



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA BASEBALL RULES COMMITTEE
JULY 21-23, 2020 ANNUAL MEETING VIDEOCONFERENCE**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

a. Rule 2.73 and 7.8 – Foul-tip.

- (1) Recommendation. To update the definition for a foul tip. “A batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher’s ~~hands~~ and is legally caught. It is not a foul tip unless caught. Any foul tip ~~that is caught~~ is a strike, and the ball is in play.”
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. To allow that a foul tip no longer has to first touch the catcher’s hand or glove before being legally caught by the catcher.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal.

b. New Rules 2.67.b – Play or attempted play.

- (1) Recommendation. To add additional definition for the term “Play or Attempted Play” to identify that a play or attempted play shall be interpreted as a legitimate effort by a defensive player who has possession of the ball to retire a runner. This may include an actual attempt to tag a runner, a fielder running toward a base with the ball in an attempt to force or tag a runner, or actually throwing to another defensive player in an attempt to retire a runner. The fact that the runner is not out is not relevant. A fake or a feint to throw shall not be deemed a play or an attempted play.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. Throughout the playing rules (base awards, appeals, batting out of order, etc.) there are references to when a time has occurred (before the next pitch, play, or attempted play). However, there is no definition of what defines a play. The current definition of play only references an umpire starting or restarting the game.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal.

c. New Rule 5.5.k – Re-entry.

(1) Recommendation. To establish a permissible re-entry rule for a player only in the instance of a potential a concussion.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. This proposal is intended to improve student-athlete safety and provide the opportunity to re-enter the contest if cleared by medical personnel following the concussion protocol (Appendix H in the rules book).

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

d. Rule 5.16 – Fight Rule.

(1) Recommendation. To clarify that any team personnel (other than coaches) who leave the dugouts or bullpens to enter the field at the time of a potential altercation or fight shall be ejected. Ejections would carry a one-game suspension, unless the individual physically violates the fight rule.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. Establishes a method and penalty for team personnel who leave the dugout or bullpen at the time of an altercation. This proposal is intended to prevent further escalations and unsportsmanlike conduct.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

e. Rule 6.1.g – Live ball.

(1) Recommendation. To clarify the live ball rule as follows: “If a thrown or batted ball that remains in live-ball territory accidentally hits a spectator, authorized on-field personnel or an animal, the ball is live.

Note: If a pitched ball strikes a bird in flight or other animal on the playing field, the pitch is nullified, and play shall be resumed with the previous count.”

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. This change is intended to distinguish the difference between a thrown or batted ball inadvertently hitting an animal or authorized on-field personnel and a pitched ball striking an animal.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

f. Rule 7.2 – Designated hitter.

(1) Recommendation. To simplify the current designated hitter rule to permit the starting pitcher to be co-listed in the lineup as the pitcher and designated hitter. Further, require that the listed designated hitter must bat at least one time unless the opposing team changes pitchers or the designated hitter becomes injured or ill before the player’s spot in the line-up comes to bat.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. This change is intended to make the current rule similar to the professional baseball rule by simplifying the designated hitter rule while maintaining the ability of the two-way player (pitcher/dh) in the collegiate game.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

g. Rule 7.11.h Note – Batter interference – Dropped third strike.

(1) Recommendation. To clarify interference. Specifically, after a third strike that is not caught by the catcher and the batter-runner clearly hinders the catcher in the catcher’s attempt to field the ball, the batter-runner is out, the ball is dead, and all other runners return to the bases they occupied at the time of the pitch regardless of the number of outs. If the pitched ball deflects off the catcher or umpire and subsequently touches the batter-runner, it is not considered interference unless, in the judgment of the umpire, the batter-runner clearly hinders the catcher in their attempt to field the ball regardless the number of outs.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. To simplify the administration of this rule regardless of number of outs and whether the action is intentional or unintentional. If the batter-runner hinders the catcher in any way on a dropped third strike (e.g., kicks the ball unintentionally hindering the catcher from making the play), time should be called immediately, the batter-runner is out and all runners return to their last legally occupied base, regardless if they were stealing or not.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

h. Rule 7.11.n – Interference – Thrown bat.

(1) Recommendation. To clarify that if a whole bat is thrown into fair or foul territory, whether intentionally or not, and it interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play on the ball, interference shall be called.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. To establish clearer guidance whether interference has occurred in situations of a fielder attempting to make a play when a bat is thrown in foul territory.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

i. Rule 8.4 – Force play slide.

(1) Recommendation. To clarify that the Force Play Slide rule does not apply to the batter-runner at first base, as well as establishing that the other runners are not required to slide until they are in the vicinity of the base.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. This provides additional clarification of the slide rule as it pertains to a batter-runner and other runners.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

j. Rule 8.6.a.3 – Base beyond.

