

2019 and 2020 NCAA Baseball Rules Changes		1/2/2019	Question	Answer
<i>The following rules changes were approved by the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee and the Playing Rules Oversight Panel. They will be incorporated into the rules book for the 2019 and 2020 seasons.</i>				
Rule 1.15a	Protective Helmet for Bat/Ball Persons	Rationale/Interpretation	Question	Answer
	To require that all non-roster bat/ball persons wear a double ear flap protective helmet while performing their duties. Non-roster – team personnel other than players or coaches	To enhance the safety of bat/ball persons located in or near the field of play.	Do trainers and managers have to wear protective gear?	
Rule 1.16b	Dead Ball Area Restriction	Rationale/Interpretation	Question	Answer
	To prohibit uniformed team personnel, coaches and extra on-deck hitters from standing or sitting in the dugout extension area or dead-ball area on the home plate side of the dugout during play. Dead Ball Area on Home Plate Side of Dugout Designated for use by ball/bat persons Cannot be occupied by any uniformed players, coaches, or other team personnel Cannot be considered part of dugout	To enhance the safety of bat/ball persons who are supposed to be in this area by restricting coaches and team personnel from entering these areas to observe the game.		
Rule 2.7	Intentional Base on Balls	Rationale/Interpretation	Question	Answer
	To allow the defensive team's head coach to signal the umpire that the coach intends to intentionally walk the batter without throwing four (4) pitches. Allows defensive team's head coach to signal umpire and intentionally walk the batter without throwing 4 pitches	To improve pace of play and more closely align the NCAA rules with professional baseball.		
			With the new rule for intentional base on balls coming from the head coach. Will there be wording that this constitutes a play/attempted play or pitch for the purpose of nullifying the defensive teams right to appeal? Runner misses first an double. Batter enters box and head coach tells the PU to put him on. No pitch was thrown and no play/attempted play took place. By rule (8-6-B, pg82), there was no pitch, can there still be an appeal??	After consideration, here's my interpretation of this situation:After a potential missed base, it is the defensive team's responsibility to appeal in a timely manner. If the next batter steps into the box and the defensive head coach indicates to the plate umpire that he wishes to intentionally walk that next batter, he has lost his option to appeal. The indication of an intentional base on balls takes the place of throwing 4 pitches to the batter; therefore, the indication to the umpire is the same as a pitch or play for purposes of this rule.
			Is the ball dead or alive following a coaches request to intentionally walk a batter?	If the defensive team's head coach notifies the umpire that he would like to intentionally walk the batter, whether prior to the at-bat beginning or during an at-bat, the umpire will call "Time", the ball is dead, and the umpire shall award the batter first base and advance any other runner(s) forced to advance by the batter being walked.
Rule 5.15a.2	Intentionally Disrupting Pitcher's Delivery	Rationale/Interpretation	Question	Answer
	To penalize a batter for using tactics with the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit a balk or disrupting the pitcher's delivery. If this occurs and a balk or illegal pitch is called, or if the pitch is called a ball, the call shall be nullified. Batter may not use tactics with obvious purpose to disrupt the pitcher's delivery Example – Batter drops his bat just before a 3-0 pitch.	To prevent unsporting behavior aimed at disrupting the pitcher's delivery. If a balk or illegal pitch occurs, or if the pitch is called a ball, the call shall be nullified. The penalty for a deliberate unsportsmanlike act is ejection from the contest.		
Rule 6.2d	Backswing Interference	Rationale/Interpretation	Question	Answer
	To clarify that during the backswing, if the batter unintentionally hits the catcher or the ball, the pitch shall be called a strike, the ball will be dead and no runners shall advance on the play.	To clarify that any bat contact with the catcher during the backswing, not just when the ball is caught by the catcher, will be entering these areas to observe the game. Eliminates the current language "as the pitch is caught" and provides more consistent enforcement. The exception in 6-2-d-2 remains. If catcher is in the act of throwing when the contact occurs, "Time" is called and runners return unless the catcher's initial throw retires the runner.		
