



## Oregon School Activities Association

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To: Athletic Directors and Head Baseball Coaches  
From: Kris Welch, Assistant Executive Director  
Subject: 2026 Baseball Reminders

Included within this memo are reminders regarding OSAA policies and NFHS rules specific to baseball that each coaching staff should review as we begin the season. The links on the right side will take you directly to more detailed information regarding that specific reminder. Each school offering baseball should have received one copy of the NFHS Baseball Rules Book from the OSAA, and if your Athletic Director has your email address listed on the OSAA website under your school, you will be able to have one NFHS eBook of the rules. If your school didn't receive your copy, please let me know. Feel free to contact me if you have questions.

### GENERAL INFO

#### OSAA Baseball Plan Book

<http://www.osaa.org/docs/bbl/bblplan.pdf>

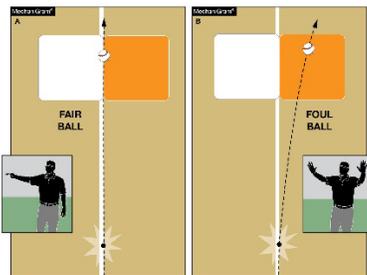
Our plan books include all information necessary for schools. The plan contains the season dates, NFHS rule changes, OSAA baseball rules and policies, state championship information and qualifications, plus OSAA general policies. Remember that Oregon is allowing for the "Speed up rule" and allow Courtesy Runners during all State Championship Playoff games. Many items listed in this memo in past years are now included in the OSAA Baseball Plan.

#### 2026 NFHS Rule Changes

<https://www.osaa.org/docs/bbl/25NFHSRulesChangesPOE.pdf>

##### **1-2-9, 2-5-1h, 2-16-1h, 8-2-1, 8-2-2a(17), 8-2-7 DOUBLE FIRST BASE:**

**ART. 9 . . . Effective January 1, 2027**, the double first base will be required. The double first base shall be a white base and a contrasting solid color. The white portion of the base is located in fair territory and the colored portion is located in foul territory. The double first base is split by the first base foul line. They shall be installed with no space between the two portions of the double first base. Both double first bases (white and colored), second and third bases shall be white bags...their anchor systems.



##### **2-5-1h**

**ART. 1 . . .** A fair ball is a batted ball which:

- a.- g. Remains the same.
- h. hits or bounds over any portion of the white portion of the double first base.

##### **2-16-1h**

**ART. 1 . . .** A foul ball is a batted ball which:

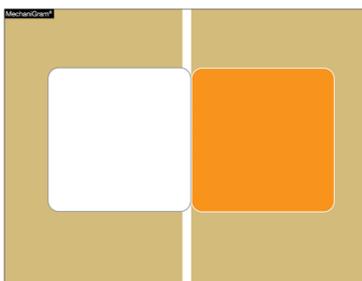
- a.- g. Remains the same.
- h. hits or bounds over the contrasting color portion of the double first base without first being a fair ball.



### 8-2-1

**ART. 1 . . .** An advancing runner shall touch first, second, third and then home plate in order, including awarded bases. A batter-runner shall use the colored base on the initial play at first base unless the fielder is drawn to the side of the colored base (dropped third strike only), in which case the batter-runner would touch the white base and the fielder to the colored base. On a dropped third strike, fielder and batter-runner may touch white or colored base.

### 8-2-2a(1-7)



**ART. 2 . . .** A returning runner shall retouch the bases in reverse order. If the ball is dead because of an uncaught foul, it is not necessary for a returning runner to retouch intervening bases. The umpire will not make the ball live until the runner returns to the appropriate base.

a. Runners tagging up on fly balls, leading off on a pitch, or returning to first base on an attempted pick-off can only use the white portion of the base. A defensive player may use only the fair portion of the base when a play is being made on the batter-runner on any live ball from within the foul lines or from third base foul line. It is interference when the batter-runner, on a force play, touches only the white portion of the base and collides with the fielder in the process of catching a thrown ball while on the white portion of the base.

- The lone exception is when there is a dropped third strike, in which case the batter-runner may use the white portion of the base and the fielder may use the colored portion of the base.
- On a dropped third strike, both the fielder and runner may use either portion of the base.

Obstruction is called on the defense when there is a force play on the batter-runner, who touches only the colored portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball while also on the colored portion of the base.

