



Welcome
2023 Season
High School Baseball
Coaches Meeting



2023 Season High School Baseball Coaches Meeting



Agenda:

- Administrative Stuff
- Rule Changes
- Points of Emphasis
- Working With Umpires

Administrative Stuff



Handouts:

- Coaches Handbook / Survival Guide put inside the
- NFHS PreSeason Guide for 2023

One set for each of your school's programs.

Schedules



- Double Check
 - Web Site (NorthernCoastOfficials.org)
 - Sunday Email
- Adds, Changes, Cancels:
 - Host school to contact NCOA
 - Night Before or Day Of - Can email but no response within 10 minutes please Call 707 538-5190
 - Future Game Adds/Changes/Cancels - Email (ncoa@sonic.net) or Phone

***PLEASE be specific to School(s);
Sport and Level - when communicating with us.***



Umpires Arrival

Umpires are to be at your school/field 30-minutes prior to start time. At least one umpire must check in with the home coach.

If umpires have NOT checked in and are no where near your field or in the parking lot at least **25-minutes** before start of the game:

Please call (707) 538-5190

and let us know umpires have not arrived.

****** Be specific with location, sport and level ******

NOTE: If you fail to check the confirmation schedule and/or check the online web site schedule we will not scramble to get you umpires.

Umpires should be on the field at the plate 7-minutes prior to the start of the game.



Questionable Weather Days



On questionable weather days please be in contact with the NCOA assigners by **CALLING (707) 538-5190**. We will notify the umpires of any cancellations or changes.

DAY of Game(s): Email is OK - but no response within 10-minutes PLEASE CALL!

Please be SPECIFIC when calling, emailing or texting NCOA in regards to the

- **SCHOOL,**
- **SPORT and**
- **LEVEL.**

Umpires are to call the HOME coach or School for the level and sport they are working prior to departing for a game if the weather is questionable.

Make sure each and every coach's information is up-to-date with NCOA



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

National Federation of State
High School Associations



2023 Baseball Rules Changes and Points of Emphasis

1-5-4

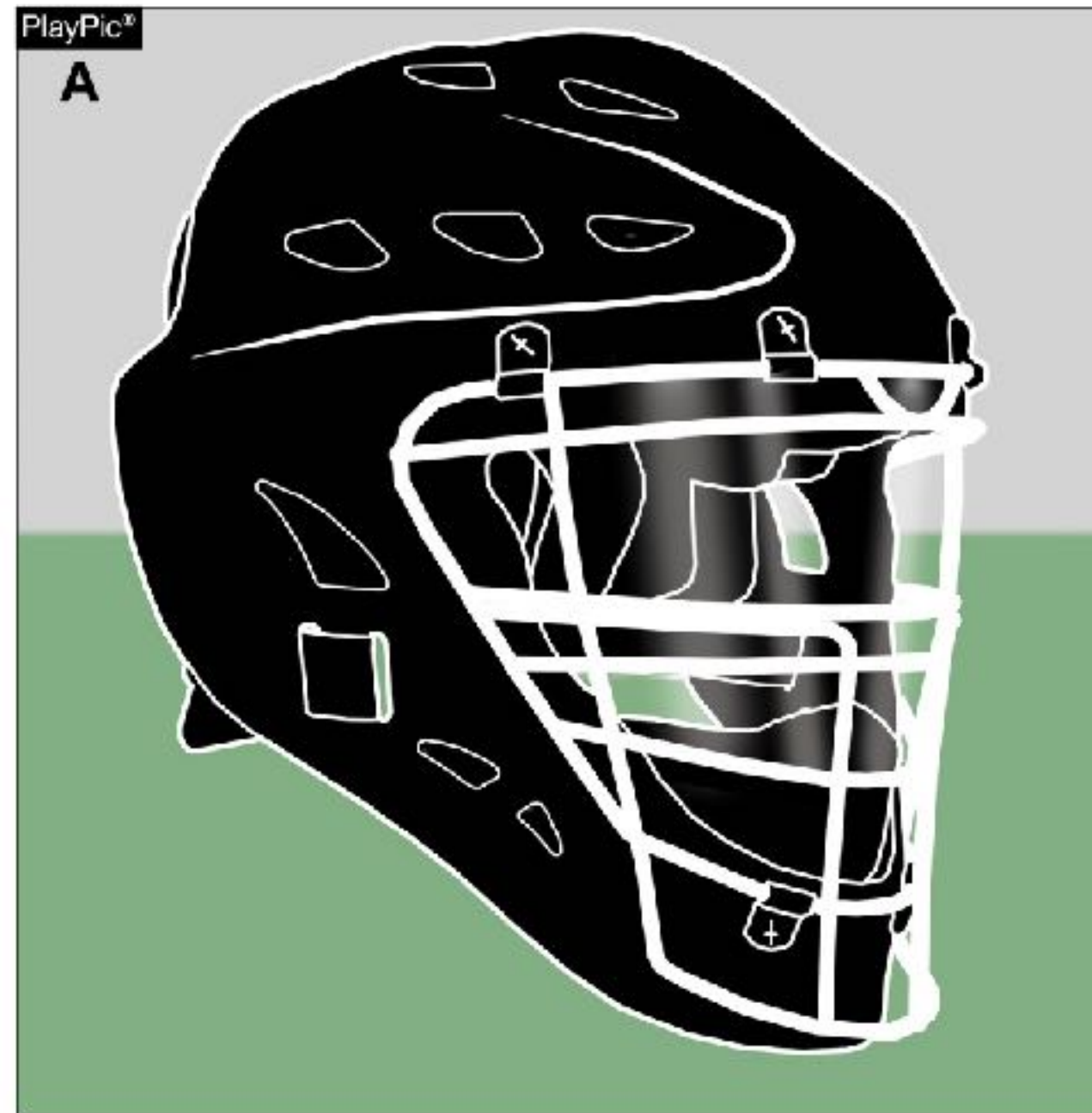
PLAYER EQUIPMENT- CATCHER'S HELMET AND MASK

- **ART. 4 . . .** The catcher's helmet and mask combination shall meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture.
- Eye shields shall not be attached to the catcher's mask **after** manufacture.
- Eye shields that are attached to the catcher's mask at the time of manufacture will be constructed of a molded rigid material and be clear without the presence of any tint.
- **Tinted eyewear (sunglasses)** worn on the face and under the face mask is permitted.



1-5-4

PLAYER EQUIPMENT- CATCHER'S HELMET AND MASK



Not Legal -
because either Tinted or “Prism”.
Why: Medical personal need
to see player’s eyes if injured.



Sun Glasses are **Legal**

1-5-12, 3-3-1d

PLAYER EQUIPMENT – WEARING OF JEWELRY

■ NO MORE JEWELRY RULE!!!

- Countless studies have shown there is little, if any, chance of injury due to wearing jewelry.



