NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE

HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

2022 Baseball Rules Interpretations

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SITUATION 1: Having sustained a concussion earlier in the season, the shortstop is released to play provided the player wears a protective helmet. The helmet is composed of a single, dark color that is non-reflective and has no earflaps. It does not have a NOCSAE seal or stamp on it. The base umpire tells the coach that the player may not use the helmet as it is not NOCSAE-certified and does not have dual ear flaps.

RULING: This is a legal helmet for a defensive player to wear. Helmets for defensive players do not have to have a NOCSAE certification. (1-5-5)

SITUATION 2: The home team coach, at the plate conference, hands the plate umpire three baseballs for the game. The home plate umpire notices that while the baseballs have the NFHS Authenticating Mark, they do not have the SEI/NOCSAE certification mark. The home team coach says these are the only baseballs the team has and the visiting team only has practice baseballs.

RULING: Both the NFHS Authenticating Mark and the SEI/NOCSAE mark are required to be on all baseballs used in high school competition. The game may not be played. (1-3-1)

SITUATION 3: The plate umpire notices that several infielders on the visiting team are wearing their signal sweatbands on their belt. The visiting team's head coach says the umpires, at the last game, ruled the equipment legal.

RULING: Equipment must be worn as intended by the manufacturer. Sweatbands were not made to be worn on a belt. This equipment is not legal if worn on a belt. (1-5-11)

SITUATION 4: During infield before the game, the base umpire notices that the first baseman has a piercing and informs the coach that it is not legal and must be removed before the game begins. The coach shows the umpire an approval letter from the respective state association.

RULING: A player, with a doctor's permit, may request the school and state association for approval to wear the piercing. If the school and the state association both approve, the piercing may be worn provided it is covered. (1-5-12; 2018 Points of Emphasis)

SITUATION 5: With the home team behind by one run in the bottom of the seventh, there are two outs and a runner on third base. The batter-runner hits a home-run for an apparent walk-off win. The runner from third touches home, and the batter-runner touches first base and celebrates with teammates before going to the dugout. Before the umpires leave the field, the defensive team appeals the batter-runner not touching second base. The home team coach argues that all that is needed in a walk off win situation is for the runner from third to touch home and the batter-runner to touch first base.

RULING: Upon a valid and legal appeal, the batter-runner will be declared out and the game will continue tied in the eighth inning. All bases, including awarded bases, must be touched. (2-2; 8-2-1)

SITUATION 6: Dolan is listed as the P/ DH for the visiting team. In the fifth inning, Dolan was substituted for by another pitcher but legally returned in the sixth inning. In the bottom of the sixth, Dolan (as the DH) hits a double and the coach wants to pinch-run for Dolan. The umpire correctly tells the coach this is permissible, but using a pinch-runner will not only eliminate the role of the DH for the remainder of the game, but will end Dolan's role as pitcher in the game since a starting player cannot re-enter back to the game twice. What can the coach do that will allow a runner and keep Dolan as a pitcher?

RULING: As a player/DH, Dolan has two roles: the pitcher when the team is on defense and as the DH when the team is on offense. The coach may tell the plate umpire that Dolan, who is on second base, is no longer there as a DH but as the pitcher who is also a hitter, thus ending the role of the DH for the game. This is legal. Then, Dolan, on base as the pitcher, may have a courtesy runner run with no impact on the substitution. (3-1-3, 3-1-4, CR1, CR3)

SITUATION 7: In the third inning, Sanders, who is listed fourth in the batting order as the P/DH, is hit by a pitch and is replaced by Coleman, who will run for Sanders. Coleman bats in the fourth inning and strikes out. In the sixth inning, Sanders re-enters the game to (a) pinch-hit for Coleman or (b) play defense for Abel at first base with Coleman continuing to pitch.

RULING: Legal in (a). While the role of the DH is done for the game, Sanders may re-enter and is a defensive player, who is also a hitter. Illegal in (b). Sanders and Coleman are "locked" into the same lineup spot and cannot be in the game on defense at the same time. (3-1-4)

SITUATION 8: Following a home run, the offensive team gathers around home plate with mock up "tiki" torches and a plastic long spear. As the runners touch all the bases, the team engages in a Polynesian style dance. As the batter- runner touches home plate, the entire team jumps high in the air, shouts "boom" as they all fall in a circle.

RULING: While it is important for a team to celebrate exciting events in the game, it cannot be done in a manner that disrespects and humiliates the opposing team. Excessive and orchestrated celebrations that taunt and/or intimidate are not part of a high school game and are not to be allowed. The coach of the team involved may be warned, restricted to the bench or even ejected depending upon the circumstances. (3-3-1f1, 3; 2022 Points of Emphasis)

SITUATION 9: With two hours elapsed, the game is in the top of the third inning with a score of 24-0 for the home team. Both coaches agree that continuing the game is not in the best interest of either team and wish to end the game officially.

RULING: At any point in a game, by mutual agreement of both coaches and the umpire-in-chief, a game may be shortened or terminated. (4-2-4)

SITUATION 10: After eight complete innings with the score still tied, the umpires suspend the game due to darkness. Due to pitch-count regulations, A1, the starting home team pitcher has a mandatory rest day on the day the game is scheduled to resume. The home team replaces A1 with A2 and claims that A2 is now considered to be the starting pitcher and has re-entry ability the same as if A2 had started the original game.

