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Baseball Pitch Count Rule

The NFHS mandated that all states must have a pitching restriction policy **based on the number of pitches thrown to afford pitchers a required rest period** between pitching appearances. This is a safety feature for the young men and women who play the game of high school baseball. NJSIAA hopes that no student athlete's well-being will ever be compromised by wins and losses.

The Head Coach must remove the pitcher when said pitcher reaches the pitching limit below. A pitcher may remain or re-enter the game at another position per the substitution rule.

Pitch Count Limitations: Maximum of 110 pitches per game.

1. If a pitcher pitches 91-110 in a day, four calendar days of rest is required. *
2. If a pitcher pitches 71-90 pitches in a day, three calendar days of rest is required.
3. If a pitcher pitches 51-70 pitches in a day, two calendar days of rest is required.
4. If a pitcher pitches 31-50 pitches in a day, one calendar days of rest is required.
5. If a pitcher pitches 1-30 pitches in a day, no (0) calendar day of rest is required.
6. A pitcher cannot pitch on 3 consecutive calendar days.
7. A pitcher cannot exceed 150 pitches in **any** five-day calendar period. *

***If a pitcher reaches the maximum pitch count limit of 110 or 150 pitches (as outlined in numbers 1 & 7 above) while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until one of the following occurs:**

1. The batter safely reaches base.
2. The batter is retired.
3. The third out is recorded, thereby completing the half-inning or the game.

This exception applies only to the current batter in progress at the time the pitch limit is reached. The pitcher must be removed immediately after the conclusion of the above condition.

For pitch count recording purposes:

1. Once the 110 or 150 pitching limits have been reached and the pitcher throws more pitches to finish the current batter, the pitch count shall be recorded based on the actual number of pitches thrown.
2. A player may be used as a pitcher in more than one game per day. The combined number of pitches per day will determine the amount of rest required.
3. A switch pitcher (ambidextrous pitcher) who is able to pitch with either the right or left hand will be recorded by adding together the total pitches.

In a NJSIAA State Tournament game suspended by darkness, weather or other causes and the game is resumed the next day, the pitcher of record may continue to pitch to the extent of his eligibility provided he has thrown 50 or less pitches.

1. If the pitcher has thrown 50 or less pitches before the game was suspended, that pitcher's count shall carry over to the next day (not reset to 0) and the pitcher may continue until reaching his maximum-allowed pitches for the game.
2. If the pitcher has thrown more than 50 pitches before the game was suspended, that pitcher shall be required to meet the rest period as per pitch count limits above.

Failure to remove a pitcher when he has reached the maximum number of pitches thrown is the basis for protest by the opposing coach. If the protest is upheld, the penalty shall be forfeiture of the game. It is the coach's responsibility to know the pitch count.

The use of a pitcher not observing the required rest period, is the basis for protest by the opposing coach. If the protest is upheld, the penalty shall be forfeiture of the game.

Before every game, both Head Coaches shall exchange their pitching logs as part of the pre-game conference with umpires. This shall include names, numbers and pitches thrown by each pitcher.

In addition, the name(s) and number(s) of all ineligible pitchers for that game shall be identified on each team's lineup card.

Umpires are reminded they are not to suspend or terminate any game for pitch count rule violation. Schools are responsible for reporting use of ineligible pitchers to the NJSIAA.

Pitch Count Recording Procedure

Regular season

During the regular season, each school shall designate a pitch counter for their team. This person can be a coach, manager, or team-designated pitch counter. The home team's pitch counter will also be designated as the "Official Pitch Counter." The official pitch counter will count pitches for both schools.

Pitch counts **must** be verified with representatives of both teams **after each half-inning**. If both teams agree on a pitch number, that number shall be recorded as the official pitch count. If one team disagrees on a pitch count, the official pitch counter's number shall be recorded. Once the first pitch is thrown for the next half inning, there can be no protests or appeals to the pitch count.

The official pitch counter shall inform both coaches and the plate umpire when a pitcher reaches their maximum pitch count threshold. Coaches are responsible for their pitcher's pitch count at all times. The home team shall report the home and visitor pitch counts on the nj.com website within 24 hours of the game's conclusion.

State Tournament Rounds 1, 2, 3 & Sectional Finals

During these state tournament rounds, each school shall designate a pitch counter for their team. In addition, the home team must supply an "Official **Adult** Pitch Counter" who shall not be part of the coaching staff or team manager. The official pitch counter should be dressed in apparel that is considered neutral during the state tournament. The official pitch counter shall be situated in an area near the backstop and equally accessible to both teams. The official pitch counter will count pitches for both schools.

Pitch counts **must** be verified with representatives of both teams **after each half-inning**. If both teams agree on a pitch number, that number shall be recorded as the official pitch count. If one or both teams disagree on a pitch count, the official pitch counter's number shall be recorded. Once the first pitch is thrown for the next half inning, there can be no protests or appeals to the pitch count.

