An extremely difficult judgment call for the plate umpire involves a batter being hit by a pitch. The umpire must watch the pitch come in, the batter possibly swing or move into the pitch and the catcher attempting to catch the pitch. Keep in mind, all that happens within half a second.

Batters must not be taught to attempt to create a hit-by-pitch situation and umpires must be more diligent in not awarding a hit by pitch when not warranted.

The governing rule is 8-2d, which reads: “The batter becomes a base runner when hit by a pitched ball at which the individual is not attempting to strike, the ball is immediately dead.”

The rule then lists two approved rulings and four examples, which can be summarized as follows:

- A batter hit by a pitch in the strike zone is to be ruled a strike and the batter is not awarded a base.
- A batter hit by a pitch out of the strike zone and who makes no attempt to avoid being touched by the ball should not be awarded a base. The ruling is a ball. However, if the pitch is clearly inside the vertical lines of the batter’s box and the batter freezes, the batter shall be awarded a base. A batter who freezes on a pitch outside the lines of the batter’s box is not to receive the benefit of being awarded a base.
- A batter hit by a pitch outside the vertical lines of the batter’s box with any part of his body (arm, shoulder, elbow, knee) outside the batter’s box will not be awarded a base unless he attempts to avoid being hit by the pitch.
- A batter who intentionally moves or rolls into the pitch in such a way to be hit by the pitch shall not be awarded a base.
- A batter who “hits the ball” with any part of his body rather than being “hit by the ball” shall not be awarded a base.
Greetings NCAA Umpires and Coaches:

Welcome to the beginning of the 2014 season. The information in this guide is designed to provide information and clarifications leading into the season. This information should be of value and read carefully by NCAA coaches and umpires.

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 impacts jobs, family and personal time. Attending camps, clinics and personal study adds to this commitment. Our success in training and education are still limited by umpires who do not attend clinics or register on the NCAA website. I hope that coaches and administrators can continue to encourage conferences to mandate participation to improve officiating. In order for the profession of umpiring to advance, all umpires and coaches need to understand the national interpretations of the rules to provide better communication and consistency.

We need coaches to understand and teach the ejection and suspension standards implemented last year. The 2013 season provided only a partial success in reducing ejections. Greater success is anticipated in 2014 as coaches and baseball programs teach acceptable conduct toward umpires. Assistant coaches and players must learn that they are not authorized to argue umpire decisions and face the consequences of ejection, which includes automatic suspension. Head coaches must learn that umpire calls may be disputed, discussed or argued without crossing the line leading to ejection. Some of those ejection standards are listed in this guide. All personnel must learn that following an ejection, conduct is still subject to penalties by what the ejected person says or does and where they go after an ejection.

In addition, umpires must learn to keep a calm, professional manner and not engage in any actions that could be misinterpreted as “non professional,” “baiting,” “quick trigger,” “cursing,” “physical contact” or “aggressive.” Only a joint effort by coaches and umpires will accomplish this goal of reduced ejections and suspensions. Unsportsmanlike conduct, out of control conduct and verbal abuse has no rational justification in today’s game.

I would like to request that all coaches review the Code of Ethics found in the rulebook. How many situations would be removed if all programs taught and adhered to those statements. Similarly, I would ask that all umpires review the Conduct and Ethics page in the CCA Manual. Many issues during a game or season would go away. There needs to be greater mutual trust, respect, perception, professionalism and dignity in the actions of both groups in order for officiating to advance and improve, a goal for both coaches and umpires.

The 2013 NCAA baseball season and championships provided some of the best entertainment and play and the overall quality of the umpiring was of a high quality as well. This is a new era of college baseball with TV, media exposure, instant replay and K-zone. The demands for accountability and responsibility continue to elevate. Umpires are seeing the results of increased accountability through loss of assignments and discipline or removal from assignment lists. At the same time we see talented new umpires moving through our systems with a high quality level requiring an

Gene McArtor
NCAA National Coordinator of Baseball Umpires

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Ejection, Suspension Penalties Reviewed

All coaches and umpires are aware of the many suspension rules put in place for 2013. To clarify, there were NO changes in the standards of conduct related to ejections, only that suspensions were added for certain types of conduct in order to reduce the number of ejections and improve conduct during the season.

In 2013, ejections were down only in Division I. It is hoped that this downward trend will continue for all divisions in 2014. The goal of the rules committee was that by increasing the penalties, overall conduct would improve.

