Ejection Penalties Increased

The NCAA Baseball Rules Committee tracked the number of ejections during the 2012 season and more than 600 combined ejections were reported for all three divisions. Of those ejections, more than half were either assistant coaches or players.

Since NCAA rules state that only head coaches are permitted to discuss calls with umpires, the committee strengthened the penalties that non-head coaches will receive as a result of an ejection.

“In my view, the number of ejections is a major concern but the levels of unsportsmanlike conduct for many of them are unacceptable regardless of total number,” said Gene McArtor, the Division I national coordinator for umpires. “I will continue to believe that other than ‘that’s just the way it is in baseball,’ no one can justify hurting the image of college baseball by these actions.”

Starting in 2013, all non-head coaching team personnel who are ejected for disputing an umpire’s call will receive a one-game suspension for the first ejection of the season and a three-game suspension for any subsequent ejections during the season (2-25).

Those suspensions are applicable only to ejections for disputing, arguing or unsportsmanlike conduct or language, and not for ejections that are a result of other rule violations such as malicious slides or throwing at a batter.

**Play 1:** An assistant coach is ejected in the second inning for leaving his position to dispute a call. It is the coach’s first ejection of the season. **Ruling 1:** The assistant coach must leave the “sight and sound” of the current contest and is suspended for his team’s next game.

**Play 2:** R3 is ejected for malicious contact after crashing into the catcher. It is R3’s second ejection of the season. **Ruling 2:** R3 is not suspended because his ejection did not fall into the categories covered by the new rule.

Three other changes have been made that affect ejections and suspensions.

Adjustments have been made to **See “Ejections” p. 3**
Greetings NCAA Umpires And Coaches

Welcome to the NCAA Baseball Umpire Clinics. The information in this guide provides a great summary and explanation of the major rule changes for 2013-2014. Along with the new rulebook, rules video and clinics, the guide provides concise explanations for NCAA coaches, players and umpires. These clinics also provide valuable interpretations and information vital for every umpire as we strive to elevate our on-field performance and national consistency in rule interpretations and mechanics. I recognize the individual sacrifice by umpires to attend a national umpire clinic but continue to believe in the increased value from in-person meetings. They are demonstrated to be more beneficial than other forms of education and training.

I want to thank all who participate in our NCAA Baseball Umpire Program and have the greatest respect for all that goes into being a high-level umpire. Working a full schedule at a conference and championship level requires an extremely high level of commitment, significant physical and mental preparation and many hours of time and travel, all of which impact jobs, family and personal time. This dedication is well recognized by me, the baseball committee and the coaches and student-athletes you serve in our sport.

I also want to thank the NCAA Baseball Umpire Program staff, including our national coordinators, secretary-rules editor, director of umpire training, regional advisors and conference coordinators. They all demonstrate a passion and singular desire to aid training, education, evaluation, selection and performance. My appreciation is also expressed to Matt Moore and the staff at Referee magazine for their work with the development and publication of this guide.

The 2012 NCAA baseball season and championships were some of the best ever with a high quality of umpiring to match the outstanding play on the field. But there will always be opportunities for improvement. Consistency, temperament and on-field performance will continue to be targets and goals. We are in a new era of college baseball with increased exposure, media attention and commitment by baseball programs. We are now entering an age of K-zone and instant replay and increased exposure through television. The demand for accountability and responsibility continue to elevate. Those are challenges for all of us. We are also seeing many outstanding newer umpires who are challenging for a place and opportunity at the upper levels of our sport creating more competition for limited positions.

The rules committee and others continue to stress the need for civil and professional conduct between student-athletes, coaches and umpires. Each group is under greater stress for results. Each group has a few members who damage the game and its image by their unsportsmanlike actions, conduct and language on the field. The rules committee has made significant rule changes in 2013 to partially address these concerns. Conferences and institutions are paying more attention and holding offenders accountable. Unsportsmanlike conduct or out-of-control conduct or verbal abuse has no rational justification in today’s game.

Along with the clinics, the NCAA website on the Arbiter platform continues to increase in value. Registrations are up again and projected to go higher. Any umpire not registered who has aspirations to improve is missing a major opportunity through instant communication, notes, rule interpretations, tests, quizzes and video training. For the postseason, additional communication and instructions are facilitated. Regardless of your level of umpiring, the website can enhance your abilities.

As we all prepare for and enter the 2013 season, suggestions or questions are welcome and may be directed to Gene McArtor, mcartore@missouri.edu; Tom Hiler, director of umpire training, tomasahiler@yahoo.com; or Jim Paronto, secretary rules editor, paronto25@aol.com. I wish everyone the very best for a great 2013 season. ☑

Acknowledgments
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**Baseball 2013**

### Ejections

*Continued from p. 1*

Rule 5-16b, which covers the physical abuse of officials. The word intentionally has been removed from the rule and kicking dirt on an umpire has been added. The rules committee believes that coaches are responsible for their actions and positions on the field related to umpires. Contact, intentional or not, will subject the offender to ejection and suspension. The penalty for the first offense by an individual has been increased to four games (from three previously).

**Play 3:** An assistant coach is ejected during an argument in which he also inadvertently bumps the plate umpire. It is the assistant coach’s first ejection of the season.

**Ruling 3:** If the assistant was ejected for his actions prior to the bump, he is suspended for five games (one for the ejection and four for the bump). If the ejection was for the bump only, then he is out for four games.

Additionally, any coach who does not leave the “sight and sound” area following an ejection is subject to a three-game suspension (3-6d AR2).

