



**2020 and 2021 NCAA Softball Official Rules Interpretations, Clarifications and Situations**

**Vickie Van Kleeck, Secretary-Rules Editor**

Last Updated February 22, 2021

**NOTE: The interpretations, clarifications and waivers dated February 22, 2021 are for the 2021 softball season only unless extended by the NCAA Softball Rules Committee at the June 2021 annual meeting.**

<b>Rule(s)</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Interpretation/Clarification/Situation</b>
2.13 5.9 6.5.3	2/22/2021	<b>Dugout Waiver due to COVID-19</b> To permit teams to utilize an area designated by the host team in the bleachers/stands to space uniformed team personnel. Rules related to electronic equipment use and positioning on a live ball must be adhered to in these designated areas. This waiver was issued to enhance physical distancing and reduce the spread of germs.
3.10.5.2	2/22/2021	<b>Masks/Face Coverings</b> Masks or face coverings worn by players may be any solid color. This need not be similar in color amongst teammates. Any logo on a mask/face covering must meet the size restriction stated in Rule 3.10.5.2. For additional information on masks/face coverings, please consult the current NCAA Resocialization document.
4.10.1.2	2/22/2021	<b>Minimum Number of Officials</b> A minimum of two officials must be contracted for each game. However, a game may be played with one official because of unforeseen circumstances, if the opposing coaches agree.
5.9.2 A.R. 5-14	2/22/2021	<b>Remote Coaching</b> The playing rules preclude coaching from outside the team areas and field and there is not a waiver process to set this aside. "Distance coaching" by members of the coaching staff, adjunct staff, such as team psychologists and strength coaches, private pitching and hitting coaches, and input from other interested parties, is only prohibited from the start of the game until its conclusion, therefore, remote contact would be allowed before the game and between games of a double header or a tournament.
5.11 5.13 Appendix G	2./22/2021	<b>Artificial Crowd Noise</b> Due to COVID-19, institutions may have restrictions on fan attendance at games during the 2021 season. Therefore, the Softball Rules Committee issued an interpretation permitting piped-in artificial crowd noise during 2021 games with five stipulations. 1. Items listed in Rule 5.11, including artificial noisemakers, air horns and electronic amplifiers, may not be part of the artificial crowd noise; 2. Bands are still only permitted to play while the ball is dead as outlined in Rule 5.13; 3. All rules in Appendix G regarding Video, Audio or Matrix Boards must be adhered to, including when music, noise, cheers, etc. may be used and when they must be stopped;

		<p>4. The umpires have the authority to regulate and/or eliminate the artificial crowd noise in the event they determine that it is interfering with the conduct of the game; and</p> <p>5. Conferences are encouraged to approve the crowd noise being used by its institutions.</p>
12.17.3.4.2	2/22/2021	<p><b>Congregating on Home Runs Waiver due to COVID-19</b></p> <p>Offensive team personnel will be prohibited from congregating anywhere outside the dugout to congratulate a runner(s) on a home run. This waiver was issued to reduce the spread of germs. Umpires and coaches are encouraged to collaborate to ensure offensive team personnel do not congregate outside the dugout. Should teams violate this COVID-19 waiver, umpires are instructed to warn (see Rule 13.1.1) the offending team and advise them that they must remain in the dugout. For further violations by a team, umpires are instructed to solicit assistance from the on-site administrator.</p>
3.10.3	7/29/2020	<p>In an effort to allow student-athletes the opportunity to use the uniform to voice their opinions and/or express support of racial and social justice, PROP reviewed the current uniform rules across all sports. Although the rules currently vary from sport-to-sport, PROP voted to direct all playing rules committees to implement the following policies for all sports effective with the 2020-21 seasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As authorized by the institution or conference, allow a commemorative/memorial patch (e.g., names, mascots, nicknames, logos, and marks intended to celebrate or memorialize persons, events, or other causes).</li> <li>• The patch must not exceed 2¼-square inches and must be placed on the front or sleeve of the uniform and may not interfere with any required markings.</li> <li>• While not all team members are required to wear the patch, the patch must be identical for those who choose to wear the patch.</li> <li>• As authorized by the institution or conference, allow other names/words intended to celebrate or memorialize persons, events, or other causes on the back of the jersey/uniform where the player name is traditionally located. The names/words may vary by team member.</li> </ul>
10.2.1.2	10/21/2019	<p><b>10.2.1.2</b> The stride foot may be on or behind the pitcher’s plate as far back as desired. Once the pitcher initially sets the toe of her stride foot, she may not step back any farther to increase the distance behind the pitcher’s plate.</p> <p><b>Clarification:</b> The stride foot may be on or behind the pitcher’s plate as far back as desired. Once the pitcher takes the proper pitching position required for taking the signal and initially sets the toe of her stride foot, she may not move that foot in any direction (backward, forward, sideways or off the ground). The proper pitching position as defined in Rule 10.2.1, including the position of the stride foot, must be established before taking the signal. Once the pitcher has established her stride foot, simple dropping or rocking onto her</p>

		heel is not a violation. The first movement of the stride foot is the forward step when the pitching motion starts.
10.2.2	<del>10/21/2019</del> <i>1/15/2020</i>	<p><b>10.2.2</b> While in the pitching position and taking the signal, the pitcher must take or appear to take a signal. The signal need not come from the catcher.</p> <p><b>Clarification 1:</b> Taking the signal from behind the pitcher’s plate from her signal arm band or the catcher is illegal since the pitcher is not in the pitching position. The result is an illegal pitch.</p> <p><b>Clarification 2:</b> A coach may give visual or verbal signal while the pitcher is not in the pitching position, however, when the pitcher assumes the pitching position she must look at her signal arm band or the catcher to take or appear to take the signal. The pitcher may not simply step into the pitching position, put her hands together and start the pitching motion. There must be timing consistent with taking the signal from an arm band or catcher. Failing to do so will result in an illegal pitch.</p> <p><b>Clarification 3:</b> <i>Taking a defensive signal from a coach or catcher prior to stepping on the pitcher’s plate is allowed. However, the pitcher may not look at the signal arm band until she is in the pitching position.</i></p>
3.10.8	9/11/19	<p><b>Undergarments:</b> Visible undergarments must contrast the color of the ball. <b>Yellow or gold undergarments are not permitted.</b></p>
10.1	9/11/19	<p><b>Pitching Position:</b> The stride foot may be on or behind the pitcher’s plate as far back as desired. Once the pitcher initially sets the toe of her stride foot, she may not step back any farther to increase the distance behind the pitcher’s plate.</p> <p><b>The stride foot must be established before taking the signal. Dropping the heel during delivery of the pitch does not constitute stepping back.</b></p>
10.2	9/11/19	<p><b>Taking the Signal:</b> The pitcher must take a signal while in the pitching position.</p> <p><b>Taking a signal from behind the pitcher’s plate (e.g., looking at the signal arm band) is illegal since the pitcher is not in the pitching position. The result is an illegal pitch.</b></p>