- (1) Recommendation. To establish that when a runner has gone beyond the base and must retouch that base before returning to the previous base(s) in order. Specifically, “A runner is considered to have passed a base if the player has both feet on the ground beyond the back edge of the base or beyond the edge of the base in the direction in which the player is advancing. The direction the runner is advancing determines the edges of the base when defining when a runner has passed a base.”
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. To provide clarification as to what part of the base the runner must have passed to be required to retouch the base before going back to the previous base safely.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

k. Rule 9.1.a – The windup.

- (1) Recommendation. To change the rule to the following:

“a. The Windup. The pitcher shall stand facing the batter with their pivot foot in contact with the pitcher’s plate and other foot free. The windup position is indicated when the pitcher stands with their chest and shoulders generally facing the batter, with the pivot foot on or in front of and touching the pitcher’s plate with the other foot free, and with the free foot touching or behind (breaking) the plane of the front edge of the pitcher’s plate.

In the windup position, a pitcher is permitted to have their “free” foot on the rubber, in front of the rubber, behind the rubber or off the side of the rubber. The pitcher may not take a second step toward home plate with either foot in his delivery of the pitch.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. To allow the pitcher more latitude and to provide clarification in the pitching rules for more equitable enforcement.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

l. Rule 9.1.b – The set.

- (1) Recommendation. To change the first sentence of the rule to read, “ The set position shall be indicated when the pitcher stands facing the batter with his pivot foot in contact with, and his other foot in front of, the pitcher’s plate, holding the ball in both hands in front of his body and coming to a complete stop.” An additional paragraph will be added to read, “With a runner or runners on base, a pitcher will be presumed to be pitching from the Set Position if the pitcher stands with their pivot foot in contact with and parallel to the pitcher’s plate, and their other foot in front of the pitcher’s plate, unless the pitcher notifies the umpire that he will be pitching from the Windup Position under such circumstances prior to the beginning of an at-bat. A pitcher will be permitted to notify the umpire that the pitcher is pitching from the Windup Position within an at-bat only in the event of (1) a substitutions by the offensive team; or (2) immediately upon the advancement of one or more runners (e.g., after one or more base runners advance but before the delivery of the next pitch).
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. To provide clarification in the pitching rules for more equitable enforcement.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

m. Rule 9.2.e – Pitcher applies a foreign substance.

- (1) Recommendation. To establish a stronger penalty for a pitcher using a foreign substance to the ball as follows:

The pitcher shall not:

e. Have on their person or possession any foreign substance. Apply any foreign substance or moisture to the ball or to the pitching hand or fingers or do anything to deface the ball. The pitcher may use bare hands to rub up the ball. The pitcher or defensive player(s) shall not apply any foreign substance or moisture to the ball or to the pitching hand or fingers or do anything to deface the ball. The pitcher may use bare hands to rub up the ball.

PENALTY for e.: Eject the pitcher from the game.

Note: If the pitcher expectorates on their hand, ball or glove or rubs the ball on their glove, person, or clothing, and, in the judgment of the umpire, the pitcher did not intend to alter the characteristics of the baseball, then the umpire may, at the umpire’s discretion, warn the pitcher in lieu of ejecting the pitcher from the game. If the pitcher persists in violating this rule, the umpire shall then eject the pitcher from the game.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. Establish a strong penalty for the use of a foreign substance on the ball. The current penalty would require a second use of a foreign substance and does not mention having a foreign substance in the player's possession for the player to be ejected from the game.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

n. Rule 9.3.i – One foot in catcher's box.

(1) Recommendation. To modify the current rule as follows:

“The pitcher pitches while the catcher is not in the catcher's box. The catcher must have at least one foot inside both feet within the catcher's box until the pitcher begins the pitching motion ~~ball leaves the pitcher's hand;~~”

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. Currently, the catcher is required to have both feet at the time of the pitch. This change will provide a more enforceable playing rule for umpires depending on where the catcher sets up to receive a pitch.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

o. Appendix B – A.3 – Scoreboards, Video and Audio – Replays.

(1) Recommendation. To modify the current rule as follows:

“Any instance in which an umpire has made a judgment call may be replayed only one time at regular speed and must be replayed before the next batter (for either team) enters the dirt area around home plate. An unlimited number of replays may be played on the video board at any speed, only after a play is under video review by the umpires; however, no replays shall be shown on the video board once a decision has been made by the umpires and/or replay official.”

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. To allow stadiums that have the capability to show different angles and speeds of a play without jeopardizing the integrity of the video review process.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

p. Appendix B – A.4 – Scoreboards, Video and Audio – Live Action.

(1) Recommendation. To modify the current rule as follows:

~~“No live~~ Live game action may be displayed on the stadium video board. Close-ups of the batter in the on-deck circle are also permitted. Live game action may be displayed once there is contact between the bat and the pitch and must cease once the next batter (for either team) enters the dirt circle., but once a player enters the dirt circle, all live action must stop. A If live game action is not displayed, a still shot, statistics or other nonmoving pictures must remain on the screen until the batter finishes the plate appearance.”

