



REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I SOFTBALL RULES SUBCOMMITTEE
JUNE 15-16, 2026, ANNUAL MEETING

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items. The NCAA Division I Softball Rules Subcommittee approved the following experimental rule. The subcommittee requests approval from the NCAA Division I Softball Oversight Committee for the following item:

- **Use of in-game data/technology in the dugout.**

(1) Recommendation. To allow conferences to experiment with the use of electronic equipment (tablets) to access scouting and analytics information, excluding information relating to balls/strikes, in the dugout.

(2) Effective date. 2027 conference play including conference tournaments.

(3) Rationale. The use of detailed stats and analytics to inform in-game decision-making has become prevalent in college softball. At the same time, advancements in technology have made immediate access to such real-time information much more accessible. As a result, several other sports, most notably baseball, basketball, volleyball and football, have recently adjusted playing rules in their sport to permit coaching staff members to utilize approved electronic devices to acquire such real-time information for use in in-game decision-making. The rules subcommittee is interested in allowing conferences to experiment and provide data as it considers potential rules changes in the future.

(4) Estimated budget impact. Varies depending on type of equipment used.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. Welcome and announcements. Committee members were welcomed and thanked for their time.

2. Review schedule, rosters, operations manual and Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) directives. The meeting schedule, rosters, NCAA conflict of interest policy, guidance regarding document retention, experimental playing rules guidelines, principles for rules writing and PROP directives from 2009 and 2014 were reviewed. These directives outline the two-year rules process and reasons a rules committee could propose a rules change in a non-rules change year, and encourage all rules committees to strongly consider providing at least a one-year

delay for Division II and Division III institutions before implementing any rules changes that have financial or facility implications.

3. **Secretary-rules editor report.** The secretary-rules editor reviewed their travel and meetings over the past year and the 205 incident reports from the 2026 season. It was noted this was up slightly from the previous season.
4. **National coordinators of umpires reports.** The national coordinators of umpires reviewed Home Plate registration numbers, which increased by 6.1%, the new evaluations process, which was very successful for camps and regular season but less successful during postseason, and areas of progress and concern. The national coordinators also reviewed the video review data submitted for the 2026 regular season, with over 3,600 total submissions, the 2026 postseason data for Divisions I, II and III and areas of highlight (rules change to retain challenge if successful) and concern (video quality and number of reviewable play types). Safe/out continues to be the most reviewed play type followed by leaving early.
5. **Active umpire report.** The active umpire's report focused on necessary rules book corrections and clarifications and potential rules proposals for 2028 and 2029. It was noted 85% of those who took the NCAA rules test passed.
6. **National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) report.** The NFHS reviewed key agenda items for their annual meeting.
7. **Equipment consultant report.** The equipment consultant presented suggested barrel compression testing (BCT) protocol changes. The list of proposals included: 1. Changing the backstop style bat break-in procedure, 2. Allowing a bat to be added for BCT after the initial bat testing as long as it's completed before the scheduled inspection of bats by the umpires on the field and if the bat testing manager is available, and 3. Allowing flexibility in how many bats will be surrendered by each team at the Women's College World Series to a maximum of two per team instead of requiring two to be surrendered. These changes were approved by the Division I Softball Rules Subcommittee and Divisions II and III Softball Rules Committee.
8. **Division I Softball Oversight Committee and student-athlete representatives report.** The Division I Softball Oversight Committee and student-athlete representatives reviewed a topic of discussion on behalf of the Division I Softball Oversight Committee which focused on a modification to the strike zone. It was agreed more discussion and surveying was necessary to assist in any proposed change during the next rules change cycle.
9. **Trends and game duration data.** Statistical trends and game duration information from regular season and postseason for all divisions were reviewed. All trends were relatively flat, with the exception of scoring and home runs for Division I and walks for all divisions. Regular-season game durations increased slightly for all three divisions and postseason game durations decreased for Divisions I and II and increased for Division III.

- 10. Review 2026 rules survey results and 2026/2027 rules changes.** The rules survey results and 2026/2027 rules changes were reviewed. It was noted the response rate for head coaches (28%) and overall response rate (18%) continue to be very low.
- 11. Review 2026/2027 Softball Case Book.** The approved rulings in the case book were approved as written.
- 12. Southeastern Conference (SEC) experimental rule request.** The Division I Softball Rules Subcommittee reviewed and approved the experimental rule request from the SEC as noted in the Action Items section. The experimental rule may be used only during conference play and the conference tournament, other conferences may request to experiment, and data collection will be required.
- 13. Future annual meeting and videoconference schedule.** It was noted the 2027 annual meeting, which is a rules change year, will be virtual. The next videoconference is scheduled for 11 a.m. Eastern time Tuesday, August 11, and will be a joint videoconference.
- 14. Other business.** Feedback was provided on the new governance structure along with concerns with meeting virtually during a rules change year. The upcoming secretary-rules editor selection process and timeline were reviewed.
- 15. Selection of chair.** The Division I Softball Rules Subcommittee re-elected Betsy Wilcox, Assistant Director of Athletics and Senior Woman Administrator at Southeast Missouri State University, as chair for the 2026-27 academic year.
- 16. Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 2 p.m. Eastern time Tuesday, June 16.

Committee Chair: Betsy Wilcox, Southeast Missouri State University, Ohio Valley Conference
Staff Liaison(s): Ashlee Follis, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Division I Softball Rules Subcommittee June 15-16, 2026, Annual Meeting	
Attendees:	
Kelsey Christensen, Providence College.	
Becky Clark, University of South Alabama.	
David Deiros, Florida Gulf Coast University.	
Ella Emmert, University of Kentucky.	
Robbie Guest, active umpire.	
Jessica Leger, University of Louisiana at Lafayette.	
Steve McCown, national coordinator of umpires.	
Vickie Van Kleeck, secretary-rules editor.	

Jexx Varner, Robert Morris University.
Tim Walton, University of Florida.
Betsy Wilcox, Southeast Missouri State University.
Absentees:
None.
Guests in Attendance:
Dee Abrahamson, equipment consultant.
Glenda Bates, DIII national coordinator of umpires.
Austin Mezzacasa, DII umpire lead.
Sandy Searcy, National Federation of State High School Associations.
NCAA Divisions II and III Softball Rules Committee members.
NCAA Staff Liaison in Attendance:
Ashlee Follis.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Stanley Broaden, Greg Johnson and Kelly Whitaker.