



To: NJSIAA Program Review Committee

From: Tony Maselli, Chief Operating Officer

Date: February 12, 2024

RE: Baseball/Softball – Rule Modifications – Sub-Varsity Free Substitution – Double 1st Base

Proposal – Free Substitution:

NJSIAA staff, with support of the baseball and softball committees, propose a rule modification that will allow free defensive substitutions during sub-varsity level competition. NFHS rules prohibit free substitutions during a varsity game.

The rule modification for each sport have been attached to this proposal.

Rationale – Free Substitution:

This modification allows for extra playing time by adding an extra hitter and will allow coaches to freely switch defensive positions without impacting the batting line up. The purpose of this modification is to increase participation and allow coaches to better evaluate players for the varsity level.

Proposal – Double First Base:

The NJSIAA would like to adopt (not mandate) the use of the double first base for any level of baseball and softball by school choice. The NFHS rule regarding the double first base is permitted by state adoption.

Rationale – Double First Base:

This modification has been in the NFHS books for several years. More and more schools have been installing these bases which has necessitated this modification. In the past, schools would have to request a waiver to play on fields that have these bases. Although there is a safety component to these bases, we do not want to require member schools to replace their bases.

2024 NJSIAA Sub-Varsity Baseball Extra Hitter and Defensive Substitution Rule Modifications

This modification allows for extra playing time by adding an extra hitter and will allow coaches to freely switch defensive positions without impacting the batting line up. The purpose of this modification is to increase participation and allow coaches to better evaluate players for the varsity level.

Procedures

The NJSIAA modified substitution rule is for sub-varsity baseball only.

An extra-hitter (EH) can be added to the line-up offensively who can be put anywhere in the initial line-up.

Teams may hit 10 instead of 9. All of which is included on the initial line-up card.

The offensive side of the game will remain the same. The only offensive re-entry allowed is the starter at the same spot in the line-up.

Changes defensively in personnel/positions will be permitted freely and without checking with the umpire or the other team except for the pitcher.

The pitch count rule is still in effect.

Any conference rule will supersede this modification when it is conference vs conference teams.

Non-conference opponents should follow this rule modification, but coaches do not have to agree on the same substitution rule if one team wants to follow their conference rule and one school wants to follow the NJSIAA modified substitution rule.

2024 NJSIAA Sub-Varsity Softball Extra Hitter and Defensive Substitution Rule Modifications

This modification allows for wider student-athlete participation by adding an extra hitter to the batting order and permission for free defensive position substitution. This modification allows sub-varsity coaches to switch player defensive positions without impacting the batting line up and without notification to the plate umpire or opposing coach.

Procedures

The NJSIAA-modified extra hitter (EH) and defensive substitution rules are for sub-varsity softball. An extra-hitter (EH) can be added to the offensive line-up anywhere in the batting order at the pregame meeting line-up exchange between the head coach and the umpires.

The batting order cannot be changed once the line-up is approved by the head coach and accepted by the home plate umpire at the pregame meeting.

The use of an extra hitter does not prevent a sub-varsity team from also applying the DP/Flex rule prior to the game.

Use of the extra hitter and a Flex player causes the Flex player to be listed in the 11th position in the order.

A sub-varsity team with an extra hitter and no available substitutes which experiences an injury to a starting player shall have the injured player's spot in the batting order skipped without penalty. However, the batting position of a player ejected from the game, without an available substitute, shall be deemed an automatic out in the line-up.

As always, batting order changes must consist of re-entry at the same spot in the line-up. Defensive position changes shall be permitted without umpire consultation with the exception of a pitching change. The opposing team and home plate umpire shall be notified of all pitching changes. Conference rules supersede this modification when a game is between two in-conference teams.

Non-conference opponents are encouraged to permit the extra hitter rule modification to increase student/athlete participation.

Non-conference opponents are not required to invoke the free defensive player substitution rule if one of the two head coaches' objects.