Legal

1-5-12, 3-3-1d

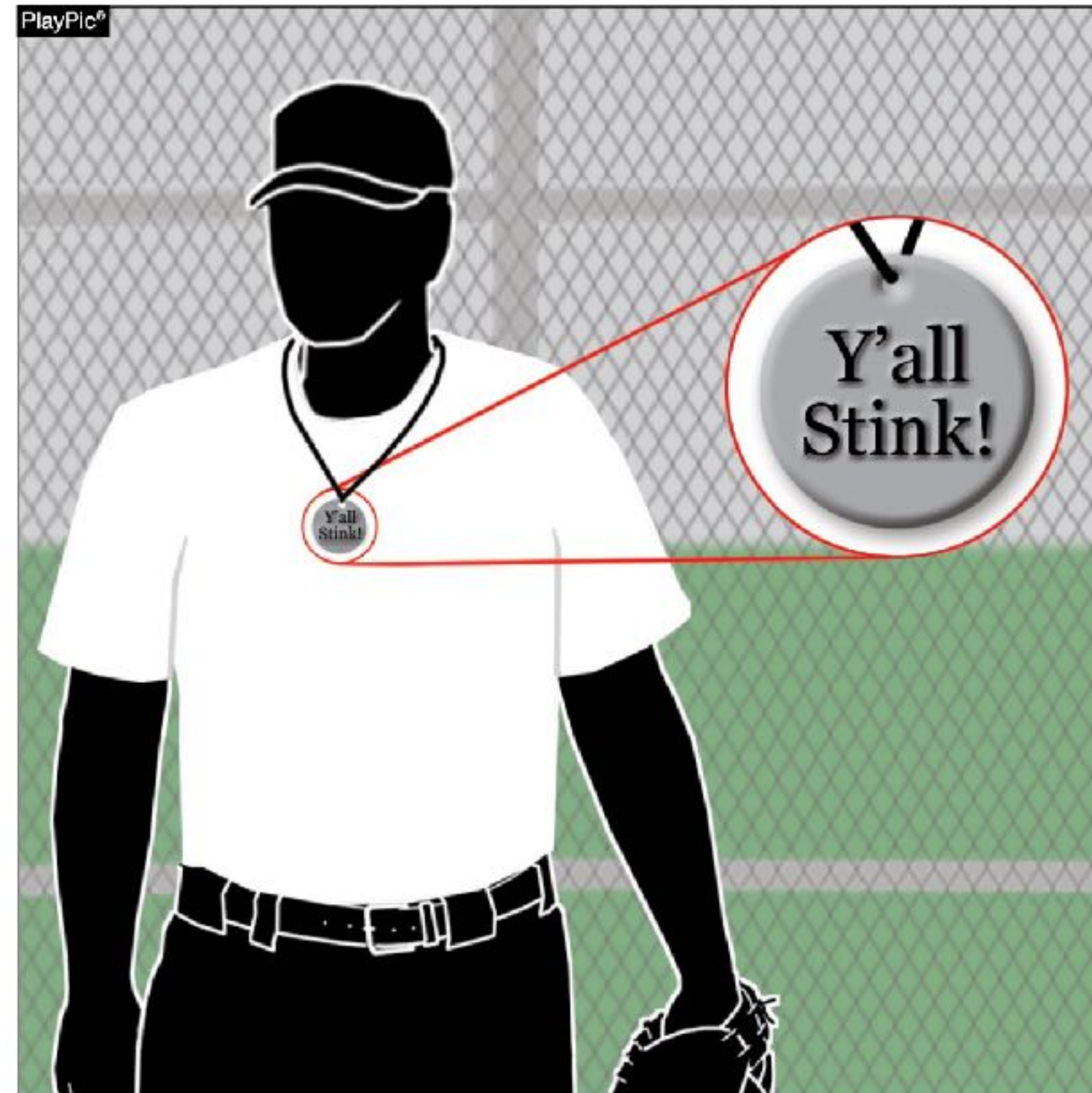
PLAYER EQUIPMENT – WEARING OF JEWELRY

- Any jewelry worn that poses harm or injury to a player or their opponent is covered in existing rules.
- Bandannas are still prohibited.



Not Safe

ELIMINATION OF JEWELRY



Derogatory Statements Not Allowed

2-4-4

LODGED BALL DEFINITION



ART. 4 . . . 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 any **non**-playing object in the course of play:

- stops abruptly, and
- does not fall or roll immediately, it is considered lodged.

It is a dead ball.

