



REPORT OF THE
NCAA BASEBALL RULES COMMITTEE
JULY 12-14, 2022, ANNUAL MEETING

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- **None.**

2. Nonlegislative items. The NCAA Baseball Rules Committee approved the following rules change proposals for the 2023 and 2024 seasons. The Baseball Rules Committee requests approval from the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel for the following items:

a. Wall Padding (Rule 1-2-c).

- (1) Recommendation. Recommend that padding be placed on all hard surfaces (backstops, sideline and homerun fences) that a player is likely (commonly/reasonably) to collide with during play.
- (2) Effective date. Immediate.
- (3) Rationale. This proposal is intended to mitigate potential injury to student-athletes that may run or slide into or come into contact with hard surfaces during play.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. Budgetary impact will vary from venue to venue and depend on what hard surfaces an institution ultimately does pad.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact but would have a positive health and safety impact.

b. Size of First, Second and Third Base (Rule 1-7).

- (1) Recommendation. At non-institutionally owned baseball facilities, bases may be 18-inch square bases. Bases at an institution's owned stadium shall be 15 inches square.
- (2) Effective date. Immediate.
- (3) Rationale. This proposal will permit institutions to play contests at professional baseball stadiums (Minor League Baseball or Major League Baseball) without the need for a waiver, if the use of 15-inch square bases are not able to be used in that stadium.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.

- (5) Student-athlete impact. Provides opportunity for institutions to play games in unique venues.

c. Penalty for Illegal Bat (Rule 1-12- Penalty for a. and b.).

- (1) Recommendation. Change first sentence of the penalty to read: “A bat without the proper bat testing sticker, which has been altered to improve performance, or that has become flattened or illegal due to continued use after bat testing has been completed is an illegal bat.”
- (2) Effective date. Immediate.
- (3) Rationale. This change will update the language in the existing rules and will address concerns regarding bats that do not have a sticker from the bat testing process and how those bats are to be deemed illegal and handled during competition.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

d. Dugout Protective Fence or Netting (Rule 1-16).

- (1) Recommendation. Require by January 1, 2025, that all Division I, II and III that facilities for collegiate baseball have protective fencing or netting on the field side of the dugout at a height not less than 3-feet from the field level.
- (2) Effective date. Recommended immediately and required effective January 1, 2024, for Division I and January 1, 2025, for Division II and III.
- (3) Rationale. This requirement is intended to provide a safe location within the team dugout for players not engaged in the competition or being treated by athletic trainers from foul batted balls or errant throws in the direction of the dugout.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact but would have a positive health and safety impact.

e. Coach Entering the Field of Play (Rules 3-6-e; 4-4; 5-5; and Appendix E).

- (1) Recommendation. To require that the coach may only come to the middle point of their respective foul line when coming to the field to ask a question about a call in the field.

To also require that the coach may not enter the dirt circle around home plate to ask a question about a call at the plate or when making a line-up change.

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. This proposal is intended to reduce the number of coach ejections during play. This rule has been in place as a waiver for the last two years for COVID-19 reasons. The committee believes that it has been an effective tool to reduce contentious situations and will reduce ejections.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

f. Completing Contest with One Umpire (Rule 3-6).

(1) Recommendation. Permit that a game may be completed with only one (1) umpire.

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. The current playing rules note that the minimum number of umpires for a baseball game shall be two (2). This proposal is intended to permit a game to be completed if, during the game, the number of umpires is reduced to one (1) because of injury or extenuating circumstances. This proposal would not permit a game to begin with only one umpire.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Positive impact to not halt contests that have already begun if the number of umpires drops to one.

g. Celebratory Props (Rule 5-2-d).

(1) Recommendation. After a home run, scoring play or at the end of a half inning, teams shall not bring celebratory props onto the field of play. Celebratory props must remain in the team dugout during competition.

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. This proposal is intended to minimize potential acts of unsportsmanlike conduct directed at opposing teams or players on the field of play.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

h. Tied Game – Extra Innings (Rule 5-8-g).

(1) Recommendation. To allow, by conference rule or mutual agreement prior to the start of the game, teams to start each extra inning (10th inning in a 9-inning game or 8th inning in a 7-inning game) with a runner on second base.

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. This proposal is permissive and would allow teams to mutually agree to start extra innings with a runner on second base. This would be applicable to all extra innings.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

i. Unsportsmanlike Conduct – Orchestrated Activities (Rule 5-17).

(1) Recommendation. To change the heading of Rule 5-17 Verbal Abuse (Bench Jockeying) to be more inclusive of unsportsmanlike acts such as use of props, signs, bat flips near or toward opponents, etc.

