



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA BASEBALL RULES COMMITTEE
JULY 17-19, 2019 ANNUAL MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items. The NCAA Baseball Rules Committee approved the following rules change proposals for the 2020 season. Although it is a non-rules change year, the committee requests approval from the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) for the following items since one is health and safety related and the other is regarding a proposed rule change from 2018-19 to improve the overall image of the game:

a. Protective equipment (Rule 1.15.d).

- (1) Recommendation. To require that all catcher's chest protectors must bear the manufacturer's certification indicating satisfaction of NOCSAE and SEI testing standards to protect against commotio cordis.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. Commotio cordis though rare, is a typically fatal condition caused by the impact of a high velocity object (e.g. thrown or hit baseball) to the anterior chest causing cardiac arrest and death. Newly developed performance standards for the NOCSAE and SEI certification testing standards for baseball chest protectors can mitigate or eliminate the risk of this preventable condition.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. \$65-100.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

b. Twenty-second action rule (Appendix F).

- (1) Recommendation. To require, a 20-second action rule be administered when runners are on base. The time limit would be kept on the field base a base umpire in the same manner the current 20-second pitch clock is administers with no runners on base.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. Consistent with other sports (e.g., football and basketball), baseball benefits from having action rules to speed up pace of the game. Requiring an action rule

extending the current 20-second play clock to situations with runners on base should reduce unnecessary delays during the game and improve the pace of play.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. Minimal.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. Welcome and opening remarks.** The chair welcomed the committee and expressed his appreciation for its service throughout the year.
- 2. Review of schedule, agenda, and committee operations manual.** The committee reviewed the meeting schedule, agenda and the committee operations manual. Staff reviewed the NCAA conflict of interest policy, guidance for committee members regarding meeting reports, notes and email, voting procedures, principles for rules writing, and experimental playing rules guidelines.
- 3. Review and approval of reports from 2018-19 committee teleconference reports.** The committee reviewed the teleconference reports from the 2018-19 year and approved the April 9, 2019, teleconference report as written.
- 4. Review of NCAA Sports Science Institute update and Datalys Center report.** The committee reviewed the 2019 injury surveillance report from the Datalys Center. The committee continued to voice their concerns regarding the limited reporting that is captured by the surveillance program. The concern is focused on the minimal number of institutions reporting in a highly sponsored sport like baseball and how safety related proposals could lack data during rules change years in the future.
- 5. NCAA Baseball Umpire Program report.** The committee heard a report from the national coordinator of umpires for the 2019 season. The report highlighted a very positive and productive year implementing the 2018 rules changes for offensive and defensive conference limits, hit by pitch and the expansion of video review. The Baseball Umpire Program (BUP) conducted four (4) in-person clinics in January to provide consistent education and instruction for the 2019 season. The BUP will conduct the 2020 rules clinic online as it did during 2018. The report also included concern regarding player conduct, citing the number of student-athlete ejections and the content of the ejection reports, as well as a concern regarding the pace of play during the Division I post season.

- 6. Active umpire's report.** The committee heard the report of the active NCAA umpire. The report included remarks regarding the difficult judgement involved in hit by pitch situations and the need to improve the relationship and communication between coaches and umpires. The active umpire also raised concern regarding the language used during contentious situations. He recommended that the committee and staff work closely with the American Baseball Coaches Association to initiate the discussion with coaches and on-field umpires to improve the relationship between the two groups.
- 7. Review of NCAA BBCOR protocol and bat testing process.** The committee reviewed the BBCOR protocol and discussed the implementation of the previously approved bat rules regarding barrel color and barrel compression testing. The committee developed a minimum guideline for regular season testing to account for multiple team tournaments and single opponent games or series. The guidelines will be published and will include information regarding the list of approved, BBCOR certified, baseball bats.
- 8. Secretary-rules editor's report.** The committee heard a report from the secretary-rules editor. The report included a review of the interpretations that have been provided throughout the 2018-19 season, a review of feedback regarding the recent rules changes and a review of the memorandum distributed in April clarifying the recent hit by pitch rule change. He also discussed what seems to be a new trend over the last two year of base runners running on the infield, not in the runner's lane, when running to first base. The committee also discussed additional potential proposals to improve pace of play. The committee approved a proposal presented by the Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sport (CSMAS) to require that beginning in January 1, 2020, all catcher's chest protectors must bear the NOCSAE and SEI performance certification mark. The committee also approved a proposal establishing a 20-second action rule for all pitches. The proposal would require the pitcher to come to the set position, begin the pitching motion, feint a throw to a base or make a pick-off attempt prior to the expiration of 20-seconds form the time the ball is received, and the pitcher is on the mound. This proposal would change the current 20-second pitch rule for situations with no runners on base to be applicable for all plays.
- 9. Review of experimental rules requests.** The committee discussed the approved experimental rules from the 2019 season and reviewed a request from the Southeastern Conference (SEC) to continue the approved experimental rule from the previous two seasons to use electronic communication, while further expanding the request to permit any electronic device, not only the approved in-ear communication device. The committee requested additional information from the SEC regarding the impact on pace of game, based on the request that was approved for 2019. The committee also requested further clarification regarding what specific electronic communication devices were to be considered. The committee asked staff to request information from the Atlantic Coast Conference and Old Dominion Athletic Conference to understand the impact of the approved experimental rules for electronic communication on pace of play in the two leagues.

10. Development of 2019-20 points of emphasis. The committee recommended the following points of emphasis for the 2020 season: player and coach conduct, rules regarding pace of play and the changes to bat regulations include barrel color restrictions and required barrel compression testing.

11. Future teleconference and meeting dates. The committee agreed to conduct a teleconference on Monday, August 12, to review the results of the comment period. The 2020 committee annual meeting will be held July 21-23, 2020, in Indianapolis.

12. Election of chair. The committee selected Fritz Hamburg, Head Baseball Coach at Saint Joseph's University, to serve as chair for the 2019-20 year.

Committee Chair: Jim Carone, Wagner College
Staff Liaison(s): Ben Brownlee, Championships and Alliances

Baseball Rules Committee July 16-18, 2019, Annual Meeting	
Attendees:	
Randy Bruns, secretary-rules editor.	
Jim Carone, Wagner College.	
John Casey, Tufts University.	
Rusty Eggen, Worcester Polytechnic Institute.	
Rudy Garbalosa, Lynn University.	
Fritz Hamburg, Saint Joseph's University.	
James Jackson, Cameron University.	
Gary Overton, East Carolina University.	
Jeff Tourial, West Coast Conference.	
Guests in Attendance:	
George Drouches.	
Ryan Morehead.	
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:	
Ben Brownlee.	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
Dan Calandro.	
Jay Fitzwater.	
Greg Johnson.	