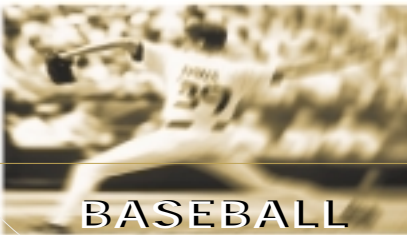




2003



**BASEBALL**

Rules and  
Interpretations

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2003  
NCAA  
BASEBALL  
RULES

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NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



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# NCAA Baseball Rules Committee

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Roger Maisner, Mansfield University of Pennsylvania

*\*\*Re-elected without restriction.*

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# Major Rules Changes for 2003

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The figures below refer to rule and section, respectively.

Each changed or altered segment is indented and identified in the rules by a screened background.

<i>Rule</i>		<i>Page</i>
1-14-b	Recommended bat handlers wear helmets .....	24
1-14-e	Added elbow pad rules.....	24
2	Obstruction definition clarified .....	32
3-2	Assistant coaches not allowed to appeal .....	36
6-1-e	Ball in play when fielder maintains body control .....	61
2, 7-4-b	Strike zone altered, diagram added.....	35, 71
8-3-1	New rule for ball lodging in player's equipment .....	80
Appendix B	New appendix for Video/Scoreboards.....	113

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# Index to Editorial Changes

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The following are editorial changes to the playing rules. Although the editorial changes are minor, it is the rules committee's intent to inform umpires, coaches, administrators and players of all changes in the rules book.

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Each changed or altered segment is indented and identified in the rules by a screened background.

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## 2003 Editorial Changes

<i>Rule</i>		<i>Page</i>
1-5-c	“Should” changed to “must” in bullpen section.....	18
1-10	Equipment information.....	19
2 and 5-8-b (4)	Ten-Run Rule .....	34, 51
4-7	Substitutions moved to Rule 5-5 .....	46



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# Points of Emphasis

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The “Points of Emphasis” section calls attention to certain areas of the game that the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee believes need to be addressed.

Points of emphasis are accentuated with a frame around the specific rule within the main text of the rules book.

This year the Rules Committee would like officials and coaches to place emphasis on the following rules:

<b>Situation</b>	<b>Rule</b>	<b>Page</b>
Uniforms	1-13	22
Tobacco use	3-10	40
Obstruction	2, 6-4-e	31, 64
Strike zone	2, 7-4-b	33, 71

The NCAA Baseball Rules have been designated as either administrative rules or conduct rules. Typically, administrative rules are those dealing with preparation for the contest. The conduct rules are those that have to do directly with the playing of the contest. Some administrative rules (as indicated) may be altered by the mutual consent of the competing institutions. Others (as indicated) are unalterable. No conduct rule may be changed by mutual consent. All NCAA member institutions hosting varsity games are required to conduct their intercollegiate contests according to these rules. NCAA member institutions playing games at non-member institutions may play by the rules of the host school.

In the 2003 Baseball Rules, the administrative rules that may be altered by mutual consent of the competing institutions are:

Rule 1: Sections 2-b, 3-d, 4, 5, 7, 15, 16.

Rule 3: Sections 4, 5.

Rule 4: Sections 5, 8.

Rule 5: Section 8.

The administrative rules that may **not** be altered are:

Rule 1: Sections 3, 6, 8, 9.

Rule 3: Sections 1, 2, 3, 6-a, 6-b.

Rule 4: Sections 2, 3, 4.

Rule 10: Sections 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

All of the other rules are conduct rules and may not be altered.

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# Code of Ethics

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Baseball as a game has been played at the colleges and universities of this country for more than 140 years. Only the highest standards of sportsmanship and conduct are expected of players, coaches and others associated with the game.

## **COACHING/PLAYER'S ETHICS**

1. It is the coaches' duty to be in control of their players at all times in order to prevent any unsportsmanlike act toward opponents, officials or spectators.
2. Coaches are expected to comply wholeheartedly with the intent and spirit of the rules. The deliberate teaching of players to violate the rules is indefensible.
3. Coaches must teach their players to respect the dignity of the game, officials, opponents and the institutions that they represent.
4. Coaches must confine their discussion with the game officials to the interpretations of the rules and not challenge umpire decisions involving judgment.
5. "Bench jockeying" will not be allowed. Coaches are to prohibit bench jockeying, which would include personal and malicious remarks, cursing and obscene language toward opponents, umpires or spectators.
6. Coaches must refrain from any personal action that might arouse players or spectators to unsportsmanlike behavior.
7. Coaches must expect from the umpires a courteous and dignified attitude toward players and themselves.
8. Coaches must seek help from school administrators in controlling unruly students and spectators.

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# Major Rules Differences

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NCAA baseball rules essentially are the same as for professional baseball; however, there are some safety-related differences—some minor and a few major—of which participants should be aware. It is the responsibility of the players, coaches and umpires who are participating under the NCAA rules to know the rules. Particular attention is directed to the following rules:

<b>NCAA Rule No.</b>	<b>Rule</b>	<b>Pro Rule No.</b>
9-2-k	Ambidextrous pitcher	No rule
8-6-b-(4)	Appeal—offensive team initiates a play before appeal	No rule
1-11	The bat	1.10
7-1-c	Batter's-box rule	No rule
1-14	Batting helmet	1.16
3-9	Blood rule	No rule
6-1-d	Catch in dugout	7.04
5-15-b	Coaches-misconduct rule	No rule
8-7	Collisions by runner	No rule
5-2-d	Control of offensive team	No rule
7-2	Designated-hitter rule	6.10
5-12-h	Double forfeit	No rule
3-6-c	Ejected from game	9.01
5-16	Fight-rule penalty	No rule
5-9	Halted game	No rule
9-3-f	Hidden-ball play	8.05
2	Misconduct	No rule
6-5-f	Offensive-conference rule	No rule
5-16-c	Penalty for leaving position to fight	No rule
5-16-d	Penalty for pitcher intentionally throwing at batter	8.02
9-2-d	Pitcher going to the mouth	8.02
9-4-e	Pitcher reentering game	3.03
5-13	Protest procedure	4.19
8-4	Slide rule on force play	7.09

<b>NCAA</b>		<b>Pro</b>
<b>Rule No.</b>	<b>Rule</b>	<b>Rule No.</b>
5-8-b-(4)	Ten-run rule	No rule
9-4-d	Trip to mound concluded	8.00

For information or interpretations of the rules, contact the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee:

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# RULE 1

## The Game, Playing Field and Equipment

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An Approved Ruling (A.R.) is an official decision of the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee [hereafter “rules committee”] regarding a specific rule or part of a rule. It serves to illustrate the spirit and application of the rules. Approved Rulings follow the rules they amplify.

### The Game

SECTION 1. Baseball is a game made up of two teams of nine players each. The team at bat is known as the offensive team, and its objective is to have its batters become base runners and its runners to advance legally, touching all bases. When this is done, a run is scored.

The team in the field is known as the defensive team, and its objective is to prevent offensive players from becoming base runners and advancing around the bases. When three offensive players are legally put out, the teams change from the offensive to the defensive and from defensive to offensive.

The object of each team is to score more runs than its opponents. The winner of the game shall be the team that scores, in accordance with these rules, the greater number of runs at the conclusion of a regulation game.

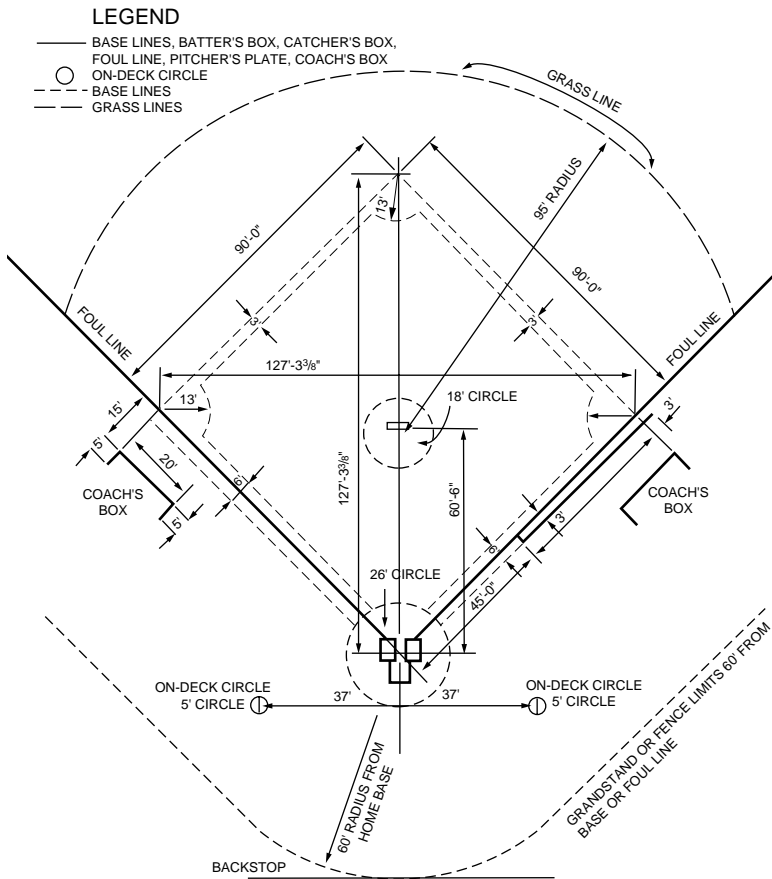
In college baseball, the two teams represent their respective institutions and play the game in conformity with the rules that follow.

### The Playing Field

#### **Infield, Outfield Dimensions**

SECTION 2. a. The infield shall be a 90-foot square. Note in the diagram on page 14 that the center of second base is one corner of the 90-foot square and the measurement to first and third bases is to the back edge of each base. All measurements are to be made from the apex or back point of







home plate. The outfield shall be the area between two foul lines formed by extending the two outer sides of the square.

- b. The recommended distances for outfield fences are 330 feet from the apex of home plate to each foul pole; 375 feet in both right- and left-center field; 400 feet in straightaway center field. If the distance to the foul pole is less than 330 feet, the fence should be rounded out to the recommended distances in right- and left-center field and straightaway center field, if possible.
- c. It is recommended highly that the outfield be enclosed completely by a solid and secure outfield fence. If possible, a permanent fence should be at least 6 feet high and preferably 8 feet high.
  - (1) If a snow fence must be used, the posts must be placed on the outside of the fence, and the top of each post must be below the top of the fence. The top of the snow fence should be bonded with 1-by-4 inch boards on both sides and flush with the top of the fence. Snow fences are potentially dangerous and their use is discouraged.
  - (2) The flexible nylon windscreen-type fence is neither solid nor secure and presents a problem when determining if a ball is caught within the field of play. In such a case, caught within the field of play shall mean that the defensive player must have possession of the ball (legal catch) while inside the boundary of the fence. The catch CAN-NOT be made legally while the player's foot is stepping on, over or against the fence. All other rules pertaining to a legal catch shall be the same as Rule 2, definition of a catch, page 27.