Rule 6.5f	Defensive Conferences Limit	Rationale/Interpretation	Question	Answer
	To allow six (6) defensive conferences per game for a regulation game. A maximum of three (3) of these defensive conferences may include a coach.	To improve pace of play by limiting the number of defensive conferences initiated by defensive players (such as the catcher or infielders) to three (3) beyond the three (3) visits the coach is currently permitted to make. A maximum of six (6) defensive conferences without a pitching change are allowed per regulation game. A maximum of three (3) of these conferences may include a coach (similar to existing rule).	What will determine a conference/trip? Defensive player or coach on the dirt, coach crossing the line, fielder leaving his position stepping on the infield, pitcher walking off the back of the mound and conversing with fielder? What would a penalty for a violation? Is a defensive timeout charged when the catcher goes out to the mound after the last pitch thrown between innings/between pitching changes? Is a defensive timeout charged if the catcher goes out to the mound after an umpire or hitter is hit with a foul ball? This has typically been a courtesy visit to give the umpire or batter time to collect themselves. Can the offense get together during a pitching change without being charged a timeout?	Updated timing rules require the pitcher to be ready to throw the first pitch of the inning prior to the expiration of 120 seconds between innings. The catcher could visit the pitcher briefly within that time frame without a charged conference, or ask the umpire for extra "time" to go visit the mound after the last pitch, but be charged one of the team's 6 conferences. A pitching change is not a charged conference and the catcher can visit the mound. No, during a time out for an injury to a player or umpire, another player visiting the pitcher is not a charged conference, provided that the visit does not otherwise delay the return to game action. Yes, the offense can get together during a pitching change as that is not a charged conference. However, the base runners must be back at their bases prior to the last warm-up pitch so the game can be started without waiting for them to return. If they are slow returning and the game is delayed waiting for them to return to their bases, it would be a charged offensive conference. Typically during a pitching change, the base runners will come over to the dugout to get scouting report information

		A player leaving his position to confer with the pitcher, including a pitcher leaving the mound to confer with a player, is a charged defensive conference.	If the catcher goes out first and then the coach comes out before the defensive conference is over, how many timeouts are charged?	As long as the coach joins a conference in progress, only one conference (to the coach) would be charged if the pitcher is not removed. If the pitcher is removed, no conference is charged. However, if the catcher goes to the mound and the umpire indicates to him that it's time to start play, then the coach asks for "time" to also confer with the pitcher, 2 defensive conferences could be charged (or 1 for the catcher's conference if the pitcher is removed). The practice of sending the catcher out to delay while a relief pitcher warms up quickly before the coach comes out of the dugout risks using additional defensive conferences.
		Brief incidental communications that do not delay the game are not considered charged conferences.	What is the penalty for going over your allotted defensive trips?	If a player asks for time for an additional conference, it will be denied. If the player ignores the assistance and reminder and delays the game anyway, he could be ejected as a last resort. If the coach takes the extra conference, the pitcher is removed. It will be important to keep coaches, infielders and the catcher in the loop so they know how many conferences have been charged. However, if that occurs with a player who continues with a conference with the pitcher that delays the game after being warned by the umpire that the number of charged conferences have been used, the position player is ejected but the pitcher does not need to be removed. Only if the extra conference is with a coach, then the pitcher would have to be removed following the completion of the current batter.
			If a relief pitcher comes in to start an inning, directly from the bullpen, can the catcher go to the mound to get the signals straight, without being charged a timeout?	Yes. We want to encourage the catcher to discuss the signs before the pitcher starts his warmups if the catcher was at the mound when the pitcher was changed. However he can go out after the warmups if necessary without a conference being charged.
			If there is an injury on the field, "a trainer comes out" to assist a player. Can the defense go to the mound while the offense or defensive player is being attended to?	The answer is YES if it is another defensive player visiting the pitcher while a different player is being checked for a possible injury. If a different player is injured and a coach comes out to visit with the pitcher, it is a charged conference. If the pitcher himself may be injured, handle that the same way as we always have. Coach can request to check on the pitcher's potential injury and plate umpire should accompany the coach to the mound. If pitcher is OK and no other strategy is discussed, it is NOT a charged conference.