Sight and sound shall mean that the ejected person(s) cannot view the contest, cannot communicate with his team nor be where the umpires may hear or see him. It may still be possible for the ejected person(s) to be able to hear the sounds of the game; however, he must have left the confines of the playing field and the grandstands.

The final change related to ejections for 2013 deals with the concern over conduct that follows an ejection. It is common for the arguments after the ejections to feature the worst conduct. Therefore, for 2013, any team personnel, including the head coach, who unnecessarily continue to express themselves with prolonged actions or offensive language after an ejection will be subject to an additional two-game suspension. While a judgment call by the umpires, any action by ejected personnel after an umpire has indicated that the conversation is over is subject to the penalty.

**Play 4:** The head coach is ejected from a game for arguing. Rather than leaving the field, he continues the discussion for more than a minute, objecting to the call and his ejection.

**Ruling 4:** The head coach is subject to a two-game suspension for prolonged actions following his ejection. The head coach is not subject to the additional one-game suspension for arguing with an umpire, since the head coach is the only one permitted to discuss plays with game officials.

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### 2012 Ejection Report Summary

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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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#### Ejection Category

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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
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#### Suspension Categories

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<tr>
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<tr>
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**Quick Tip**

Carbonless lineup cards can be difficult to take notes on. Have a few index cards in your lineup card holder to make notes or write down warnings or details of ejections.
Two Changes to “Getting the Call Right”

For several years, umpires have been encouraged to get together under certain circumstances to get the call right, as opposed to knowingly having missed a call.

An additional type of call has been added to the rules for 2013-14 that falls under that philosophy.

A ball that has been called foul can be reversed to fair under limited circumstances under a change to the procedures listed in Appendix E of the rule book.

For the umpires to consider overturning a foul call, the ball must have first touched the ground beyond first or third base and beyond the first or third baseman.

The reason for limiting the plays that could be changed is that defensive players will stop on the initial call of foul. If the ball landed in front of him, the third baseman might have made a play on it. It is not fair to the defensive team to give a batter first base when the defense is harmed by the umpire's call.

If the call is changed to “fair,” the crew chief will place any runners using a conservative philosophy to where runners and the batter would have advanced if the original call had been fair. That situation will also be added to the list of reviewable plays for instant replay in the College World Series.

Play 1: With R3 on third and no outs, the infield is playing in. B7 hits a line drive that caroms off third base, but the plate umpire erroneously calls the ball foul. Ruling 1: The call, even though it is wrong, cannot be changed. The ball did not land beyond third base.

Play 2: B1 leads off the inning by hitting a ball that lands behind the first baseman on the line. The base umpire mistakenly calls the ball foul. B1 is a known speedster who leads his team in triples. The ball gets to the corner.

Ruling 2: B1 should be awarded second base. Once the ball was called foul, it is not known how the defensive team would have played the ball. Umpires should use a conservative philosophy in placing runners. The offense is already benefitting by the changed call.

Another addition to that appendix now requires the head coach who is requesting an umpire conference to return to his dugout or coaching box before the umpires convene. The procedure was in effect for the past several years but was not listed in the rule book.

Standards for Removal from the Game

NCAA baseball umpires are entrusted with the authority by rule to remove or eject any participant or member of team personnel from a game. That responsibility should never be taken lightly. The NCAA recognizes that every situation is unique and that umpire discretion is essential to proper rule enforcement. While there are possible unique and extraordinary circumstances, student-athletes and coaches look to the umpires for uniformity in applying consistent standards for ejections. The following general principles should be considered when deciding whether to eject a coach, student-athlete or another member of team personnel from a game.

1. Use of profanity specifically directed at an umpire or vulgar personal insults of an umpire, including accusations of bias or cheating are grounds for an immediate ejection (NCAA 2-25).

2. Once a ball-strike warning has been issued and the umpire notifies the head coach, no coach or player is allowed to continue to argue balls, strikes or half swings from any location. Offenders are subject to immediate ejection (NCAA 3-6f, AR 1).

3. Physical contact with an umpire, including bumping, billing, shoving, kicking, spitting or spraying, or any other physical abuse or threat of physical abuse is an automatic ejection and suspension without a warning (NCAA 5-16b).

4. Refusal to stop arguing and further delay the game after the umpire has provided the head coach an opportunity to make a point is grounds for ejection. The umpire should warn the head coach that he has been heard and should return to his position, or be ejected. After an ejection, a prolonged argument by any team personnel will lead to suspension (NCAA 2-53, NCAA 5-15a AR 4).

5. If a coach or student-athlete leaves his position or the dugout to argue balls and strikes (including half swings) the individual will be subject to immediate ejection (NCAA 3-6f, AR 2).

6. “Step balk,” the head coach is allowed to receive an explanation from the umpire that the call was a step balk. Should the head coach continue to argue the call, he will be warned to immediately return to his position (or the dugout) or be subject to immediate ejection.

7. During an argument, if a coach or student-athlete makes reference to having observed a video replay that purportedly contradicts the call under dispute, such person is subject to immediate ejection.

8. The use of histrionic gestures (e.g., jumping up and down, violently waving one’s arms, or other demonstrations) while arguing with an umpire or stepping out of the dugout or out of the...
batter's box and making gestures toward the umpire are grounds for ejection.

9. Throwing anything out of the dugout (towels, cups, equipment, etc.) is grounds for an automatic ejection. Actions by players specifically intended to ridicule an umpire are grounds for ejection. An example would include drawing a line in the dirt to demonstrate where the player thought the pitch was thrown.