**A.R.**—A defensive player may touch or lean against the fence with the body or hands and make a legal catch even though the fence is pushed back, but may not push back or down with either foot. This rule also pertains to an out-of-bounds fence.

- d. All college baseball facilities shall have a regulation bullpen for both teams constructed to the exact measurements of the mound on the playing field (see 4-3-e).

### **Boxes—Batters', Catcher's, Etc.**

SECTION 3. Batters' boxes, catcher's box, coaches' boxes, next batter's box and the 3-foot first base restraining line shall be laid out in accordance with the diagram. All lines must be marked with chalk or nonburning white material and must be 2 to 3 inches in width. The line is inside the diamond proper at first and third base. The outside edge of the line should correspond with the outside edge of the base.

- a. Before a contest, it is mandatory to line all four sides of the 4 feet by 6 feet batter's box as shown in the diagram on page 14. At the time of the pitch, the batter shall have both feet inside the batter's box.
- b. It is mandatory that the catcher's box be lined as shown in the diagram on page 14.  
A.R.—There is no penalty. The umpire shall call time and have the catcher move to a legal receiving position.
- c. The coaches' boxes shall be 20 feet by 5 feet and 15 feet from the foul line as shown in the diagram on page 15.
- d. It is recommended that the first and third base lines be skinned 15 inches inside of the base line (no more than 36 inches) and 36 inches outside of each base line.

### **Surface Drainage**

SECTION 4. For natural surface drainage, it is recommended that the entire playing area be graded two-thirds of one percent starting at the edge of the pitcher's rubber (excluding the mound) to the sideline boundaries of the field. The top of the pitcher's rubber should be 10 inches higher than the level of home plate.

### **New Fields**

SECTION 5. All new fields should be oriented with consideration to the following factors: protection of players (hitter, catcher, pitcher and others in that order); comfort of spectators; season of use (March-June); latitude (north to south); east-west geographical location within time zone; prevailing winds; daylight saving time; background and obstacles or barriers.

When constructing a baseball diamond, first designate a point for the rear tip of home plate. Secondly, with the aid of the above guidelines, locate the desired direction of second base. Using a steel tape or strong cord, measure 127 feet,  $3\frac{3}{8}$  inches in this direction. This is the center of second base. With the tape still in this position, locate the pitcher's plate 60 feet, 6 inches from home plate toward second base. With the tape still fastened to the rear point of home plate, measure 90 feet toward first base and scribe a short arc. Also measure 90 feet toward third base and scribe a short arc. Now fasten the tape at the center of second base and measure 90 feet toward first and third base, respectively. Scribe a short arc each time. First and third bases are located where the respective arcs intersect.

- a. It is recommended that a warning track be constructed in front of the outfield fence, backstop and dugout areas. The warning track should be a minimum of 15 feet in width.

- b. It is recommended that the distance from home plate to the backstop be 60 feet and the distance from the base line to the sideline boundary be 60 feet and extended to a point down the line as deep as the skinned portion of the infield. At this point, the sideline fences are to be extended at an angle to a minimum point of 30 feet outside each foul pole. These distances would be used on each side of the field.
- c. It is recommended that bullpens be set up outside the playing area and located so that relief pitchers will be throwing in the same direction as when they throw from the mound on the playing field and that each bullpen have a mound or mounds constructed to the exact measurements of the mound on the playing field.

Each bullpen must be large enough to allow two pitchers to warm up at the same time and must be equipped with the regulation-size home plates and pitcher's rubbers.

- d. All new fields should meet the specifications set forth in 1-2-a and 1-2-b.
- e. The "on-deck" circle, where distance is restricted, should be located a minimum of 30 feet from home plate, in line with the front edge of the dugout. The recommended distance is 37 feet.

### **Home Plate**

SECTION 6. Home plate is a five-sided slab of whitened rubber. One edge is 17 inches long, two are 8½ inches and two are 12 inches. It shall be set in the ground so that the two 12-inch edges coincide with the diamond lines extending to home plate from first base and third base and with the 17-inch edge facing the pitcher. The top edges of home plate shall be beveled; and the plate shall be fixed in the ground, level with the ground surface.

### **First, Second and Third Bases**

SECTION 7. First, second and third bases shall be white canvas bags, or suitable rubberized material, securely fastened to the ground. Each bag shall be 15 inches square, filled with soft material to a thickness of 3 to 5 inches.

- a. A release-type base may be used for NCAA competition.
- b. The double first base may be used only during regular-season competition.

**A.R.**—If any base is dislodged from its position during a play, a runner shall be considered as touching or occupying the base if the runner touches or occupies the point originally marked by the dislodged base.

### **Pitcher's Rubber**

SECTION 8. The pitcher's rubber is a rectangular whitened rubber slab, 24

inches by 6 inches, set in the ground with the nearer edge at a distance of 60 feet 6 inches from the back point of home plate.

### **Pitcher's Mound**

SECTION 9. a. The top of the pitcher's rubber must be 10 inches above the top surface of home plate. The 10-inch height can be measured easily by the use of a line level. There should be a gradual slope of 1 inch per foot from a point 6 inches in front of the pitcher's rubber to a point 6 feet toward home plate. From this point, the mound should slope and blend into the grade of the rest of the playing surface.

- b. The top of the pitcher's mound should be level with the top of the pitcher's rubber, extending from the point 6 inches in front of the pitcher's rubber to 22 inches behind the pitcher's rubber and 18 inches from each end of the pitcher's rubber. This gives a level area 5 feet wide and 34 inches deep that includes the 6-inch width of the pitcher's rubber.
- c. Maintenance of the pitching mound, before and during games, should be the responsibility of the home management. Unburnt brick clay, plastic blue or gray clay mixed with some of the existing soil is recommended for reconditioning worn out spots. It is recommended that the home management provide foul weather covers for the home-plate and mound areas.

## Equipment

The rules committee is responsible for formulating the official playing rules for the sport.

Only equipment that meets specifications published in the NCAA Baseball Rules may be used in intercollegiate competition. The rules committee is responsible for interpretations of NCAA rules and for compliance with those rules.

The rules committee suggests that manufacturers planning innovative changes in baseball equipment submit the equipment to the rules committee for review before production.

### **The Ball**

SECTION 10. The ball is a sphere weighing not less than 5 nor more than 5¼ ounces avoirdupois and measuring not less than 9 inches nor more than 9½ inches in circumference. It shall be formed by yarn wound around a small core of rubber, cork or combination of both and covered by two pieces of white horsehide or cowhide tightly stitched together. The coeffi-

cient of restitution (COR) of a baseball cannot exceed .555.

- a. The home team shall present one dozen game baseballs to the umpires to be rubbed up to remove the gloss before the game starts. Enough balls should be rubbed up so that a glossy ball is not used in the game. Moistened river silt makes an excellent material to remove the gloss from baseballs.
- b. Before the game, the umpire-in-chief shall determine whether game balls meet those specifications. During the contest, any umpire may judge the fitness of the ball for play.
- c. No player intentionally shall damage or discolor the ball.

**PENALTY for c.—The umpire shall demand the ball, warn the player and if the practice continues, remove the player from the game.**

*Note: The official game ball for 2003 NCAA tournament play will be the raised-seam, Rawlings R1-NCAA.*

### **The Bat**

SECTION 11. a. **Wood bat.** The bat must be a smooth, rounded stick not more than  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches in diameter at its thickest part nor more than 42 inches in length. There must be a direct line from the center of the knob to the center of the large end. Any material to improve the grip may be used for a distance not to exceed 18 inches from the end of the handle. It is mandatory that all bats have an identification mark 18 inches from the end of the handle. An indentation in the end of the bat up to 1 inch in depth is permitted (cupped bats). All bats other than one-piece solid white ash must be certified in accordance with the NCAA certification program.

#### b. Nonwood bat.

- (1) The entire bat must be round with a constant radius at any point and the finish of the hitting area must be smooth.
- (2) There must be a direct line from the center of the knob to the center of the large end.
- (3) The maximum length is 36 inches and the maximum diameter is  $2\frac{5}{8}$  inches.
- (4) The knob and end plug (if applicable) must be firmly attached.
- (5) A bat may not weigh, numerically, more than three units less than the length of the bat (e.g., a 34-inch-long bat cannot weigh less than 31 ounces).

- (6) A non-wood bat must have an approved, coded certification mark on the barrel of the bat signifying the bat is legal for NCAA competition.

**PENALTY for a. and b.—Any bat, which does not display the approved certification mark, or in the umpire’s judgment or upon appeal of the opposing team, has been altered so as to affect the distance factor or cause an unusual reaction on the baseball shall be removed from the game. The batter, either after taking a position in the batter’s box or after hitting, shall be declared out. Base runners shall not advance.**

- c. It is mandatory that all bats have an identification mark 18 inches from the end of the handle. No foreign substance that will in any way discolor the ball may be added to the surface of the bat beyond 18 inches from the end of the handle.
- d. For game and practice use, all aluminum bats must have a leather, rubber or taped grip securely attached to the bat handle.

**PENALTY for c. and d.—If the bat is not marked 18 inches from the knob, or has pine tar or a foreign substance beyond the 18-inch mark, the bat must be removed from the game and the player warned. If the practice continues, the player is to be removed from the game. If a bat’s handle should become loose and the bat must be removed from the game, the same practice is to be followed. Neither of these infractions is cause for calling the batter out.**

### **Gloves or Mitts**

SECTION 12. a. The catcher may wear a glove or mitt of any dimension.

- b. The first baseman’s glove or mitt must not be more than 12 inches long or eight inches wide. The webbing shall not be constructed so as to form a net type of trap.

**A.R.—**The length measurement of any glove/mitt shall be from the bottom edge or heel straight up across the palm. The width measurement for the first baseman’s mitt shall be from the center of the base section between the thumb and the first finger to the outside

edge of the little finger. The crotch area for the first baseman's mitt shall not exceed five inches in length,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches in width at the top and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches at the base.

- c. Every player except the catcher and first baseman is restricted to the use of a fielder's glove not more than 12 inches long nor more than eight inches wide.

**A.R.**—For the fielder's glove, the measurement shall be from the base of the inside seam of the first finger to the outside edge of the little finger. These measurements shall not exceed  $5\frac{3}{4}$  inches in width at the top and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches at the base. The pitcher's glove must be uniform in color but not white or gray.