Yes, that gives an umpire great responsibility with the authority to issue suspensions. There are some loose accusations of “quick trigger” umpires but in almost all cases, umpires tip the other way and use warnings or multiple warnings prior to suspensions being issued. No umpire is looking to complete the myriad of paperwork and communications related to suspensions unless absolutely necessary as required by the rules.

Assistant coaches and players need to learn that, by rule, they are not allowed to argue. That ability is reserved for the head coach. Head coaches need to understand that calls can be argued without resulting in an ejection. However, when their arguing departs from arguing the call to personal or abusive verbal attacks on an umpire then they are on thin ice and an ejection may be warranted.

Many coaches, following ejections or suspensions, argue for the need for due process or appeals, reduction of penalties or claim inaccurate umpire reports. Please remember that the reports are in most cases confirmed by the umpire crew and/or a conference coordinator prior to being submitted. Umpires are charged with submitting accurate reports. When that is not the case, umpires may edit or change their report to make it more accurate and coordinators will work to assist in the necessary edits as the umpire is the only neutral arbiter of the game. All other persons have some bias to their view of the situation. If umpire reports still contain inaccuracies, the umpires shall be accountable. Most conferences and coordinators DO NOT want to deal with an appeals process and there is none at the current time.

The easy solution for all is to

See “Ejections” p. 4

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### 2013 Ejection Report Summary

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2014 NCAA Baseball Guide 3
Ejections
Continued from p. 3

understand that ejections only occur for specific types of conduct. If these actions do not occur then there are no ejections, hence no suspensions, and hence no concerns about umpire power, appeals or due process.

Suspension Penalties

A brief review of the suspension penalties that were new for 2013 should assist all with the specific rules. The rules were enacted with one major goal — to reduce ejections and reduce unsportsmanlike conduct and verbal abuse during arguments.

• By rule, arguing by assistant coaches, players or other team personnel other than the head coach is prohibited (Rule 3-2). If they are ejected for arguing or disputing an umpire’s decision or are ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct or language toward an umpire or a post-participation ejection is received, an additional one-game suspension (four games for a pitcher or removed pitcher) is automatic by rule for the first offense. Ejections for other reasons (i.e. bench jockeying, malicious slide, unsportsmanlike conduct toward another player, etc.) are not covered by this rule.

• Conduct following an ejection is addressed in the current rules. That refers to action or conduct after, not prior to, the ejection and is commonly called “prolonged arguing.” There is no suspension for prolonged arguing unless an ejection has already occurred and there is no suspension for prolonged arguing as a result of conduct or actions that occur prior to an ejection.

A timely warning after the ejection may be given before enforcing the suspension penalty. Situations in which a warning may not be given might include throwing of equipment, kicking dirt on the plate, etc. No team personnel may continue to argue or excessively express themselves with actions, offensive language or verbal abuse after an ejection (Rule 2-25 AR 7). The suspension is for an additional two games and is added to any other suspensions. This penalty may also apply to ejected personnel for not leaving the field and dugout area in a timely manner after an ejection.

• The suspension for physical abuse of an umpire is for four games for the first offense (Rule 5-16 b) added on to any other suspensions. That includes any action or threat of physical intimidation or harm to include pushing, bumping, billing with the hat, shoving, contacting, kicking dirt on an umpire, spitting, spraying, throwing at or an attempt to make physical contact. Coaches are responsible for their position on the field and to ensure no contact with an umpire is created.

• Finally, the rules for staying out of sight and sound for any ejected personnel has been in place for many years. The rule is very specific. If ejected personnel are in a location inside or outside the stadium or field where they can view the contest, they are in violation of the rule. If they are in a location where they can communicate with their team or could be heard or seen by the umpires, they are in violation of the rule. It is up to the ejected person to see that these requirements are met or there is an additional three-game suspension added on to any other suspensions (Rule 3-6d AR 2). □

2013 Rules Change Review

With the two-year cycle for rules changes, there are no new changes for the 2014 season. However, it’s imperative to be reminded of the changes that took effect last year in addition to ejections and suspensions, which are covered elsewhere in this newsletter.

Get the call right

For many years, umpires have been able to conference and reverse a fair call on any batted ball to foul. Now a ball that has been called foul can be reversed to fair under limited circumstances under a change to the “Getting the call right” procedures (Appendix E).

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.

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.

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 rulebook.

Pitching mounds

There are two changes regarding the pitching mound. It is legal to use a portable mound if both teams agree before the visiting team arrives at the game site (9-1d). Also, each bullpen must have a minimum of two mounds with pitching rubbers, plates and regulation measurements (1-5c, 4-3e).

