



NCAA BASEBALL EXPERIMENTAL RULES 2027 SEASON – FOR CONFERENCE PLAY ONLY

The NCAA Division I Baseball Rules Subcommittee and the Division II and Division III Baseball Rules Committee is interested in allowing institutions to experiment and provide data and feedback as it considers potential rules change in the future. The Division I Baseball Rules Subcommittee and the Division II and Division III Baseball Rules Committee recommended the following experimental rules, which were approved by the Division I Baseball Oversight Committee and the Division II and Division III Playing Rules Oversight Panel.

Approved Experimental Rules:	Division I	Division II and Division III
1. Pitcher disengagements	X	X
2. Pitcher minimum batters faced requirements	X	X
3. Use of in-game data/technology in the dugout	Permissive for DI.	X
4. Challenge system for called balls and strikes	X	X

Any conference interested in experimenting must submit the request in writing Stanley Broaden (sbroaden@ncaa.org). Conferences granted permission to experiment are required to collect data and submit it to the Division I Baseball Rules Subcommittee and the Division II and Division III Baseball Rules Committee at the end of the season. The experimental rules are approved for the 2027 season during conference play only. The experimental rules will not be used during the NCAA postseason.

1. Pitcher Disengagements ([Attachment A](#)):

Pitchers are limited to two disengagements (pickoff attempts or step-offs) per plate appearance. However, this limit is reset if a runner or runners advance during the plate appearance. A third disengagement, or a disengagement violation, would result in a balk.

2. Pitcher Minimum Batters Faced Requirements ([Attachment B](#)):

The starting pitcher or any substitute pitcher is required to pitch to a minimum of three consecutive batters, including the batter then at bat (or any substitute batter), until such batters are put out or reach first base, or until the offensive team is put out.

3. Use of in-game data/technology in the dugout during a game, including the use of preloaded and non-live recorded video:

To permit the use of electronic equipment (tablets) to access scouting and analytics information during the game in the dugout, including the use of preloaded and non-live recorded video. (*Note: Access to pitch location [i.e., balls/strikes] must be restricted during the game.*) The following information must be provided for consideration of this experimental rule: (1) An outline of the conference's plan for use of the electronic equipment, (2) the type of equipment that will be provided or used, (3) details on the conference's policies/procedures to ensure

appropriate use of the equipment and (4) details of implementing a device management feature to limit access of applications and metrics during a game, including if the conference intends to permit and manage the use of preloaded and non-live recorded video. *Note: Preloaded video is defined as video content not from the current game being played. Accessing delayed video content from the current game is permitted provided the video is delayed by a half inning at a minimum.* Data collection will include the number of uses throughout the conference season, effectiveness of the technology for the purposes of coaching and player development.

4. Challenges Permitted for Called Balls and Strikes Using Electronic Strike Zone Assist ([Attachment C](#)):

Overview. Each team will be permitted to challenge an individual ball or strike call (on either offense or defense) by appealing to the appropriate call of the pitch as determined by an electronic strike zone. A challenge may occur at any point in a plate appearance including the end of an appearance.

Initiating a Challenge. A batter, pitcher, or catcher must initiate a challenge by immediately tapping their cap or helmet. Other players or team personnel are not permitted to initiate a challenge. Each team starts the game with three (3) challenges: (1) If a challenge is successful, the team retains that challenge; and (2) If the original call is confirmed, the team loses the challenge. If a team enters an extra inning with zero challenges remaining, they are awarded one challenge for every extra inning. *Note: The additional challenge provided during extra innings cannot be used until all remaining challenges have been exhausted and may not be carried over to any subsequent inning of extra innings.*

Review Process. Upon a challenge, the pitch location is compared against the batter's individualized electronic strike zone.

Hitter Measurement & Certification. To ensure the electronic strike zone assist conforms to the height of each batter, every player on a team's designated roster (including pitchers) shall participate in the measurement process.

