

2019 Softball Rules Survey Report

QUANTITATIVE DATA

May 8, 2019

Title	n	N	%
DI Head Coach	172	295	58%
DII Head Coach	151	291	52%
DIII Head Coach	198	418	47%
TOTAL COACHES	521	1004	52%
DI Commissioner	22	32	69%
DII Commissioner	15	24	63%
DIII Commissioner	25	44	57%
Umpire	1010	1609	63%

POSSIBLE RULES CHANGES

Would you be in favor of the following proposed rule changes?

1. Before starting a pitch, requiring the pitcher to have both feet on the ground with the pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate? The stride foot may be behind the pitcher's plate as far back as desired. The stride foot, once the initial distance is established by dropping the heel or remaining in the position behind the pitcher's plate, may not go back any farther to increase the distance.

Rationale: To align with international softball pitching rules. There is no advantage to establishing a stride foot farther back when not allowing the pitcher to step farther back.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	49%	84	47%	70	49%	97	48%	251
No	51%	87	53%	80	51%	100	52%	267
TOTAL	100%	171	100%	150	100%	197	100%	518

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	82%	18	93%	13	79%	19	83%	50
No	18%	4	7%	1	21%	5	17%	10
TOTAL	100%	22	100%	14	100%	24	100%	60

UMPIRE	
68%	682
32%	325
100%	1007

2. Requiring the pitcher to take a signal, either from a signal arm band, catcher or coach while in contact with the pitcher's plate with her hands separated? Delete Rule 10.2.2 which allows a pitcher to simulate taking a signal and/or pausing for a noticeable stop of two seconds.

Rationale: To align with international softball pitching rules and comply with the language in current NCAA Rules 10.2.1 and 10.2.3 on taking the signal.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	74%	126	84%	124	74%	146	77%	396
No	26%	44	16%	24	26%	51	23%	119
TOTAL	100%	170	100%	148	100%	197	100%	515

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	100%	21	100%	15	96%	23	98%	59
No	0%	0	0%	0	4%	1	2%	1
TOTAL	100%	21	100%	15	100%	24	100%	60

UMPIRE	
82%	820
18%	185
100%	1005

3. Allowing the pitcher to leap but not crow hop during her delivery? The only place the pitcher can push off from is the pitcher's plate. The pitcher can leap from the pitcher's plate while her drag foot stays in contact with the ground. However, she cannot crow hop by leaping or dragging to a second point of contact.

Rationale: To align with international softball pitching rules. Pitchers gain a significant advantage by crow hopping but not by leaping.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	46%	79	41%	61	49%	96	46%	236
No	54%	92	59%	87	51%	99	54%	278
TOTAL	100%	171	100%	148	100%	195	100%	514

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	90%	19	87%	13	92%	22	90%	54
No	10%	2	13%	2	8%	2	10%	6
TOTAL	100%	21	100%	15	100%	24	100%	60

UMPIRE	
62%	621
38%	380
100%	1001

4. Implementing a time limit between innings for non-media games?

Rationale: Currently, the time limit between innings only applies to media games. This would create consistency of time between innings for all games and increase pace of play for non-media games.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	77%	131	51%	77	40%	78	55%	286
No	23%	40	49%	74	60%	119	45%	233
TOTAL	100%	171	100%	151	100%	197	100%	519

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	91%	20	73%	11	84%	21	84%	52
No	9%	2	27%	4	16%	4	16%	10
TOTAL	100%	22	100%	15	100%	25	100%	62

UMPIRE	
90%	908
10%	99
100%	1007

5. Phasing in the use of a visible clock?

Rationale: To improve the consistency of time between innings and assist umpires, teams and fans in keeping time.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	59%	102	26%	39	21%	42	35%	183
No	41%	70	74%	109	79%	155	65%	334
TOTAL	100%	172	100%	148	100%	197	100%	517

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	73%	16	27%	4	24%	6	42%	26
No	27%	6	73%	11	76%	19	58%	36
TOTAL	100%	22	100%	15	100%	25	100%	62

