

Iowa High School Baseball Thoughts & Tips

- *by Ira Blue*

We are all excited for this opening week of Iowa High School baseball. Some talk as always over the baseball rules test, we umpires just took. One question/video that got some attention was the home run hit where the batter-runner removes his helmet and flips his bat. The question was “how should the umpire rule when the batter-runner removes the helmet?” The correct answer is B. “The umpire should ignore the action since the ball is dead because of the home run” I sense the NFHS just wants to remind us of 1-5-1 that since the ball is dead the helmet removal PENALTY does not apply. Old Ira got that one wrong twice over years ago when I once banged out a lead runner on a home run when he tossed his helmet coming around third. He's not out even if it was a live ball (it's a warning then second offense ejection) and it's nothing since it was a homer. Old Ira was 0 for 2. Ouch! This also reminds us of it's a myth that his teammates can't touch him or high five him prior to the plate, the ball is dead fellas.

The bat flip in that video gives us some consternation though. NCAA Rule 5-17 updated in 2023 calls for ejection if “bat flips are near or toward an opponent or umpire.” Well, that is NOT the NFHS rule but 3-3-1-f and 10-3-1 certainly gives us some latitude to warn or eject via unsportsmanlike conduct. Just last season in 2023 a NFHS point of emphasis was on sportsmanship. Let's hope together our Iowa coaches and umpires can meet some middle ground on this. Umps let's do some preventive officiating or perhaps a warning if bat flips and excessive celebrations get out of hand. Coaches, we want the kids to be excited and enthused but let's not cross that fine line where it's showing up your opponent or the game.

Have a good one, guys!