

# THIS WEEK IN BASEBALL



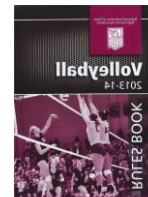
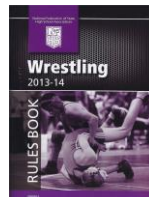
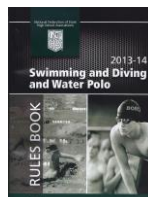
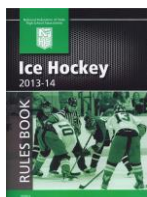
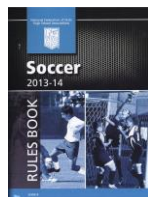
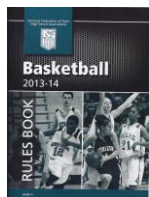
The Ohio High School Athletic Association

The NFHS Rules Process

Updated July 19, 2016

## Who Made That Rule?

With the recent NFHS decision to require ‘pitch counts’, it is more important than ever to understand the “Rules Process” and how the ‘rules of the game’ are NATIONAL rules for all High School’s across the nation. And...there is a reason for it. Examples of “why a helmet cannot be worn in soccer” to ‘why is there no ‘shot clock’ in basketball? The “BBCOR” bat rule in baseball, Suspended/Completed game procedures....What? Many believe I do this – sit back and make rules of the game that I want. I don’t.... the process is much more complicated and thorough and here it is explained.



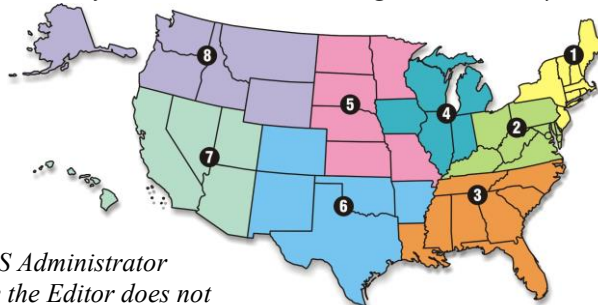
### The Rules of the Game are NATIONAL Playing Rules

The OHSAA is a member of the “NFHS” ([www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)). One of the many functions of the NFHS is to write playing rules for **most** sports. These playing rules are codified each year in the Rules Book for each sport -examples you see above. Though there may be a rule or two that the OHSAA sport administrator may not totally agree with, as a member of the NFHS, the OHSAA agrees to abide by all playing rules adopted by the NFHS.

### National Rules Committees & Representation on the “Committee”

Each sport recognized by the NFHS is represented by its “Rules Committee”. THE “committee” is comprised of a representative from each of 8 “Sections” across the nation plus a representative from the NFHS Officials Committee and a representative from the NFHS Coaches Committee. These members serve staggered 4 year terms with an additional member elected as the Chair.

Mr. Bob Gardner, NFHS Executive Director serves as the publisher and an NFHS Administrator who administrates that specific sport at the national level, serves as Editor. Only the Editor does not have voting privileges on the committee. Football is ‘unique’ in that 1 individual from each state association office (OHSAA in our case makes up the Football Rules Committee.



The NFHS divides the US into 8 different ‘Sections’. Each Section elects one representative from the states making up that section to the Rules Committee. Ohio is part of ‘Section 2’ which includes PA, WV, KY, VA, DE and MD

### Committee Members & Meetings

Each “Rules Committee” meets 3 times per year at the NFHS offices in Indianapolis. The first meeting is to entertain and review the different proposals that come before the Committee as well as review the input received from questionnaires provided to all state association administrators, officials and coaches (see ‘input’ below)

### Input for Rule Changes

An important aspect of the Rule (change) Process is receiving input from a wide range of individuals involved in the sport. Officials and Coaches are represented by their representative to the Committee. Each Section is represented by its selected member. During the season, every sport administrator in each state is provided a list of survey questions regarding trends and current issues that may have developed during the year. Toward the end of each season, every school coach along with every registered Class 1 official in the nation is given the opportunity to respond to a survey about trends in the game. The results of this survey are the basis for the Committee’s agenda at its January meeting. Also, prior to the January meeting, individuals across the nation (coaches, officials and administrators) are provided an opportunity to submit “Rules Proposals” to the Committee. These proposals must first be read and approved by the state association sport administrator (such as myself) and signed by the state’s Commissioner before submission to the Committee for consideration.

### Rule Change Proposals...What Happens Next?

Once proposals are received, the NFHS staff liaison meets with the Chair of the Rules Committee to evaluate the proposals and determine which proposals make the ‘all important’ next Committee meeting agenda. The agenda is provided to each state association for input and each state association administrator is contacted by the representative elected from their Section for feedback and direction. Any proposal that makes it to the agenda for discussion it must be approved by a margin of 2 votes to be considered for possible approval.

