



NCAA Softball Rules Interpretations and Clarifications – 2024 Season
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Rule 13 Accurate Rule Basis for Ejection Reports and Ejection Reports with Suspension

All ejection reports are now submitted on RefQuest at refquest.com and disseminated to appropriate personnel through the NCAA Directory. Umpires must be certain that the correct rule is selected in the dropdown box as the reason for the ejection and possible suspension. Multiple ejections with suspensions have been received where the suspension is NOT supported by the explanation of what happened. Please review the rule you are referencing before submitting the report. These are the possible selections:

Rule 13.2.1.2 Behavioral Ejection—rules violations relating to play, including all violations of Rule 13 and actions of batters, runners, pitchers, and fielders. Most instances of arguing calls fall under this category.

Rule 13.2.1.1 Administrative Ejection—rules violations regarding equipment, lineup management, conferences, and warmup activities.

Ejections with an additional suspension(s):

Rule 13.2.3 Pregame or postgame ejection for unsporting behavior that would have resulted in an ejection if it had occurred during the game—1 game suspension.

Rule 13.3.6 Make a verbal threat of physical harm to an opponent or umpire—1 game suspension.

Rule 13.4 Physical Contact with an Opponent or Umpire—any threat of physical intimidation or harm, including spitting at, pushing, shoving, kicking, or striking with a body part or equipment in a confrontational manner—2 game suspension. Collisions (Rule 12.13) **do not** fall into this category.

Rule 13.5 Leaving a team area to join a brawl or potential fight. **Exception:** Coaches may leave a team area or coaching box to prevent players from joining a brawl or potential fight—2 game suspension.

Rule 13.12 Refusal to continue to play as noted in Rule 6.20—2 game suspension.

Rule 13.13 Ejected/suspended student-athlete, coach or other nonplaying personnel discovered after the game has ended – 2 game suspension for player/nonplaying personnel or 4 game suspension for head coach.

Rule 9.5.2 Obstruction—Trajectory of the Throw

Reacting to the trajectory of the throw does not relieve the defensive player of possible obstruction. If the movement of the defensive player in this situation causes the runner to alter their path and the umpire judges that this impeded their progress to the base or plate, the umpire may rule this

obstruction. Obstruction also may be called if the defender, without possession of the ball, contacts the runner.

Rule 10.1.8 Time Allowed Between Pitches

The pitcher does not need to be on the pitcher's plate within 10 seconds. The only timing requirement for the pitcher is that they separate their hands to start the pitch before the 20 seconds expires.

The pitcher must have their hands separated on the pitcher's plate to take or appear to take a signal. This will allow the batter to engage the pitcher and prevent the pitcher from quick pitching.

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED INTERPRETATIONS February 7, 2024

Rules 10.1, 10.2, 10.2.2, 10.2.3 No Violation for Pitcher Looking for Signal off Pitcher's Plate

With the addition of one-way communication devices, the rules should allow all defensive players the same opportunity to receive defensive signals. Pitchers will now be allowed to look at an electronic one-way communication band or signal arm band prior to being positioned on the pitcher's plate without penalty. This will no longer be ruled an illegal pitch.

Once in the legal position on the pitcher's plate, the pitcher must take or appear to take a signal from the digital or signal arm band as stated in Rules 10.2.2 and 10.2.3.

A.R. 10-1 in the online 2024 Case Book has been updated to reflect this new interpretation.

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED INTERPRETATIONS September 14, 2023

Rules 2.34, 6.7, 10.18 and 11.2.1 – Time Between Pitches and Visible Action Clock Guidelines

1. The pitcher has 20 seconds from when they receive the ball from the catcher to separate their hands which indicates the beginning of the pitch. Violation of this results in a ball being awarded to the batter.
2. The batter has 10 seconds to take their position in the batter's box. Violation of this results in a strike being assessed to the batter.
3. The catcher has 10 seconds to take their position in the catcher's box. Violation of this results in a ball being awarded to the batter.

4. For the first pitch of each half-inning, following an umpire's call of "time", or if the ball becomes dead (e.g., after a foul ball or a pick-off that goes out of play), the time shall stop, **reset**, and start again when the plate umpire signals "play" after the pitcher takes their position on the pitcher's plate with possession of the ball, the catcher is in the catcher's box, and the batter is in the batter's box.
5. For the first pitch of any subsequent at-bat, the time shall start when the plate umpire signals "play ball".
6. After each pitch during an at-bat (following the first pitch) in which the ball remains alive and in play and the batter remains at bat, the time shall start when the pitcher has possession of the ball in the circle and the catcher is in the catcher's box. *Note: Clock also starts on any dead ball brought live on the plate umpire's verbal or hand signal.*
7. When using a timing device not managed by the plate umpire, the plate umpire should signal when the time should begin.
8. The time shall stop under the following circumstances:
 - a. The pitcher separates their hands which begins the motion to deliver the pitch;
 - b. With runners on base, the pitcher calls time and steps off the pitcher's plate;
 - c. The catcher leaves the catcher's box to give defensive signals or to confer with the pitcher from a distance (in which case the time shall stop, **reset**, and start again after the catcher returns to the catcher's box);
 - d. The batter calls "time"; or
 - e. The umpire calls "time" for any legitimate reason.
9. Violations of the time between pitches/visible clock are not subject to video review.

Timing Device Options:

NOTE: Timing devices may be used to assist in enforcing all timing rules (i.e., time between innings, time between pitches).

1. Umpire counting;
2. Non-visible device managed by an umpire (e.g., stopwatch, handheld timer, belt/waistband timer); or
3. Visible device managed by an umpire or other personnel (e.g., on a video or scoreboard, standalone clocks).

Rule 5.9.9 One-Way Communication Devices

1. Only allowed to be used by defensive players to call a pitch or a play.

2. Digital signal devices (e.g., wristband) may be used by any defensive player.
3. In-ear/hat/helmet audio devices may only be used by the catcher.
4. Batters should not be referring to their electronic one-way communication device while at bat.