



2026-27 NFHS Baseball

Points of Emphasis - umpire training reference for the 2027 season
NFHS source published August 18, 2026.

What a Point of Emphasis means

A Point of Emphasis is not automatically a new rule. It identifies an area the NFHS wants coaches, players and officials to reinforce because the subject needs additional attention during the season.

2027 Points of Emphasis - At a Glance

1

Video and Audio Usage

No wearable microphones, cameras or other recording devices on players during live competition.

2

Players and Coaches Apparel

Legal, professional, education-based appearance; address illegal or altered apparel/equipment before play when possible.

3

Pitching Rules and Pitcher Protection

Know and apply pitching rules while reinforcing pitcher safety and responsible fatigue management.

4

Sportsmanship

Respectful conduct by players, coaches, umpires and spectators; address behavior that taunts, provokes or embarrasses.

5

Gamesmanship vs. Travesty

Legal strategy is part of baseball; conduct that mocks, confuses or exploits the game outside the spirit of the rules is not.

Crew Mindset

Practical training objective

These emphases are best handled through prevention, consistent communication and timely intervention. Identify avoidable issues before first pitch, know what is permitted, and address conduct problems before they escalate.



Points of Emphasis - Field Application

Technology, apparel and pitching
NFHS source published August 18, 2026.

1. Video and Audio Usage

NFHS EMPHASIS

Players may not wear microphones, cameras or other audio/video recording devices while participating in a live high-school baseball contest. Recording by schools or media may occur from approved locations outside the field of play.

UMPIRE TRAINING FOCUS

During equipment and uniform checks, look for wearable or player-operated recording technology. Distinguish a player-worn device from permitted recording conducted off the field. Keep the focus on safety, competitive equity, privacy and minimizing distractions.

PREGAME / CREW DISCUSSION

Ask the crew to identify who will handle any technology question and how to communicate the restriction clearly to a coach before play.

2. Players and Coaches Apparel

NFHS EMPHASIS

Uniforms and apparel should promote team unity, professionalism and school identity rather than individual expression or commercial promotion. Coaches are responsible for players being legally and properly equipped; coach attire should also fit the educational setting.

UMPIRE TRAINING FOCUS

Use the pregame period to address obviously illegal, altered or non-compliant apparel and equipment. Avoid preventable delays by resolving concerns before the game begins whenever practical.

PREGAME / CREW DISCUSSION

Review current uniform/equipment rules so the crew can separate a true rules issue from a matter of style or personal preference.

3. Pitching Rules and Pitcher Protection Enhancement

NFHS EMPHASIS

NFHS emphasizes correct application of legal pitching positions, pitching motions, disengagements, balks and illegal pitches. It also stresses responsible pitcher management, fatigue recognition and compliance with state-association pitching limits.

UMPIRE TRAINING FOCUS

Be precise on pitching-rule administration and avoid creating extra restrictions not found in the rules. Umpires share responsibility for protecting the integrity and safety of the contest, while coaches and school personnel manage pitch-count limits and pitcher use under state policy.

PREGAME / CREW DISCUSSION

Discuss unusual pitching motions, disengagement situations and crew communication on balk/illegal-pitch calls before taking the field.



Points of Emphasis - Conduct and Integrity

Sportsmanship and the line between gamesmanship and travesty
NFHS source published August 18, 2026.

4. Sportsmanship

NFHS EMPHASIS

High-school baseball is an extension of the classroom. Players, coaches, umpires and spectators share responsibility for respect. Taunting, excessive celebrations and conduct intended to embarrass or provoke others are inconsistent with education-based athletics.

UMPIRE TRAINING FOCUS

Set an appropriate tone early. Handle disrespect, taunting and escalating behavior consistently and without unnecessary confrontation. The crew should communicate so similar conduct is treated similarly throughout the game.

PREGAME / CREW DISCUSSION

Agree on preventive communication: when a quiet word is appropriate, when the head coach should be involved, and when conduct requires the penalty prescribed by the current rules.

5. Gamesmanship vs. Travesty

NFHS EMPHASIS

Legal deception, strategy and creativity are legitimate parts of baseball. Conduct becomes a problem when it intentionally mocks the game, creates unnecessary confusion, uses unsporting deception or exploits rules in a manner contrary to their purpose.

UMPIRE TRAINING FOCUS

Do not confuse clever legal strategy with misconduct. Judge the act against the actual rule, its purpose and sportsmanship standards. When an act crosses into unsporting behavior, address it promptly so the game remains orderly and credible.

PREGAME / CREW DISCUSSION

Discuss unusual trick plays or recurring local situations. The crew should be prepared to distinguish a legal baseball tactic from conduct that undermines the game.

Useful Distinction for Training

Legal strategy is not automatically unsporting

The NFHS emphasis does not eliminate deception from baseball. Pickoffs, decoys, hidden information and other tactics may be legal. The concern is conduct that turns the contest into a mockery, intentionally creates improper confusion, or uses behavior inconsistent with the spirit and educational purpose of the game.



Pregame and Chapter Training Checklist

Use this page for crew meetings, clinics and association discussion
NFHS source published August 18, 2026.

Pregame Review

1

Wearable technology

Confirm players are not wearing microphones, cameras or similar recording devices during live play.

2

Uniforms and apparel

Resolve obvious legality/compliance issues before the first pitch whenever possible.

3

Pitching enforcement

Review responsibilities on legal positions, disengagements, balks and illegal pitches.

4

Pitcher safety awareness

Remember that state pitch-count administration and fatigue management involve coaches/schools, while umpires enforce the playing rules and maintain a safe contest.

5

Sportsmanship tone

Establish calm, professional communication with coaches and partners; intervene before behavior escalates when the rules permit preventive officiating.

6

Gamesmanship questions

Apply the written rules first. Separate legal strategy from conduct that is unsporting or makes a travesty of the game.

Chapter Discussion Prompts

- What wearable technology have you seen at the high-school or travel-ball level, and how would you identify the permitted location/use under NFHS rules?
- Which uniform or apparel issues should be fixed pregame rather than allowed to become an in-game distraction?
- Which pitching situations create the most inconsistency within our crews, and what rule language should we review?
- Where is the line between legitimate deception and unsporting conduct in common trick-play situations?

Primary source

NFHS, "Baseball Points of Emphasis - 2027," published August 18, 2026. This CFU handout summarizes and converts the NFHS emphasis areas into training prompts; it is not a substitute for the current NFHS Baseball Rules Book, case book, interpretations, or applicable FHSAA guidance.