

Massachusetts switch to Federation Rules for Baseball

Effective Spring 2020



National Federation of State
High School Associations



Agenda

- What is NOT Changing
- Playing rule differences
 - Batting
 - Fielding
 - Pitching
 - Base running
- Administrative rule differences
- Coaching rule differences
- Equipment rule differences
- Points of Emphasis

What is NOT Changing

- BALLS AND STRIKES
- SAFE AND OUT
- FAIR AND FOUL
- Myths to debunk
 - Umpires call out runners (**WITHOUT AN APPEAL**) when they miss a base or leave early on a tag-up

Batting rule differences – Check swing ([10.2.3](#))

- Check Swing appeals
 - Plate umpire does not have to check
- Rectify situations
 - Change to strike – runner stealing thinking it was ball four or batter trotting to first base
 - Only applies if call change put them in jeopardy
 - Runner stealing – running hard the entire time



Batting rule difference

Backswing/follow-through interference

- **7.3.5 c** – Batter shall not interfere with the catcher's fielding or throwing **Including follow-through interference....**
 - Swing and a miss and the follow-through contacts catcher
 - Batter is out, Runners return unless runner is retired, and interference is ignored



Batting rule difference 7.3.5 Penalty

Backswing/follow-through interference (cont'd)

- With less than two outs, R3 attempts to steal home. B2 swings and misses the pitch for strike two. On the follow-through, his bat releases and strikes F2 in the facemask.
- RULING: The ball is dead and R3 is declared out. With two outs, the batter is declared out.

Batting rule difference

Abandon running after missed 3rd strike (7.4.1)

- F2 drops the third strike. B1 starts toward the dugout and F2 does not throw to first. B1 then makes a quick dash to first.
- RULING: If F2 does not throw to first, he risks failure to put out B1. However, B1 should be declared out for failure to attempt to reach first if he does not reach the base before the time of the next pitch, he reaches his bench or dugout area, or a half inning is ended because the infielders have left the diamond.

Batting rule difference

Batting out of order – end of half-inning (7-1-2)

- If a player has batted out of order and there has been a third out of a half-inning, the defensive team must appeal the batting out of order situation before their infielders leave fair territory.
- If they don't do so, the player who had batted out of order becomes legal.
- The next time that team comes up to bat, the batting order picks up with the player who is listed after the legalized batter.

Batting rule difference

Batter's box rule (7-3-1)

- If the pitcher, with a runner on base, stops or hesitates in his delivery because the batter steps out of the box (a) with one foot or (b) with both feet or (c) holds up his hand to request "Time," it shall not be a balk.
- In (a) and (c), there is no penalty on either the batter or the pitcher. The umpire shall call "Time" and begin play anew.
- In (b), a strike shall be called on the batter for violation of [7-3-1](#). (batter's box rule).
- In (a), (b) and (c), **if the pitcher legally delivers the ball, it shall be called a strike and the ball remains live.** Thus, two strikes are called on the batter in (b). If the umpire judges the batter's action to be a deliberate attempt to create a balk, he will penalize according to [3-3-1](#)n. (n. call "Time" or use any command or commit any act for the purpose of causing a balk)

Fielding rule difference

Obstruction – always delayed dead ball (2-22-1)

- Obstruction is always a delayed dead ball.
- On conclusion of action, kill ball and award bases to nullify obstruction,
- but minimum one base beyond the point of the obstruction.
 - If the obstruction happens on a pick-off with the runner going back into the base, the runner will be awarded the next base.
 - If the obstruction happens at the base the runner is attempting to reach the one base award would be the base the runner is going to.

Fielding rule difference

Ball lodged in clothing or equipment (8-2-9 Table)

