

UMP-O-GRAM

Helmet Rule for Base Coaches

Nothing like a little controversy to start off the new baseball season. In November of 2007 the General Managers of Major League Baseball met in Orlando and voted to require all third and first base coaches to wear a protective helmet while on the field. This was done in response to the minor league coach who was hit by a line drive and died last summer.

After talking with the Public Relations/Rules office of Major League Baseball, it has been confirmed that although the new rule is not in the 2008 Official Rules of Major League Baseball Rule Book, it has been published in the Baseball Operations Bulletin distributed to all 30 Major League Clubs. This distribution coupled by the fact that the rule is being enforced on the field, makes it an Official Major League Baseball Rule.

Since High School Baseball does not play by Major League Rules, this new rule will not apply to adults in the coach's boxes.

Since American Legion Baseball follows Major League Rules with some exceptions, the National Baseball Committee for American Legion Baseball has ruled that all base coaches shall wear protective headgear.

Since VFW Baseball in South Dakota also follows Major League Rules with exception, and since they have not made an exception to this rule, all VFW base coaches shall wear protective headgear while on the field.

The executive committee of the South Dakota Amateur Baseball Association has issued the following directive to all South Dakota ball clubs and umpires:

The SDABA has ruled that the new Major League Baseball mandatory helmet rule for first and third base coaches will NOT be enforced in South Dakota Amateur Baseball until at least our next commissioners meeting on June 10, 2008. At that time the Commission will discuss and take such further action as they deem appropriate.

Therefore please be advised that umpires for South Dakota Amateur baseball games are instructed NOT to enforce the mandatory helmet rule for first and third base coaches until they hear otherwise from the association. In order that all umpires receive the same information, we will notify you, Brad, as secretary of the umpires association, if and when such ruling changes, and if it changes, the effective date. Please pass this information on to your members.

I might add that first and third base coaches who deem themselves at risk or in danger may choose to voluntarily wear a helmet if desired.

Herb Sundall, Secretary/Treasurer

Now you know the skinny on the new helmet rule for base coaches. Shouldn't be any more questions.

One last reminder to those of you who haven't yet paid your dues for 2008, Gueedo is warming up his Hummer to come see you.

Till next time,
Brad Schramm, Secretary