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. This proposal is intended to specify the types of behaviors that are subject to penalty under the current rule and to reduce potential acts of unsportsmanlike conduct directed at opposing teams or players.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

j. Runner Hit by Legal Pitch (Rule 6-4-b).

(1) Recommendation. If a legal pitch hits a runner trying to score, all runners advance one base.

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. The current playing rule allows only those other runners who were stealing with the pitch to advance one base. This proposal would be consistent with other levels of baseball and provide easier guidance to umpires in not determining on their own if a runner were attempting to steal at the time of the pitch.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

k. Inadvertent Deflection by Batter or Umpire (Rule 7-11-h).

(1) Recommendation. Amend 7-11-h to add language for the following situation: Pitch is not caught by the catcher and rolls into batter's box or goes near the umpire. Umpire or batter unintentionally deflect (kick) the ball allowing a runner to advance. "If a pitch that is not caught remains in the vicinity of home plate and it is inadvertently deflected by the batter or umpire, that ball is a dead ball and the runner should return to the bases they occupied at the time of the pitch (unless strike three, batter is out)." Differentiate between the following scenarios: A. Baserunner stealing with pitch - he should not be sent back as he should not be penalized for an uncaught pitch as he would have advanced. B. Baserunner not stealing with pitch but tries to advance after the ball is uncaught/deflected – baserunner shall return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. If the runner was stealing with the pitch, the offense should not be penalized). If the runner is not stealing with the pitch, then the deflection has an impact on the play and the runner should return.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

l. Force-Play-Slide Rule (Rule 8-4).

(1) Recommendation. To allow in Force-Play-Slide Rule situations, that a runner must slide in direct line between his position and the base (not always in a direct line between the two bases depending on the runner's position) and to allow judgment by the umpire to determine whether a runner slides or runs in a direction away from the fielder to avoid contact or is altering the play of the fielder.

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. This proposal is intended to alter the rule to preserve the safety and interference aspects but provide the runner the benefit of the doubt when safety and interference are not in play.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

m. Runner Interfering with Fielding a Foul Ball (Rule 8-5-d).

(1) Recommendation. To add language to address a runner interfering with a fielder fielding a batted foul ball.

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. This proposal will add clarification to situations where interference occurs, and the batted ball is foul.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

n. Pushing Runner Off Base (Rule 8-5-i-Note 2).

(1) Recommendation. Add Note 2 regarding a runner being pushed off a base to read as follows:

“Note 2: If in the judgment of an umpire, a runner is pushed or forced off a base by a fielder, intentionally or unintentionally, at which the runner would have otherwise been called safe, the umpire has the authority and discretion under the circumstances to return the runner to the base he was forced off following the conclusion of the play.”

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. This proposal is intended to provide fairness to a runner who may be forced off a base.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

o. Pitcher Going to the Mouth (Rule 9-2-d).

(1) Recommendation. A pitcher shall be issued one (1) warning when they go to the mouth and neglect to wipe before touching the ball or engaging the pitcher's plate. Subsequent violations would result in a ball added to the count.

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. This proposal is intended to provide a warning to a pitcher for the first violation of neglecting to wipe before touching the ball after going to the mouth. Currently, there is no warning, and a ball would immediately be issued to the count.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

p. No Pitch Resulting from Batter Action (9-3-g-Note).

(1) Recommendation. Change wording to indicate "If a pitcher, with or without a runner on base, stops or hesitates the delivery or throws the ball in a manner that the umpire judges is clearly not intended to be a pitch to the batter (such as a ball thrown into the ground or dropped) because the batter steps out of the box, holds up his hand or uses any other actions as if calling time, it shall not be a balk if runners are on base, or an illegal pitch if no runners are on base."

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. The current "Note" only addresses a situation with runners on base and does not address if the batter's action results in a pitcher stopping or hesitating the delivery if no runners are on base.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

q. Getting the Call Right Without Video – Hit by Pitch (Appendix E).

(1) Recommendation. Add hit by pitch to the list of plays that an umpire crew can conference about in Section 1, Getting the Call Right Without the Use of Video Review.

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. This proposal is consistent with the premise of Appendix E to get the call correct. There are a number of factors that could result in a base umpire having a better

view to help determine if a batter were hit or if the batter intentionally moved to get hit by the pitch.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

r. Getting the Call Right – Umpire Discretion Placing Runners (Appendix E).

(1) Recommendation. Add that the umpire or video review official may use their discretion in the placement of runners after changing a call from “catch” to “no catch” or “no catch” to “catch”. If any doubt, follow the existing guidelines as currently stated.

