



# 2024 NFHS BASEBALL RULES INTERPRETATIONS

**Publisher's Note:** The National Federation of State High School Associations is the only source of official high school interpretations. They do not set aside nor modify any rule. They are made and published by the NFHS in response to situations presented.

Dr. Karissa L. Niehoff, Publisher, NFHS Publications © 2024

**SITUATION 1:** The pitcher comes to the mound wearing a wristband containing defensive plays and pitch selections. The wristband is on the non-throwing arm. The opposing coach protests saying the pitcher cannot wear an item while pitching. **RULING:** It is legal for the pitcher to wear the wristband on the non-throwing arm provided it is a solid color, not white or gray, and is non-distracting. (1-6-1)

**SITUATION 2:** The pitcher's wristband containing defensive plays and instructions is of a single, solid color but does not match the color of the jersey or undersleeves. **RULING:** The wristband is not required to match the color of the uniform or the sleeves worn underneath the uniform jersey. (1-6-1)

**SITUATION 3:** The batter, hearing a string of numbers announced by the third-base coach, takes an instruction card from the pants pocket, looks at the card and determines the offensive play and then puts the card back into the pants pocket. **RULING:** This is legal. The card may be kept on the wrist or forearm or in a player's uniform pocket. (1-6-1)

**SITUATION 4:** The pitcher is wearing a communication wristband on the belt. The coach tells the umpire that in the last game the team was told the pitcher could only wear it on the belt as it was distracting if worn on the forearm. **RULING:** Illegal. The wristband can only be worn on a player's wrist or forearm and only on the non-throwing arm of the pitcher. This being the first offense, the coach is issued a warning. (1-6-1)

**SITUATION 5:** The catcher is wearing a one-way electronic communication device with an earpiece but no microphone. The coach in the dugout is relaying to the catcher the next pitch the coach wants the pitcher to deliver. **RULING:** This is legal. (1-6-2)

**SITUATION 6:** The catcher is wearing an electronic device that has the capability of being a two-way communication instrument. The coach tells the umpire that the device is muted so that the catcher cannot talk to the coach. **RULING:** This is an illegal electronic device and must be removed. The coach of the team involved will be issued a team warning. (1-6-2)

**SITUATION 7:** The catcher is wearing an earpiece from a one-way communication device along with an electronic bracelet that displays codes to the catcher only. The opposing coach wants a team warning to be given claiming the catcher cannot be wearing both. **RULING:** Both electronic communication devices are one-way only to the catcher; it is legal for both devices to be worn. (1-6-2)

**SITUATION 8:** The team has been previously warned about the catcher having a two-way communication device. The pitching coach is now giving pitch selections over a one-way communication device to the catcher from the bullpen. **RULING:** This is illegal. The device may only be used from within the dugout/bench area. The pitching coach, catcher and the head coach will be ejected. (3-2-5)

**SITUATION 9:** An assistant coach in the bullpen has an earpiece but no microphone and is simply listening to the pitch instructions to the catcher coming from the dugout. **RULING:** This is illegal. Only one coach in the dugout can have a one-way communication device to relay information to the catcher regarding what pitches to deliver. If this is the first offense, a warning is issued to that team. If not, the assistant and head coaches are both ejected. (3-2-5)

**SITUATION 10:** The head coach is relaying offensive plays to the coaches in the coaching boxes who each have an earpiece from a one-way communication device. **RULING:** This is illegal. Instructions may only be given to a catcher while on defense. The devices must be removed from the assistant coaches and a team warning will be given. (3-2-5)

**SITUATION 11:** The team has used all of its defensive charged conferences, and the coach does not want to change pitchers. The coach tells the catcher to call all the infielders to the mound for the purpose of relaying instructions to them through the catcher and the one-way communication device. The opposing team discovers what is happening and wants a defensive conference to be charged, thus removing the pitcher. **RULING:** This is an illegal use of the one-way communication device. A warning shall be given to the coach. A defensive conference cannot be charged, as a charged conference is a meeting which involves the coach or a non-playing representative of the team and a player or players of the team. (3-2-5, 2-10-1)

**SITUATION 12:** A team's one-way communication device becomes inoperable. The team wants the other team to turn its one-way communication device off. **RULING:** The opposing team does not have to turn its device off and no longer use it during the game. Whether a team decides to use or is able to use, a communication device has no impact on the other team. (3-2-5)

**SITUATION 13:** Multiple coaches have a one-way communication device and are communicating with the catcher. **RULING:** This is illegal. Only one coach in the dugout or bench area may be communicating with the catcher at any one time. (3-2-5 PENALTY)

**SITUATION 14:** A team is using a light board with multiple various color lights to relay instructions to the team. The opposing team complains that it can only be used by the catcher for calling pitches. **RULING:** This system is legal. It may be used by all players along with their wristband devices. (3-2-5, 1-6-1)

**SITUATION 15:** The batter comes to bat with a sliding glove tucked in the back pants pocket. A pitch is thrown and as the batter turns to avoid it, the pitch hits the sliding glove. **RULING:** This is a hit batter, and the batter will be awarded first base. Preventative officiating and asking the batter to tuck the glove completely in the pants pocket may have prevented the situation. (8-1-1d)

**SITUATION 16:** The batter has a sliding glove tucked in the back pants pocket. The batter hits a pitch to left center field and, in an attempt to obtain second base, is tagged by the shortstop on the sliding glove. **RULING:** The batter is out on the tag. (8-4-2h)

**SITUATION 17:** What is "bench-jockeying?" **RULING:** Bench-jockeying occurs when words or actions reflect unfavorably toward another person or team. This may or may not be orchestrated and/or choreographed. Bench-jockeying is negative in focus and includes actions (including verbal) that are intimidating, discouraging, taunting (or insinuation of taunting), baiting, poking fun, and/or intended to rattle the other team and its members. These are some of, but are not limited to, types of actions, that are in violation of the NFHS Bench and Field Conduct Rule 3-3-1. This behavior must be immediately addressed by the officials and coaches and have no place in the game of high school baseball. (3-3-1)

**SITUATION 18:** The pitcher, with runners on the bases, gets on the pitcher's plate in the set position (pivot foot parallel to the pitching plate and touching it) with hands already together, i.e., already set. Is this legal? **RULING:** No, it is not. When a pitcher takes the set position, the pitching hand shall be down at the pitcher's side or behind the pitcher's back. In the motion to become set (to join gloved hand and pitching hand), the pitcher must go to the set position in one continuous motion without interruption with ball in both hands in front of the body at or below the chin. (6-1-3)

**SITUATION 19:** There is one out with runners on third and first bases. The batter hits a double, easily scoring the runner from third base. The runner from first misses second on the way to third. The batter-runner touches first base and touches second but is tagged out in an attempt to return to second base. The defense now successfully ap-

peals the runner from first missing second base. How many runs score? **RULING:** The runner from first was forced at the time second base was missed, so the appeal is a force out. If a runner is forced to a base when he missed touching the base, the appeal is a force out. No runs score since this third out is a force out. (9-1-1b)

**SITUATION 20:** The home crowd is out of control throwing debris on the field and yelling profanity at the opposing team. The umpire-in-chief declares a forfeit on the home team and ends the game. **RULING:** The umpire-in-chief cannot declare a forfeit due to actions of spectators. Umpire jurisdiction is within the confines of the field, i.e., inside the fences. Game management should be requested to bring the situation under control. If game management is unable to bring the spectators' behavior to a satisfactory condition for the game to continue, the game is suspended. (10-2-3h)