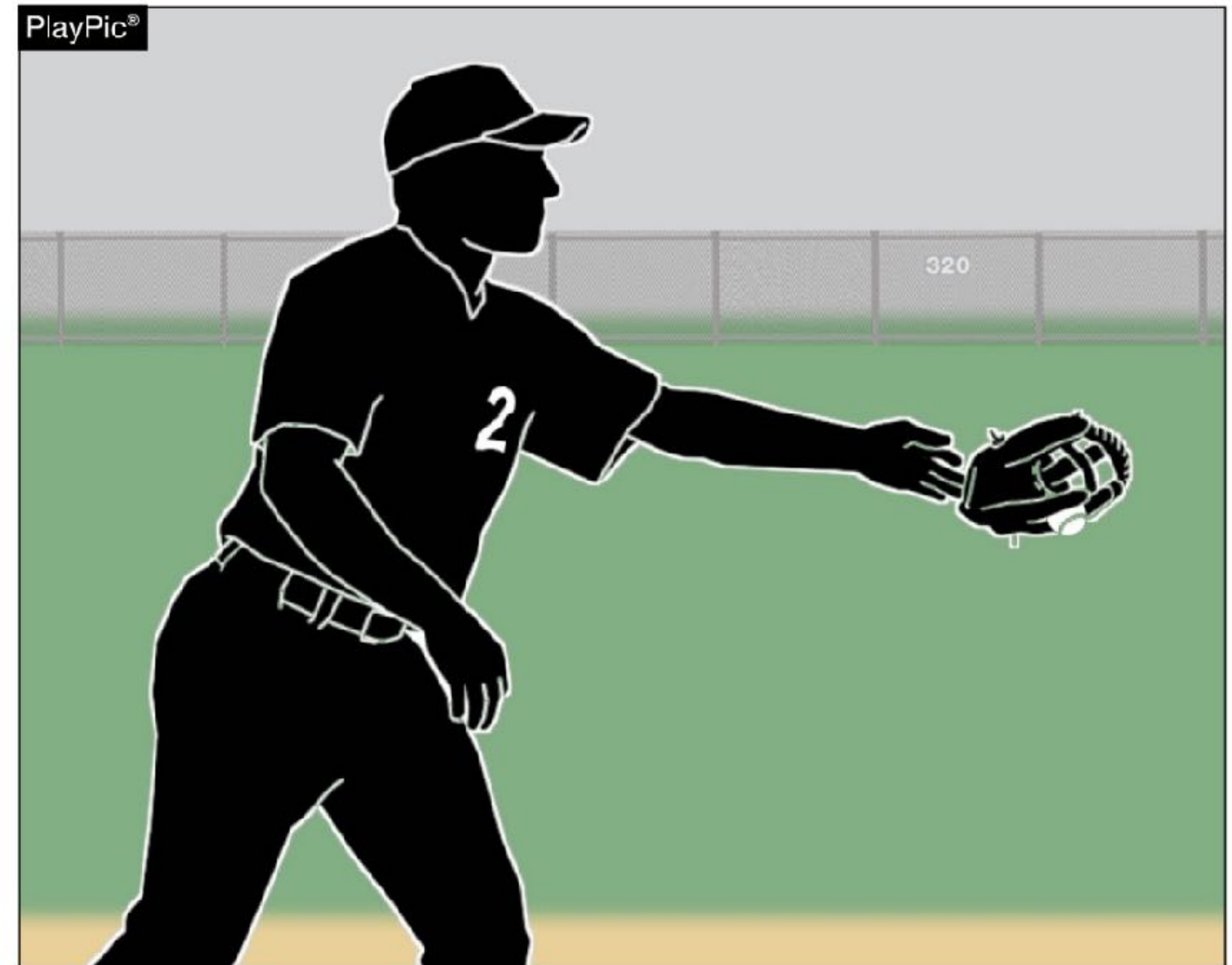
Award bases accordingly

(5-1-1f-3,4; 5-1-1g-4).

2-4-4

LODGED BALL DEFINITION

Exception: if a ball becomes stuck in the webbing of the fielder's glove, it remains in play. The glove/ball combination is treated as a live ball.



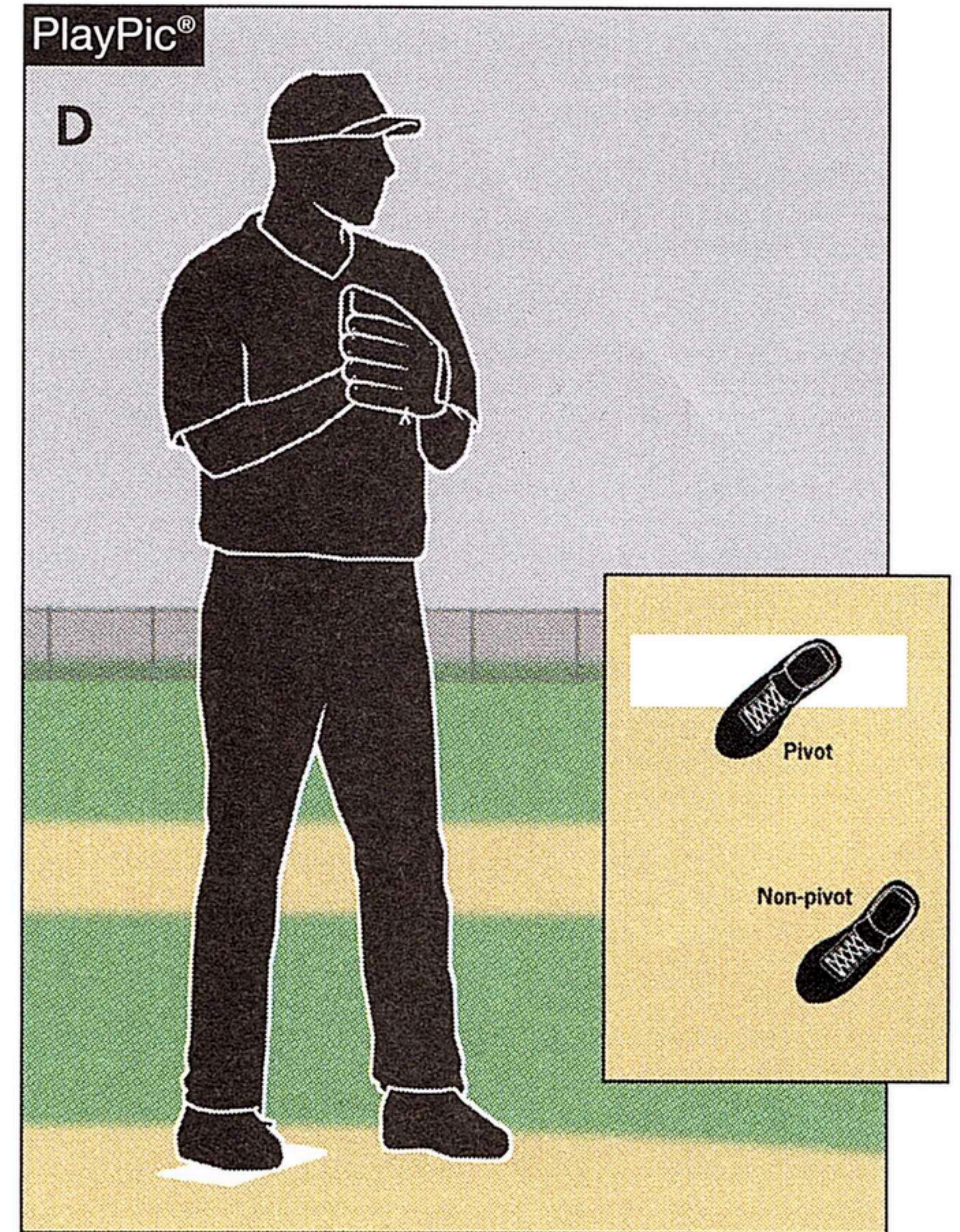
Pitching Positions

“Hybrid” Stance:
NOW Legal
In high school

With an exception.

If the pivot foot is **NOT parallel** to the pitcher’s plate the pitcher is in the “**Wind Up**” position.

The free foot **CAN be in front** of the rubber.



