



UNDER
THE
STRIPES

BASEBALL

RULES REFERENCE

HIGH SCHOOL OFFICIALS QUICK GUIDE
2027 NFHS ADVANCE REFERENCE

CODE & GENDER APPLICATION

NFHS baseball rules are not gender-specific. Softball is governed by a separate rules code.

Study aid only. Always use the current official rulebook, interpretations, mechanics manual, state or conference adoptions, bulletins and assignment instructions.

THE STORIES BEHIND THE CALLS

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Core Contest Framework

Start here before moving into situation-specific study.

Topic	Quick reference
Players / game	Nine defensive players; seven innings. State associations govern suspended games, run rules and postseason procedures.
Field	90-foot bases; pitching distance 60 ft 6 in. Field tolerances and recommended fence distances are in the rules book.
Batting order	Bat in listed order; substitutions and re-entry must comply with NFHS eligibility rules.
Pitching	Pitcher must use a legal windup or set position; know balk/illegal-pitch distinctions with runners on or off base.
Dead ball	Distinguish immediate dead ball, delayed dead ball and live-ball infractions before ruling on awards.
Designated hitter	NFHS DH options differ from professional and college codes; confirm lineup roles before first pitch.

Pregame Crew Checklist

- Confirm jurisdiction, start time, contest level, crew assignments and state/local modifications.
- Inspect playing area, equipment, clocks, team/bench areas and required game personnel.
- Conduct the required coaches/captains meeting; address sportsmanship and unusual ground/facility conditions.
- Review timing, substitution, timeout, penalty and end-of-period/inning procedures.
- Establish crew communication, primary coverage, rotations, help situations and emergency procedures.

Primary Coverage & Mechanics

Use the current NFHS officials manual and your state mechanics. Maintain a patient whistle/flag, officiate your primary, expand only when necessary, and communicate decisive information to the crew before enforcement.

High-Priority Rules

Area	What the official must know
2027 first base	Effective January 1, 2027, a double first base or larger first base is permitted under the revised field rule. Study the exact use and runner/fielder obligations.
Player communication	2026 guidance prohibits players from wearing audio/video equipment for communication; use only rule-authorized devices and locations.
Pitching positions	Read hands, pivot foot, free foot, start/stop action, feints and disengagement under NFHS definitions.
Obstruction / interference	Know whether the act is immediate or delayed dead ball, the protected runner, awards and post-play enforcement.
Force-play slide rule	Judge the runner's slide, direction, reach of base and illegal contact; enforce interference and possible double play.
Bench conduct	Address profanity, baiting, bench jockeying and unsporting acts early and consistently.

Gender & Competition Differences

Area	Application
Baseball participants	Same rules regardless of gender.
Baseball vs softball	Not a gender conversion. Field, pitching, ball, bat, substitution and timing rules differ by sport.
State modifications	Run rules, pitch-count restrictions and game-ending procedures may differ by state/level.

Important

A boys/girls distinction is included only where an actual equipment, dimension, adoption or competition difference exists. The absence of a separate section means the same NFHS playing rule applies.

Situations to Review

Situation	Crew response / study point
Batter interferes with catcher's throw	Call interference when the batter's act meets the rule; declare appropriate outs/returns based on the play.
Runner misses a base	Keep ball status and appeal requirements in mind; do not announce the miss to either team.
Coach visits pitcher	Record conferences accurately and apply removal requirements only when the rule threshold is met.
Potential malicious contact	Rule independently of obstruction/interference; eject when required and administer the ball/runner awards.

Postgame Self-Review

- Which ruling required the strongest rules knowledge?
- Did the crew communicate ball status, clock status, penalty/foul details and restart correctly?
- Was any call made outside a primary without clear necessity?
- What rule, case play or mechanic should be verified before the next assignment?
- What one crew adjustment would improve consistency?

Official References

NFHS Baseball Rules

<https://nfhs.org/sports/baseball/rules>

2026 Comments on Rules

<https://nfhs.org/resources/sports/baseball-comments-on-the-rules-2026>

2027 Rules Changes

<https://nfhs.org/sports/baseball/rules>

RULES DISCLAIMER

This educational quick reference is not an official rules book and does not reproduce the complete NFHS code. Rules, interpretations and state adoptions change. Before every season and assignment, consult the current NFHS rules book, case book, officials manual, your state high school association and the contest administrator.