

# 2009 BASEBALL HIGHLIGHTS

## HELMETS REQUIRED IN MANY SITUATIONS

Several areas of the NFHS rule book address situations in which players and others are required to wear helmets. The rules (1-5-1, 1-5-6, 1-5-5) also spell out requirements for the helmets themselves. In order to maintain safety of participants, it is important that the rules are obeyed and enforced. On-deck batters, batters, runners, retired runners, and players or students serving as base coaches must wear a batting helmet that meets the NOCSAE standard while the ball is alive. Non-adult ball shaggers or batboys must wear helmets any time they are in live-ball territory. If anyone who is required to wear a batting helmet deliberately removes a helmet in live-ball territory while the ball is live, a team warning is issued to that team's coach, unless the ball becomes dead without being touched by a fielder or, after being touched, goes directly to dead-ball territory. **Situation 1:** B2's fly ball goes over the fence for a home run. He removes his helmet between third base and home. **Ruling:** In (a) there is no warning, or penalty because the ball is dead. **Situation 2:** A youngster serving as a batboy is wearing a helmet that is made for an older person and is too big. **Ruling:** The batboy must wear a helmet that fits properly. Simply wearing a helmet does not meet the rule.

- NOCSAE standard (stamp) required for offensive team members and catcher(s)
- Full ear protections both sides for offensive team members and catcher(s)
- Mask/helmet tested together (same mfg.); Note: Can't use two separate pieces manufactured by two different manufacturers; throat protector required, but not part of NOCSAE test; both coaches will verify that all equipment, including catcher's equipment is legal. Hockey style catchers helmet, legal.

## UNDERSTANDING THE D.H. RULE

Some sections of the rule book prove confounding to many umpires. One in particular is the designated hitter rule. Here are points to remember regarding the D.H. rule. In NFHS rules, the D.H. is not restricted to batting for the pitcher, but may bat for any player in the lineup. That rule coupled with the re-entry rule, allows the coach great flexibility. It is important to note the D.H. is not associated with any defensive position, but is associated with a spot in the batting order (3-1-4). For example, the starting lineup lists Brett as the D.H. in the fourth spot batting for John, the right fielder. In the third inning, Brian comes in to right field and John goes to pitch. The D.H. is unaffected by that substitution. John is still associated with the fourth spot and Brett is still the D.H. for John. Instead of a D.H. for the right fielder, we have a D.H. for the pitcher. Brian as the new right fielder will have to hit in the original pitcher's spot in the order. The following acts terminate the use of the NFHS D.H. for the remainder of the game and require the player for whom the D.H. is batting and any substitutes for that player to bat for themselves. (1) The D.H. Plays on defense. (2) The player for whom the D.H. is batting bats for himself. **Situation:** NFHS rules. Green is the starting pitcher and is batting third. Smith is the D.H. batting in the fifth spot for the left fielder Jones. In the bottom of the fifth, the coach visits the mound and announces he wants Smith to pitch and Green to leave the game. **Ruling:** Legal, but Jones must also leave the game. The entry of Smith to pitch terminates the D.H. Smith and Jones were in the same spot in the batting order, so only one can remain. The entering substitute will bat in the third spot. As an alternative, Green could remain in the game and go to left field or any other defensive position.

## CHECKING BATS AND HELMETS

For the purpose of expediting pre-game inspections, coaches please make all bats and helmets available for inspection by the umpire crew 10 minutes prior to the game. One of the preliminary responsibilities of the umpires upon walking onto the field is to check the bats and helmets of both teams. Umpires should continue their diligent effort to inspect bats for the BESR label. Additionally, umpires are responsible for checking bats for dents, cracks, flattened surfaces, manufactured flaws that would deface the ball. These bats shall be removed from the game. Helmets that are cracked, missing padding, etc., shall be prohibited from being used. Umpires should inform the coach of any equipment deemed unacceptable for play. Remember, equipment inspection is an opportunity to do preventative umpiring.

## BAT CERTIFICATION

1-3-2 Reminder that BESR label, sticker or decal is NOT permitted on any non-wood bats. The bat shall be labeled with a silk screen or other permanent certification mark.

- Wood bats are legal

Rule 1.3.4 Any non-wood bat may only have a barrel size of 2 5/8 inches. All non-wood bats must have a manufactured BESR silk screen label on the bat.