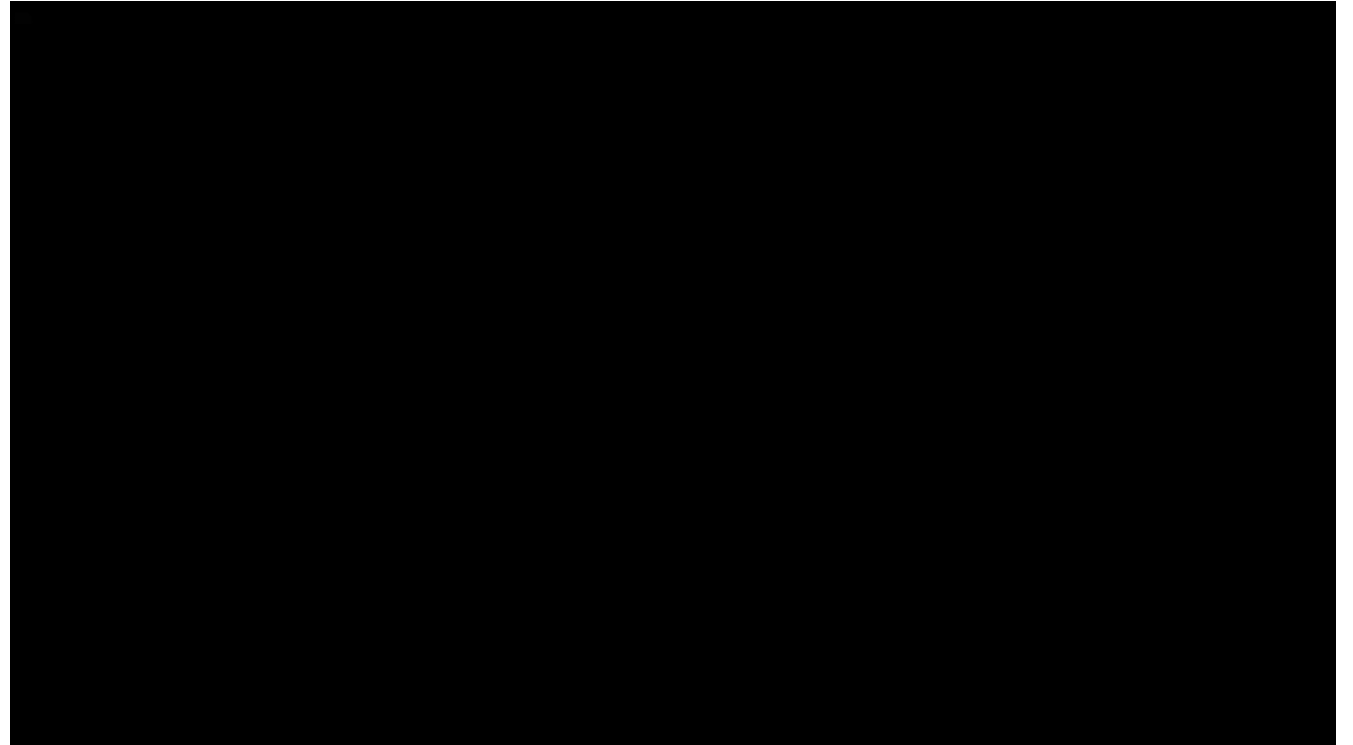
- OBR allows tossing glove or mitt in which ball is lodged for purpose of making a play.
- **NFHS: NOT ALLOWED**
- PU will declare the ball dead and award the batter-runner second base. When F1 tossed his fielding glove to F3 to put out the batter-runner, it became apparent that the ball was lodged and the ball becomes dead and the award is made.



Fielding rule difference

Fake tag without the ball (2-22-2)

- A fake tag without the ball is obstruction; delayed dead ball; base award.



Fielding rule difference

Catch and Carry – Out of play (8-2-9 Table)

- There is no catch-and-carry in NFHS. If a fielder steps into dead-ball territory ***with both feet***, or falls in dead-ball territory, you have an immediate dead ball and base awards (one base).

Fielding rule difference

Player positions on the field (1-1-4)

- Minimum one foot in fair territory ***at time of pitch***;
- **Penalty** is illegal pitch.
 - **The ball is dead immediately when an illegal pitch occurs. If there is no runner, a ball is awarded the batter. If there is a runner, such illegal act is a balk. In both situations, the umpire signals dead ball.**
- 1B holding runner may have one foot in foul territory but must the other in fair territory

Fielding rule difference

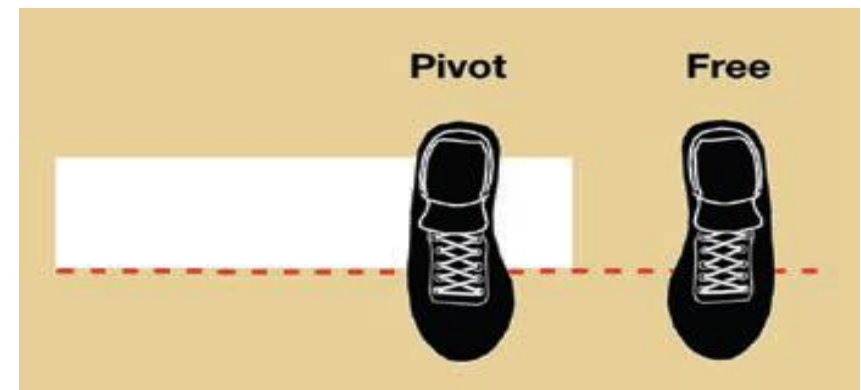
Fielder uses equipment on pitch (8-3-3 c)