**PENALTIES for a., b., and c.—**

- (1) A violator shall be given reasonable time to correct the situation. If it is not done, the violator shall be ejected from the game.**
- (2) If a catch is made with illegal equipment, the offensive team has the choice of taking the play or having the play voided with the pitch being made again (see 8-6-b).**

**Uniforms**

**SECTION 13.** The uniforms of all participating players and coaches of the team shall be of the same color and style, caps.

It is required that each team have two sets of uniform jerseys of contrasting colors. It is the responsibility of the visiting team to wear a contrasting uniform color to the jersey worn by the home team. It is recommended that both teams wear the full pregame or regular-game uniforms when entering the playing field.

- a. All uniforms must include numbers on the back of the shirt. These numbers shall be at least 6 inches in height.
- b. Except for the standard shoe plate or toe plate, no player shall attach anything to the sole or heel of the shoe. Shoes with pointed metal spikes similar to golf or track shoes shall not be worn.
- c. Polished metal or glass buttons shall not be used on a uniform. If a pitcher wears a helmet, it must have a nonglossy finish.
- d. Any part of an undershirt exposed to view shall be of the same solid color other than white. Sleeve lengths may vary for each individual, but each player must wear sleeves of approximately the same length (torn or ragged sleeves are prohibited). A uniform shall not contain a pattern that imitates or suggests the shape of a baseball.

e. A player or coach may wear a jacket under the uniform top if it is the same color as the team's undershirts.

f. In accordance with NCAA Bylaw 12.5.4-(b):

- (1) An institution's uniform or an item of apparel (e.g., team jersey, socks) that is worn by a student-athlete while representing the institution in intercollegiate baseball may contain only a single manufacturer's or distributor's logo or trademark on the outside of the apparel (regardless of the visibility of the logo or trademark). The logo or trademark must be contained within a four-sided geometrical figure (e.g., rectangle, square, parallelogram) that does not exceed  $2\frac{1}{4}$  square inches. The item of apparel may contain more than one manufacturer's or distributor's logo or trademark on the inside of the apparel, provided the logo or trademark is not visible.
- (2) A single manufacturer's or distributor's logo or trademark, not to exceed  $2\frac{1}{4}$  square inches, may appear on both the jersey and pants of a student-athlete's uniform.
- (3) If an institution's uniform or any item of apparel worn by a student-athlete in competition contains washing instructions on the outside of the apparel or on a patch that also includes the manufacturer's or distributor's logo or trademark, the entire patch must be contained within a four-sided, geometrical figure (e.g., rectangle, square, parallelogram) that does not exceed  $2\frac{1}{4}$  square inches.
- (4) The restriction on the size of a manufacturer's or distributor's logo or trademark is applicable to all apparel worn by student-athletes during the conduct of the institution's competition, which includes any pregame or postgame activities (e.g., postgame celebrations on the field, pre- or postgame press conferences) involving student-athletes.

### **Protective Equipment**

SECTION 14. a. **Helmet.** It is required that every player wear a double-earflap protective helmet while batting, on deck and running bases. No player will be allowed to bat or run the bases without wearing such a helmet. Helmets that are cracked, split or broken shall not be worn. For speeding up play, it is recommended that the base runner continue to wear the same helmet worn while batting.



A.R. Tape of any kind on the helmet is not allowed and must be removed from the game.

A.R. 2—All batting helmets must bear the manufacturer's certification indicating satisfaction of NOCSAE test standards.

PENALTY—If an umpire observes a player wearing an illegal helmet before coming to bat, while at bat or while on base, the umpire shall instruct the player to change to a legal helmet without penalty. If the player refuses to change helmets, the player shall be ejected from the contest.

b. Bat handlers. It is recommended that all bat handlers wear helmets.

c. Catcher's Throat Guard. It is required that all catchers have a built-in or attachable throat guard on their masks.

d. Catcher's Helmet. It is required that all catchers shall wear a protective helmet and face mask when fielding their position, warming up a pitcher (i.e., between innings) or catching in the bullpen.

A.R.—It is recommended that all catcher's helmets bear the manufacturer's certification indicating satisfaction of NOCSAE test standards.

**PENALTY for c. and d.—The player shall not be allowed to catch but shall not be ejected from the contest.**

e. Elbow pads. (1) A player is permitted to wear one (1) elbow protection pad that does not exceed 10 inches in length, as measured when the pad is lying flat.

(2) A nylon pad shall surround the shell of any elbow protection equipment.

(3) No player may wear a non-standard elbow protection pad, or any pad designed to protect the upper or lower arm, unless the player has an existing elbow or other arm injury and the team carries with them

the following documentation:

- (a) A letter identifying the player and describing the nature of the injury and describing the proposed elbow protection pad;
- (b) A physician's report diagnosing the injury; and
- (c) A physician's determination of length of time the protective pad will be necessary.

## Dugouts and Scoreboard

### Dugouts (Players' Benches)

SECTION 15. Players' benches for both teams must be furnished by the home team. It is recommended that these benches be enclosed at either end, at the rear and overhead, or that appropriate dugouts be a part of each new field, and that the center of each dugout be located on the sideline boundary at a point equal distance from home plate and first base and home plate and third base [45 feet].

- a. All players and substitutes of both teams must be in their team's dugout area or bullpen and remain there until the ball has been declared dead or the side has been retired. This excludes the batter, the on-deck batters, base runners, base coaches and the nine defensive players (see 5-2-c).
- b. If a facility has limited dugout space and it is necessary for players or team representatives to be outside of the dugout, a clearly visible out-of-bounds line should be added at both bench areas to identify the dead-ball area. All nonparticipating players shall remain in this area until the ball has been declared dead.
- c. During a game, no one except players in uniform, coaches, managers, trainers, physicians, scorekeepers and bat persons shall occupy a team's dugout.
- d. All loose equipment (e.g., bats, gloves, chairs, etc.) must be kept in the dugout or in a clearly marked dead-ball area.

**A.R.**—If a pitched, batted or thrown ball touches equipment that is in live-ball territory, the ball remains live.

### Scoreboard

SECTION 16. It is recommended that a scoreboard that shows balls, strikes, outs and line score be located in such a position on the field so that it can be seen easily by both teams and spectators. Scoreboards shall not be placed in line with the batter's background sector of vision.

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# RULE 2

## Definitions

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### **Appeal**

The act of a player or coach claiming a violation of the rules by the opposing team or misinterpretation of them by the umpires. For specific appeals see: bat (1-11), base coach (3-3), checked swing (3-6-e), batting out of order (7-11-a) and runner (8-1-a and 8-6). For appeal procedure, see 8-6-b.

### **Balk**

An illegal act by the pitcher with a runner or runners on base (see 9-3).

### **Ball**

A pitch or partial delivery that does not enter the strike zone and meets one of five criteria (see 7-5).

### **Base**

One of four points that must be touched by a runner in order to score a run. They are usually canvas or rubberized bags except for the rubber home plate (see 1-6, 1-7 and 8-1).

### **Base Coach**

A team member or a coach, in proper uniform, who is stationed in the coach's box at first or third base.

### **Base on Balls**

An award of first base granted to a batter who, during the time at bat, receives four pitches outside the strike zone (see 7-5).

### **Batter**

The offensive player positioned in the batter's box.

### **Batter's Box**

The area within which the batter is positioned when at bat.

### **Batter-Runner**

A term that identifies the offensive player who has just finished the time at bat and is either put out or becomes a runner before the play ends.

### **Battery**

The pitcher and catcher.

**Bench or Dugout**

The area reserved for team personnel in proper uniform engaged in the game.

**Bullpen**

The area in foul or dead-ball territory, generally between the dugout and outfield fence, where substitute pitchers, catchers and other players warm up. **It must contain two regulation pitching rubbers and home plates and should have seating for four to six players.**

**Bunt**

A legally batted ball, not swung at but intentionally met with the bat and tapped within the infield (see 7-9).

**Called Game**

One in which, for any reason, the umpire-in-chief terminates play.

**Catch**

The act of a fielder in getting secure possession in the hand or glove of a ball in flight and firmly holding it, providing the fielder does not use the cap, protector, pocket or any other part of the uniform in getting possession.

In establishing the validity of the catch, the fielder shall demonstrate complete control of the ball and that the release of the ball is voluntary and intentional.

- a. If the fielder has made the catch and drops the ball while in the act of making a throw (i.e., reaching for the ball in the glove) after the catch, the ball shall be judged to have been caught.
- b. If a fielder falls over or through the fence after making a catch within the field of play, the batter shall be retired and the ball is dead (see 6-1-d and 8-3-1).
- c. It is not a catch if, simultaneously with or immediately after contact with the ball, the fielder collides with a player or fence or falls down and, as a result, drops the ball.
- d. It is not a catch if a fielder touches a fly ball that then hits a member of the offensive team or an umpire and then is caught by that fielder or another defensive player.
- e. It is not a legal catch if either foot is touching dead-ball territory when the catch is made.

**Catcher**

The fielder who takes a position in back of home plate.

**Catcher's Box**

That area that the catcher shall occupy until the pitcher releases the ball (see 1-3-b).

**Checked Swing**

A checked swing shall be called a strike if the barrel head of the bat crosses the front edge of home plate **or the batter's front hip**.

A.R.—This does not apply to a bunt attempt when the batter pulls the bat back.

**Dead Ball**

A ball not in play because play legally has been suspended temporarily.

**Defense**

The player or team not at bat and in the field.

**Designated Hitter**

A player who may be designated to bat for the pitcher only (see 7-2).

**Disqualified Player**

A player who no longer is eligible to participate in the game but who has not been ejected (e.g., a player who leaves the lineup because of injury or substitution).

**Double Forfeit**

If both teams are equally at fault and the situation is so out of control that the umpires believe the contest cannot be safely continued, or if neither team has enough eligible players available to continue the game, a double forfeit shall be called.

**Double Play**

A play by the defense in which two offensive players are put out as a result of continuous action, providing there is no error between the putouts.

**Doubleheader**

Two regularly scheduled games played in immediate succession (see 5-7).

**Ejection**

The game officials have the authority to eject a player, coach or team representative for misconduct or unsportsmanlike conduct. The offending individual must leave the field and dugout area immediately and is not allowed to communicate with the teams or umpires.

**Fair Ball**

A legally batted ball that settles on or over fair territory. A fair fly shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line,

including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder at the time of contact.

**Fair Territory**

That part of the playing field within and including the first and third base lines from home plate to the bottom of the playing-field fence and perpendicularly upwards. Both foul lines are in fair territory.

**Fielder**

A defensive player.

**Fielder's Choice**

The act of a fielder who, in playing a fair ground ball, attempts to or does retire another base runner rather than throwing to first base to put out the batter/runner.