## MALICIOUS CONTACT

- \* Half of baseball ejections deal with malicious contact by the offense or defense (ball becomes dead).
- \* Usually occur between home and third, base running awards for malicious contact, when malicious contact occurs by the runner, all other runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the contact. The runner who created the malicious contact is ruled out and ejected.
- \* Keys to malicious contact & player ejection
  - Player leads with forearm or lowered shoulder in attempt to take out the catcher
- \* Runners choices (when catcher has the ball)
  - Legal Slide
  - Stop and return to previous base (get in rundown)
  - Let the fielder tag him
- \* What your runner should do if a fielder is in the baseline without the ball

Go around the fielder (umpire should call out obstruction and throw out left arm, just like any other obstruction situations  
Coaches, teach your players not to block any baseline without the ball or they are subject to being called for obstruction  
\* If the ball arrives just prior to the contact and runner is tagged and there is a collision you have an out, but the player is not ejected unless he lead with the forearm or shoulder  
\* I think our problem occurs with the runner at home, because player and parent watch major league baseball where it is legal to run over the catcher, not so in high school baseball.

**Rule 3-3-1n:** A coach, player, substitute, attendant or other bench personnel shall not: initiate malicious contact.

**Rule 8-3-2:** Malicious contact supersedes obstruction.

#### **INCIDENTAL CONTACT vs MALICIOUS CONTACT**

- A) Not all collisions are malicious
- B) A violent collision is not automatically considered malicious
- C) Umpires shall rule on player's intent:
  - 1. Contact is result of intentional excessive force, or,
  - 2. Contact is a result of intent to injure
- D) Runners should be instructed to help eliminate the question of malicious or incidental contact by:
  - 1. Sliding legally, and
  - 2. Attempting to avoid making contact with defensive player

#### **SLIDING (2-32-1,2 & 8-4-2b)**

A legal slide can be either feet or head first. If a runner slides feet first, at least one leg and buttocks shall be on the ground. He must slide within reach of the base with either a hand or foot. **Exception: Force Play Slide Rule:**

- A) A player is never required to slide. A base runner may go into a base standing up.
- B) When a player chooses to slide, he must slide legally at any base (not just a force play situation)
- C) The runner is not required to slide directly into the base; however, if he is forced to advance and there is a play on him, the runner must slide directly toward the base.
- D) In order to be an illegal slide, the runner must make illegal contact with the fielder and/or illegally alter the actions of a fielder in the immediate act of making a play.
- E) Sliding beyond the base and making contact with the fielder is an illegal slide. (2-32-2c, 8-4-2b)

#### **Illegal slides**

- a) A rolling, cross body or pop-up slide into the fielder;
- b) Runner's raised leg is higher than fielder's knee when the fielder is in a standing position;
- c) Runner goes beyond the base and makes contact with or alters the play;
- d) Slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg;
- e) Tries to injure the fielder.
- f) The runner on a force play does not slide on the ground and in a direct line between the two bases.

**Exception:** A runner may slide or run in a direction away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder (8-4-2b)

#### **PITCHING REGULATIONS(6-1-1,2,3)**

- A) There are two pitching positions
  - 1. The windup
  - 2. The set position
- B) Pitching regulations begin when the pitcher intentionally contacts the pitching plate. Pitcher must take his sign with pivot foot in contact with plate.  
Any turning of the shoulders to check runners while in contact with the pitcher's plate is legal, turning the shoulders after bringing the hands together during or after the stretch is a balk.
- C) The windup position (not restricted as to how he shall hold the ball)
  - 1. The pitcher may assume the wind-up position when his hands are:
    - (a) together in front of his body
    - (b) both hands are at his side
    - (c) either hand is in front of the body and the other hand is at his side
  - 2. Pitcher's non-pivot foot shall be in any position on or behind a line extending through the front edge of the pitcher's plate
  - 3. Time of pitch is when the pitcher has committed himself to delivering the pitch to the batter. For the windup position, the "time of the pitch" occurs when the pitcher (a) first starts any movement of his arm(s) or leg(s) after stepping onto the pitcher's plate with his hands already together in front of his body; (b) with both hands at his side, first starts any movement with both arms or legs prior to the pitch; Keep in mind this must be one continuous motion. Pitcher is required to pitch the ball. If he alters his motion, it is a balk. (c) with either hand in front of the body and the other hand at his side, after bringing his hands together, first starts any movement of his arm(s) or leg(s) prior to the pitch.
  - 4. Pitcher is limited to not more than two pumps or rotations
  - 5. While in the windup position, the pitcher may only:
    - a. Deliver a pitch, or
    - b. Step backward off the pitcher's plate with his pivot foot first before any other pitching motion has begun.