Coaching boxes

It is now mandatory that
the coaching boxes be lined (1-3c). Previously, that was not a requirement.

**Illegal bat penalty**

The penalty for an illegal bat has been clarified (1-12b). 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. Baserunners shall not advance as a result of a batted ball.

**Pitcher’s glove color**

The pitcher’s glove can be any color or colors other than white or gray, exclusive of piping (1-13c AR2). The glove and laces may also not be distracting in any way in the judgment of the umpire.

The rule regarding pitcher’s gloves has changed several times over the past few years, but that change should make the rule less confusing and easier to administer for umpires than previous rules.

**Catch**

To improve consistency on what does and does not complete a catch, an approved ruling has been added (2-15). Only two circumstances may be interpreted as creating a voluntary and intentional release: when the momentum of the catch is complete (the fielder has reversed his direction and is running the ball back toward the infield) or when the fielder is reaching for the ball to make a throw.

**Tag**

An approved ruling has been added to the definition of a tag (2-74). The new ruling confirms that a ball stuck in a fielder’s glove remains live and that the ball/glove combination may be thrown to a base or used to complete a tag to retire a runner.

**Pitching substitutions**

To prevent unnecessary delays and avoid confusion for the offensive team, a new rule has been added about a continuing pitcher who goes to the mound to start an inning (9-4f). If the pitcher crosses the foul line on the way to the mound, then he must pitch to the first batter until the batter is retired or reaches base. Exceptions are made for illness or injury, or if there is a pinch hitter who enters the game to lead off the inning.

**Substitution notification**

Either the head coach or another coach in uniform must approve or confirm substitutions when they are made (5-5g). For substitutes who enter a game without notification, the umpire should receive confirmation of the change from the head coach before recording and announcing the substitute.

Related to that change is a clarification of Rule 4-4 to indicate that names on the line-up card are what’s official. Numbers are a courtesy and should be corrected when discovered but there is no penalty for incorrect numbers.

**Game-ending policies**

Two changes were made in the rules that govern games ending early. Travel policies are now permitted for conference games on the last day of a series, regardless of the method of travel. Previously, a conference could only put a time limit on a game if it was due to commercial air travel (5-8g).

For non-conference games, both teams can agree to a travel policy before the game.

An approved ruling to the halted game rule clarifies that a game that is started under that rule must be finished in order to count (5-9c). If two teams are unable to complete a halted game, it becomes “no contest.”

**Successive offensive conferences**

While a team is limited to one defensive conference per inning without making a pitching change, there is no such rule governing offensive conferences (6-5f).

A team may use any or all of its three offensive conferences in a regulation game at any time without penalty, including consecutively.

**Catcher’s throw**

A batter’s actions must be intentional in order to be penalized when he is leaving the batter’s box legally and he interferes with the catcher’s throw (7-11f).

If the batter’s actions are deemed intentional, the batter is out and runners return to the bases 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.

**Batter deflecting ball**

After hitting or bunting a ball that is foul and the batter-runner intentionally deflects the course of the ball while running to first base, the batter is out only if the ball had a chance to become fair (7-11o).

**Running lane interference**

The running lane interference penalty (7-11p) has been expanded to include that 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 that 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 to that point.

**No objecting to warnings**

When an umpire has ruled that a warning needs to be issued because a pitcher has intentionally thrown at a batter (9-2g), no team personnel may come on to the field to object to such warning. Anyone who does so is subject to warning followed by an immediate ejection. □
Background Check Update

Before a comprehensive background check can be conducted, an official must confirm consent for the background check to be completed.

Similar to 2013, all officials will 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 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 in any postseason baseball tournament 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. Also similar to last year, the passing score for the test is 85 percent. The test will consist of 60 questions, including some video-based questions. To earn a passing score, you must get 51 correct.

The test opens Jan. 27 and closes at the same time as the background check.

The Strike Zone

In an average nine-inning college baseball game, there are probably 300 pitches thrown. Take out the balls put into play, foul balls and swinging strikes and umpires must judge around half of those pitches.

Calling strikes according to the rulebook has been a point of emphasis for the NCAA for the last several years, and it is once again for 2014.

Let’s take a look at what the rulebook says about the strike zone and apply it to today’s game.

The definition of the strike zone comes from Rule 2: “The area over home plate from the bottom of the kneecaps to the midpoint between the top of the shoulders and the top of the uniform pants. The strike zone shall be determined from the batter’s stance as the batter is prepared to swing at a pitched ball.”

Breaking down that definition gives you the official dimensions of the strike zone.

