NCAA Baseball Interpretations/Clarifications
January 16, 2019

Rule 6-2-d-2 – Backswing Interference

Clarification of Exception to Immediate Dead Ball – If "backswing interference" occurs as described in Rule 6-2-d when the catcher is in the act of making a throw to retire a runner, "Time" is called, and runners return unless the catcher's initial throw ***directly and immediately*** retires the runner.

Play #1: R1 and R3, one out, 1-0 count. R1 attempts to steal on the next pitch. B3 swings and misses the pitch and unintentionally hits the catcher's glove behind him on the backswing. The catcher is in the act of throwing the ball when contact occurs but is able to make the throw to the shortstop covering second base. The shortstop immediately tags R1 for the second out.
Ruling: R1 is out, the interference is ignored, and the ball remains live and in play.

Play #2: Same situation as above, except the shortstop is unable to immediately tag the runner after catching the throw because the runner stopped, and the shortstop had to chase the runner back toward first base.
Ruling: As soon as the fielder could not immediately tag the runner for the out, "Time" is called, the interference is enforced, and all runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.
.
Rule 6-3-b-Penalty – Batter's Interference

Clarification of Penalty – The penalty for batter's interference is enforced in the same manner as described above for backswing interference. If the interference occurs but the catcher is able to make a play on a runner and the runner is ***directly and immediately*** put out and the batter does not strike out, the batter is not out, and the interference is disregarded. The ball remains alive and other runners may advance. If the catcher's throw does not directly and immediately cause the runner to be tagged out, the ball becomes dead immediately, the batter is out, and all runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

Play #3: R1 and R3, one out, 1-0 count. R1 attempts to steal on the next pitch. B3 swings and misses the pitch, falling forward over home plate, contacting the catcher who is attempting a throw to retire R1. The catcher makes the throw to second base and R1 is tagged out immediately.
Ruling: R1 is out, and the interference is ignored. The ball remains live. If R3 tries to advance home on the throw to second base that directly and immediately led to R1 being tagged out, the play is allowed to proceed and the result of any play on R3 stands. However, had there been any delay such as the throw being cut off before R1 had been put out, "Time" would be called, the interference on the batter enforced, and all runners would return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.