



2026 BASEBALL RULES CHANGES AND POINTS OF EMPHASIS

National Federation of State
High School Associations



Presented by:

Jake Gustafson / AIA Baseball Lead

Rob McKinley / AIA State Rules Interpreter



Questions about this presentation:

Jake Gustafson

AIA Baseball Lead

480.489.6404

jake@azboa.org



Rob McKinley

AIA Rules Interpreter

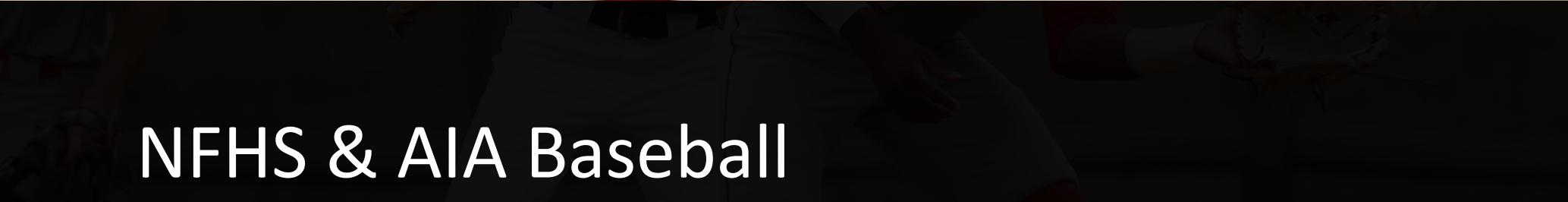
602.616.5224

robmckinley@cox.net





AIA



NFHS & AIA Baseball

2026 RULE CHANGES



RULES CHANGES

DOUBLE FIRST BASE

**1-2-9, 2-5-1h, 2-16-1h, 8-2-1,
8-2-2a(1-7), 8-2-7**



- Starting in **2027**, all high school baseball fields will be required to use the double first base.
- Optional for 2026 season.



RULES CHANGES

DOUBLE FIRST BASE 1-2-9



- The double first base will include a regular white base connected to a contrasting colored base.
- The white base remains in fair territory while the contrasting colored base is in foul territory.
- They are installed with no space between them.