10. Throwing equipment in disgust over an umpire’s call will be grounds for ejection. The umpire may warn the offender for throwing equipment, but if the umpire deems the action severe, the umpire may eject without warning.

11. Any coach or student-athlete who fails to comply with an order from an umpire to do or to refrain from doing anything that affects the administering of the rules and regulations governing play is subject to ejection. Examples include failure to stay within the lines of the batter’s box after a warning, refusal to submit a piece of equipment for an umpire’s inspection, etc.

12. Ejected persons must comply with the NCAA rules and be out of “sight and sound.” Once the ejected person has left the field or dugout, it is the responsibility of the ejected person and of the home institution’s game management to ensure the ejected person complies with all NCAA rules regarding ejections and to report any infractions to the NCAA and respective conference office.

While the standards listed above justify an ejection, they are not all inclusive and umpires are granted discretion to eject any participant, without a warning for objecting to decisions or for unsportsmanlike conduct or language. Many ejections also carry automatic suspension penalties depending upon the specific personnel ejected and the reason for the ejection. In addition, there are other situations that result in immediate ejections, such as a pitcher in possession of a foreign substance, a batter charging the pitcher with the intention of fighting, a pitcher intentionally throwing at a batter after a warning (or in some instances without a warning).

Interference Rules Expanded, Clarified

There were several rules that were adjusted to better explain what constitutes interference by a batter or batter-runner and the penalties when interference occurs.

There were approved rulings added to Rule 7-11f to cover situations related to a catcher’s return throw to the pitcher.

With these rulings, it is clarified that a batter’s actions must be intentional to result in interference. In that case the batter is out and runners return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch. If the catcher’s return throw hits the batter or bat and the batter did not intentionally interfere, the ball is live if the batter is in the batter’s box and dead with runners returning if the batter is legally out of the batter’s box.

**Play 1:** With a 3-1 count and R3 on third base, the pitcher delivers ball four. The batter starts toward first base and is outside the box when the catcher’s throw hits the batter’s helmet and ricochets away. R3 attempts to score. **Ruling 1:** The ball is dead when it hits the batter.

Since the batter was legally out of the box, no runners may advance. The batter gets first base on the walk; R3 returns to third.

**Deflection of a foul ball.**

There is also a clarification to Rule 7-11o, which deals with a batter-runner intentionally deflecting the course of the batted ball while running to first. The batter-runner is out if the ball had a chance to become fair, or if the batter made contact with a fair ball.

**Running lane interference.**

The interference penalty in Rule 7-11p has been expanded. If the batter-runner is outside the running lane and alters the throw or interferes with the catch of the thrown ball or is hit by the throw, the batter-runner shall be called out.

An exception to the penalty is clarified by the batter-runner being permitted to exit the running lane on his last step, stride, reach or slide in an effort to tag the base if he has been running legally within the running lane prior to that point.

No advance on interference.

In Rule 8-1a, no runner shall advance on an interference play. A runner is not considered to occupy or having advanced to a base until he has legally reached and touched the base. However, if there is catcher interference on a squeeze play, the batter is awarded first base, the run scores and all other runners advance one base on the balk created by the interference.

**Spectator interference.**

Rule 8-3k has been clarified to state that it is spectator interference only if the ball has been intentionally touched by a spectator.

**Obstruction and appeals.**

Rule 8-6 has been expanded to indicate that if obstruction causes a runner to miss a base, he shall not be called out on appeal for missing the base. In addition, Rule 8-6b will add an approved ruling that if the defense is to make more than one appeal, the defense must appeal in the correct order, unless it is an advantageous fourth out.
Substitution and Lineup Clarifications

Any notification of substitutes must come from the head coach or another coach in uniform (5-5g). For substitutes who enter a game without notification from the coaching staff, the umpire should receive confirmation of the change before recording and announcing the substitute. The rule does not prevent or prohibit unannounced substitutions. If a substitute enters without being announced and meets the criteria listed in Rule 5-5g, he is a legal unannounced substitute.

Related to that change is a clarification of Rule 4-4 to indicate that names on the lineup card are the official lineup. Numbers are a courtesy and should be corrected when discovered, but there is no penalty for incorrect numbers. When recording substitutions on the lineup card, umpires shall use names and not numbers, since numbers are not official.

Half-Swing Appeals

For 2011, a new definition of a half swing was instituted to replace the checked swing. The half swing is to be called a strike if the barrel head of the bat passes the batter’s front hip. The position of the batter’s hands is not part of this definition.

After a one-year change in 2012, the conference coordinators have decided to return to the previous procedure on appealing half swings in a three-umpire system. The appeal for a right-handed hitter will always be made to the first-base umpire and the appeal for a left-handed hitter will always be made to the third-base umpire. It does not matter if the umpire is on the foul line or stationed in the middle of the field.

Several Definitions Added, Clarified

Several of the definitions that appear in Rule 2 have been clarified and several new ones have been added to make several common terms more clear.

The following definitions were added:

Substitute
A substitute is an eligible roster player who is not one of the nine or 10 eligible players in the game and has not been withdrawn or disqualified. That clarifies a substitute as it applies to other rules in the book.

Fair Ball
The new definition makes clear what determines when a ball is fair. The criteria are: When it settles on fair territory between home plate and first or third base; bounds past first or third base on or over fair territory; first touches fair territory beyond first or third base, including the foul pole, or; first touches a player, umpire or any piece of equipment while over fair territory. A batted ball that hits the rubber and rebounds to foul territory between first and home or third and home is a foul ball.

