



2022 Preseason OHSAA Baseball Newsletter

The 2022 season is upon us. Hopefully the weather this season will be better than what we had last year! Going into my 8th year as DOD, the most satisfying part of the job is meeting the umpires. We currently have over 3,000 in Ohio and I can say I haven't met everyone yet! The in-person state meetings, clinics, the numerous local meetings, and the state tournament each year is helping me increase my contact list.

The Blue Book for Baseball was sent out with last year's mailing and has a two-year life span. We will be looking at any recommendations you might have when editing the next version of the Blue Book. If you have any mechanical recommendations, please send them to me for consideration. The communication portion of the Blue Book is on line and I ask that everyone please review prior to the beginning of the season. In this way, we are all speaking the same language.

Congratulations to all those who worked the regionals and state tournament. Below is the list of those that umpired at the 2021 state championship. For the seventh year in a row, over 35% of the umpires at the state were doing their first state game.

Mike Plaugher	Jeffrey Baughman	Bobby Bolin
Daniel McGinnis	Jay Moran	Brian Harrell
Mark Spicer	Joseph Pennington	Tim Ward
Andrew Nash	Brandon Polutnik	Rudy Denius
Bryan Shields	Damon Koverman	John Craig
Bart Andrews	Jim Ruth	Daniel Asp
Frank Grubb	Ryan Thompson	Dale Romitio
Steven Halley	Justin Penix	William Rudibaugh

Todd Rini	Christopher Prokes	Richard Quintell
Donald Madzia	Scott Barr	Kirby Kiser
Kirt Shay	Chris Madigan	Tim Maddocks
Samuel Jones	David McCartney	Fred Schludecker
Kevin Pickerill	Marvin Doyle	Daniel Duignan
Matt Carson	Matthew Kleiner	Todd Fraser
Tyler Smith	Jeffery Gorsuch	Mark Miachak
Lou Bennett	Carson Dixon	Ron Fuller

Special congratulations go to Scott Barr who was the 2021 NFHS Baseball Official of the Year. We appreciate all that Scott has done for baseball umpiring in Ohio.

2022 marks the twelfth year of the OHSAA’s sport specific program to provide officials additional training opportunities and you the opportunity to improve your “game”. The OHSAA Board of Directors has directed substantial resources to enhance the training programs for all officials. We need your help as we continue to strengthen officiating in Ohio. We expect all of you to support our efforts to see that both playing rules and the approved umpire mechanics are followed. These cannot be optional – either for individual umpires or local associations. Consistency is something the game, coaches, players, and your fellow umpires all deserve. Our goal is simple: **ONE RULE/ONE INTERPRETATION/ONE MECHANIC**

Points of Emphasis

State & Local Meeting Attendance Requirements

As in the past, all baseball umpires must attend four local rules meeting and one state rules meeting. The OHSAA requires umpires holding permits in both baseball and softball to attend four local meetings for each sport.

This year we will be offering 2 online local meetings. Two of our local associations have graciously produced the two meetings and their topics are as follows. Everyone will still need to do two in person meetings, and I hope you can even do more.

Meeting #1

- mechanics and the blue book

Meeting #2

- Force play slide rule
- Runners' lane interference
- Taking plays in the wedge
- Rotation to third and return
- Hybrid pitching stance
- Double play footwork
- DH rule and subs

The state meeting will be available both online and in person. The **BEST WAY** to start your preparation for the coming season is to attend a “face-to-face” State Rules Interpretation Meeting. There will be eight in person meetings. **Each meeting will feature sessions of about two hours and in addition to the state meeting will review the most important items that we want to cover prior to the season. By attending the entire session, you will receive credit for a local meeting in addition to the state baseball meeting.** There is no need to “pre-register” for any face-to-face State meetings, it is purely optional. The schedule is listed below with all meetings starting at 6PM.

Monday, January 24 – Zanesville – High School – 1701 Blue Ave

Wednesday, January 26 – Columbus – OHSAA Office –Ceramic Building– 4080 Roselea Place

Tuesday, February 1 – Monroe – High School - 220 Yankee Rd.

Tuesday, February 8 – Jackson – High School – 500 Vaughn St.

Thursday, February 10 – Cleveland - Garfield Heights High School – 4900 Turney Rd.

Tuesday, February 15 – Findlay – Donnell Middle School – 301 Baldwin Ave.

Thursday, February 17–Canton –Stark County Educational Service Center, 6057 Strip Ave NW

Tuesday, February 22 – Piqua – Upper Valley Career Center – 8811 Career Dr.

The online state meeting for baseball will be available by the week of February 7. Details will be emailed to all officials and will include the deadlines for completing the meeting. To access the meeting, log in to your myOHSAA profile and click the “Rules Meetings” icon in the top right, then click “Find a State Meeting” from the left side menu, then select “Baseball” from the “Sports” dropdown menu, “Official” from “Meeting Type” dropdown menu, and then click “Search”. This search will display the online meeting option as well as any face-to-face meeting options. You may view the online meeting on any device except for a Google Chromebook. A Google Chromebook is a type of laptop computer, entirely different from the popular internet browser Google Chrome. You may view the online meetings using the internet browser Google Chrome.

Weather guidelines, please read page 75 in the 2022 rule book. This will be discussed during the state meeting, and I would hope you can familiarize yourself with these changes. We still need to err on the side of safety.