**Fly Ball**

A batted ball that goes high in the air directly off the bat.

**Force Play**

A play in which a runner legally loses the right to occupy a base by reason of the batter becoming a runner.

**Forfeited Game**

A game declared ended and awarded to the offended team by the umpire-in-chief (see 5-12 and 10-28).

**Foul Ball**

A batted ball that:

- Settles on foul territory between home plate and first base or third base;
- Bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory;
- First touches foul territory beyond first or third base, or
- Touches a player, umpire or any object not part of the playing field while over foul territory.

**A.R.**—A ball is to be judged fair or foul with respect to its position relative to the foul lines and not with respect to the position of the fielder at the time of contact.

**Foul Territory**

That part of the playing field outside the first and third base lines extended to the fence and perpendicularly upwards.

**Foul Tip**

A batted ball that travels directly from the bat to the catcher's hands and is caught legally by the catcher. It is a strike and the ball is in play (see 7-8).

**Ground Ball**

A batted ball that rolls along the ground.

**Halted Game**

A called game that is stopped at any time after its start and is to be completed at a later date (see 5-9).

**Home Team**

The team on whose field the game is played. If the game is played on neutral grounds, the home team shall be determined by mutual agreement.

**Illegal Bat**

A bat that, which does not display the approved certification mark, or in the umpire's judgment or upon appeal of the opposing team, has been altered so as to affect the distance factor, or cause an unusual reaction on the baseball. This includes wooden bats that are filled, flat-surfaced, nailed, hollowed, grooved or covered with a substance such as paraffin, wax, etc., and metal bats that are flat-surfaced or have had the polyurethane core removed. (PENALTY—Rule 1-11)

**Illegal Pitch**

A pitch delivered to the batter without the pitcher's pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's rubber or the pitcher making a quick return pitch. With no runner(s) on base, it is a ball; with a runner(s) on base, it is a balk (see 9-1-d and 9-2-a).

**Illegally Batted Ball**

A ball hit by the batter with one or both feet on the ground and entirely outside the batter's box, or a ball hit by an illegal bat (see 1-11 and 7-10).

**In Flight**

Any batted, thrown or pitched ball that has not touched the ground or some object other than a player.

**Infield**

That area within the 90-foot square bounded by home plate, first, second and third bases.

**Infield Area**

That portion of the field included in an arc between the left- and right-field foul lines approximately 160 feet [56.4m] from home plate.

**Infield Fly**

A fair fly ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when first and second or first, sec-

ond and third bases are occupied before two are out. The pitcher, catcher and any outfielder who is positioned in the infield on the play shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule. The ball is live and runners may advance at their own risk. If a declared infield fly becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul.

**A.R.**—If a player intentionally drops a fair ball, the ball remains in play despite the provisions of 7-11-q. The infield fly rule takes precedence.

### **Infielder**

Fielders (usually four) who occupy positions between the pitcher's mound and the three outfielders (usually between or somewhat behind the bases).

### **Inning**

That portion of a game within which the teams alternate on offense and defense and in which there are three putouts for each team. Each team's time at bat is a half-inning.

### **Interference**

The act of an offensive player, umpire or nongame person that interferes with; physically or verbally hinders; confuses; or impedes any fielder attempting to make a play.

See specific rule sections for action to be taken: batter (6-2-d, 6-3-b, 7-11-f, k, l and n, 8-2-e, 8-5-l and p); batter-runner (7-11-l, m, o, p and q, 8-2-h, 8-5-e, o, p and q); runner (6-2-e and g, 6-4-b, 7-11-r and s, 8-2-g, 8-3-f and g, 8-5-d and k); coach (6-2-c, 8-3-j, 8-5-f and g); nongame personnel (4-8, 6-4-a, 7-11-t, 8-3-m); offensive team (5-2-d, 8-5-h and q); umpire (6-2-f, 6-3-a).

**A.R. 1**—If the umpire declares the batter, batter-runner or a runner out for interference, all other runners shall return to the last base that was touched legally at the time of the interference, unless otherwise provide by these rules. The ball is dead.

**A.R. 2**—If the batter-runner has not touched first base at the time of interference, all runners shall return to the base last occupied at the time of the pitch. If there was an intervening play made on another runner, all runners shall return to the base last touched at the time of interference.

**A.R. 3**—If a fielder has a chance to field a batted ball, but misplay it and while attempting to recover it, is unintentionally contacted by the base runner attempting to reach a base, interference shall not be called.

### **Misconduct**

Misconduct is any act of dishonesty, unsportsmanlike conduct or unprofessional behavior that discredits the contest, the institutions or intercollegiate athletics.

### **Obstruction**

The act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner.



See specific rule sections for action to be taken: catcher (8-2-e); fielder (8-2-e, f and g, 8-3-e, f and g); visual obstruction (8-3-f).

**A.R.**—Obstruction shall be called on a defensive player who blocks off a base, base line or home plate from a base runner while not in possession of the ball regardless of the result of the play.

- a. If a play is being made on a runner who is obstructed, the umpire shall call time, and the ball immediately is dead. If the ball is in flight on a wild throw before the obstruction is called, the runner(s) is awarded the base(s) that would have been reached if no obstruction had occurred (see 8-3-e).
- b. If a play is not being made on a runner or batter-runner who is obstructed, the umpire shall let the play proceed until all action stops, then call time and award any bases that are justified. If a runner(s) advances beyond what the umpire would have granted and is put out, the runner(s) is out.

**Offense (Offensive)**

The team at bat.

**Out**

A declaration by the umpire that a player who is trying for a base is not entitled to that base.

**Outfielder**

Fielders (usually three) who occupy positions most distant from home plate between the infielders and the playing-field fence.

**Overslide**

The act of an offensive player who slides with such momentum that contact is lost with the base.

**Pinch Hitter**

An eligible substitute player who is not listed in the lineup and bats for a player listed in the lineup.

**A.R.**—With a 10-player lineup, the pitcher only may pinch hit for the designated hitter [see 5-5-c, 7-2-c-(2) and 7-2-c-(10)].

**Pinch Runner**

An eligible substitute player who is not listed in the lineup and who runs for a player who has reached base (see 5-5-c and 5-5-f).

**Pitch**

The ball delivered by the pitcher to the batter while in contact with the pitcher's rubber.

**Pitcher**

The fielder designated to deliver the pitch to the batter.

**Pitcher's Pivot Foot**

The foot in contact with the pitching rubber when the pitcher is in the act of delivering the ball.

**Play**

The order given by the umpire to begin the game or resume play.

**Quick Pitch**

An illegal pitch made with the obvious intent to catch the batter off balance (see 9-2-a).

**Run Down**

The act of the defense in an attempt to put out a runner between bases.

**Runner**

An offensive player who is advancing to, returning to or touching a base.

**Safe**

A declaration by the umpire that a runner who is trying for a base is entitled to that base by virtue of reaching it before being tagged or forced out.

**Set Position**

One of the two legal pitching positions, usually used with runners on base (see 9-1-b).

**Squeeze Play**

A play whereby a team, with a runner on third base, attempts to score that runner by means of a bunt.

**Strike**

A legal pitch that can be called for one of seven criteria (see 7-4).

**Strike Zone**

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 (See diagram at the end of this section).

**Tag**

The action of a fielder in touching a base with any part of the body while holding the ball securely and firmly in the hand or glove or touching a runner with the ball or with the glove while holding the ball securely and firmly in that hand or glove.

**Ten-Run Rule**

By conference rule, or mutual consent of both coaches prior to the contest, a game may be stopped only after seven innings if one team is ahead by at least 10 runs.

Each team must play an equal number of innings unless shortened because the home team needs none or only part of its half of the final inning.

**Throw**

The act of hurling the ball, with various degrees of velocity, toward a given object, usually a teammate. A pitch is not a throw.

**Time**

The interruption of play by any umpire, making the ball dead.

**Time of the Pitch**

The time of the pitch is 1) in the wind-up position, when the pitcher makes any movement habitually connected with the delivery to the plate, or 2) in the set position, when the pitcher separates the hands starting the delivery to the plate.

**Touch**

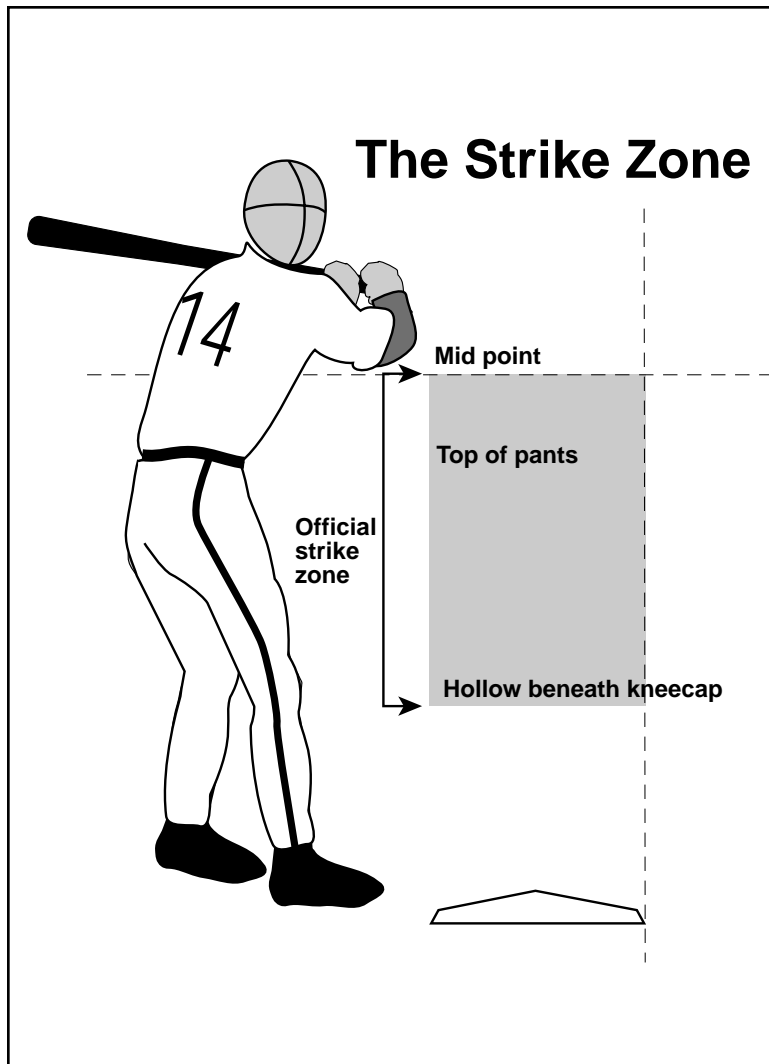
The contacting of any part of an opposing player's or umpire's body, clothing or equipment.