- The catcher (or other fielder) is **NOT ALLOWED** to use their equipment (mask or hat) to field/touch a pitched ball,
- **Penalty** - the award is two bases

Pitching rule difference

Actions allowed from windup position (6-1-2)

- The pitcher is allowed two actions from the windup:
 - Deliver pitch to batter
 - Disengage the rubber
- **Not allowed** to step and throw to a base to attempt a pickoff –
Penalty - Balk
- The pitcher's non-pivot foot shall be in any position on or behind a line extending through the front edge of the pitcher's plate. -
Penalty – Illegal pitch – Balk w/ runners



Pitching rule difference

Balks – Immediate Dead Ball (6-2-1 Penalty)

- Immediate dead ball. If the ball is put in play on the pitch, kill the play. Award all runners one base.
- R1, attempted pick-off is judged a balk. The balk followed by a wild throw. No advance beyond 2nd base.

Pitching rule difference

Illegal pitch

- No runners. Immediate dead ball. Award a ball.
- Runners on. Immediate dead ball. Call balk. Advance runners 1 base.

Pitching rule difference

Hidden Ball Trick (allowed)

- It is a balk if a runner or runners are on base and the pitcher,
 - while he is not touching the pitcher's plate,
 - makes any movement naturally associated with his pitch,
 - or he places his feet on or astride the pitcher's plate,
 - or positions himself within approximately five feet of the pitcher's plate without having the ball.

Pitching rule difference

Pitch count limits and rest requirements

- Umpires do not track, only verify the teams are validating the counts every two innings.
- If limit is reached during an at bat, the pitcher may finish pitching to that batter
- Issues/penalties about count limitations will not be handled by umpires.

Pitching rule difference

Pitch count limits and rest requirements

Massachusetts Pitch Count – Spring 2020

Maximum Pitches Per Day – 115 pitches for Varsity Pitchers & 95 pitches for Sub Varsity

Breakpoints & Required Rest:

Varsity

1-25 pitches	0 days rest
26-40 pitches	1 days rest
41-55 pitches	2 days rest
56-70 pitches	3 days rest
71-115 pitches	4 days rest

Sub Varsity

1-25 pitches	0 days rest
26 -40 pitches	1 days rest
41-55 pitches	2 days rest
56-70 pitches	3 days rest
71-95 pitches	4 days rest

*These rules apply to both regular and post season play

*If a pitcher has thrown 71-90 pitches on the day he last pitched, on his fourth day of rest, he would be eligible to throw a maximum of 25 pitches.

Pitching rule difference

Pitch count limits and rest requirements

- **Tracking**

- *Coaches will designate on their line up cards which players are not eligible to pitch that day
- *Coaches or their designee confirm pitch counts after every 2 innings and at the conclusion of the game. In the case of a dispute the home team has the official count.
- *Umpire's do not regulate the pitch count, their job is to make sure coaches are conferring every two innings and at the conclusion of the game.
- *At the conclusion of each contest, both coaches will sign the official MIAA pitch count sheet

- **Penalties**

- * Violations of the pitch count maximum limit or required rest periods will follow Rule #86 of the MIAA Handbook "Participation of an ineligible student"

Pitching rule difference

Pitch count limits and rest requirements

- **F.A.Q's**
- *A pitcher can exceed the maximum pitch limit if he is in the middle of an AB but once the AB is completed, the pitcher must be removed from the mound
- *The calendar day in which a game is started shall be used to determine how many days of rest is required. Ex. If a game goes past midnight a pitcher shall not now be counted as eligible nor should a pitcher lose a day of rest because they pitched past midnight. Ex. A pitcher throws 72 pitches in a game on Saturday morning – rest required is 4 days so pitcher must rest on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before returning to the mound on Thursday.
- *Doubleheaders – pitchers can pitch in both games but if a pitcher exceeds 50 pitches in the first game he cannot pitch in the second game. A pitcher cannot exceed 115 pitches on the day.
- *Ambidextrous pitcher- pitch count guidelines apply to the individual pitcher not the individual arm

Pitching rule difference

Feint to third base / 3-1 move (6-1-5)

- This move is allowed. Must step towards third.
- Feint to third and then throw to first is allowed.