1. The batter-runner should use the colored base on the initial play at first base, unless the fielder is drawn to the colored base because of a dropped third strike, in which case the BR would go to the white base only.
  2. Once the batter-runner reaches first base, the runner must always return to the white base.
  3. On extra base hits or other balls hit to the outfield when there is no chance for a play to be made at the double first base, the batter-runner may touch either the white or colored section of the base.
  4. When tagging up on a fly ball, the white section of the base must be used by the runner. One foot is permitted to extend behind or on the colored base provided the front foot is touching the white section of the base.
- If a batter-runner on a force play touches only the white portion of the base and collides with a fielder who is entitled to catch a thrown ball while touching the white portion of the base, interference should be ruled.
  - If a batter-runner on a force play touches only the colored portion of the base and collides with a fielder who is not legally entitled to catch a thrown ball while touching the colored portion of the base, obstruction should be ruled.

5. On attempted pick-off plays, the runner must return to the white section of the base only. This includes a throw from the pitcher, catcher, or any other player, in an attempt to retire the runner at the double first base.
6. The double first base does not change any other rule concerning interference or obstruction at first base. The batter-runner must still avoid interference with the fielder attempting to field a batted ball.
7. On base on balls, the offense or the defense may touch either the white or colored base.

#### **8-2-7**

**ART. 7 . . .** A batter-runner who reaches first base safely and then overruns or over slides may immediately return without liability of being put out provided the batter-runner does not attempt or feint an advance to second. Once the batter-runner reaches first base (colored), the runner shall use the white base.

- On extra-base hits or other balls hit to the outfield when there is no chance for a play to be made at the double first base, the batter-runner may touch either portion of the base.
- Once a batter reaches first base safely, the colored portion of the base essentially disappears, and all legal touches of first base require the use of the white portion of the base.

**Rationale:** Risk Minimization.

#### **Rule 1-4-4 Uniforms:**

**ART. 4 . . .** The school's official uniform... (The same restriction shall apply to either the manufacturer's logo/trademark or reference.) Effective, January 1, 2027, The school's name, school nickname, school logo, school mascot, and/or the player's name are permitted on the uniform top and/or pants. One American flag 2 inches x 3 inches may be worn or occupy space on each item of uniform apparel.

**Rationale:** This is a universal rule adaptation by every NFHS Rules Committee to be uniformed for every NFHS rule publication.

#### **Rule 1-6-3 Player Equipment:**

**ART.3...** No player shall wear any audio (microphone) or video (camera) device during the game.

**Rationale:** No player participating in the game will be allowed to wear any type of audio or video device to record or transmit audio or video. This is a universal rule adaptation by every NFHS Rules Committee to be uniformed for every NFHS rule publication.

#### **Rule 2-10-3, 3-4-6:**

**RT. 3 . . .** A player-to-player defensive meeting includes two or more players (3-4-6).

**Rationale:** Definition for player-to-player meeting.

**ART. 6 . . .** Each team, when on defense, may be granted not more than one player-to-player meeting during an inning to permit players to confer with defensive personnel. The umpire shall deny any subsequent player-to-player defensive team requests for meetings.

The following plays are not defined as player-to-player meetings:

- Injury time-outs for either offense or defense. Players will be able to meet without penalty during an injury time-out.
- Offensive Time-out – If the offense calls time, the defensive players can meet and not be in violation of the rule.
- Other Team Conferences – If the other team conferences, the defensive players can meet and not be in violation of the rule.
- After Putout (Outfield) – After a putout in the outfield, with no runners on base, the ball shall be thrown to a cutoff player and if desired to one additional player before being returned to the pitcher. The returner can either throw the ball to the pitcher or walk it to them with words of encouragement or a congratulatory message.
- After Putout (Infield or Strikeout) - After a putout in the infield, with no runners on base, the ball shall be returned directly to the pitcher. The returner can either throw the ball to the pitcher or walk it to them with words of encouragement or a congratulatory message.
- Fifth Warm-up Pitch– Upon the fifth warm-up pitch at the start of the half-inning, the catcher can either throw the ball to the pitcher or walk it to them with words of encouragement or a congratulatory message.

**Rationale:** Utilizing the rule addition will improve the pace of play, while still allowing the meetings to continue. Currently there is not a limit on defensive player-to-player meetings. This will prevent teams from stalling when the weather or darkness is approaching.

### ***Points of Emphasis***

#### ***Discipline:***

- Any unsportsmanlike conduct, arguing or disrespect directed toward umpires will result in disciplinary action, which may include warnings, restriction to the bench or ejection from the game (3-3-1 to 3-3-4 and 10-2-3).
- These penalties are not punitive in nature – they are protective of the values that define high school sports: respect, integrity and personal responsibility.
- Respect for officials is a reflection of the maturity, leadership and character we hope to instill in all participants through educational athletics.

