

# Rules Changes

## Pitching (6-1-1)

A pitcher taking a sign from the catcher is one of the fundamental rules of baseball, allowing both the offensive and defensive teams to understand that playing action is about to take place. However, that basic act has become much more complex in recent years due to the proliferation of signals being verbally relayed directly from the dugout to the pitcher and catcher. However, such activity was not supported by an accompanying rule to allow the offensive team to be prepared for the start of action.

Therefore, rule 6-1-1 has been changed to include wording that, while defensive teams are legally allowed to relay signs in this newly accepted manner, the pitcher must still “take or simulate taking his sign from the catcher with his pivot foot in contact with the pitcher’s plate.” This is shown in PlayPics A and B. This requirement is in place whether the pitcher is working out of the windup or the set position, as established in 6-1-2 and 6-1-3.

By simulating taking a sign, the playing action is allowed to start in the same fashion as it always has, eliminating the possibility of a pitcher illegally delivering a quick pitch to an unsuspecting hitter or a baserunner now having the opportunity to lead off from a base.

# Points Of Emphasis

## Excessive Celebration

Spontaneous, in-the-moment celebrations of good plays have now evolved into more choreographed celebrations that include props and players being assigned specific roles, leading to activity that can best be described as “one-upmanship” or “showboating.” Coaches should be the first line in preventing this type of behavior from occurring.

However, if they are unwilling or unable to manage the emotions of their players or the celebrations, umpires have existing rules that provide warnings, possible restrictions and ejections, and should be willing to use them as necessary.

## Proper Use of Equipment

Players should not be modifying or misusing equipment in a way it was not meant to be used as designed by equipment manufacturers. Doing so created questions about how the equipment will perform and creates liability issues.

## Sitting on Buckets (Coaches)

Coaches, players, substitutes, and other bench personnel are not allowed, by rule, to leave the dugout during a live ball for any unauthorized purpose. This includes sitting outside the dugout on a bucket or stool.

## Lodged Ball Procedure

A baseball that remains on the playing field but has become wedged, stuck, lost or unreachable is defined to be a lodged ball. If the ball impacts something, stops abruptly and does not fall back or roll immediately, it is considered lodged. There are existing NFHS rules to deal with a batted, thrown or pitched ball that enters a player’s uniform, catcher’s equipment or umpire’s equipment. However, if a ball becomes stuck in a player’s glove, it remains in play, with the glove/ball combination being treated as a live ball.

## Sportsmanship

Chants/intentional distractions and loud noises (natural or artificial) directed at the opponent prior to pitching, hitting or fielding are not good sportsmanship and should not be accepted. As with excessive celebrations, coaches should be the first line in curbing this behavior, and if they are unable to do so, the umpires have tools spelled out in the rulebook to address these actions.