Pitching Positions



Stretch Position

Determined by Foot Placement

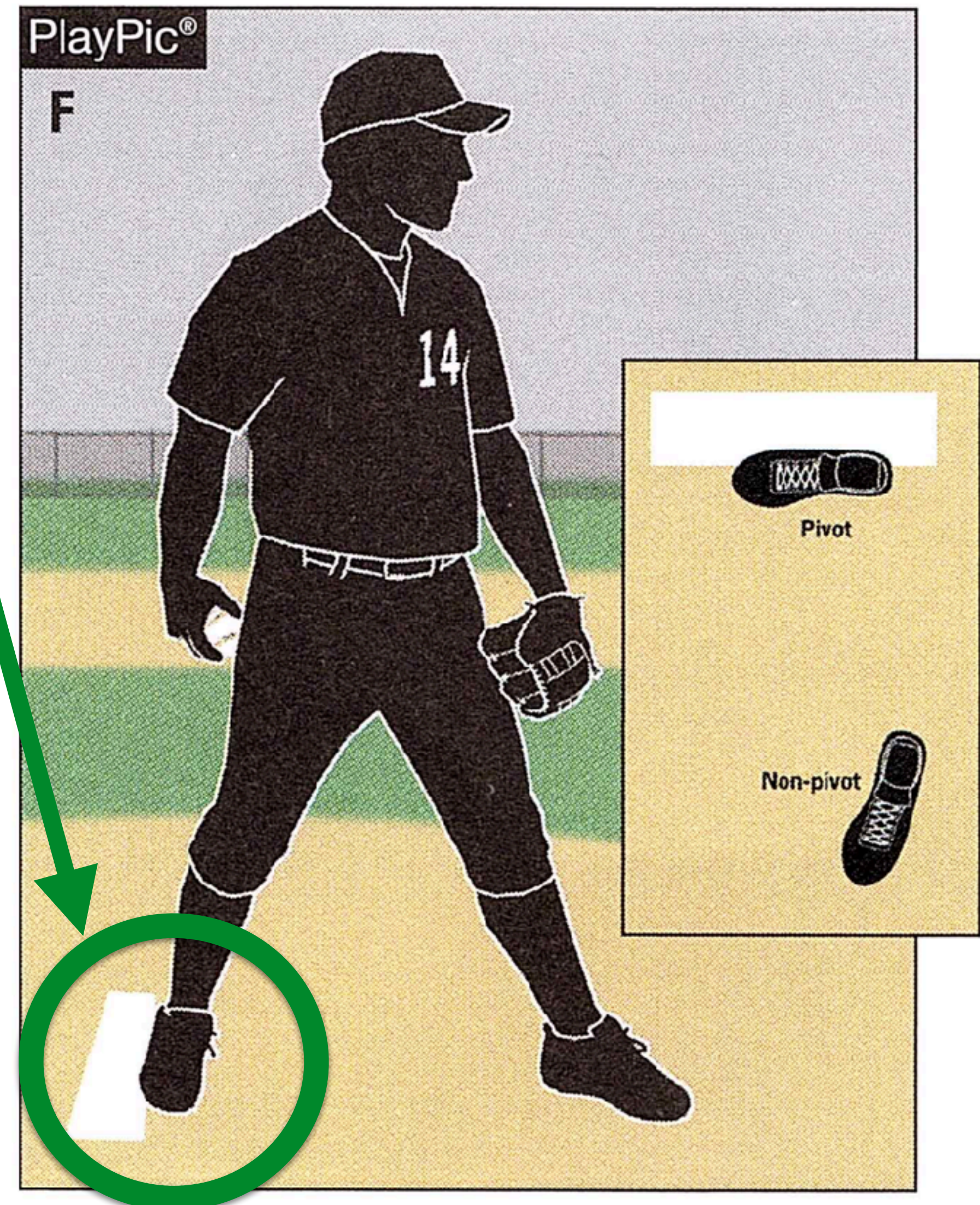
Parallel to Rubber = Stretch Position

Hand Placement While Getting Sign:

- Separate
- Throwing hand Down at Side
- or
- Behind Back

Pitcher can be bent at waist:

- Throwing arm can be in front but not swinging (or very little).
- Ball can be in hand or glove.





6-1-1, 6-1-2, 6-1-3

PITCHING – DETERMINATION OF PITCHING POSITION

Remember . . . For the set position with bases empty or occupied:

- The pitcher still must come to a ***complete and discernible stop*** before delivering a pitch from the set position.
- Bases Empty: Illegal pitch.
- Runners on: Balk



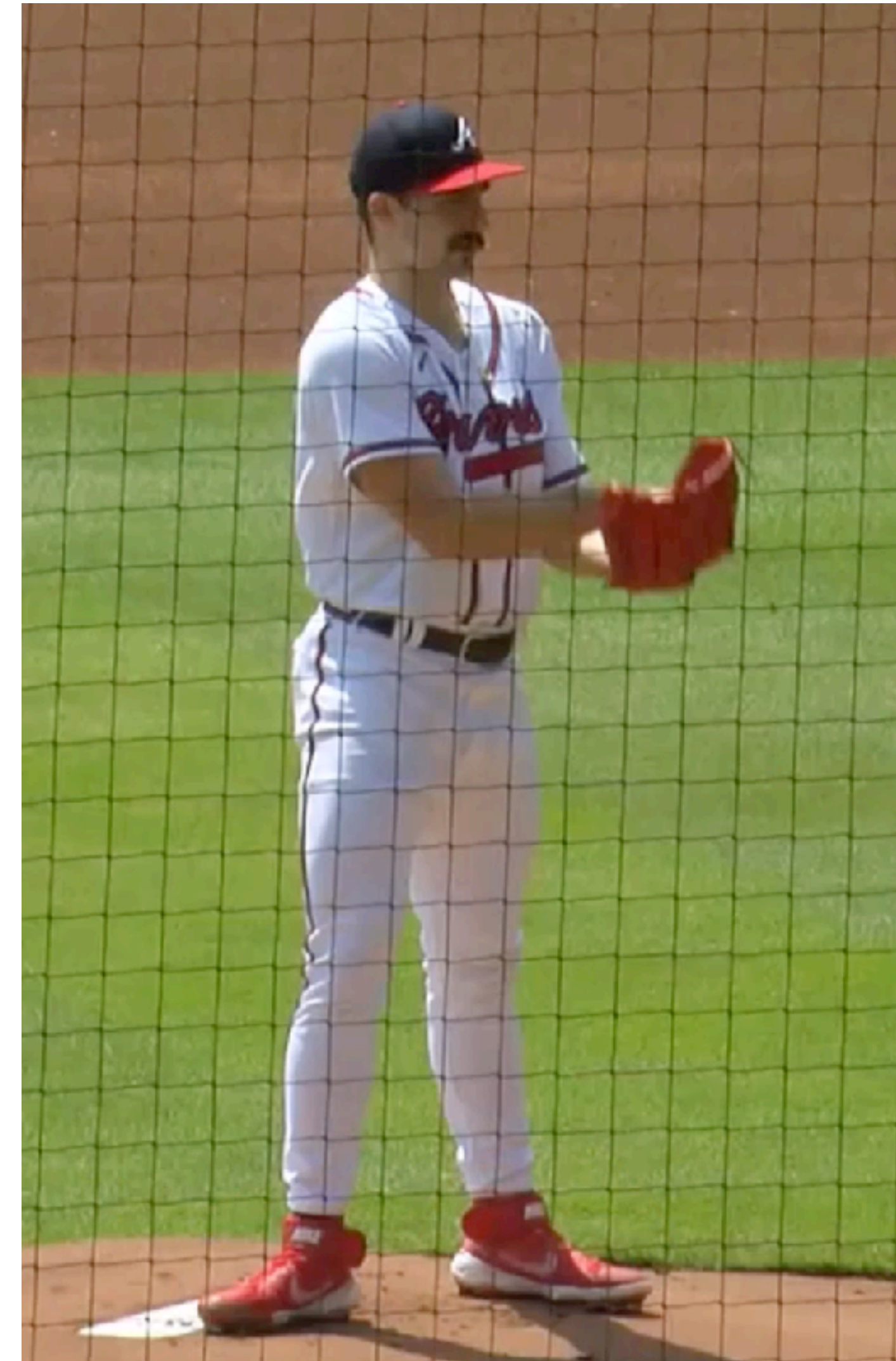
Pitching Positions

This “Hybrid” Stance:
NOT Legal
In high school

If the pivot foot is **parallel** to the pitcher’s plate the pitcher is in the **SET** position.

