Instant Replay

In the 2015 season, the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee approved the expansion of the experimental video instant replay rule for conference regular season and postseason tournament games (if approved by the conference commissioner and the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee) and tournament games. Those include the NCAA Division I Baseball Championship Super Regionals and the College World Series. The expansion helped umpires change incorrect calls to correct calls.

“If there’s a controversial call and we can get it right, that’s the goal,” said Randy L. Buhr, NCAA director of championships and alliances.

“During the Super Regionals, the NCAA partnered with Turner Sports and Turner Studios to set up a review command center at Turner’s offices in Atlanta.”

The guidelines for replay are found in Appendix E - Getting the Call Right.

The following plays are allowed to be reviewed by replay.

1. Deciding if a batted ball is fair or foul (must first touch the ground beyond the first and third baseman).
2. Deciding if a batted ball is either a ground-rule double or a home run.
3. Catch or no catch in the outfield or foul territory. Not in the infield unless it results in a third out with multiple runners on base or a catch at any time with a batter only.
4. Spectator-interference, only if it affects items 1, 2 or 3 above.

Only the crew chief can initiate a review.

Play: With a runner on second and one out, the batter hits a deep fly ball to center and the center fielder makes a diving catch. The base umpire rules no catch; the batter runs and is safe at second and the runner from second scores. The coach comes out to talk with the crew chief about the play. After talking with the coach, the crew chief decides to speak with the entire crew about the play. After the discussion, the crew chief requests a replay review of the play. The crew chief is told that replay shows the center fielder made a catch.

Ruling: The batter is out and the runner returns to second because that was the base the runner occupied at the time of the pitch. □
Welcome to the 2016 Baseball Season

The information in this 2016 NCAA Preseason Guide is designed to provide not only information, but also clarifications leading into the season. Umpires need to keep up with development materials. It can be helpful for use in study groups and pregame discussions. Coaches, please keep your game day materials as a quick reference. In addition, the Preseason Guide will be posted on our HOME PLATE page at www.ncaabaseball.arbitersports.com.

Here are a few things of note this season:

- Umpires continue to improve at consistently enforcing the new hit-by-pitch rule. Batters were getting hit less and not gaining an unfair advantage by trying to intentionally get hit by the pitch. To further clarify the rule, wording was revised for this coming season to include, “Did the batter try to intentionally get hit by the pitch?” The rules committee felt that it will aid in better enforcement from umpires and further guide batters and coaches to be in compliance with the rule.

- The safety of the student-athlete regarding plays at home plate is a concern. The rules committee has restructured the rule to cut down on unnecessary collisions at home plate and allow umpires to enforce the rule with a greater level of consistency. The rule will be structured similar to the MLB rule and will also place further restrictions on the catcher blocking the plate unnecessarily.

- As college baseball continues to grow, so does the visibility on national television and the use of modern technology. Centralized Instant Replay was instituted before the super regionals last year and was handled meticulously by our umpires and our staff of replay officials. The NCAA and rules committee will carefully look at all aspects of replay in the future.

- The most foundational duty of an umpire is to enforce the rules of the game. Umpires are there to aid in making the game fair and enjoyable. To that end, one fundamental rule we must uniformly enforce is the strike zone. The rule book clearly lays out the definition of the strike zone; it’s not given as a guideline. Umpires must call the entire zone as written, including the high strike. The umpire’s ability to enforce “their own” strike zone no longer exists.

- Before you think about getting together with your partner(s), ask yourself these questions before the head coach asks you anything: Am I 100 percent sure I got the play right?

- As I look at my crew, does any member of the crew clearly have information I need?

- Is getting the crew together the right thing to do to get the play right?

- If you’re 100 percent sure you’re correct and no member of your crew is approaching, then you shouldn’t get together to appease the coaches or players. It’s unprofessional and it fractures the game and umpires as a whole.

- If you’re unsure, and a member of your crew is approaching you with information, getting together may be the right thing to do.

- Ejections: In 2015, ejections in all three divisions increased, including an almost 35 percent increase in Division I head coach ejections (112 to 150; see Penalty Chart on page 4). Assistant coaches and student-athlete ejections/suspensions were slightly lower. Good strides were accomplished with minimizing the multiple game suspensions in the area of prolonged arguing. A standard phrase — “You have been ejected, if you continue to argue, you will be subject to a two-game suspension for prolonged arguing” — provided a uniform tool to remind coaches of the consequences. I have talked to numerous head coaches and umpires regarding management tactics to reduce the number of head coach ejections and the consensus was a subtle warning needed to be in place. All incident reports are filled out via ncaabaseball.arbitersports.com and must be filed by the ejecting umpire.

See “Drouches” p. 7
Beginning in the 2015 season, the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee adopted a penalty chart that appears in the rule book. The chart has categories with penalties based on the act and the offending participant. At the end of the 2015 season, ejections in all three divisions of baseball went up from the previous year. Division I was up 4.64 percent, Division II 12.84 percent and Division III 33.12 percent. With those results, the committee made revisions or additions to the chart with the hope to better understand of how to enforce the penalties in all three divisions of baseball.

**Rule 2-26 A.R. 3; Appendix D:**
For a post-participation ejection involving the head coach, it will result in ejection from the next contest with no suspension. If the post-participation ejection of an assistant coach, players or team personnel is for actions directed toward an umpire or game official, they will be ejected from the next contest and serve a one-game suspension. If any participant or game personnel are ejected for actions that are not directed toward an umpire, the suspensions will be the same.