Line Up: There are now three line-ups that a coach can use. The first is a straight nine with no designated hitter. This is the simplest and each starter has one re-entry. The second is the DH that we have been using for years. Here there is a defensive player and a DH who is batting for him. Both players have re-entry opportunities, and we know that the DH is done when offense to defense or defense to offense.

The coaches asked that the rule include a Player/DH. Rule 3-1-4-a and b explains the new rule. Here any player (one only) is listed as the defensive player and the offensive player. The rationale is many times the best fielder is also one of the strongest hitters and when using the other two-line ups, when he was taken out, he couldn't bat unless he re-entered. Using the P/DH if that player is substituted on offense for any reason (running, batting), the P/DH is terminated, and that player is now in the game in that spot in the lineup.

Tobacco and Jewelry: Both tobacco and jewelry are **illegal** in high school sports. If you have either a player or coach using tobacco or tobacco like products, that person is immediately ejected and there needs to be a report filed in myOHSAA. In the Handbook for Officials it states, "An Official shall avoid the use of tobacco and tobacco products at the contest site". For jewelry, after action has stopped, a warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender on that team shall be ejected.

Online testing: For the 2022 season the OHSAA will again offer rules testing for baseball umpires. Umpires who complete the rules test successfully will receive additional point credit for their 2023 tournament officials rating as follows:

94% and above – 3 points

86% - 92% - 2 points

80-84% - 1 point

This test will be available by mid-February and will have a mid-March deadline. Additional details will be sent to you when the test is available online.

Handling situations: Last year I asked that if an official was having issues with a team that they fill out a game report in myOHSAA. There were numerous reports filed, both good and bad

sportsmanship by team personnel and fans. During the year, I had opportunity to talk to some Athletic Directors and a few principals and for the most part the issues were addressed. They were very surprised that the umpires were writing up the reports and wished all sports would do so. Often, this is the only time they had heard of issues at baseball games!

So, again this year, I am asking at every plate meeting that you ask the head coach of the home team if there is game management available. If there are any issues during the game with fans, advise the coach to take care of it. If you have any problems with coaches, players, or fans, please file a sportsmanship report on myOHSAA. The office and the schools need to know what is going on and we need to protect each other. Below is from the OHSAA By-Laws.

School's Responsibility When Hosting A Contest 3-2-1 *The host school has the responsibility to ensure that a contest or event is administered in a manner which emphasizes the educational values inherent in interscholastic athletics. It is the host school's responsibility to remove any individual(s) who disrupts the educational goals of the contest or event. Likewise, the host school is ultimately responsible for the safety of all participants (players, coaches, officials, spectators, etc.) in the interscholastic contest immediately before, during and immediately after each contest or event. Therefore, the host school shall appoint a site director/ manager or administrator-in-charge for every contest or event. The host school shall ensure that the site director/manager or administrator-in-charge is aware of the school's emergency action plan and how to adjust it to meet the needs of the particular contest or event. Included in the emergency action plan shall be procedures to deal with emergencies, crowd management and health and safety protections. The plan shall also include procedures to ensure that unauthorized personnel are kept from the playing field; to provide safety and security for the visiting team(s), their spectators and the contest officials, and to provide safety and security for parking areas related to the contest or event.*

Clinics: We will again try and have three, two umpire mechanics clinics in the state. As of the writing of this letter, we are still trying to find a location in the Northeast that can accommodate a clinic in February. For those who participate, an additional 3 points will be added to your 2022 rating. Below are the dates and locations of the clinics. To register go to: <https://www.ohsaa.org/Officiating/DOD>

February 12, 2022 (Central) Grove City, OH

February 26, 2022 (SW) Sidney, OH

Social Media Guidelines: I wouldn't think we need to again address social media but what I saw online last year really disturbed me. Please take note to what NASO has given us as guidelines:

NASO's Board of Directors adopted the following social media guidelines for use by officials and organizations:

- Consider social media communications as public at all times — even if created with private intentions. If you are going to use social media in any form, consider your communication may be read by anyone at any time.
- You represent the officiating industry, your associations, your assigners and your partners. Act accordingly.
- Promote officiating in a positive light and with a general feeling of pride and professionalism. You are an ambassador for officiating.
- You have a unique access to information. The same ethical restrictions that apply to any form of public speech also apply to social media. It is inappropriate to communicate specifics about your assignments, other officials, conferences/schools, coaches, players or any related personnel.
- Do not engage in specific play and or ruling evaluation/commentary, whether it be of a game you worked, one that you witnessed or in general about the impact of officials in any sporting event.
- Communications among officials for learning purposes should be done privately and not through the use of social media. Be mindful that email and other forms of direct communication can be made public.
- Be very sparing in the sharing of your personal information, including photos. Adjust security settings accordingly. Report fake profiles or posts to the appropriate authorities/governing bodies in a timely fashion.
- Follow specific conference, school and/or governing body social media policies

Hybrid Pitching position: It is 2022 and it's hard to believe but we are still not calling the hybrid consistently across the state. If you aren't calling this because you do not feel it's important then you are doing the kids a disservice. We had numerous teams make it to the regionals where it was called and the coach said that "he's been doing this all year." I'm always skeptical when I hear them say that but there were too many making the same comment. Please make a point of this at your early local meeting so that I won't have to include this in next year's letter!



ILLEGAL

Have a great safe holiday season and will be in touch in the new year.