



Ohio High School Athletic Association

Kyle McNeely

Baseball 2013 Season Bulletin #1

Director of Officials' Development – Baseball

April 1, 2013 – BB Bulletin

jkyle1974@aol.com

First, thanks to all of you for all your hard work in preparing our 3000+ officials for this 2013 season. Without your dedication and commitment, Ohio would not have the high level of baseball being played and officiated that it does have. I, and everyone else at the OHSAA, thank you.

This is the first in a series of weekly Baseball bulletins that I will be sending to Association interpreters, secretaries, instructors and assignors. Over this 2013 season, I will provide interpretations, clarifications, and important information for you and all the umpires that you serve. Please, it is vitally important, that you forward or otherwise provide this information to your association and all its umpires. This can be done by using your association's email distribution list or by using the myOHSAA association email program that is available to local secretaries. Bulletins will also be posted on the "Officiating Page" of the OHSAA website - www.ohsaa.org.

Jerry Snodgrass will be publishing a Baseball bulletin focused on information for coaches.

If you would, as the season progresses, if you have any questions, concerns or situations you want to share, please email me and I will use them in a future bulletin for everyone.

1) Rule Issues

Over the first few days of the 2013 season, there have been several situations where the same rules were miss-applied. In all of the instances the umpires used a rule from a different rule code rather than the proper NFHS rule. Please review these two rules in particular with your associations:

- i) When a defensive conference may be held: In the first situation, a coach held a defensive conference with his pitcher and headed back to his dugout, crossing his foul line. He then decided to return and provide some more instruction to his player. The plate umpire properly told the coach that the defensive conference was concluded when he crossed the foul line. The coach then stated "No problem, I will take my second one." The plate umpire refused to allow the conference telling the coach that only one conference was allowed per an at-bat. The NFHS rule does not restrict when a coach may take his three allowed defensive charged conferences in a seven-inning game. He may take all three in the same inning, with the same player at bat.

- ii) The Designated Hitter: We had four instances these past few days where coaches were allowed to list a player as both the pitcher and the DH. That is not the NFHS rule. If a coach utilizes a DH, it is a tenth player and may not be both a DH and a defensive player. No player in high school, pitcher or otherwise, may DH and at the same time play a defensive position.

2) Ski Caps as Headwear

The only legal and approved headwear for baseball teams is the traditional baseball cap. The wearing of ski caps or other non-traditional hats are not legal. If all the team has to wear is a non-approved, non-traditional cap or headwear, please allow the game to proceed but let me know after the game is over. Religious headwear may be worn with prior authorization from the OHSAA. Schools know to obtain the form and have it with them. The wearing of religious headwear does not pre-empt the proper wearing of a batting helmet.

3) Calling the NFHS

Over this 2013 pre-season, there have been some OHSAA Baseball umpires who have either emailed or called the NFHS looking for answers or support for various rulings or situations. You can imagine how that would tie up the NFHS if even a tenth of all the high school umpires in the nation called or emailed. Please, if your umpires have a question on a rule or a mechanic, they should first contact the interpreter in their local association or email/call me. They should also not contact Jerry Snodgrass on a rule or mechanic. Jerry handles the OHSAA policies and guidelines and while he doesn't mind assisting, he is focused on working with the coaches. Please ask your umpires to utilize myself.

4) Batting Helmets and Tape

If a batter comes to bat with a batting helmet that has tape in or over the ear-hole, please inspect that particular helmet. In many instances, athletic tape on a helmet are used to cover a cracked helmet or secure ear pads that no longer stay in place. As a reminder, a player with an illegal batting helmet is allowed to secure a new helmet with no penalty to himself or the coach.

5) Cold Weather

If you even think it is cold enough for a pitcher to blow on his hand, allow it. Please cover the ability to do so at the plate conference with both coaches. Ask them to instruct their pitchers to legally step off the pitching plate, blow on their hand, clearly wipe the hand off, and then re-engage the pitching plate.

6) Five Inning Games

It is not allowed by NFHS rules nor OHSAA policy for a baseball game to be pre-determined to be a five inning game. Already in the state, some teams are looking to have 5-inning double or triple headers. Please advise the coach that this is not legal, and if the coach insists on continuing to play a five inning game, let me know immediately. Don't put yourself in the middle of the issue, inform the coach out of professional courtesy, play the game, and let me know.

7) Player Removed For Possible Concussion

A player whom you have had removed from a contest for exhibiting signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a possible concussion cannot occupy a coach's box or be a "protector" for a pitcher and a catcher who are warming up in live ball territory. Also, as a reminder, on April 26th, a player removed for a possible concussion cannot return to play that day. It will no longer be possible for a player to return with a signed and legal "Return to Play" form on and after April 26th.

Hope you all have a good week. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in baseball,

Kyle McNeely

OHSAA Director of Baseball Officials Development