**Rule 2-26 A.R. 6:** Whenever an assistant coach, a player (other than a pitcher) or team personnel are ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct or language, they will be ejected from the present contest plus serve a one-game suspension.

**Rule 2-26 A.R. 7:** Any participant that has a prolonged argument with an umpire after an ejection will receive an additional two-game suspension.

**Rule 3-11:** When players are ejected for tobacco use, they will be ejected from the contest and serve a one-game suspension. If the head coach is ejected, they will be ejected with no other suspension.

**Rule 5-15b:** When a head coach removes a team from the field and refuses to continue playing the game, the head coach will be ejected from the contest and serve a two-game suspension.

**Rule 5-17:** Participants involved with verbal abuse or bench jockeying after a warning is given will be ejected from the game and serve a one-game suspension. If the abuse and jockeying continue, the head coach is ejected from the contest.

**Rule 8-17:** If a player violates the collision rule, the player is ejected from the contest and will be suspended for the next game.

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**NCAA 2015 Ejection/Suspension Reports**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Assistant Coach</th>
<th>Head Coach</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Division I</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division II</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division III</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>704</strong></td>
<td><strong>215</strong></td>
<td><strong>370</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**QUICK TIP**

Choose your words wisely. Don’t threaten a coach with a phrase such as, “Coach, I don’t want to hear another word.” That will make the coach feel defensive and then unable to express a legitimate concern. If a situation is serious enough that you feel a need to threaten, it’s probably serious enough to eject. Letting the coaches know you heard them is usually enough.
# NCAA Misconduct Penalties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Offense</th>
<th>Offender</th>
<th>Consequence for First Offense</th>
<th>Consequence for Second Offense</th>
<th>Consequence for Third Offense</th>
<th>Rule Ref.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsportsmanlike conduct or language directed toward an umpire or opponent</td>
<td>Assistant coach, player or team personnel</td>
<td>Ejection from present contest plus a one-game suspension</td>
<td>Ejection from present contest plus a three-game suspension by the same individual in the same season</td>
<td>Same as second offense</td>
<td>Rule 2-26 A.R. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsportsmanlike conduct of a game official</td>
<td>Head coach</td>
<td>Ejection from present contest — no suspension</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>S-15 (1), (2), (3) &amp; Misconduct Def.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game Misconduct — removing team from the field, refusing to continue</td>
<td>Head Coach</td>
<td>Ejection from the present contest, plus a two-game (2) suspension</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>S-15b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game misconduct for arguing, directed at an umpire or unsportsmanlike conduct directed toward an umpire or an opponent</td>
<td>Player whose last listed position is that of a pitcher</td>
<td>Ejection from present contest plus a one-game suspension</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>2-26, A.R. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prolonged or continued arguing, offensive language or excessive expressions directed at an umpire or game official after an ejection</td>
<td>Any participant</td>
<td>Two-game suspension added to the present accumulative total for applicable suspension penalties</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>2-26, A.R. 7; S-15a (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting</td>
<td>Any participant</td>
<td>Ejection plus a four-game suspension</td>
<td>Ejection plus a suspension from the team's next five contests</td>
<td>Ejection plus a suspension for the remainder of the season, including postseason competition</td>
<td>S-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical abuse of participants or umpires</td>
<td>Any participant includes head coach</td>
<td>Ejection plus a four-game suspension</td>
<td>Ejection plus a suspension from the team's next five contests</td>
<td>Ejection plus a suspension for the remainder of the season, including postseason competition</td>
<td>S-16b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving position to participate in a fight</td>
<td>Any participant</td>
<td>Four-game suspension after the ejection</td>
<td>Suspended for the remainder of the season</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>S-16c, Penalty (1), (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionally throwing at a batter</td>
<td>Pitcher, or pitcher and head coach</td>
<td>Ejection plus a four-game suspension</td>
<td>Ejection plus an eight-game suspension. The head coach is not ejected if no warning has been given. If a warning has been given, the head coach is ejected and suspended for one game</td>
<td>Ejection plus a suspension for the remainder of the season, including postseason. If no warning is given, the head coach is not ejected. If a warning is issued, the head coach is ejected and suspended for one game</td>
<td>S-16d (1), (2), (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal abuse/bench jockeying</td>
<td>Any participant or game personnel other than head coach</td>
<td>After a warning, offender is ejected for that game plus a one-game suspension</td>
<td>When verbal abuse/bench jockeying continues, head coach is ejected (no suspension). All others ejection plus one game suspension</td>
<td>Same as second offense</td>
<td>S-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail to leave sight and sound of the playing field and grandstands after an ejection</td>
<td>Any participant</td>
<td>Three-game suspension added to any penalties already accumulated</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>3-6, A.R. 2 and A.R. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collision rule</td>
<td>Player</td>
<td>Ejection from the present contest. One-game suspension</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>8-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ejection for tobacco use</td>
<td>Player and head coach</td>
<td>Ejected from present contest, one-game suspension for everyone other than the head coach</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>3-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common ejections for actions for unsportsmanlike behavior not directed toward an umpire</td>
<td>Any player or coach</td>
<td>Ejected from present contest plus a one-game suspension</td>
<td>Same as second offense</td>
<td>Same as second offense</td>
<td>2-26, A.R. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-participation ejection for actions directed toward an umpire or game official</td>
<td>Assistant coach, player or team personnel</td>
<td>Ejection from next contest plus a one-game suspension. These two games will be added to any other applicable penalties for other offenses</td>
<td>Ejection from next scheduled contest plus a three-game suspension for a total of four games. These four games will be added to any other applicable penalties for other offenses</td>
<td>Same as second offense</td>
<td>2-26, A.R. 3; Appendix D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-participation ejection for actions that are not directed toward the game official or umpires</td>
<td>Any participant or game personnel</td>
<td>Ejection from next contest plus a one-game suspension. These two games will be added to any other applicable penalties for other offenses</td>
<td>Ejection from next scheduled contest plus a three-game suspension for a total of four games. These four games will be added to any other applicable penalties for other offenses</td>
<td>Same as second offense</td>
<td>2-26, A.R. 3; Appendix D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-participation ejection for actions directed toward the game official or umpires</td>
<td>Head coach</td>
<td>Ejected from team's next game-No Suspension</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>2-26, A.R. 3; Appendix D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-participation ejection for a pitcher</td>
<td>Player whose last listed position is that of a pitcher</td>
<td>A total suspension of four games</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>Same as first offense</td>
<td>2-26, A.R. 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1: It is the responsibility of the institution's head coach and director of athletics to administer and enforce any suspension penalties.