Among the definitions that were clarified were:

Appeal
The change makes it clear that an appeal is any act that unmistakably indicates an appeal.

Play 1: With R1 on first, B8 hits a single to right field. R1 goes from first to third, missing second base along the way. F9 returns the ball to the infield. As F6 catches the ball, he inadvertently touches second base. Ruling 1: That is not an appeal. F6 or a member of the defensive team must clearly indicate that an appeal is being made.

Tag
A ball stuck in a fielder’s glove remains live and the ball/glove combination may be used or thrown to complete a tag or base to retire a runner.

Play 2: B7 hits a one-hop smash that F1 fields. However, the ball is stuck in the webbing of F1’s glove. F1 throws the ball and glove together to F3, who catches it in time to retire B7. Ruling 2: That is a legal out. For umpires who also work high school baseball, the NCAA ruling is different than high school.

Voluntary Release
The change clarifies that voluntary release occurs only when the momentum of the catch is completed, the fielder has reversed direction and
the fielder is running the ball back toward the infield or when the fielder is reaching for the ball to make a throw. The release must be voluntary and intentional.

**Catcher’s Box**

The change clarifies that the catcher must have both feet in the catcher’s box until the pitch is delivered. If a catcher is in violation, the penalty is an illegal pitch with no runners on base and a balk with runners on base. The clarification will primarily be an issue for the defense during an intentional base on balls.

[3 foot running lane must start 45 feet from the plate.]

**Field, Equipment Rule Changes**

There are several changes for the rules dealing with the playing field and equipment for 2013.

- Rule 9-1d indicates that portable mounds are legal if both teams agree before the visiting team arrives at the game site.
- Rule 1-3c indicates that it is mandatory to outline or differentiate the coaches’ boxes.
- Rule 1-5c and Rule 4-3e will make it mandatory that each bullpen have a minimum of two mounds with pitching rubbers, home plates and regulation measurements.
- In Rule 1-12b the penalty for an illegal bat is clarified. Any bat that has been flattened or altered to improve performance is an illegal bat. If discovered prior to the first pitch, the bat will be removed and the batter must use a legal bat. If discovered after the first pitch, the batter shall be declared out. Base runners shall not advance as a result of a batted ball.
- Rule 1-13c, AR 2 will change again the requirements for pitcher gloves. For 2013, a pitcher’s glove can be any color or colors other than white or gray exclusive of piping. The glove and laces may also not be distracting in any way, which is a significant judgment call by the umpire. The new rule should be less confusing and more consistent than previous rules.

**Background Check, Online Test Update**

Before a comprehensive background check can be conducted, an official must confirm consent for the background check to be completed. This year all officials are asked to electronically sign the final authorization when completing the online background check process. The officials selected for the comprehensive background check will receive an email notification indicating that they have been selected for the check. No action will be required by the official. If an official wishes to withdraw from the comprehensive background check process, the email will contain instructions on how to notify the enforcement staff of that decision and will contain a deadline by which notification must be made to the enforcement staff. If an official chooses to withdraw from the comprehensive background check process, they will not be eligible to officiate any postseason games that year.

The states of Alaska, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Washington require a separate signed release before they will release your driving records to the NCAA. If you live in one of the noted states, you are required to print the appropriate release for your state, sign and return via fax (317-917-6073) or email to Suzanne Brickell (sbrickell@ncaa.org) prior to the deadline for the online background check.

As in the past, background check authorization is applicable only for the Division I postseason.

**Test update.** The passing score for the NCAA test is now an 85, instead of an 80. The test will consist of 60 questions, including some video-based questions. To earn a passing score, you must get 51 correct.

The test becomes available on Jan. 28 and closes at the same time as the background check.
Test Your Rules Knowledge

In each of the following, you are given a question or play situation and several possible answers. You are to decide which answer is correct using 2013-14 NCAA rules.

1. Which of the following statements is true about obstruction?
   a. The offense can be guilty of obstruction.
   b. A player holding the ball can be guilty of obstruction.
   c. Obstruction always carries a mandatory minimum one-base award.
   d. None of the above.

2. As it relates to a team’s orchestrated dugout activities:
   a. No orchestrated dugout activity is permitted at any time during a game.
   b. Orchestrated dugout activities to distract, intimidate or disconcert the opponent are prohibited.
   c. There is no rule prohibiting a team’s orchestrated dugout activities.
   d. The penalty for orchestrated dugout activities is an automatic ejection of the head coach.

3. With R2 on second, F6 attempts to field a ground ball. The ball hits off the heel of F6’s glove, then several feet behind him. R2, who was running behind F6, then runs into F6 who has taken three steps in chasing down the ball.
   a. Obstruction should be called.
   b. Interference should be called.
   c. No call necessary, play on.
   d. I’d have to be there to see it and judge, but I have to call something.

4. The pitcher is also serving as the designated hitter. When his team is on defense, the head coach comes out to make a pitching change.
   a. The pitching change does not affect the pitcher’s status as DH.
   b. The new pitcher automatically becomes the new DH.
   c. The coach must indicate the pitcher’s status before making the change, similar to what is required of a double-switch.
   d. The coach must indicate the pitcher’s status before reaching the dugout or the pitcher may not move to a defensive position or remain as DH.

5. The force-play slide rule:
   a. Is a safety rule only.
   b. Is an interference rule only.
   c. Is neither a safety rule or interference rule.
   d. Is both a safety rule and interference rule.

