: This is a companion rule change with the deletion of Rule 1-5-12. If jewelry is worn that poses harm to the player or their opponent, there is existing rules support to handle the situation. Bandannas are still prohibited.



RULES CHANGES – LODGED BALL

2-4-4 (New): Change: Note: Add Lodged Ball to Section

ART. 4 . . . A baseball that remains on the playing field but has become wedged, stuck, lost, or unreachable, is defined to be a lodged ball. If the ball impacts any object in the course of play, stops abruptly, and does not fall or roll immediately, it is considered lodged. It is a dead ball (5-1-1f-3,4; 5-1-1g-4). Exception: if a ball becomes stuck in the webbing of the fielder's glove, it remains in play. The glove/ball combination is treated as a live ball.

Rationale: A definition of a lodged ball was necessary and appropriate to differentiate when it is stuck on the field or in an apparatus, compared to when it is stuck in a glove.



RULES CHANGES – PITCHING REGULATIONS

6-1: Change:

ART. 1 . . .The pitcher shall pitch while facing the batter from either a windup (Art.2) or a set position (Art. 3). The position of the pitcher's feet determine whether ~~his~~ the pitcher will pitch from the windup or the set position. The pitcher He shall take or simulate taking the sign from the catcher with the ~~his~~ pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate. The pitcher will be considered to be in the set position when the pivot foot is in contact with or directly in front of and parallel to the pitcher's plate. The pitcher will be considered to be in the windup position when the pivot foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate and is not parallel to it.

RULES CHANGES – PITCHING REGULATIONS

ART. 2 . . . For the wind-up position, the pitcher is not restricted as to how they shall hold the ball. A pitcher assumes the windup position when the ~~his~~ hands are: (a) together in front of the body; (b) both hands are at the ~~his~~ side; (c) either hand is in front of the body and the other hand is at the ~~his~~ side. ~~The pitcher's non-pivot foot shall be in any position on or behind a line extending through the front edge of the pitcher's plate.~~ The pitcher is limited...lift either foot.

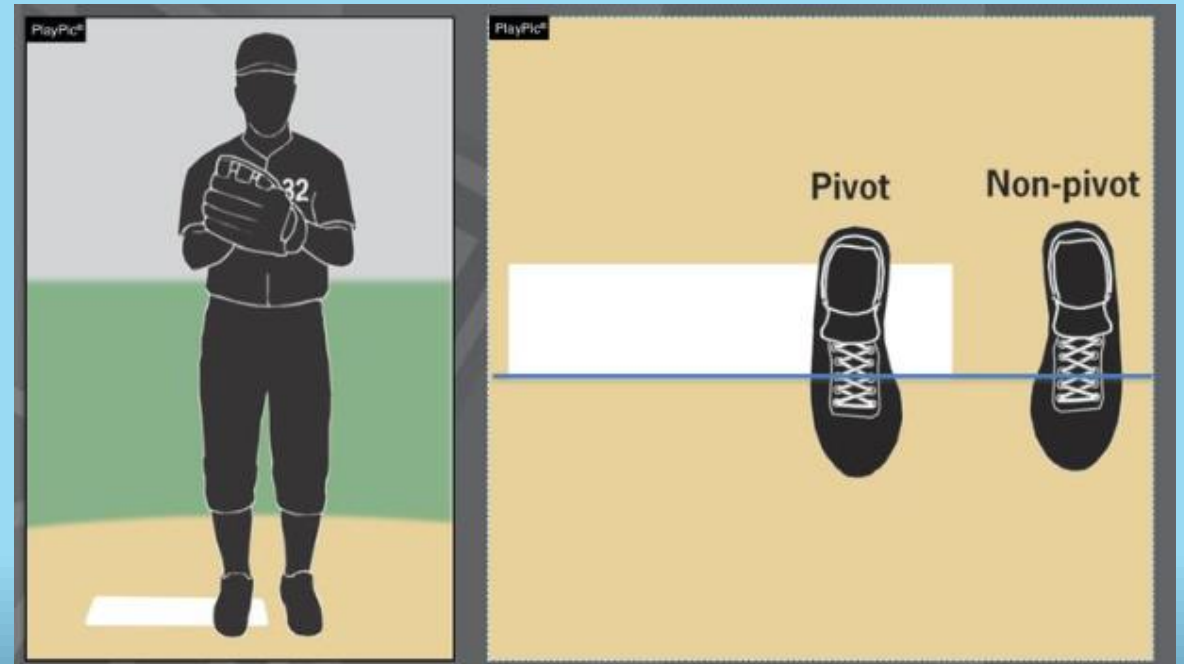
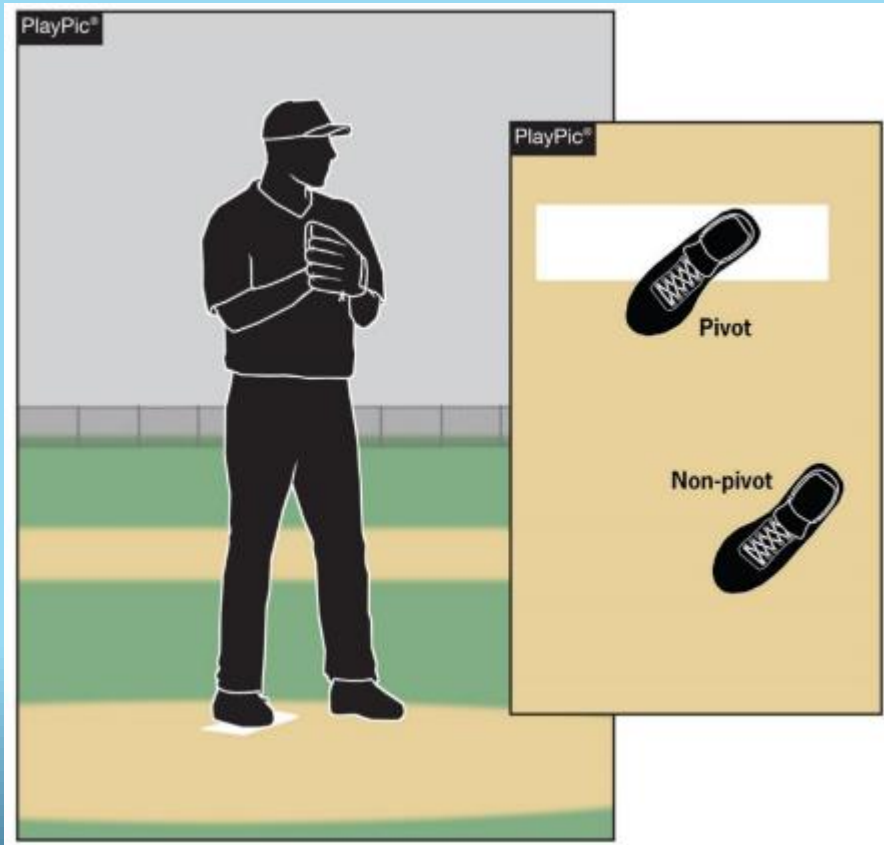
RULES CHANGES – PITCHING REGULATIONS