Note 2: Suspension penalties, regardless of the number, shall be served during the offending team's next scheduled contest(s). Post-participation ejections and any applicable suspension penalties shall also be served during the offending team's next scheduled contest(s). Conferences and institutions may choose to implement additional penalties for misconduct.

Note 3: A listing of ejection and suspension penalties is contained in Appendix D.
Q&A with Randy Bruns
Meet the new NCAA Secretary-Rules Editor.

Randy Bruns is a former Division I umpire that started his four-year term as the NCAA baseball secretary-rules editor this past September, succeeding Jim Paronto.

Bruns’ umpiring career includes working in the Big Eight, Big Ten and Big 12 conferences. He was selected to work 19 regionals, nine super regionals and three College World Series.

Q: How do you feel about taking over for Jim Paronto?
A: It’s a great opportunity and honor. Jim had the position for a number of years and did a great job. He had a great passion for keeping the rules up to date and helping as many people as he could. It’s always a little bit different with any transition. But I had a chance to get to know Jim and shadow him for part of last year as I was preparing to start my term. I appreciated his guidance and my hope is he still will be helpful in the next few years.

Q: Are you planning on working some games or are you focusing on the new position?
A: The way they wrote the job description, you can’t be an active coach or official. That was kind of nice because my plan was to retire from active umpiring in the coming year. So when the opportunity arose, I looked at it as a way to keep contributing to college baseball. It made my decision a little bit easier. I enjoyed my last season working but it was nice knowing that I was going to have an active role in college baseball, just in a different way. I’ve always been very interested in helping others have the same kinds of experiences that I’ve had, and I think the secretary-rules editor can certainly contribute to that.

Q: Do you feel that being an active umpire will benefit you as the new secretary-rules editor?
A: I think it’ll be a great benefit. The rules committee right now doesn’t have an active umpire that’s part of the rules committee. There are some administrators and head coaches that are on that committee, but I think any time you change a rule the other thing you have to look at is how do you administer the rule, how is it going to happen on the field. Between George Drouches and myself, we’re part of that committee but not voting members. Hopefully we can help bring that other on-the-field administrative experience to the committee and the committee will consider our points. We’ve got a wealth of coaching and administrative experience on the committee already. Any good rule still has to be administered on the field, so hopefully we can bring that experience to the group.

Q: What is going to be your approach to the job?
A: I’m going to rely on what was done before me until I get some experience. I want umpires to be challenged with their rules knowledge because having rules knowledge is very important. With this being a non-rule-change year, there are always things that come up based on changes that were made the year before. Things happen in the course of a season that need to get cleaned up, such as cleaning up the language on the misconduct penalty chart. There are a couple of other things that we’re emphasizing this year because things happened last season that needed to be clarified with the language, such as the hit-by-pitch situation. The way the language was updated we’re close to being what’s in professional baseball. The batter has to make an attempt to avoid being hit. What we did for both the hit by pitch and then some other things with plays at the plate is we’ve been working on some video examples and some language examples to give umpires guidelines on how to apply the rules. We’ve already started accumulating things for the rules committee to review and consider to change for the 2017 season.

Q: Do you see a particular rule in college baseball that definitely needs a lot of clarification?
A: I don’t see that there’s any one rule in particular. I think people are always looking at interference and obstruction since it’s always tricky. Those take a lot of judgment and the more experience the umpire has, the more clear those things become. I don’t have any particular rule that I think really just begs the update. I think pace of play is still going to be a major topic for a period of time. Pace of play is going to become more of an issue as baseball becomes more visible, as well as instant replay in the super regionals and the College World Series. The rules that regulate those types of situations will become more important in the next couple of years.

Q: Where do you see instant replay going and do you think it will move down to Division II and Division III?
A: I don’t see that there’s any one rule in particular. I think people are always looking at interference and obstruction since it’s always tricky. Those take a lot of judgment and the more experience the umpire has, the more clear those things become. I don’t have any particular rule that I think really just begs the update. I think pace of play is still going to be a major topic for a period of time. Pace of play is going to become more of an issue as baseball becomes more visible, as well as instant replay in the super regionals and the College World Series. The rules that regulate those types of situations will become more important in the next couple of years.
**Flashback: 2015-16 Rule Changes**

Here is a review of rule changes from last season.

