

## 2013 NFHS Baseball Rules Interpretations

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**SITUATION 1:** The coach discovers that a player's bat has had the end cap removed and replaced. **RULING:** Once the bat's end cap has been removed, the bat is considered to be an altered bat and hence is an illegal bat for future play. Certain manufacturers consider such alteration of their bats to be unlawful and subject to possible legal action. (1-3-2 Note, 1-3-5)

**SITUATION 2:** On a cold day, a player uses a warming device for his bat before he comes to bat. **RULING:** The bat is now considered to be an illegal bat for the duration of that game. If the player is discovered using the bat, penalties under 7-4-1a would apply. (1-3-5, 7-4-1a)

**SITUATION 3:** The head coach has a tablet computer with video capability in the dugout. However, he is only using the tablet to keep the score and both teams' lineups. **RULING:** This is permissible. The use of a tablet computer or other mobile electronic devices are allowed provided they are not used to monitor or replay any of the game for coaching purposes. (3-3-1f)

**SITUATION 4:** While in the dugout, the coach is using the video capability of his "smartphone" to record his pitcher's delivery to the plate. He intends to use the video to help the pitcher correct a flaw when the team is in the dugout and not on defense. **RULING:** This is not allowed. The head coach will be ejected upon discovery of using the replay capability for coaching purposes. (3-3-1f)

**SITUATION 5:** The coach in the third-base coach's box has a stopwatch that he is using to time the pitcher's delivery to the plate. **RULING:** This is legal. A coach may have in his possession, while occupying a coach's box, a stopwatch, a hard copy of the rules book and a hard copy of a scorebook. (3-3-1i)

**SITUATION 6:** The coach in the first-base coach's box has a smartphone that has the ability to score the progress of the game. **RULING:** This is not allowed. A coach may not have any electronic equipment, other than a stopwatch, while in the coach's box, even if it is intended to be used only for scoring purposes. The umpire shall either restrict the coach to the dugout for the remainder of the game or eject him. (3-3-1i Penalty)

**SITUATION 7:** In the fifth inning of the game, F1 is ejected for vehemently protesting a pitch that was declared to be a ball and he thought should have been strike three. S1 comes in to replace F1. How many warm-up throws is S1 allowed? **RULING:** S1 is allowed eight warm-up throws. The umpire-in-chief, however, may authorize more throws for S1 because F1 left the game due to an ejection. (6-2-2c Exception)

**SITUATION 8:** With runners on first base and third base, the pitcher legally steps toward third and feints a throw. With his pivot foot now off the pitching plate, the pitcher turns and feints a throw to first base. **RULING:** This is a legal pick-off play by the pitcher. (6-2-4a,b)

**SITUATION 9:** With runners on first base and third base, the pitcher legally steps toward third and feints a throw. With his pivot still engaged with the pitching plate, the pitcher turns and feints a throw to first base. **RULING:** This is a balk. While engaged with the pitcher's plate, the pitcher may not feint toward first base. The runner from first is awarded second base and the runner from third is awarded home. (6-2-4a)

**SITUATION 10:** A team plays its home games at a minor league park that has the ability to display radar gun information on the scoreboard. May the information be shown or must it be turned off? **RULING:** The radar gun information displayed on the scoreboard is permissible provided it is used for both teams throughout the game. (3-3-1f)

**SITUATION 11:** On a base hit to the outfield, the runner from third base comes home but misses touching home plate. The on-deck batter physically stops him and shoves him back to the plate, where he then touches it. **RULING:** Physical assistance by a teammate is not allowed unless both players are viable runners. The assisted runner is out and his run does not count. (2-21-1c, 5-1-2f, 3-2-2)

**SITUATION 12:** In the eighth inning, the coach comes out and replaces his pitcher. Two batters later, he asks for “Time,” and goes to the mound to discuss strategy with both the catcher and the pitcher. The opposing coach argues that he must now replace the pitcher. **RULING:** When the game is in extra innings, a team is allowed only one charged conference per inning, but since the coach removed the pitcher on his first visit in the eighth inning, it did not count as a charged conference. Therefore, the coach still had one charged conference available to him in the inning. His conference is legal and he does not have to remove his pitcher. (3-4-1)

