



# 2023 NFHS BASEBALL RULES INTERPRETATIONS

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**SITUATION 1:** The catcher has purchased a new hockey-style catcher's helmet. The helmet (a) was purchased with a tinted, attached eye shield, or (b) the catcher later purchased a clear eye shield and had it installed. **RULING:** In both (a) and (b), the helmet is not legal for use. Eye shields attached after manufacture are not permitted. Legal eye shields, attached at the time of manufacture, must be clear without the presence of any tint. (1-5-4)

**SITUATION 2:** The catcher is wearing a pair of sunglasses underneath the face mask. **RULING:** This is legal. A catcher may wear tinted eyewear on the face and under the face mask. (1-5-4)

**SITUATION 3:** The pitcher is wearing a gold cross that dangles from a chain around the neck. With the sun's position, there is a glare from the cross into the home plate area. **RULING:** All players may wear jewelry while on the bench and/or while participating in the game. If the wearing of jewelry is judged by the plate umpire to be distracting to the batter, the plate umpire may direct the pitcher (or any other fielder) to remove the jewelry until conditions are such that the jewelry is no longer distracting to the batter. (6-2-1f PENALTY)

**SITUATION 4:** The shortstop is wearing a bracelet that has jagged points on it. The base umpire notices the bracelet and requires the shortstop to remove it. **RULING:** While jewelry may be worn by all players, it cannot be the type that may cause harm or injury to the wearer, teammates or opponents. If the umpire judges the bracelet to be dangerous, it must be removed. (1-5-9)

**SITUATION 5:** The second baseman had bracelets made for all teammates that has a derogatory, taunting word aimed at the opponents. **RULING:** The umpires shall require that the bracelets be removed. Unsporting actions that reflect unfavorably upon the other team cannot be allowed. (3-3-1f2)

**SITUATION 6:** The pitcher takes a position with the pivot foot in contact with the pitching plate, and not parallel to it, and the non-pivot foot clearly in front of the front edge of the pitcher's plate. The head coach of the offensive team complains that this is an illegal pitching position and must be penalized. **RULING:** The pitching position from which a pitcher is pitching is determined by the position of the pivot foot only. Where the non-pivot foot is placed no longer is a determining factor for the pitching position. With the pivot foot in contact but not parallel to the pitcher's plate, the pitcher is in a legal windup position. (6-1-1)

**SITUATION 7:** With R3 on third base, the pitcher assumes a legal windup position with the pivot foot in contact but not parallel to the pitching plate. As the pitching movement begins, the pitcher rotates the pivot foot such that it is still in contact with and now parallel to the front of the pitcher's plate. The pitcher now steps to and gains ground as a pick-off is made to occupied third base. The offensive head coach complains that this is a balk while the defensive head coach asserts that since only the pivot foot determines the pitching position, all the pitcher did was change from the windup to the set position. **RULING:** The pitcher has committed a balk. To change from the windup position, the pitcher must first step backward off the pitcher's plate, which must be in or partially within the length of the pitcher's plate. (6-1-2, 6-1-3)

**SITUATION 8:** The pitcher takes a position on the pitcher's plate such that the umpire is in doubt if the pivot foot is simply in contact with the pitching plate or in contact and parallel to the pitching plate. What should the umpire determine? **RULING:** To be in the set position, the pitcher must have his pivot foot in contact with or directly in front of and parallel to the pitcher's plate. If the pivot foot is in contact with but not distinctly parallel to the pitcher's plate, then the pitcher is judged to be in the windup position. (6-1-1, 6-1-2, 6-1-3)

**SITUATION 9:** A group of spectators, as well as some of the opposing players, have been taunting the plate umpire on the strike zone being called. What shall the umpire do? **RULING:** Umpires have jurisdiction over the field of play while game administration is to handle issues in the stands or situations involving spectators. If there is an issue outside the confines of the field that must be addressed, the umpires should halt the game and request game administration to handle the issue. If game administration is not present or unable to remedy the situation, the game should be suspended. (10-2-3h)

**SITUATION 10:** The batter, with a runner on second base and no outs, swings and misses at strike three. The pitch gets by the catcher and goes into a dead-ball area. **RULING:** Award one base to all runners, including the batter-runner. The batter became a batter-runner upon the third strike. (8-1-1b, 8-3-3d)

**SITUATION 11:** The batter hits a fly ball to deep right field, which the batter believes is caught and turns and heads to the dugout. Halfway to the dugout, bench personnel get the batter-runner to realize the ball is in play and the batter-runner begins to advance. The defensive head coach tells the umpires that the batter-runner should be declared out since the batter-runner "abandoned" the effort to advance. **RULING:** The batter-runner has not abandoned the effort and may begin to advance. As on a dropped third strike, the batter-runner is not considered to have abandoned the effort until the batter-runner enters the bench or dugout area. (8-4-1i)

**SITUATION 12:** The batter is hit by a pitch on the sliding gloves that are tucked in the back pocket. Is the batter awarded first base or does the batter continue the at-bat? **RULING:** A batter is to be awarded first base when a pitched ball hits the batter or the batter's clothing, provided the batter did not strike at the ball or permitted the ball to hit oneself. A player, and one's body, includes the helmet, uniform, shoes, protective gear, etc., when worn correctly and normally. (The person of a player does not include jewelry). When the pitched ball makes contact with sliding gloves in the back pocket, the ball is dead, and the batter is awarded first base. The umpire may instruct the batter to remove the sliding gloves from the pocket when at-bat. (8-1-1d)

