

2009 Baseball Rules Changes

1-2-2 Change: All non-permanent lines on the playing field shall be marked white with a material not injurious to the eyes or skin. Lime or caustic material of any kind is prohibited.

Rationale: Clarification for proper lining instructions for grass and turf fields.

6-2-3 Change: Intentionally pitch close to a batter.

Rationale: To reinforce the responsibility of the pitcher while he has engaged the pitcher's plate.

7-3-4 Penalty Change: Penalty: The batter remains at bat (pitch is a ball or strike) unless the pitch was a third strike or ball four.

Rationale: Clarification.

10-1-9 and Umpires' Manual

Delete: ... word "heather" gray

Rationale: Heather gray slacks are slowing becoming difficult to acquire.

Equipment dealers are transitioning into charcoal gray slacks. This rule change will provide umpires the opportunity to purchase any shade of dark shade and be in compliance.

Revisions Made to Four Baseball Rules

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elliot Hopkins

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (June 30, 2008) - The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Baseball Rules Committee adjusted four rules at its annual meeting June 8-10 in Indianapolis. The rules changes subsequently were approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

A revision was made to Rule 6-2-3 regarding infractions by a pitcher. The rule states it is illegal for a pitcher to intentionally pitch close to a batter, replacing the prior phrasing of to "throw" close to a batter. The change was necessary for clarification and in order to be consistent with other pitching rules.

"This rule is violated while the pitcher is pitching, and not just throwing the ball," said Elliot Hopkins, NFHS director of educational services and liaison to the Baseball Rules Committee.

Infractions by a batter were also addressed. The committee is concerned that batters are still attempting to be hit by pitches and earn an undeserved awarded base by "taking one for the team." Rule 7-3-4 clearly prohibits a batter allowing himself to be hit by a pitch.

In such a situation, the pitched ball is deemed either a strike or a ball and the player who permitted the ball to touch him remains at bat unless the pitch results in a third strike or ball four. The phrase "or ball four" was added to the rule to clarify the pitch needed to be called a strike or ball.

Revisions were also made to Rule 1-2-2 regarding painted field lines. All non-permanent lines on the playing field shall be marked white with a material not injurious to the eyes or skin.

Non-permanent refers to all lines that must be painted on the field. Only permanent lines, such as on artificial turf, may be a color other than white.

Lastly, umpires will be given more flexibility with their uniforms beginning in 2009. An adjustment to Rule 10-1-9 eliminated the need for umpires to specifically wear heather gray pants.

"Equipment dealers are transitioning to charcoal gray slacks," Hopkins said. "This rule change will provide umpires the opportunity to purchase any shade of dark gray and be in compliance."

In addition to the four rules changes, the committee identified four points of emphasis: 1) simplifying illegal pitch penalty administration, 2) re-emphasizing that team personnel remain in dugouts, 3) keeping the pace of play steady and 4) having all coaching staff members display professional behavior.