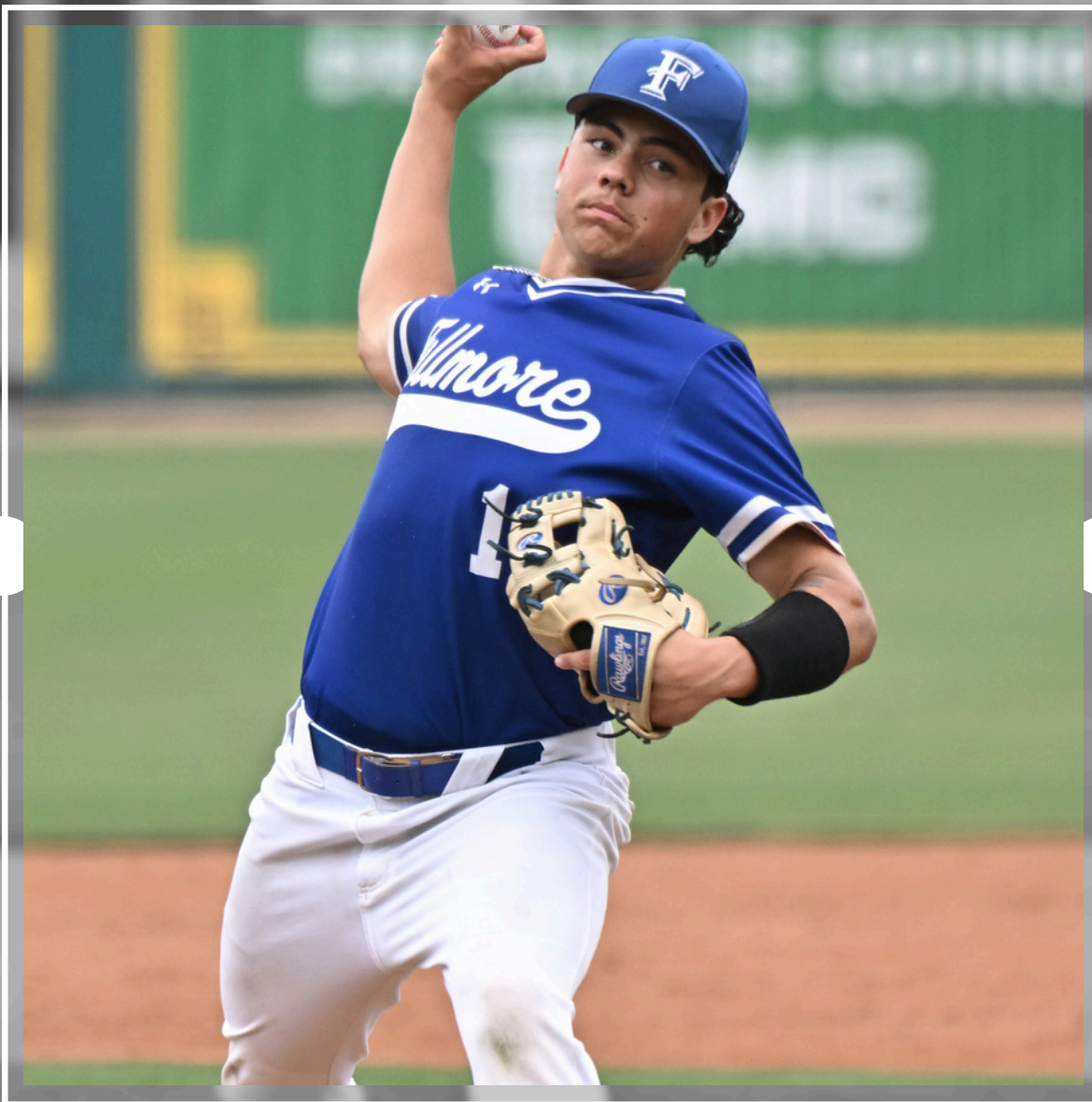


CIF SOUTHERN SECTION | BASEBALL



SEASON PREVIEW



2025 - 2026

BE ICONIC



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OFFICIAL BASEBALL OF THE



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Year after year, the most well-known baseball icons have continuously chosen Rawlings as their on-field brand of choice, and with the latest addition to the bat lineup - it's easy to see why. Introducing the Icon - the all-new carbon composite bat from Rawlings featuring, leading-edge technology to ensure truly iconic performance at the plate. **BE ICONIC.**

TO: CIF-SS VARSITY BASEBALL COACHES

FROM: JOE HOGGATT, ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

DATE: JANUARY 14, 2026

RE: 2026 BASEBALL SEASON



2026 BASEBALL SEASON PREVIEW

To assist you with your organizational plans for the upcoming season, we have compiled the 2026 Baseball Preview. We hope its content will prove informative and serve as a reference point during the course of your daily routine. Hopefully, this preview will answer your questions, if not, do not hesitate to call. Enclosed you will find the following items. Please make sure they are shared with the other members of your coaching staff:

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CIF-SS BASEBALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Over the years, the CIF-SS Office has worked with the concept of establishing committees in all 27 sports for boys and girls, and the success of this program is being continued into the 2024-25 school year. The role of the advisory committee, which is comprised of coaches in the respective sport and an administrator from the CIF-SS Office, may or may not include the following:

1. Meetings
2. Recommendations for playoff sites
3. Recommendations for rules and procedural changes
4. Evaluation of sport season
5. Assistance to coaches and/or official's organizations
6. Liaison between coaches and/or official's organizations

We urge that if you have suggestions or questions, make use of this excellent channel of communication, and pass the information along to one of the committee members. We will be meeting on a regular basis during the current baseball season and your items will become part of our agenda. Best of luck in your upcoming baseball campaign and if any of the below can be of assistance to you please do not hesitate to contact them personally.

For your reference, members of this year's Baseball Advisory Committee are:

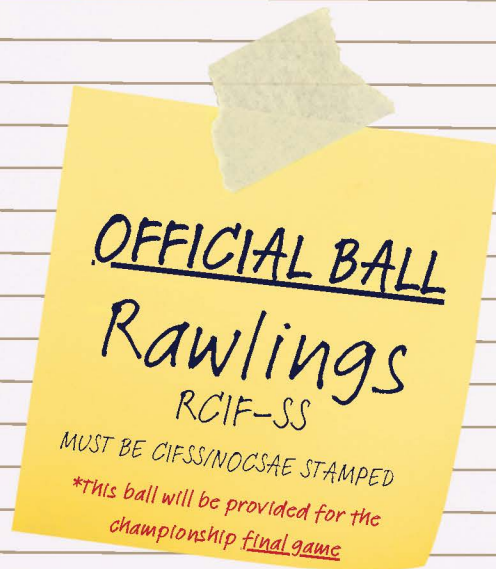
Burt Call	Villa Park High School
Ricardo Cepeda	Garden Grove High School
Mike Gonzales	El Toro High School
Jess Gonzalez	Downey High School
Jared Halpert	Harvard-Westlake High School
Jake Haney	Crean Lutheran High School
Aaron Kavanagh	Quartz Hill High School
Brett Kay	JSerra Catholic High School
Gary Libby	Hesperia High School
Samuel Lopez	Summit High School
Darren Murphy	South Hills High School
Iran Novick	Foothill High School/CBCA
Spud O'Neil	Lakewood High School
Gerardo Perez	Gahr High School
Curtis Scott	Newbury Park High School
Matt Shupper	Maranatha High School
Alfred Tarazon	Oxnard High School
Phil Torres	At Large Member
John Weber	Cypress High School
Rick Weber	Viewpoint High School
Jimmy Zurn	La Mirada High School