Pitching rule difference

Time limit to deliver pitch (6-2-2)

- The time limit rule is enforced **with or without** runners on base
- c. failing to pitch or make or attempt a play, including a legal feint, within 20 seconds after he has received the ball.
- **PENALTY: The batter shall be awarded one ball.**
- With R1 at first and B2 in the batter's box, F1 steps back off the pitcher's plate after having the ball for 18 seconds.
- **RULING:** The pitcher is required to pitch, or make/attempt a play, including a legal feint, within 20 seconds. Stepping backward off the pitcher's plate can be considered part of a feint, if in the umpire's judgment there is accompanying action. However, if this is not the case, a ball shall be credited to the batter.

Base running rules difference

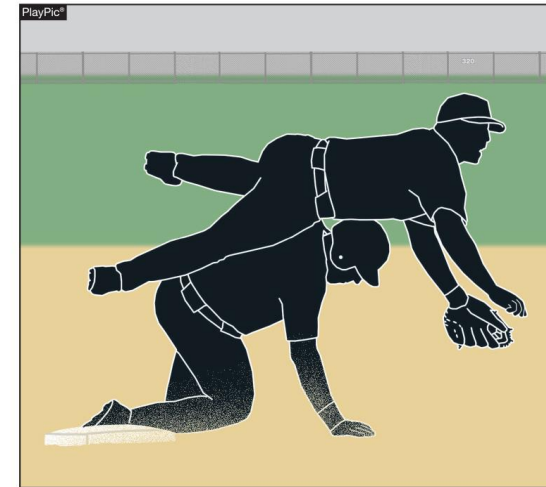
Must slide or attempt to avoid (2-32-1)

- No requirement to slide, but runner must execute a legal slide, or otherwise attempt to avoid contact with a defender or otherwise altering the play of the defender.

Base running rules difference

Legal/Illegal slide; force-play slide rule (2-32-2)

- Must slide within reach of base with hand or foot, but not in a path toward the defender (except straight in). No rolling or pop-up slides **into fielder**; no slide through the base to **contact defender** (except at home). No raised leg above defender's knee; no slashing or kicking; no malicious contact with fielder. On force play, must slide in direct line between bases.
- No slide is okay if they move away / don't alter the play
- [FPSR examples video](#)



Illegal
Pop-up
slide



Illegal
Slide
through
base and
contact
defender

Base running rules difference

Batter-runner intentionally interferes with potential double play (8-4-1 h)

- If a batter-runner intentionally interferes with a potential double play, he is out and so is the other runner who would most likely have been played against. If the umpire is not sure who would have been played against, the runner of furthest advance (closest to home) should be the second out.

Base running rules differences:

Collisions with defender / malicious contact

Base coach touched by ball while in fair territory

- It is interference, dead ball, runner out; if egregious, may eject player.
- If a thrown live ball unintentionally touches a base coach in foul territory, or a pitched or thrown ball touches an umpire, the ball is live and in play. If the coach is judged by the umpire to have interfered intentionally with the thrown ball, or interferes in fair territory, the interference penalty is invoked.
- **PENALTY:** The ball is dead immediately and the runner is out. The batter-runner or runner may be out as in [7-4-1f](#) and [8-4-2g](#). Other runners return as in [8-2-8](#).

Base running rules difference

Courtesy runner (12-1-1)

- Allowed at any time for pitcher or catcher. Runner is tied to position he runs for; a given runner may not run for both pitcher and catcher.
- Anyone who's been in the game may not be a runner; runner may not be sub in same half inning in which he courtesy runs.
- Courtesy runners need to be reported as such. Failure to do so makes them a “normal substitute”.
- Umpires need to record courtesy runners on line-up card.
- Once a player is a courtesy runner for a position, he can only continue to courtesy run for a player in that particular position.

Base running rules difference

Diving over defender (8-4-2 d)

- Runner is out if he dives over a defender who is standing or kneeling, but ball remains live. However, if a defender is laying flat on the ground, runner may jump/leap/hurdle the defender.
- Jumping or leaping over a fielder supersedes obstruction.



