

Spring breaks are over for *most* schools and league races begin. I have included several 'odds and ends' for early season. Since most schools 're-up' their non-league contracts soon after playing a game THIS season, I have an important column on the left regarding the 2013 season and how start dates and Easter may affect your scheduling.

Jerry Snodgrass, Ass't. Commissioner

Looking Ahead

Yes..I know. We have only a few weeks in the scorebook and I am talking about 'next year'. However, something I mentioned LAST year in a TWIB regarding next year's schedule is a reminder again to 'look ahead' before making arrangements for travel, etc. Look at the following dates:

Season Start Date (2013): March 30, 2013
Easter: March 31, 2013

What does this mean? A growing trend is for schools to 'head south' for spring break and play games in non-bordering states; South Carolina, Florida, and Georgia for example. With the Season Start date moving later next year (it was March 24 THIS year), it may affect your Spring Break travel plans with your team. Why...might you ask? But with the first game permitted on **MARCH 31** of next year, this could have serious ramifications on 'spring break' baseball.

First, teams are not permitted to travel out of state just to *practice or just scrimmage*. And, one of the more important regulations to consider is this: **General Sports Regulation 21.5; A scrimmage must be considered the same for all schools involved.** What does this mean? It means that YOUR school cannot 'call' it a scrimmage on YOUR schedule while it is a 'game' on the other teams schedule. Check this out carefully when playing out of state schools as their contest limitations are most likely different than Ohio's. A few "Q and A's" to help you:

Q: If I take my chances, is there a chance the OHSAA will change the start date for games?

A: No. These start dates are set and there is no plan to change these dates.

Q: If we schedule and play a game on 3/30/13 (the first day for contests) and practice all week while on 'the trip', is that 'ok'?

A: Yes, as long as that contest is a GAME. The regulation says that you must play a contest while in a non-bordering state.

A reminder; this regulation applies to travel out of state to NON-BORDERING states.

Odds & Ends

"Play Lists"

You thought only football quarterbacks and linebackers used play lists on the wrist (or elsewhere)? Guess again, as many teams wear them in the field with their defensive plays. Some of these, just as you see in the NFL have a flap covering them, some do not. Most are worn on the wrist/forearm or on the belt. They **are legal**. Pitchers can also wear one...but it **must be on the non-throwing arm** and cannot be white or gray.

Sunglasses

It comes up every year. Just remember..we live in Ohio and we should be thankful when the sun is out. Remembering that will remind you that there are no rules/regulations concerning sunglasses. They can be worn on the bill of the cap and pitchers can wear them. Keep in mind that the umpire can always rule something as 'distracting to a batter' but should only occur if the pitcher is wearing reflective (silver coated) sunglasses.

Face Painting

Seriously? Yes...it actually has come up. My editorial comment first.... Coaches, please don't let your players do this. Please. Respect the Game is more than just a slogan. So I hesitate to even go further with this...BUT...there is no rule prohibiting 'eye black' or face painting. IF a pitcher has it on...it still must be considered not distracting by the umpire to be legal. And, it must meet all requirements of Rule 3-3-1 which references it cannot be used to intimidate, be unsporting, be profane, or intend to embarrass, ridicule or demean others.

College "Workouts"

Each season, it seems to grow; 'workouts' or 'tryouts' at the collegiate level for high school players. It falls under "non-interscholastic participation" and is **not permitted during the season of play**. I generally hear about it at the NAIA level but have had a few reports of athletes being contacted by Division II schools to come to their campus and workout for them. These are not permitted. I have contacted the NAIA (and may choose to do the same now with NCAA) asking them to put out a release to their member schools informing them Ohio and many other states do not permit this.

Scrimmages...

Probably unlikely this year that you did not use all your allotted scrimmages (4), but in the event you did NOT use them all, you are permitted to use them any time during the season of play, including during tournament time. Just remember that a scrimmage for YOUR team must also be a scrimmage for the OTHER team as well

"Play of the Day"

This year, I am including a page of "plays of the day" as compiled by Kyle McNeely, the OHSAA's "Director of Development for Umpires. The former chair of the NFHS Baseball Rules Committee, is responsible for overseeing the pre-season and continuing education for baseball umpires across the state. One aspect of this continuing education is providing "Plays of the Day" to associations across the state. This week's are on page 2 of this week's TWIB and a link to a complete compilation is also included.