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. Discretion is needed at times to be fair to the offensive team, especially after a change of “no catch” to “catch” deep in the outfield.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

s. Getting the Call Right with Video – Malicious Contact (Appendix E).

(1) Recommendation. Add plays involving any potential malicious contact to the list of reviewable plays without a challenge.

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. This proposal is intended to review any potential malicious contact plays to properly enforce the appropriate penalty, which is an ejection that carries a suspension. The review of potentially malicious contact would allow an umpire to review the contact and potentially rescind the ejection if malicious contact had not occurred.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

t. Pitch Between Innings Timing (Appendix F).

(1) Recommendation. To add in the between inning timing protocol, that if the pitcher/DH is either on base or makes the last out of an inning, the umpire should give additional time for warm-up, if requested.

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. This change is intended to provide some benefit, if requested by the defensive team, to allow the P/DH additional time if they are on base or at bat during the last out of the inning.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

u. Twenty-Second Action Clock (Appendix F).

(1) Recommendation. Change the current action clock rule with runners on base to the following:

The pitcher is required to start the motion to deliver the pitch or attempt a pickoff prior to the 20-second time limit. A pitcher shall be limited to one step-off or “fake” move toward a baserunner per batter to reset the clock. A request for “time” by a defensive player would constitute a step-off. The first violation of the 20-second clock will result in a ball to the count.

(2) Effective date. Immediate.

(3) Rationale. This change is intended to allow pitchers to maintain a level of defensive strategy, while also emphasizing action take place. Similar rules have been implemented in Minor League Baseball and have improved the length of game by 18-25 minutes per game over the previous two seasons.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal impact.

v. Visible Action and Between Innings Clock (Appendix F).

(1) Recommendation. To require the use of a visible clock(s) during all times of the game to enforce all timing rules equitably.

(2) Effective date. January 1, 2024, for Division I and January 1, 2025, for Divisions II and III.

(3) Rationale. The proposed requirement is intended to effectively and equitably enforce the 20-second action clock and between innings clock rules of NCAA baseball. These playing rules are intended to improve the pace of play and have been effective at the Minor League Baseball level at improving the length of the game by 18-25 minutes over the previous two seasons. A visible clock is necessary to properly administer the playing rule.

(4) Estimated budget impact. The cost per clock is estimated between \$500 – \$1,000 depending on the type of clock and whether it is permanently affixed to the stadium.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Equitable enforcement of the playing rules in all venues.

w. Extend the term of current secretary-rules editor.

(1) Recommendation. To extend the term of the current secretary-rules editor for four years once the current term ends August 31, 2023.

(2) Effective date. September 1, 2023.

(3) Rationale. The eight-year term for the current secretary-rules editor, Randy Bruns, ends August 31, 2023. The Baseball Rules Committee recommends that based on the positive feedback from the secretary-rules editor performance evaluation survey and to the benefit of the various constituency groups in collegiate baseball, it is important that the current secretary-rules editor continue in the role. Randy has an incredible knowledge of the playing rules as a former profession and college baseball umpire and has developed strong relationships with Major League Baseball and throughout the umpiring and coaching communities. The committee request that the position be posted during the 2026 season to identify a replacement prior to the 2026 annual meeting and shadow the current secretary-rules editor for the 2026 annual meeting, plus the full 2026-27 academic year, and assume the role of secretary-rules editor September 1, 2027. Baseball is in a non-rules change year in 2027 and the committee believes it is important for the new secretary-rules editor to observe the role during a rules change year.