2026 BASEBALL CALENDAR AND PLAYOFF DATES

FIRST CONTEST	<p>MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH</p> <p>The initial date on which a school may schedule and conduct an interscholastic contest. If a school chooses to have a scrimmage (maximum 2 scrimmages), it must be on or after February 16th and before their first official contest.</p>
SIT OUT PERIOD	<p>FRIDAY, MARCH 27TH</p>
LAST CONTEST	<p>WEDNESDAY, MAY 6th</p> <p>All competitions (league and non-league) See Bylaw 1508 for end of competition guidelines.</p>
LEAGUE ENTRIES & AT LARGE ENTRIES	<p>DUE WEDNESDAY, MAY 6th BY 10:00 PM in CIFSSHome.</p>
PAIRINGS DAY	<p>MONDAY, MAY 11TH AT 10:00 AM</p> <p>Playoff Brackets can be found at www.cifss.org</p>
PLAYOFFS	<p>THURSDAY, May 14th - First Round (Divisions 2, 4, 6 & 8) FRIDAY, May 15th - First Round (Divisions 1, 3, 5, 7 & 9) TUESDAY, May 19th - Second Round (All Divisions) FRIDAY, May 22nd – Quarterfinal Round (All Divisions) TUESDAY, May 26th – Semifinal Round (All Divisions)</p>
CIF-SS FINALS	<p>FRIDAY, May 29th or SATURDAY, MAY 30th</p> <p>Specific championship finals dates, times & divisions will be posted on Wednesday, May 27th no later than 10:00 a.m.</p>
CIF STATE REGIONALS	<p>TUESDAY, JUNE 2 – SATURDAY, JUNE 6</p> <p>CIF State Regional pairings will be posted at www.cifstate.org on Sunday, May 31st.</p>



Official Baseball



**The official ball rule is mandatory for all CIF-SS playoff rounds.*

Contracted through: June 30, 2026

Official Ball Rule:

Should a school fail to provide the correct game ball, the game will always be played. Teams/schools failing to utilize the correct official ball in CIF-SS playoffs will be reported by officials to CIF-SS and will not be allowed to host their next available home playoff game. Penalty will carry over to the next season if not enforceable this season due to elimination.

IN-SEASON RANKINGS

With the passage of the new competitive equity playoff system in January 2024 and changes to Bylaws 3519 and 3520 a weekly Top 10 poll will not be necessary. The playoff divisions will be created at the end of the regular season based on the current year's data.

It is **IMPERATIVE** that COACHES enter their full schedule and record results constantly throughout the season. Member schools who fail to accurately enter complete regular season results into the CIFSSHome (www.cifsshome.org) system will not be placed into a playoff division and will be **INELIGIBLE** to participate in the Southern Section Championship playoffs. For the 2026 season, Massey Ratings will be used to provide overall team rankings.

At the halfway point of the season and then each week to follow until the end of the regular season on Wednesday, May 6th we will post in-season rankings of all Southern Section teams participating in baseball.

Posting dates are:

Tuesday, March 31

Wednesday, April 8

Tuesday, April 14

Tuesday, April 21

Tuesday, April 28

Tuesday, May 5

APPROVED SANCTIONED EVENTS

Please refer to the CIF Southern Section website (www.cifss.org) for the latest Sanctioned Events, as events are updated daily.

Sanctioned Events download directions:

click on *GOVERNANCE TAB*, click on *SANCTIONED EVENTS*, select BASEBALL, click Search

This page will display the most up to date information on **Baseball Approved Sanctioned Events**

CIF-SS HISTORY RECORD BOOK

The CIF-SS Record Book is updated on a yearly basis and can be found here.

<https://cifss.org/record-book/>

The CIF-SS Communications Office will automatically update information on championship teams, scores, and Players of the Year. Should your team, an athlete on your team, or a coach, meet a milestone record, then please complete this form.

<https://cifss.org/record-book-request/>

Please note we only record the top 10 in each category.

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Sports Medicine to get you back on the field.

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to be the Official Orthopedic & Sports Medicine Partner of the
CIF Southern Section.

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Orthopedic
Institute.**

SPORTS MEDICINE



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CIFSSHOME REQUIREMENTS

SCHEDULES & SCORES Complete your schedule in CIFSSHome prior to your season as well as update scores following each contest

Attention Athletic Directors/Coaches: It is very important that you enter your entire season schedule into CIFSSHome (www.cifsshome.org) as well as update the scores immediately following your contests.

Log in @ www.cifsshome.org (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director). Once you are logged in:

- On the left panel, click on "Teams", select "Baseball"
- To **Add a game**, click "Add Game" at the top right and fill out all of the required fields which are marked by a red (*) to complete your schedule.
- To **Submit your score**, click on the "Teams", select "Baseball" Scroll through your schedule and click on the green "Post Result" button.
- Make sure that your overall and team records are correct on your team page.

Member schools who fail to accurately enter complete regular season results into the CIFSSHome (www.cifsshome.org) system will not be placed into a playoff division and will be **INELIGIBLE** to participate in the Southern Section Championship playoffs.

Varsity Team Information (Roster) Due no later than **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2026**

Attention Athletic Directors/Coaches: It is very important that you enter your entire Baseball Varsity roster into CIFSSHome (www.cifsshome.org) no later than **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2026.**

Log in @ www.cifsshome.org (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director).

Once you are logged in:

-On the left panel, Click on the "Teams" tab, select "Baseball"

-Here are the instructions for using the sample file.

- Download the sample file and delete the "contents only". Copy and paste or type your roster information into the file as the contents and save the file to your computer. You can only upload an excel file (xls) that is the exact same format as the sample file. Columns for information not required for your sport may be left blank, but the HEADER INFORMATION MUST REMAIN EXACTLY AS THE SAMPLE.

Required Columns for Baseball are: First Name, Last Name, Birth date, Year, Number, Position, Height, Bats, Throws & Eligibility.

- Next - click Choose File, find your file, then click "Import Student".

- To confirm your roster has been uploaded, your roster will be uploaded in the roster section and all of the required columns are filled out.

Varsity Coaches

Attention Athletic Directors/Coaches: It is very important that you enter your Baseball coaches (Head & Assistants) into CIFSSHome (www.cifsshome.org) no later than **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2026.**

Log in @ www.cifsshome.org (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director).

Once you are logged in:

-Click on the "Teams" tab on the left navigation bar. Click on the corresponding varsity team (Baseball).

-Click on "Add/Edit Coaches", select the information to add both your HEAD & ASSISTANT coaches

Varsity Team Photo Due no later than **FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026.**

Attention Athletic Directors/Coaches: It is very important that your Baseball Varsity Team Photo is uploaded to CIFSSHome (www.cifsshome.org) no later than **FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026.**

Log in @ www.cifsshome.org (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director).

on Home Campus

-On the left panel, click **Teams**" tab on the left navigation bar. Click on the corresponding varsity team (Baseball).

- Under Team Picture, click Add/Edit picture, click Browse, find your file and click "Upload Picture" – Team Photo can be no larger than 672 pixels x 480 pixels (7"x5")

At Large Application – Must Have .500 Record or Better

Attention Athletic Directors/ Coaches: Please follow the instructions below to enter your school as an At Large Entry for Baseball.

The At Large Application is to be submitted by your school no later than **Wednesday, May 6, 2026 @ 10:00 p.m.**

Log in @ www.cifsshome.org (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director).

Once you are logged in:

-On the left panel, click on At Large Petition

-Select "Baseball" then click "Add"

Please be sure that your Schedule is updated in CIFSSHome as this is where the information for the At Large Petition will be created.

