



Baseball Bulletin 2026-4

February 22, 2026

From: Frank Grubb, Director of Officiating Development

- **In-person State Rules Interpretation meetings** – There is one more opportunity to attend an in-person SRI meeting this year. I highly encourage you to attend an in-person SRI meeting. These are highly interactive and the discussions during the meeting are invaluable. The remaining in-person meeting schedule is as follows:
 - **Tuesday, February 24 (Rescheduled from Monday, January 26) - Columbus** – Franklin Heights HS – 1001 Demorest Rd, Columbus (Baseball will be in the Auditorium, Softball will be in the Library).

All meetings will begin at 6:00 PM in combination with Softball. At 6:00 pm the softball SRI meeting and the baseball local meeting will begin in separate rooms. Following these meetings, at 7:00 PM the Baseball SRI and softball local meetings will occur. By attending, you will be able to get credit for two meetings maximum (2 SRI meetings baseball and softball, two local meetings baseball and softball, or one state SRI and one local of the same sport)

- **Online SRI Meeting** - The online state rules meeting was released on DragonFly on February 3, 2026. To access it, please visit your 2025-26 registration page on DragonFly. This is the same page on which you have paid your renewal fees on. Once there, click on the requirement that is titled **“2026 SRI Meeting OHSAA Points of Emphasis”**. You will be able to watch the video on that screen.
 - To access this screen, you can click on **your name** on the left side of your DragonFly page, and then select **“My Info.”** From there, you will see a box labeled **“Prep for 2025-26 Official Eligibility”**. That is where you can find the meeting!
 - You will select **“Fill out form Electronically,”** and it will take you to a screen where the video is available. After watching the video, you will select “Yes” to the question asking if you have watched the video, as well as signing your name at the bottom.
 - **Please note: You MUST sign your name and hit “done” on the screen to receive the credit. If you do not sign your name, your credit will not populate.**
 - **After March 24th,** there is a \$50 late fee to take the SRI meeting!
 - **Loading Error Note:** If you are experiencing a loading error when trying to access the State Rules Meeting, try these steps: If your page continues to spin without loading anything, and eventually a box with an "Exit Page" and "Wait" option, select the "Exit Page" option. It will take you to a "dead" page with a "reload" button in the middle. Select that button, and the meeting page should appear quickly.

- **Local on-line meetings** – We will once again publish two local on-line meetings during the spring. The dates are to be determined but will more than likely be late March and Mid-April.
- **State Clinics** – We have three state clinics for 2026 with the first being this upcoming weekend in Rossford. This year we will again focus on the newer umpire; however, I encourage all umpires to attend to brush up on mechanics and rules. Veteran umpires attend each year and get valuable feedback and information. We've also been able to discover unknown talents in the past that may have been overlooked!

To register for the clinics, please use the links below and submit payment via the instructions on the registration form:

- **Saturday, February 28, 9:00-1:00** – Rossford High School, 28720 Lime City Rd, Perrysburg, OH 43551 [Register here](#)
- **Saturday, March 7, 9am – 3pm**, Sidney Middle School, 980 Fair Rd, Sidney, OH 45365 [Register Here](#)
- **Saturday, March 14, 9am-2pm**, St. Ignatius High School, The Carfagna Family Magis Athletic Center, 3100 Chatham Ave, Cleveland, OH. [Register here](#)

The cost of each clinic will be \$40 payable to the local organization organizing the clinic. This will cover the costs of running the clinic. This is an excellent opportunity to get evaluated and receive instruction from some of the best umpires in the state! Multiple umpires received regional assignments for the first time last year in part because of their clinic participation and the evaluations we received.