First, the width: The plate is 17 inches wide. However, as Matt Moore explained in his 2013 book, “Balls and Strikes: Every Pitch Counts,” the strike zone is actually much wider.

A ball is determined to have crossed the plate if any portion of the ball touches any part of the area over the plate. Therefore, you must add the width of the ball (2.94 inches) on either side of the plate to the width of the plate itself (17 inches) to get an actual strike zone width of 22.88 inches. The book went on to explain the two-inch allowance that MLB umpires get in judging pitches when being electronically graded. Adding that allowance, and the calling area is nearly 27 inches, just two inches away.
from a “batter’s box to batter’s box” width of 29 inches on a correctly linedield.

No one is advocating calling that wide of a zone, but it’s easy
to see that the width of the zone is misunderstood.

As for the height of the zone, the interpretation of the last part of the
rule is that the batter’s strike zone is established not when he is standing
in the batter’s box, but at the instant before he would swing at the pitch —
in other words, when he has taken his stride.

“Historically, our umpire clinics have not focused on the actual strike
zone ‘judgment’ of the umpire,” Hiler said. “Most collegiate clinics across the
country, including our national clinics have put more of an emphasis on the
umpire being in the right position and

being fundamentally sound.

“Based on feedback our program has received from conferences and
supervisors, including the national survey that went out to coaches last
season, our training this year is going to try a new approach to achieving
a greater level consistency and accountability of the umpires calling
the entire strike zone and identifying pitches that are clearly not a strike.”

Simplifying Batter’s Interference

To help understand a difficult
judgment call by an umpire, the
following clarifications to the batter’s
interference rule are provided.

• A batter is out when, on a
steal attempt, he interferes with the
catcher’s fielding or alters the catcher’s
throw. The interference may be
intentional or unintentional.
The does not need to be contact
between the catcher and batter for
interference to be called.

• A batter may or may not be out of
the box for interference to occur. The
batter cannot be expected to disappear.
However, if a batter has a chance to
avoid interference and does not, he is
guilty of interference.

• If a batter swings and his
backswing hits the catcher as the pitch
is caught, the ball is dead, there is
no interference and no runners shall
advance.

• If the catcher’s initial throw
retires the stealing runner and
the batter does not strike out, the
interference is disregarded.

• A throw does not need to be
made for batter’s interference to be
called. If the attempted throw by the
catcher is aborted due to illegal action
by the batter, the ball becomes dead
and interference is ruled.

• Any alteration of the throw or
throwing motion of the catcher by the
batter who is out of the batter’s box is
ruled as batter’s interference.

Substitution Clarifications

Regarding substitutions, it has been
clarified that the announcement
of a substitute by the public address
announcer alone is not sufficient for
that player being “legally” in the
game. Substitutions are officially in
the game when the plate umpire has
confirmed the substitution with the
head coach or another coach, recorded
the substitution and signaled the PA to
announce the substitution.

When the starting P/DH is
replaced as the pitcher and not moved
to a defensive position at that time, he
or any subsequent DH may not later
enter the game in any other capacity
such as a defensive player, pitcher, etc.
The status of the removed pitcher must
be announced to the plate umpire prior
to the defensive coach reaching the
dugout after a conference.

Also, a continuing pitcher who
crosses the foul line on the way to
the mound to start an inning and
completes his warmup throws may be
substituted for if the first batter of the
inning is a pinch hitter.

Lightning detectors are not
required, but it is important
that umpires and coaches
know if a detector is on site
and who is monitoring it. No
baseball game is worth risking
any injury to game participants.
Safety is the job of all involved.
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. To begin the second game of a doubleheader, both coaches send only their team captain to the pregame meeting with the umpires.
   a. That is legal even if it is a non-conference game.
   b. Legal only if it is a conference game.
   c. Legal only for the visiting team.
   d. Always illegal.

2. At the pregame conference, the home coach indicates that an area on the plate side of each dugout has been chalked off as an area where coaches can sit during the game.
   a. This is allowable.
   b. This is not allowed as any dugout extension must be on the outfield side of the dugout.
   c. Allowed for the coaches to be in this area but no equipment can be left in this area.
   d. This is allowable if the visiting coach agrees to this extension at the pregame meeting.

3. R1, one out. B2 hits a ground ball to the second baseman and loses control of his bat, which travels in the same direction as the ball. The second baseman is hit by the bat but recovers and is still able to turn a 4-6-3 double play.
   a. Dead ball as soon as the loose bat makes contact with the second baseman. B2 is out for interference and R1 is returned to first base.
   b. Because the second baseman was able to turn the double play, the bat obviously didn’t interfere, so the actions of the batter losing control of the bat are ignored.

   c. As long as the umpire believes the actions of B2 are unintentional, there is no interference.
   d. B2 is out for interference and warned that if this unsportsmanlike act is repeated, he will be ejected from the game.