- D). The set position (The “time of the pitch” occurs the instant the pitcher, after coming to a complete and discernible stop, starts any movement with arm(s) and/or leg(s) that commits him to pitch.
1. The pitching hand must be at the pitcher’s side or behind his back when taking the sign from the catcher.  
*(Not in front of the thigh)*
  2. The ball may be either in his glove hand or in his pitching hand.
  3. His entire pivot foot must be in contact with the pitcher’s plate.
  4. When coming set, he must do so without interruption and in one continuous motion.
  5. He shall stop (change of direction is not considered a stop)
  6. The ball shall be in both hands in front of the body and the glove at or below his chin when stopped.
  7. Only one stretch may be made
  8. During the preliminary motion and during the set position until a delivery motion occurs, the pitcher:
    - a. May turn on his pivot foot or lift it in a jump turn to step with the non-pivot foot toward a base while throwing or feinting as in 6-2-4 and 2-28-5.
    - b. May lift his pivot foot in a step backward off the pitcher’s plate
    - c. May step backward which shall be at least partially within the 24" length of the pitcher’s plate
    - d. Shall touch the ground with his pivot foot prior to the separation of his hands.
- E). 6-2-1e Pitcher may go to mouth while off the pitcher’s plate if he distinctly wipes off his pitching hand prior to touching the ball. Going to the mouth while in contact with the pitcher’s plate is a balk with runners on base or a ball credited to the batter with no runners on base.
- 6-2-1h Clarified the existing rule as to what colors are allowed on a glove/mitt worn by the pitcher. No white or gray allowed.
- 6-2-3 Intentionally pitch close to a batter. The pitcher shall be ejected if the act **judged** to be intentional. In case of doubt, the umpire may first warn the pitcher.

### **REPORTING SUBSTITUTIONS**

It is becoming a concern that players are entering the game without reporting to the umpire-in-chief. The practice of reporting substitutions is not only ethical and in accordance with the rules book, it is courteous and promotes good sportsmanship. Coaches are responsible to inform the umpire-in-chief about any substitutions. There is no penalty for an unreported substitution. If there is no announcement of substitutions, a substitute has entered the game when the ball is alive and: (a) a runner takes the place of a runner he has replaced; (b) a pitcher takes his place on the pitcher’s plate; (c) a fielder reaches the position usually occupied by the fielder he has replaced; or (d) a batter takes his place in the batter’s box. The ball is declared live by the umpire in each case. **Penalty:** If the starting pitcher does not face one batter, he may play another position, but not return to pitch.

### **STRIKE ZONE**

- A) The strike zone is
1. Area over home plate
  2. The top of which is the point **halfway** between the top of the shoulder and the batter’s waistline, and the **bottom** of the knees.
- B) Umpires shall enforce the strike zone according to the batter’s normal batting stance.
- C) Coaches: Make sure your players understand the strike zone and umpires shall call it as written. We should have greater consistency. A much better specified strike zone than in the past. Look for strikes. Be a “striker”.

**NOTE:** Coaches, the strike zone is well defined by rule and we have emphasized the zone and need for consistency, etc., to umpires. However you as coach have to be able to make adjustments with your players from game to game for the simple reason that the strike zone will vary from umpire to umpire due to human element and the necessary judgments in calling the zone. Obviously, everyone wants and knows the importance of a consistent strike zone throughout the game but rather than debating and arguing about the zone coaches and players must be able to make some adjustments from game to game.

### **LIGHTNING & INCLEMENT WEATHER**

You have got to be alert for these things. There is no sense in trying to get involved in a guessing game. If the weather is threatening, specifically that of involving lightning in the area, get the kids and coaches off the field until it subsides and resume play at a later time. If it lasts too long, then perhaps you will have a suspended game — that is if enough innings have not been played to consider it a ball game. Generally speaking, a thunder storm accompanied by lightning passes through in a span of 30 to 45 minutes or at the most an hour. If after that time, it still has not subsided it is probably best to consider it a suspended game and to be played at a later date. Always use good judgment. It is safer to error on the side of safety. Umpires need to wait a minimum of 30 minutes before suspending or calling a game, once delayed.