UMPIRE	
74%	741
26%	265
100%	1006

6. Allowing nonplaying personnel ejected for an administrative violation to remain in the dugout?

Rationale: Violations resulting in an administrative ejection don't carry the same implications as violations resulting in a behavioral ejection. Requiring nonplaying personnel to leave the playing field, dugout and team areas and be out of sight and sound for a rule violation regarding equipment, lineup management, conferences and warm-up activities seems excessive.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	47%	81	63%	94	71%	138	61%	313
No	53%	90	37%	56	29%	57	39%	203
TOTAL	100%	171	100%	150	100%	195	100%	516

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	45%	10	53%	8	40%	10	45%	28
No	55%	12	47%	7	60%	15	55%	34
TOTAL	100%	22	100%	15	100%	25	100%	62

UMPIRE	
62%	622
38%	386
100%	1008

7. Limiting the number of player-to-player conferences during a half inning?

Rationale: Coaches have a limited number of offensive and defensive conferences and player-to-player conferences need to be limited as well. This restriction will ensure the pace and flow of the game.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	35%	61	37%	56	38%	74	37%	191
No	65%	111	63%	95	62%	123	63%	329
TOTAL	100%	172	100%	151	100%	197	100%	520

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall		UMPIRE	
Yes	68%	15	80%	12	84%	21	77%	48	80%	810
No	32%	7	20%	3	16%	4	23%	14	20%	198
TOTAL	100%	22	100%	15	100%	25	100%	62	100%	1008

8. Requiring the batter to make an attempt to get out of the way of being hit by a pitch even if the pitch is in the batter's box?

Rationale: Batters are being encouraged to allow themselves to be hit by a pitch, which is potentially dangerous. In addition, batters are positioning themselves in such a way that they have parts of their body out of the batter's box. This behavior leads to inconsistent decisions regarding whether the ball is entirely in the batter's box or is the ball in the strike zone. This will assist umpires in being able to focus on the pitch being a ball or a strike.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	40%	68	40%	60	51%	101	44%	229
No	60%	104	60%	90	49%	96	56%	290
TOTAL	100%	172	100%	150	100%	197	100%	519

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall		UMPIRE	
Yes	68%	15	73%	11	71%	17	70%	43	50%	501
No	32%	7	27%	4	29%	7	30%	18	50%	508
TOTAL	100%	22	100%	15	100%	24	100%	61	100%	1009

9. Allowing coaches to make defensive changes without reporting them to the umpire except for a pitching or defensive DP/Flex change?

Rationale: To increase pace of play since defensive changes have no bearing on the outcome of a game and seem to slow down the pace of the game. For statistical purposes, coaches may choose to alert the umpire, opposing team or official scorer that a defensive change has been made using verbal or non-verbal communication.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	41%	70	42%	64	45%	89	43%	223
No	59%	102	58%	87	55%	108	57%	297
TOTAL	100%	172	100%	151	100%	197	100%	520

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	55%	12	53%	8	50%	12	52%	32
No	45%	10	47%	7	50%	12	48%	29
TOTAL	100%	22	100%	15	100%	24	100%	61

UMPIRE	
76%	768
24%	236
100%	1004

10. Changing the run-rule to a 12-run lead rather than an 8-run lead?

Rationale: To acknowledge the increase in offensive production in NCAA softball games.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	31%	54	22%	33	22%	44	25%	131
No	69%	118	78%	118	78%	153	75%	389
TOTAL	100%	172	100%	151	100%	197	100%	520

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	23%	5	0%	0	8%	2	11%	7
No	77%	17	100%	15	92%	23	89%	55
TOTAL	100%	22	100%	15	100%	25	100%	62

UMPIRE	
3%	30
97%	976
100%	1006

11. Requiring the uniform jersey, pants/shorts and visible undergarments contrast with the color of the ball (i.e., optic yellow uniforms would be prohibited)?

Rationale: Fielders have very little time to react to a batted ball, which is made even more difficult when the ball is coming off a yellow background. This difficulty was acknowledged with the rules change from 2016 that required the bat barrel shell color(s) contrast with the color of the ball, and the same consideration should be made for uniform colors. In addition, the same difficulty should be acknowledged for batters when receiving the ball from a pitcher wearing optic yellow.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	79%	135	86%	130	84%	165	83%	430
No	21%	35	14%	21	16%	32	17%	88
TOTAL	100%	170	100%	151	100%	197	100%	518

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	86%	19	100%	15	88%	22	90%	56
No	14%	3	0%	0	12%	3	10%	6
TOTAL	100%	22	100%	15	100%	25	100%	62

UMPIRE	
85%	848
15%	155
100%	1003

12. Requiring that all collisions as defined in Rule 12.13 result in an out, even if the fielder is not in possession of the ball?