#### ***Sportsmanship (Bench Jockeying and Props)***

- Bench jockeying can be considered as negative verbal comments, taunting or attempts to distract, intimidate or embarrass opponents or officials from the dugout – violates the standards of conduct expected in interscholastic competition.
- By rule, bench jockeying is prohibited and will result in warnings, restrictions or ejections as deemed appropriate by the umpire.
- Enforcement of this rule is not about silencing enthusiasm – it is about upholding the spirit of fair play and modeling appropriate conduct for students, schools and communities.
- There is no logical purpose to have props at an education-based athletic event.
- The dugout should be a place of encouragement and unity, not derision and distraction.
- Let the game be decided by skill, preparation and respect – not by unnecessary noise and antics.

#### ***Pitching Position:***

- Pitchers are required to use one of two positions: the wind-up or the set.
- It is important that umpires, coaches and players know what position the pitcher is using so they know which part of Rule 6 is in play.
- The position of the pivot foot determines which of the pitching positions is being used.
- In the wind-up position, the pitcher's pivot foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate and is not parallel to it.
- In the set position, the pivot foot is in contact with or directly in front of and parallel to the pitcher's plate.

#### ***Running Lane Awareness***

- Enforcing the running lane rule (8-4-1g) is vital for player safety, fairness and the educational goals of high school baseball.
- The batter-runner must use the designated lane in foul territory during a play at first base.

**1. Safety** – The lane prevents collisions and protects both the runner and the fielder.

**2. Fair Play** – Staying in the lane avoids unfair interference with defensive plays.

**3. Consistency** – Regular enforcement promotes accountability and discourages rule violations.

**4. Education** – Teaching proper lane use reinforces respect for the rules of the game.

- Violations result in interference, with the batter-runner out and runners returned to their previous base.

### **Pace of Play**

There is continued concern with the length of contests, especially at the sub-varsity level, the state is declining in the number of participants and umpires. The OACA Baseball Coaches committee and the OAOA Baseball umpires committee have agreed to help with this decline, at the sub-varsity level there will be a conscience effort to enforce the 60-seconds between each half inning. The umpires will be working with coaches and schools that are constantly taking longer than 60 seconds between innings. The umpires will be working this year to enforce the 20 seconds between pitches also. If pitchers are constantly taking over 20 seconds to throw a pitch, the umpires will work with coaches and schools to speed up their delivery, if this continues after talking with the coach, a ball could be awarded to the batter. The umpires will also be working with the batters to make sure they are in the box and ready to hit within the 10 seconds, the umpires will encourage batters to leave one foot in the box (unless there is a play at the plate or the pitched ball enters the batter's box area), and they should be ready and looking at the pitcher within the 10 seconds rule, if the batters are constantly taking longer than 10 seconds to be ready to hit, the umpire will work with the school and coaches to speed up their routine, if it persists, a strike could be called on the batter. We will also have no new inning after 2 hours and 15 minutes.

## **NOCSAE STAMP REQUIREMENTS**

Friendly reminder about baseballs and catcher's chest protectors **at ALL LEVELS (Varsity, JV, JVII, or Frosh)** must have the NOCSAE stamp on it. To be clear, there will be 2 stamps on every baseball; the NFHS stamp and the NOCSAE stamp in order for it to be considered legal. There are three different options that would meet the requirement for catcher's chest protector. 1) a traditional chest protector that protects the heart/cardiac silhouette and meets the NOCSAE performance standard; 2) a body protector (compression shirt with heart guard built into the shirt) that protects the heart/cardiac silhouette and meets the NOCSAE performance standard under the traditional chest protector; 3) a chest pad that protects the heart/cardiac silhouette and meets the NOCSAE performance standard that fits on top of the traditional chest protector. **If a school does not have this stamp on the catcher's protective equipment, the game WILL NOT take place!** Please ensure that every team at your school has at least one of these.

## **PITCHING LIMITATION**

### **Pitch Count Limitation**

<http://www.osaa.org/docs/bbl/bblplan.pdf>

This policy includes required rest days depending on the number of pitches thrown. The policy, which was created by the OSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee and Oregon Athletic Coaches Association, will be used, schools will be required to enter the pitch counts of players through the OSAA website following each game at **ALL LEVELS, not just Varsity** by 10:00am the day following the game or the school may be fined, the head coach may be suspended, or the player may be considered an ineligible participant. Teams should be using the [Pitch Count – Contest sheet](#) each game and to ensure no discrepancies, both coaches or designees should sign the sheet at the conclusion of the contest.