The official pitch counter shall inform both coaches and the plate umpire when a pitcher reaches their maximum pitch count threshold. Coaches are responsible for their pitcher's pitch count at all times. The home team shall report the home and visitor pitch counts on the nj.com website within 24 hours of the game's conclusion.

State Tournament Semifinals (public only) & State Finals

During these state tournament rounds, each school shall designate a pitch counter for their team. The NJSIAA will supply the "Official Adult Pitch Counter."

Pitch counts **must** be verified with representatives of both teams **after each half-inning**. If both teams agree on a pitch number, that number shall be recorded as the official pitch count. If one or both teams disagree on a pitch count, the official pitch counter's number shall be recorded. Once the first pitch is thrown for the next half inning, there can be no protests or appeals to the pitch count.

The official pitch counter shall inform both coaches and the plate umpire when a pitcher reaches their maximum pitch count threshold. Coaches are responsible for their pitcher's pitch count at all times. The home team shall report the home and visitor pitch counts on the nj.com website within 24 hours of the game's conclusion.

Play Ruling

Play 1:

A replacement for F1 is announced to the umpire-in-chief. Prior to or immediately after the newly announced S1 has completed his authorized warm-up throws, the Head Coach informs the umpire-in-chief that S1 cannot pitch as he has not met the required period of rest.

Play Ruling:

The umpire-in-chief is to allow the Head Coach to remove the announced relief pitcher without requiring S1 to pitch to one batter or retire the side as stated in the NFHS Baseball rule book. The Head Coach and S1 are ejected from the game. The new substitute, S-2, will be given his full warm-up throws prior to pitching. F1 may not return to the pitching position until S-2 has completed pitching to one batter or retired the side. If S2 requires more than 8 warm-up throws, F1 may not return as a pitcher but may play other positions.

Play 2:

A team is scheduled to play two games on the same day. The Head Coach allows the same pitcher to pitch in both games. In game one he throws 47 pitches. In game two he throws 21 pitches. How many days rest is he required to observe before he can pitch again?

Play Ruling:

The Head Coach shall add the totals of games 1 and 2 together to reach a total of 68 pitches thrown on that day. Two calendar days of rest is required before the Head Coach may use him to pitch in a game.

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Pitch Count Rule:

Q. After six innings of play, both teams and the official pitch counter are in agreement. As the third batter in the top of the 7th inning enters the batter's box, offensive coach claims that the pitcher has reached 110 pitches and must leave the game. Defensive Coach and official pitch counter state that he has thrown 109 pitches and can pitch to that batter.

A. The procedure is clearly defined in the pitch count document. The Official Adult Pitch Counter shall inform both Head Coaches and the Plate Umpire when the 110 Pitch threshold is reached. If there is disagreement, the umpires shall allow a short discussion with the Official Adult Pitch Counter. The game is to be resumed quickly, and prolonged discussion is not to be allowed by umpires.

Q. Pitcher #17 has thrown 69 pitches when a new batter enters the batter's box. He throws 7 additional pitches to retire that batter. How is this recorded on the pitching log?

A. Coach shall enter 76 pitches on the pitching log. #17 is required to observe three days of rest before pitching again. The 76 pitches are important as all pitches thrown are used to calculate the maximum of 150 pitches in a five-day calendar period. The threshold amount applies only to the pitcher reaching the maximum of 110 pitches in a game/day.

Q. Pitcher throws 72 pitches on Monday. He rests on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, meeting his mandatory rest requirement. If he throws 21 pitches on Friday, what is the maximum number of pitches that pitcher can throw on Saturday?

A. The five-day calendar period begins on Monday when he threw 72 pitches. Since Saturday is the 6th day, he may throw up to 110 pitches, the maximum threshold.

Q. Where will coaches go to log the pitch count information on a daily basis?

A. Coaches will go to the same site as they normally do for recording game statistics, which is, njschoolsports.com. The technical staff there will have a "dashboard" area where pitch count information for starting, and relief pitchers will be accessible, viewable, and downloadable for exchanging at the next game home plate meeting.

Q. How will varsity coaches know and keep track of sub-varsity pitchers and their pitch counts?

A. NJSIAA will have a downloadable word form that sub-varsity coaches will be able to print out, fill out as to name, uniform number, the number of pitches thrown, date, opponent, and the form will have a 7-10-day period of time. This form will be exchanged at the home plate meeting prior to every game and a copy of this form shall be given to the varsity coach on a game-by-game basis.

Q. Will sub-varsity pitchers be held to the same pitch count protocols as the varsity pitchers?

A. Yes, a sub-varsity pitcher shall be held to the same limits and thresholds as the varsity pitchers, i.e., over any five (5) calendar day period, a pitcher may not exceed 150 total pitches.

Q. Must a school pay for the "Official Adult Pitch Counter"?

A. No. However, this does not preclude any school from doing so.