4. 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 if this is the assistant coach's first ejection of the season, he receives an additional one game suspension from the team’s next regularly scheduled contest.
   d. The assistant coach is ejected from the present game but is eligible to participate in the team’s next contest.

5. After having been ejected for arguing the umpire’s decision on a close play at third base, the assistant coach continued to argue and excessively expressed himself while using offensive language or prolonged actions or acts or both.
   a. The assistant coach is suspended a total of three games from the team’s next regularly scheduled contests. One game for the regular ejection and an additional two games for excessively arguing, using offensive language or prolonged actions.
   b. The assistant has already been ejected so no further penalties may be applied.
   c. The assistant coach is ejected and suspended for a total of two games.
   d. The assistant coach is ejected from the team’s next three games and the head coach is suspended for one game for the actions of his assistant coach.

6. F4 is injured when R1 slides safely and legally into him on a stolen base attempt. The defensive team has no eligible substitutes available.
   a. The game is immediately forfeited.
   b. The game may continue to its normal conclusion.
   c. The opposing head coach may select any of the disqualified defensive team’s players to replace the injured F4.
   d. The Umpire-in-Chief may select any of the defensive team’s disqualified players to replace the injured F4.

7. In the top of the first inning, the visiting coach wants to pinch hit for his starting pitcher.
   a. This is legal in any instance.
   b. This is legal provided the pitcher is also listed as the DH.
   c. He may not under any circumstance.
   d. The head coach could only do this if his team was the home team.

8. The 6th inning begins with the home team leading 8-7. With two outs, the visiting team scores three runs on a home run. Immediately after the batter-runner touches home plate, to complete his home run, the stadium lights fail and the game cannot continue.
   a. Under any circumstance, the game reverts to the last completed full inning.
   b. Under any circumstance, the game reverts to the last completed inning unless the conference had adopted the halted game rule or the coaches had agreed to the halted game rule prior to the start of the contest.
   c. The game is a suspended game without the halted game provision being agreed to prior to the start of the contest or having been adopted by the conference.
   d. Absent the halted game provision, the umpires must wait a minimum of one hour before declaring the game a complete game.

9. R3 and one out. The count is 3-1. The next pitch bounces in the dirt for ball four.
and ends up lodged under the catcher’s chest protector.

- a. The ball is dead and the batter remains at the plate. R3 is awarded home.
- b. The ball is dead and the batter is awarded first base. R3 remains at third base.
- c. The ball is dead, the batter is awarded second base and R3 is awarded home.
- d. The ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base and R3 is awarded home.

10. With two outs, B3 hits a fly ball to F9. Thinking the inning is over, F1 leaves the mound and heads towards his dugout on the first base side. Not paying attention, F1 inadvertently bumps B3, who is jogging to first base, causing him to fall down.

- a. If the ball drops, the ball remains live and B3 is awarded third base.
- b. The ball remains live and B3 is always awarded one base.
- c. Once the ball is dropped by F9, the ball remains live and in play. Once all play has ceased, the umpires will award the number of bases they believe will nullify the obstruction on B3.
- d. Once the ball is dropped by F9, the ball is declared dead immediately. B3 is awarded whichever base the umpires believe nullifies the obstruction.

11. R3, two outs, 2-1 count on B6. The runner at third breaks for home prior to the pitcher committing to the start of the pitch. The pitcher steps back legally off the pitcher’s plate and throws home in an attempt to retire R3. B6 bunts the ball and breaks for first base as the runner crosses home plate.

- a. The umpire shall call a ball on the pitcher for delivering a pitch while disengaged from the pitcher’s plate. R3 scores, count remains 2-1 on B6.
- b. The umpire shall call time immediately, R3 is out for the batter’s interference. B6 leads off the next inning.
- c. The umpire shall call time immediately. B6 is out for interference. No run scores. B7 leads off the next inning.
- d. Allow the play to stand.

12. R1, R2, one out. B3 hits a ball into the gap in right center. F8 fields the ball and throws back toward the infield. F4 fields the ball and relays to third. R2 is held up late between third and home by his coach. He slips as he tries to stop and the third-base coach helps R2 to his feet. R2 then scrambles back to third, where R1 is already standing. B3 is standing on second at the conclusion of the play.

