



NCAA Softball Rules Interpretations and Clarifications – 2024 Season
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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. Neither the pitcher, catcher or batter may call time when the clock has 5 seconds or less to avoid a violation.
5. 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.
6. For the first pitch of any subsequent at-bat, the time shall start when the plate umpire signals "play ball".
7. 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.*
8. When using a timing device not managed by the plate umpire, the plate umpire should signal when the time should begin.
9. 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.
10. 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.