

## 2012 National Federation Rule Changes

### High School Baseball Rules Changes Emphasize Responsibility of Coaches

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (July 6, 2011) — At its June 5-7 meeting in Indianapolis, the committee also took steps to define a new tamper-evident protocol for non-wood bats. All changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors. Prior to the start of each game, each head coach must now verify to the umpire in-chief that all participants are legally equipped and equipment is in accordance with NFHS rules. Such rules include “compliant bats that are unaltered from the manufacturer’s original design and production and helmets that are free of cracks and damage.”

Another rule was added to address unsportsmanlike conduct toward umpires after a game has ended and after the umpires have departed the game site. It calls for state associations to determine appropriate action when dealing with these situations.

In addition, umpires no longer will be required to perform pregame equipment checks, as that responsibility will fall to coaches beginning next year. Coaches can still ask umpires at the pregame conference to confirm that equipment is compliant.

“The committee is placing a great importance on increased coach responsibility,” said Elliot Hopkins, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the Baseball Rules Committee. “It is one of our top priorities.”

Prior to the June 2012 meeting of the Baseball Rules Committee, the NFHS will work with appropriate parties to research and develop a baseball bat tamper-evident protocol for non-wood bats and present the recommendations to the committee for its consideration. The goal for implementation is for non-wood bats manufactured after January 1, 2015.

“Bat tampering is illegal and a major problem in high schools,” Hopkins said. “Everyone is looking for a competitive edge. With this note, we want to make sure that the state associations, coaches, teams and the public are aware that we are committed to minimizing any risk for players with bat tampering.”

In addition, a minor change to Rule 1-3-5 states that “No artificial or intentional means shall be used to control the temperature of the bat,” based on scientific research that altering the bat damages the bat and poses an unnecessary risk of injury.

Changes to Rules 1-5-8 and 3-1-6 deal with players’ equipment on the field. State associations may now authorize exceptions to NFHS rules to provide “reasonable accommodations to individual participants with disabilities and/or special needs and unique and extenuating circumstances,” so long as they do not fundamentally interfere with the sport. Players and coaches must also clean or remove “any” (formerly “excessive”) amount of blood from a uniform or piece of equipment before being allowed back into the game.

Other rules changes approved by the committee include:

- Rule 6-2-2c Note: The starting pitcher may warm up by using no more than eight throws, completed in one minute (timed from the first throw). This rule applies to relief pitchers as well. At the beginning of each subsequent inning, the pitcher may warm up with no more than five throws, completed in one minute.
- Rule 10-1-2: The game officials retain clerical authority over the contest through the completion of any reports, including those imposing disqualification, that are responsive to actions occurring while the umpires had jurisdiction. State associations may intercede in the event of unusual incidents after the umpires’ jurisdiction has ended or in the event that a game is terminated prior to the conclusion of regulation play.
- Suggested Double First Base Rules: Runner should use the colored base on initial play at first base (dropped third strike only), unless the fielder is drawn to the side of the colored base, in which case the runner would go to the white base and the fielder to the colored base.