



# NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

PO Box 690, Indianapolis, IN 46206

317-972-6900, FAX 317.822.5700/www.nfhs.org

## **New rule permits facial and head protection for high school baseball**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: B. Elliot Hopkins**

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (July 14, 2005) — At its annual meeting June 17-18 in Indianapolis, Indiana, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Baseball Rules Committee adopted a new rule that permits the pitcher or defensive players to wear non-glare facial or head protection while on the field. Rule 1-5-5, which is designed to minimize risk of injury, was one of 12 rules addressed at the meeting.

“In the few occasions that pitchers are hit by the ball, most of the occurrences are above the neck,” said B. Elliot Hopkins, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the NFHS Baseball Rules Committee. “The committee felt that players who want to wear protection should be able to.”

In other changes, Rule 1-3-6 was revised to eliminate the confusion this past season with the legality of two-toned gloves. The modification bans any white or gray colors on the glove or mitt worn by the pitchers. This rule was revised due to the popularity of two-toned gloves, which typically have not been distracting.

As a means of providing additional coverage to the definition of a foul ball, Rule 2-16-1e was added. It states that a ball inadvertently declared foul by an umpire that touches the ground is a dead ball.

The committee also revised Rule 2-10-2, which now mandates a meeting involving the umpires, both head coaches and team captains (if available) near home plate before each game.

“Good sportsmanship is the rationale behind the pregame conference,” said NFHS Baseball Rules Committee Chairman Greg Brewer, assistant director of the Alabama High School Athletic Association. “We want to make sure everyone is properly uniformed, understands the rules and that there is no miscommunication between the umpires and the teams.”

Eight other minor changes were approved by the committee, including two involving baserunning rules and two revisions to dead-ball rules. A listing of all rules changes is attached.

Baseball is the fourth-most popular sport among boys at the high school level with 457,146 participants during the 2003-04 season, according to the High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS. It also ranks third in school sponsorship with 14,984 schools offering the sport.

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**MEDIA CONTACT:** Bruce Howard or John Gillis, 317-972-6900