**Conference for catch/no catch (Appendix E)**

Umpires are allowed to conduct a conference to change a call of “catch” to “no catch” and vice versa. If a play to the outfield originally called a catch is overturned by umpire conference or through video evidence, the play will be declared dead and the batter will be placed at first base. Each runner will advance one base from the position occupied at the time of the pitch.

If the play is overturned in foul territory, it will be ruled a foul ball and all runners will return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch.

On plays to the outfield that are overturned from “no catch” to “catch,” all action prior to the ball being declared dead will be disallowed. The batter will be declared out and all runners returned to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch.

**Defensive Timeouts (Appendix F)**

The defensive team may use one of its three timeouts to prevent a ball being awarded to the batter if they are not ready for play when the 90-108 second clock expires. The clock shall start when the last defensive player crosses the foul line nearest his dugout.

**Foul Poles Must be Yellow (1-2b)**

Beginning in the 2016 season to aid the umpires, foul poles must be painted fluorescent yellow.

**Base Coaches’ Box (1-3c)**

At the time of pitch, base coaches may not be closer to the foul line than the inside edge of the coaches’ box and no closer to home plate than the front edge of the box. The base coaches may take a position directly outside of the coaches’ box in the direction of the outfield.

**Uniform Changes (1-14e, 4-7)**

Only pitchers may wear a jacket while serving as a base runner. When worn, the jacket must be buttoned or zipped up. The jacket may be worn under the uniform top while batting. Also, only players, coaches and ball/bat persons are to be dressed in the team’s game uniform. Other personnel shall be dressed appropriately for their specific team responsibilities.

**Abandonment (2-1)**

Abandonment is defined as the act of any runner who leaves the base path after reaching first base, heading for his dugout or for his defensive position believing there is no other play.

The runner will be declared out if the umpire(s) judges the act of the runner to be considered abandoning his efforts to run the bases. **Play 1:** Two outs, bases loaded, score tied in the last inning. The batter hits a base hit to right field and the runner on third scores. The runner on first base believes that the game is over on the hit and cuts across the diamond, heading to his bench without touching second. **Ruling 1:** The runner on first would be called out for abandoning his effort to touch the next base. Because the next base is considered a force out that would not allow the run to count and the game would continue.

**Base Running (2-33, 2-51 A.R. 6, 7-11p A.R. 1)**

No preceding or succeeding runner shall advance on an interference play and a runner is considered to occupy a base until he legally has attained the next succeeding base. Additionally, if no defensive player is covering or attempting to cover the base, the defense should not be considered as “making a play.” On a dropped third strike with first base occupied, it’s not a force play on the runners on base if they decided to advance. The defense must tag the runners to be declared out.

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**Bruns**

Continued from p. 5

**Q:** Are there any fun facts you want the group to know about you?

**A:** I worked eight years in professional baseball and had the opportunity to go to the Dominican Republic for a couple of years to work games. Once I got out of pro ball, I’ve been working in Division I since the mid ‘80s. I’m so appreciative of the opportunities for so many years of being able to work three College World Series and multiple regionals and super regionals and conference tournaments and a lot of great conference weekends.”

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2016 NCAA Baseball Guide
Video Camera (Rule 5-2f & A.R. 1)
The use of a manned video camera is restricted to the area behind home plate, which is defined as the area from the outfield cutoff behind first base to the outfield cutout behind third base. In A.R. 1, video for scouting, training, or teaching purposes may be recorded from any unmanned camera location. However, no video from manned or unmanned sources may be transmitted for scouting, training or coaching purposes during the contest. Play 2: While the home team is batting, three visiting team personnel are behind home plate (a) using a radar gun, (b) charting pitches, and (c) using a tablet to record and transmit the information to the coach in the dugout. Ruling 2: Legal in (a) and (b). In (c) the umpire will warn the personnel and if they don’t immediately comply with the rule, they will be removed from the stands or receive a post-participation ejection.

Game Length (5-7d A.R. 9, 10)
A scheduled stand-alone seven-inning game is prohibited. However, if the seven-inning game was scheduled as part of a doubleheader and was started or had been halted or suspended, it may be played as a seven-inning contest the following day or at a future time.

Anthem Standoff [5-15a-(5)]
If players don’t return to their dugouts immediately after the playing of the National Anthem, the umpire-in-chief is to warn the head coach that failure to comply results in the ejection of the head coach and offending player(s).

Pitcher Stance (9-1a)
In the windup position, the pitcher must stand facing the batter with his pivot foot on or in front of and touching the rubber with the other foot free.

Drouches
Continued from p. 2
within a few hours after a contest. Also, the ejecting umpire must contact the conference coordinator and game management of any suspension(s). As a reminder, I will be sending all reports to the conference baseball liaison and respective director of athletics and conference coordinator for any required suspension “next steps” (See Penalty Chart). Reports were accurate and straightforward in 2015 and umpires should continue that for 2016.

