

2026 NFHS Baseball Case Book Changes

COMMENTS on the 2026 Rules Changes

Mandating Double First Base (Effective January 1, 2027) and associated rules (1-2-9, 2-5-1h, 2-16-1h, 8-2-1, 8-2-2(a) 1-7, 8-2-7, 8-4-1g(1)) — A double first base enhances player safety by reducing the risk of collisions between the batter-runner and the first baseman on close plays. It provides a separate space for each player — fair territory for the fielder and foul territory for the runner — helping to prevent injuries while maintaining the integrity of the game.

School Uniform (1-4-4) — Clear uniform guidelines help maintain the integrity, fairness, and educational purpose of high school baseball. Uniforms represent the team and school, not individual expression, and must comply with NFHS rules. Defined standards prevent confusion, promote equality, and teach values like respect, discipline and accountability — hallmarks of education-based athletics.

Player Communication Equipment (1-6-3) — In high school baseball, players are not permitted to wear any audio or video equipment for the purpose of broadcasting or live recording while actively participating in the contest. This rule protects safety, fairness, competitive integrity and the privacy of others while focusing on education and the educational mission of high school sports.

Definition of Player to Player Meeting (2-10-3, 3-4-6) — Utilizing the rule additions, clarifies that the defensive players can offer support and provide camaraderie to their pitcher and limits the occurrences. The new rule also clarifies that it is not a charged conference and maintaining the integrity of the existing rule. It is hopeful that these changes prevent teams from stalling to gain an unfair advantage when weather or darkness is approaching.

Case Book Plays

2.10.3 SITUATION A: The pitcher, while struggling with control, has walked two straight batters. The catcher asks for time to go talk to the pitcher. The other infielders come to the mound as well. **RULING:** This is a defensive player meeting. Time was granted and the game was stopped for two or more defensive players.

2.10.3 SITUATION B: The pitcher struck out B1 on three straight pitches. The catcher throws the ball to the shortstop who throws it to the second baseman. The third baseman receives the ball from the second baseman and takes it to the pitcher, drops the ball in his glove and pats him on the back. **RULING:** This is not a defensive meeting as the game was not interrupted and stopped for the ball to be given to the pitcher.

2.10.3 SITUATION C: The center fielder and the left fielder converge on a fly ball, almost running into each other. After the catch, the two discuss coverage as they return to their positions. **RULING:** This is not a defensive player meeting. Time was not called and the game was not interrupted for the discussion.

3.1.4 SITUATION K: The visiting team comes to bat in the top of the first inning. The head coach intentionally lists his first baseman as the catcher on the line-up card. The first baseman can hit well but is slow on the bases. He does this so that if the first baseman gets on base, the coach can have a courtesy runner take his place on the bases in the first inning. When the team goes to the field in the bottom of the first inning, the head coach makes a defensive substitution, switching the first baseman, who was listed as catcher, to first base, and the listed first baseman to catcher. **RULING:** This action is not in accordance with the spirit of fair play. Had an injury, etc., forced the coach to make this change, that would be acceptable. But to do this as a way of avoiding having to honor a substitution is not what was intended by the rule. The coach is to be warned of this tactic and another offense will restrict him to the bench or a possible ejection. (3-3-1f-4)

3.4.6 SITUATION A: At the start of a new half-inning, the pitcher completes his five warm-up throws and the catcher and infield come to the mound to briefly encourage the pitcher. The opposing coach wants this charged as the team's defensive meeting for the half-inning. **RULING:** This is not a defensive player meeting. The half-inning had not yet started and the ball had not yet been in play.

3.4.6 SITUATION B: The defense had a defensive player meeting earlier in the half-inning. A substitute pitcher has replaced the previous pitcher and has completed his warm-up throws. The catcher takes the ball out to the pitcher and discusses signals. **RULING:** This is allowed. This is not to be considered a defensive player meeting. It is in the best interest of all that the catcher and new pitcher get aligned.

3.4.6 SITUATION C: In a half-inning, (a) R3, leading off from third base in foul territory, is hit by a line drive, or (b) F2 is hit by a foul ball, or (c) a charged offensive conference with the team's runners and batter is granted. In all three instances, the infield gathers together as the hurt players are being assisted or the offensive players confer. **RULING:** In (a), (b), and (c), a defensive player meeting will not be assessed. The game was stopped for other reasons. The defensive players need to return to play when the other circumstances have concluded.

3.4.6 SITUATION D: The plate umpire is hit by a foul ball and is momentarily stunned. The catcher goes to the mound to talk with the pitcher as the umpire gathers himself. **RULING:** This is not a defensive player meeting. Time has been called for the plate umpire and the catcher, out of courtesy, is providing a break.

3.4.6 SITUATION E: With a runner on third and first, the catcher is granted time and has all the infield to gather at the mound to discuss coverage. The next batter walks and the catcher wants to go talk with his pitcher. **RULING:** The plate umpire will deny the request by the catcher to go talk with the pitcher. The team has had their one defensive player meeting for the half-inning.

8.4.2 SITUATION E: With all bases occupied and no outs, B4 bunts, which results in a fly ball in the infield (not an infield fly). As R3 advances toward home, R3 contacts F5, causing F5 to drop the fly ball. How should the umpire rule? **RULING:** The ball is dead immediately. R3 is out for interference and B4 is awarded first base.