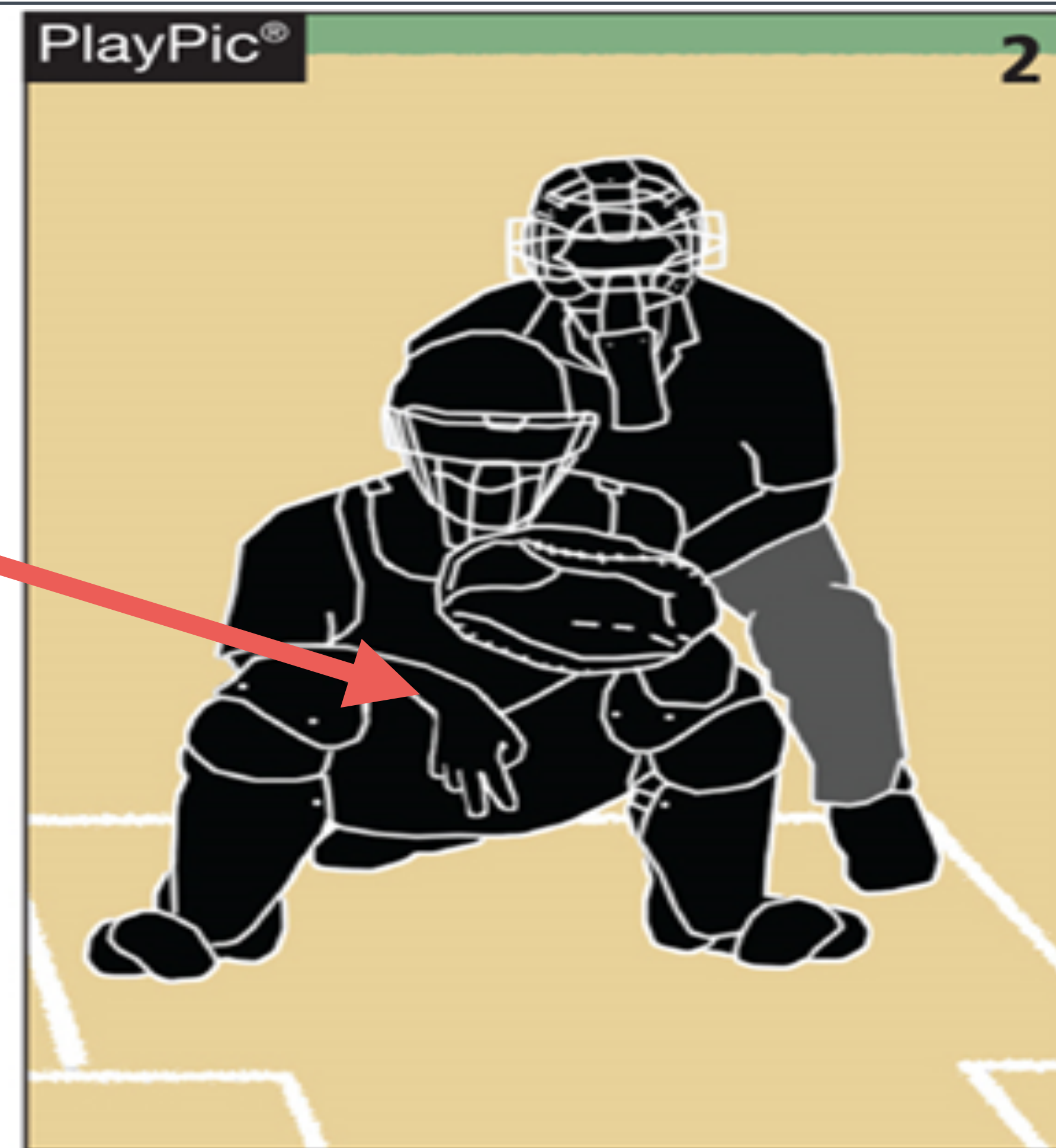
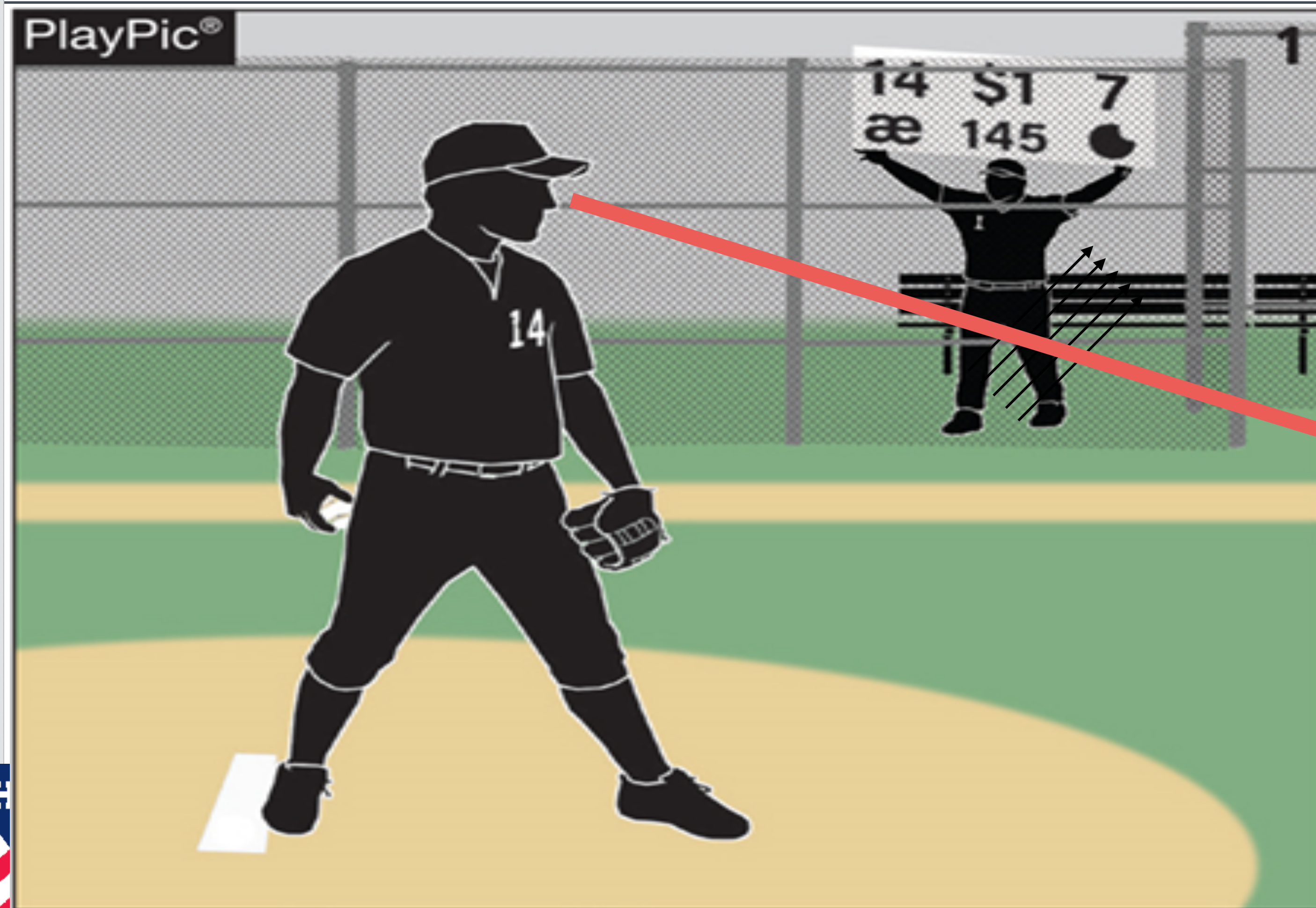
Thus pitcher with **foot parallel** to the pitcher’s plate **CANNOT** step sideways with free foot and then raise leg and complete the pitch.