**Triple Play**

A continuous play by the defense in which three players are put out without an error between the putouts.

**Windup**

One of two legal pitching positions, usually made with no runners on base (see 9-1-a).



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# RULE 3

## Game Personnel and Their Duties

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### Head Coach

SECTION 1. A head coach is a person employed or appointed by an institution to be responsible for the team's actions on the field (usually the head coach also is responsible for the team's actions off the field) and to represent the team in communications with the umpire and the opposing team. A player may be designated as head coach in the event the head coach is absent.

- a. The head coach may delegate specific duties prescribed by the rules to a player or assistant coach, and any action of such designated representatives shall be official. The head coach always shall be responsible for the team's conduct, observance of the official rules and deference to the umpire.
- b. If a head coach leaves the field, a player or assistant coach shall be designated as the substitute; and such substitute coach shall have the duties, rights and responsibilities of the head coach. If the head coach fails or refuses to designate a substitute before leaving, the umpire-in-chief shall designate a team member as substitute head coach.

### Assistant Coach

SECTION 2. An assistant coach is a person who assists the head coach. The assistant coach is ineligible to compete as a player.

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Assistant coaches may not leave their position, dugout or bullpen area to appeal any play on the field.

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### Base Coach

SECTION 3. a. A base coach is an eligible team member, head coach or assistant coach who occupies the coach's box at first or third base to direct the batter or runner. A base coach must be in the same type and

color of uniform, including the team outer (warm-up) jacket, as the team's players.

- b. A base coach shall be obliged to stay within the confines of these boxes with both feet. A coach may leave the coach's box to signal the player to slide or advance or return to a base as long as the individual does not interfere with the play.
- c. Base coaches may address only their team members.
- d. A base coach may not use language that will reflect negatively upon the players, umpires or spectators.

**PENALTY for b., c. and d.—Ejection from game after a warning.**

- e. A base coach may not physically assist a runner in returning to or leaving the base.
- f. A base coach may not leave the box or act in a manner to draw a throw by a fielder or distract the pitcher.

**PENALTY for e. and f.—A delayed dead ball shall be called. At the conclusion of the play, the assisted runner shall be declared out and all runners not put out shall return to the base occupied at the time of the interference.**

**Team Manager**

SECTION 4. Team managers are individuals whose duties are designated by the head coach.

**Official Scorer**

SECTION 5. A representative of the home team, league or conference should be designated as the official scorer. This person shall keep the records as designated in the official scorebook. It is recommended that the official scorer be seated in the press box or stands and ensure that the home and visitor's scorebooks agree.

**Umpires**

SECTION 6. a. Game officials are the umpire-in-chief (plate umpire) and one, two or three field umpires. Any umpire has the authority to order a player, coach or team attendant to do or refrain from doing anything that affects the administering of these rules and to enforce prescribed penalties.

*Note: Umpires should arrive at the game site at least 60 minutes before game time and notify the home team. Umpires, and the home team coach, should have a current NCAA rules book available at the game site.*

- b. Each umpire is an approved official of the institution, league or conference and is authorized and required to enforce each section of these rules. Further, the individual is obliged to conduct the game under conditions conducive to the highest standards of good sportsmanship. Each umpire has the authority to rule on any point not specifically covered in these rules.
- c. Any umpire shall eject any player, coach, manager or trainer for acts of misconduct or for violations of the Coaches' and Players' Code of Ethics (see page 10).

**A.R. 1**—The umpire first may warn any violator before ejecting the individual(s) from the game.

**A.R. 2**—If any person is ejected from the game, the individual shall leave the field immediately. If the person refuses to leave after a reasonable amount of time (not to exceed one minute) or returns to the playing field later in the game, the umpire in chief shall contact game management or security personnel for assistance.

**PENALTY - The offending person is suspended for one game. If game management or security personnel cannot restore order and the game resumed in a reasonable amount of the time the umpire in chief shall forfeit the game.**

**A.R. 3**—An ejected person may not remain in the dugout, runway, bullpen or press box during the remainder of the game. The person may sit in the stands, far removed from the playing field or leave the ballpark. The ejected person may not communicate in any way with their team personnel or umpires.

**A.R. 4**—Any umpire may eject and suspend any player, coach, manager or trainer if the violation warrants a suspension (see 5-15 and 5-16 for suspension penalties).

- d. If there is a reasonable doubt about some decision being in conflict with the rules, the head coach has the right to appeal an umpire's decision and seek its reversal.
- e. When asked by a coach or player, the plate umpire must seek a decision from the appropriate base umpire regarding the "checked swing." Such appeal **ONLY** may be made when the plate umpire has called the pitch a ball.
- A.R.**—Balls, strikes and checked swings are not to be argued. After a warning, any player or coach who continues to argue balls, strikes or checked swings shall be ejected from the game. Umpires shall record the warning.
- f. No umpire shall criticize or interfere with another umpire's decision, unless asked by the one making it; however, if there is a misinterpretation of a rule, it should be brought to the attention of the umpire-in-chief.
- g. No umpire may be replaced in a game unless the individual becomes ill or injured.

- h. When two or more umpires render different decisions on the same play, the umpire-in-chief shall consult with all the umpires away from all players and coaches. The umpire-in-chief shall determine which decision shall be accepted.
- i. Players, coaches and umpires are prohibited from deliberately erasing the batter's box or other lines. There is no penalty. Umpires must stop the individual from erasing the lines.

### **Umpire-in-Chief**

SECTION 7. The umpire-in-chief has sole authority to forfeit a game, and has jurisdiction over any rules matters not assigned to the field umpire in 3-8. The umpire-in-chief's duties include those covered in 3-6 and also the following:

- a. Call or indicate "Play" to start the game, "Time" when the ball becomes dead and "Play" when play is resumed;
- b. Call and count all balls and strikes (see 3-6-e) and give a clear visual and verbal indication of all strikes;
- c. Make all decisions on the batter;
- d. Determine fair and foul balls;
- e. Announce each substitution or have this announced through the public-address system;
- f. Have the lights turned on when necessary for safety reasons. Whenever possible, this should be done at the beginning of an inning;
- g. Call the game when conditions become unfit for play and when the last out is made;
- h. Eject a player or coach;
- i. Clear the bench. "Clear the bench" means the affected participants must leave the dugout area; however, these participants remain eligible to participate in the contest.
- j. Penalize for rule infractions, and
- k. Forfeit the game for prescribed infractions by spectators, players, coaches or other persons subject to these rules (see 5-12-h Note).

### **Field Umpire**

SECTION 8. a. A field or base umpire may take any position desired and shall aid the umpire-in-chief in administering the rules. The base umpire shall make all decisions on the bases except those reserved to the umpire-in-chief, and shall have concurrent jurisdiction with the umpire-in-chief in calling time, balks, defacement or discoloration of the



ball by the pitcher, use of an illegal pitch, when a fly is caught or in ejecting any player for unsportsmanlike conduct or infractions as prescribed by the rules.

- b. If there is only one field umpire, this individual shall make all decisions at first and second base and such decisions at third base as cannot be made more conveniently by the umpire-in-chief.
- c. If additional field umpires are used, they are referred to as base umpires; and their normal positions are behind third and second bases. They have concurrent jurisdiction with the first-base umpire.
- d. Base umpires and coaches shall require players to remain in the dugout or dead-ball territory while the ball is in play. Players shall not leave the dugout until the ball is dead.

**PENALTY—For the first offense, a warning shall be issued. For the second offense, ejection of a player.**

### **Medical Personnel**

SECTION 9. Aggressive treatment of open wounds or skin lesions should be followed. In particular, whenever an athletics participant suffers a laceration or wound where oozing or bleeding occurs, the practice or game should be stopped at the earliest possible time, and the athlete should leave the field of play and be given appropriate medical treatment. During practice, the athlete should not return to the field of play without the approval of medical personnel. If, during a game, the athlete can be treated without undue delay, play shall be stopped until the athlete has received treatment and is cleared to play by medical personnel. However, if the bleeding requires extensive treatment, a substitute shall replace the injured player.

### **Tobacco Rule**

SECTION 10. The use of all tobacco products by student-athletes and game personnel (e.g., coaches, umpires, athletic trainers, managers) is prohibited during practice sessions and game competition.

**PENALTY—Disqualification for the remainder of the practice or ejection from the contest.**

Umpires are instructed to take a zero tolerance policy in this area.

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# RULE 4

## Pregame Procedures

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### Umpire's Duties

SECTION 1. Before the start of the game, the umpire-in-chief shall:

- a. Inspect equipment, particularly the bats and batting and catching helmets. For safety reasons, umpires should make certain that dented, bent or illegal bats, or broken helmets, are not used during a contest.

**PENALTY—If, after one warning, a player continues to use illegal equipment, the individual shall be removed from the game.**

- b. Check the condition of the field and inspect all playing lines and markers for proper location and adequate visibility.

**PENALTY—If the field dimensions, equipment and facilities are illegal, the game is subject to forfeit if conditions are not corrected in a reasonable length of time.**

- c. Receive from the home team and rub up a minimum of one dozen baseballs that meet the specifications of 1-10. Additional balls will be furnished thereafter by a home-team representative.
- d. Always have at least two alternate balls to replenish immediately the game balls as needed. Such balls shall be put in play when:
  - (1) A ball has been hit out of the playing field;
  - (2) A ball has been rejected because it is discolored, scuffed or otherwise unsuitable for play, or
  - (3) The pitcher requests a different ball. The game should not be delayed to retrieve a particular ball that may have been fouled away from the playing area.

### Fitness of Field

SECTION 2. a. The coach and the director of athletics (or representative) of the host institution shall decide whether a game shall not be started because of unsatisfactory conditions of weather or playing field, except for the second game of a double-header.

- b. Should bad weather or unfit conditions prevail during a game, the umpire-in-chief shall be the sole judge as to the suspension, resumption or termination of play.
- c. The umpire-in-chief of the first game shall be the sole judge as to whether playing conditions permit the start of a second game of a double-header.

### **Pregame Practice**

SECTION 3. a. If batting practice is scheduled and the field is deemed playable, the visiting team must be allowed a minimum of 30 minutes of batting practice on the game field, assuming normal (satisfactory) weather and field conditions.

- b. A pitching screen must be provided by the home team. It can be either of an “h” or inverted “t” structure. Its highest point should be a minimum of 72 inches high and 48 inches wide. Visitors should be notified in advance if a screen is not available.
- c. It is recommended that the home team provide a batting cage.
- d. It is recommended that a screen 8 feet high and 6 feet wide be provided for the first-base area during batting practice.
- e. Each bullpen must be provided with two regulation pitching rubbers and home plates and be in satisfactory condition for pregame warm-up for the visiting team. If the visiting pitching mound is not comparable to the home team’s mound, the visiting team’s starting pitcher shall be allowed to prepare for the game on the home team’s practice mound starting approximately 20 minutes before game time.