**SITUATION 13:** The visiting first baseman comes to the batter’s box with eye black painted on his face from under his eyes extending to his jaw, looking like inverted “bat wings.” Is this legal? **RULING:** Unless the extensive eye black is deemed to be profane, intimidating or taunting intended to embarrass, ridicule or demean, the face paint is legal. (3-3-1g-2)

**SITUATION 14:** With one out, a runner on second base who is not moving on the pitch, and a count of 1-0, the batter attempts to hit the pitch to right field. The catcher reaches out for the ball and obstructs the batter, causing him to foul off the pitch. The coach, wanting the batter to stay at bat, tells the plate umpire he does not want the award for obstruction on his batter, and he elects to take the result of the play. **RULING:** The coach may decline the obstruction penalty and accept the result of the play. The game continues with a runner on second base, one out and a count of 1-1. (8-1-1e)

**SITUATION 15:** With a runner on first base and no outs, the batter hits a high fly ball near the dirt/grass intersection between first base and second base. The runner was stealing on the pitch and, with his coach yelling for him to return, turns around and heads back to first base. The runner, as he returns, brushes the second baseman, who does not catch the pop fly. The second baseman quickly picks up the ball and throws to second base for an apparent force-out. No one says a word as the next batter comes to the plate with a runner on first base and one out. **RULING:** As soon as the runner from first contacts the second baseman attempting to catch the pop fly, interference should be declared and the ball made immediately dead. The runner is out for his interference; and because his interference prevented the catch of the pop fly, the batter-runner is also declared out. The next batter comes to bat with the bases empty and two outs. (8-4-2g)

**SITUATION 16:** With runners at second base and third base and one out, the infield is playing in to prevent the runner on third from scoring. The sharply hit batted ball goes up the middle, passing the pitcher, and the second baseman and shortstop. There is no other infielder in position to make a play on the ball. The batted ball hits the runner while he is standing on second base. **RULING:** The ball remains live and in play. The runner at second is not out as the ball had passed an infielder and no infielder was in position to make a play. (8-4-2k)

**SITUATION 17:** With a runner on second base, Smith, who is a pure pull hitter, comes to bat. The defense puts on a shift that has the shortstop playing near third base and the second baseman playing almost directly behind second base. The batter hits a sharp ground ball that contacts the runner who is standing on second base at the time. **RULING:** The ball is dead and the runner on second base is declared out. The second baseman is in position to make a play, and the base does not protect the runner when it is not an infield-fly situation. (8-4-2k)

**SITUATION 18:** With runners on third base and first base, there is one out and a count of 2-2 on the batter. The batter swings and misses the pitch for the third strike, as both runners are stealing on the pitch. The batter steps out across home plate and interferes with the catcher’s throw to second base. The throw is still made and is in time to retire the runner stealing from first base. The runner from third scores before the out on the runner at second is made. **RULING:** Since the throw from the catcher resulted in the out at second base, the interference by the batter is ignored. The run by the runner from third base will count since it occurred before the third out was declared at second base (time play). (7-3-5 Penalty, 9-1-1)

**SITUATION 19:** The runner at first base takes off in an attempt to steal second base. The pitcher legally makes a spin move and throws to unoccupied second base to easily retire the stealing runner. The third-base coach argues, saying the pitcher cannot throw to an unoccupied base. **RULING:** A pitcher may throw or feint a throw to an unoccupied base in an attempt to put out or drive back a runner. The out stands. (6-2-4b)

**SITUATION 20:** With runners at first base and second base, the runner at second bluffs a steal of third by running hard to third before he stops and retreats back to second base. The pitcher, seeing the runner take off hard to third base, legally throws to the unoccupied third base. The third-base coach wants a balk called on the pitcher since the runner from second stopped. **RULING:** A pitcher may throw or feint a throw to an unoccupied base in an attempt to put out or drive back a runner. As long as the umpire judges that it is reasonable for the pitcher to believe he had a play at third, even though the runner stopped, it is a legal move. (6-2-4b)