BASEBALL 2025-2026 LEAGUES/SCHOOLS

LEAGUE 605

Artesia
Cerritos
Glenn
Oxford Academy
Pioneer
Whitney

AGAPE

Academy Aca/ Exc
Academy Car/Exp
Cobalt Institute
Lucerne Valley
Silver Valley
Victor Valley Chr

ALMONT

Alhambra
Bell Gardens
Mark Keppel
Montebello
San Gabriel
Schurr

AMBASSADOR

Aquinas
Arrowhead Chr
Linfield Christian
Ontario Christian
Woodcrest Chr

ARROWHEAD

California Lutheran
Hamilton
Sherman Indian
United Chr Acad

BASELINE

Chino Hills
Damien
Etiwanda
Los Osos
Rancho Cucamonga
Upland

LEAGUE BAY

Mira Costa
Palos Verdes
Redondo Union
Torrance
West Torrance

BIG VIII

Centennial/Cor
Corona
King, ML
Norco
Roosevelt, Eleanor
Santiago/Corona

CAMINO REAL

Bishop Montgomery
Cantwell Sac Heart
Cathedral
Don Bosco Tech
Paraclete
St. Anthony
St. Monica Prep

CHANNEL

Buena
Dos Pueblos
Oxnard
Pacifica/ Oxnard
Rio Mesa
San Marcos
Santa Barbara
Ventura

CITRUS BELT

Beaumont
Cajon
Citrus Valley
Redlands
Redlands East Vly
Yucaipa

LEAGUE CITRUS COAST

Carpinteria
Channel Islands
Fillmore
Hueneme
Malibu
Nordhoff
Santa Paula

COAST

Century
Estancia
La Quinta/ W
Loara
Savanna

COAST VALLEY

Coast Union
Coastal Chr.
San Luis Obispo Class Aca
Shandon
Valley Chr./SM

COASTAL

Hawthorne MSA
Lennox Academy
New Roads
Rolling Hills Prep

COASTAL CANYON

Camarillo
Moorpark
Oak Park
Royal
Simi Valley

CRESTVIEW

Cypress
El Dorado
Foothill
La Habra
Villa Park

**LEAGUE
CROSS VALLEY**

Big Bear
Excelsior Charter
Hesperia Christian
Riverside Prep
University Prep

DEL REY

Bishop Amat
La Salle
Serra
St. Bernard
St. Paul

DEL RIO

California
El Rancho
La Serna
Santa Fe
Whittier

DESERT EMPIRE

La Quinta/ LQ
Palm Desert
Palm Springs
Rancho Mirage
Shadow Hills
Xavier Prep

DESERT SKY

Adelanto
Barstow
Granite Hills
Silverado
Victor Valley

DESERT VALLEY

Coachella VALley
Indio
Twentynine Palms
Yucca Valley

**LEAGUE
EMPIRE**

Costa Mesa
Fullerton
Katella
Laguna Hills
Ocean View

FOOTHILL

Canyon/CC
Castaic
Golden Valley
Hart
Saugus
Valencia/Valencia
West Ranch

FREEWAY

Brea Olinda
Canyon/ Anaheim
Crean Lutheran
El Modena
Pacifica/ GG

FRONTIER

Bishop Diego
Dunn
Santa Clara
Villanova Prep

GATEWAY

Bellflower
Downey
Gahr
La Mirada
Warren

GOLD COAST

Brentwood
Campbell Hall
Crossroads
Viewpoint
Windward

**LEAGUE
GOLDEN**

Antelope Valley
Eastside
Highland
Knight
Lancaster
Littlerock
Palmdale
Quartz Hill

GOLDEN WEST

Buena Park
Calvary Chapel/SA
Kennedy
Segerstrom
Tustin

GROVE

Anaheim
Bolsa Grande
Orange
Rancho Alamitos
Saddleback

HACIENDA

Alta Loma
Colony
Los Altos
San Dimas
South Hills

HERITAGE

Desert Chr./L
Faith Baptist
Palmdale Acad Ch
Santa Clarita Chr.
Trinity Classical
Valley Torah
Vasquez

LEAGUE
INLAND VALLEY

Canyon Springs
Hemet
North, J.W.
Perris
Rancho Verde
Vista Del Lago

IVY

Arlington
Heritage
Liberty
Moreno Valley
Paloma Valley
Poly/ Riverside

LIBERTY

Buckley
deToledo
Milken Community
Oakwood
Pacifica Chr/ SM
Providence/ Bur
Yula

MAJESTIC

Bethel Christian/R
Calvary Baptist
Cornerstone Chr/W
Crossroads Chr
Grove
Norton Sci Acad
Packinghouse Chr

MARMONTE

Agoura
Calabasas
Newbury Park
Oaks Christian
Thousand Oaks
Westlake

MID-CITIES

Dominguez
Firebaugh
Lynwood
Mayfair
Norwalk
Paramount

LEAGUE
MIRAMONTE

Bassett
Edgewood
Ganesha
La Puente
Pomona
Workman

MISSION

Alemanya
Chaminade
Crespi
Harvard-Westlake
Loyola
Notre Dame/SO
Sierra Canyon
St. Francis

MISSION VALLEY

Arroyo
El Monte
Gabrielino
Marshall
Mountain View
Rosemead
South El Monte

MOJAVE RIVER

Apple Valley
Burroughs/R
Hesperia
Oak Hills
Serrano
Sultana

MONTVIEW

Azusa
Baldwin Park
Duarte
Garey
Nogales
Sierra Vista

LEAGUE
MOORE

Cabrillo/LB
Compton
Jordan
Lakewood
Millikan
Poly/ Long Beach
Wilson/ LB

MOUNTAIN PASS

Elsinore
San Jacinto
Tahquitz
Temescal Canyon
West Valley

MOUNTAIN VALLEY

Entrepreneur/H
Indian Springs
Miller, AB
Pacific
San Bernardino

MT. BALDY

Chaffey
Chino
Diamond Ranch
Don Lugo
Montclair
Ontario

MULLHOLLAND

Ambassador Chr
Animo Leadership
Compton Early
Environemental Ch
Shalhevet

NORTH HILLS

Esperanza
Sonora
Sunny Hills
Troy
Yorba Linda

LEAGUE**OCEAN**

Beverly Hills
Centennial/ Com
Culver City
Hawthorne
Inglewood
Lawndale
Leuzinger
Santa Monica

OLYMPIC

Heritage Christian
Maranatha
Valley Chr/Cer
Village Christian
Whittier Christian

OMEGA

Beacon Hill
Gorman LC
Hillcrest Christian
Ojai Valley
Sequoyah

ORANGE

Los Amigos
Magnolia
Santa Ana Valley
Santiago/ GG
Western

ORANGE COAST

Garden Grove
Godinez
Santa Ana
Valencia/ Placentia
Westminster

PACIFIC

Arcadia
Burbank
Burroughs/Burbank
Crescenta Valley
Glendale
Hoover
Muir
Pasadena

LEAGUE**PACIFIC COAST**

Irvine
Laguna Beach
Northwood
Portola
Sage Hill
St. Margaret's
University
Woodbridge

PALOMARES

Ayala, Ruben
Bonita
Claremont
Diamond Bar
Glendora
Walnut

PIONEER

El Segundo
North Torrance
Peninsula
South Torrance
Wiseburn Da Vinci

PREP

Chadwick
Flintridge Prep
Poly/Pasadena
Rio Hondo Prep

RIO HONDO

La Canada
Monrovia
San Marino
South Pasadena
Temple City

RIVER VALLEY

Jurupa Valley
La Sierra
Norte Vista
Patriot
Ramona
Rubidoux

LEAGUE**SAN ANDREAS**

Arroyo Valley
Bloomington
Carter
Colton
Eisenhower

SAN JOAQUIN

Avalon
Calvary Chapel/ D
Capistrano Vly Chr
Fairmont Prep
Legacy College Prep
Pacifica Chr/OC
Southlands Chr
Tarbut V Torah
Webb
Western Christian