**A.R.**—The visiting team’s head coach first must appeal to the home team’s head coach for a correction of the condition of the practice mound. If this does not resolve the problem, then the visiting head coach can ask the umpire-in-chief for time (not to exceed 20 minutes) to prepare the starting pitcher for the game. This warm-up time shall be within the final 30 minutes before game time.

### **Pregame Meeting**

SECTION 4. Ten minutes before the scheduled starting time, the umpire-in-chief shall conduct the pregame meeting with the representatives of the opposing teams. During this meeting, the umpire-in-chief shall:

- a. Receive from the home team and visiting team their respective batting orders, in duplicate. The umpire will determine that the copies are identical, keep one copy and give the other copy to the opposing team’s representative. The umpire now is officially in charge of the game, and the lineups are official;

*Note: If a team's lineup does not include all nine players (and the pitcher if a designated hitter is used), the umpire should call this to the attention of the coach.*

- b. Remind coaches of and review dugout control, the batter's-box rule, bench jockeying and slide rules.

### **Ground Rules**

SECTION 5. A local ground rule may be adopted where unusual conditions prevail if agreeable with the visiting team. Where the teams do not agree, ground rules shall be determined by the umpires.

### **Team First in Field**

SECTION 6. The members of the home team shall take their positions in the field at the start of a game.

### **Authorized Personnel on Field**

SECTION 7. Only the following people shall be allowed on the playing field: players, coaches in uniform, athletic trainers, umpires, team managers, bat persons, authorized news media (at the discretion of the home team) and authorized home-field attendants (see 3-5).

### **Nongame Personnel Interference**

SECTION 8. If there is interference with a live batted or thrown ball by anyone other than players, coaches or umpires, the umpire shall rule as to its being intentional or unintentional.

- a. If it is **intentional**, the ball shall be declared dead at the moment of the interference and the umpire shall award the offended team appropriate compensation that, in his opinion, would have resulted had interference not taken place.
  - (1) It is intentional interference if a coach, bat person, photographer or home-field attendant fields, kicks or pushes a ball, regardless of possible motives.
  - (2) The umpire shall declare intentional interference and award just compensation, be it an out, extra bases, etc., if a spectator reaches out of the stands or goes out on the playing field.
- b. If it is **unintentional** interference, the ball is live and in play. It is unintentional interference if a base coach, bat person, photographer, etc., tries to evade the ball and it touches the individual or if it touches such person without the person being aware the ball was coming.
- c. It is **NOT** interference if, as the player is going outside the playing field during a play, a spectator interferes with a possible catch in the stands or over a fence.

**Crowd Control**

SECTION 9. The responsibility for crowd control rests with the director of athletics or designated representative of the host institution. The designated representative shall be prepared to utilize the public-address system at the first sign of unsportsmanlike crowd behavior and request cooperation in maintaining proper playing conditions. Profanity, racial comments or other intimidating actions directed at officials, student-athletes, coaches or other team representatives will not be tolerated. Individuals making such remarks may be removed from the site of competition.

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# RULE 5

## The Game— Its Beginning and Ending

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### **Starting the Game**

SECTION 1. The game begins when the umpire-in-chief calls “Play.” The game shall start on time unless the home team gives previous notice that the game has been postponed or will be delayed in starting. (Pregame practice will be eliminated if necessary due to late arrival, wet grounds, etc.)

### **Positions of the Offensive Team**

SECTION 2. The offensive team shall:

- Follow the original batting order throughout the game unless a player is substituted for another one;
- Position a base coach in the coaches’ boxes at first base and third base during its time at bat, and
- Have all personnel except the base coaches, batter, runner(s) and “on deck” batters (maximum of two) in the dugout, bullpen or dead-ball area.
- After a home run, no offensive team member, other than the base coaches, shall touch the batter-runner before home plate has been touched. Team personnel, except for preceding base runners, shall not enter the dirt circle at home plate to congratulate the batter-runner.

**PENALTY for d.—After a warning for the first offense, ejection from the contest of one of the offending players.**

- No uniformed team members or coaches shall stand near or behind home plate, or behind the backstop while the pitcher is throwing warm-up pitches or pitching to a batter.

**PENALTY—The umpire first should warn the offender(s), and if the violator(s) do not immediately move away, the individual(s) shall be ejected from the game. If ejected, the individual(s) shall not communicate with eligible team representatives.**

- f. Nonuniformed team personnel may sit in the stands for the purpose of charting pitches or videotaping a contest. Games and individuals shall not be videotaped from the team's dugout. Any scouting information involving current opponents shall not be transmitted to the playing field or to team personnel. A team may film or videotape its own game but not games involving other teams.

The use of video cameras is restricted to the area behind home plate — defined as that area from the outfield cutout behind first base to the outfield cutout behind third base. Filming from beyond this area toward the outfield or any point beyond the outfield fence or wall is not permitted — with the exception of television cameras for the broadcast of a game. Monitors for viewing live or taped video during a game are prohibited from the dugout or bench area, as well as all adjacent areas (i.e., training rooms, locker rooms, etc.).

A.R. 1—Video and communication equipment used to transmit information between coaches, coaches and players, scouts or other team personnel shall not be allowed for intercollegiate competition.

A.R. 2—The use of telephones, cellular phones, walkie-talkies, etc., is permitted for two-way communication between a team's dugout or bench and bullpen.

**PENALTY—The umpire first should warn the violator(s). If the violator(s) does not immediately comply with the rule, the individual(s) shall be removed from the stands.**

### **Team Offensive Interference**

SECTION 3. No offensive team members, either in or out of the lineup, shall physically or verbally hinder, confuse or impede any defensive player who is attempting to make a play.

**PENALTY—(1) The umpire shall call offensive interference and call out the runner on whom the play was attempted, or would have been attempted.**

- (2) If a runner or batter-runner who has been put out hinders or impedes any following play being made on a runner, such runner shall be declared out because of a teammates interference.**

**A.R. 1**—If the batter or runner continues to advance after being put out, that act alone shall not be considered as confusing, hindering or impeding the fielders.

**A.R. 2**—The team offensive interference rule does not apply to or change the batter's interference rule or penalty.

### **Positions of the Defensive Team**

**SECTION 4.** At the start of or during a game, all players of the defensive team except the catcher must be in fair territory when the ball is put in play. Being in fair territory means that a defensive player must have at least one foot placed in fair territory.

- a. The catcher must stand with both feet within the limits of the catcher's box until the pitcher releases the ball.

**PENALTY**—It is an illegal pitch if no one is on base and a balk with a runner(s) on base.

- b. The pitcher must be in a legal position while delivering the ball to the batter.
- c. Other than the pitcher and catcher, all other fielders may position themselves anywhere in fair territory.

**PENALTY for c.**—The play, if it benefits the defense, shall be nullified. If it is an appeal play, the appeal is lost.

- d. All personnel except the nine defensive players on the field must remain in the dugout or bullpen (see 5-2-c PENALTY).

### **Substitutions**

**SECTION 5. a.** Each team shall have nine eligible players in the game at all times.

- b. Any pitcher may be replaced after the first opposing batter (or the batter's substitute) has been put out or has advanced to first base or the side has been retired. In case of injury or illness, a pitcher may be replaced immediately (see 9-4-c).

**A.R.**—When a pitcher is removed as a pitcher but remains in the game, the individual may return to the mound only once (see 7-2-c-5, 9-4-b and 9-4-e) if not in conflict with 9-4-b.

- c. Any player other than the pitcher may be substituted for at any time when the ball is dead and the substituted player must take the place of the replaced player in the team's batting order. However, offensive changes can be made only when a team is on offense and can take place only during that half inning. Likewise, defensive changes can be made only when the team is in the field (see 5-5-e and 6-5-d A.R.).

**A.R.**—If the pitcher is removed from the game as a pitcher, but will remain in the game and bat for the DH, that change must be announced at the time the pitcher is removed.



- d. The designated hitter may enter the game on defense once but must bat in the original position in the lineup. The pitcher must then bat in the position vacated by the player leaving the game (see 7-2-c-[1] A.R. 2).
- e. If two or more substitute players of the defensive team enter the game simultaneously, the coach or a representative immediately shall designate to the umpire-in-chief the position of each in the team's batting order. If this is not done immediately, the umpire shall place them in the batting order.

**A.R.**—When the pitcher is not the designated hitter, moving the pitcher to a defensive position and bringing in only one new substitute player does not constitute multiple substitution for the purpose of batting-order changes. The pitcher moved to the defensive position must bat in the spot of the defensive player replaced and the new pitcher must bat in the DH position.

- f. A base runner shall not be replaced by another player whose name appears or has appeared in the batting order for that game.

**PENALTY for f.**—**If the illegal pinch runner is on base when appealed, the player is declared out and is disqualified from the game. If the runner has scored a run and the appeal is made before the first pitch to the next batter, the player is declared out, the run is canceled and the player is disqualified from the game.**

- g. After having been notified by the team making the substitution, the umpire-in-chief shall record any substitutions on the lineup card and then announce immediately or cause to be announced any substitutions. Should there be no announcement of substitution, the substitute becomes a legal player when:
  - (1) A runner takes the place of another base runner;
  - (2) A pitcher engages the pitcher's rubber;
  - (3) A fielder reaches the position usually occupied by the fielder being replaced and play commences, or
  - (4) A batter enters the batter's box.

**A.R.**—Any play made by, or on, any of the above-mentioned unreported substitutes shall be legal. There is no penalty.

- h. If a player substitutes for an injured teammate, other than the pitcher, the individual shall be allowed five warm-up throws.
- i. A withdrawn player may sit on the bench, warm up pitchers and act as a base coach.

- j. Should a withdrawn (disqualified) player reenter the game:
- (1) If on offense, whether as a batter or a runner, **upon discovery by the opposing team or an umpire**, the player immediately shall be declared out and disqualified from the game. If the player should score a run before the discovery, an appeal must be made to the umpire-in-chief before the first pitch to the next batter of either team. This appeal would invalidate the action of the ineligible player;
  - (2) If on defense, the disqualified player shall be replaced immediately upon discovery **by the opposing team or an umpire**. If a play should precede the discovery, and the discovery is appealed to the umpire-in-chief before the first pitch to the next batter of either team, the team on offense has the option to let the play stand or require the batter to bat again, with the ball-strike count before the last pitch, or
  - (3) Any player for whom a withdrawn player substitutes may not reenter the game.