- a. Coach interference can only occur when the coach contacts the runner, not when the runner contacts the coach. The ball is live and in play.
- b. This is coach interference. The ball is dead immediately and R2 is declared out. All other runners return to the last legally touched base at the time of the interference.
- c. This is coach interference. It is a delayed dead ball. At the conclusion of the play, R2 is declared out and the other runners remain at the bases they attained during the play.
- d. This is coach interference. The ball is dead immediately and R2 is declared out. All other runners are awarded the base they would have attained had interference not occurred.

13. R2, two outs. B2 hits a ball that glances off the pitcher’s glove and then contacts U3, who is positioned within the infield. The shortstop fields the ball and throws to third in time to put out R2.

- a. Umpire interference. The ball is dead immediately. B2 is awarded first and R2 remains at second since he was not forced.
- b. Umpire interference. This is a delayed dead ball. At the conclusion of the play, the umpires will consult and decide the correct placement of the batter and all base runners.
- c. Since the shortstop still had an opportunity to field the ball, this is umpire interference. At the conclusion of the play, B2 is declared out and R2 remains at second.
- d. The ball remains alive and in play. R2’s out at third stands.

14. R1, R2, one out. B3’s batted ball is deflected by the pitcher on the ground toward the shortstop. R2 collides with the shortstop as he attempts to make the play.

- a. The ball is alive and in play. R2 cannot be expected to avoid the fielder after the pitcher deflected the ball.
- b. Interference on R2. Because a double play was possible, both R2 and B3 are declared out. R1 returns to first base.
- c. Interference on R2. The ball is dead immediately and R2 is declared out. B3 is awarded first and R1 is awarded second because he is forced by the batter-runner.
- d. Obstruction on F6. Once the pitcher deflected the ball, F6 is no longer protected. Since he was not in possession of the ball when contact was made with R2, he is guilty of obstruction. B3 is awarded first, R1 second and R2 third.

15. R1, one out. B2 bunts the ball along the first-base foul line. As B2 runs to first, he intentionally kicks the ball, which is on foul ground. The plate umpire has determined that the ball did not have a chance to become fair. True or False: B2 is ruled out and R1 is returned to first. Any time a batter-runner intentionally deflects the course of a batted ball, he is ruled out.

- a. True
- b. False.

**ANSWERS**

1. b (4-4a)
2. b (1-16b, AR 1)
3. a (2-50, 7-11n)
4. c (2-25, AR 6)
5. a (2-25, AR 7)
6. a (5-12g)
7. a (5-5b)
8. b (5-8b, 5-9)
9. d (7-11a)
10. c (6-3d)
11. c (7-11f, Exceptions)
12. c (2-50, 3-3e, AR; 8-5f)
13. d (2-50, 6-2I, AR)
14. c (2-50, 8-5d, AR 2)
15. b (2-50, 7-11d)
Bat Warming Illegal; Some Elbow Pads Legal

A couple of clarifications to the current rules have been issued in regard to equipment.

The use of any artificial means to heat a non-wood bat is to be considered an attempt to alter the performance of the bat and is not to be allowed. The penalties include those for use of an illegal bat. In addition, when discovered, the practice should be stopped and the offending team warned that the head coach is subject to ejection if it continues. Conference coordinators should be notified after the game.

A player may wear a standard elbow pad that does not exceed 10 inches. A nylon pad shall surround the shell of any elbow protection equipment. A player wearing a non-standard elbow pad or any pad designed to protect the upper or lower arm must have an existing elbow or arm injury. In those cases a physician’s documentation must be provided per Rule 1-15e (3).

FPSR: “Directly into the base”

A n approved ruling was added in 2013 related to a runner’s slide. The current rules require a runner to slide before a base and in a direct line between the two bases. It is permissible for the runner’s momentum to carry him through the base in the baseline extended. A slide or movement away from the fielder to avoid contact and to avoid altering the throw of the fielder should not be called interference. “Directly into the base” means the runner’s entire body (feet, legs, trunk and arms) must stay in a straight line between the bases. An illegal slide results in interference even if the fielder makes no attempt to throw to complete the play. The new approved ruling clarifies that if the runner slides directly into a base and pops up on top of the base and makes contact with the fielder, that contact is legal and there is no interference.
Ditsworth Named Regional Advisor

The NCAA has announced that Mark Ditsworth has been named a NCAA Division I Regional Advisor, replacing Dick Runchey who announced his retirement this past year.

