



2025 Softball Rules Changes

The following rules changes were approved by the NCAA Softball Rules Committee and the Playing Rules Oversight Panel. All rules changes are effective with the 2025 season.

**Note – These rules changes will not be reflected in the hardcopy rules book until the 2026/2027 version.*

| Rule | Rules Language and Rationale |
|--|--|
| 2.34, 10.18 and 11.2.1 Time Between Pitches Violation | <p>To change the penalty for a time-between-pitches violation by the pitcher or catcher to an illegal pitch.</p> <p>Rationale: To improve the image of the game and not negatively impact the offense if the pitcher still delivers a pitch after a timing violation has been called and the batter hits it. If a pitcher does not start the pitch within 20 seconds, it is a violation of a pitching rule and should be ruled like all other pitching violations – an illegal pitch. This is a delayed dead ball and the offensive coach may take the result of the play or the penalty for the violation (a ball awarded to the batter). There is no change to a violation by the batter – a strike will be assessed.</p> |
| Video Review – Leaving Early Appendix G | <p>To amend leaving early on a pitch video review challenges to if 1) called by an umpire on the field, or 2) a runner successfully advances a base on the play. Exceptions: Leaving early may not be challenged in the following situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home run; • Hit by pitch; • Ground rule double; • Foul ball; • Lead off; or • When the runner is forced to advance due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A blocked ball base award; ○ A walk; or ○ Catcher obstruction. <p>Rationale: To improve the intended rationale behind allowing a review for leaving early, which should be limited to when a runner advances a base in which they are not forced or has potentially gained an advantage by leaving early. Some of the challenges during the 2024 season for leaving early were not in line with intended reasons for this rules change when it was approved last year (e.g., challenging leaving early on home runs). This modification will address unintended consequences with the rules change from last year and also improve the image of the game.</p> |
| Video Review – Umpire Review Appendix G | <p>To allow umpires to initiate a video review without requiring a coach’s challenge at any point in the game when a play is not properly covered by an umpire (i.e., uncovered or doubled covered with a different signal from each umpire).</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>Rationale: To allow umpires the opportunity to get the call right at any point in the game and to improve the image of the game. Currently, video review protocol does not allow umpires to review situations when a play is not properly covered (uncovered or double covered with different calls) by an umpire until the sixth inning. This has led to coaches being required to use a video review challenge if umpires are unable to properly cover a play.</p> |
|--|--|