### Object of the Game

- SECTION 6. a. The offensive team's objective is to have its batters become runners and its runners advance to home plate.
- b. The defensive team's objective is to prevent offensive players from becoming runners and to prevent their advance around the bases.
- c. When a batter becomes a runner and touches all bases legally, the individual shall score one run for that team.

**Exception**—A run is not scored if a runner touches home plate while the third out is made on:

- (1) The batter or proper batter-runner before the player touches first base;
- (2) Any runner who is forced out, or
- (3) A preceding runner who is declared out because the individual failed to touch one of the bases.

**A.R. 1**—Once a runner legally has scored, the run cannot be nullified by subsequent action of the runner, such as, but not limited to, trying to return to third base in the belief that the base had been left too soon or missed.

**Exception**—If the base runner is safe at home but interferes with the catcher on a force play, the run shall not be allowed (see 8-4-c Penalty).

**A.R. 2**—In 5-5-c-(2), if there is one out with runners on third base and first or second base and a fly ball is caught, the runner on third base scores IF the individual tags up and touches home plate before the ball reaches the base of the other runner who had left too soon. This is NOT a force play.

- d. When three offensive players legally are put out, their team takes the field and the opposing team becomes the offensive team.
- e. The objective of each team is to score more runs than its opponent.

### **Doubleheader**

SECTION 7. a. The first game of a doubleheader must be completed before the second game may start.

- b. The second game shall start 20 minutes after completion of the first game. If a longer time period is necessary, the umpire-in-chief will announce this to both head coaches. The maximum time should be 30 minutes.
- c. Doubleheaders may be scheduled as two nine-inning games, a seven and a nine, or two seven-inning contests.
- d. If a rescheduled (not halted) game is scheduled as part of a doubleheader, it shall be the second game played. If it is the completion of a halted game, it shall be the first game played.

### **Regulation Game**

SECTION 8. a. A regulation game shall be nine innings unless:

- (1) Extended because of a tied score (see 5-7-d and 5-8-d);
- (2) Shortened because (a) the home team needs none or only part of its half of the ninth inning or (b) the umpire calls the game after satisfying either “b” or “c” below or 5-10 (Tie Game), or
- (3) Seven-inning games have been scheduled for a double-header by conference rule or mutual agreement.

**A.R.**—If a seven-inning game has been scheduled, the rules applying to the ninth inning shall be applied to the seventh inning.

- b. It shall be a regulation game if called by the umpire at any time after five innings have been completed, and the score shall be that of the last equal inning played, except that in the following circumstances the score of the game shall be the total number of runs that each team has scored:
  - (1) If the team second at bat has scored more runs at the end of its fourth inning than the team first at bat has scored in five completed innings;
  - (2) If the team second at bat has scored in an unequal number of innings more runs than the team first at bat, or
  - (3) If the team second at bat is at bat when the game is called and has scored in the incomplete inning the same number of runs or more runs than the team first at bat.

Each team must play an equal number of innings unless shortened because the home team needs none or only part of its half of the final inning.

- c. It is a regulation game if it is called by the umpire for any cause that puts patrons or players in peril such as for darkness, inclement weather, a facility problem, crowd behavior, etc., provided the conditions in 5-8-b have been met.  
A.R.—If a game is delayed due to inclement weather, a facility problem, etc., a reasonable amount of time (not less than 30 minutes) must elapse before the game is called.
- d. If the score is tied at the end of nine innings, play shall be continued until one team has scored more runs than the other in an equal number of innings, except that if the last team at bat scores the winning run before the third player is out in any inning after the ninth, the game shall terminate and be a regulation game.
- e. It is a regulation game when the umpire terminates play by calling “Game.” If, however, there shall be an appeal situation, it is the responsibility of the team to make such an appeal to an umpire before the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory on their way to the dugout.
- f. Speed-up, optional substitution, or any other optional rules **may not be used** for official NCAA contests or NCAA Championships since they are considered conduct rules. By definition (points of emphasis section), conduct rules are those rules that have to do directly with the playing of the contest. No conduct rule may be changed by mutual consent or agreement.

### Halted Game

SECTION 9. a. A game that has been stopped at any time after its start because of inclement weather, darkness, light failure or curfew may be continued by mutual agreement reached before the start of the contest by the competing institutions, or according to conference or tournament policy, to a predetermined point of completion. Any such game must meet the conditions of Rule 5-8 to be considered a regulation game. A halted game is for special conditions and is not intended to supersede the conditions of a regulation game.

- b. A halted game must resume play at exactly the point of being halted, with the lineups and batting orders of both teams exactly the same, subject to the rules of substitution; any player (or pitcher) who played, or was announced as a substitute before the game was halted, must be in the lineup when play resumes or be ineligible for the remainder of the game.
- c. The halted-game procedure also may be used in nonconference games, but this agreement clearly should be understood and mutually be agreed upon by the coaches and directors of athletics of the competing institutions before the start of the contest.
- d. If a league, conference or tournament committee wishes not to be bound by the tie-game rule and wishes to complete a regulation tie game from the point at which the game was halted, it may do so by stating same when formally opting to use the halted-game rule. Otherwise, a game stopped with the score tied is considered a tie game, not a halted game.
- e. When a halted game is part of a double-header, it shall be the first game, and the second game shall be the regularly scheduled game for that date; if a double-header is scheduled, it shall be the first game of three games.

### **Tie Game**

SECTION 10. a. A regulation tie game shall be declared by the umpire-in-chief:

- (1) If the score is tied when play is terminated after five or more equal innings, or
  - (2) If the team that went to bat second is at bat when play is terminated and has scored in the uncompleted inning the same number of runs as the other team.
- b. Any regulation game called by the umpire with the score tied shall be declared a “tie” game.

*Note: All individual and team averages from a tie game shall be incorporated into the official playing record.*

### **No Game**

SECTION 11. “No game” shall be declared by the umpire if play is terminated before five innings have been completed by each team.

**Exception 1**—If the team last at bat is at bat in the last half of the fifth inning and equals, before the completion of that inning, the score of the side first at bat, the umpire shall declare the contest legally tied.

If the team last at bat shall have made more runs at the end of its fourth inning, or before the completion of its fifth inning, than the team first at bat has made in five completed innings, the umpire shall award the game to the team second at bat; and it shall count as a legal game.

**Exception 2**—Teams previously have agreed to play by the halted-game rule (see 5-8).

### **Forfeited Game**

SECTION 12. A game shall be forfeited only as a last resort; however, a game may be forfeited by the umpire-in-chief, after consultation with the umpiring crew, in favor of the team not at fault in the following cases:

- a. If a team fails to appear upon the field or, being upon the field, refuses to begin a game for which it is scheduled or assigned within five minutes after the umpire has called “Play,” unless such delay in appearing or in commencing the game is unavoidable.
- b. If, after the game has begun, one side refuses to continue to play.
- c. If, after play has been suspended by the umpire, one side fails to resume playing in one minute after the umpire has called “Play.”
- d. If a team employs tactics obviously designed to delay or shorten the game.
- e. If, after warning by the umpire, any one of the rules of the game is willfully and persistently violated. This includes crowd behavior that puts players or patrons in peril.
- f. If the order for the removal of a player, coach or team personnel is not obeyed within one minute (see 3-6-c).
- g. If, because of the removal of players from the game by the umpire or for any cause, there are fewer than nine players on either team.
- h. If both teams are equally at fault and the situation is so out of control that the contest cannot be safely continued, or if neither team has enough eligible players available to continue the game, a double forfeit shall be called.

**PENALTY**—**Players suspended for leaving their position and participating in a fight shall serve a three-game suspension. If a team does not have enough eligible players available to continue the game, the team shall forfeit the next three contests.**

*Note: If the umpire-in-chief declares the game forfeited, the umpire shall submit a written report to the conference office, the athletics directors at both institutions and the NCAA staff liaison to the Baseball Rules Committee (see 10-28).*

### Protested Game

SECTION 13. a. Each conference or governing agency should adopt a procedure for protesting a game when a coach claims that an umpire's decision is in violation of these rules. No protest ever shall be permitted on judgment decisions by the umpire.

- b. Any protest by the coach of a competing team must be made at the time of the action or incident that caused the protest and before play is resumed. If the game ends (legal contest) in a protestable situation, the offended team has 20 seconds to voice its protest intentions. All protests must be made to the umpire-in-chief. Decisions on a protest involving nonconference teams shall be resolved by the secretary-rules editor of the rules committee.
- c. When a coach claims that an umpire's decision violates NCAA rules, the umpire-in-chief must: (1) allow the coach the right to file a protest; (2) announce to each coach, to the official scorer and to the public-address announcer that the game is being played under protest, and (3) note and record the game situation at the time of the protest.
- d. No replay of any part of a game will be allowed even if the protest is proven to be legitimate, if the play in question did not directly affect the outcome of the game.
- e. If the protest is proven to be legitimate and could have had a bearing upon the game, then it is upheld and play resumes from the point of the protest.

*Note: For nonleague games, it is the responsibility of the two competing teams to arrange for the completion of the game or declare such game "no contest."*

### No Contest

SECTION 14. a. There shall be no forfeit of a contest until the umpire or other appropriate contest official has assumed jurisdiction of the contest in accordance with the applicable playing rules.

- b. When a team does not appear (e.g., due to weather conditions, accidents, breakdown of vehicles, illness or catastrophic causes), a forfeit is not recorded. An institution shall not, for statistical purposes, declare a forfeit for nonfulfillment of a contract. Such instances shall be considered as "no contest."

### Game Misconduct

SECTION 15. a. **Unsportsmanlike-Conduct Rule.** No coach, player or team shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coaches' box or on the playing field, or elsewhere:

- (1) Incite or attempt to incite, by word or sign, a demonstration by spectators;
- (2) Call “Time” or employ any other word or phrase or commit any act while the ball is in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit a balk. If a balk is committed, it shall be nullified;
- (3) Take a position in the batter’s line of vision, and with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, act in a manner to distract the batter.

**PENALTY for 1, 2 and 3—The offender shall be ejected from the contest.**

- b. **Coaches-Misconduct Rule.** Misconduct is any act of unsportsmanlike conduct or unprofessional behavior that discredits intercollegiate athletics or the game.

Specifically, a coach shall not remove the team from the field or refuse to continue play due to a dispute with game officials.

**PENALTY—The coach shall be suspended for the team’s next two scheduled contests. The umpire-in-chief is responsible for reporting this act to the institution’s director of athletics, the conference commissioner, if applicable, and the NCAA staff liaison to the Baseball Rules Committee.**

Conferences and institutions may choose to implement additional penalties for misconduct.