6. Left-handed F1 throws to first base in a pickoff attempt. F3 drops his knee to block the base and attempt to tag R1.
   a. F3 may block part of the bag before possessing the ball as long as he is in the immediate act of receiving the throw.
   b. F3 may block the entire bag before possessing the ball as long as he is in the immediate act of receiving the throw.
   c. F3 may not block any part of the bag until he possesses the ball.
   d. If obstruction is called, R1 is awarded first base.

7. With two outs and the bases loaded, B7 hits a fly ball toward right field. The pitcher, in his excitement, runs toward his team’s dugout, which is on the first-base side. The pitcher and batter-runner collide.
   a. As long as the fly ball is caught, the obstruction is ignored.
   b. All runners, including the batter-runner, are awarded one base.
   c. There cannot be obstruction in the infield when the ball is in the outfield.
   d. Since the batter-runner was still able to reach first base, the obstruction is ignored.

8. With bases loaded and no outs, B9 hits a ground ball to the hole at shortstop. Speedy R3 scores easily before F6 fields the ball and throws to F4 for the force out. F4 has no chance of retiring B9 at first base. R1’s raised leg makes contact with F4 at thigh level.
   a. R1 is ejected for the illegal slide.
   b. There is no penalty.
   c. The force play slide rule applies; R1 and B9 are out. R2 and R3’s advance is legal.
   d. The force play slide rule applies; R1 and B9 are out. R2 and R3 return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

9. Which of the following result in a balk being called with at least one runner on base?
   a. The pitcher pauses during his delivery during the windup position.
   b. The pitcher unintentionally drops the ball, but it does not cross the foul line.
   c. The pitcher moves his pitching hand into the glove to adjust the ball, but does not immediately continue his pitching motion.
   d. Part of the pitcher’s foot breaks the plane of the back edge of the pitcher’s rubber and the pitcher makes a pickoff throw to first base.

10. With the bases loaded, R3 attempts to score on a wild pitch. The ball bounces directly back to the catcher. In the ensuing rundown, R3 is obstructed by F5. At the time of the obstruction, both R1 and R2 were attempting to advance, but had not yet reached the next base.
    a. The ball is delayed-dead. Play continues and obstruction will be penalized at the end of the rundown.
    b. The ball is dead immediately. Since R1 and R2 hadn’t advanced, they are returned to their bases at the time of the pitch.
    c. The ball is delayed-dead. R3 is
awarded home, but R1 and R2 are not awarded anything and are still subject to being put out.

d. The ball is dead immediately. R3 is awarded home and R1 and R2 are awarded the bases the umpires believe would have been obtained without the obstruction.

11. Which of the following types of plays, calls or situations may not be changed in an NCAA game?
   a. A foul tip that is dropped by the catcher.
   b. Cases in which an umpire clearly errs in judgment because he did not see a ball dropped or juggled.
   c. A batted ball that first touches the ground in front of the first or third bases and was ruled foul.
   d. Deciding if a home run is fair or foul.

12. With the score tied in the bottom of the ninth and runners at second and third, the pitcher bounces a two out, 3-2 pitch off the catcher’s shin guard and the ball rolls into a dead ball area.
   a. R3 is awarded home. The batter is awarded first base on ball four and the game is concluded.
   b. R3 and R2 are awarded home and the game is concluded.
   c. The batter is awarded first base and the game continues with two outs.
   d. Each runner is awarded two bases from the time of the pitch, when a pitched or thrown ball (pickoff attempt) by the pitcher from his position on the rubber goes into any dead ball area.

13. After a close play at first base that went against the offensive team, the assistant coach is ejected for arguing the umpire’s call.
   a. The assistant coach is suspended for an additional two games, plus the game from which he was ejected.
   b. The assistant coach and the head coach are suspended for an additional game.
   c. The assistant coach is ejected from the present contest and receives an additional one-game suspension from the team’s next regularly scheduled contest.
   d. The assistant coach is ejected from the present contest but is eligible to participate in the team’s next contest.

14. Between innings, the team’s equipment manager notifies the plate umpire that the team is making a pitching change as the new pitcher approaches the mound to begin his warm-up throws.
   a. The umpire will confirm this substitution with the head coach or another coach in uniform. Absent this confirmation, the contest will not continue.
   b. The new pitcher is legally in the game.
   c. Only the head coach can make this form of substitution.
   d. As long as the parameters of making a pitching change are followed, this form of announcing a substitution is acceptable. The new pitcher has eight warm-up pitches and the game will continue.

15. B8, B9 and B1 are due to bat. B9 bats for B8 and singles. B8 then bats and sacrifices B9 to second for the first out. B1 then hits a home run. Before a pitch is thrown to B2, the defense appeals that B1 batted out of order.
   a. B1 is out and B2 is the proper batter.
   b. B1 is declared out and B9 is the proper batter.
   c. B9 is declared out and B8 is the proper batter.
   d. B1 was a proper batter. B9 should have been the proper batter, but he was skipped over because he was on base. B1 became the correct batter and his home run counts. B2 is the next proper batter.

Any assistant coach who argues a judgment call with an umpire(s) will be ejected. See question 13 to determine additional penalties for the coach. NCAA umpires (from left) Scott Wilkerson, Arnold, Mo.; Mike Droll, Tipton, Iowa; and Mark Winters, Springfield, Ill.

