



REPORT OF THE  
NCAA SOFTBALL RULES COMMITTEE  
JUNE 21-22, 2022, ANNUAL MEETING VIDEOCONFERENCE

ACTION ITEMS.

**1. Legislative items.**

- None.

**2. Nonlegislative items.** The NCAA Softball Rules Committee approved the following rules change proposal and experimental rule. Although this is a non-rules change year for softball, the rules change proposal is being made for financial and student-athlete safety reasons. The Softball Rules Committee requests approval from the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel for the following items:

**a. Sideline and Home Run Fences (Rule 2.15).**

- (1) Recommendation. To require sideline and home run fences constructed of wood, concrete or brick to be padded. Padding must begin not higher than 1 foot off the ground and extend to the top of the wood, concrete or brick or 6 feet from the ground, whichever is shorter. This is required for any field hosting NCAA softball competition.
- (2) Effective date. January 1, 2027.
- (3) Rationale. Currently, padding is strongly recommended for fences constructed of wood, concrete and brick. This is a requirement for backstops constructed of these materials. This change would align sideline and home run fences with backstops. Although this is a non-rules change year for softball, this rules change proposal is being made for financial and student-athlete safety reasons. The estimated budget impact varies depending on the amount of areas that require padding.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. Varies depending on amount of areas that require padding.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. This rules change is intended to enhance student-athlete safety.

**b. Double First Base Experimental Rule (Rule 2.7).**

- (1) Recommendation. By mutual agreement by the competing institutions, to allow teams to experiment with a double first base.
- (2) Effective date. 2022 fall (non-traditional) and/or 2023 spring (traditional) season.
- (3) Rationale. Since this is a non-rules change year for softball, the Softball Rules Committee is interested in allowing institutions to experiment and provide data and

feedback as it considers a potential rules change in the future. Data collection will include the number of runner interference and obstruction calls, number of collisions and any injuries occurring while using the double first base. The double first base is required for USA Softball competition and permitted for high school and NCAA baseball competition.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. Approximately \$250 for the double first base, however, installation costs vary depending on the type of field (e.g., potentially higher for a turf field).
- (5) Student-athlete impact. The use of a double first base may prevent collisions at first base and better protect the runner and fielder since the defense is restricted to using the white (fair) portion and the batter-runner is restricted to the colored (foul) portion.

#### INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Welcome and announcements.** The chair of the Softball Rules Committee welcomed the committee and invited guests and thanked them for their time.
2. **Review schedule, agenda, committee operations manual and Playing Rules Oversight Panel directives.** The Softball Rules Committee reviewed the meeting schedule and agenda. The Softball Rules Committee also reviewed the operations manual, which included the NCAA conflict of interest policy, guidance for committee members regarding meeting reports, notes and email, voting procedures, principles for rules writing, and experimental playing rules guidelines. The Softball Rules Committee was reminded of the directives of PROP from 2009 and 2014. 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. **Approval of the April 13 videoconference report.** The Softball Rules Committee reviewed and approved the April 13 videoconference report as written.
4. **Playing Rules Oversight Panel report.** The Softball Rules Committee heard a report from Ronda Seagraves, PROP liaison to the Softball Rules Committee, which reviewed topics of discussion from PROP's annual meeting in January. This report focused on PROP's directive to rules committees on the prohibition of tobacco products, uniform trends and the NCAA staff's goal to foster and promote equity, diversity and inclusion through the rules process. The Softball Rules Committee agreed the current penalty for use of tobacco products outlined in the rules book (ejection) is appropriate. The Softball Rules Committee discussed the use of "basemen" throughout the rules book and agreed to change this to "baseplayer" during the next rules cycle to ensure the use of gender-fair, inclusive language.

