

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.

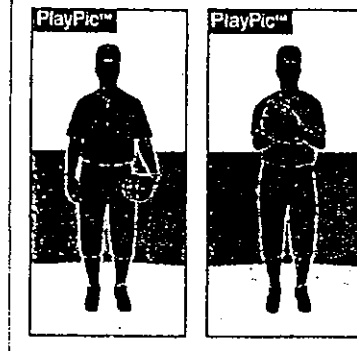
Series 3: Legal: The pitcher may step on the rubber with either hand in front of his body and the other hand at his side. (In most cases, it is likely that the glove hand will be in front and the pitching hand at the side.)

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.

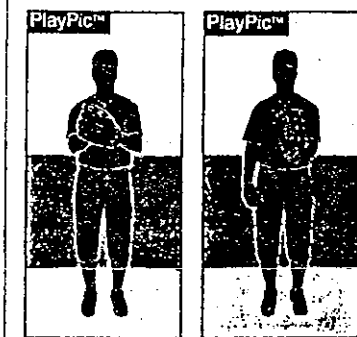
Series 4: Legal: A pitcher who engages the rubber with both hands at his sides may lift the glove hand in front of the body, then lift the pitching hand into the glove to grip or adjust the ball *without* committing to pitch. The key is that the arm movements were separate and distinct. The time of the 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. ☺

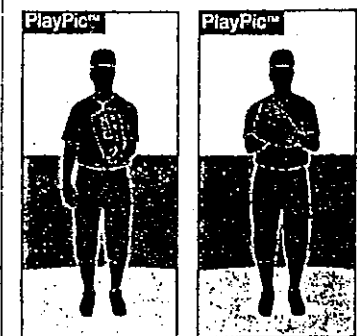
Series 1: Balk



Series 2: Balk



Series 3: Legal



Series 4: Legal