RULING: When a suspended game is resumed, the game continues as if the game had not been interrupted. Accordingly, the starting pitcher cannot be "replaced" by another starting pitcher. If the starting pitcher cannot continue to pitch, the substitute pitcher is a substitute and will not be considered the starting pitcher. The substitute pitcher has no re-entry ability. In a suspended game, substitutes who were not at the original game can be added to the substitution list. (4-2-4, 3-1-3, 6-1-6)

SITUATION 11: The pitcher is wearing — on the non-throwing arm — a black, non-distracting sweatband which contains pitch and defensive signals that the pitcher wears under a Velcro flap. The opposing coach insists that the pitcher must remove the sweatband from the non-throwing arm.

RULING: The wearing of this sweatband is legal as it is not distracting to the batter. (1- 4-2, 6-2-1f)

SITUATION 12: It is a cold night with a wind that is creating a noticeable wind-chill. The pitcher is wearing a full-face, cold-weather mask that is of a solid dark color. The opposing team is insistent that this mask must be removed.

RULING: Provided that this mask creates no distraction to the batter, it is legal and may continue to be worn. The umpire has sole authority to judge whether or not an item is distracting. (6-2-1f PENALTY)

SITUATION 13: To communicate defensive and pitch signals, the home team uses posters that have emblems, colors and icons. The pitcher looks to the dugout, sees the team pointing to various parts of the posters and gets the sign for the next pitch. The pitcher now legally gets on the pitching plate, and without looking at the catcher begins the pitching motion.

RULING: This is an illegal pitch. A pitcher is required to take the sign or simulate taking the sign from the catcher when legally on the pitching plate. (6-1-1)

SITUATION 14: The coach announces a color and a number that tells the pitcher what the next pitch should be when F1 checks the armband worn on the non-throwing arm. The pitcher next legally gets on the pitcher's plate, gets set and looks into the catcher. The pitcher then begins the pitching motion.

RULING: This is legal. A pitcher is required to take the sign or simulate taking the sign from the catcher when legally on the pitching plate. (6-1-1)

SITUATION 15: The count is 1-2 when the runner on second base attempts to steal third base. As the batter looks at an outside pitch, the catcher attempts to throw to third base to put out the runner stealing. The catcher's throw hits the batter's bat and is deflected into a dugout. Even though the batter had not moved, the defensive coach insists that batter interference be called.

RULING: This is not batter interference. It is a throw that goes into a dead-ball area. Award the runner from second base home and score the run. The batter remains at bat with a 2-2 count. (7-3-5).

SITUATION 16: With R2 on second base and one out, a ground ball is hit to the third baseman. The third baseman bobbles the ball and throws low to first base. The batter-runner (BR) slides into first as the thrown ball from third bounces off the first baseman's mitt and into the BR's jersey. When the third baseman threw the ball to first, R2 was attempting to advance to third base. When no one could find the baseball, R2 advances to home. The defensive team coach is adamant that the BR should be out and that R2 be returned to second base. The offensive team coach is equally adamant that the play should stand.

RULING: When the ball became lodged in the offensive player's jersey, it is immediately dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base. Because R2 was attempting to advance at the time the ball became lodged, R2 is awarded third base. (8-3-3f; 5-1-1g-4)

SITUATION 17: A pitch that is low and hard gets by the catcher and ends up in the backstop fence that is a short distance behind the plate. R2, on second base, sees the ball get by the catcher and attempts to advance to third base. The batter-runner attempts to advance to first base as the pitch was ball four. As the catcher goes to retrieve the ball, it falls from the fence and the catcher picks it up and throws to third in time to retire R2.

RULING: This is a lodged ball and is immediately dead. R2 is awarded third base one base since it was a pitch) and the batter-runner is awarded first base due to the pitch being ball four. (8-3-3d, 8-1-1c, 5-1-1g3, 2022 Points of Emphasis)

SITUATION 18: With runners on second and third and one out, the batter swings at strike three and the pitch gets past the catcher. The batter turns and begins to walk to the third base dugout as R3 attempts to come home. With instructions from the dugout to run, the batter-runner turns around and runs to first and in so doing cross the home plate area as the pitcher nears home plate in an attempt to put out R3. There is no contact as the batter-runner runs between the pitcher and the catcher. However, as the catcher throws the ball to the pitcher covering home, the pitcher is distracted and the ball goes to the pitcher's mound. The defensive team's head coach demands that interference be called.

RULING: This is not interference. The batter-runner has the right to attempt to advance to first base and has done nothing intentional. Even if the batter-runner mistakenly thought about advancing, that act itself would still not be considered interference. Score R3 and leave the batter-runner at first base. (8-1-1b)

SITUATION 19: With bases empty and a two-strike count, the batter swings as the pitch hits the dirt and bounces off the catcher. The batter-runner comes out of the box running toward first base with the bat still in hand. The pitch that bounced off the catcher's shin guards, hits the bat and rolls to the backstop as the batter-runner makes first safely.

RULING: Since the batter-runner has not yet advanced to the 45-foot running lane, the batter-runner can only interfere if the batter-runner intentionally interferes on a thrown ball or intentionally hinders a fielder. A strike three where a batter becomes a runner, is treated as a thrown ball situation. Even if the

batter-runner, starting to advance to first base, unintentionally kicks the ball or contacts the catcher trying to field the ball, neither case is interference if unintentional. (8-1-1b, 8-4-1a)

SITUATION 20: With runners on first and third there are two outs. The batter hits a fly ball to right field. R3 immediately comes home, but R1, thinking there is only one out, remains on first base to tag up. The first base coach sees R1 still at first base and gives R1 a slight push to get moving. R3 has crossed the plate just before the push and the fly ball falls at F9's feet for a base hit.

RULING: When a coach physically assists a runner during playing action, the assisted runner is called out immediately and the ball remains live and in play. This is a timing play and the run will count since R3 touched home prior to the out being declared. The defense did not force R3 out so the third out is not considered to be a force out. (8-4-2s, 3-2-2, 9-1-1)