Base running rules difference

Running lane interference (8-4-1 g)

- Interference in the running lane invoked with any throw to retire runner who violates running lane, regardless of the quality of the throw. In effect, runner is interfering with fielder's opportunity to make the play.



Base running rules difference

Walk-off scoring (8-2)

- All runners, including batter-runner, must touch the base to which they are advancing, or to which they are forced to advance.

Base running rules difference

Last Time By (8-2-6 I)

- If a runner correctly touches a base that was missed (either in advancing or returning), the last time he was by the base, that last touch corrects any previous baserunning infraction.

Administrative rules difference (8-2-5)

Proper Appeals: Live ball/Dead ball - Timing

- Appealing the failure of a runner to touch a base advancing or retreating, and/or failure to tag up, can both be either a live-ball or dead-ball appeal.
 - Live-ball appeal must be a proper appeal
 - Dead-ball appeal may be made by manager or any defensive player by clearly indicating the nature of the infraction.

Administrative rules difference (8-2-5)

Proper Appeals: Live ball/Dead ball - Timing

- If the defense wants to appeal but another play has happened, the appeal is still allowed if the offense initiated the play.
- On game ending plays, the defense must appeal before the umpires leave the field. It doesn't matter if all the infielders have left fair territory.

Administrative rules difference

Substitutions: Re-entering starters (8-3-3)

- Using the NFHS substitution rules already
- A starter may re-enter one time but must re-enter in same position in batting order where he started. On the other hand, a substitute, after entering and then being replaced, may not re-enter.

Administrative rules difference

Substitutions: Change to DH rule – effective 2020

- **3-1-4:** Designated Hitter (DH) can be used in two ways. The DH can be listed as the tenth starter replacing one of the other nine players when it is their turn to bat. The other method is that any one of the starting defensive players can be their own DH (in effect having two positions) within the confines of the rule requirements
 - Start with a nine-player line-up, one player is listed as possible DH as well. If that player is removed from the defense, they may remain as the DH.
 - Must be designated at the pre-game conference
- REVIEW THE CASE PLAYS – especially the ones in “grey”.

Administrative rules difference

Substitutions: Illegal substitute (3-1-1)

- Illegal substitute is restricted to the bench for duration of game. If same player re-enters, he is ejected.

Administrative rules difference

Injury issues – time out – (5-2-1)

- ART. 1 . . . "Time" shall be called by the umpire and play is suspended when:
 - d. an umpire or player is incapacitated, except that if injury occurs during a live ball, time shall not be called until no further advance or putout is possible;
 - 1. If there is a medical emergency or if, in the umpire's judgment, further play could jeopardize the injured player's safety, "Time" shall be called.
 - f. the umpire suspends play for any other cause, including an award of a base after an infraction, or for inspection of the ball.
- ART. 6 . . . A player or coach who is bleeding or who has an open wound shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment has been administered. If medical care or treatment can be administered in a reasonable amount of time, the individual would not have to leave the game. The length of time that is considered reasonable is umpire judgment. The re-entry rule applies to starters. If there is any amount of blood on the uniform, it shall be changed or cleaned before that individual participates again. (See Appendix D: Communicable Disease Procedures.)

Administrative rules difference (4-2-1)

Game ends by darkness/weather - Suspended Games

- All games that are regulation games (games played through 4 1/2 or five innings) which are stopped by the umpire in chief, are completed games, if not tied or if the home team has had an equal amount of at-bats. If tied or if the home team has had an unequal amount of at-bats, the game will be resumed at the point of stoppage. These games must complete a minimum of 6 1/2 or 7 innings until a winner is declared.
- All games played that are not regulation games (under 4 1/2 innings) which are stopped by the umpire in chief are suspended games and will be resumed from the point of stoppage.
- THESE ARE FOR BOTH FOR REGULAR SEASON AND TOURNAMENT

Administrative rules difference

Shortened game: Mercy rule (4-2-2)

- Game ends on 10-run advantage after five full innings, or 4-1/2 if home team leads (that is, "official" game).
- The game may end after three full innings if both coaches and UIC concur.

Administrative rules difference

Umpire touches or handles live ball (5-1-1 h)

- The ball is dead immediately any time the umpire handles a live ball or calls “Time” for inspecting the ball or for any other reason or gives the “Do Not Pitch Signal.”

Administrative rules difference

The umpire's jurisdiction (10-1-2)

- Umpire jurisdiction begins when they arrive in the confines of the field for purpose of officiating game; jurisdiction ends when umpires leave the playing field. Post-game ejections are valid.