This would be an illegal pitch.



RULE 6-1-1 PITCHING

- *If the pitcher takes his sign from the dugout, either off or on the rubber, pitcher **MUST SIMULATE** taking a sign from the catcher on the rubber before delivering the pitch.*





POINTS OF EMPHASIS



SITTING ON BUCKETS OUTSIDE DUGOUT OR COACHES OUTSIDE DUGOUTS



- Coaches not in the coaches box,
- Players not on defensive, on base, at bat or in a coaches box...
- MUST be in the dugout.
- *During a Dead Ball or a lull in the action OK for coach to step out and yell instructions to players - then get back in when pitcher ready to pitch.*

USAGE OF EYE BLACK



- The high school game is now experiencing eye black that is being used as face decoration, with images and/or sayings being drawn on the faces of players to try to intimidate and/or taunt an opponent.
- Existing sportsmanship rules are available (Rule 3-3-1f 2, 3 and 4) to **prohibit any use of eye black in an inappropriate or unfavorable way.**

SPORTSMANSHIP



SPORTSMANSHIP

- Good sporting behavior is one of the fundamental ingredients to the continued success and enjoyment of education-based high school sports and activities.
- In fact, in the 103-year history of organized high school sports in the United States, good sportsmanship has been one of the most important outcomes of high school activity programs.



SPORTSMANSHIP

- NFHS playing rules are written to encourage sportsmanship.
- Participation in these programs should **promote respect, integrity and sportsmanship.**
- However, for these ideals to occur, everyone involved in these programs must be doing their part.
- The NFHS is concerned that **unsporting behavior** in education-based athletics has increased across all sports.
- **As a result, the NFHS has made sportsmanship the No. 1 Point of Emphasis for the 2022-23 school year.**



SPORTSMANSHIP

- There must be a collaborative, working relationship between contest officials and game administration to promote good sportsmanship and safely conduct the contest.
- **Everyone has their roles to play in creating a positive, sportsmanlike atmosphere at contests.**
- **Officials should focus on the actions of players, coaches and other bench personnel.**
- A positive, open line of communication between officials and coaches ultimately results in a better contest for everyone involved.



SPORTSMANSHIP

- Contest officials, however, should never engage with spectators who are exhibiting unsporting behavior.
- **Once the contest begins, school administration is responsible for dealing with unruly spectators.**
- A proactive approach by school administration includes monitoring the behavior of spectators and intervening as needed.
- **If spectators are using demeaning or profane language at officials, players, or at others in the stands – those individuals should be removed from the contest by school administration.**



SPORTSMANSHIP

- BUT, let's get real. Most schools have numerous activities going on at the same time and an administrator may not be at the game site.
- So.....
- Umpires - Do not be afraid to stop play if spectators are causing a disruption of the game.
- Send both teams to their dugouts and tell both coaches to game will not resume until the troublemakers have been removed.



SPORTSMANSHIP

- In recent years, a heightened level of unsportsmanlike behavior has been occurring by spectators at high school sporting events, **and it must be stopped.**
- The use of demeaning language, or hate speech, by students, parents and other fans must cease.
- High school sports and other activities exist to **lift people up**, not demean or tear people down.
- **The goal is to treat everyone fairly and treat each other with respect.**
- **Any speech or harassment that is insulting, demeaning or hurtful will not be tolerated.**



CHANTS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

- Chants and demonstrations by teams are permissible provided they DO NOT reflect negatively toward the opposing team, affect the administration of the game or create a safety issue.
- Umpires must be alert for these situations, to stop negative comments toward an opposing team immediately.
- Dead ball situation - celebration on-field with a choreographed chant that is NOT specific toward the opponent. **OK**
- In-dugout celebration - can be choreographed (dance, chant, etc.) if NOT directed at the opponent. **OK**
- "Worm-killer!" after a pitch in the dirt. **NOT OK**
- "Free 90!" after a walk. **NOT OK**



SPORTSMANSHIP

- High schools must establish a culture that values the worth of every single person – both players on the school's team and players on the opposing team.
- There must be a no-tolerance policy regarding behavior that shows disrespect for another individual.
- **Good sports win with humility, lose with grace and do both with dignity.**
- It takes the efforts of everyone every day to ensure that sportsmanship remains one of the top priorities in education-based activity programs.





STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Coaches and players are expected to maintain a standard of conduct which is necessary for the proper administration of the game and is consistent with behavioral expectations of students and staff in a classroom environment. Umpires have considerable latitude in removing coaches and players for various acts which interfere with the game.

Many problems can and should be resolved with verbal cautions or warnings.

The following are examples of behavior that would likely require much more than a verbal caution and/or warning.



STANDARDS OF CONDUCT (CONT)

- A player drawing a line on the dirt to indicate the location of a pitch.
- Profanity by either a coach or player directed at an umpire or profanity loud enough to likely be heard by fans.
- A coach refusing to return to the dugout or coaching lines after an umpire has explained a ruling.
- Jumping up and down or other such actions to show displeasure over a call or ruling whether from the dugout or the field.
- Any non-playing actioni contact with an umpire, whether it's accidental or intentional.



STANDARDS OF CONDUCT (CONT)

- The throwing of equipment such as bats or helmets in reaction to a call or ruling.
- A coach or player who refuses to follow verbal directions from an umpire relating to the administration of the game.
- A coach who leaves his position, after being warned, to argue balls and strikes.
- Blatant violation of the rules such as cutting considerably short of third base in scoring a run.



Coaches and Umpires

Competition evokes emotion.

When an “emotional” event occurs during a game we have to set a good example for the young players playing the game by acting accordingly.