### **AVOID CONFRONTATIONS**

When a batter takes a called third strike, the plate umpire can reduce the chances of a confrontation by moving away from home plate, opposite the direction the batter will go to return to his dugout. That movement also helps give the impression the umpire is not showing up

the batter by standing rigidly in his position. If the batter crosses the plate to argue, the player appears as the aggressor, umpire, simply state "we are not going there!"

### **KEEPING A PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE**

Each umpire needs to review the following statements on professionalism.

1. Arrive on time for your assignment
2. Always honor your commitments
3. Remember that no game is below you.
4. Never bad-mouth a fellow official. It's better to keep your mouth closed.
5. Have a solid pregame conference.
6. Don't brag about your games, quality or quantity. Nobody really cares anyway.
7. Utilize proper, crisp signals
8. Earn a reputation as an umpire who hustles
9. Be a communicator. Coaches want to know you will listen.
10. Be the umpire the coaches and players want for the right reasons.
11. Be the umpire other umpires want to work with.
12. Have good game management skills, your most important asset.

### **SPECIAL ATTENTION COACHES AND OFFICIALS COMMUNICATION**

This year we want an all out effort between coaches and umpires to do a better job of communicating. When a coach approaches you, the umpire, you need to have open ears and be approachable. Be the umpire the coach wants for the right reasons. **COACH, WE ASK YOU TO BE A BETTER COMMUNICATOR WITH THE UMPIRES.** We are all going to see plays from different angles but remember judgment is judgment. Communication is a way of life and the harder we work to be better communicators the better the game of baseball will be for all of us.

### **DURING INFIELD PRACTICE**

The non-participating team shall not be in live ball territory (excluding team's bullpen area) during the opponents infield practice prior to the start of the game. **Rationale:** Safety and good sportsmanship (3-3-1-g-5)

### **2008 BASEBALL RULE CHANGES**

Beginning with the 2008 baseball season, fielders without possession of the ball will not be allowed to deny access to the base that a runner is attempting to achieve. In other words, you can't block the base without the ball.

A player or coach may occupy each coach's box while his team is at bat. A coach who is **not** in uniform (pants and top similar to the rest of the team, but may wear a pullover over his **uniform top**) of that team shall be restricted to the bench/dugout. However, a coach may leave the bench/dugout to attend to a player who becomes ill or injured. Coaches need to make every attempt to stay in the coach's box (except to vacate the area so offensive interference doesn't take place) in order not to confuse their opponent.

The penalty for a pitcher wearing a glove that contains white or gray has been clarified (1-3-6). Upon discovery, the pitcher must replace the glove. There is no base award penalty for the pitcher wearing an illegal glove.

The head coach must attend the pre-game conference if he is available to do so, or he will be restricted to the dugout (3-2-4). Captain(s) are strongly encouraged to attend this pre-game conference with the head coach.

The requirement that subs "shall" be listed has been modified to "should" be listed since there is no penalty for not listing eligible substitutes (1-1-2).

**Coaches**, make sure you put in coaching boxes and a full batters box (all lines including the line from the inside top of the box to the inside back of the box, closest to home plate). The batters box lines must be complete in order to rule if a player is legally in the box during his time at bat. We appreciate your cooperation pertaining to this matter.

### **2009 BASEBALL RULES CHANGES**

- 1-2-2 All lines on the playing field shall be marked with a material which is not injurious to the eyes or skin. **All non-permanent lines should be white.**
- 7-3-4 Permit a pitched ball to touch him. PENALTY: The batter remains at bat (pitch is a ball or strike) unless pitch was a third strike or ball four.
- 10-1-9 Modified the color choice of umpires slacks to be **gray** slacks and navy blue pullover shirt.

## **\*\*SUSPENDED GAMES\*\***

**A.** If a game is called prior to the completion of a full inning, after the fifth inning, the game becomes a suspended game in the following situation. “The visiting team has scored one or more runs to tie the score or take the lead, and the home team has now retaken the lead.”

**B.** A game called for any reason where a winner cannot be determined, or any game called at any time for mechanical failure (i.e., artificial lights, water systems, etc.) where a winner cannot be determined, will be treated as a suspended game. If the game is to be completed, it will be continued from the point of suspension with:

- \* Lineup and batting order the same as at the moment of suspension subject to rules of game.
- \* If team, while on defense, has been charged two conferences, it is allowed only one more charged conference, when suspended game is continued.
- \* Pitcher is restricted as per pitcher limitation rule.
- \* If a player entered as a substitute and has been removed from the game, he cannot re-enter when the game is continued - - even though played on two different days.
- \* All playing regulations apply as if the game was continuous and being played during the day.