SANTA FE

Mary Star
Salesian
St. Genevieve
St. Pius X-St. Matthias
Verbum Dei

SEA VIEW

Beckman
Capistrano Valley
El Toro
Mission Viejo
San Juan Hills

SKYLINE

Fontana
Notre Dame/ Riv
Rim of the World
San Gorgonio

SOUTH COAST

Aliso Niguel
Dana Hills
San Clemente
Tesoro
Trabuco Hills

LEAGUE
SOUTH VALLEY

California Military
Desert Chr Acad
Nuview Bridge
San Jacinto Lead
San Jacinto Vly Aca
Santa Rosa Acad
St. Jeanne
Temecula Prep

SOUTHWESTERN

Chaparral
Great Oak
Murrieta Mesa
Murrieta Valley
Temecula Valley
Vista Murrieta

SUN VALLEY

Banning
Cathedral City
Desert Hot Springs
Desert Mirage

SUNBELT

Citrus Hill
Hillcrest
Lakeside
Orange Vista
Rancho Christian
Valley View

SUNKIST

Grand Terrace
Jurupa Hills
Kaiser
Rialto
Summit

LEAGUE
SUNSET

Corona del Mar
Edison
Fountain Valley
Huntington Beach
Los Alamitos
Marina
Newport Harbor

TRI COUNTY PREMIER

Desert Chapel
Loma Linda Acad
Mesa Grande
Noli Indian
Public Safety Acad
Redlands Adventist
Weaver

TRINITY

JSerra
Lutheran/Orange
Mater Dei
Santa Margarita
Servite
St. John Bosco

TRI-VALLEY

Cate
Foothill Technology
Grace
St. Bonaventure
Thacher

VALLE VISTA

Charter Oak
Covina
Northview
Rowland
West Covina
Wilson/ HH

LEAGUE
FREELANCE

Del Sol - No Schedule



2026 Baseball Rules Changes

By NFHS on August 01, 2025

1-2-9, 2-5-1h, 2-16-1h, 8-2-1, 8-2-2(a)1-7, 8-2-7, 8-4-1g(1) – Modified that the double first base will be mandatory effective January 1, 2027 and associated rule changes.

1-4-4 – Clarified what is allowed on a school's official baseball uniform.

1-6-3 – Clarified what is not allowed to be worn by a player to record or transmit audio or video feeds.

2-10-3 – Clarified the definition of a player-to-player defensive meeting.

3-4-6 – Clarified the difference from a player-to-player meeting and a charged conference.

NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

Double First Base Introduced into High School Baseball

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elliot Hopkins

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (January 15, 2026) — Beginning with the 2027 season, a double first base will be required in high school baseball games to minimize the risk of collisions by runners and fielders.

This rule revision was one of 10 proposed by the NFHS Baseball Rules Committee during its annual meeting held June 8-10 at The Alexander hotel in Indianapolis. The rules changes were accepted by the NFHS Board of Directors.

New language was added to Rule 1-2-9 noting that the double first base must be white and a contrasting solid color. The white portion of the base is located in fair territory while the colored half is located in foul territory, split by the first base foul line. There is to be no space between the two portions of the double base.

"Adding the double first base is symbolic to the evolution of the sport. It will immediately address running lane violations, and it will further protect the players from the violent collisions that have occurred at first base," said Elliot Hopkins, NFHS director of sports and liaison to the Baseball Rules Committee. "By reducing collisions and enhancing safety, it preserves both the integrity of competition and the well-being of those who play."

Several subsequent rules changes, including Rule 8-2-2a, outline how batter-runners and fielders shall use the double first base. The batter-runner should use the colored base on an initial play at first base unless a fielder is drawn into foul territory to receive a dropped third strike, in which case, the batter-runner would use the white portion of the base. Once the batter-runner reaches first base, the batter-runner must always return to the white base, including when leading off, returning on a pick-off attempt or tagging up on a fly ball.

A batter-runner may use either side of first base on a base-on-balls or on an extra-base hit to the outfield

when there is no chance of a play to be made at first base.

Interference is to be called on batter-runners if they only touch the white portion on a force play at first and collide with the fielder. Similarly, it is obstruction if a defensive player only touches the colored portion of the base and collides with the batter-runner.

Rule 2-5-1h was added to note that it is a fair ball if a batted ball hits or bounds over any part of the white portion of the double first base. Alternately, it is a foul ball if a batted ball hits or bounds over any part of the colored portion of the base (Rule 2-16-1h).

Rule 3-4-6 was added to address defensive player meetings as charged conferences. Each team, when on defense, may be granted not more than one player-to-player meeting during an inning. Umpires shall deny any subsequent defensive team requests for that half-inning. Additionally, Rule 2-10-3 was added to define a player-to-player defensive meeting as having two or more defensive players.

“A player-to-player defensive meeting is a natural and essential part of the game—whether it’s strategy, encouragement or clarification, but having multiple meetings in a half-inning adds additional time that lengthens a contest and is not in the best interest of the game,” Hopkins said. “A charged conference, however, involves direct coaching intervention with either a coach or a non-playing representative and is intended to provide instruction. The distinction ensures we honor both the flow of the game and the role of coaching.”

Two rules changes were approved to bring the Baseball Rules Book in line with all NFHS rules. Language added to Rule 1-4-4 allows a school’s name, nickname, logo, mascot and/or player’s name to be permitted on a uniform top and/or pants beginning in 2027.

In addition, Rule 1-6-3 states that “no player shall wear any audio (microphone) or video (camera) device during the game.”

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

According to the 2023-24 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, baseball is the fourth-most popular boys sport with 471,701 boys participating in 16,146 high schools across the country.

Mandatory Playoff Baseball

During the 2026 CIF Southern Section Baseball Playoffs, the Rawlings RCIF-SS baseball will be the mandatory baseball for all playoff games. The home team will be responsible for supplying the required baseball for all playoff contests, beginning with the wild-card games and in each round to follow. The CIF Southern Section will supply all baseballs for the Championship Finals.

Any school found to be out of compliance with the mandatory use policy will be sanctioned in the following manner:

- Following the CIF-SS office receipt of a non-compliance report, the offending school will lose its next opportunity to host a playoff game.
- For purposes of calculating future home game opportunities during the playoff season, any game for which a team is sanctioned will count toward its total of home games played.
- Should a sanctioned school not have the opportunity to host a playoff contest (eliminated from playoffs), the penalty shall be carried over to next year's playoff season.

Mandatory Playoff Baseball





Memorandum

DATE: January, 2026
TO: CIF Coaches
CIF Umpires
COPY: Chris Fahey
Joe Hoggatt
Section Commissioners
FROM: Ken Allan,
California State Baseball Rules Interpreter
Former Member, NFHS Rules Committee
RE: 2026 Rule Interpretations, Points of Emphasis

The following information is provided to commissioners, coaches, and umpires in an effort to provide consistency in rule enforcement and game management. Please see the Standards of Conduct section. Also, please review the definition of malicious contact. Any questions should be directed to Ken Allan at: kensport101@earthlink.net. (909) 861-7767.

These are the significant rule changes, points of emphasis and interpretations for the 2026 season. **Please be sure your lower division coaches have a copy.**

NOTE TO INSTRUCTIONAL CHAIRMEN

Please do not add to or change any information in this memo. This material has been approved by the CIF State Office and is expected to be published as is.
Thank you.

COMMENTS ON THE 2026 RULE CHANGES

There are three rule changes for 2026

1-6-3

No player shall wear any audio (microphone) or video (camera) device during the game.

2-10-3

A player-to-player defensive meeting includes two or more defensive players. All defensive meetings whether it involves players and coaches or players and players will count as a conference. Previously, only meetings between players and a coach counted as a charged

conference. Each team, while on defense, may be granted not more than one player-to-player meeting during an inning. Umpires shall deny any subsequent defensive team requests for that half-inning. Additionally, Rule 2-10-3 was added to define a player-to-player defensive meeting as having two or more defensive players. After the pitcher's warmup is completed, infielders may briefly gather at the pitcher's mound. This will not be charged as a player-to-player meeting.

3-1-4a

If a pinch-hitter or pinch-runner for the designated hitter is used, that player becomes the new designated hitter.

