



April 29, 2026

## NFHS Baseball Weekly Rule Interpretations

I hope this final baseball weekly interpretation finds you well and probably starting your post season. The Foul Tip and Foul Ball are slightly nuanced, but the difference is real and important to understand.

The distinction between a true foul tip and a foul ball that is subsequently caught is essential because it directly impacts whether the ball remains live or becomes dead. A legally caught foul tip—traveling sharply and directly from the bat to the catcher’s glove or hand—results in a live ball, allowing runners to advance and permitting the possibility of a strikeout on strike three. In contrast, any ball that first contacts the catcher’s body or equipment (such as the chest protector or mask) before being secured is ruled a foul ball, immediately dead, and limits the play to a strike only under certain counts. Misjudging this difference can lead to improper rulings on outs, runner advancement, and overall game flow.

From an officiating and educational standpoint, this clarity promotes consistency, fairness, and confidence in rule application. The strict definition removes ambiguity by giving umpires a clear visual standard—direct, uninterrupted flight to the glove or hand—while also ensuring that players are not unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged by deflected balls. For coaches, athletes and fans, understanding this nuance reinforces situational awareness and proper expectations during play. Ultimately, mastering this distinction supports the integrity of the game by aligning real-time decisions with the intent of the rules and maintaining a consistent, equitable playing environment. We trust this interpretation will be received as helpful, practical, and constructive.

For your convenience, we have attached the illustration as a combined document to support ease of use and distribution. These materials serve as excellent discussion tools for both relatively new and veteran umpires alike.

Thank you for your continued support and professionalism throughout the season, and best wishes for a successful baseball post season.

**Foul ball off the bat, and goes directly to the catcher's mitt and hits chest protector and then caught by catcher. Ball is a strike and in play. (Rule 2-16-2)**

1.



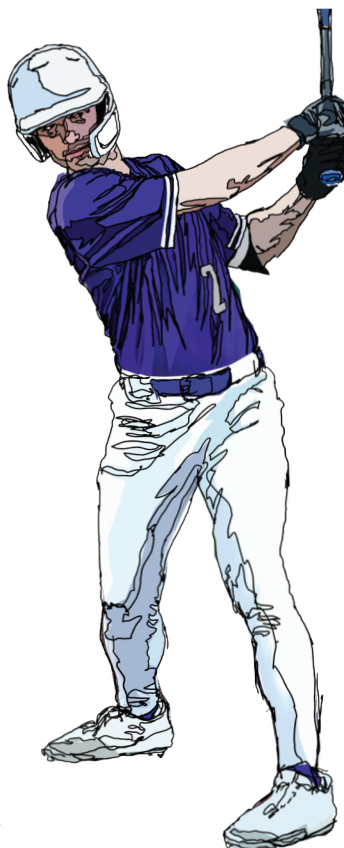
Foul tip off of catcher mitt, hits the chest protector...



The pitch is fouled off the bat, goes directly to the catcher's mitt travels on and contacts the chest protector. This is a foul tip. **Ball is a strike and in play.**  
**Rule 2-16-2**

2.

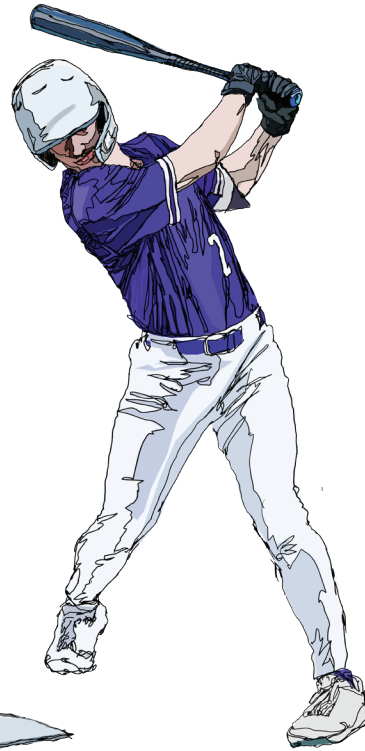
and then is caught by catcher.  
**FOUL** ball.



## Foul Ball off Chest Protector and then caught by the Catcher (Rule 2-16)

1.

Foul tip off of chest protector...



The pitch is fouled off the bat, goes directly to the chest protector of the catcher and then is caught by the catcher.

**This is a Foul Ball.**

**Rule 2-16**

2.

and then is caught by catcher.  
**FOUL** ball.