5. **National coordinator of umpires report.** The Softball Rules Committee heard a report from the national coordinator, which included a recap of the season and areas to address moving forward.
6. **NCAA Injury Surveillance Program data and report.** The Softball Rules Committee heard a presentation on the softball injury data provided by the Datalys Center for Sports Injury Research and Prevention in conjunction with the NCAA's Injury Surveillance Program and Sport Science Institute. The Softball Rules Committee heard preliminary information on injuries at first base compared to other bases, and the committee noted it may request additional information for next year's annual meeting.
7. **Active umpire report.** The Softball Rules Committee heard a report from the active umpire, which included difficult playing rules for umpires and suggested clarifications.
8. **Equipment consultant report.** The Softball Rules Committee heard a report from the equipment consultant, which included an update on the fastpitch standard, which is on hold because of the changes to the ball specifications, things to consider as part of the double first base discussion, and a review of the in-season and postseason barrel compression information. The Softball Rules Committee requested a dozen softballs go through testing in the lab.
9. **Director of video services and video review report.** The Softball Rules Committee heard a presentation from the director of video services and video review, which included an overview of regular season and postseason video review and types of plays for future consideration. More information on video review:
  - Safe/out was the most reviewed play type during regular season and postseason.
  - Regular season – 11 DI conferences used video review with three different models being used (onsite, on field, centralized). 556 reviews with 76% upheld.
  - Video review was used during all games of the DI regionals (centralized), super regionals (centralized) and Women's College World Series (onsite) and at the DII and DIII Softball Championships final site (centralized).
  - DI regionals – 123 reviews with 76% upheld; 1:42 was the average review time.
  - DI super regionals – 22 reviews with 73% upheld; 1:19 was the average review time.
  - WCWS – 21 reviews with 52% upheld; 1:24 was the average review time.
  - DII Softball Championship – 18 reviews with 67% upheld; 1:30 was the average review time.
  - DIII Softball Championship – 13 reviews with 85% upheld; 1:38 was the average review time.
10. **Secretary-rules editor report.** The Softball Rules Committee heard a report from the secretary-rules editor, which included a recap of their travel and meetings over the past year and a review of the ejection reports from the 2022 season.

- 11. National Federation of State High School Associations report.** The Softball Rules Committee heard a report from Sandy Searcy, liaison to the NFHS Softball Rules Committee. The committee met earlier in June and is currently in the process of finalizing its rules changes for the 2022-23 season. It was noted the NFHS allows the use of the double first base (one state requires its use and 10 states permit its use) and will begin collecting injury data next year to compare injuries while using the single first base and the double first base.
- 12. Trends.** The Softball Rules Committee reviewed statistical trends from all three divisions and noted scoring has remained relatively flat. The Softball Rules Committee requested game duration information.
- 13. Review 2022 rules survey results and future discussion topics.** The Softball Rules Committee reviewed the 2022 rules survey results. It was noted the previous rules changes requiring regular-season barrel compression testing and prohibiting teams to come out of the dugout during stoppages of play were not highly supported by head coaches. The Softball Rules Committee reaffirmed its position on these rules changes and noted no adjustments will be made. Although it is a non-rules change year for softball, the Softball Rules Committee approved one rules change for financial and student-athlete safety reasons and one experimental rule, as noted above in the Action Items section. The rules change is to require sideline and home run fences constructed of wood, concrete or brick to be padded by Jan. 1, 2027. This was supported by the membership on the rules survey. The experimental rule is to allow institutions to use the double first base by mutual agreement.
- 14. 2022 and 2023 Softball Case Book.** The Softball Rules Committee reviewed and approved the 2022 and 2023 softball Case Book.
- 15. Future annual meeting and videoconference schedule.** The Softball Rules Committee scheduled its 2023 annual meeting for June 19-21. It was noted this will be an in-person meeting in Indianapolis. The Softball Rules Committee also scheduled a videoconference for noon Eastern time on Wednesday, Aug. 3, to review the comment period results.
- 16. Selection of chair.** The Softball Rules Committee elected Shena Hollar, head softball coach at Lenoir-Rhyne University, as chair for the 2022-23 academic year.
- 17. Other business.** The outgoing member was recognized and thanked for their service to the committee and Association.
- 18. Adjournment.** The Softball Rules Committee adjourned at 3:30 p.m. Eastern time on Wednesday, June 22.

*Committee Chair:* Deanna Tritinger, Chatham University, Presidents' Athletic Conference  
*Staff Liaison(s):* Ashlee Follis, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Softball Rules Committee June 21-22, 2022, Annual Meeting Videoconference	
<b>Attendees:</b>	
Tracie Adix-Zins, DePaul University.	
Janelle Breneman, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.	
Shena Hollar, Lenoir-Rhyne University.	
Bridget Martin, McNeese State University.	
Trisha Senyo, Whittier College.	
Deanna Tritinger, Chatham University.	
Vickie Van Kleeck, secretary-rules editor.	
Kate Whalen, Regis University (Colorado).	
Mike White, University of Texas at Austin.	
<b>Absentees:</b>	
None.	
<b>Guests in Attendance:</b>	
Marty Abezetian, director of video services and video review.	
Dee Abrahamson, equipment consultant.	
Adrian Boltz, Datalys Center for Sports Injury Research and Prevention.	
Avinash Chandran, Datalys Center for Sports Injury Research and Prevention.	
Robbie Guest, active umpire.	
Steve McCown, national coordinator.	
Ronda Seagraves, Concordia University Texas.	
Sandy Searcy, National Federation of State High School Associations.	
<b>NCAA Staff Liaison in Attendance:</b>	
Ashlee Follis.	
<b>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:</b>	
Greg Johnson and Mallory Mickus.	