### **USA Baseball Pitch Smart Guidelines**

<http://m.mlb.com/pitchsmart/>

The OSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) supports the Pitch Smart guidelines created by USA Baseball and MLB. The two entities have teamed up to help young players reduce arm injuries by providing a comprehensive resource for safe pitching practices. Research has shown that pitching too much, particularly at a young age, can increase a pitcher's risk of injury. Pitch Smart is a series of practical, age-appropriate guidelines to help parents, players and coaches avoid overuse injuries and foster long, healthy careers for youth pitchers. The NFHS has a course offering ([www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com)), Introduction to Pitch Smart, hosted by Hall of Famer, John Smoltz, the course aims to explain the principles behind Pitch Smart, a joint arm care initiative between Major League Baseball and USA Baseball. This course includes topics such as risks of arm injuries, common misconceptions, and the Pitch Smart guidelines. <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/61054/introduction-to-pitch-smart>

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

### **Health and Safety Information**

<http://www.osaa.org/health-safety>

The OSAA website contains a variety of information regarding heat and hydration, lightning safety, and concussion management. This page contains links to informational items that all coaches should familiarize themselves with as practices begin.

### **Pre-Season Practice Limitation Rule for Pitchers and Catchers**

<http://www.osaa.org/docs/bbl/bblplan.pdf>

The Practice Limitation Rule (Rule of 2) for the 3A, and 2A/1A Classifications allows baseball coaches to begin pitching instruction and throwing workouts with pitchers and catchers only (maximum of eight total per day) two weeks prior to the Spring Sports First Practice Date (February 16, 2026). The 6A, 5A and 4A classifications are following the Pilot Program for the Practice Limitation Rule.

### **Lightning Safety Guidelines**

<http://www.osaa.org/docs/bbl/bblplan.pdf>

The OSAA has made a concerted effort to educate member schools and officials associations regarding the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder. Once thunder is heard or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, all personnel, athletes and spectators should evacuate to available safe structures or shelters.

## **FIELD MARKINGS, OFFICIALS**

### **Field Markings and Game Preparation**

[www.osaa.org/docs/bbl/baseballfielddiagram.pdf](http://www.osaa.org/docs/bbl/baseballfielddiagram.pdf)

A reminder to schools to have fields properly marked before a game begins. This includes all appropriate lines for batters' boxes, coaches' boxes, the catcher's box, foul lines, runner's lane to 1<sup>st</sup> base, etc. It is recommended that all outfield fence signs are properly secured to the fence and off the ground.

## Officials – Host School Responsibilities

<http://www.osaa.org/docs/bbl/bblplan.pdf>

Remember that a game manager shall be designated by the host school for all contests. It's a good idea for the game manager to introduce themselves to the officials upon arrival. A member of the coaching staff of the home team is not eligible to serve as game manager during a varsity contest at which he or she is coaching. A coach of a sub-varsity team may act as the game manager at a sub-varsity contest at which he or she is coaching. The game manager shall wear easily recognizable identification, shall be physically present and / or readily accessible by phone, and shall be responsible for:

- a. Designating reserved parking for officials as close as possible to the contest site; where available if requested by the commissioner of the Local Association providing the officials
- b. Designating dressing facilities for officials where available if requested by the commissioner of the Local Association providing the officials;
- c. Monitoring and responding to inappropriate crowd conduct during and after the contest; and
- d. Providing an escort to the designated dressing facilities or vehicle for officials following each contest unless that offer is declined. ***(This is especially important at fields where officials must walk through the spectator area when leaving the field.)***

## JEWELRY, EJECTIONS, GAME ENDING/SPEED-UP, INTERRUPTED CONTEST PROCEDURES

### Jewelry

The elimination of the jewelry rule will permit players to wear these items freely, Additionally, with that freedom to wear jewelry, note that any jewelry that contains profanity, taunting, language to intimidate or baiting an opponent would not be allowed under our sportsmanship rule. Besides those examples, there is existing rule coverage that gives guidance on any player equipment that presents a danger to the player, teammate or opponent.

### SCORE DIFFERENTIAL PROCEDURES

The following procedures shall be followed when the score differential reaches the level outlined in this policy at all contests, regardless of classification and level.

- A. Baseball. If a 10-run score differential occurs at the completion of five full innings, or the completion of any inning thereafter, the game shall be terminated and considered a completed game.

