

Is this Catcher Helmet and Mask Combination Legal?

There are reports that a handful of schools are using a catcher's helmet and mask combination that is not permissible in high school games governed by NFHS rules.

To be legal, a catcher's helmet and mask combination shall meet the NOCSAE standard, have full ear protection and have a throat protector that adequately covers the throat. The commercially manufactured catcher's head, face and throat protection may be a one-piece or multi-piece design. Additionally, the unit must be tested by NOCSAE as a whole; not individual pieces.

Does this mask meet the above criteria? Of course not!



1.5.4 Situation A: The home's team catcher takes his position behind the plate in the top of the first inning with a skull cap helmet-and-mask combination. **RULING:** This is illegal. A catcher will be required to wear head protection with double ear flaps that meets the NOCSAE standard. He will be told to get a legal helmet-and-mask combination. If he does not comply, he will be ejected.

1.5.4 Situation C: The visiting team's catcher's one-piece hockey-style mask breaks, causing the catcher to use a traditional Brewer mask-and-Acme helmet combination, which have not been tested together. **RULING:** The umpire requests that the visiting coach provides documentation that the Brewer/Acme components were tested together. He is unable to comply. The Brewer mask-and-Acme helmet combination is not allowed.

to be used. The catcher's helmet-and-mask combination shall meet the NOCSAE standard of being tested together.

At the pre-game conference, coach is responsible for verifying that his team is properly and legally equipped. Once the conference concludes, game officials must apply the rule. What is most disturbing is when there is inconsistency in rule application. We must all be on the page. Allowing a catcher to wear the above helmet and mask combination is a major safety violation.