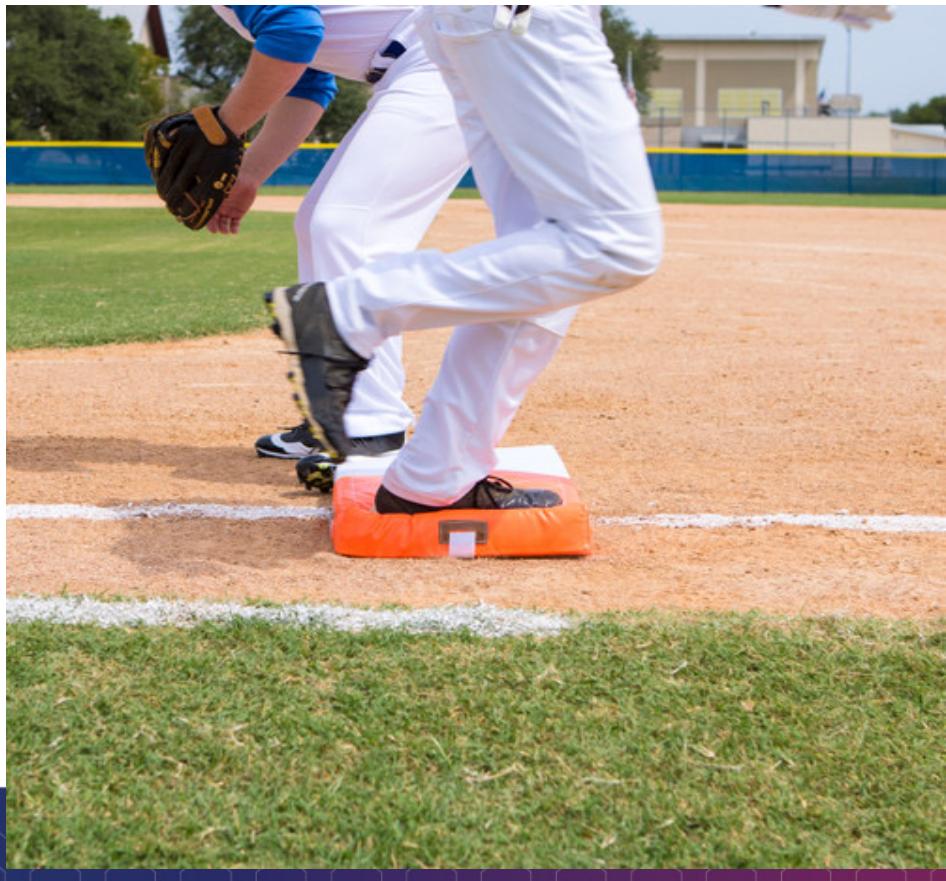
DOUBLE FIRST BASE 8-2-1



- On the initial play on the Batter Runner (BR), at 1st base, the fielder must touch the white base and the BR the colored base.
 - The initial play on the batter runner is the play where the defense is directly attempting to retire the batter runner before he reaches first base. When there is no initial play i.e. a walk or base hit to the outfield, the runner can touch either base.
- There are two exceptions to requiring the fielder to touch white and the BR the colored base on the initial play on the BR at 1st base and those are:
 - Dropped 3rd strike- both the fielder and the BR can use either the white or colored base to avoid colliding with each other.
 - During a batted ball, an errant throw to 1st base that pulls the first basemen off the white base and into foul territory (into the path of the runner). The fielder still needs to touch the white base or tag the BR while the BR can touch EITHER base in an effort to avoid colliding a fielder.