### Ejections During a Doubleheader and Out-of-State Ejections

<http://www.osaa.org/docs/bbl/bblplan.pdf>

Multiple ejection reports came through the OSAA office last season where a player or coach had been ejected in the first game of a doubleheader. A reminder that when this happens, the player or coach is done for the rest of the day (**Ejection Period**) and is also suspended through the next contest at that level of competition (**Suspension Period**). Some schools have mistakenly thought that the 2<sup>nd</sup> game of the doubleheader counts as the suspension period.

- a. Example #1 – A varsity coach is ejected in the first game of a doubleheader. The coach is done for the rest of the day (**Ejection Period**). The coach is also suspended through the next varsity contest (**Suspension Period**).
- b. Example #2 – A JV player is ejected in a game on Friday (single game that day) and the JV team has a doubleheader the next day on Saturday. The player is done for the rest of the day on Friday (**Ejection Period**). The player sits out the 1<sup>st</sup> game of the Saturday doubleheader (**Suspension Period**) but is eligible to play in the 2<sup>nd</sup> game of the doubleheader on Saturday.

Remember that when a player or coach is ejected from an out-of-state contest, OSAA ejection policies still apply. It is the responsibility of the school to notify the OSAA of the out-of-state ejection.

### Interrupted Contests / Tie Games

<http://www.osaa.org/docs/bbl/bblplan.pdf>

Listed below are the procedures on interrupted contests as there are no ties in Oregon high school baseball. Games don't have to be continued, but if they are it shall start from the point of interruption. If teams choose not to continue, the game should be deleted from each team's schedule and won't count against either team's participation limitation. Pitches thrown by pitchers in the tie game are still counted toward the individual pitching limitation.

## OSAA WEBSITE / RANKINGS INFO

<http://www.osaa.org/docs/bbl/bblplan.pdf>

### Postponing/Canceling Contests

On the day of a contest, schools are able to change the status to either Postponed or Cancelled by selecting the appropriate box in your editing window. When Postponed is selected, schools have the option to list the new date/time, if known. If a postponed contest will be replayed but you aren't sure when, you can leave the new date/time field blank to complete at a later time. If you aren't sure if the contest is going to be replayed, it should be Cancelled. That way you can always reinstate the contest if you end up being able to get it scheduled. Deleting contests from your schedule and adding them back later in the season may result in contests not counting in the rankings based on the following policies. When in doubt, leave it on your schedule as Cancelled.

## 1. ADDING CONTEST TO SCHEDULES AFTER CERTAIN DATES

Contests added to a team's schedule after the dates listed below may not count in the rankings based on new Board Policies regarding the rankings. Be sure that you don't delete contests from your schedule, but instead use the Postpone Contest or Cancel Contest button to keep the contest on your schedule.

### a. **Adding Contests to Schedules vs. Teams More Than One Classification Away After April 9**

Remember that results from contests added to a team's schedule after a certain date each season (Spring – April 8) **vs. a team more than one classification away** shall not be included in the rankings.

### b. **Adding Any Contest to Schedules After April 15**

Results from contests added to a team's schedule after a certain date each season (Spring – Apr. 16) shall not be included in the rankings. **NOTE:** Contests not affected by this policy include bracketed contests at tournaments, league tiebreakers, and district/league tournaments. Schools may apply for an exception to OSAA Staff in extenuating circumstances.

### **Tracking Out of State Opponents**

[www.osaa.org/docs/osaainfo/ManagingOutOfStateRecordsInstructions.pdf](http://www.osaa.org/docs/osaainfo/ManagingOutOfStateRecordsInstructions.pdf)

Varsity teams are required to update their schedule and results through the OSAA website throughout the season. Schools are also required to track records of out of state opponents. Each Oregon school is ultimately responsible for making sure their own schedule and results are accurate, including the records of their out of state opponents.

### **Home/Away Designation**

- c. Baseball and softball contests, even those played as part of a tournament, shall not be listed as neutral due to the fundamental difference associated with being the home team in those sports (advantage of batting last).
- d. **Doubleheaders:** If a team is playing a doubleheader at another school, both contests should be shown as away contests on the schedule to accurately portray where the contests are physically taking place. When scoring the contest, schools are able to check a box if the "home" team batted first so the home/away designation is correct for the rankings.

### **Rosters**

It shall be the responsibility of each member school to submit varsity team sport rosters to the OSAA through <http://www.osaa.org/> prior to the first contest date of that sport's season. Varsity rosters are required for the following OSAA-sanctioned sports: football, boys' soccer, girls' soccer, volleyball, boys' basketball, girls' basketball, baseball, softball. Subsequent changes to each varsity teams' roster shall be updated as they occur throughout the season.