ART. 3 . . . For the set position, the pitcher shall have the ball in either the ~~his~~ gloved hand or the ~~his~~ pitching hand. The pitcher's ~~His~~ hand shall be down at the ~~his~~ side or behind ~~the~~ his back. Before starting the delivery, the pitcher shall stand with the pivot foot in contact with or directly in front of and parallel to the pitcher's plate. ~~Before starting his delivery, he shall stand with his entire non-pivot foot in contact with or directly in front of and parallel to the pitcher's plate.~~ The pitcher ~~He~~ shall go...any other fielder.

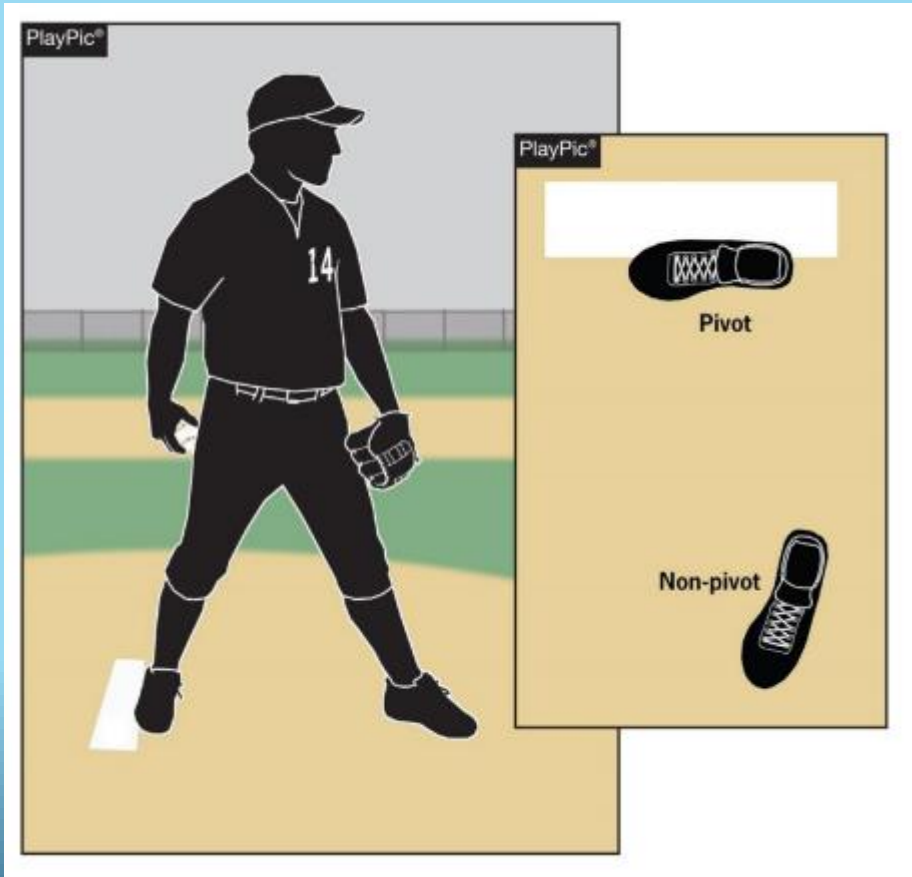
RULES CHANGES – PITCHING REGULATIONS

Rationale: In reference to the high school pitching rule, the position of both the pivot and non-pivot foot was the determining factor to deem if a pitcher was pitching from the windup position or the set position. The game has evolved throughout high school baseball for the pitcher to pitch with the pivot foot in a windup description with the non-pivot foot in a set description. This "hybrid" position was previously illegal by NFHS rule. What is important is that umpires, coaches, and players know what position the pitcher is using so they know which part of Rule 6 is in play. Deleting the use of the non-pivot foot does no damage to the existing pitching position rule and having only the pivot foot determine makes it clean and easily discernible for all involved.

LEGAL WINDUP



LEGAL SET POSITION



RULES CHANGES – PITCHING REGULATIONS

Additional notes and reminders:

- The position of the pitcher's feet determine if the pitcher is in the set or wind up position.
 - In the set position, once the pitcher lifts their non-pivot foot to begin their motion committing to pitch, they must do so with one step towards the plate.
 - The pitcher cannot take a side or back step from the set in the same manner a pitcher can in the windup. Violation of this rule would be a balk or illegal pitch, based on location of runners.
- In both positions, the pitcher must pause to take a sign or simulate taking a sign prior to beginning their motion committing to pitch (2022 rule change).



UMPIRE SIGNAL CHANGES

NFHS Official Baseball Signals

A: PRE-PITCH SIGNALS - 8 signals to demonstrate situations & their explanations

B: DURING PLAY & RESULTS - 8 signals to demonstrate calls

Rationale: Updating signals to further enhance umpire mechanics and communication between officials, coaches, players and fans.




UMPIRE SIGNAL CHANGES


OFFICIAL NFHS BASEBALL SIGNALS

A. Pre-pitch Situational Signals


PlayPic®




1. Play **Right hand point to pitcher "Play." Ball is live.**




2. Do Not Pitch **Right palm facing out. Ball is dead.**




3. Infield Fly Situation **Right hand bill of cap with index finger.**




4. Double Tag Rotation **PU covers 3rd on double tag.**



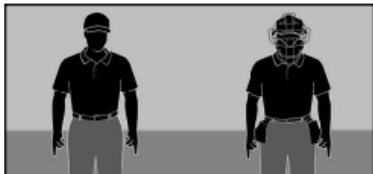
5. Count **Left hand indicates balls and right hand strikes. Verbal count given.**



6. Time Play **With 2 out potential run score 2 fingers on left wrist.**




7. Rotation **Thumbs and pinkie fingers extended. Arm down by side. Rotate hand.**




8. Stay Home **Both arms with index finger straight down for base umpire and umpire-in-chief.**

B. During Play and Results


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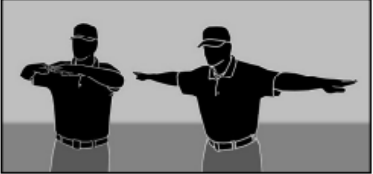
1. Strike **Verbal only without swing.**




2. Foul Ball, Time Out, Dead Ball




3. Foul Tip **Right hand pass over left hand. Strike call. Live ball.**




4. Safe, Uncaught 3rd Strike, "Did Not Go" **Arms extended in front and swing open.**




5. Out **Right arm up with fist hammering motion. "He's out."**



6. Infield Fly **Point up with index finger. Verbal on way down "If fair."**



7. Fair Ball **Point only. No verbal.**



8. Information **Tap chest. Has relevant information for partner.**

PlayPics courtesy of REFEREE (www.referee.com)

Maine will be keeping our current mechanic of pointing the number of outs at the base we're covering.



7. Rotation **Thumbs and pinkie fingers extended. Arm down by side. Rotate hand.**

Maine will also maintain the standard of signaling no outs or one out when communicating the infield fly rule pre-pitch as a crew.