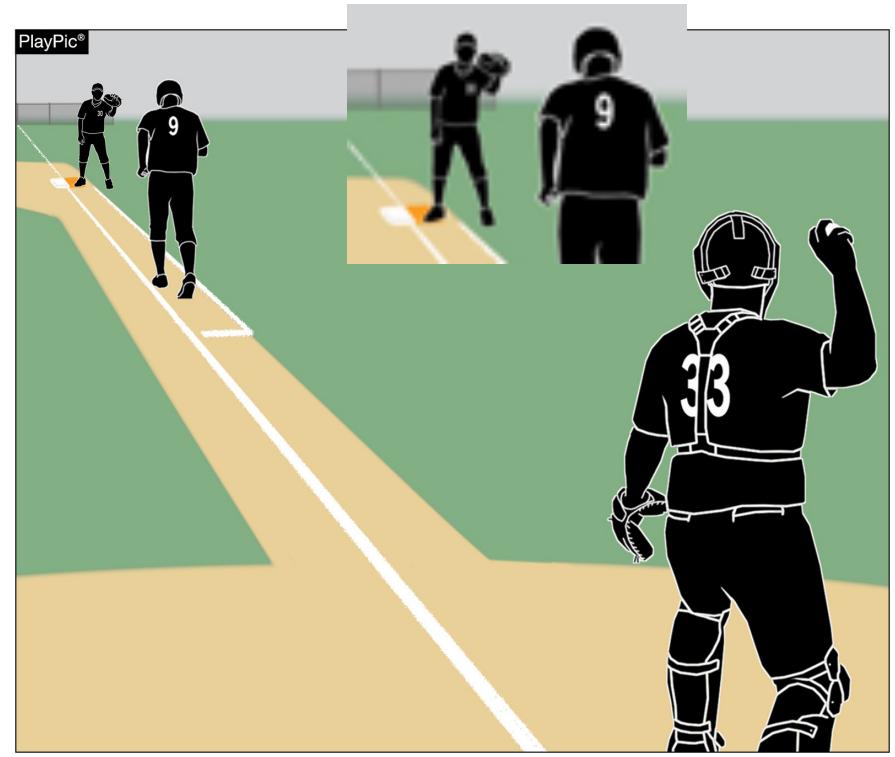
RULES CHANGES

- **Initial Play- Fielder = white base** **Batter Runner = colored base**



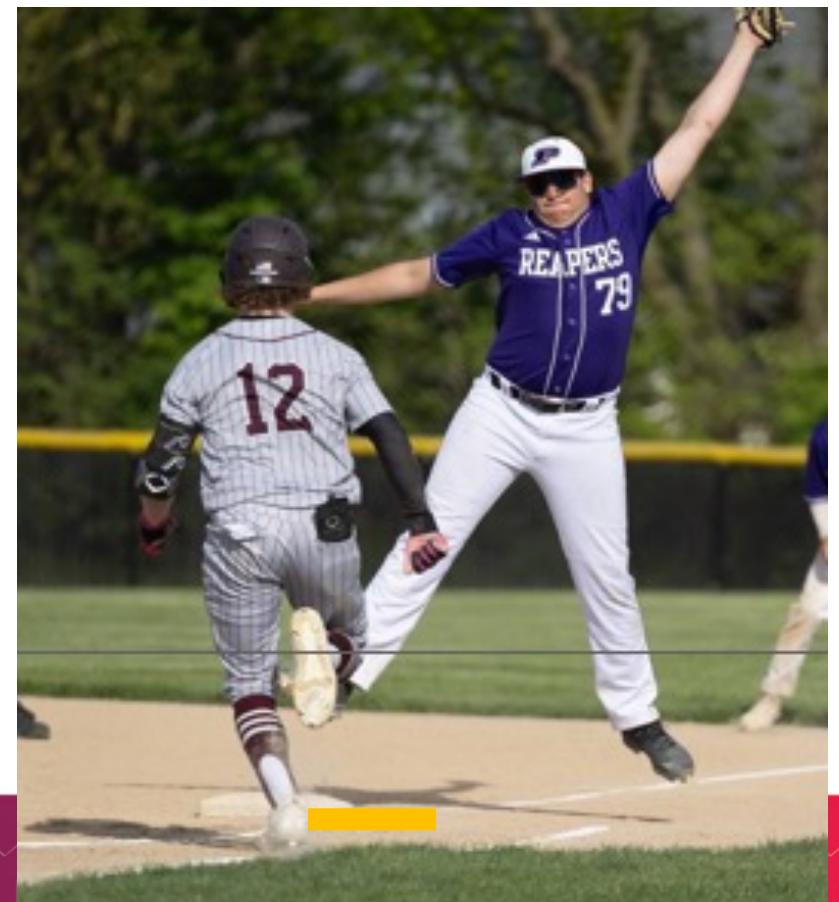
RULES CHANGES

- **Dropped 3rd strike**- Fielder = either base Batter Runner = either base



RULES CHANGES

- **Errant throw, on a batted ball, draws fielder into path of runner-**
- Fielder = white base Batter Runner = either base



RULES CHANGES

DOUBLE FIRST BASE8-2-2a

- Once the batter-runner reaches first base, the runner must always return to the white base.
- On extra base hits or other balls hit to the outfield when there is no chance for a play to be made at the double first base, the batter-runner may touch either the white or colored section of the base.
- When tagging up on a fly ball, the white section of the base must be used by the runner. One foot is permitted to extend behind or on the colored base provided the front foot is touching the white section of the base.
- On a walk or HBP the BR may run initially use either base.





Player touches the wrong base....

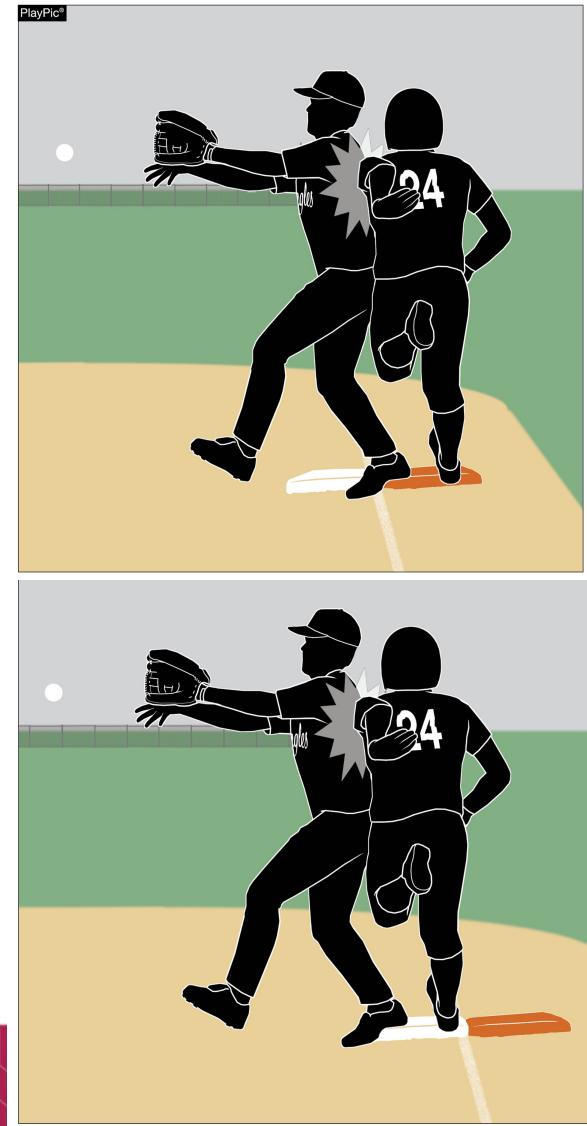
- If the fielder touches the wrong base the runner is not out. They must correct the mistake by touching the correct base or tagging the runner before he reaches 1st base.
- If the batter runner, touches the white base in error while running through the base, the defense must appeal prior to the runners return to the white base.
- When the BR runs through the base correctly but returns to the colored base, they are not out if tagged as the colored base effectively disappears and it would be the same as though they are standing on dirt and have not yet returned to the white base.



