

THIS WEEK IN BASEBALL - 2014



The Ohio High School Athletic Association

Issue #2 – April 16, 2014

Snowstorms on Tuesday, Sunny and 65 on Friday. Yes, here we go again. Patience, patience, patience. I have been a little behind getting this #2 posted, and much of this is centered around some early issues that have surfaced once we HAVE started playing games. I will be focusing more on ejections and the growing misconception that video evidence can be used for 'getting calls right'. Until next week, best of luck to everyone as it finally appears spring is here.

Jerry Snodgrass
Assistant Commissioner

Who Hired These Umps????

YOU did! This is something that is gaining significant attention since many have lost sight of the process of hiring officials (in all sports) for interscholastic contests. Maybe we all need to get back to the basics of understanding the process. Consider this:

-All contests NEED officials. Though I tried to work out a plan for coaches to 'call their own', it doesn't seem to work. So....contest officials are a necessity.

-Contest officials in Ohio (in all sports) generally have more training required of them than coaches do. Contrary to belief, they do not receive officiating licenses from Wal-Mart on sale days.

Coaches' Guides Online

This year, in an attempt to eliminate printing costs and save on mailing, the "Coaches Guide" (Pre-Season Manual) is posted online and was not mailed. You can download that to your computer at:

<http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bb/boys/bbmanual.pdf>

May 4 Tournament Draw

Difficult to believe that I am referencing "tournament draw" now with the tough early season weather we have experienced BUT....please put on your calendar the Tournament Draw on **Sunday, May 4 at 2:00 p.m.**

Transfer Player?

Though all transfer issues are handled through the Athletic Administrator, many schools have an individual that will become eligible after the first half of the season due to the 'new' transfer regulation that went into effect this school year. Just a reminder since so many have inquired, those individuals become eligible **after the completion of your team's 13th regular season contest**. No doubt weather has hindered this a little, however, in the past that individual would have been ineligible for 1 calendar year from the date of transfer.

Ejections

This year, like all years, there is an attempt to reduce ejections. So far, there have been 38 ejections to date in baseball. But a few facts:

- **Video Evidence/Replay is NOT permitted**
- **Appeals are not heard on any ejection**
- **Umpires submit ejection reports online which trigger an email to the school Athletic Director**

Each school agrees to hiring an umpire, whether it is the home school or the away school. That agreement is made by the officials contract AND the contract with the opposing school – the agreement to the officials of the contest AND to abide by all decisions they make.

"Chrome" Helmets

Bats, bat warmers, play cards.....something new develops weekly it seems. The "new" thing appears to be 'Chrome' helmets. Under Armour is manufacturing a solid chrome batting helmet. This helmet is not a legal helmet for high school competitive play. It is not a stretch of imagination to see how the sun's reflection off a solid chrome helmet might cause issues for the defense. A picture of the helmet is show below.



"5 Inning Games"

Here we go again...MANY requests come in regarding playing "5 inning" games. This is easy to understand when I mention what the length of a game is. The length of a game is 7 innings – not 4 innings, not 5 innings, not 6 innings; 7 innings. So...you are not permitted to schedule a 5 inning game. Games are 7 innings in length by NFHS rule.

Axe Handled Bats

And there's more....There are several Bat Manufactures who make bat models with handles that resemble an ax handle. These bats, provide they meet the other requirements found in Rule 1-3-2 through 1-3-5, are legal for competitive play. We have had a couple of games where the bat was not allowed. Please pass on to all your umpires that these bats are legal. A picture of the handle from one of the bat models is above.



Pitcher Being Designated Hitter for Himself

There have been several instances this past week where a coach attempted, and even insisted that is was legal, for his pitcher to DH for himself. That is NOT the high school rule. Starting defensive players, by NFHS rule, cannot be the Designated Hitter. One coach convinced the umpiring crew by showing them a NCAA laminated DH card. Be professional and courteous, but do not allow a coach to use any of his defensive players to DH for themselves or any other player.

The use of an "Extra Hitter" (EH) in High School

A few coaches have attempted to include in their lineup the use of a tenth batter, the EH. The use of an Extra Hitter is not legal for high school baseball play.

Re-Entry for a Designation Hitter

There has been a fair amount of confusion concerning a DH's re-entry ability. As a starting player, the DH has one re-entry to the game afforded to him, just as any of the other starting nine players. But, the first time the DH enters the game as a defensive player, it is not his re-entry being used. As an example, let's say that Luther is the starting second baseman and Evans is the DH batting for Luther. In the third inning, the coach has Evans, the starting DH, come into the game defensively. That is Luther's first exit from the game and the role of the DH is now terminated for the balance of the game. It is not a re-entry for Evans. Now, in the fifth inning, the coach has Luther return to the defense. That is Luther's re-entry and Evans first exit from the game. To complete the scenario, let's say Evans now comes back and Luther goes back to the bench. Luther is now done for the game, he has no re-entry availability left, and it is Evans' only re-entry. If Evans is later pulled again, he would no longer be able to participate at that time.

The Third-to-First (31) Pickoff Move

Another 'confusion' has occurred on a few occasions in which this "3rd to 1st" move has been "balked," simply because it was thought that the "31" move was illegal. The "31" pickoff move is a legal move, provided the other aspects of the pickoff attempt meet the requirements of rule 6-4 and umpires across the state have been given special correspondence reinforcing this.

But...I have Video Evidence!!!

It is an amazing time, cameras are smaller than ever and most cell phones have camera/video capabilities better than VERY expensive cameras and recorders of the past. Nothing happens today without someone having video evidence. But...keep in mind there is a human element involved in officiating all athletics. But what about the 'need to get it right'? Where does it stop? Do we permit video evidence for ejections only, or do we get the play at second base right by use of video replay. What makes one more important than the other? But even the MLB and NFL that use video replay have limitations AND standards. The NFHS opened up the ability to use video replay in states at state tournament contests in basketball – but ONLY when there is a minimum number of cameras and camera angles AND only at a specified time.

Whether it be the NFHS rules that state the 'decision of all officials is final' or the OHSAA's bylaw that indicates that "there are no appeals granted on ejections", the fact remains that **Video Evidence cannot be used**. Why? Do we use the cell phone from mom sitting in the stands? Do we use the tv station that happened to have footage of it? Are there errors made? Yes. Though many disagree, it is part of the game. Until the standards change, video evidence cannot be used to remove the human element in high school sports. – even to 'get it right'.