• We continue to make strides in consistency and www.ncaabaseball.Arbitersports.com is positioned to help with that.
• Wellness: Staying physically fit (in-season and off-season) is part of the commitment to the business of college baseball. Based on evaluations, head coaches do not want to see out-of-shape umpires!
• We continue to look for yearly improvement. There are no guarantees or entitlements. Remember, you cannot legislate integrity, but you can hire it.
• Our best practices have been implemented in the 2016 NCAA Umpire Policies.

I would like to thank all who participate in our Baseball Umpire Program; the NCAA staff, including our Divisions II and III national coordinators: Dan Weikle and Don Umland respectively; Tom Hiler, our director of umpire training; conference coordinators and regional advisors — for aligning their umpires to the national program and for their passion and commitment to high-quality umpiring. Our business responsibilities are growing each day, each season, every call and every pitch — savor the challenge!

To umpires, coaches, coordinators, advisors: Best wishes for a superb 2016 season. All I ask is that all stakeholders enforce the rules as written, take care of business and respect the game of college baseball.

George Drouches
NCAA National Coordinator of Baseball Umpires
Test Yourself

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 the 2015-16 NCAA rules.

1. R1 on first, no outs. F1 is on the dirt mound when he goes to his mouth and then goes directly to the ball with that hand.
   a. This is a ball and you add it to the count of the present batter.
   b. This is a balk and you award R1 second base.
   c. This is a balk, however, you keep R1 at first base.
   d. This is a ball but if the present batter has no count at the time of the pitcher’s infraction, the plate umpire ignores the infraction and issues a warning to that pitcher.

2. The nonconference contest has just been called because of weather after the completion of the 11th inning with the score tied, 3-3. No agreement to continue at a later time was made at the plate conference prior to the start of the contest.
   a. The game is declared to be “no game” and must be replayed in its entirety.
   b. The game is declared a tie game and all individual and team averages are part of the official playing record.
   c. The game is considered a suspended game and will be resumed from the point of interruption.
   d. The game is a regulation game and must be made up at a later date in collegiate baseball.

3. R1 on first and R3 on third, one out. F9 makes a catch on the warning track. The runners are tagging. R3 scores easily and R1 is safe at second. The defense successfully appeals that R1 left first base too early.
   a. No run scores because the appeal play is an out at first before R3 has scored.
   b. No run scores because the appeal play is a force out.
   c. R3 scores because the appeal play is a “time” play.

4. Left-handed F1 throws to first base in a pickoff attempt. F3 drops his knee to block the base and attempts 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.

5. 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 fair but was foul.
   d. Deciding if a home run is fair or foul.

6. 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.

7. R1 on first, R2 on second, one out. F1 deflects B3’s batted ball on the ground toward F6. R2 collides with F6 as he attempts to make the play.
   a. The ball is live 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.

8. R2 on second, 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 to advance.
   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 live and in play. R2’s out at third stands.

9. With a runner on first base, F1 fails to stop before delivering the pitch. The base umpire properly calls the balk. B2 hits the ball on the ground to center field. R1 advances to second, but B2 thinking a balk is an automatic dead ball, doesn’t advance. The defense returns the ball to the mound and when F1 realizes B2 did not advance, he throws to first base, appealing that B2 should be declared out.

   a. The umpires should sustain the defensive appeal. B2 is out. R1 remains at second.
   b. The appeal is irrelevant. The ball should have been declared dead immediately. B2 remains at the plate. R1 is awarded second on the balk.
   c. The appeal is granted. However, because B2 and R1 both did not advance one base, the balk must be enforced. Award R1 to second and B2 remains at the plate.
   d. The appeal is unnecessary. Because B2 had the opportunity to advance and failed to do so, he is called out for abandoning the bases. R1 remains at second. The balk is ignored.

10. In order to use the halted-game rule:
   a. It must be a conference game.
   b. The coaches can decide at any point to invoke the rule.
   c. It must be agreed upon at the plate meeting.
   d. The home coach makes the decision on when it is being used.

11. With R1 on first, B2 singles to center. R1 rounds second and heads for third, but changes his mind. F8’s throw to F6 is in time to trap R1 in a rundown. After several exchanges between F5 and F6, R1 makes a desperate attempt to get back to second, where F4 is covering. On his way back to second, R1 is bumped by F6 while F5 still has the ball. F5’s throw to F4 retires R1 as he dives into second.

   a. Obstruction, immediate dead ball, R1 is awarded third.
   b. Obstruction, delayed dead ball, R1 is awarded third.
   c. Interference, immediate dead ball, R1 is out.
   d. Obstruction, delayed dead ball, R1 is awarded second.

12. With R1 on first, B2 grounds to F4, who flips to second for the force out. R1 slides directly at the base with one leg in contact with the ground. The top leg is waist-high to the pivot man and contacts the pivot man’s glove, but not maliciously. The relay throw is late to retire B2.

   a. Legal play.
   b. Interference, B2 is also out.
   c. Interference, B2 is not out because a double play wasn’t possible.

13. What is the determining factor when it comes to a half swing:

   a. The batter breaks his wrists.
   b. The barrel head of the bat crosses the batter’s front hip.
   c. The barrel head of the bat crosses any part of home plate.
   d. Umpire’s judgment.

14. With the bases loaded and no outs, B4, with a 3-2 count, swings and misses at the next pitch. F2 drops the pitch and B4 begins to run to first. F2 fields the dropped pitch and inadvertently steps on home plate as he squares to throw to first in an attempt to retire B4. F2’s throw is wild and goes down the right field line. All runners score on the play and B4 stops at third.

   a. Play stands.
   b. B4 is out and all runners return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch.
   c. B4 and R3 are out and the other runners score on the play.
   d. All three runs score and B4 is out.