There are two rules which will go into effect in 2027. More detailed information will be available in the 2027 memo.

1-2-9

A double first base will be required to minimize the risk of collisions by runners and fielders.

Please note that the use of the double first base is not legal in the CIF for the 2026 season. However, some schools play on public fields with a permanent double first base. In that case, umpires should officiate 2026 plays at first base as has been done in the past

1-4-4

Allows a school's name, nickname, logo, mascot and/or defensive player's name to be permitted on a uniform top and/or pants.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

For clarity and brevity, this is a condensed and/or revised version of the POE. For a complete review of the POE, please refer to the 2026 rule book.

Discipline

Baseball is a very competitive sport and sometimes, emotions can run high. It is imperative for coaches and players to respect the decisions of umpires. It's expected that a coach will ask for an explanation on an unusual play. It is not expected that a coach will continue the discussion after receiving an answer to his question.

Sportsmanship (Bench Jockeying and Props)

By rule, bench jockeying (3-3-1-f-2) is prohibited. It is not only considered unsportsmanlike behavior, it can, without appropriate game control by umpires, lead to further, sometimes serious, problems. Also, there is no logical purpose to have props at an education-based athletic event. The dugout should be a place of encouragement and unity. Let the game be decided by skill, preparation and respect, not by unnecessary noise and antics

Proper Pitching Positions

The NFHS has made this easy. If a pitcher's pivot foot is in contact with and parallel with the pitcher's plate, he is considered to be in a set position. Thus, he must come to a complete and discernible stop after coming to set position before delivering a pitch. Any other foot placement will be considered a windup position.

Running Lane Awareness

Remember, the purpose of the running lane rule is to: Provide for safety by preventing collisions for the batter/runner and fielder. Provide for fair play by avoiding unfair interference with defensive plays. Provide for consistency by regular enforcement of the rule. Teaching proper lane use reinforces respect for rules and the game.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

OUT-OF-STATE TEAMS—Coaches, if you have scheduled games with out-of-state teams, please be sure they know in advance that California requires all base coaches to wear helmets. There have been issues when some teams only had double ear flap with face guard helmets available.

MALICIOUS CONTACT—Umpires continue to do a good job in enforcing this rule. As a reminder:

Malicious contact is violent, avoidable contact between two opposing players. It often occurs when a runner collides with a fielder in an effort to dislodge possession of the ball. Malicious contact can also occur when a fielder unnecessarily applies a hard tag to a runner. Intent and play situation must be a consideration in determining malicious contact. Hard contact is not, in itself, malicious contact.

PROPER LINING OF THE FIELD—This was mentioned last year. There have still been several reports of fields not properly lined. This includes fields that lack the lines of the coach's box and the on-deck circle. Not having the catcher's box lined continues to be a wide-spread issue. Also, it has been noted that a number of fields, with brown grass infields, do not have the 3-foot runner's lane marked. Please see page nine of the rule book. If you have control of your field, please be sure these rule-required markings are visible. As an umpire and you work a game with a field not properly lined, please report this to your area liaison and have him contact the school.

PITCH COUNT REGULATIONS—Can be found in section 1500 of the CIF Constitution.

BASEBALL OFFICIAL'S RESOURCES—Go to the CIF website (cifstate.org) and find the link Baseball Official's Resources to find a number of valuable articles and handouts about game management and other aspects of umpiring.

UMPIRE'S TIME MANAGEMENT—Time management is crucial to how the game progresses. Umpires must be consistent in motivating both teams to get on and off the field and to expedite conferences. A good example would be sure to have someone warm up the pitcher if the catcher was batting or on base on the third out of an inning. These are areas an umpire can be a positive factor in keeping the game moving at an acceptable pace.

FACILITIES—If there is an issue with field conditions that cannot be made reasonably hazard-free, the event should be relocated or rescheduled. An example would be standing water on the field.

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. Below, however, are examples of behavior that would likely require an ejection:

1. A player drawing a line on the dirt to indicate the location of a pitch.
2. Profanity by either a coach or player directed at an umpire or profanity loud enough to likely be heard by fans.
3. A coach refusing to return to the dugout or coaching lines after an umpire has explained a ruling.
4. Jumping up and down or other such actions to show displeasure over a call or ruling whether from the dugout or the field.
5. Any non-playing action related contact with an umpire, whether it's accidental or intentional.
6. The throwing of equipment such as bats or helmets in reaction to a call or ruling.
7. A coach or player who refuses to follow verbal directions from an umpire relating to the administration of the game.
8. A coach who leaves his position, after being warned, to argue balls and strikes.
9. Blatant violation of the rules such as cutting considerably short of third base in scoring a run.

POST-GAME EJECTIONS

POST GAME EJECTIONS—In the event of a problem with coaches, players or fans after the conclusion of a game, the umpires should write a report just as they would with an in-game ejection. This document should be reported in the same manner as an in-game ejection. Any post-game incidents that involve identifiable individuals should be filed as an ejection report and not an incident report. An incident report should be filed for any event that involves unidentifiable individuals (usually spectators/fans). Umpires should report any unsportsmanlike conduct that occurs involving them until they leave the game site.

BENCH JOCKEYING—There were reports last year of bench jockeying. Bench-jockeying occurs when words or actions reflect unfavorably toward another person or team. Proper game control requires that this behavior must be immediately addressed by the officials and coaches.

REMINDERS WHICH ARE HELPFUL TO COACHES AND UMPIRES IN GAME ADMINISTRATION

These items have appeared in the past and are repeated as an aid to proper game management and pace of play.

FOUL BALLS—In order to keep games moving more smoothly, it is strongly recommended that any ball retrieved by the on-deck hitter, or a long foul ball on the visitor's side of the field, be rolled to the home dugout as soon as possible. If you are the visiting team and your

on-deck batter retrieves a ball at the backstop, please have him roll it to the home dugout rather than taking it with him back to the on-deck circle. Let's continue to give this a good effort as it is a big help in keeping the game moving. Umpires are asked to remind coaches of this at the pregame meeting.

LINE UP CARDS—Coaches, please do not separate lineup cards. Just hand everything to the plate umpire. It is acceptable to provide a copy of the lineup card to the opposing team scorekeeper before the pregame meeting at home plate. Umpires are instructed to take the home lineup card first, then the visiting lineup card before inspecting either of the lineup cards.

LINEUP CARDS II—If you are using a designated hitter, please list the DH either directly below or directly across from the player for whom he is hitting. Please do not list the DH at the bottom of the lineup card, unless of course, he is batting for the player ninth in the order.

PREGAME MEETING—It has been noted that during the pregame meeting at home plate, members of the visiting team have often been observed outside their dugout warming up with bats. Rule 2-10-2 provides that BOTH teams must remain in the dugout during the pregame meeting. Please remind your teams.

LEAVING THE DUGOUT DURING A LIVE BALL—Coaches continue to do a good job in helping umpires enforce this rule. If players leave the dugout to congratulate a scoring runner during a live ball, the coach will receive a warning. Any following violators are subject to ejection. Coaches are also asked to remain within the lines of the coaching box.

COACHING ATTIRE—Umpires are expected to enforce this rule. This is usually an issue in lower-level games. As per rule 3-2-1, coaches must be in the uniform of their team. As a guideline, the following is acceptable: Baseball shoes, baseball pants, a jersey top similar to what the team is wearing, either a tee shirt with a team logo, wind shirt with a team logo, a jacket, and a baseball cap. The following is NOT acceptable at ANY level: Coaches who are wearing shorts, or other non-baseball attire such as, but not limited to, sweatpants, jeans, tennis shoes, or sandals. These items are not permissible. The penalty for non-compliance is that the coach is restricted to the dugout. If the team's only coach is in non-compliance, he will be allowed on the field to participate in the pre-game meeting at home plate. He will also be allowed on the field to attend to an injured player. Otherwise, he must remain in the dugout.

