



## MHSAA BASEBALL PRESEASON POINTS OF EMPHASES 2021-22 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.

### **Covid Mandates –**

**ALL** Covid restrictions/requirements regarding social distancing, the disinfecting or handling of baseballs or lineup exchanges used during the 2019-20 season have been fully retracted.

### **Baseballs –**

In 2017, the NFHS adopted a playing rule which mandates only the use of NOCSAE-certified baseballs. This requirement 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.

**NOTE:** Schools are not required to have the MHSAA stamp on the ball – only the NFHS and NOCSAE stamps.

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 –**

Coaches are not 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. Head 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 immediate restriction to the dugout and to ejection if they continue to refuse to comply.

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 if he approaches the foul line in a calm manner to make a request of the calling umpire. Umpires should be willing to answer questions for head coaches that remain calm and collected and approach the foul line in the proper manner. Umpires are not obligated to continually meet with a head coach who is out of control or that repeatedly disputes calls.

Assistant coaches are never permitted to come onto the field to argue or dispute a play. If an assistant coach comes onto the field, he will be restricted to the dugout immediately and ejected if he continues to argue the call or ruling.

**NOTE:** A team's conferences are no longer affected by requests by the head coach to discuss a call or ruling.

### **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.



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### **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](#).

### **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 or scrimmage against (only) other MHSAA member schools. 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. To ensure consistency across the state, these wristbands are not permitted to be worn by pitchers on either arm 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.

These pitch selection cards may be worn by pitchers at their waists attached to their belts.

### **Excessive Celebrations –**

A major point of emphasis this year will be for umpires to restrict excessive celebrations. Excessive celebrations are unsporting and often lead to further problems during the game or later in the season. Choreographed celebrations, props or chants directed at the opposing team are not to be permitted, whether on the field or in the dugout.

Depending on the frequency and severity, umpires may warn, restrict head coaches to the dugout or eject coaches or players for this prohibited conduct.