15. R1 and R2, two outs. B3 hits a triple. R1 misses third base on his way to the plate. On the appeal attempt, the defense throws the ball away but it remains in live ball territory. B3, who is standing on third, scores easily. The defense retrieves the ball and tries the appeal again.

   a. The umpires will disallow the second appeal and all runs score.
   b. The second throw to appeal R1’s missing third is considered a play.
   c. The appealed “out” stands but one runner will score.
   d. The appealed “out” stands, no runs score, even though the batter advanced on the overthrow on the first appeal.

16. After hitting a double, the batter-runner requests time and time is granted by the base umpire. F6 holds onto the ball in an attempt to pull off the hidden ball trick. After the batter-runner returns to second, the pitcher engages the rubber and the umpire puts the ball in play. The batter-runner takes one step off the base and F6 tags the batter-runner out.

   a. Legal play, the out stands.
   b. A balk should be called for engaging the rubber without the ball.
   c. The ball can’t become live in this situation. The ball remains dead and the batter-runner stays at second and no balk is called.

17. R1 on first and one out. The batter singles sharply to center field. F5 tags out R1 as he slides into third but obstructs R1 by blocking third base without having possession of the ball. The umpire properly declares, “That’s obstruction.” F5 then throws to F4 covering second base and the batter-runner is caught in a rundown between first and second. F3 tags out the batter-runner and then throws home to F2 who tags out R1, who had broken for home during the rundown.

   a. Immediate dead ball. R1 is awarded home and the batter-runner is awarded second.
   b. Delayed-dead ball. R1 is awarded home and the batter-runner is out.
   c. Delayed-dead ball. R1 and the batter-runner are both out.
   d. Immediate dead ball. R1 is awarded third and the batter-runner is awarded first.

18. If an infield fly ball is intentionally dropped:

   a. The ball is dead immediately.
   b. The infield fly provisions take precedence.
   c. The intentionally dropped ball provisions take precedence.
   d. The umpire will declare the batter out for the infield fly and the lead runner out for the intentionally dropped ball.

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**Answers**

1. a – 9-2d
2. b – 5-9a, 5-9c, 5-10b Note
3. c – 5-6c A.R. 2
4. c – 2-55 A.R. 4
5. c – Appendix E
6. a – 2-26 A.R. 6 & 7
7. c – 2-51, 8-5d A.R. 2
8. d – 2-51, 6-2f A.R.
9. c – 9-3 Penalty 1
10. c – 5-9
11. a – 2-55, 8-3e 1
12. b – 8-4c 3
13. b – 2-39
14. d – 7-11f
15. a – 5-6c Exc. (3), 8-6a(3), 8-6b(5b)
16. c – 2-53, 6-6
17. d – 2-55, 8-3e (1)
18. b – 2-48 A.R.
Q&A with Rod Walters
Meet the CEO of Walters, Inc. - Consultants in Sports Medicine.

Rod Walters, CEO of Walters, Inc. Consultants in Sports Medicine, was the head athletic trainer at Appalachian State University and the University of South Carolina, where he rose to the position of assistant director of athletics of sports medicine. Since 2011, he has been working with MLB umpires on concussion management.

Q: What is your background in working with umpires and officials related to their healthcare needs?
A: My background with officials goes way back. I was involved with the Southeastern Conference (SEC) football officials in 1990 when I came to work for the University of South Carolina. The commissioner of officials back then asked me if I would get involved with officials because I’d done some stuff in the Southern conference.

In the 1980s, we did some stuff in the Southern conference with the medical screening of officials. The SEC put together a pretty robust program where we did pre-participation screenings and worked with the university doctors and athletic trainers. We also added a medical and performance component to the evaluation. We screened a lot of people, we found a lot of information, got the officials better care and prevented some of the officials from death because of the work we did. I remember we had one official go into cardiac arrest during the test, and because of our plan we brought him back, and he’s a viable citizen as of today.

Q: In the off-season, what do you recommend for umpires to get ready for the season?
A: I believe that umpires need to be working out and getting medical clearance is a must. Umpires need to have a relationship with their primary care doctor and need to make sure that they get a good physical. That way the umpire can take care of any underlying issues before the season. The worst thing in the world is to deny that something’s going on, and so many of these things can be dealt with. The days of an umpire showing up for preseason scrimmages to get themselves into shape are gone. We’re conditioning and training to a specific activity so that when the season starts we’re ready to go.

Q: What kind of exercises or regimen would you recommend to an umpire to get ready before the season?
A: I think the bottom line is a good exercise program is a good program for umpires, and its got to be tweaked specific to their needs. The legs and low back are two key areas. I think flexibility, core stability and strength training are key components. Building strength in your muscles and stamina will help umpires endure a two- or three-hour activity.

Q: What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion that umpires should look for?
A: I think the fact that when a person has a headache, things are not normal. When they get hit, make sure things are normal. Is your balance, vision and hearing affected?

Umpires need to be honest with themselves. There’s a lot of things that go on with concussions. There isn’t one test that shows that you have a concussion. But when you start producing those symptoms, we’ve got to look at that. If you notice that your partner is showing signs, you need to step in and get your partner looked at.