Administrative rules difference

Guidelines on correcting umpire errors (10-2-3)

- Rectify any situation in which an umpire's decision that was reversed has placed either team at a disadvantage
 - (example: an overturned check swing)
 - Case Play 10.2.3 Situation N

Administrative rules difference

May continue playing with only 8 players (4-4-1)

- A team must have 9 players to start a game.
- Once the game has started, a team must have at least 8 players to finish the game. (Loss of play may be due to injury, ejection, or they just had to leave).

Coaching rules difference

Defensive conferences (visits) (3-4-1)

- Three conferences per regulation game (no limit per pitcher or per inning); on forth visit, pitcher must be removed.
- One visit per inning in extra innings, but no roll-over.
- Visit to replace a pitcher is not a charged visit.
- Time out to attend to injured player is not a charged visit.

Coaching rules difference (3-4-3)

When is a defensive visit concluded/counts

- A defensive conference ends when the coach crosses the foul line returning to the dugout; if conference is held in foul territory, it concludes when the coach first starts back toward dugout.
- The opposing team may conference at the same time and is not charged for use of a conference if that conference does not delay the game.
- If there is an unrelated break in the action, the offensive coach may consult with his players and not be charged for a conference. The defensive coach is not allowed this courtesy.

Coaching rules difference

Offensive conferences (3-4-4)

- One offensive conference per inning.

Coaching rules difference

Base coaches (3-2-1)

- Either a player or coach may occupy each coach's box; must be in uniform; anyone on the team in uniform (and not ejected) may be a base coach

Coaching rules difference

Disciplinary actions against coaches

- Three-tier system: verbal warning, written warning (coach restricted to bench) and then ejection. Teams may be subject to bench warning; players subject to immediate ejection.
- Continue to use the Strike 1 warning – restricts coach to bench

Equipment rules difference (1-5-3 & 1-5-4)

NOCSAE

- **COMPLIANCE OF PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT**

- It is critical that coaches understand their responsibility regarding being knowledgeable about the equipment that their players possess and use for game competition. The NOCSAE standard for body/chest protectors is an important piece of equipment that is designed to protect the heart and cardiac cavity and reduce the risk of commotio cordis. **All high school catchers will have to have new body/chest protectors beginning January 1, 2020.** When a coach is asked to verify that his players are properly equipped in accordance with NFHS rules, he/she shall also verify that the participants are using only legal equipment, including bats that are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design, production and meet the provisions of Rule [1-3-2](#) and helmets that meet the provisions of Rule [1-5-1](#) and are free of cracks and damage.

Equipment rules difference

Legal bats / bat regulations

- **Non-wood bats:**
 - Not more than 2-5/8" in diameter at thickest point
 - Not more than 36" in length
 - Not weigh, numerically, more than three ounces less than the length of the bat (i.e., "drop 3")
 - Be certified and labeled as meeting the **BBCOR standard** (permanently imprinted or silk-screened by the manufacturer)
 - Have a safety grip that extends a minimum of 10", but not more than 18", from the handle end of the bat
- **Wood bats:**
 - Must be not more than 2-3/4" in diameter
 - Maximum 36" in length
 - No foreign substance beyond 18" from the end of the handle
 - May have tape or other substance not more than 18" from the handle end of the bat

