



## **Playing the ball at any height.**

This year, players will have the opportunity to play the ball legally even if it is above the shoulder provided that the play is safe and with regard for others around the play. In the NFHS Rule Book under Rule 3 section 2 article 11 it describes "playing the ball" and the manner in which it can be played. Even though this rule has been played in the US at many levels for more than a year, it is the first time it is being brought to the High School game.

With most teams beginning practice on or about August 15<sup>th</sup>, they will have a chance to begin playing by the rule before many of the umpires have a chance to see it with their own eyes. In most cases it will be two weeks before any scrimmages or play days take place and up until that point the umpires will only be able to watch some video and talk about the rule.

Since the teaching of this skill will begin at practice, it is important to start off with the proper information on the rule....

1. All players must play safe and with regard for others around them.
2. All attempts to play the ball must be in control and not aggressive.
3. Playing the ball in the air is legal. Taking a "wild" swing at it while in the air is dangerous and intimidating.
4. A controlled swing or inherent movement of the stick to play the ball while in the air is legal.
5. The stick does not have to be "still" or just trying to "stop" the ball.
6. Missing the ball while attempting to play it above the shoulder is not a foul, unless dangerous to other in close proximity.
7. If danger is judged during an attempt to play the ball above the shoulder, this is not a hold whistle situation. An umpire should blow the foul immediately.
8. This rule DOES NOT change any of the parameters for receiving an aerial ball. (5 yd. Rule) Any decision while the ball is in flight and an attempt to "cut it off" by playing the ball over the shoulder is judged solely on the dangerous aspect surrounding the action.