Plays of the Day – from DOD Kyle McNeely

A complete compilation of ALL “Plays of the Day” can be found by going to:
<http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bb/boys/2012/TWIB2012POD.pdf>



The following is a listing of the most recent “Plays of the Day” and the subsequent correct rulings that would be made as a result. Most are taken from actual cases that have occurred around the nation. Kyle McNeely is the OHSAA’s Director of Development for baseball umpires and is responsible for the education of umpires as well as recruiting new umpires. Kyle is the former chair of the NFHS Baseball Rules Committee.

Number One:

The Play: With no outs and runners on first and second base, a batter hits a line drive to the shortstop which bounces off his glove and hits the runner who has a lead off second base. The ball then bounces directly back to the shortstop without hitting the ground. The shortstop gloves the ball and throws to the second baseman, who tags second and fires to first before the runner off first can get back to the base, and before the batter reaches first. The defense begins to celebrate its first ever triple play. The coach of the offense looks cross-eyed at the base umpire and asks, “What just happened?” What does the umpire tell him?

The offensive coach truly thought that when the batted ball, deflected off the shortstop's glove hit his runner, the ball was dead and his runner was out. he couldn't believe that the umpires kept the ball live and in play. The defensive coach was celebrating what he thought was his team's first triple play.

The Ruling: In all reality, *neither* coach is right. When a ball comes off an infielder and hits an offensive runner it stays live and in play (unless the runner intentionally hit the ball). But, when it bounced off the runner and back to the shortstop, it can not be secured as a catch. The rules state that “It is not a catch when a fielder touches a batted ball in flight which then contacts a member of the offensive team or an umpire and is then caught by a defensive player.” So, the shortstop did not make a legal catch. The ball is treated now just like a ground ball. The defense turned a double play, but not a triple play. The runner from first and the batter runner are out!

Number Two:

The Play: With two outs and runners on second and first in a tie game, the home team batter rips a double that is miss-played into a triple. The runner from second base crosses but does not touch home plate. The runner from first then touches the plate, scoring another run. The catcher, noticing (mainly because the on-deck batter kept yelling to the runner from second to touch home) the miss of home plate, properly appeals to the home plate umpire that the runner from second missed touching home. The plate umpire, very happy with himself, does indeed call that runner out, and announces to the official scorekeeper that only one counted, as the second run scored because it was a “timing” play. Everyone nodded their heads in agreement, with the coaches making a mental note to tell the assignor what a good crew they had that day. The home team goes on and eventually wins by that one run margin. So...how did the umpires REALLY do on this?

The Ruling: Indeed, had the defense not appealed at all, both runs would have scored. But when they successfully appealed that the runner from second missed home, actually neither run can count.

By rule, no run can score if the third out is made by a preceding runner who is out upon appeal because he failed to touch a base or left a base too soon on a caught fly ball. The game remains tied.

Also, in this case as well, once the runner from first touched home, the runner from second no longer has the ability to return and touch home plate.

Even if he does so, upon a proper appeal, he will be called out.

That will get the rule experts in the stands going.

Number Three:

This play is a scoring play that has the possibility of involving an appeal, which could change the score.

The Play: With the bases loaded, the batter hits a looping fly ball that everyone thinks will drop for a base hit. All the runners are off and running and never retouch their respective base. But, the right fielder makes a “Baseball Tonight” spectacular catch. He comes firing the ball to second base for out number two on the runner from second who did not tag up. The second baseman then completes the triple play when he throws the ball to first for the third out on that runner who also had failed to tag up. The runner from third scored before the out at first was recorded. So, the discussion was on how many runs were counted? The offense thought one; the defense thought none since, well it was a triple play.

The Ruling: Even though the runner from third did not retouch third base, his run will count if the defense does not properly appeal his base running mistake. If they do not appeal, the play is a time play, with his run counting since he touched home before the third out at first occurred.

However, if the defense appeals before the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory, then it would be considered a fourth out and would take precedence over the third out at first base, thus negating the run. In other words, even though we have three outs, the defense may still properly appeal the infraction and have the run not count. If they fail to do so, count it for the offense. But, the fourth out does not carry over to the next inning, as the defensive coach tried to argue.