(4) Estimated budget impact. There would be minimal expense associated with the replacement shadowing the current secretary-rules editor for approximately 15 months.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Welcome and announcements.** The chair of the Baseball Rules Committee welcomed the committee and invited guests and thank them for their time. The Baseball Rules Committee reviewed the annual meeting schedule and agenda, staff provided a review of the committee operations manual and PROP directive regarding proposals with potential financial implications.
2. **Approval of the May 10, 2022, videoconference report.** The Baseball Rules Committee approved the May 10, 2022, videoconference report as written.
3. **Report of the NCAA Injury Surveillance Program.** The Baseball Rules Committee heard a report from representatives of the NCAA Injury Surveillance Program regarding injury data in NCAA baseball. The report included an overview of the injury rate, as well as the process for participation in the program and how institution submit information to the Datalys Center. The Baseball Rules Committee had requested additional information regarding head and face injuries for offensive and defensive players. The report showed that 87 percent of head and or face injuries occur to defensive players. The data also noted that 10.5 percent of head and or face injuries occur to the batter on offense and 78 percent of those injuries are batters being hit by a pitch.
4. **Report of the national coordinator of umpires.** The Baseball Rules Committee heard a report from the national coordinator of umpires. The report included highlights of the educational material issued throughout the year, a review of the Baseball Umpire Program rules video and details about future in-person umpire clinics. The national coordinator provided year-end information regarding ejections and suspensions for all three divisions, as well as a recap of video review during the Division I championships. The national coordinator recommended the Baseball Rules Committee consider additional supplemental discipline for head coaches with multiple ejections throughout the year. The Baseball Rules Committee noted that with very few head coaches being ejected more than one time, further emphasis on coach conduct and other proposed rules changes would be appropriate at this time.
5. **Report of the secretary-rules editor.** The Baseball Rules Committee heard a report from the secretary-rules editor. The report included a review of interpretations issued during the previous year, a review of the Minor League Baseball action clock rule documents and a review of suggested editorial revisions to the current rules book. The secretary-rules editor and chair reviewed the following surveys and discussed potential rules changes based on the results.
 - a. **Review of 2021 facilities survey.** The Baseball Rules Committee reviewed the facilities survey conducted in the fall of 2021. The Baseball Rules Committee discussed the results and recommended that a fence or netting be required on the field side of the dugout by January 1, 2024, for Division I institutions and by January 1, 2025, for Division II and III institutions (see Action Item 2.a).

- b. Review of 2022 rules survey.** The Baseball Rules Committee reviewed the results of the 2022 rules survey. The feedback from coaches and administrators supported a need for rules proposals focused on pace of play, student-athlete safety and improved conduct. The Baseball Rules Committee does note that feedback in the survey provided less support to changes regarding the use of technology. While the survey conveyed support for pace of play rules, there is limited support for requiring a visible clock at all levels of collegiate play.
- 6. Review of proposed rules changes and revisions.** The Baseball Rules Committee reviewed the approximately eighty submitted rules change proposals and recommended 22 for approval by PROP for the 2023 and 2024 seasons, as noted above in the Action Items section of this report.
- 7. Review of bat testing procedures.** The Baseball Rules Committee reviewed the current bat testing protocol and the Bat-Ball Coefficient of Restitution (BBCOR) compliance process. The Baseball Rules Committee reviewed the new NCAA Approved Bat List, which will replace the current BBCOR Approved List and the NCAA Prohibited Bat List in the current bat testing protocol. The testing protocol will be updated to account for a single list of bats approved for NCAA play. The Baseball Rules Committee asked to continue to review the BBCOR compliance process and requested additional input from the testing laboratory and from the manufacturing community.
- 8. Selection of chair.** The Baseball Rules Committee selected Doug Aiken, associate director of athletics at Chapman University, to continue to serve as chair for the 2022-23 academic year.
- 9. Extend the term of the current secretary-rules editor.** The Baseball Rules Committee recommended a four-year term extension to the current secretary-rules editor (see Action Item 2w). The Baseball Rules Committee believes that Randy Bruns is a well-respected and knowledgeable entity to continue guiding NCAA baseball through the growth in video review and the challenges of pace of play. With his extensive contacts in professional baseball, maintaining this leadership through the next rules cycles will be important to college baseball.
- 10. Future meeting schedule.** The Baseball Rules Committee will meet on Thursday, August 4, at 11 a.m. Eastern time to review the results of the comment period. The Baseball Rules Committee will next meeting in November or December 2022.
- 11. Adjournment.** The Baseball Rules Committee adjourned at 12:15 p.m. Eastern time on Thursday, July 14.

Report of the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee

July 12-14, 2022, Annual Meeting

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Committee Chair: Doug Aiken, Chapman University.

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

NCAA Baseball Rules Committee July 12-14, 2022, Annual Meeting	
Attendees:	
Doug Aiken, Chapman University.	
Travis Beausoleil, Mitchell College.	
Mark Brew, Lee University.	
Randy Bruns, secretary-rules editor.	
Larry Gallo Jr., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.	
Mike Kennedy, Elon University.	
Billy O'Conner, Xavier University.	
Chris Standiford, Gonzaga University.	
Todd Wilkinson, Barton College.	
Absentees:	
None.	
Guests in Attendance:	
Adrian Boltz, Datalys Center.	
Dr. Avinash Chandran, Datalys Center.	
George Drouches, NCAA national coordinator of umpires.	
Jeff Gosney, active umpire.	
Ed Scott, University of Virginia, Playing Rules Oversight Panel.	
NCAA Staff Liaison (or Staff Support if subcommittee) in Attendance:	
Ben Brownlee.	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
LaGwyn Durden, Sport Science Institute; Greg Johnson, communications; Mallory Mickus, Sport Science Institute; and Greg Pottorff, Office of Legal Affairs.	