

Risk Minimization and Sportsmanship Addressed in 2025 Baseball Rules Changes

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High school baseball players using non-wood bats will have greater flexibility in using substances to enhance their grip on the bat with a change that brings consistency to Rule 1-3-2.

This rule revision was one of two proposed by the NFHS Baseball Rules Committee after its annual rules meeting held June 2-4 at The Alexander hotel in Indianapolis. The rules changes were accepted by the NFHS Board of Directors and are effective with the 2025 season.

Rule 1-3-2c1 addresses allowable grips on non-wood bats and now includes clarification that resin, pine tar or another drying agent can be applied to the bat, not to exceed beyond 18 inches from the base of the knob. In addition to allowing players more grip control on their bats, it makes the standards the same as wood bats.

"For years, players using wood bats had the luxury of being allowed to use substances that ensure better grip," said Elliot Hopkins, NFHS Director of Sports and liaison to the Baseball Rules Committee. "This rule change permits users of non-wood bats the same opportunity to protect others while maintaining a firm and solid grip of the baseball bat. Both styles of bats can now enjoy the ability to improve their grip and hold while not interfering with the ball-striking area of the bat."

The other rules change relates to forfeited games. Rule 4-4-1 outlines the conditions that can result in a forfeit and item 'c' now includes the failure to remove an ejected coach or team personnel from the game as a reason an umpire may force a team to forfeit. Previously, only an ejected player was listed.

"Rule 4-4 is more about coaches maintaining proper decorum for their players and coaching staff," Hopkins said. "If the emotional rigors of the game become overwhelming for students and coaches, this rule intends to bring the offending parties back to the center of the reason for education-based athletics."

A complete listing of the baseball rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on "Activities & Sports" at the top of the home page and select "Baseball."

According to the 2022-23 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, baseball is the fourth most popular boys sport with 478,451 boys participating in 15,978 high schools across the country.