• Our bulletins will come to umpires directly again this year from the OHSAA office. This will make it easier on our secretaries and interpreters who will no longer have to relay the information to you. This will be more efficient and allow for more timely distribution with everyone receiving the information at the same time.

• Mechanics Clinics for 2019 – I would like to send out a special thanks to Mark Kuhn, John Rock, and Scott Barr for hosting the 2019 baseball clinics. The feedback has been very positive, and there will be some modifications to the 2020 clinics next year. The attendance at these clinics was considerably larger than in years past, and it is my hope that this trend will continue. It is a good sign that umpires are willing to put in the time to get better and work on their mechanics. There’s no doubt that many factors contributed to this huge increase – among those the tournament points awarded to attendees.

• State Meeting Deadline – The last day on which an online rules meeting may be viewed without penalty will be Friday, March 22. The meeting will be accessible with a $50 late fee until Monday, April 22. To access the meeting, log in to your myOHSAA profile and click the “Rules Meetings” icon in the top right, then click “Find a State Meeting” from the left side menu, then select “Baseball” from the “Sports” drop down menu, “Official” from “Meeting Type” dropdown menu, and then click “Search”. This search will display the online meeting option as well as any face-to-face meeting options. You may view the online meeting on any device except for a Google Chromebook. A Google Chromebook is a type of laptop computer, entirely different from the popular internet browser Google Chrome. You may view the online meetings using the internet browser Google Chrome.

• Remember that a minimum of four local meetings are required. If you have questions, contact your local secretary. Don’t delay – time is running short.

• Last week the OHSAA office issued contracts for the 2019 Regional Tournament games. We’re pleased that we will continue with an important change to the assigning process again this year. Each four-umpire crew assigned to work a state game will also be assigned as a four umpire crew for a regional final game as well. This allows that crew to work two weeks in a row as a crew of four with the umpires working the same positions each week. While twelve regional games will be worked by four umpire crews the remaining regional games will be worked by crews of three. This means that we will have 156 (versus 144 prior to 2017) umpires working regional games.

• Hold the date - we will again offer a pre-tournament clinic covering the three and four-umpire system, as well as other topics, on Saturday, May 18 at Grove City High School. This free clinic is intended for
umpires working the three and four umpire system in postseason play but is open to all OHSAA umpires. If you plan on attending, please send an email to dan.mcginnis@hotmail.com to let me know your will be coming. The four-person mechanics will be from 10-11 am followed by the three person from 11-12PM. Lunch will be from 12-12:30 followed by live scrimmages working both three and four-person mechanics. Please come prepare in proper OHSAA uniform and bring both you base and plate gear. It is our hope as many crews will get to work and inning or two followed by observations during the game. We should conclude around 3pm.

- During the state meeting, we discussed the C-flap on players helmets. There has been further clarification as to the umpire’s responsibilities with regards to the C-flap. **During the pregame we ask the coach if all his equipment is legal. Once he responds that it is, then it is now the coach’s responsibility to guarantee that the helmets are legal.** We do not check to see if the proper NOCSAE stamp is on the C-flap. We assume that the coach has checked with the manufacturer of the helmet and that it meets their standards. As a side note, as of this writing there is no protocol for the testing!

- It was brought to my attention that someone heard during the state meeting that the hybrid is now legal in High School baseball. This is not correct, NFHS rules calls for the hybrid to be called an illegal pitch if no runners are on base and a balk if there are runners. As soon as the pitcher begins his pitching motion, while in the hybrid, call time and award as described above. A note, NCAA baseball has also declared that the hybrid is illegal in college baseball starting in 2019!

- Prior to the start of an inning, we are having some coaches direct the players on their bench to go out in front of their respective dugout and swing bats as the opposing pitcher is warming up. According to rule 3-3-1-i, the only players/personnel allowed out of the dugout are “be outside the designated dugout (bench) or bullpen area if not a batter, runner, on-deck batter, in the coach’s box or one of the nine players on defense.” Please make sure they stay in the dugout.

- Both catchers in the game or bullpen cannot wear two-piece head-gear. This is fine in college and pro but not in high school. Please refer to rule 1-5-4 that states “The catchers helmet and mask combination shall meet the NOCSAE standard”

- Make sure that as a plate umpire we mark down all conferences both offensive and defensive. With the weather causing many suspended games, we need to make sure we have an accurate record of all changes and conferences in case the game is continued at a later date.

- The 3-1 move in high school baseball is still legal.

- Ball stuck in a player’s glove is stuck and is live. There was some rumor that if the ball is stuck and a play is made with the glove, the ball then becomes dead. Wrong, the ball stays alive until the umpire calls time. If there is another runner then they would have to throw the glove with the ball in it to try and put out another runner.