**ANSWERS**

1. d (2-54)
2. b (5-17)
3. a (2-54 AR2)
4. d (7-2 (5))
5. d (8-4).
6. c (2-54 AR4)
7. a (8-3d (3) penalty)
8. d (8-4).
9. b (8-4a AR1, AR2; 9-1b (3); 9-2b)
10. d (8-3e 1)
11. c (Appendix E)
12. a (8-3k)
13. c (2-25)
14. a (5-5g)
15. d (7-11a (1) thru (5), AR)
Conference Calls

The rules that govern offensive and defensive conferences have caused some confusion in the past. Here are several points to remember regarding each:

Defensive conferences
- A team is limited to three defensive conferences in a regulation game without penalty. A team is permitted one extra free defensive conference if the game goes extra innings, regardless of how long the game goes.
- If a coach or his nonplaying representative goes to the mound a second time in the inning to talk to the same pitcher, the pitcher must be removed from the pitcher’s position for the remainder of the game.
- A coach may not make a second trip to the mound in the same inning with the same batter at bat. However, if a pinch hitter is substituted, the coach may make a second trip but must remove the pitcher. In that pinch-hitter situation, a relief pitcher, having just been brought in to pitch, may not be removed from the game before pitching completely to one batter or the side has been retired.
- The trip to the mound (which may include a conference with the infielders) begins when the coach crosses the foul line, and shall be concluded when the coach leaves the dirt circle or the pitcher begins his eight warm-up pitches.
- The defense may not meet during an offensive conference without being charged for a conference.

Offensive conferences
- Each team shall be allowed three offensive conferences per game. If the game goes into extra innings, the team will receive one extra offensive conference plus any unused conferences from the first nine innings.
- There is no restriction on the use of multiple offensive conferences in the same inning or with the same batter. A team may use all of its conferences at one time.
- After the maximum number of offensive meetings have been used, the umpire shall warn the coach before penalizing the offending team. The player involved in the meeting shall be removed from the game. If the meeting is between the head coach and the assistant coach, the assistant shall be removed from the game.
- Offensive meetings shall not be charged during a defensive team’s timeout.
- An offensive meeting shall not be charged if time is called for the purpose of making an offensive substitution, attending to an injured player or making an equipment change.

Timing Procedures Unchanged

The timing procedures that were instituted in 2011 to improve the pace of play remain in effect and unchanged for the 2013 baseball season. Here is a quick review of the procedures:

Between innings
Once the final member of the defensive team has crossed the foul line, a 90-second clock begins. By the end of 90 seconds, the new defensive team must have completed its warmups and the pitcher must have started his pitching motion to the first batter of the inning.

There is no warning for a violation of the 90-second rule. If the defense is responsible for the delay, a ball is added to the count. If the batter is not ready, a strike is added to the count.

Umpires should alert both teams when approximately 30 seconds remain.

Umpire Kevin Mackelburg, Simi Valley, Calif., checks his stopwatch between innings. The appropriate base umpire is required to monitor the time between innings.

For games that are being broadcast on TV, teams can agree to change the 90-second limit to 108 seconds. No other changes may be made.

If both teams are ready earlier, play may resume before 90 seconds has elapsed, but neither team is required to begin play early.

The base umpire who is running the clock is responsible for administering the penalties.

Between pitches
A pitcher has 20 seconds to deliver a pitch with no runners on base. The clock starts when the pitcher receives the ball and is on the dirt circle. Allowances should be made for starting the clock if other players are not in position (i.e., a batter or defensive player returning after hitting a foul ball). Each pitcher is afforded one warning once he has violated the 20-second rule.
being warned, any further violation by that pitcher is penalized by adding a ball to the count. The offense is not granted a warning for violation of the 20-second rule. A strike is added without warning if the batter causes the delay to exceed 20 seconds.

For a complete explanation of the timing rule, go to Appendix F in the NCAA Baseball 2013 and 2014 Rules Book.

Press Box Rules Clarified

Appendix B covers directions for game management for scoreboards, video and audio. Some additions have been added to include:

- No video board replays may be shown during a dispute with an umpire.
- All music, chants or crowd-cuing messages must stop when the batter enters the dirt circle around the plate rather than the batter’s box in the previous rule.
- The public address announcer will announce the first batter of an inning immediately after the catcher throws the ball down to second base and announce following batters no later than when the ball reaches the third baseman or any infielder on balls being thrown in from the outfield.
- Public address announcers should not announce pinch hitters, a new pitcher, or any substitution until signaled in from the umpire.

‘That’s Gotta Be Interference!’ Or Is It?

Take a look at the PlayPic that accompanies this article. It caused a long discussion in the game in which it happened. Not only that, the coach also contacted the league office, wanting an interpretation of why interference wasn’t called.

Clearly, the coach believed the batter was outside the batter’s box in front of the plate and that should be penalized.

However, the coach forgot one key element of the play.

There was no interference. Not yet. And after the play, not at all.

Here’s the text from the rule book (7-11f): “The batter is out when: The batter intentionally or unintentionally interferes with the catcher’s fielding or throwing by stepping out of the batter’s box or making any other movement that hinders a defensive player’s action at home plate.”

To break down the specific play (and most interference plays), let’s go through it step-by-step:

The batter’s swing.

It may have been a hit-and-run or just a straight steal attempt, but clearly the batter is trying to protect the runner. Watch batters when they swing normally and you will see that their weight shifts forward, not across the plate. His actions clearly indicate that he is trying to disrupt the play.

The catcher’s throw.

For there to be interference, not only must the batter violate the rule, but the catcher’s play has to be affected.

When the batter has clearly violated, the burden of proof should be minimal in order for an interference call to be made.