Additional Requirements. Each institution that anticipates participating in a contest that may use the electronic strike zone challenge system shall submit precise height measurements starting August 1 of the current academic year and must be submitted no later than two weeks prior to the start of the season. Measurements are required to be certified by the institution's primary health care administrator. *Note: Height measurements may be remeasured and certified prior to the start of postseason competition (including conference championships/tournaments).*



**NCAA BASEBALL EXPERIMENTAL RULE
2027 SEASON – FOR CONFERENCE PLAY ONLY
PITCHER DISENGAGEMENTS**

Overview. Pitchers are limited to two disengagements (pickoff attempts or step-offs) per plate appearance. However, this limit is reset if a runner or runners advance during the plate appearance. A third disengagement, or a disengagement violation, would result in a balk. For example, if a third pickoff attempt is made, the runner automatically advances one base if the pickoff attempt is not successful. Mound visits, injury timeouts and offensive team timeouts do not count as a disengagement.

If a team has used up all of its allotted mound visits prior to the ninth inning, that team will receive an additional mound visit in the ninth inning. This effectively serves as an additional disengagement. *Note: what constitutes a balk remains as written in the NCAA baseball playing rules (see Rule 9-3), which describes a legal pitching delivery.* Any umpire, if they notice an illegal movement by the pitcher, can call a balk.



**NCAA BASEBALL EXPERIMENTAL RULE
2027 SEASON – FOR CONFERENCE PLAY ONLY
PITCHER MINIMUM BATTERS FACED REQUIREMENTS**

Overview. The starting pitcher or any substitute pitcher is required to pitch to a minimum of three consecutive batters, including the batter then at bat (or any substitute batter), until such batters are put out or reach first base, or until the offensive team is put out.

Procedure. To qualify as one of three consecutive batters, the batter must complete their plate appearance, which ends only when the batter is put out or becomes a runner. If the offensive team is put out prior to any substitute pitcher completing their first three consecutive batters, the pitcher may be removed from the game between innings; but, if they return for the subsequent inning, they must complete pitching to as many batters as necessary to satisfy the three consecutive batters requirement, which total would include any batters that completed a plate appearance with that pitcher the prior inning (i.e., if they completed 0 plate appearances [PA] in inning 1, they must complete 3 PA in inning 2; if they completed 1 PA in inning 1, they must complete 2 PA in inning 2; if they completed 2 PA in inning 1, they must complete 1 PA in inning 2). An intentional walk counts toward fulfilling the number of required batters. Picking off a runner does not fulfill the minimum batter requirement, but would permit the early removal of the pitcher if the out recorded by the pickoff ends the inning.

In addition to other rules governing pitcher usage (see Rule 9-4), the following principles will apply to determinations about whether the three-batter minimum requirement has been met:

1. *Credit For Completing Plate Appearances.* The pitcher who is on the mound at the completion of the plate appearance will be provided the credit for facing that batter. For example, a relief pitcher enters the game in the middle of a plate appearance (e.g., 2-0 count). If the relief pitcher walks the current hitter with two more balls, the relief pitcher will receive credit for facing their first batter.
2. *Pitcher Moves to a Defensive Position.* A pitcher may move to a defensive position to start an inning (other than the first) or after fulfilling the three-batter minimum. They may return to pitch after the three-batter minimum is met by a replacement pitcher. They will be required to satisfy the three-batter minimum again if they are substituted back to the pitcher position.
3. *Trips to the Mound.*
 - a. If a coach or their nonplaying representative (hereafter called “coach”) goes to the mound and signals for a substitute pitcher on their initial visit before a pitcher has satisfied the three-batter minimum, the umpire will immediately inform the coach that the pitcher is not permitted to be substituted for and must continue pitching until fulfilling their requirement. The manager shall be charged with a mound visit and subject to ejection if they fail to comply with the direction from the umpire.
 - b. If a coach attempts to make a second trip to the mound in the same inning prior to that pitcher fulfilling the three-batter minimum, the coach shall be warned by the umpire that they cannot return to the mound. If the coach ignores such warning, they may be removed from the game, and the pitcher shall be required to pitch to a minimum of three consecutive batters or until the offensive team is put out, at which point the pitcher must be removed from the game.