THANKS—To all the coaches and umpires for their past cooperation and good luck for 2026.

CIF SOUTHERN SECTION BASEBALL GUIDELINES

Following are key points of emphasis baseball coaches should review with their staffs and players in reference to CIF Southern Section rules and regulations as set down in the Blue Book. This list is NOT all-inclusive but only highlights some key areas.

1500. PITCHING LIMITATION RULE – 30 OUTS

Sections shall adopt the following baseball pitching limitation rule: 30 outs and/or three (3) appearances in a calendar week through the season.

- A. The calendar week begins on Monday.
- B. Innings pitched in a no game (i.e., rainout, power failure, etc.) shall count toward the total.
- C. If the 30th out involves a double or triple play, the team will not be penalized.
- D. An appearance is defined as a pitcher pitching at least one (1) pitch. If a pitcher is removed from the mound to another position or to the dugout and later returns to pitch in the same game, the pitcher will be charged with a second appearance.
- E. Any violation constitutes a forfeit of the contest.

1501. PITCHING LIMITATION RULE – PITCH COUNT

In addition to 1500 above, Sections shall adopt the following baseball pitching limitation rule with respect to pitch count and required days of rest:

Pitch count limits and required rest:

Level	Maximum Contest Pitch Limit	0 Days Rest Required	1 Day Rest Required	2 Days Rest Required	3 Days Rest Required
Varsity	110 Pitches	1-30 Pitches	31-50 Pitches	51-75 Pitches	76+ Pitches
Freshman; F/S; JV	90 Pitches	1-30 Pitches	31-50 Pitches	51-75 Pitches	76+ Pitches

- A. A pitcher may finish the current batter if the Maximum Contest Pitch Limit is reached during that at-bat.
- B. Pitches thrown and appearances made in a no game (i.e., rainout, power failure, etc.) shall count toward the totals.
- C. At the end of each half inning, the head coaches will confirm and both team books will record the pitch count for all pitchers who threw a pitch in that half inning. In the case of a discrepancy, the home book is considered the official book.
- D. Each school must keep a record of all pitches thrown by each of their players in each game and make this available to their respective Section Office upon request.
- E. Any violation constitutes a forfeit of the contest.

Questions & Answers:

Q: If a pitch count mechanism is used that is visible to both teams, do the coaches still need to confirm the pitch count every half inning?

A: No. If the mechanism (i.e. scoreboard add-on, flip chart behind home plate, etc.) can be seen by both teams, the coaches may use that as verification of the pitch count.

Questions & Answers (continued):

Q: How is a day of rest defined?

A: A day of rest is defined as a calendar day. For example, if a pitcher throws 76 or more pitches in a Monday game thus requiring three-days rest before being allowed to pitch again, those days of rest would be Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday allowing that pitcher to pitch again on Friday.

Q: If a pitcher exceeds the maximum number of allowable pitches with respect to the required days of rest while finishing a batter, how are the required number of rest days calculated?

A: The required days of rest is determined by the actual number of pitches thrown. For example, if a pitcher starts a batter with 48 pitches, finishes the batter with 53 pitches and is then removed from the game, that pitcher would be required to rest for two days before making another appearance.

Q: What, if any role, do the umpires play in the confirmation and recording of the pitch count after each half inning?

A: The umpires are asked to ensure that the teams are exchanging the required information, but the actual recording of the pitch count is up to the head coach from each school.

Q: If an intentional walk is issued to the batter and no pitches are delivered to home plate, are those pitches counted towards the pitcher's total number?

A: No. Those pitches would not count towards the pitcher's total number.

Q: In the case of balk, when does a pitch count towards the pitcher's total number?

A: A pitch would only count if the ball is delivered to the batter.

Q: If a batter is awarded timeout by the umpire but the pitcher still delivers the ball to the batter, does that pitch count towards the pitcher's total number?

A: No. That pitch would not count towards the pitcher's total number.

Q: Does the Pitch Count reset each Monday like the 30 Out Rule?

A: No. While the 30 Out Rule will reset each Monday, the Pitch Count Rule will not. For example, if a pitcher throws 76+ pitches in a game on Saturday, they will have to rest on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday before being eligible to pitch again on Wednesday.

Q: May the same pitcher appear in two different games on the same day?

A: Yes. However, they may only do so if they threw 30 pitches or less in the first game and are not required to rest. Also, they may not throw more than 110 pitches total for the day.

Q: What is the protest protocol for a possible violation of the pitch count Bylaw?

A: A school wishing to protest should follow the normal protocol of immediately informing the umpire that it is playing the game under protest. The contest will continue, and the protest will be forwarded to the local league and/or CIF Section Office for review depending on the protocols in place for handling protocols in that Section.

Q: Does the above protocol preclude the Section from assessing a forfeiture for a violation of the pitch count Bylaw that is brought to them after the competition of the contest?

A; No. The above protocol simply outlines how a dispute is to be handled during a contest.

Q: Do pitches thrown and appearances made in an incomplete inning during a suspended game count towards the totals?

A; Yes.

1502. OFFICIAL NATIONAL FEDERATION AUTHENTICATION MARK

Only balls with the National Federation authentication mark shall be used in the sports of baseball, basketball, field hockey, football, lacrosse, soccer, softball, volleyball and water polo.

(Revised to include lacrosse November 2000 Federated Council)

All Baseballs must meet the current NOCSAE standard for baseballs at the time of manufacture and is required on balls that will be used in high school competition. (Effective January 1, 2020) The SEI/NOCSAE mark is required on all baseballs that meet the NOCSAE standard. The NFHS Authenticating Mark is required on all balls that will be used in high school competitions. The CIFSS mark is required on all balls used for CIF playoff competition. During the 2026 CIF Southern Section Baseball Playoffs, the Rawlings RCIF-SS baseball will be the mandatory baseball for all playoff games. The home team will be responsible for supplying the required baseball for all playoff contests. The CIF Southern Section will supply all baseballs for the Championship Finals.

1503. PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

It is required that adult base coaches wear a protective helmet. Play will not continue until compliance with this rule is met. It is recommended that the helmet meet NOCSAE standards.

NOTE: NFHS rules govern use of protective equipment by a player/student. (Approved January 2015 Federated Council)

As per NFHS rules, players occupying coach's boxes must wear a NOCSAE approved helmet. (Double ear flaps) Adult coaches are not required to wear a NOCSAE approved helmet, but they must wear a protective helmet. This rule applies to any team playing in the state of California.

The plate umpire shall not put the ball in play to begin a new half inning until he is sure all base coaches are properly equipped. An adult coach who does not wish to comply must remain in the dugout.

1507. MAXIMUM TEAM CONTESTS

A baseball team will be permitted to play no more than 28 games during the season, including tournaments, but excluding CIF Southern Section, CIF State playoffs, Section Foundation or Scholarship Games or League culminating tournament.

- 1507.1 Faculty: Each team will be permitted to play one game with the faculty which will not count towards the allowable number of contests.
- 1507.2 ALUMNI: Each team will be permitted to play one Alumni contest, which will not count toward the allowable number of contests.

1509. OUTSIDE COMPETITION (IN-SEASON)

A member of a high school baseball team may NOT, during his or her season of sport, compete for an outside team in the sport of baseball. A season of sport is defined as that period which begins with a student's first interscholastic competition (non-league, tournament or league game) and ends with that student's last interscholastic contest (non-league, tournament, league or CIF-SS playoff game).

1224. LEVEL OF COMPETITION

No student shall participate in more than one level of competition in the same sport in the same day.

DUGOUT

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL COACHES BE ALLOWED TO SIT ON CHAIRS OR BUCKETS OUTSIDE THE DUGOUTS IN LIVE BALL TERRITORY.