Rationale: Deliberate collisions have no place in NCAA softball games. Collisions are considered a form of interference and acts of interference take precedence over obstruction. Regardless if a defender has or doesn't have the ball, or is obstructing the runner or not, a runner should attempt to avoid a collision as described in Rule 12.13. If both players are guilty of a flagrant act, even though the collision interference will result in an out, both players will be ejected.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	35%	59	45%	67	44%	87	41%	213
No	65%	110	55%	82	56%	110	59%	302
TOTAL	100%	169	100%	149	100%	197	100%	515

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	64%	14	71%	10	79%	19	72%	43
No	36%	8	29%	4	21%	5	28%	17
TOTAL	100%	22	100%	14	100%	24	100%	60

UMPIRE	
65%	649
35%	352
100%	1001

13. Phasing in mandatory barrel compression testing for regular season competition?

Rationale: Barrel compression testing has proven to be an effective tool in protecting the integrity of the game, maintaining the delicate balance of offense and defense, ensuring a player's performance is a result of the player's skill more than of her equipment, regulating the defender's available reaction time, and eliminating suspicion of rogue bats in the college game. Note – This would require institutions to purchase a barrel compression testing machine, which costs \$875. NCAA baseball approved this requirement in 2017 for implementation beginning with the 2020 season.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	64%	110	66%	99	31%	61	52%	270
No	36%	62	34%	52	69%	135	48%	249
TOTAL	100%	172	100%	151	100%	196	100%	519

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	91%	20	53%	8	17%	4	52%	32
No	9%	2	47%	7	83%	20	48%	29
TOTAL	100%	22	100%	15	100%	24	100%	61

UMPIRE	
66%	664
34%	338
100%	1002

14. Allowing the use of video review in a limited number of situations (e.g., scoring plays at home plate, deciding if a batted ball called fair is fair or foul, spectator interference)?

Rationale: To allow umpires to take advantage of technology to assist in getting the call right in limited, potentially game-changing situations.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	77%	131	66%	100	57%	111	66%	342
No	23%	40	34%	51	43%	85	34%	176
TOTAL	100%	171	100%	151	100%	196	100%	518

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	77%	17	53%	8	28%	7	52%	32
No	23%	5	47%	7	72%	18	48%	30
TOTAL	100%	22	100%	15	100%	25	100%	62

UMPIRE	
59%	593
41%	409
100%	1002

15. Allowing a metric sensor fully encased in a flexible attachment to be attached to the end of the bat? When attached, this device shall add no more than one inch to the overall length of the bat.

Rationale: To allow an alternative to an embedded sensor that was approved for 2018 and 2019 NCAA softball.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	33%	56	25%	37	30%	58	29%	151
No	67%	116	75%	113	70%	138	71%	367
TOTAL	100%	172	100%	150	100%	196	100%	518

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	59%	13	57%	8	38%	9	50%	30
No	41%	9	43%	6	63%	15	50%	30
TOTAL	100%	22	100%	14	100%	24	100%	60

UMPIRE	
44%	444
56%	557
100%	1001

16. Allowing players to wear an electronic or digital communication device that is not internet-enabled to receive coaching signals?

Rationale: To allow teams a more efficient way of sending and receiving coaching signals and increase pace of play.

HEAD COACH	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	25%	43	19%	29	16%	32	20%	104
No	75%	128	81%	121	84%	165	80%	414
TOTAL	100%	171	100%	150	100%	197	100%	518

COMMISSIONER	Division I		Division II		Division III		Overall	
Yes	36%	8	7%	1	24%	6	24%	15
No	64%	14	93%	14	76%	19	76%	47
TOTAL	100%	22	100%	15	100%	25	100%	62

UMPIRE	
33%	329
67%	677
100%	1006