### **EXAMPLES:**

**1.** End of the 6<sup>th</sup> inning, Home – 6, Visitors – 4. Visitor scores three runs in the top of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning, to take the lead 7-6, when rain comes. **RULING:** Suspended game rather than reverting back to the last completed inning.

**2.** End of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning, Home – 7, Visitors – 2. Visitor scores four runs in the top of the 6<sup>th</sup> inning to make the score 7-6, bases loaded, when rain comes. **RULING:** Score reverts back to the 5<sup>th</sup> inning, Home – 7, Visitors – 2.

**3.** Game is called (ended) in the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning due to rain, darkness, lighting, or a combination of any. **RULING:** It shall be continued from that point to a later time agreed upon by both schools involved.

**4.** Games is called (ended) in the top of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning due to a malfunction of lights or the watering system with the score, Home – 5, Visitors – 2. The visitors score two runs in the top of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning to make the score, Home – 5, Visitors – 4, prior to calling the game. **RULING:** Revert back to the 6<sup>th</sup> inning, Home – 5, Visitors – 2.

**5.** Its in the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning, Home – 6, Visitors – 4, when rain causes for a called game. **RULING:** Completed game. Home team wins. Required number of innings have been played to meet completed game requirement.

## PITCHING LIMITATION RULE

A. Sixteen innings will be the maximum total number of innings a pitcher may pitch in a given week. (For purpose of reference, Sunday through Saturday is a week.)

B. A pitcher may not pitch more than a total of nine innings in any one day or on two consecutive calendar days. The ninth inning must be followed by two calendar days of rest. A game started on one calendar day, but is not completed until the next day, and is not a suspended game is to be considered played on the original calendar date the game started.

C. If a pitcher pitches on any two consecutive days with the combined total greater than four innings, he will follow with two calendar days off for rest.

*The penalty for violation of the pitching limitation rule will be forfeiture of the contest. The pitching limitation rule and the penalty for violation is a recommendation of your Baseball Coaches Advisory Committee.*

Coaches, it is your responsibility for making certain that your pitchers are complying with the pitching limitation rule that follows. Obviously, umpires are aware of the rule in that the rule is outlined on your line-up cards, however, you are the responsible party to make certain that a young man does not violate the pitching limitation rule as it pertains to the number of innings he may pitch in a given week. Keep good records. Keeping good records of number of innings pitched is certainly the key to alleviate any difficulties with reference to violating the pitching limitation rule. It is not a difficult rule as outlined in a, b, c, below and, of course, your line-up cards provide space for probable pitchers, uniform number, number of eligible innings remaining in the weeks, etc. Most of you have individuals who keep your book for you anyway so it would not be difficult to have your official scorer or yourself maintain those records as you move through the week as it pertains to the pitching limitation rule. There are a number of examples that follow and your review of those examples would be advantageous to your thorough knowledge of the pitching limitation rule.

In summary, the pitching limitation rule is nine innings on any given day, followed with two calendar days rest. If a pitcher pitches more than four innings, up to a maximum of nine innings, on any two consecutive calendar days, he will follow with two calendar days rest. The maximum number of innings a pitcher may pitch in a week is 16.

**NOTE:** As part of the pitching limitation rule, one pitch constitutes an inning having been pitched.

### EXAMPLES:

a) A pitcher pitches nine innings on Monday. How many days rest are required? Two calendar days rest, meaning Tuesday and Wednesday; he may next pitch on Thursday.

b) A pitcher pitches four innings Monday. How many innings can he pitch on Tuesday? He may pitch the maximum of five innings on Tuesday followed by two calendar days rest, meaning Wednesday and Thursday. He may next pitch on Friday.

c) A pitcher pitches three innings Tuesday, two innings Wednesday. He must now follow with two calendar days rest (Thursday and Friday). He can next pitch on Saturday.

d) A pitcher pitches nine innings on Saturday. He must now follow with two calendar days rest (Sunday and Monday). He can next pitch on Tuesday.

e) A pitcher pitches seven innings on Tuesday. When can he pitch again? He can pitch on Wednesday for the maximum of two innings. He must then follow with two calendar days rest, meaning Thursday and Friday. He may next pitch on Saturday.