Equipment rules difference

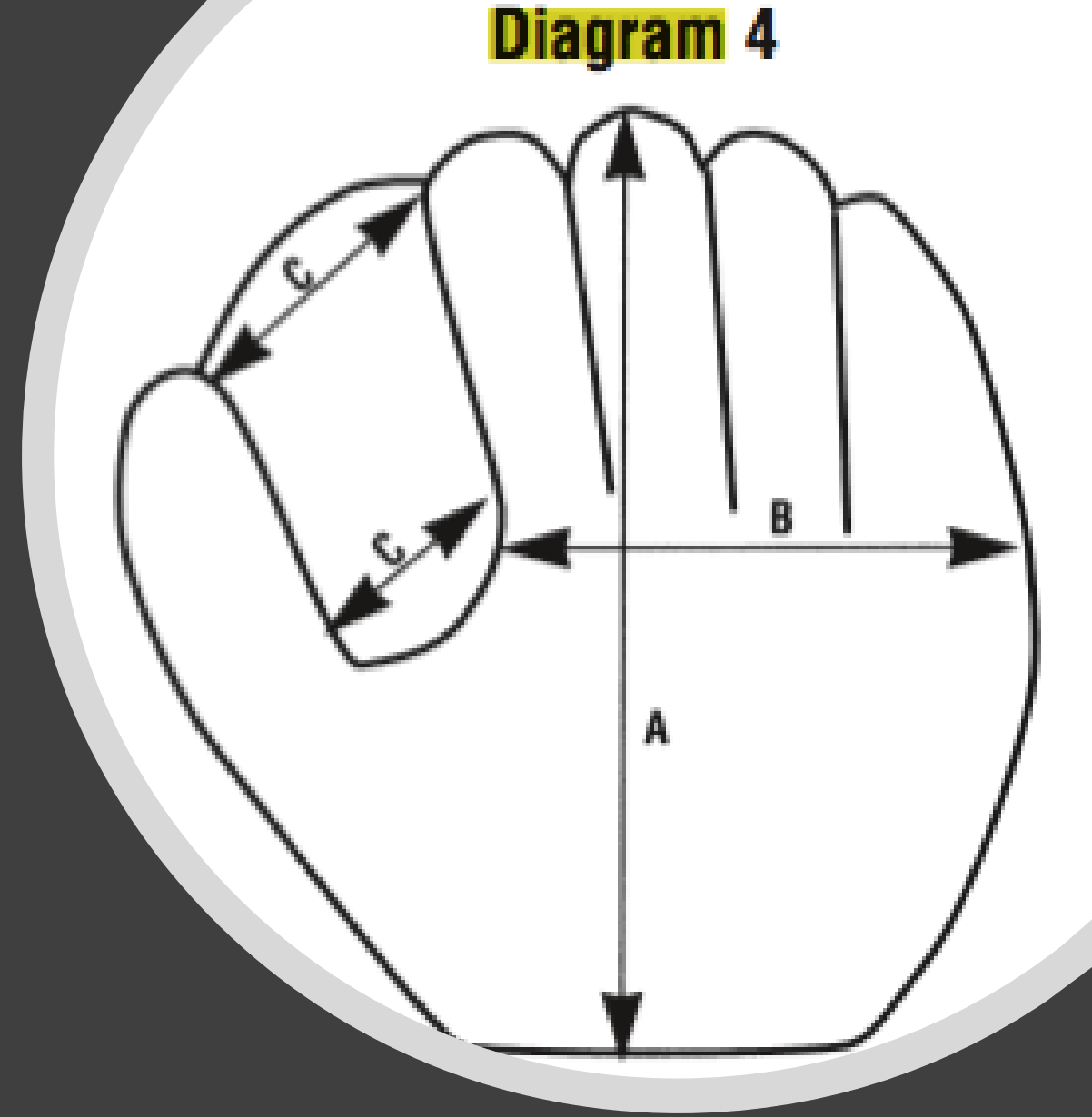
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Diagram 4

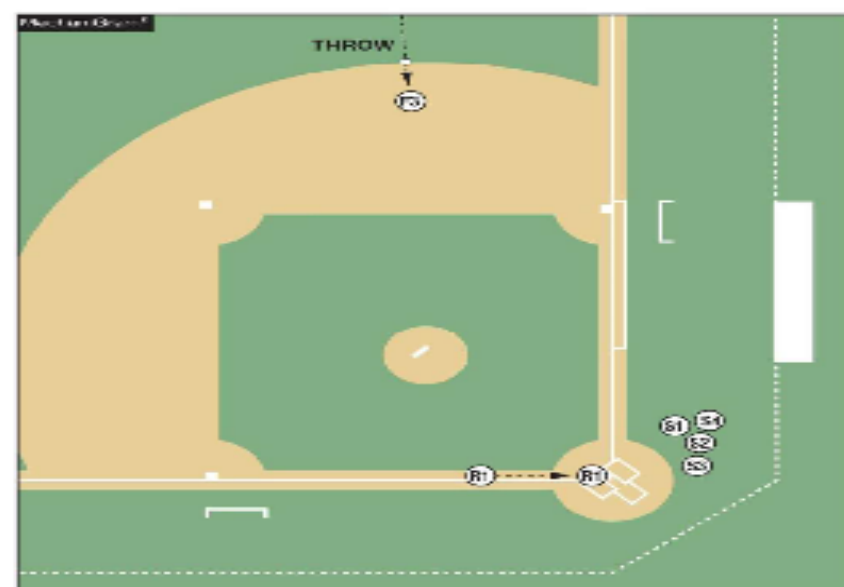
Equipment rules difference

- Catcher's mitt
 - Any size catcher's mitt is allowed.
- First baseman's mitt and all other fielding gloves must conform to size limitations.
 - (A) Height -14 inches
 - (B) Width of Palm - 8 inches
 - (C) Webbing width – 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches
- No restriction of using first baseman's mitt at any position.
- Safety rules for high school play allow breakaway bases at first, second and third, and a “safe-base” at first.