Q: Do you recommend umpires do multiple sports?
A: Cross-training is a good thing but it’s really tough. I think you’ve got to have some downtime. I’m not going to call guys by name, but when I look at sports and guys that work every single day without time off, they break down.

I think those are the people that are going to have overuse-type problems. We’re seeing today pitchers not pitching all year round. That holds true for officials. If officials overtrain the body, they’re going to break down.

Q: Do you recommend plate umpires wearing the regular-style mask or the full-headgear-style mask?
A: I think you’ve got to look at the forces. Umpires want the mask and helmets that dissipate force because the umpire is not taking the force.

If you wear the regular-style mask you want your padding up to date. You can’t use the same padding year in and year out because of the weather and moisture. The padding does not dissipate blows. That’s the one piece of equipment I’d always have spot on.

Q: Is there anything you think umpires should be aware of when it comes to protective gear?
A: I think you’ve got to make sure the helmet is up to date, the protective padding, the shoulder pads, the face guard, the protective pants. Umpires want the mask to dissipate force, which is why they want the full-headgear-style mask.

Q: What are some things umpires should look out for when it comes to protective gear?
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There are some studies now showing that people are starting to use the different types of helmets, and I’m not sure all of that’s gotten to the umpires as much. I know the catchers are looking at some different stuff.

And it’s not always just the cheaper stuff is not as good. People think if you buy cheap, you’re not getting the best stuff. But it’s not always true...
Collisions and malicious contact at the plate are still causing problems in the game of baseball. The rules committee decided to clarify the wording in rule (8-7) to give coaches, players and umpires consistent language on how to rule on plays at the plate and all other bases. The slide rule is divided into two categories: head first and feet first.

**Head first**
A runner’s body must be in contact with the ground prior to making contact with any fielder.

**Feet first**
A runner’s legs and buttocks must touch the ground prior to contact with any fielder.

**Result**
If an umpire judges that a runner did not follow the guidelines, the umpire will rule an illegal slide. The ball is dead immediately, interference is the call on the field and the runner is out on the play. If there are other runners on base at the time of the interference, the runners will go back to the base last touched at the time of the interference. Also, if the umpire rules that the runner’s contact is malicious, the umpire will call the runner out and eject him from the game.

A runner is always required to at least try to avoid a collision. However, contact may be unavoidable and ignored if a runner’s direct pathway to the plate is blocked by the catcher trying to field an off-line throw that goes in the pathway of the runner.

In order for the catcher to block the plate, the catcher must be in possession of the ball. If the catcher doesn’t have the ball and is blocking the plate, the umpire will ignore the actions of the catcher if it had no bearing on the play. If the umpire deems that the actions of the catcher had a bearing on the play, the umpire will rule type one obstruction. The ball becomes dead and the runners are awarded the base they would have attained had there been no obstruction.

When the catcher is in possession of the ball, the runner must do one of the following things: the runner may slide, give himself up on the play or make an obvious attempt to avoid a collision with the catcher.

When the catcher is not in possession of the ball, they must not block the runner’s direct pathway to the plate. Also, the runner must not initiate an avoidable collision with the catcher.

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Dave Gimbi of Diamond Bar, California, moves into position to see the runner’s slide and makes sure all contact is legal and the fielder gave the runner a path to the plate.

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Walters
Continued from p. 10

pay more, you get more. I do think there’s some equipment there that has superior protection with the facemask.

Q: What do you recommend for the umpires for staying healthy and in shape during the season?

A: I think you’ve got to have sound nutritional components. You can’t eat fast food and think you’re going to be able to work a doubleheader. You need to get up in the morning and have a sound breakfast.

If you’re working a doubleheader, in between games you should have sound food. It’s important to stay hydrated. I don’t think you cannot have stuff in your tank and think you’re going to make it. Number two is flexibility. You want to make sure that you get loose before the game and be able sustain so you can maintain peak performance. Having a good workout regimen in the preseason and then carrying it over into the season will help maintain that peak performance.

Q: Do you recommend stretching before or after a game?

A: You need to stretch before and after. If you think about it, you go out there and get beat up or heaven forbid you get hit. What usually happens is you get bruises. You may need to ice those things down, and then stretch those muscles back out so that you’ve got good supple muscles. The worst thing you can do is get into your car and take a two-hour drive immediately after working a doubleheader where you got beat up.

You can develop a deep vein thrombosis just because you’re being in a car and you’re not letting your blood circulate. You pull over, get up and walk around every hour when you have a long car trip back home so you don’t develop blood clots. We saw it in the SEC where every year we’d have a couple of guys that might have a blood clot. One of the worst things you can do is get in the car and ride six or seven hours and not get out.
Did the Batter Intentionally Try to Get Hit?

Last season, the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee approved to change the language to rule 8-2d(1). The language said a batter must attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch. If the ball is outside the strike zone when it touches the batter who has not tried to avoid the pitch, the ball is dead, it shall be called a ball and the batter is not awarded first base.

The rules committee found that umpires were inconsistently applying the rule. As a result, the rules committee added clarification to the rule. The batter must not intentionally allow himself to be hit by the pitch and, if possible, the batter must make an effort to avoid being hit by the pitch. For example, if a fastball in the dirt bounces in such a way that in the umpire’s judgment the batter had no opportunity to try to avoid being hit, he is awarded first base.

