NEW JERSEY STATE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
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NFHS/NJSIAA BASEBALL PITCHING LIMITATION RULE

National Federation Baseball Rules mandatory provision to have each state adopt a pitching limitation rule.

The NFHS Baseball Rules Committee, at its annual meeting in June of 2016, recommended that each state association shall have a pitching restriction policy based on the number of pitches thrown to afford pitchers a required rest period between pitching appearances.

NFHS approved the recommendation and amended the baseball rule 6-1-6 to read:
ART. 6. . . . Each state association shall have a pitching restriction policy based on the number of pitches thrown to afford pitchers a required rest period between pitching appearances.

Rationale: After years of research and thoughtful discussion on minimizing risk for the position of pitcher, it has been determined that modifying the pitching restriction rule to reflect that the policy should be based on the number of pitches thrown is a better indication of overuse and repetition than the current method of innings pitched during a contest.

NJSIAA convened a Pitch Count Committee in the Fall of 2016 to determine pitch count limits and mechanics of operation. The Committee was comprised of Athletic Directors, Baseball Coaches and officials. Larry White, NJSIAA Assistant Director chaired the committee.

The committee was concerned with the potential for overuse of pitchers; particularly with the amount of travel ball and other organized baseball programs for which NJSIAA cannot govern. The committee examined models that had already been approved by states. Some of the warmer climates had larger pitch counts; some states in the Northeast and Northern Tier of the United States had smaller pitch counts. The New Jersey model is closer to those of states in the Northeast region.

The NJSIAA Pitch Count standards were revised at a February 7, 2018 meeting of the Pitch Count Committee.

At the end of the 2018 baseball season, the NJSIAA baseball rules committee will meet and discuss this year's pitch count season. We will discuss and make suggestions where needed, corrections and/or keep as is.

The NJSIAA pitch count document is on the website, www.njsiaa.org under the heading, baseball.

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2018 NJSIAA BASEBALL PITCH COUNT RULE

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 substitution rule.

Maximum of 110 pitches per game; NJSIAA Baseball.

A. If a pitcher pitches 91-110 in a day, four calendar days of rest is required.
B. If a pitcher pitches 71-90 pitches in a day, three calendar days of rest is required.
C. If a pitcher pitches 51-70 pitches in a day, two calendar days of rest is required.
D. If a pitcher pitches 31-50 pitches in a day, one calendar days of rest is required.
E. If a pitcher pitches 1-30 pitches in a day, no (0) calendar day of rest is required.
F. A pitcher cannot pitch on 3 consecutive calendar days.
G. A pitcher cannot exceed 150 pitches in a five-day calendar period.

If a pitcher reaches a pitch limit while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until one of the following occurs.

1. The batter reaches base, or
2. That batter is retired, or
3. The third out is recorded to complete that half-inning or game.

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.

In a NJSIAA State Tournament game suspended by darkness, weather or other cause resumed the next day, the pitcher of record may continue to pitch to the extent of his eligibility provided he has pitched less than 50 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 and pitcher may pitch until the maximum of 110 pitches in a game is reached.
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.

PLAY RULINGS

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.

In conclusion, as written in the opening of this Q and A, 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 for wins and losses.