SPORTSMANSHIP — BENCH JOCKEYING AND CELEBRATIONS

Coaches, players, substitutes, attendants or other bench personnel shall not leave the dugout during a live ball for any unauthorized purposes.



SPORTSMANSHIP — BENCH JOCKEYING AND CELEBRATIONS

Coaches or team personnel may not sit outside the dugout/bench area on buckets or stools.



Bench Jockeying not allowed:

- Players are not allowed to make “cat-calls” or any other disparaging remarks during or prior to the game.
- Chants/intentional distractions/loud noises (natural or artificial) directed at the opponent’s pitcher prior to his pitching, or the batter getting ready to hit, or a fielder getting ready to make a play is not good sportsmanship

Rules that are significant or likely to happen:

- Pre-game meeting –
 - No catch and carry
 - Line up cards w/ pitch count info
 - Hidden ball trick allowed
 - Legal equipment question
- Tracking information/line up card
 - Re-entry rules
 - Courtesy runners
 - Conferences - tracking
- Live action:
 - Balks are immediate dead ball
 - Batters' Box rule
 - Fake to third is allowed
 - Slide (Do it legally or avoid)
 - Force Play Slide rule
 - No pop-up and contact/alter play
 - Slide beyond bag and contact/alter play
 - Appeals can be made during dead ball
 - Pitcher's feet aligned on rubber for wind-up position

Mercy rule at 10 runs - All personnel remain in the dugouts during live ball

BASERUNNING AWARDS TABLE

NO. BASES AWARDED	DETERMINED FROM BASE OCCUPIED AT TIME OF:
ONE BASE (runners)	
1. Balk	1. Infraction
2. Pitch from pitcher's plate thrown out of play	2. Pitch
3. Throw from pitcher's plate goes out of play	3. Throw
4. Unintentional catch and carry	4. Pitch
5. *Catcher obstruction (if attempting to advance)	5. Pitch
6. Forced (because batter is awarded 1st base)	6. Pitch
7. Pitch strikes runner	7. Pitch
ONE BASE (batter)	
1. Walk	1. Pitch
2. Pitch thrown out of play on ball four	2. Pitch
3. *Batter is obstructed	3. Pitch
4. Hit by pitch	4. Pitch
5. Runner interference (unintentional)	5. Pitch
6. Umpire interference (hit by batted ball)	6. Pitch
7. Pitch lodges in defensive player's or umpire's uniform or equipment on ball four	7. Pitch
TWO BASES (batter and runners)	
1. Fair batted ball bounces over, through, goes under, lodges in or under fence	1. Pitch
2. #Fair batted ball or thrown ball lodges in defensive player's or umpire's uniform or equipment	2. Pitch
3. *#Live thrown ball or pitch touched by illegal glove or mitt	3. Infraction
4. *#Live thrown ball or pitch touched by detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by fielder	4. Infraction
5. First throw by infielder and ball goes out of play or lodged in or under fence	5. Pitch
6. For any subsequent play by an infielder or for any throw by an outfielder and ball goes out of play or lodges in or under fence.	6. Throw
7. Intentional catch and carry (runners only)	7. Pitch
THREE BASES (batter and runners)	
1. Fair batted ball contacted with detached player equipment or illegal glove/mitt	1. Infraction
FOUR BASES (batter and runners)	
1. Fair batted ball over fence in flight	1. Pitch
2. Fair batted ball hits foul pole above fence in flight	2. Pitch
3. Fair batted ball prevented from going over fence because it is touched by spectator	3. Pitch
4. Fair batted ball prevented from going over fence because of contact with detached player equipment or illegal glove/mitt	4. Pitch
UMPIRE JUDGMENT	
1. Spectator interference	1. Infraction
2. *Runner(s) obstruction (minimum of one base)	2. Infraction
3. Defensive malicious contact	3. Infraction

*Award only if infraction is not ignored

#An award to the batter-runner on a pitch is only made if he has the right to advance to first base.