SOFTBALL RULING

The sport of baseball is separate and distinct from the sport of softball, and competition by a school baseball player on an outside softball team during the individual's baseball season IS PERMISSIBLE. Slow-pitch is softball.

TIE GAMES

A regulation called game with a tie score shall be counted as 1/2 game won and 1/2 game lost for each team. This rule will apply to all contests and leagues MAY NOT WAIVE THIS RULE.

503.M STATEWIDE SPORTSMANSHIP AND EJECTION POLICY

PLAYER CONDUCT

A player who is ejected from a contest (for reasons other than fighting or leaving the bench area during a fight) shall be ineligible to participate in the remainder of that contest (event) and his or her team's future contest (s) as outlined below:

(1) First Ejection: Player is ineligible to participate in the team's next contest. Player may remain on the bench for the duration of that contest and may be on the bench in street clothes for the team's next contest. If the ejection occurs in the last game of the season, the player would be ineligible for the team's first contest the following season. If the player is a senior, he or she would be ineligible for the first contest of their next season of sport.

(2) Second Ejection: Player is ineligible to participate in the team's next three (3) contests. Player may remain on the bench for the duration of that contest and may be on the bench in street clothes for the team's next three (3) contests. If the season concludes prior to the player serving the three (3) contests suspension, he or she would be ineligible for the number of contests remaining on the suspension for the team's following season. If the player is a senior, he or she would be ineligible for the number of contests remaining on the suspension for their next season of sport.

(3) Third Ejection: Player is ineligible to participate for the remainder of that season. Player may remain on the bench for the duration of that contest and may be on the bench in street clothes for the team's remaining contest that season. If there are six (6) or fewer contests remaining in the season, the player would be ineligible for up to six (6) contests for the team's following season as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter. If the player is a senior, he or she would be ineligible for up to six (6) contests for the next season of sport as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter.

A player who is ejected from a contest for fighting or leaving the bench area during a fight* shall be ineligible to participate in the remainder of that contest and his or her team's future contests as outlined below:

(4) First Ejection: Player (Fighting/Assaultive Behavior/Gross Unsportsmanlike Conduct) is ineligible to participate in the team's next three (3) to six (6) contests as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter. Player may remain on the bench for the duration of that contest and may be on the bench in street clothes for the duration of the suspension. If the season concludes prior to the player serving the full suspension, he or she would be ineligible for the number of contests remaining on the suspension for the team's following season. If the player is a senior, he or she would be ineligible for the number of contests remaining on the suspension for their next season of sport. *NFHS Rules indicate automatic one game suspension for leaving the bench.

(5) Second Ejection: Player is ineligible to participate for the remainder of that season. Player may remain on the bench for the duration of that contest and may be on the bench in street clothes for the team's remaining contests that season. If there are six (6) or fewer contests remaining in the season, the player would be ineligible for up to six (6) contests for the team's following season as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter. If the player is a senior, he or she would be ineligible for up to six (6) contests for their next season of sport as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter.

Before a player may return to participate in a contest following a multiple game suspension for any of the above infractions, the school principal must inform the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter that they have met with the student-athlete, his or her parent/guardian/caregiver and coach to discuss future behavioral expectations.

503.M COACH EJECTION

Statewide Sportsmanship and Ejection Policy (also 503.M) applies to all sports

A coach who is ejected from a contest (for reasons other than fighting) shall be disqualified from participating in the remainder of that contest and his or her team's future contest (s) as outlined below:

First Ejection: Coach is disqualified from participating in the team's next contest. Coach must immediately vacate the playing area and the vicinity in and around the contest and refrain from having any communication with the team or other coaches for the remainder of that contest and for the team's next contest. If the ejection occurs in the last game of the season, the coach would be ineligible for the team's first contest the following season.

Second Ejection: Coach is disqualified from participating in the team's next three (3) to six (6) contests as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter. Coach must immediately vacate the playing area and the vicinity in and around the contest and refrain from having any communication with the team or other coaches for the remainder of that contest and for the team's next three (3) to six (6) contests. If the ejection occurs in the last game of the season, the coach would be ineligible for the team's first three (3) to six (6) contests the following season.

Third Ejection: Coach is disqualified from participating in the remaining contests of that season. Coach must immediately vacate the playing area and the vicinity in and around the contest and refrain from having any communication with the team or other coaches for the remainder of that contest and for the remaining contests of that season. If there are six (6) or fewer contests remaining in the season, the coach would be disqualified from participating for up to six (6) contest for the team's following season as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter.

A coach who is ejected from a contest for (Fighting/Assaultive Behavior/Gross Unsportsmanlike Conduct) shall be disqualified from participating in the remainder of that contest and his or her team's future contests as outlined below:

Ejection for (Fighting/Assaultive Behavior/Gross Unsportsmanlike Conduct): Coach is disqualified from participating for the remainder of that season. Coach must immediately vacate the playing area and the vicinity in and around the contest and refrain from having any communication with the team or other coaches for the remainder of that contest and for all of the team's remaining contests that season. If there are fewer than six (6) contest remaining in the season, the coach would be disqualified from participating for up to six (6) contests for the team's following season as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter.

Before a coach may return to participate in a contest following a multiple contest disqualification, for any of the above infractions, the school principal must inform the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter that they have met with the coach to discuss future behavioral expectations.

Spectator:

If a spectator is ejected from a contest, it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that person does not attend that team's next contest. If the same spectator is ejected a second time, it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that person does not attend any of the remaining contests for that season.

Appeal Process for All Multi-Game Ejections:

The school principal may appeal the penalties listed above in writing to the League Commissioner/President (for a regular season contest not including the final contest prior to Section playoffs) or CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter (for the final contest prior to Section playoffs and all playoff contests). The appeal must be received by the Section within 48 hours of the date of the ejection. Reasons for the appeal may only include misidentification of the ejected player or a misapplication of the rule. There will be no appeal regarding the judgement of an official. Note: There is no appeal process for single game ejections.

Note: There is no appeal process for single game ejections.

SPORTSMANSHIP

There has been a great deal of concern about security for officials. It is strongly suggested that the home team have a representative to escort the officials to the playing field and back to your locker room and/or their car at the end of the contest. A responsible adult who can guarantee the security of the official should do this task.

RULE 125.1 - COACH EJECTION

Upon the ejection of a coach from any CIF-SS contest, it is the responsibility of the principal of said school to file a letter of explanation with the CIF Southern Section Office, which includes the circumstances surrounding the matter, and what action the principal has taken to prevent a recurrence. Said correspondence is to be filed within THREE school days of notification of the ejection. Additionally, upon ejection, the head or assistant coach shall be disqualified from participating in the remainder of the game and will be ineligible for the team's next contest.

QUESTION: What happens if unknowingly a coach or player who was ejected the previous game participates in the next contest?

ANSWER: Anyone playing or coaching in a contest after they have been ejected from a previous contest will be an ineligible participant and the contest must be forfeited.

RULE 125.2 - FAILURE TO COMPLETE A CONTEST

When a school fails to complete a contest, due to a coach pulling his/her team from the floor, court, or field, it is MANDATORY that the CIF-SS office be notified by the principal within 24 hours (excluding holidays and weekends). The competing schools and officials will be required to file written reports, and after review of the aforementioned material, the principal of the school involved will be required to respond to the CIF Southern Section office concerning his/her investigation of the incident.

QUESTION: How serious is such action?

ANSWER: It has been the position of the CIF-SS Executive Committee to expect the principal of the school concerned to relieve the coach from his/her assignment for the balance of that season or the Executive Committee is empowered to consider recommendations for additional penalties.

PLAYOFFS

The 2026 Baseball Playoffs will be conducted in nine divisions, with each division made up of various schools. The playoff divisions will be created at the end of the regular season based on the current year's data.