Ditsworth, of Lansing, Mich., brings 39 years of experience to the position which has included supervising and evaluating umpires. His personal officiating background includes many years of baseball and basketball experience. He worked 15 Division I Regionals, 8 Division I Super Regionals and 3 Division I College World Series, including 2013. He umpired primarily in the Big 10, Big East and Mid-American conferences.

Ditsworth will primarily cover and evaluate Division I umpires in the Midwest with specific conference responsibilities to be determined.

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 for rule enforcement is subject to immediate ejection.

See “Standards” p. 12
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 or a pitcher intentionally throwing at a batter after a warning (or in some instances without a warning).

The Beginning and the End

Nowhere is it truer than on a college baseball field when you say what happens at the beginning of the day will affect the end of it.

Unfortunately, what happens at the beginning of a lot of games isn’t complete enough, bringing major issues to the end.

Here are the issues that must be addressed. Most of these matters are predetermined by the conference office in the case of league games; however, some leagues don’t have set rules and often times, the rules or pregame arrangements aren’t clearly communicated to umpires.

Length of game

That is only an issue if the teams are playing a doubleheader. Otherwise, a game must be scheduled for nine innings. But if a game is part of a doubleheader, the teams can agree to play two seven-inning games or a combination of seven and nine innings. What they can’t do is change the length of the game in the middle of it. If there is no discussion and mutual agreement (5-7c, 5-8a(3)), the game must be nine innings.

A doubleheader is defined as two games between the same two teams that are scheduled with no more than a 30-minute break between them. If that is not met, the games must be nine innings.

**Situation 1:** Team A plays a seven-inning game with Team B. Team B then plays a seven-inning game with Team C immediately after the first game. Team A then plays a seven-inning game with Team C immediately after the second game.

**Ruling 1:** Those games are not regulation games and do not count.

**Run rule**

By conference rule or mutual consent of both coaches before the game, a game may be stopped after seven innings if one team is ahead by at least 10 runs. The issue with this rule is what happens if the game is scheduled for only seven innings; a lot of teams believe a game can be stopped after five innings. That is not the case. A game may only be shortened to seven innings, so there is no run rule in a seven-inning game (5-8b(4)).

**Halted game**

This decision is the one most overlooked and also the one that can cause the most issues, because it determines the status of the game should it be interrupted by weather or other issues.

Without any discussion, a game is assumed to be played under regulation rules, which means that before five innings are complete (or 4.5 if the home team is leading), the game is not official. After that time, the game is considered official and should it not be able to be played out due to weather, it is not resumed. If tied, it is considered no game (5-8b).

If the teams agree to play using the halted game rule (or if it is conference policy) and the game does not go the distance, it is stopped at that time and must be resumed and completed in order to count.

Teams that have agreed to play (or not play) the halted game rule cannot change that decision in the middle of the game.

**Situation 2:** There is no discussion of rules at the pregame meeting. In the bottom of the (a) fourth or (b) fifth inning, with the home team leading, 3-2, rain causes the game to be stopped and it cannot be resumed. **Ruling 2:** In (a), the game is ruled no contest. It did not meet the regulations of a complete game. In (b), the game is over. The home team wins, 3-2, since the visiting team had five complete turns at bat and the home team was leading.

**Situation 3:** The same games in...
Situation 2: only the teams agreed to the halted game rule before the contest started. **Ruling 3:** In both cases, the game is stopped at that point and must be resumed and played to its conclusion. If the game is not resumed, it is considered no game. The teams cannot declare the home team the winner since the halted game rule was agreed to.

**Situation 4:** With no halted game rule in place, the visiting team leads, 8-1, in the top of the fifth inning when an unexpected rain storm halts play for the day. The visiting coach wants to be able to resume the game the next day. **Ruling 4:** The game is considered “no game” and must be replayed from the beginning.

**Situation 5:** With no halted game rule in place, the score is tied, 3-3, after eight innings when no further play is possible due to darkness. **Ruling 5:** The game is declared a tie game and will not be resumed. Had the halted game rule been in place, the game would be resumed at the point of interruption.

**Situation 6:** With no halted game rule in place, the home team leads, 2-1, after seven innings. In the top of the eighth inning, the visiting team scores twice. Rain ends play for the day. **Ruling 6:** The game is declared official with the visiting team winning, 2-1. There is no “suspended game” rule for that situation. The game is either played under regulation rules or the halted game rule.

**Travel policies**
Conferences are allowed to establish their own travel guidelines or restrictions for the get-away or travel day of a series regardless of the mode of transportation.