RULES CHANGES

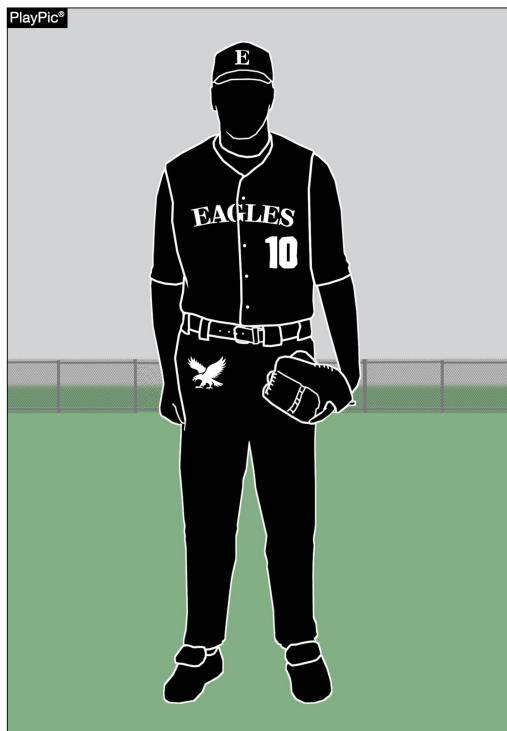
Player touches the wrong base....

- When the BR runs to 1st base and rounds the base (no initial play at 1st base) when they return they must use the white base only. If they are on the colored base they are subject to being out if the defense tags them.
- On a batted ball, if the fielder blocks the colored base while fielding a true throw then they are guilty of obstruction of the BR.
- On a batted ball, where there is no errant throw, if the BR touches the white base (wrong base for them) and contacts the fielder they are guilty of interference. This would usually be on the back end of a double play.



UNIFORMS

1-4-4

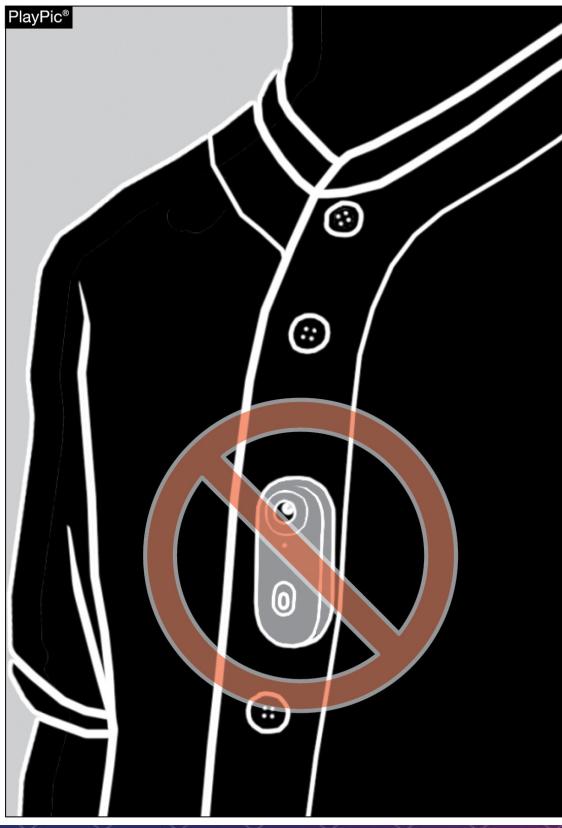


The school's name, school nickname, school logo, school mascot, and/or the player's name are permitted on the uniform top and/or pants

RULES CHANGES

PLAYER EQUIPMENT

Rule 1-6-3



No player shall wear any audio (microphone) or video (camera) device during the game.



RULES CHANGES

MEETINGS

Rule 2-10-3, 3-4-6



AIA will continue to allow a maximum of 3 player to player conferences during a regulation game



2026 NFHS Baseball Points of Emphasis



POINTS OF EMPHASIS

DISCIPLINE

- Any unsportsmanlike conduct, arguing or disrespect directed toward umpires will result in disciplinary action, which may include warnings, restriction to the bench or ejection from the game (3-3-1 to 3-3-4 and 10-2-3).
- Respect for officials is a reflection of the maturity, leadership and character we hope to instill in all participants through educational athletics.