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. To enhance fan experience.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

q. Appendix E – 2 - Getting the Call Right with Video Review – Coach’s Challenge.

(1) Recommendation. To clarify that if a coach's challenge is successful in overturning a call, the coach will retain the challenge to use if needed later in the game.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. To enhance the game to continue to correct incorrect calls if possible.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

r. Appendix G – Visual Inspection/Bat Testing.

- (1) Recommendation. To establish the following guidelines for NCAA required bat testing beginning with the 2021 season:

1. A visual inspection of the bat.
2. Conduct a ring test.
3. Conduct bat barrel compression testing.

All bats used in competition must undergo the bat testing process and be identified as approved with a destructible sticker.

- (2) Effective date. Immediately for Division I. The effective date for barrel compression testing at Division II and Division III is now the 2022 championship season.
- (3) Rationale. Clearly define the process that must take place prior to competition to use legal and approved bats during competition to ensure the integrity of competition.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. Opening remarks and review of agenda and meeting schedule.** Committee chair, Fritz Hamburg welcomed the committee and expressed appreciation for the committee members service during this challenging year and over the course of the annual meeting schedule.
- 2. Approval of July 7, 2020 videoconference report.** The committee reviewed and approved the July 7, 2020 videoconference meeting report as written.
- 3. Review of Datalys Center Injury Surveillance report.** The committee reviewed the injury surveillance report from Datalys Center.
- 4. Review of NCAA bat testing procedures.** The committee reviewed the draft of the proposed bat testing appendix, Appendix G, and recommended minor revisions to provide clear guidance regarding how a bat is considered failing during any step of the testing process and how bats will be identified as passing. The committee agreed that the bat testing process will include three steps; a visual inspection of the bat, a ring test and barrel compression testing. The committee determined that disagreements on bats during the visual inspection shall be taken to the umpires for review prior to the contest beginning. A bat will be considered non-compliant and not permitted in play if it fails any of the bat testing steps. If a bat passes all

three steps of the testing process it is to be identified with a destructible sticker. A single sticker shall be visible to identify that the bat has passed testing for the current game.

5. **Review of 2020 baseball rules survey results.** The committee review the Baseball Rules Survey and discussed the feedback provided on the topics of hit by pitch, the designated hitter rule, the windup and set pitching positions, the fight rule and re-entry for a player who has been removed for evaluation of a potential concussion.
6. **Review of proposed rules proposals.** The committee discussed proposed rules changes and recommended 18 changes for approval by the Playing Rules Oversight Panel (see Action Items 2.a – 2.r). The proposals include additional language to define a play or attempted play, permissible re-entry of a student-athlete with a potential concussion, creating a penalty for leaving the dugout or bullpen at the time of a fight, simplifying the designated hitter rule and clarifying the force play slide rule. The committee also recommended changes to the wording of the windup and set pitching positions, a stronger penalty for pitchers using a foreign substance, permitting the catcher to start play with only one foot in the catcher's box at the time the pitcher starts their motion, allowing the coach to maintain a challenge if it is successful during video review and expanded permissible uses of videoboards during video review and live game play. Finally, the committee discussed proposed changes regarding the use of certain technology during competition for collecting player swing data and communicating from the dugout to the catcher. The committee determined in the current economic climate, recommending these changes would not be in the best interest for all members. The committee intends to continue the current experimental rules for coach to catcher electronic communication for the 2020-21 academic year. The committee will ask for conferences to request the use of the experimental rules no later than January 1, 2021. The committee intends to discuss and potentially consider recommending rules that would expand the permissible use of electronics during the 2021 annual meeting even though it is a non-rules change year.
7. **Election of chair.** The committee selected Fritz Hamburg, Saint Joseph's University, to continue to serve as chair for the 2020-21 academic year.
8. **Future teleconference and meeting dates.** The committee will meet via videoconference on Monday, August 17 to review the comment period results.

Committee Chair: Fritz Hamburg, Saint Joseph's University.

Staff Liaison(s): Ben Brownlee, Championships and Alliances

Baseball Rules Subcommittee July 21-23, 2020, Annual Meeting Videoconference	
Attendees:	
Doug Aiken, Chapman University.	

Mark Brew, Lee University.
Randy Bruns, secretary-rules editor.
John Casey, Tufts University.
Fritz Hamburg, Saint Joseph's University.
James Jackson, Cameron University.
Brian Murphy, College of William & Mary.
Gary Overton, East Carolina University.
Chris Standiford, Gonzaga University.
Guests in Attendance:
George Drouches, national coordinator of umpires.
Jeff Gosney, active umpire.
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:
Ben Brownlee.
Greg Johnson.