Any contact is an obvious call, but contact isn’t required. If the catcher double-pumps or attempts to throw, but pulls it down because the batter is in his way, then interference has also occurred. The catcher is not required to throw to get an interference call. Additionally, if the catcher throws wildly because he was attempting to avoid the batter, interference may have occurred. Just because there is a wild throw, it may be just that and...
Interference

Continued from p. 11

not interference. However, when the throw is wild and the batter has violated, the catcher should get the benefit of the doubt.

Outcome of the play.

On the play in question, there is no doubt the batter violated. However, the catcher made no contact with the batter and got off a clean and accurate throw. The runner stealing was safe on a bang-bang play. Therefore, even though all of the elements of interference were present, the play correctly stood as called. □

Two Pitching Rules Clarified

An existing pitcher who goes to the mound to start an inning must pitch to the first batter until the batter is retired or reaches base. That restriction, written into Rule 9-4f, applies once the pitcher crosses the foul line on his way to the mound.

Also, an addition to Rule 9-2g on a pitcher intentionally throwing at a batter has been made to stipulate that any team personnel coming onto the field to dispute or argue a warning for intentionally throwing at a batter is subject to a warning followed by immediate ejection. □

Five Things to Take Away From a Game

There are many aspects to working games that you don’t read in rulebooks or manuals. Here’s at least five things every umpire should take away from every game.

1. Learn from your mistakes. Since we all make mistakes, what should our mind-set be about them? Learn from every mistake you make. When you make a mistake, after the game, first analyze what happened. Did you give a wrong signal or fail to signal at all? Did you rush instead of hustle? Maybe your error was a wrong call. What happened? Were you out of position? Did you anticipate the call instead of the play? Most importantly, what do you need to correct to make sure it doesn’t happen again?

Mistakes can be valuable learning experiences. Make the most of a bad situation.

2. Note what works. Despite what most fans and some coaches and players think, most umpires do most things right. The beauty of the avocation is that umpires can keep working on things not until we get them right, but until we don’t get them wrong. Do you have trouble calling balks? What have you been doing about it? Have you increased your study of the rules? Have you talked with experienced umpires until you get it right?

Maybe you’ve been working on seeing outside pitches better, so you try a slight change in your plate stance and it works. If you try something different and it works, make note of it, share it and keep doing it.

3. Judge your game talk. Every game is not merely a series of judgment calls, but also a series of interactions with players, coaches and partners. A sure sign of development in an umpire is how he handles the tough situations when a coach “comes out” on an umpire or a player decides to try to show him up. Inexperienced and insecure umpires tend to “pull the trigger” early in those situations. Evaluate game conversations you had on your way home. How did you do?

Have you spent time working on face-to-face discussions and conflict resolution techniques? Perhaps you were able to de-escalate a volatile situation and keep everyone in the game. Why did things go better? What did you do differently? Replaying the one-on-one exchanges from the game will help you assemble a collection of techniques that will serve you well as you move up in your umpiring career.

4. Get an honest evaluation. An immediate evaluation serves an important purpose: It puts areas of your game that need work in the open and keeps them foremost on your mind. Sure, we all like to hear we did a great job, but the reality is every game gives us a chance for improvement.

Ask your partners how they thought you did, and then take their comments as constructive criticism. If your partners are veterans, they’ll be more forthcoming, and sometimes a little more blunt, in evaluating you. Don’t take it personally; take it as an opportunity for improvement.

5. Put it in writing. If you have to file a game report (for ejections, major injuries or unusual game occurrences), make sure you jot down all pertinent details as soon as the situation is under control and before you resume play. Taking that vital information home with you will surely save you and your assigner a major headache later. □
Early Endings

One change and one clarification have been made in regard to the policies in Rule 5 governing when a game ends early.

In Rule 5-8g, a conference in the past could adopt a travel policy regarding an approved reason to end a game only in the case of commercial air travel. The new rule permits conferences to have an established travel policy on travel days, regardless of the method of travel.

Play 1: Teams in the final game of a conference series are playing. The visiting team has traveled by bus and has final exams the next day. **Ruling 1:** The conference is permitted to authorize a travel policy. The two teams cannot agree to it unless it has been approved by the conference.

Also, the rule concerning halted games has been clarified. In non-conference games, institutions must agree before the game to the halted game rule to avoid conflict. If the teams do not agree or it is not covered at the pregame meeting, the halted game rule is not in effect.

If the halted game rule is being used in a game and the game cannot be completed, the game becomes “no contest.”

Play 2: Teams A and B are playing a two-game non-conference series and agree to use the halted game rule in the first game. With team B leading 14-2 in the seventh inning, the game is stopped because of rain. The two teams are unable to play the next day or make up the games during the season. **Ruling 2:** The game is ruled a “no contest.” Had the game been played without the halted game rule, it would have been a legal game.

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Video Is Not The Enemy

Imagine the pressure that MLB umpires are under. Not only is every controversial play shown again and again on TV, but every pitch is captured by an electronic system and evaluated for accuracy.

And even when replay isn’t clear, if announcers think the call might have been missed, their opinion will be broadcast as gospel and that becomes the reality.

For example, take what happened on July 26, 2011, in Atlanta.

It was the bottom of the 19th inning. One can only imagine working behind the plate for six hours, 10 minutes. Crossing the three-hour threshold makes most umpires (and their partners) angry, because the day has already gone on too long.

But in a game in which both teams missed multiple opportunities to score the winning run, it came down to a play on which Jerry Meals didn’t do what was expected. Certainly, you remember talking about that play with your umpiring friends.

