



NCAA Softball Rules Interpretations, Clarifications and Reminders – 2026 Season
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Rule 8.6.2.2 – Bleeding Situations

New A.R. 8-33. A player notices blood on an area of their uniform. The head coach calls time so the player can be assessed by the primary athletics health care provider. Do bleeding situations require a substitution?

RULING: If the blood can be removed or the uniform changed in a timely manner, the game shall be stopped and resumed once cleared by the primary athletics health care provider. If the uniform is saturated or cannot be changed in a timely manner, the player must be removed and substituted for under Rule 8.6.2 (temporary replacement player). If the player is cleared to return to participation by the primary athletics health care provider, they must reenter the game in that same spot in the lineup. Neither player is charged with a substitution/reentry in this medical evaluation situation.
(Rule 8.6.2.2)

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED INTERPRETATIONS, CLARIFICATIONS, REMINDERS
February 13, 2026

Rule 5.9 – Scouting, Electronic Equipment and Video Review (new A.R.s 5-22 and 5-23)

1. Per Rule 5.9.8 coaches and players may not wear any type of smart/AI glasses on the field during an NCAA softball game. These devices fall into the category of devices capable of transmitting information that are prohibited by Rule 5.9.8.
 - **Rule 5.9.8** Team personnel, including players, are prohibited from carrying or wearing any device capable of transmitting information while on the field (e.g., cell phone, smart watch). Use of a cell phone camera in a team area is prohibited from the start of the pregame meeting with the umpires until the game's conclusion. **Exception:** See Rule 5.9.9.
2. Coaches are prohibited from using two-way communication devices (e.g., cell phones, iPads, tablets) to transmit digital signals to offensive or defensive players from either a team area (e.g., dugout, bullpen) or a coach's box on the field. As per Rule 5.9.9, any device associated with signal calling methods must be an exclusively one-way type of communication.
 - **Rule 5.9.9** An exclusively one-way electronic communication device from the dugout or the coaches' boxes for the purpose of relaying the pitch or play call is permitted on defense and offense. The use of an in-ear communication device shall be limited to the defensive position of the catcher.

In both these situations related to electronic equipment, when brought to the attention of the umpire by a coach, the umpire shall warn the violator(s) and the head coach. If the violator(s) does not immediately comply, the head coach shall be ejected.

Rule 12.6 – Double First Base

1. When the batter-runner walks or is safe on a batted ball, the baserunner must stand on the fair portion of the double first base before they take off their optional protective equipment they wore at bat. Failing to do so on the fair portion versus on the foul portion leaves them open to being tagged out or in violation of the look-back rule.
2. Video review may be used to see if the batter-runner touches the foul or fair portion as they run through first base only after a live ball appeal.
3. Video review cannot be used to determine which portion the baserunner touched **returning** to the base. Returning to the correct portion of the double first base is enforced by the defensive player tagging the runner with the ball (live ball appeal) or enforcing the look-back rule if the pitcher has the ball in their possession in the pitcher's circle.
4. Video review may be used to determine if a batter runner after overrunning first base makes an attempt toward second base. (Appendix G, 11.b)

Rule 12.6.2.3 In general, the foul portion of the base is only available when a play is being made on a batter- runner advancing from home to first. Once the batter-runner passes the base, the foul portion is no longer available to the offense or defense.

Rule 12.6.2.6 On a base on balls, the batter-runner may touch the fair or foul portion of the base while advancing from home plate.

Rule 12.6.2.7 After overrunning the base or returning to the base, the offensive player must return to the fair portion. Should they stand on the foul portion only, it is considered not in contact with the base and they will be called out if:

12.6.2.7.1 They are tagged with the ball, or

12.6.7.2.2 They stand on the foul portion of the base while the pitcher has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle.

Rule 12.17.1 The look-back rule is in effect when the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched first base and the pitcher has possession (for example, has the ball in their hand or glove, under their arm or chin, or between their legs) and control of the ball within the pitcher's circle. The pitcher is considered to be in the pitcher's circle when both their feet are within the circle or on the lines.

Rule 7.1.2.1.1 A live-ball appeal is made by a fielder, who is holding the ball securely in hand/glove, touching the base the runner missed or left before a fly ball was first touched or by tagging the runner who committed the violation, provided they are still on the playing field and have not returned to that base, and indicating to the umpire what is being appealed (if necessary).

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Rule 10.5.3.3 and new A.R. 10-8

A.R. 10-8 After legally taking the signal, the pitcher rocks back onto the heel and begins the initial step/stride. As the pivot foot transitions from heel to toe during forward movement across the pitcher's plate, this action produces a momentary, slight separation between the pivot foot and the surface of the plate commonly referred to as "clearing the cleats." Is this legal?

RULING: Rule 10.5.3.3 permits natural heel-to-toe or toe-to-heel rocking during the step/stride, and this rocking motion may occur simultaneously with the forward movement of the pivot foot. A minimal, incidental separation over the plane of the pitcher's plate, resulting solely from this action, is not considered lifting.