			In the event of a cross-up can the catcher visit without penalty?	A conference is charged for the catcher to go out to talk to the pitcher if conferences remain. If all 6 conferences have been used and the umpire feels it is important from a safety perspective that the catcher and pitcher make sure they are on the same page giving and receiving signals, the plate umpire can direct the catcher to go out for a quick conference. The umpire will accompany the catcher much like they treat a potential injury to the pitcher. As long as the signals are quickly confirmed, there is no penalty.
			If all the "Position Player" defensive conferences have been used (3) and the catcher asks to visit because "he was crossed up", will one of the "coach" trips be charged if they have trips remaining? This could exhaust a last remaining trip and put the team in jeopardy of having to change a pitcher on the next coach visit?	There are not "position player" conferences and "coach's" conferences. There are 6 defensive charged conferences. A coach can be involved in up to 3 of those, but if the players use 5 of them, the coach would have one more that he could be involved with. The umpire could grant the "I got crossed up" reason for an additional quick conversation with his supervision after those 6 have been used at his discretion.
			If the six defensive trips have been used and a player asks for another conference,	The umpire will not grant it and remind the player that all trips have been used. The pitcher does not need to be removed unless it is a coach who violates the rule. However, if the player does not comply with the umpire's reminder and immediately resume play, he could be ejected if the action was just to be in defiance of the umpire.
Rule Delete 6.5f.4	No "Free" Offensive Conference During Defensive Charged Conference	Rationale/Interpretation	Question	
	To charge an offensive conference if the batter runner or runners leave their position during a defensive conference.	To decrease the number of unnecessary delays during breaks in the game and allow for consistency in charging offensive and defensive conferences.	During a charged trip to the defense, either a position player or coach goes to the mound...and an offensive coach (first, third, or bench) leaves their position to confer with the batter...and the batter does not leave their position, is this a charged offensive conference?	Incidental conversation that is brief and does not delay the game is not a charged conference. But if someone leaves their position to confer with a member of their team, it is. The offense does not get a free conference during a defensive charged conference under the new rule. If they were 20 feet away from each other, either the base coach was a long way from his position or the batter also left his position to meet the base coach part way. Charged conference but remember the offense has 3 to use. If the coach takes a few steps and has an encouraging statement for the batter, there is no problem.
			Can a first or third base coach talk to their runner at first or third base respectively.	Yes-In this case neither the coach or player has left their position to confer
	An offensive conference is charged if a batter or any runner leaves their position during a defensive charged conference.	A pitching change is not a charged conference and the next batter and any runners are allowed to leave their positions to meet with a coach but should return before the last warmup pitch so the game can be started promptly.		
		Consistent enforcement of charging both types of conferences as defensive conferences were not allowed during offensive charged conferences.		
Rule 8.2d.1	Hit By Pitch	Rationale/Interpretation	Question	Answer
	To penalize the batter with a strike and not award first base if, in the judgement of the umpire, the batter makes an intentional runner had attained before the obstruction	To provide guidance in enforcing the hit by pitch rule and to deter batters from attempting to be hit by the pitch. "Freezing" by a batter is not considered making an intentional movement. A batter who freezes inside the batter's box and who is hit by a pitch shall be awarded first base.	If the batter makes a move to intentionally get hit by the pitch, a strike will be called?	Yes
	A batter who, in the judgment of the umpire, makes a movement to intentionally get hit by the pitch, is not awarded first base and a strike is added to the count, regardless of the location of the pitch.		If in the umpires judgement the batter intentionally allows himself to be hit by the pitch outside of the box, but does not make a move to get hit intentionally, he will remain in the box, but a ball will be awarded?	No, if the batter intentionally allows himself to be hit outside of the batters box, then he will remain in the box and a strike will be awarded
			If in the umpires judgement the batter "freezes" in the box, is hit by the pitch he will be awarded first base?	Yes
		This judgment by the umpire cannot be argued. If video review is being utilized, a coach could use one of his challenges to have this situation reviewed.	Will a warning be issued, then ejection, or automatic ejection for violating an actual rule?	Yes, the umpire should hold up his hand and warn the coach not to proceed and argue, as this is ball & strikes. The coach can inform the umpire he would like to challenge this HBP, if he has a challenge available in innings 1-7, Crew Chief can go to review 8th inning & beyond

			I see a backup breaking ball posing a tremendous issue. Hitter is diving over the plate anticipating spin and the ball rides back into them... Exceptions for this? Ump discretion?	A strike is charged when in the umpire's judgment a batter intentionally moves to get hit by a pitch or intentionally allows himself to be hit by a pitch that is not within the batter's box. If there was no intent, the batter should be awarded first base unless the pitch was in the strike zone.