With this new language, the rules committee believes that umpires will consistently make the appropriate call on rewarding first to the batter or keeping the batter in the box.

Play: B2 has 2-2 count. A pitch is thrown that hits B2 while he is in the batter’s box. B2 (a) sticks his elbow out so he can intentionally get hit by the pitch, (b) stands still and makes no attempt to get out of the way, or (c) makes an attempt to get out of the way. Ruling: In all situations the ball will be dead immediately. In (a) and (b), if the pitch was out of the strike zone, a ball is added to B2’s count, making it 3-2. If the pitch was in the strike zone, a strike is added to the count and B2 is called out on strikes. In (c), B2 is awarded first base for being hit by the pitch.

‘Come on, That’s Interference!’

Interference is defined as the act of an offensive player, umpire or non-game person who interferes with; physically or verbally hinders; confuses; or impedes any fielder attempting to make a play. But, when umpires analyze a play, do they go through the entire process to make sure that it was interference?

Look at the PlayPic that accompanies the article. Umpires have to assume that interference is a strong possibility. It can cause a discussion with your partner(s) and the coach. Often, coaches believe that when the batter is outside the batter’s box and in front of the plate, an interference call should be immediate.

However, coaches and umpires can’t forget one other key element: If there is no play attempted, there’s no interference.

Let’s examine the play for a possible interference. In the rule book (7-11f), batter interference occurs 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 the play step-by-step:

The batter’s swing

There may have been a hit-and-run or just a straight steal attempt, but clearly the batter is trying to protect the runner. Watch hitters 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 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 hitter is in his way, then interference may have 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 hitter, then interference may have occurred. However, just because there is a wild throw, it may be just that, and not interference. However, since the batter has clearly violated, the catcher should get the benefit of the doubt on the play.

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 potential elements of interference were present, the play correctly stood as called.

2015 NCAA Championship Umpires
Keys to Read on Lefty’s Pickoff Move

When a lefty is throwing for one team, you can bet the other team will gripe at some point during the game about the pitcher not stepping directly toward first base.

The plate umpire is always responsible for the step, no matter how many umpires are working the game. When there are just two umpires, the base umpire has no angle and also has the pickoff play. When there are three, U1 has the pickoff play and cannot focus on the step, although if it is egregious, he can make that call.

So what should the keys be for the plate umpire in watching the actions of the left-handed pitcher on a pickoff?

**It’s not just the foot**

The pitcher will often start a lean of his body toward the plate before he then throws toward first. Any action by the pitcher toward the plate commits the pitcher to pitch.

**The hanging foot**

The pitcher might try to catch the runner by “freezing” during the delivery. Once the pitcher has started a motion, he cannot pause. If the free foot hangs and there is a distinct pause, it’s a balk.

**The late throw**

The runner is looking for keys as well. If the runner takes off, the pitcher might try to throw to first even though he has already legally committed to pitch.

**The step itself**

There is no 45-degree line on the field, so an exact distinction between a step to first and step toward home is impossible. But you can use where the foot lands as a final guideline for calling the balk. Remember, the step must be toward first and he must gain distance or it’s not a legal step.

Bottom line

When a runner gets picked off by a lefty, there will be some complaining. Keep an eye on the things listed above and don’t go hunting for technical balks. □
Managing the Pace of Play in Your Game

There are many ways that a crew can manage a game efficiently. Keeping a game running efficiently relies predominately on the plate umpire, but he or she also needs the assistance of the base umpire(s).

The first factor of managing a game efficiently is speeding up dead-ball time. The majority of a game has a lot of downtime — during innings, pitching changes, rain delays and even during pitches.

The plate umpire can start managing pace of play before the game even starts by talking to the catcher while the starting pitcher is taking his initial warmup pitches. The umpire can remind the catcher that there’s no need to chase foul balls or passed balls with no runners on base and he will be handing the catcher a new ball. That will resume play much quicker.

The second factor involves a base umpire using a stopwatch to ensure the proper time allotment between innings, whether it’s 90 or 108 seconds. It is important that the base umpire start it — when the defense has crosses the foul line nearest his dugout — on time and alert the plate umpire that time is on the verge of expiring. Depending on the plate umpire’s preferences, the base umpire should alert the crew by walking back to his position.

A third pace-of-play helper is when the base umpire helps with pitching changes. When the head coach makes a trip in which a replacement is required, the base umpire does not need to wait for a signal from the coach or plate umpire. The base umpire should head over to the bullpen and signal to the pitcher that they’re in the game. If there are two pitchers throwing, watch the coach to see which one he wants.

The final factor in managing the game is to work with a sense of hustle and intensity. Umpires will be amazed at how quickly players will react when they see the umpires hustling to get where they need to go.

That makes it seem that they are out there to get the play right, and not out just to collect a paycheck. It will make all the difference in the world if umpires stay focused on pace of play and controlling what can be controlled when managing a game.

HEATH JONES OF TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA, KEEPS THE PACE OF PLAY GOING BY THROWING THE BALL TO THE PITCHER AFTER A FOUL BALL SO THE CATCHER CAN SET UP.

QUICK TIP

Base umpire(s) working around second base should treat a play the same as if a plate umpire would the point-of-plate. Make an adjustment around second base depending on where the throw originated, just like a plate umpire adjusts around the plate. Be patient, see the throw and move, if needed.
When the game is on the line, will you be ready?

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