



**NCAA BASEBALL
NOVEMBER 2019
20-SECOND ACTION RULE LIMITS**

The existing NCAA rule (Appendix F) that sets a 20-second time limit for a pitcher to begin his motion to deliver a pitch when the bases are unoccupied has been expanded for the 2020 season to include situations when there are baserunners. A similar rule has been used successfully at the AA and AAA levels of professional baseball for the past several seasons. The updated rule will be administered using the following guidelines:

- A visible clock may be used but is not required. If a visible clock is not available for use, the time limit will be kept on the field by a base umpire.
- A pitcher shall be allowed twenty (20) seconds to begin the activity preceding each pitch. The pitcher does not necessarily have to release the ball within 20 seconds; however, the pitcher must begin his windup motion or otherwise begin the motion to come set in order to comply with the 20-second rule.
- For the first pitch of an at-bat the timer shall start when the plate umpire signals “play”. The umpire should signal when the pitcher has possession of the ball in the circle surrounding the pitcher’s rubber, the catcher is in the catcher’s box, and the batter is in the batter’s box.
- After each pitch of an at-bat in which the ball remains alive and in play and the batter remains at bat, the timer shall start when the pitcher has possession of the ball in the circle surrounding the pitcher’s rubber and the catcher is in the catcher’s box.
- Following an umpire’s call of “time” or if the ball becomes dead (for example, after a foul ball or a pick-off that goes out of play), the timer shall stop, reset, and start again when the plate umpire signals “play” after the pitcher engages the pitcher’s rubber with possession of the ball, the catcher is in the catcher’s box, and the batter is in the batter’s box. (See Rule 6-6.)
- The timer shall stop and reset under the following circumstances:
 - The pitcher begins his windup motion or begins the motion to come set;
 - The pitcher makes a pickoff attempt at any base;
 - The pitcher feints a pickoff attempt or steps off the rubber with runners on base (in which case the timer shall reset and start again immediately);
 - The catcher leaves the catcher’s box to give defensive signals or to confer with the pitcher (in which case the timer shall stop, reset, and start again after the catcher returns to the catcher’s box);
 - The umpire calls “time”. If a visible clock is being used and the operator does not start the timer at the appropriate time, the umpire shall call “time” and signal to the operator to reset the timer and start again immediately.
- Batters are expected to enter the batter’s box promptly prior to the first pitch of an at-bat and should remain in the batter’s box in accordance with the Batter’s Box Rule R(Rule 7.1.d). Batters should not delay entry to gain an undue advantage. If the batter does not enter the box and become alert to the pitcher with 5 or more seconds remaining, the batter

will be adjudged to have violated the rule and the umpire shall award a strike without the pitcher having to deliver the pitch. The ball is dead, and no runners may advance.

- Pitchers are expected to begin the motion to deliver the pitch as soon as the batter enters the box and becomes alert to the pitcher. If the pitcher does not begin his motion to deliver the pitch (or become set) prior to the timer reaching “0”, the pitcher will be adjudged to have violated the rule and shall be warned by the umpire. There is one warning per pitcher.
- After a pitcher is warned, if he continues to violate the rule, the umpire shall award a ball without the pitcher having to deliver the pitch. The ball is dead, and no runners may advance, unless the ball awarded by the umpire is the batter’s fourth ball in which case the batter is entitled to advance to first.
- If the catcher or other defensive player intentionally delays getting the ball to the pitcher on the mound so that the time limit doesn’t start, or if the pitcher delays taking his position on the mound, the plate umpire may point to have the 20-second time limit started.