POINTS OF EMPHASIS

SPORTSMANSHIP (BENCH JOCKEYING)

- Bench jockeying can be considered as negative verbal comments, taunting or attempts to distract, intimidate or embarrass opponents or officials from the dugout – violates the standards of conduct expected in interscholastic competition.
- Be loud, be proud but stay with your team!



POINTS OF EMPHASIS

SPORTSMANSHIP (PROPS)

- There is no logical purpose to have props at an education-based athletic event.
- If a prop is brought out of the dugout or a piece of baseball equipment is used as a prop, the offender and the Head Coach will be ejected without warning



POINTS OF EMPHASIS

SPORTSMANSHIP (Bat Flips)

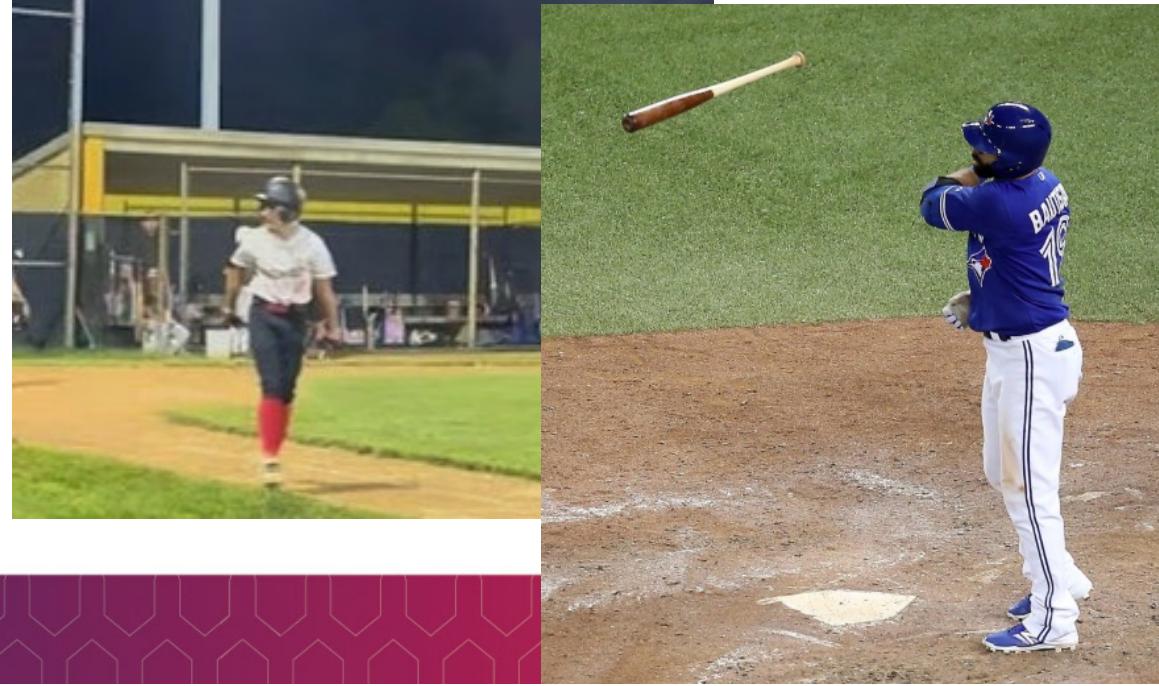
- More and more batters are taunting or celebrating by throwing their bat high in the air above their head.
- This is both dangerous and taunting the opponent.
- Drop your bat to the ground and then go celebrate with your teammates.



POINTS OF EMPHASIS

SPORTSMANSHIP (Bat Flips)

- If a player flips their bat in the air above their head, in a **celebratory or taunting** fashion, they will be ejected when the playing action stops.



POINTS OF EMPHASIS

SPORTSMANSHIP (Bat Flips)

- A player who is simply throwing their bat back towards their dugout, as long as it not a dangerous situation, they are not subject to ejection.
- Please instruct your players to not bat flip in AIA games or they risk ejection.





Questions about this presentation:

Jake Gustafson

AIA Baseball Lead

480.489.6404

jake@azboa.org



Rob McKinley

AIA Rules Interpreter

602.616.5224

robmckinley@cox.net

