



Memorandum

To: NFHS Baseball Administrators and Baseball Rules Committee Members

From: B. Elliot Hopkins, MLD, CAA, Baseball Rules Editor and National Interpreter

Subject: The Usage and Allowance of Cheek and Jaw Protectors attached to Batting Helmets

Date: February 15, 2019

I hope this note finds you well. With the baseball season starting in many parts of the country, we have been receiving numerous calls and questions about cheek and jaw protectors and their compliancy. They are quickly becoming very popular amongst our age group of players. Our young people are mimicking their idols at the college and professional levels who wear this type of equipment.

Per NFHS Rule 1-5-1, it states that it is mandatory for on-deck batters, batters and base runners among other individuals to wear a batting helmet that is non-mirror like and meets the NOCSAE performance standard. Our rules allow for a face mask/guard to be attached to the batting helmet in NFHS Rule 1-5-2. However, a cheek and jaw protector is not considered a face mask/guard and currently does not meet any performance standard. Parents and guardians are concerned with the safety of their children and we are experiencing that cheek and jaw protectors are being attached to the batting helmets around the country.

There is no NOCSAE performance standard for cheek and jaw protectors. We have confirmed that current manufactured batting helmets meet the NOCSAE performance standard with pre-drilled holes and without pre-drilled holes. Many of the larger helmet manufacturers have developed their own brand specific cheek and jaw protector and also accommodate third party cheek and jaw protectors to be attached to their helmets as well. Please note: It is the NFHS' position once the head baseball coach verifies that his team is legally and properly equipped, and all other criteria to start a game have been met, then we will begin play. It is not our role to determine the legitimacy of a cheek and jaw protector that has been attached to a batting helmet.

Obviously, if the umpire notices that the cheek and jaw protector is hanging off the batting helmet and swinging loosely, he should enforce the rule regarding defective equipment. (NFHS Rule 1-5-6) As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office.