



## MHSAA BASEBALL PRESEASON POINTS OF EMPHASES 2021 Season

MHSAA baseball games will begin in just a few short days, and this POE document is intended to provide both coaches and umpires the most recent and up-to-date information on a variety of important topics. This is not meant to cover all questions or concerns that the MHSAA baseball community might have, but it should clear up a number of topics for the start of the season. As always, please feel free to reach out to me at any time (best by email – [brent@mhsaa.com](mailto:brent@mhsaa.com)) for any further questions or concerns you have.

Point of emphasis are listed in alphabetical order by topic.

### Baseballs –

In 2017, the NFHS adopted a playing rule which mandates only the use of NOCSAE-certified baseballs. This requirements was initially set to begin the following season, but implementation was pushed back to the 2019-20 school year so that schools could deplete any remaining supply of baseballs during the 2018-19 season that did not meet these safety standards. The rule then went into full effect beginning last year.

Non-certified baseballs (which do not contain a NOCSAE stamp) are not permitted for use in competition. If a non-certified baseball is found in play, it should be removed. If there are no NOCSAE-certified baseballs to be used, the game should not be completed as this is an equipment safety standard.

It is recommended that the visiting team routinely bring a supply of NOCSAE-certified baseball when traveling to another school to ensure that proper baseballs are available for use during play.

### Coaches Arguing Plays or Rulings –

For the 2020-21 season, coaches will not be permitted to leave their positions to either enter the playing field or approach and umpire at his/her position for the purpose of disputing a call or ruling. Coaches that start to leave their position of arguing plays on the field should first be warned. If they continue onto the field after being warned, they are subject to ejection.

If a head coach wishes to question or dispute a play, or request an umpire seek help on a call or ruling, the coach may do so under the following conditions:

- The coach must have an available conference remaining (offensive conference while on offense or a defensive conference while on defense). **NOTE: If a play ends a half inning, the conference that will be affected is determined by whether the coach's team will be on offense or defense the following half inning.**
- The coach must approach the foul line in a calm manner to make a request of the calling umpire.
- An umpire may choose not to have a discussion with the coach at the foul line, in which case the coach should return to his/her position.
- If the call is overturned, the affected conference will be retained.
- If the call is sustained, the affected conference will be lost.

If any of the provisions are not met, the coach will be warned to return to his/her position. If the coach persists after being warned, he/she may be ejected.

### Face Masks for Baseball –

Everyone is required to wear face masks when not in active participation such as in the dugout, in a discussion or huddle with the team or and any other time they are unable to maintain 6 feet of distance consistently.

Players, coaches and umpires on the field of play are not required to wear face masks during active participation since they can maintain 6 feet of distance from others except for fleeting moments. If a coach is permitted a discussion with an umpire, both must wear masks when the discussion takes place with less than 6 feet of distance from one another.



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### **Pitch Counts –**

Pitch counts must be maintained for each player that pitches during a game. These records must be maintained for a minimum of the previous three calendar days. They may be recorded and tracked through GameChanger or by the Pitching Record Form. Each head coach will ensure that pitch counts are tracked for his/her own pitchers. Details can be found [HERE](#). Umpires will have no role in tracking or enforcing pitch count requirements.

### **Player/DH Rule –**

The Player/DH Rule allows a team to list a player as a defensive player (usually the pitcher) and an offensive player (the Designated Hitter) separately but in the same position in the lineup. If utilized, the Designated Hitter will be considered as batting for his/her defensive position. This rule provides flexibility to allow the head coach to remove the player from the defensive position but remain hitting for the player that replaces him/her. Details of the Player/DH Rule can be found [HERE](#).

### **Scrimmages –**

No scrimmages between schools are permitted for the 2020-21 season.

### **Travel Out-of-State –**

School teams may travel out of state as long as they comply with all travel rule requirements/restrictions. If a team submitted and was approved for an Out-of-State Travel Practice request, they may practice amongst their own team as in previous years. However, even though it was recently adopted to permit MHSAA schools to scrimmage out of state, that is not permitted this season because of the prohibition on scrimmages. Teams **MAY NOT** participate in competitions with other teams during spring break trips, whether MHSAA or out of state teams.

### **Wrist Bands for Pitchers –**

The collegiate level recently began permitting pitchers to wear wristbands containing pitch selection cards. These wristbands are not permitted for use in MHSAA competitions because they would violate Rule 6-2-1f which prohibits any item worn on the wrists or arms which *may* be distracting to the hitter. Even though it is the umpire's discretion as to what is distracting, these pitch selection wristbands will not be permitted this season to ensure uniformity in enforcement across the state. This topic will be discussed further in the Baseball Rules Committee discussion to be considered for next season.