To avoid being restricted to the dugout or ejected head coaches should keep the following in mind:

- **Acceptable initial emotional outbursts - OK.**
- **Regain your composure and if you would like clarification on the call or rule come out and discuss, in a calm manner, with the umpire who made the call.**
- **Get assistant coaches, players and fans under control.**



Coaches and Umpires

You should expect umpires to:

1. Arrive on time and be dressed appropriately.
2. Conduct themselves in a professional manner.
3. Put forth EFFORT on the diamond by moving to proper positions to get an angle to rule on plays.
4. Make rulings that are clear violations of the rules.
5. Consistency – applying same strike zone and other rulings to both teams.
6. **But NOT be perfect.** They have a short period of time to render their ruling based on their angle and view of the play.



Coaches and Umpires

The magic way to deal with umpires – The Golden Rule – *Treat them as you would want to be treated by them.* Keep the following in mind:

- Your angle from 100+ feet away is different than the umpire's.
- Remain calm when a call you don't agree with a call that goes against your team.
- **Don't chip, yell or bark from the dugout** – instead come out and discuss it with the umpire that made the call. **DON'T** ask other umpire to help him.
- Don't make sarcastic comments, direct or indirect, towards the umpires.
- Don't question an umpire's integrity.
- Keep your players, assistant coaches and your fans under control.
- Make sure you know the rule before questioning an umpire on a rule.
- Know what calls are arguable and which are not.
- When the umpire is explaining the call or rule – **LISTEN** – don't interrupt.



***Ultimately the coach and umpire just may end up agreeing to disagree.
Then let's move on with the game.***

Coaches and Umpires

Umpires “GETTING HELP”:

Pure judgement calls - don't expect the umpire to get help - they should not be seeking it.

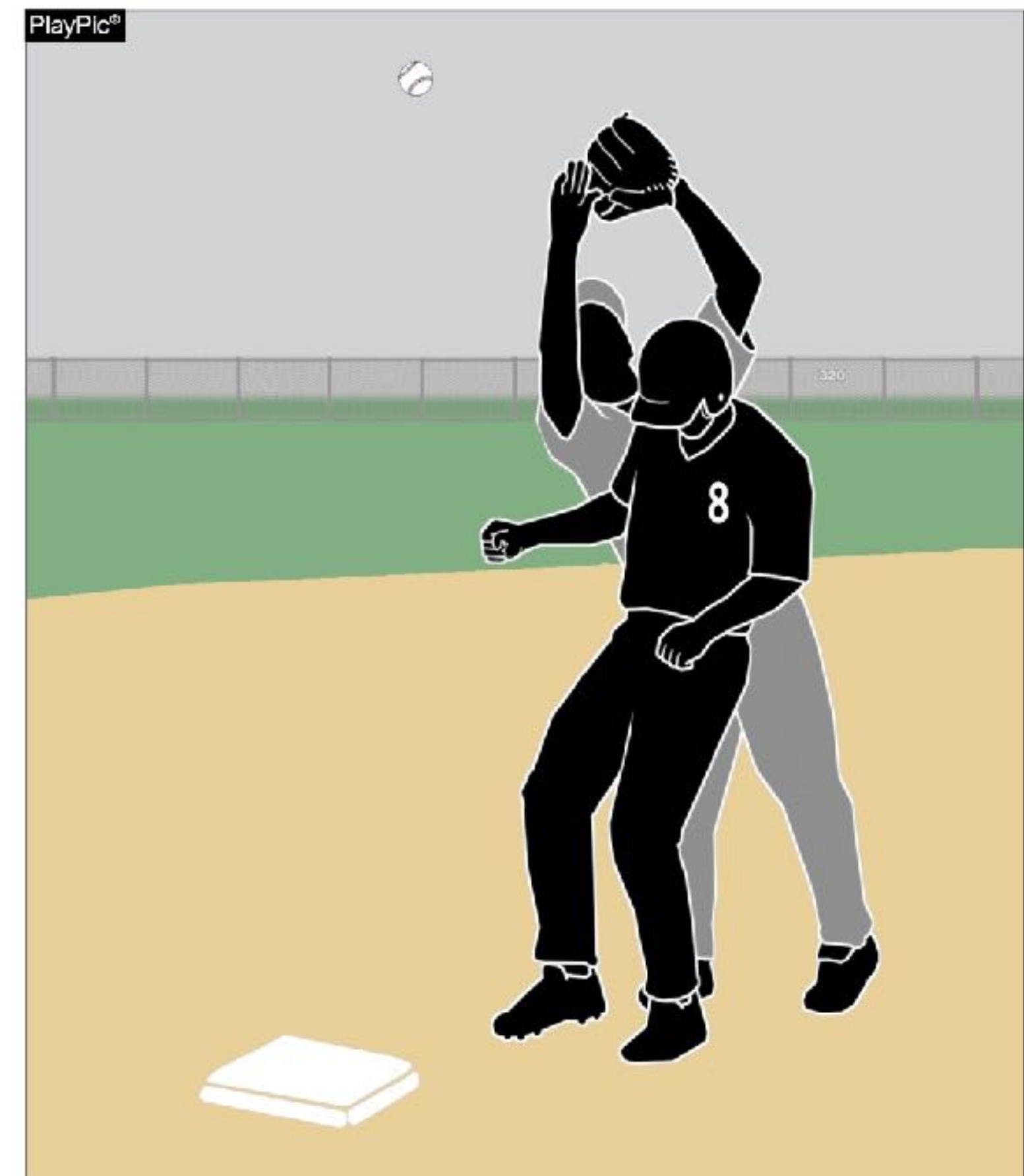
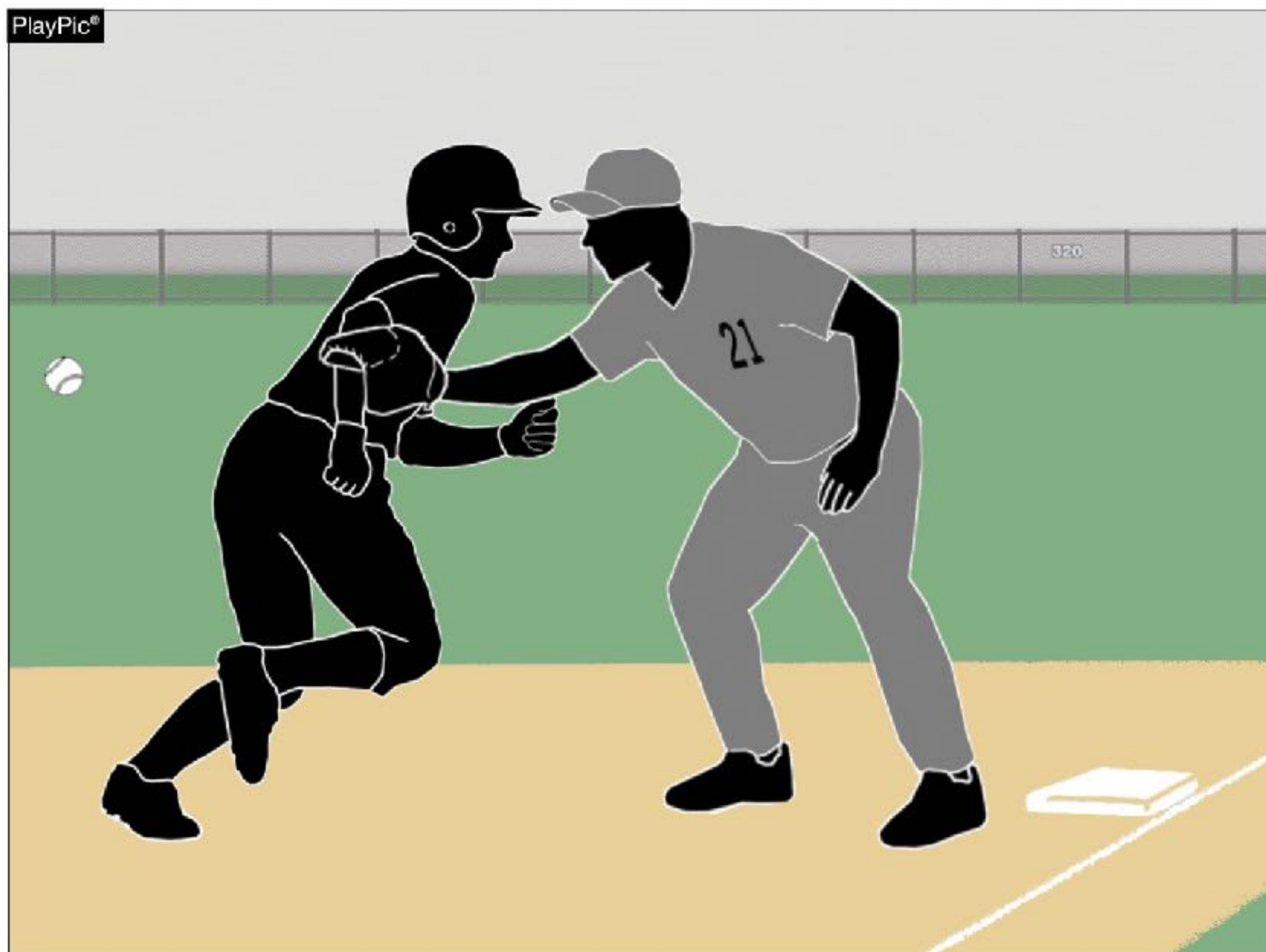
If there is an element of the play the umpire may have missed, then they should ask their partner for additional information to potentially get the call right. Such as:

- Pulled foot.
- Swipe tags.
- Dropped ball.
- Rule Clarification.

Be specific with your request when questioning an umpire's call.



OBSTRUCTION AND INTERFERENCE



OBSTRUCTION AND INTERFERENCE

- Obstruction and interference are two familiar terms that have been in the game of baseball since the early beginnings of the sport.
- Simply stated, obstruction is any act accidental, intentional, verbal, or physical that a fielder or any member of the defensive team (or team personnel) that hinders a runner or affects the pattern of play.
- Besides affecting scoring plays, obstruction can occur anywhere on the field resulting in some unsportsmanlike behaviors.
- That is why the penalty for obstruction is one of the sternest penalties in our rules code.





OBSTRUCTION AND INTERFERENCE

- **Interference** is very similar to obstruction; it addresses the behavior of the offensive team.
- It is any act, verbal or physical, by the team at bat that impedes, hinders or confuses any defensive fielder attempting to make a play.
- **There are several other types of interference:** umpire, spectator, follow-through, and backswing.
- **Umpire interference** is when the plate umpire accidentally moves in the way of the catcher's attempt to throw.
- It is **also interference when a fair batted ball touches an umpire *before*** passing a fielder other than the pitcher.
- These are the ONLY types of umpire interference.

OBSTRUCTION AND INTERFERENCE

- **Spectator interference** is when a spectator impedes the progress of the game in any way.
- **Follow-through interference** is when the bat of the batter, in the batter's box, hinders action at home plate or when the catcher is attempting to make a play on a runner.
- **Backswing interference** is when the batter contacts the catcher or their equipment prior to the pitch.



OBSTRUCTION AND INTERFERENCE

- As one might realize, there are many nuances to both obstruction and the multi-layers of interference.
- **Coaches, umpires and players have a role in understanding these two extremely powerful rules.**
- Because both violations are sportsmanship-centered, the penalties are severe.
- IT IS IMPORTANT FOR UMPIRES BE PREPARED FOR ANY UNSPORTSMANLIKE ACTION AFTER A COLLISION, ESPECIALLY AT HOME PLATE.



DH Rules



Designated Hitter:

Each Team has One of Three Line Up options to choose from:

- #1 Straight Nine - No DH
- #2 DH for another player - same as in the past.
- #3 Defensive Player / DH

CAN NOT change after line up turned in.

Field Markings



PLEASE have all lines for the field marked accordingly:

- **Batters' Boxes – Inside Lines Marked Too.**
- **Fair/Foul Lines – Marked all the way down to the fence.**
- **3-foot Runners Lane Marked.**
- **On Deck Batter's Circles:**
... Drawn and safe distance from home plate.
- **Dead Ball Lines – Marked where needed**

Baseballs



HOME Team PLEASE have:

- At least **SIX** baseballs, if not more, *marked with NFHS and NOCSAE*,
- **ready and rubbed up**

...prior to the start of the game. Not when starting pitcher is warming up.

They don't have to be "pearls" but at least be "eligible" to be used.

Not having enough baseballs usually causes delays in the pace of play.

Please "funnel" game balls through the HOME dugout, not the on deck batter, so that the pace of play can be maintained.

Strike Zone



A consistent “TRUE” strike zone is what you should expect from the game’s plate umpire.

Not a “ridiculous” zone with pitches 3, 4, 5-inches off the plate; ankle burners; at/above the shoulders; etc that are consistently called strikes.

On occasion an umpire, being human, may call such a pitch a strike.

Work with your catchers on “sticking” the pitch.

- **Sticking means catching and holding the ball/glove where it was caught.**
- **Dragging the glove down after catching the ball gives the perception it was a low pitch.**
- **Catching and then dragging the glove back into the zone gives the perception the pitch was outside or inside and thus trying to “frame it”.**

Pace of Play



Number TWO reason umpires are quitting or not wanting to umpire is length of baseball games.

Things teams can do to keep pace of game flowing, thus properly shortening games:

- **Players hustling in/out between innings.**
- **Pitchers having a catcher to warm-up to when catcher was at bat or on base when third out is made.**
- **Funneling passed balls (bases empty) and all foul balls through home dugout then at and opportune time to the plate umpire.**
 - **Thus pitchers need to be looking at home plate for the new ball.**
 - **Re-Loading the plate umpire with baseballs between innings and when needed.**
- **Batters keeping a foot in batters box if **NOTHING** else happens on the pitch.**
- **Limiting signals to batters, runners, pitchers and/or catchers.**
- **Obviously good pitching and fielding play important roles but those can only be controlled to a certain point.**

In Closing

- Thoughts or Questions?
- **THANKS FOR ATTENDING!**
- **Good Luck to Your Teams.**
- **Stay Healthy and Safe Travels.**