On a ground ball, the throw home beat Braves runner Julio Lugo by a bunch. Lugo did nothing extraordinary, but neither did Pirates catcher Michael McKenry. Meals called Lugo safe, explaining after the game that he felt McKenry “ole’d him” — like a bullfighter — with his glove.

In good position to see the entire play, Meals said he never saw the catcher touch the runner. No tag means the runner was safe. Game over. Controversy just beginning.

It is easy to debate whether Meals got the play right. Even he came out a day later and said, “After coming into the locker room, I reviewed the incident through our videos we have in here, and after seeing a few of them on one particular replay, I was able to see that Lugo’s pant leg moved ever so slightly when the swipe tag was attempted by McKenry. That’s telling me I was incorrect in my decision, and he should have been ruled out, not safe.”

Most umpires don’t want to be in Meals’ position of having to review the play and explain a call because other video angles might possibly show a different outcome. No matter what happened with Meals and that play, it leads us to the bigger problem and that is the use (and misuse) of video and how it has affected the game, especially as video becomes more prevalent at the college level.

Video is everywhere, even all the way down to the youth level, as it seems every parent has access to some form of video technology (think cell-phone camera) and an avenue to broadcast the event (think Facebook and YouTube).

Prior to the advent of video review and scrutiny, most umpires would not have given it a second thought to call Lugo out at the plate. Ball beats runner … catcher attempts tag … runner does nothing extraordinary … it’s an out.

That can’t happen today. Umpires now must umpire according to what the camera sees. Otherwise, face scrutiny (fair or not) in regard to taking everything into account when calling a player out or safe.

So what do the play and its results mean for the rest of us? Does common sense still apply or has “big brother” affected the way we umpire? Umpires must certainly be aware of how they interact with coaches and players on and off the field along with utilizing their partners (when applicable) to get the play right.

An inappropriate comment or gesture can easily be taken out of context and be broadcast via the Internet or on the local news. And while MLB has the opportunity on some plays to change calls on replay, college umpires don’t have that luxury (except at the College World Series). So not only can amateur replay broadcast our mistakes, it also shows off how we handle those situations. You can be sure that every conference office and every assigner gets sent clips from games showing how an umpire’s “mistake” affected the game and how the umpire acted unprofessionally toward a coach or player. It’s happens.

Let’s go back to Meals’ play in Atlanta. What happens if Meals rules the runner out and replay clearly shows there was no tag and Atlanta loses the game in the 20th inning or beyond? Would Meals have been given a free pass because he made the “expected” call? Probably not.

It’s a no-win situation for any umpire at any level. Make the expected call or make what he believed was the correct call, and either way, he gets criticized.

The game seemed to manage itself much smoother prior to the onset of replay and video technology. However, video technology is only going to become more prevalent, especially as more conferences work out television contracts with local, regional and national broadcasters. Umpires will shy away from the expected call, knowing that video won’t back them up. The adjustment period will be rough — there will be arguments and ejections. But the game will survive. Video replay is here to stay and the benefits of the technology will outweigh the negatives.

Keep in mind the following: Rarely will there be a time when an official’s decision is universally accepted, especially when the play at hand is so close or timely in nature.

The great debate will continue as to whether an official can take all “elements” of the play into consideration before rendering a decision or suffer the consequences by accepting what the “eye” in the sky can see. The view seems much better from ground level. Wouldn’t you agree?
Toughest Play On the Bases

Whether in the two- or three-umpire system, the toughest play on the bases has to be the double steal. In fact, while the three-umpire system covers many of the gaps that the two-umpire system leaves, that play is one of the only plays where there is no advantage gained by adding an extra umpire.

With two umpires, the base umpire should start in the “C” position, halfway between the dirt circle and second base, on a line from the plate through the edge of the dirt on the pitcher’s mound.

In the three-umpire system, U3’s starting position would be the same.

Since third base is open, U3 cannot work in the “Deep C” position.

When the runners break, the umpire who started in the “C” position should break toward the back of the mound. The umpire should commit to a base only when the throw from the catcher goes to one of the bases where plays are possible (see MechaniGram). More teams are teaching their catchers to throw to second base, since that runner usually will have gotten a later start on the play. An umpire who commits too early to third base will be out of position for the play at second base.

Plays at the Plate: What to Watch

Plays at the plate have been given an increased focus over the past several years. The rules for plays at the plate vary for both catchers and runners.

The NCAA Baseball Rules Committee is concerned about violent collisions at the plate. There is no place in the college game for the violent collisions by runners in an attempt to dislodge the ball.

When there is a collision (see PlayPic) between a runner and a fielder who clearly is in possession of the ball, the umpire shall judge:

Did the runner make a legitimate attempt to reach the plate or base?

If the runner is doing that, he may make contact or slide into a fielder.

As a general rule, such contact must occur below waist level. The base is at ground level and is not moving.

If the runner is making a legitimate attempt at the base, he is headed toward the ground.

By rule, contact above the waist initiated by the baserunner shall not be judged as an attempt to reach the base or plate.

Did the runner attempt to dislodge the ball or initiate an avoidable collision?

If the answer to that question is yes, the runner shall be declared out, even if the fielder loses possession of the ball. The ball is dead and all other runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of interference.

Did the runner make illegal contact (below the waist)?

If the contact was flagrant or malicious and occurred before the runner touched the plate, the runner is out and ejected. The ball is dead and the runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of interference.

If the runner touches the plate then collides illegally, he scores, but is ejected.

Did the runner do everything right?

If the runner’s path to the plate or base is legally blocked and the runner did not violate the rules, it is considered unavoidable contact.
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