- c. If a coach attempts to defy the three-batter minimum and removes the pitcher before they have satisfied the three-batter minimum, the pitcher and/or coach may be subject to an ejection. In addition, the umpire shall award no-pitch intentional walks to the number of batters necessary to complete the ejected pitcher's three-batter minimum before resuming the game.



**NCAA BASEBALL PROTOCOL FOR CHALLENGE SYSTEM USING
AN ELECTRONIC STRIKE ZONE
(Updated August 24, 2026)**

Overview. Each team will be permitted to challenge an individual ball or strike call (on either offense or defense) by appealing to the appropriate call of the pitch as determined by an electronic strike zone. A challenge may occur at any point in a plate appearance including the end of an appearance.

Initiating a Challenge. A batter, pitcher, or catcher must initiate a challenge by immediately tapping their cap or helmet. Other players or team personnel are not permitted to initiate a challenge. Each team starts the game with three (3) challenges: (1) If a challenge is successful, the team retains that challenge; and (2) If the original call is confirmed, the team loses the challenge. If a team enters an extra inning with zero challenges remaining, they are awarded one challenge for every extra inning. *Note: The additional challenge provided during extra innings cannot be used until all remaining challenges have been exhausted and may not be carried over to any subsequent inning of extra innings.*

Review Process. Upon a challenge, the pitch location is compared against the batter's individualized electronic strike zone.

Hitter Measurement & Certification. To ensure the electronic strike zone assist conforms to the height of each batter, every player on a team's designated roster (including pitchers) shall participate in the measurement process. Both teams must have certified height measurements for use during a game. *Note: It is strongly recommended that all institutions submit certified player height measurements.*

Additional Requirements. Each institution that anticipates participating in a contest that may use the electronic strike zone challenge system shall submit precise height measurements starting August 1 of the current academic year and must be submitted no later than two weeks prior to the start of the season. Measurements are required to be certified by the institution's primary health care administrator. *Note: Height measurements may be remeasured and certified prior to the start of postseason competition (including conference championships/tournaments).*

Challenges:

- Each team will be provided three (3) challenges per game. Successful challenges will be retained, but an unsuccessful challenge will result in the loss of the used challenge. If a team loses all challenges, the team will not be permitted to challenge for the remainder of the regulation (nine-inning) game. During extra innings, a team with no challenges remaining at the start of an inning will be provided one (1) additional challenge per inning, which may not be carried over to any subsequent inning. The additional challenge provided during extra innings cannot be used until all remaining challenges have been exhausted.
- A challenge may only be made by the pitcher, catcher, or the hitter. No other player, coach, or other team personnel may signal to a player whether or not to initiate a challenge. If the umpire determines that a player's decision to challenge was aided by any other player or team personnel, the offending team will lose the ability to challenge that pitch.
- Teams, including players, coaches, and other team personnel, are prohibited from using information received, directly or indirectly, from any electronic devices to inform a decision whether to challenge a call. *Note: The defensive team cannot challenge a strike, and the offensive team cannot challenge a ball.*

Procedure:

1. *Initiating a Challenge.* To initiate a challenge, a batter, pitcher, or catcher must tap the top of their cap or helmet immediately upon the conclusion of a pitch. Players are encouraged to simultaneously request their challenge verbally to ensure the request is recognized by the home plate umpire.
2. *Umpire Signal.* Upon initiation of a challenge, the umpire will signal to the press box and announce that a challenge has been initiated.
3. *Challenge Timing.* A challenge must be initiated immediately after the conclusion of the prior pitch, provided if there is an ensuing play on a runner (including a batter-runner), or an appeal of a check swing, the call may be challenged immediately upon the conclusion of the ensuing play. The determination of whether a challenge was timely shall be made solely by the home plate umpire. *Note: A challenge may not be requested after a team initiates video review. Any challenge must be initiated and resolved before an umpire accepts a coach's request for video review.*
4. *Potential Check Swing.* If the pitch is called a ball on the field and the defensive team believes the batter offered at the pitch, the defensive team may request an appeal of the check swing call. If the batter is not deemed to have offered at the pitch, the defensive team's head coach may then challenge the call. If the pitch is called a strike on the field and the batter request a challenge, but the umpire believes the batter may have offered at the pitch, the umpire must confirm that the batter did not offer at the pitch before initiating the review. If it is determined that the batter offered at the pitch, the result of the pitch will be a strike, and the offensive team will retain its challenge.
5. *Delivery of Call.* After the umpire signals that a challenge has been initiated, it is recommended that the scoreboard display a visual graphic showing the location of the pitch, whether the call was confirmed or overturned, and the updated ball-strike count. If the visual graphic cannot be displayed on the scoreboard, the result of the challenge shall be communicated using the best method available to the host institution (i.e., Announcement from an umpire or the public-address announcer). Following the communication of the result of the challenge, the umpire shall appropriately place the runners (if applicable), and the pitch timer shall restart consistent with applicable NCAA baseball playing rules.
6. *Failure to Track Pitch.* If the pitch was not tracked by the electronic strike zone assist, the call on the field shall stand and the team requesting the challenge will retain the challenge.
7. *Placement of Runners.* All decisions regarding the placement of base runners resulting from a call that is overturned pursuant to these regulations shall be made by the on-field umpires, in accordance with the standards set forth in NCAA baseball playing rules:
 - Unless directed otherwise by the NCAA baseball playing rules, if the umpires determine that an incorrect call of ball or strike had no effect on the subsequent behavior or conduct of the offensive and defensive players, the umpires shall change the incorrect call but let stand any on-field calls or plays unaffected by the incorrect call.
 - Any doubt regarding the placement of runners should be resolved in favor of the last base legally touched at the time of the challenged call.
 - The following principles shall apply under certain circumstances in which an originally called pitch or the result of a successfully challenged call would end an at-bat:
 - *Reversal of Ball Call Dropped by Catcher Results in Strike Three.* If a pitch that was not legally caught by the catcher and had been called a ball on the field is challenged, overturned, and results in strike three, the batter is out without requiring the batter or first base to be tagged.
 - *Reversal of Strike Call Results in Ball Four.* If a pitch that had been called a strike on the field is challenged, overturned, and results in ball four, any runner(s) that would have been

forced to the next base had the pitch been called a ball on the field, shall automatically advance one base from the base they occupied when the pitch was released.

8. *Hit-By-Pitch in the Strike Zone.* The possibility that a pitched ball touches a batter, their clothing or equipment in the strike zone may be challenged.
9. *Protest/Appeals.* No player, coach, or other team personnel may argue, protest, or appeal the result of a challenge.

The Strike Zone:

The electronic strike zone assist will have the following dimensions as established within the parameters of the NCAA Strike Zone initiative: (1) the strike zone shall be a two-dimensional rectangle that is 19" wide (i.e., the width of home plate plus the 1" black border on both sides of the plate); (2) set over the middle of home plate (i.e., 8.5" in front of the back tip of home plate); (3) the upper boundary of which shall be defined as 56% of the batter's height; and (4) the lower boundary of which shall be defined as 24% of the batter's height. A player's standing height, as officially measured, will be used to calculate the upper and lower boundary of the strike zone. The batter's stance as the batter is prepared to swing at a pitched ball is not relevant to this determination.

If any part of the ball intersects the strike zone as defined above, it will be called a strike; if the entire ball misses the strike zone, it will be called a ball.