3. Infield Fly Situation **Right hand bill of cap with index finger.**

POINTS OF EMPHASIS - SPORTSMANSHIP

- **Sportsmanship**
- Sportsmanship continues to be a concern, and has been noted as the #1 POE for NFHS.
- Officials should strive to have positive, constructive relationships with coaches, players and other team personnel.
 - If coaches do not uphold their responsibilities, use the “warn, restrict, eject” process for dealing with unsporting behavior.
 - Do not hesitate to provide official warnings for bench/team personnel behavior (bench jockeying or use of props).
- Umpires should never engage with spectators who are exhibiting unsporting behavior. Once the contest begins, school administration is responsible for dealing with unruly spectators.



POINTS OF EMPHASIS – OBSTRUCTION & INTERFERENCE

- **Obstruction is any act accidental, intentional, verbal, or physical that a fielder or any member of the defensive team (or team personnel) that hinders a runner or affects the pattern of play.**
 - Besides affecting scoring plays, obstruction can occur anywhere on the field resulting in some unsportsmanlike behaviors. That is why the penalties for obstruction are some of the sternest penalties in our rules code.
- **Interference is very similar to obstruction; it addresses the behavior of the offensive team. It is any act, verbal or physical by the team at bat that impedes, hinders or confuses any defensive fielder attempting to make a play.**
 - There are several other types of interference: spectator, umpire, follow-through and backswing.
 - Umpire interference is when the umpire-in-chief accidentally moves in the way of the catcher's attempt to throw or when a live ball or thrown ball touches the umpire.
 - Spectator interference is when a spectator for either team impedes the progress of the game in any way.
 - Follow-through interference is when the bat of the batter in the batter's box hinders action at home plate or when the catcher is attempting to make a play on a runner.
 - Backswing interference is when the batter contacts the catcher or the catcher's equipment prior to the pitch.
- As one might realize, there are many nuances to both obstruction and the multi-layers of interference. **Coaches, umpires and players have a role in understanding the rules of two extremely powerful rules.** Because both violations are sportsmanship-centered at their core, the penalties are commensurate to the overarching concern regarding fair and equitable play in interscholastic baseball.



POINTS OF EMPHASIS - JEWELRY

- Jewelry in baseball was originally defined as any item on the body of the player that was not a natural part of the person. That also included medical-alert bracelets and some religious, cultural or tribal adornments. **The elimination of the jewelry rule will permit players to wear these items freely.**
- Additionally, with that freedom to wear jewelry, please note that **any jewelry that contains profanity, taunting, language to intimidate or baiting an opponent would not be allowed under our sportsmanship rule,** bench and field conduct policies.
- Besides those examples, there is existing rule coverage that gives guidance on any player equipment that presents a danger to the player, teammate or opponent.



POINTS OF EMPHASIS – EYE BLACK USAGE

- Eye black has been a staple in the sport of baseball since the 1930s. Originally, the first introduction of eye black was to help players reduce glare from the sun. It has evolved to a less messy version as a plastic sticker placed under the eye socket that does not run when wet from perspiration or soils the uniform.
- The grease version of eye black is now being used as a face decoration. **Images and/or sayings are being drawn on the faces of the players to try to intimidate and/or taunt an opponent. There are existing sportsmanship rules available to mitigate any use of eye black (in any version) in an inappropriate or unfavorable way.**
- We are hopeful that coaches direct their players to use this convenient tool in a more productive way.



PLAYS & SITUATIONS

- **Snow Fencing – Rulings & Mechanics**
- **Runner stealing 3rd base**
 - Responsibilities of the batter in the box
 - Responsibilities of the catcher
- **Base runner running on contact**
 - Running on hit vs. ground ball vs. pop up
 - Who has priority; the fielder or the runner?
- **Base runner being pushed off a base**
 - Intentional versus unintentional
- **Managing unsportsmanlike conduct**
 - Taunting opponents and related actions (bat flips)
 - Use of props by a team or dugout
- **Running lane interference**
 - Runner and fielder responsibilities
 - Rule application with throw vs. no throw



MECHANICS POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- **Communication with Head Coach**
 - Head coaches with a question or concern are still meeting at the 45' mark of the baseline. This mechanic from the pandemic has become permanent in Maine.
 - They are also still prohibited from the dirt circle at the plate, with the exception of the pre-game meeting with the umpire crew and captains.
- **Review of specific base umpire responsibilities**
 - Basic mechanics for play at 1B
 - Mechanics for routine double play (Out at 2B then throw to 1B)
 - R2 on 2B, first play at 1B, with a subsequent play at 3B
 - Fly ball coverage
 - Pre pitch communication with partner
- **Review of the plate umpire's responsibilities on a ground ball to the infield**
 - Rotation and base coverage situations
 - Pre pitch communication with partner
 - Running lane responsibilities



HAVE A GREAT SEASON!



Thank you for all you do in support of baseball and umpiring in Maine. Enjoy the season and time with friends and colleagues.