

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



NEWS RELEASE

2018-19 Baseball Rules Changes Focus on Pitching Mechanics

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elliot Hopkins

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (August 7, 2018) — The elimination of the requirement for the entire pivot foot to be in contact with the pitcher’s plate is among the changes approved for the 2018-19 high school baseball season.

This revision in Rule 6-1-3 was one of three changes recommended by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Baseball Rules Committee at its June 3-5 meeting in Indianapolis. All changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

“We are very fortunate that the state of high school baseball is in an excellent position, which is indicative of the few rules changes that were passed,” said Elliot Hopkins, NFHS director of sports and student services and staff liaison for baseball. “We appreciate the hard work of dedicated coaches who, in addition to minimizing risk associated with the sport, teach the game in a way that makes our young people enjoy playing for their high school. We must also acknowledge the highly professional and responsible game umpires. Without their thorough knowledge and implementation of NFHS rules, we would not be able to enjoy the small injury rate and increase in player participation.”

The rationale behind the change to Rule 6-1-3 is a result of the difficulty for pitchers to consistently make contact with the pitcher’s plate when pivoting. Before starting the delivery,

the pitcher shall stand with his entire non-pivot foot in front of a line extending through the front edge of the pitcher's plate and with the pivot foot in contact with or directly in front of and parallel to the pitcher's plate.

"The committee concluded that many pitching mounds are such that it is problematic for a pitcher to have his entire pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate," Hopkins said. "Therefore, no advantage is gained by having some of the pivot foot not in direct contact with the pitcher's plate."

The committee also approved two new umpire signals. The two new signals, indicating calls for "Correct Rotation" and "Information Available," were approved to further improve communication between partners.

"It is always wise to be able to communicate clearly with your partner(s) during a game," Hopkins said. "With so many moving parts (defensive players, base runners, umpires), it is imperative that umpires communicate easily and inconspicuously from players and fans. These mechanics say a lot without bringing attention to the signaling umpire."

The "Correct Rotation" signal comes when in a three- or four-man mechanic, the umpires indicate to their partner(s) where they are rotating to a specific base for coverage of an anticipated play. The umpire(s) points with both hands in the direction of the base that they are moving toward.

To assist in providing pertinent information between partners, the "Information Available" signal occurs when the game umpire is indicating that he/she has some information that is relevant to their partner by tapping two times over the left chest (heart).

Additionally, the NFHS Rules Review Committee extended the implementation date to January 1, 2020, for baseballs to meet the NOCSAE standard.

According to the 2016-17 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, there are 491,790 boys participating in baseball at 15,979 schools across the country, and 1,145 girls playing the sport in 269 schools.

A complete listing of the baseball rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on "Activities & Sports" at the top of the home page, and select "Baseball."

This press release was written by Cody Porter, a graphic arts/communications assistant in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org.

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