**Situation 7:** The last game of a three-game series begins at noon. According to conference policy, no inning may start after 3 p.m. due to commercial air travel restrictions. At 3:10 p.m., the visiting team leads the home team, 10-9, at the end of seven completed innings. **Ruling 7:** Umpires shall call the game with the visiting team declared the winner.
Legal Pitching Positions

In 2013 a number of pitchers were pushing or exceeding the limits of the rule regarding the windup position and the set position. In addition, many umpires were not requiring that the rulebook standards be met.

The rules are very clear in differentiating between the two and it is especially important with runners on base.

For a windup position, the pitcher shall stand facing (shoulders squared) the batter with the pivot foot on or in front of and touching the pitcher’s rubber. The pitcher’s entire free foot shall not be in front of the pivot foot. That means that from a side view the free foot and pivot foot must overlap. The rearmost part of the free foot cannot be in front of the foremost part of the pivot foot. The hands may be separated or together.

For the set position, the chest and shoulders of the pitcher must generally face the respective foul lines (not square to the batter). The pivot foot must be on or in front of and touching the pitcher’s rubber (same as windup). The free foot must be in front of the pivot foot. This means that the rearmost part of the free foot must be in front of the foremost part of the pivot foot. The hands may not be together.

The set position shall be indicated when the pitcher stands with his chest generally facing the respective foul lines with the pivot foot on or in front of and touching the pitcher’s plate and the free foot in front of the pivot foot.

The pitcher shall stand facing (shoulders squared to) the batter, with the pivot foot on or in front of and touching the pitcher’s plate. The pitcher’s entire free foot shall not be in front of the pivot foot.

Umpires and coaches must work together when it comes to confirming game times. Since most games are now assigned using electronic systems, coaches should confirm their schedules are correct in those systems and there should be some form of verification between the crew chief and school several days before each game.

This is not a legal windup position. The shoulders are not square to the batter and the non-pivot foot is entirely in front of the pivot foot. This would result in an illegal pitch with no runners on or a balk with runners on base.
The Different Conference

While everyone knows and expects the defensive coach to call time and have a meeting on the mound with his players, it’s a lot more uncommon for an offensive conference to occur.

Umpires need to be as vigilant in recording and monitoring offensive conferences as they are with defensive meetings.

A conference is considered to have taken place when a coach (or other designated person) delays the game by conferring with the batter, on-deck batter, runner or any other offensive team personnel.

There is a cumulative limit of three conferences during a regulation game. If the game goes into extra innings, a team gets one additional conference (plus any unused) to last the entire game, no matter if it goes 10 or 30 innings (6-5f). If a team takes an excessive timeout, the player with whom the coach is meeting must be removed from the game.

Catch As Catch Can

A catch is the act of a fielder getting secure possession in his hand or glove of a ball in flight and firmly holding it. He may not use his cap, protector, pocket or any other part of his uniform in getting possession. However, in order to record an out with a catch, the fielder must be standing in the right spot.

Where it is

Whether a catch is allowed is not always as simple as the delineation between live-ball and dead-ball territory. That line could be a fence, rope, wire, railing or a chalk line, or it could be imaginary such as a fence-line extended, a creek edge or the start of an upslope.

If there is a line, it is considered live-ball territory. And the rules say a catch cannot be made with any part of the fielder’s body touching dead-ball territory (6-1d1).

Play: B1 hits a foul pop fly. When F9 catches the ball, he is straddling a line dividing live-ball from dead-ball territory. F9’s momentum then causes him to step with both feet into dead-ball territory. Ruling: No catch; that is an uncaught foul ball.

Because demarcation lines are in live-ball territory, a fielder can make a catch if he has any part of his body, including a foot, touching such a line provided no portion of his body or foot is in contact with the ground outside the line.

It’s also possible for a player to make a catch by launching himself to catch the ball while completely airborne and then landing in dead-ball territory. A fielder may reach into a dugout, be held up and kept from an apparent fall by a player or players of either team and if the catch is made, it shall be allowed. If such a fielder is interfered with by an opponent, the batter is out and no runners may advance (6-1d AR 1).

Throws

If it is possible for a fielder to enter a dead-ball area and make a throw from there, the ground rules should address whether such a throw is permissible. If the ground rules do not address that situation, a throw is allowed since the ball remains live unless the fielder falls or otherwise loses body control.

If the fielder drops the ball within the dead-ball area while in the act of throwing, the ball is dead and runners are awarded two bases from the time of the drop. If the ground rules prohibit a throw and require the fielder to re-enter live-ball territory before making a throw, and the fielder throws from dead-ball territory or drops it there, the ball is dead and runners are awarded one base.
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