Rule 8.3e-1 Note	Obstruction	Rationale/Interpretation	Question	Answer
	To clarify that a defensive player may not block any part of the base with any part of their body unless they have clear possession of the ball. If the defensive player blocks a base before having clear possession of the ball, the umpire shall call obstruction, the ball shall be dead immediately and the runner involved shall be awarded one base beyond the last base the runner had attained before the obstruction	To provide consistent application and simplify umpire judgement at all bases when a defensive player attempts to block the base. This is also intended to reduce the amount of collisions during scoring plays at the plate.	Is this type 1 obstruction is the ball dead and runner awarded the next base?	
		Further reduce the amount of contact during plays at any base and simplify umpire judgment, especially during scoring plays at home plate.	Is this reviewable for Instant Replay, "Tag Plays at any base"	Yes
Rule 8.5k	?	Rationale/Interpretation	Question	Answer
	To clarify that a runner will be out if the runner is touched by a batted ball in fair territory before the ball is touched by a fielder. If a fair ball goes through or by an infielder and touches a runner after having been deflected by a fielder, the runner shall not be out.	To clarify the language within the existing rule regarding situations when a batted ball in fair territory contacts a runner and what the umpire should rule on the play.		
Rule 9.1a	Windup Position	Rationale/Interpretation	Question	Answer
	To require that to be in the windup position, the pitcher shall stand with: a) His chest and shoulders generally facing the batter. b) His pivot foot touching on or in front of the pitcher's plate and c) "Any Part of" The free foot touching or behind the plane of the front edge of the pitcher's plate.	To clarify the windup pitching position for umpires to properly apply applicable pitching rules and to further distinguish the windup position from the set position. (A diagram will be included in the rules book.)	Will there be a warning for each pitcher? After warning is it a ball? Runners on a balk?	It would be a warning with no runners on and all subsequent illegal pitches by the same pitcher would be a ball. With a runner on it would be a balk.
			Can a pitcher in a legal pitching position step forward without taking a step back or to the side and deliver a pitch?	Yes provided the meet all the requirements of a legal pitching position. This has not changed from last year. The Batter, Catcher and Umpire would all have to be ready. The pitcher can not step forward, then backward in the windup movement. The Rule currently states the pitcher can step back or sideways, and then forward with his free foot (only one step forward)
Rule 9.1b	Set Position	Rationale/Interpretation		
	To require that to be in the set position, the pitcher shall stand with his pivot foot in contact with and parallel to the pitcher's plate and his free foot in front of the pitcher's plate. Further, the pitcher may turn his shoulders and face the batter while receiving the sign prior to facing the respective foul lines and bringing the hands together in the set position.	To clarify the set pitching position for umpires to properly apply applicable pitching rules and to further distinguish the set position from the windup position.		
Rule 9.3a	Balk for Feint to Third Base	Rationale/Interpretation	Question	Answer
	To penalize a pitcher by calling a balk for faking a throw to third base and then throwing to first base.	To hopefully eliminate the "fake to third and throw to first" play, which is considered a deceptive move by the pitcher, and to more closely align the rules with professional baseball.	If a pitcher fakes a throw to first and the runner takes off, is he allowed to pivot and throw, since his attention was to only fake a throw to third? Basically, if there is a runner on first then a pitcher cannot feint a throw to third Period?	It is a balk if with runners on first and third, the pitcher steps toward third and does not throw, merely to bluff the runner back to third; then seeing the runner on first start for second, turn and step toward and throw to first base.