**SITUATION 13:** With a runner in third and first, there is one out. The batter hits a double on which R3 easily scores. R1 misses second on his way to third base. The batter-runner touches first and second, but is tagged as the runner attempts to return to second base. The defense now legally appeals R1's miss of second base. **RULING:** R1 was forced at the time he missed the base so the appeal out is a force out. The out by the batter-runner after touching first and second does not remove the force on R1. The inning is over and R3 does not score. (2-29-3; 9-1-1b)

**SITUATION #14:** A runner is on third base with no outs. The third baseman is playing behind third base at a normal depth. The batted ball contacts the third base and rebounds toward home plate on (a) foul ground, or (b) fair ground, where it contacts R3 between third base and home plate. **RULING:** The batted ball becomes a fair ball when it hits the base. In (a), unless R3 moved so that

R3 would be hit, the contact is simply contact and the play continues. In (b), when R3 is contacted by the batted ball rebounding from the base over fair ground, R3 is out and the ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base. (8-4-2k, 5-1-1f1)

**SITUATION 15:** The batter hits a deep fly ball near the center-field fence. The center fielder, with the ball in the glove, stumbles while running, trying not to lose balance. In so doing, the center-fielder's knee contacts the glove, popping the ball out of the glove and over the fence. **RULING:** This is a home run. The fielder had yet to have complete control/voluntary release and the ball remained "airborne." (2-9-1a, 8-3-3a)

**SITUATION 16:** The bases are loaded with no outs. It is the bottom of the seventh and the home team trails by one run. B4's bat clips the catcher's glove as B4 swings, but F2 does catch the pitch. B4's follow-through causes B4 to fall across the plate and interfere with F2's attempt to retire R1 who was stealing on the pitch. As R1 is successfully tagged out, R2 and R3 attempt a delayed steal of home and third. F6 now attempts to throw to third base to put out R2, but the throw is wild and goes into the third-base dugout. The defensive head coach argues that due to B4's interference, R1 is out and the ball then becomes dead, so all runners return to their bases. The offensive head coach thinks there is an option on the play. **RULING:** The plate umpire should declare obstruction on the catcher and let the play happen. When R1 is successfully tagged out, this out negates B4's interference, so it is nullified. B4 and R1 as well did not advance a base, so penalty enforcement would result in B4 being awarded first base and the other runners advance one base. So, one run in, still no outs and bases remain loaded. If the offensive coach takes the result of the play, both runs score and the game is over. (8-1-1e, 7-3-5c PENALTY)

**SITUATION 17:** With bases loaded and no outs, the batter hits a fly ball that will come down along the third-base line between third base and home plate. The plate umpire signals "Infield fly if fair!" As R3 attempts to return to third base, R3 interferes with the third baseman. The ball is (a) caught over foul territory, (b) not caught and lands foul, (c) caught over fair ground or (d) is not caught and lands fair. **RULING:** Although there is interference by R3, the umpire must see what happens to

B4, which is determined by whether the ball ends up fair or foul. In all four instances, R3 is out. In (a) and (b), B4 goes back to bat with a strike added to the count. It was not an infield fly since the ball was foul. R2 and R1 remain on second and first bases, respectively, with one out. In (c) and (d), B4 is out on the infield fly as the infield fly occurred before the interference. R2 and R1 return to their respective bases with two outs. (2-19, 8-4-2g)

**SITUATION 18:** With one out and R2 on second base, the batter hits a high fly ball near second base. F6 camps under the fly ball when R2, attempting to return to second base, makes contact with F6 prior to F6 making the catch. **RULING:** R2 is out for the interference and B4 is awarded first base. If R2 had intentionally interfered to prevent a double play, then R2 and B4 would be declared out. (8-4-2g)

**SITUATION 19:** With the bases loaded and (a) less than two outs, (b) two outs, B4 bunts the pitch towards the mound. F1 fields the bunt and tosses the ball home to F2 after R3 safely touches home. F2 then throws to first base, but the ball hits B4 running outside the running lane to the side the throw was being made. **RULING:** In (a), B4 is out for interference in being out of the running lane, the ball becomes dead at that instance and runners attain bases touched at time of interference. Since R3 scored before the throw from F2 to F3 was made, the run will score. In (b), B4 is out for interference in being out of the running lane, and since the third out is a force out no runs will score. (5-1-1e, 8-4-1g, 9-1-1 EXCEPTIONa)

**SITUATION 20:** R1 is on first base with a ground ball to the shortstop. The infield attempts a double play as R1 legally slides into second base as the base itself is detached and slides 5 feet away from its original position. The throw goes to first but is overthrown and hits a fence, staying in play. B2 advances to second base, touches the ground where the base should be and continues to advance to third base. The defense appeals, stating that B2 is out for missing second base. **RULING:** The part of the ground where the base was located shall serve as the base. It is umpire judgment as to whether B2 touched where the base was located or not. If B4 is judged to have touched the area, the appeal is denied. (8-4-2h1)