- Those that DO make it to the agenda for discussion, the entire committee reviews and works on the proposal.
- Vote is taken by the Committee and the proposal must pass by a margin of 2 votes to become a rule

### Rule Change Proposals...What Happens Next? (Continued from Previous Page)

- Any proposal that **DOES** pass by a margin of 2 votes now moves to the NFHS Rules Review Committee. This committee is comprised of NFHS staff member involved in writing rules. The object is to review for consistency with other rules.
- After review and (if) approval, the rule change is sent to the NFHS Board of Directors who make the final decision as to whether a rule change will take place.
- If the NFHS Board of Directors make no comment...**RULE CHANGE!**
- The NFHS Rules Book is changed, the Case Book is changed and the communication to all states, coaches and officials is developed.

**Note:** The Rules Review Committee or the NFHS Board of Directors will **not change** any proposal that comes to them, but they **MAY** refer it back to the original Rules Committee for further discussion.

### How does the OHSAA Implement the Changes?

Each state is provided a News Release announcing any adopted Rule Change. This announcement generally takes place 3-4 months prior to the start of the season and is placed on the OHSAA's website and communicated to the Coaches' Association recognized by the OHSAA for that sport. Additionally, it is shared with the OHSAA's Director of Development for Officials in that specific sport. Then each of the following are scheduled and/or conducted:

#### National Rules Interpretation Meeting

Each state administrator logs on to a national webinar conducted by the NFHS Sport Administrator to review all Rule Changes, Editorial Changes and Points of Emphasis. This meeting offers an opportunity for open dialogue and Q and A's

#### State (Ohio) Interpreters Clinic

Each local Umpires' association has an "interpreter". These interpreters come to a meeting at the OHSAA to review the Rule Changes, Editorial Changes, Points of Emphasis and any official pertinent information. Their task of course is to take this to their local umpires' associations and convey it there. This meeting is conducted 2-3 weeks prior to the start of the season and conducted by the "Director of Development" (see inset) and the OHSAA's Sport Administrator (Jerry Snodgrass for Soccer)

#### State Mandated Rules Interpretation Meetings

Coaches and Umpires across Ohio **MUST** attend a State Rules Meeting each year. The OHSAA has attempted to help both groups by offering the meetings online and as well as a limited number of 'face to face' meetings across the state. These meetings utilize the information.

#### Local Officials Meetings

In addition to the mandated STATE Rules Meetings, each umpire in the state is required to attend 4 additional meetings at their local association during the soccer season. These "**Local**" meetings have agendas/topics set by the sport's Director of Development.

#### **Directors of Development Key Part of Rule Enforcement**

*In 2009, the OHSAA recognized "Directors of Development" to serve as the lead rules interpreter and liaison to officials for each sport the OHSAA sponsors. These "DOD's" have the responsibility not only of interpreting rules but also for providing educational opportunities for officials and recruiting new officials. The DOD's assist with tournament assignments while also developing meeting agendas for required 'local' officials association meetings.*

### Exceptions? Of Course there are. They are called **STATE ADOPTIONS!**

There is a slight bit of latitude given to the states that permits each state to adopt a certain rule if they so choose. These 'exceptions' are known as **State Adoptions**. Basically, any rule that is permitted to be adopted or not adopted by a state (therefore the term 'State Adoption'), is a rule that does not cause or create any fundamental difference in the game itself. One of the best examples would be the '3-pt line' in basketball. It is **NOT** a '**State Adoption**', meaning states do not have a choice whether to adopt it or not. If one state were to have the 3-pt line and another state not, it would create an anomaly within the fundamental rules of the game and eliminate the necessary consistency from state to state. So, **State Adoptions** are generally granted for rules that if varied from state to state would have little fundamental difference in the game itself. And I know your next question...What ARE some examples of state adoptions? There are actually 9 in **baseball** but here are a few;

- States are permitted to determine whether to use a 'double first base'. Ohio does not.
- States are permitted whether to permit protests of games or not. Ohio (and most states) does not.
- States are permitted to use a "10 run rule". Ohio does.

So you can see from this – there are certain variations in the rules that are permitted on a state by state basis but then generally do not change the fundamental concept of the game itself. Each sport has a number of these and are listed in the back of the NFHS Rules Books.

**And, the decision to implement a pitch count is NOT a state adoption, however the exact number and rest period IS permitted state by state.**

### So Now, The Million Dollar Question... "Do we HAVE to follow all the NFHS Rules?"

**Q:** What if a state chooses not to follow all the Rules adopted by the NFHS or a selected Rule Change?

**A:** That state loses its opportunity to be part of the National Rules Committee either by sitting on the committee or by supplying input through the various questionnaires. Ohio would lose this opportunity if we would choose not to follow NFHS Rules. And, the OHSAA Constitution created by our member schools actually **requires us to follow all NFHS Rules**. So, end of story!