		From a pitching position, any feinting motion (without completing the throw) toward the batter or toward first or third base.	Fake to 3rd - can a pitcher fake to 3rd with only a runner there?	No
9-3-c-1 Note	If there is a runner or runners, a balk shall be called for the following actions by a pitcher:	9-3-c-1-Note – If the pitcher throws to the first or third baseman who is playing off the base, a balk shall not be called if the fielder moves toward the base in an attempt to retire the runner	Can they fake to 3rd with runners on 2nd and 3rd?	No, but...it is legal to feint a throw to second base.
		It is a balk if with runners on first and third, the pitcher steps toward third and does not throw, merely to bluff the runner back to third; then seeing the runner on first start for second, turn and step toward and throw to first base.	What is the rule for the pick attempt at 3B? Where does the 3 rd baseman need to be in relation to the bag? Does he just need to be in line with 3B or does he need to be a certain distance away from the bag? Does he need to actually try and tag the 3B runner?	The rule doesn't specify a certain distance, but the fielder must make a legitimate attempt to retire the runner at third or it would be a balk. A feint to third is still allowed if the pitcher steps off the rubber first. Please refer to rule 9-3-c-1...Note: If the pitcher throws to the first or third baseman who is playing off the base, a balk shall not be called if the fielder moves toward the occupied base in an attempt to retire the runner.
			It is legal to feint a throw to second base.	Yes
			Can you fake to third and throw to second base if the base is occupied?	You can no longer fake a throw to third base from a pitching position at any time. Third base is now treated the same as first base. The rule change eliminates the "third to first" move, but the throw to any base after a feint to third base is irrelevant as the feint to third is what created the balk. This rule change is consistent with professional baseball also.
Rule Appendix E, Section 2	Expanded Video Review	Rationale/Interpretation		
	To expand the existing list of plays that allow the use of video review to include the following to assist umpires in deciding:	To expand the use of available technology in certain situations to improve college baseball and enhance the chances that the correct call is made		

To establish a coach's challenge process for the administration of video review by permitting each head coach two (2) challenges for the duration of the game.	To allow each head coach a maximum of two opportunities to request the result of a play reviewed. The play must be one of the 12 types of plays listed in Appendix E, Section 2.		
	A coach can challenge any of the 12 types of reviewable plays at any time		
	The crew chief can decide to review plays 1-6 at any time during the game. He may choose to review plays 7-12 during the last 2 innings of regulation or during extra innings.		
	Each head coach is allowed a maximum of 2 opportunities to request the result of a play to be reviewed.		
Getting the Call Right with the use of video review:			
The six (6) types of plays that have been reviewable are maintained.			
SECTION 2. The following plays will be reviewable by the crew chief at his discretion at any time during the game or with the use of a coach's challenge (each coach is permitted two challenges per game):		Question	Answer
a. Deciding if a batted ball is fair or foul. The ball must first touch the ground or a fielder beyond the initial position of the first or third baseman			
b. Deciding if a batted ball is either a ground-rule double or a home run.			
c. Any "catch" or "no catch" ruling in the outfield or foul territory.			
d. A "no catch" ruling in the infield in some instances. With runners on base, a "no catch" within the infield can be changed to a "catch" only if it results in a third out. With no runners on base, a "no catch" within the infield can be changed to a "catch" at any time.			
e. Spectator interference.			
f. Deciding scoring plays at home plate inclusive of collisions (illegal and/or malicious slides) or time plays.			