- **Local Clinics** – I attended a local clinic in Columbus this past weekend. They had around 40 umpires with various experience and there was a lot of great instruction! Here are a list of local clinic opportunities that I have been aware of around the state. These have various costs and are of various lengths but any opportunity to get practice is a good day! Newer umpires, please make sure you go to at least one clinic, this will be invaluable to your development and will greatly improve your experience on the field!
 - **NEWLY ADDED – Sunday, March 1, 8-12**, The Energy Field House, 101 Yellow Jacket Dr, Mt. Vernon, OH 43050. Register [here](#). Cost is \$10, registration deadline is Friday 2/27.
 - **Sunday, March 1, 9:00-1:00**, Norton High School, 1 Panther Way, Norton, OH. Cost is \$25. Register by emailing Ron Fuller (rfull1108@gmail.com). Organized by the Tri-county Umpires Association.
 - **Saturday, March 7, 9:00 – 1:00**, Logan High School – Chieftain Center, 14470 State Route 328, Logan, OH. Register by emailing Phillip Lightfoot at ncaablu@yahoo.com by March 5, 2026. Organized by the Athens County Umpires Association.
 - **Thursday, March 19, 4:00-6:00**, Wapakoneta High School, 1 W. Redskin Trail, Wapakoneta, OH. No Cost, live scrimmage action. Contact Todd Bullinger with questions (toddrbullinger@gmail.com). Register [here](#).
- **Rule book mailings:** I just spoke to Beau Rugg just before sending this out. Many have received their rule book mailings but I know many have not. The OHSAA office is in the process of

resending the mailings to everyone to ensure that everyone receives their books. More information is to come out very soon from the OHSAA office.

- **Runner's lane Interference (RLI)**– I continue to receive many questions regarding the enforcement of runner's lane interference. While the interpretation of this rule has **not changed in Ohio**, confusion and disagreement still exist. This rule should be enforced according to the following interpretation.
 - **Relevant Rules**
 - **2-21-1 Interference** – Offensive interference is an act (physical or verbal by the team at bat: a. which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play
 - **5-1-1e Dead ball** – The ball becomes dead immediately when...there is interference by a runner, batter-runner (8-4-1g), or a retired runner...
 - **8-4-1g Runner is out (the batter-runner is out when)**- the batter-runner runs outside the three-foot running lane (last half of the distance from home plate to first base), while the ball is being fielded or thrown to first base; or
 - **8-4-1g-1:** This infraction is ignored if it is to avoid a fielder who is attempting to field the batted ball.
 - **8-4-1g-2:** The batter runner is considered outside of the running lane lines if either foot is outside either line.

To have interference, the batter-runner must hinder, obstruct, impede, or confuse a fielder making a play (see 2-21-1). The runner being outside the lane alone is **not** enough. There must be a throw, and the runner must interfere with the fielder throwing or receiving the throw. Once interference occurs, the ball is immediately dead—regardless of whether an out is ultimately recorded. Other runners return to the last base legally occupied at the time of interference.

Runner's lane interference most commonly occurs when the throw comes from behind the batter-runner. First base is in fair territory, and a runner who uses the lane properly may legally step out of the lane on the final stride to touch first base without committing interference. However, a runner who runs entirely outside the lane and interferes with the throw or catch should be ruled out. The **quality of the throw is not a factor** under NFHS rules. We have to remember, it is the responsibility of the batter-runner to run in the lane. If in doubt as to if there is interference, and the batter-runner is not legally in the lane, we should rule interference. This rule is to ensure safety of the student athletes on the field.

Umpires should watch for situations where a fielder must throw around, over, or adjust their throwing lane due to the runner's position. There is a great video on YouTube from Umpire Classroom that breaks down this rule. You can find that video here: [NFHS Baseball: Runner's Lane Interference](#) (note, this video is a few years old and from Georgia. There is an error in this video at 2:45, that if the throw retires the runner, the interference is ignored. That is incorrect as this interference is not a delayed dead ball as some other interference is (i.e. batter interference on a throw to second to retire a runner))

Here are some additional plays that were sent to me and apply the NFHS rules above to these situations. Ask yourself, did the runner's action impede the fielder making the throw or the fielder making the catch at first base?

- [Game 6 world Series](#)
 - [Close Call Sports breakdown](#)
 - [College regional](#)
 - [Throw from first to home](#)
 - [College World Series](#)
 - [HS League championship](#)
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- **Video** – I am always on the lookout for usable video of high school baseball. If you have video that may be of interest for training purposes (mechanics, difficult plays, etc.), please send me those clips or links to those clips to fgrubb@ohsaa.org.