All 4-team leagues will be guaranteed two entries into the playoffs, all 5-6 team leagues will be guaranteed three entries into the playoffs and all 7-8 team leagues will be guaranteed four entries into the playoffs. 9 or more team leagues are guaranteed 5 entries into the playoffs. Under the playoff format in all sports, leagues have the responsibility of developing and identifying the priority for their representatives into the playoffs as so noted under Article 330 (Playoffs) of the CIF Southern Section Blue Book. Please note that leagues may not conduct additional contests beyond the prescribed limits unless said contests are to determine ENTRY and not representative priority (leagues must have this as part of their constitution and must secure permission from the CIF-SS office before conducting such playoffs for entry).

3414.1 AT LARGE ENTRIES

In all teams sports other than football and wrestling, additional entries beyond a guaranteed number of entries, will only be permitted to enter the playoffs to fill any byes which exist in the opening round. These at-large teams must meet the at-large criteria (.500 or better overall record). For example, where there are 30 teams entered as guaranteed entries from their leagues into a 32-team draw, there would be 2 byes in the bracket and those byes could be filled by teams who were not guaranteed entries from their leagues who submitted at-large application forms for that particular sport and have an overall record of .500 or better in all games played during the regular season. In any playoff grouping, at-large selections will be considered from the highest ranked teams that are .500 or better.

3410. FREE LANCE PLAYOFF ENTRY QUALIFICATION

All freelance schools are reminded that in order to be considered for post-season competition, the CIF-SS office prior to the start of the season must evaluate their schedule. This can be done by completing the freelance petition and schedule at www.cisshome.org. (See Rule 3510.)

RULE 514 - TOBACCO PRODUCTS PROHIBITED

The use of tobacco products in conjunction with any CIF Southern Section athletic contest is prohibited. That is to include all those involved in the contest including players, coaches, and officials.

1223. SUMMERTIME RULES

With the exception of the summer dead period, until the beginning of the first official starting date for fall sports, there shall be no restriction on high school coaches working with high school students, or entering them in summer baseball competition, provided approval is received from the school principal.

MEDIA COVERAGE

National Federation Rule 1-2-8 states, "Media shall be prohibited from being in live-ball area. If a designated media area is to be used, it shall be established before the game begins. The home team or game management shall designate a lined area for the media, which shall be considered dead-ball area."

TEN-RUN RULE

National Federation Rule 4-2-2 states that the 10-run rule is optional, not mandatory. If a league wishes to adopt the 10-run rule for their league games they can do so, but every league contest must be played under that rule. Tournaments may adopt it as well, but only if it is part of the tournament rules. Finally, the ten-run rule can be utilized in non-league contests, only if it is agreed upon by both schools, prior to the start of the contest. **All C.I.F. playoff games will be played without the 10-run rule.** If the 10-run rule is adopted by a league, tournament or utilized in a non-league contest, it shall be implemented as follows, "At the end of 5 innings, or 4 ½ innings with the home team ahead, if a team is ahead by 10 runs or more the game will be over."

ACCOUNTABILITY RULE

The following is an excerpt from the article which appeared in the "Commissioner's Corner" in the CIF-SS January/February 1982 Bulletin. We hope it will prove helpful to coaches in understanding the ACCOUNTABILITY RULE:

Without question, the most serious breach within the realm of our programs presents itself when an individual coach removes a team from the playing facility prior to the conclusion of a contest.

Ironically, the justification invariably lacks substance at a subsequent hearing -- personal dissatisfaction with an official or the citing of dangerous conditions is the usual tenor of that thrust.

It is also paradoxical that such action if spawned by the individual coach on the short end of the score at the time. How serious is such an action?

It has been the position of the CIF-SS Executive Committee to expect the Principal of the school concerned to relieve the coach from his/her assignment for the balance of that season.

When one considers the focal point is to involve as many student-athletes in our programs as possible, we lack accountability to those considered the heart of our organization -- not to mention the officials, the entire student body, the district and the community.

Each individual contest, regardless of the sport, lasts but a few minutes. The damaging results from such an occurrence are timeless.

Administrators are urged to review this aspect and the potential consequences with their staffs at the start of each sport season -- it takes but a few minutes.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is the expectation of the CIF Southern Section that your Coaches and Administration will take every measure to ensure the health and safety of your student athletes. The following key points of emphasis should be reviewed with staff and players in reference to 2025-2026 CIF Southern Section Blue Book. This list is not all-inclusive but only highlights key areas. For forms and additional information regarding Heat Safety, Hydration, and other Sports Medicine resources, please go to www.cifstate.org under the "Sports Medicine" tab.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

An annual physical examination, or a statement by a medical practitioner, is required for a student to take part in any authorized school practice session and/or pre-season conditioning period. This physical examination will be valid for a period of one year from the date of the examination. A student will be excused from this physical examination only if there is compliance with the Education Code (parent's refusal to consent). CIF Health and Safety Committee strongly recommends schools use the Pre-Participation Examination form that is endorsed by five major medical societies, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Society for Sports Medicine, American orthopedic Sports Medicine and the American osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine. All CIF schools must have school board approved forms.

CONCUSSION PROTOCOL

A student athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at the time for the remainder of the day. A student-athlete who has been removed from play may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in education and management of concussion and receives written clearance to return to play from that health care provider. If a licensed health care provider, trained in education and management of concussion determines that the athlete sustained a concussion or a head injury, the athlete is required to complete a graduated return to play protocol of no less than seven (7) full days from the time of diagnosis under the supervision of a licensed health care provider. On a yearly basis, a concussion and head injury information sheet shall be signed and returned by all athletes and the athlete's parent/guardian/caregiver before the athlete's initial practice or competition. (Approved May 2010 Federated Council/Revised January 2015 Federated Council)

STEROID PROHIBITION

All schools shall adopt policies prohibiting the use and abuse of androgenic/anabolic steroids. All member schools shall have participating students and their parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver agree that the athlete will not use steroids without the written prescription of a fully licensed physician (as recognized by the AMA) to treat a medical condition. NOTE: Article 1-12.N. (Revised May 2005 Federated Council)

SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST PROTOCOL

A student-athlete who passes out or faints while participating in, or immediately following, an athletic activity or who is known to have passed out or fainted while participating in or immediately following an athletic activity, must be removed immediately from participating in a practice or game for the remainder of the day. A student-athlete who has been removed from play after displaying signs and symptoms associated with sudden cardiac arrest may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider and receives written clearance to return to play from that health care provider. On a yearly basis, a Sudden Cardiac Arrest information sheet shall be signed and returned by all athletes and the athlete's parent/guardian/caregiver before the athlete's initial practice or competition.

Question: What is meant by "licensed health care provider?"

Answer: the "scope of practice" for licensed health care providers and medical professionals is defined by California state statutes. This scope of practice will limit the evaluation to a medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO).



All coaches within their respective division will be eligible to vote for their division's All CIF team. A link to the ballot form will be emailed to each head coaches email address listed in CIFSSHome (www.cifsshome.org). Please be certain that your email address is accurate.

All CIF Southern Section Baseball teams are eligible to nominate players.

If you have a player who you deem worthy of being part of the top 22 players in your division, please use the link provided in the 2026 Baseball Playoff Bulletin to submit your player's information by the deadline.

League champions may nominate up to three players, other playoff teams (2nd, 3rd, 4th, At Large in league) may nominate up to two players and teams that did not qualify for the playoffs are limited to one player nomination.

In addition, if your team reaches the finals of the playoffs, an additional player (up to a maximum of 4 per team) may be nominated after the final game.

A separate form is required for each player that you are nominating. You must submit full final season stats including southern section playoffs for each player. Coaches will nominate players (in the order they would have them considered).

A player and coach of the year will be selected for each respective division. There is a total of 22 players that will receive "All CIF" honors including the player of the year. If you have a player who you deem worthy of being part of the top 22 players in your division, please nominate your player(s).

The deadline to submit nominations will be posted in the Baseball Playoff Bulletin.



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