The following plays will be reviewable only by a coach's challenge at anytime during the game or at the crew chief's discretion during in the last two nines of regulation and any extra innings:			
g. Force and tag play calls at any base.		Including Obstruction by a fielder, in the immediate vicinity of the base, in the event a fielder is not in clear possession of the ball (blocking the base), preventing a runner from achieving that base. i.e. stolen base or pickoff, including back-pick.	Yes, this is a reviewable play under the approved coaches challenge system.
h. Calls involving whether a base runner passes a preceding runner; determining whether a base runner scored ahead of a third out; and upon an appropriate appeal by the defensive team, determining whether a base runner touched a base.			
i. Plays involving a hit by pitch.		Can we add an additional interpretation to allow the intent of the batter be reviewed during the HBP, now that the penalty of a strike being imposed is a greater point of contention	According to document dated 9/18/8, the intent of the batter can be reviewed as part of the challenge system by the head coach (2) challenges in innings 1-7, and Crew chief initiated in inning 8 and beyond
j. Deciding if a runner failed to retouch a base after a fair or foul ball is legally caught.			
k. Non-home run boundary calls including the placement of runners following a boundary call.		Please add as interpretation to K: Non-Home Run Boundary Calls. Calls involving a decision regarding whether a live ball (1) bounces out of the field of play; (2) strikes the top of a fence or hits a railing or other obstacle in the ballpark; (3) is interfered with by a fan reaching over the fence; (4) is successfully caught by a fielder proximate to a stadium boundary (e.g., while falling into the stands); or (5) leaves the field of play and becomes a dead ball; or (6) is lodged or temporarily lodged in a field fence, scoreboard, shrubbery or vines on a field fence, or other similar object	This review now includes the review of the actual boundary call, and the placement of runners.
l. Deciding if interference occurred on a runner's attempt to break up a double play			
The following criteria will be used by institutions and conferences using video review during the regular season:		Instant Replay Questions:	
Appendix E / Getting the Call Right 111			
a. A ruling on the field will only be changed if there is indisputable video evidence to reverse the call. Absent that evidence, the original ruling on the field will stand.		Point A: What if the first or third baseman is playing somewhere other than their traditional spot due to a shift or some other unique defensive alignment that is becoming more common in baseball. Is there a better way to state that bullet point?	The concept is that a ball hit in front of an infielder standing near a foul line is not reviewable. If no infielder is playing near the foul line, the umpire can base his decision on whether to review a fair/foul ball on the normal initial position of the fielder beyond first or third base.
b. Any use of video review must occur before the next pitch or play. The Head Coach should notify an umpire immediately (within approximately 10 seconds) at the end of a play if he intends to use one of his two challenges on the previous play. This is critical, especially if the play ends an inning or ends the game. If the review is called for after a game ending play, it must be called before all umpires leave the field of play.		Point C: Does point C apply to an infielder who back-pedals or runs into the outfield to make a play?	Yes. Anytime an infielder turns his back to the infield or has to run into the outfield to make a play, it is reviewable. A line drive hit directly to an infielder, even if he is playing deep ("in the grass"), is not covered by "c", but could be covered by "d" if there are no runners or if a "no catch" is changed to a "catch" with 2 outs.
c. The crew chief will make the determination if a play is eligible for video review. Under the provisions of Getting the Call Right, coaches have the ability to request a conference among the umpires.		Point D: Is a the transfer of the ball from the glove to the throwing subject to review under point D?	If the "transfer" is directly following the potential catch of a batted ball, it could. It could also be covered under "g" with a coach's challenge or in the last 2 innings of regulation or during extra innings by the umpire crew if the transfer was following a throw that determines an out or safe on a force or tag play.
d. The video review area must be on the field level so that umpires must not walk through spectators to view the coverage. At least one umpire must remain on the field		Now...the following was taken from the SEC rules and I am not certain if they are NCAA rules or not...can you clarify?	The SEC document that you referenced is the one they used last year using the experimental expanded reviews and it was based on a very good document produced by Major League Baseball for their own use. That document will be rewritten to use our review rules and posted for everyone using video review to use during the season. Obviously, we have some differences with the professional review system which will impact our use of video review.
e. During the video review the defensive team shall maintain their positions on the field and may warm-up if desired. Offensive base runners and the on-deck hitter shall maintain their positions. Other personnel shall remain in the dugout. Any defensive or offensive conferences will be charged as during any other part of the game.		Statement: Instant Replay must occur before the next pitch or play. What defines a play?	A "play" is not specifically defined in the rule book, but a play continues until all related action stops. The next play starts when action starts again, either by the next pitch or a throw to retire a runner.