f) A pitcher pitches two innings Thursday and five innings on Friday. He will now follow with two calendar days of rest (Saturday and Sunday). He can next pitch on Monday. Remember, pitching in any combination of innings greater than four innings up to the maximum of nine innings on any two consecutive days will result in two calendar days rest; OR pitching the maximum of nine innings in any one day requires two calendar days rest.

g) A pitcher pitches two innings Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Legal: He has pitched 12 of his allowable 16 innings for that week.

h) A pitcher pitches one inning Tuesday and eight innings Wednesday. Legal, and he will follow with two calendar days of rest, meaning Thursday and Friday. He can next pitch on Saturday.

i) A pitcher pitches eight innings on Monday; does not pitch on Tuesday, however, does pitch on Wednesday. How many can he pitch on Wednesday? He can pitch the maximum of eight innings on Wednesday because those eight innings, added to the eight innings he pitched Monday, give him his maximum of 16 innings for the week. Had he only pitched seven innings on Monday, he could have pitched the maximum nine innings on Wednesday and reached his maximum 16 for the week.

j) A pitcher pitches six innings Wednesday; does not pitch Thursday, but does pitch on Friday. How many can he pitch on Friday? Maximum nine innings, which would give him a total of 15 innings for the week.

k) A game begins Tuesday, July 25, at 10:45 p.m. and is completed at 12:35 a.m. the following morning. The starting pitcher pitches; (a) 7 innings; (b) 9 innings. Under the IHSAA pitching rule, the game would be considered played July 25th, even though the game did not end until early the following morning. In (a) the pitcher would be able to pitch 2 innings on Wednesday, those 2 innings combined with the 7 innings pitched on Tuesday make 9 innings pitched on two consecutive

days. The pitcher would now have to take two consecutive calendar days off - Thursday and Friday. He may pitch again on Saturday. In (b), the pitcher would have to take two consecutive calendar days off, meaning Wednesday and Thursday. He could pitch Friday. This is all providing he does not exceed 16 innings in a week and stays within the prescribed guidelines (Sunday through Saturday).

l) Example: If a pitcher pitches 7 innings on Friday and 2 innings on Saturday, the pitcher must follow with two calendar days of rest, meaning Sunday and Monday. He may next pitch on Tuesday. The confusion with a few coaches was that Saturday ended the week by reference, and with that in mind the coach thought this individual could pitch again on Monday. The rule is for the safety of the individual and when two calendar days of rest are required, the pitcher is unable to pitch again until day three when category B of the pitching rule applies. This will be emphasized at all rules meetings and with all correspondences.

## NFHS Baseball Windup Positions Examined

Legal Starting Positions



There are three legal starting positions for a high school pitcher while in the windup position. A pitcher may legally engage the rubber with both hands at his sides (PlayPic A), with either hand in front of the body (PlayPic B) or with both hands in front of the body (PlayPic C).

**Series 1: Balk:** The pitcher may step on the rubber with both hands at his sides. If the pitcher does so and starts any movement with *both* arms or leg(s), the pitcher is committed to pitch. In Series 1, the pitcher, after legally engaging the rubber, brought both arms up together and stopped. That is a balk.

**Series 2: Balk:** If both arms are legally in front of the pitcher's body at any time, the pitcher may not drop either hand. That is a balk.

**Series 3: Legal:** The pitcher may step on the rubber with either hand in front of his body and the other hand at his side. (In most cases, it is likely that the glove hand will be in front and the pitching hand at the side.)

While in that legal starting position, the pitcher *may* bring his pitching hand up to meet the glove hand in front of the body in order to grip or adjust the ball. That does *not* commit the pitcher to pitch. In fact, the pitcher could still legally disengage the rubber without penalty. The time of the pitch occurs once the pitcher starts any movement of his arm(s) or leg(s) after adjusting the ball. (Note: A pitcher may legally step off the rubber.) Remember, Series 2 could still occur.

**Series 4: Legal:** A pitcher who engages the rubber with both hands at his sides may lift the glove hand in front of the body, then lift the pitching hand into the glove to grip or adjust the ball *without* committing to pitch. The key is that the arm movements were separate and distinct. The time of the pitch occurs once the pitcher starts any movement of his arm(s) or leg(s) after adjusting the ball. (Note: A pitcher may legally step off the rubber.) Remember, Series 2 could still occur.

These PlayPics demonstrate the most likely scenarios you will see. See pages 26 and 27 for more details and caseplays. As always, consult NFHS publications for official interpretations. ☺

Series 1: Balk



Series 2: Balk



Series 3: Legal



Series 4: Legal