### **Fight Rule**

SECTION 16. The rules committee believes there is no place in college baseball for physical abuse of officials or fighting among opponents. A fight rule penalizes offending team representatives (e.g., players, coaches, trainers, managers) for physical abuse or fighting. However, coaches must understand that they are responsible for the actions of their players. Cooperation is needed from players, coaches, administrators and game officials to prevent fighting and physical abuse.

The penalties for this rule must be enforced during both fall and spring baseball competition.

When applying this rule, penalties shall carry over from fall to spring, and from regular-season to postseason competition.

Further, suspended player(s) shall be restricted to the designated spectator areas and prohibited from any communication or contact, direct or indirect, with the team, coaches and/or bench personnel from the start of the contest to its completion — including all extra innings.



**A.R.** —When applying the suspension rule, penalties shall be served for the team's next previously scheduled and completed contest(s). If a previously scheduled game has been postponed or halted, that make-up game against the originally scheduled opponent shall count as a regularly scheduled contest. Games may not be added after the incident in order to fulfill the requirements of this rule.

- a. **Fighting**—Any physical abuse of an opposing player, including attempting to strike with the arms, hands, legs, feet or equipment in a combative manner, or intentionally spitting at an opponent.
- b. **Physical Abuse of Game Officials or Umpires**—Any threat of physical intimidation or harm to include pushing, shoving, bumping, kicking, intentionally spitting, throwing at or attempting to make physical contact.

**Exception**—For a violent attack (punching or kicking) of an umpire, game official or any opposing coach, the offending individual shall be suspended for the team's next five contests, even if it is the individual's first offense.

**PENALTY for a. and b.**—If a player, coach or team representative is ejected from a contest because of physically abusing an official or fighting an opposing player, the following shall be enforced:

- (1) For the first offense by an individual, ejection plus suspension from the team's next contest.
- (2) For a second offense by an individual in the same season, ejection plus suspension from the team's next three contests.
- (3) For a third offense by an individual in the same season, ejection and suspension for the remainder of the season, including post-season competition.
- (4) Procedures for enforcing penalties are as follows:
  - (a) After an ejection and suspension, the offending individual must leave the field and dugout area immediately and is not allowed to communicate with team members or the umpires.

- (b) Suspended personnel shall not be in uniform, allowed in any team area or perform any team duty while serving their suspensions.
  - (c) It is the responsibility of the institution's head coach and director of athletics to administer and enforce the suspension penalty. If a suspended player or coach is found to have participated in a game during the prescribed suspension, the game will be forfeited by the offending team.
  - (d) If the penalty occurs during the team's last game of the season, a one-game penalty will be assessed at the beginning of the next official NCAA spring season.
  - (e) An umpire has jurisdiction to impose penalties for fighting from the beginning of the game until the umpires have left the playing area (stadium) after the final game of the day.
  - (f) Umpires must file a suspension-report form with the secretary-rules editor, the offending team's athletics director and a conference administrator, if applicable.
  - (g) Conferences and institutions may choose to implement additional penalties for fighting or physical abuse.
  - (h) Suspended game personnel shall serve the suspension penalties immediately. There shall be no appeal of the penalty.
- c. **Team Personnel Leaving Position**—Team personnel leaving their position to participate in a physical confrontation (e.g., pushing, shoving, bumping) or a fight (see 5-16-a) shall include players, coaches, trainers and managers.

The position of various team members is determined by where the individual is located (e.g., dugout, bullpen, coaching box, on base, at bat, defensive position) at the time a confrontational situation develops.

**PENALTY—**

- (1) All team personnel, including coaches, who leave their positions and participate in a fight shall be ejected and suspended for the team's next three contests.**

**A.R. 1**—A player involved in a fight while remaining at the position on the field and judged to have been acting in self-defense and not contributing to the fight shall not be ejected or suspended.

**A.R. 2**—If a player or coach makes physical contact with another player in an obvious attempt to prevent a fight or confrontation, that individual shall not be ejected or suspended.

- (2) A batter or runner who initiates a fight by charging or pursuing the pitcher shall receive a three-game suspension.**
- (3) A pitcher who leaves the pitcher's mound and initiates a fight shall receive a three-game suspension.**
- (4) If a fight occurs while other players are involved in a play (i.e., run-down play, back-up situation etc.), those nearby or backing up the play must not become physically involved as this will constitute a violation of this rule. The penalty is ejection and a three-game suspension.**

**A.R.**—If a confrontation or fight develops, the head coach and assistant coaches are expected to leave their positions to bring their players under control. Coaches should not involve themselves in physically restraining personnel from an opposing team.

- (5) The penalty for a second offense of this rule is suspension for the remainder of the season, including postseason competition.**
- d. Pitcher Intentionally Throwing at a Batter**—If a pitcher is ejected for intentionally throwing at a batter, the following penalties shall be enforced (see 9-2-f provisions):
- For the first offense by the individual, ejection plus suspension from the team's next **four** regularly scheduled contests.
  - For a second offense by the individual in the same season, ejection plus suspension from the team's next **eight** regularly scheduled contests.
  - For a third offense by the individual in the same season, ejection plus suspension for the remainder of the season, including postseason competition.
  - If the coach has been warned during or before the contest, the coach also shall be ejected and suspended for the next regularly scheduled contest (one game).

**A.R. 1**—The suspended pitcher shall not be allowed to participate in any manner during the suspension (see 5-16-b-[4]-[b]).

**A.R. 2**—If a pitcher has been ejected while pitching, the substitute shall be allowed an adequate time to warm up, similar to the time allowed when an injured pitcher is replaced.

### **Verbal Abuse (Bench Jockeying)**

**SECTION 17.** Game personnel shall not use language that will, in any manner, refer to or reflect negatively upon opposing players, coaches, umpires or spectators.

**PENALTY**—**The umpire shall warn the offending individual and the coach one time. If the verbal abuse continues after the warning, the offender shall be ejected. If the verbal abuse continues after the first ejection, the head coach shall be ejected along with any other offending personnel.**

**A.R.**—An individual ejected for verbal abuse shall not be suspended.

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# RULE 6

## Ball in Play, Out of Play

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### Live Ball

SECTION 1. a. After the umpire calls “Play,” the ball is alive and in play and remains alive and in play until, for legal cause, or at the umpires’ call of “Time” suspending play, the ball becomes dead. While the ball is dead, no player may be put out, no bases may be run and no runs may be scored, except that runners may advance one or more bases as the result of acts that occurred while the ball was alive (such as, but not limited to, a balk, an overthrow, interference, a home run or other fair hit out of the playing field).

*Note 1: Umpires must not permit the promiscuous calling of “Time” by players and coaches when it is an obvious tactic to delay the game.*

*Note 2: The umpire shall not call time until a play has been completed.*

**A.R.**—After a base on balls, the umpire shall not call time until the runner has stopped at first base.

- b. If a thrown ball accidentally strikes a coach in foul territory, or a pitched or thrown ball strikes an umpire, the ball remains in play (see 8-3-i).
- c. If a fair-hit ball passes by a fielder (other than the pitcher) and no other infielder has a reasonable chance to make a play, or it is touched by a fielder and then touches a runner or an umpire, the ball is in play and the runner is not out. If said ball should touch the runner or umpire while still in flight, thereafter it shall be considered a ground ball. It cannot be caught as a fly ball.
- d. If a fielder, after making a legal catch, steps into a bench or dugout or steps into dead-ball territory but does not fall (lose body control), the ball is in play.
  - (1) For a legal catch, a fielder must catch and have secure possession of the ball before touching dead-ball territory with either foot or falling into a dead-ball area.

**A.R.**—A fielder may enter the dead-ball area as long as the player re-enters live ball territory at the time of the catch.

- (a) If ground rules allow, the fielder may throw from this dead-ball territory.
- (b) For the safety of spectators and players, facility ground rules may preclude a fielder from throwing from dead-ball territory. Local rules may require the fielder to reenter live-ball territory to make a throw.

**PENALTY for (b)—The ball is dead and runners advance one base.**

- (2) A fielder is considered **not** to have fallen and the ball is live if the individual is assisted (held) from falling down into a dugout or dead-ball area by game personnel or spectators.
- (3) If the fielder makes a legal catch and goes through or over the outfield fence, the ball is dead even if the fielder lands feet first. The batter is out and, if not the third out of an inning, runner(s) may advance one base.
- (4) All lines used as out-of-play boundaries are considered in live-ball territory.

e. If a fielder, after possessing a thrown or pitched ball, steps into a bench or dugout or steps into dead-ball territory but does not fall (lose body control), the ball is in play. If the fielder falls, all runners are awarded one base from the time of the fall.

**A.R.**—If any runner deliberately interferes with a batted or thrown ball with a helmet or other personal equipment, the runner is out and other runners return to the bases occupied at the time of interference.

- f. If a detached batting helmet accidentally is hit with a live ball, the ball remains in play (see 6-2-h).
- g. If the live ball should come apart in a game, it is in play until the action is completed.
- h. If a thrown, batted or pitched ball that remains in live-ball territory accidentally hits a spectator, any other individual or animal, the ball is live.
- i. If a fair-hit ball touches an umpire after it passes a fielder other than the pitcher, or is touched by a fielder, including the pitcher, the ball is in play.
- j. Subject to local ground rules, a batted ball that strikes a power line, tree limb or other overhead object in the field of play remains live.

**Immediate Dead Ball—Runners Return**

SECTION 2. The ball becomes dead and base runners return when:

- a. A foul is hit that is not caught. Runners return and the umpire shall not put the ball in play until all runners have retouched their bases;
- b. A ball is illegally batted (see 1-11-b-[6] PENALTY and 7-10);
- c. A coach intentionally interferes with a thrown ball (see Rule 2-Interference and 8-3-j);
- d. If a batter swings and misses a pitch and the backswing is so forceful that it hits the catcher as the pitch is caught, or if the batter hits the ball again, the pitch shall be called a strike, the ball is dead (no interference) and no runner shall advance on the play;
  - (1) If the interference occurs in a situation where the batter normally would become a runner because of a third strike not held by the catcher, the ball shall be dead and the batter declared out. (No runner shall advance on interference.)
  - (2) If the catcher has possession of the ball and is in the act of throwing or preparing to throw and the batter interferes with the catcher, the batter shall be declared out provided the throw does not retire the runner. If the interference occurs after the third strike, the batter and runner shall be called out and it will be ruled a double play.
- e. A fair-hit ball touches a runner in fair territory before touching a fielder and before passing all infielders, other than the pitcher, who have a reasonable chance to field the ball. Runner(s) advance if forced (see 8-5-k);

**PENALTY—The ball is dead and the runner hit by the batted ball is declared out. The batter is awarded first base with a single.**

- f. A fair-hit ball touches an umpire before touching a fielder and before passing all infielders, other than the pitcher, who have a reasonable chance to make a play;

**PENALTY—The ball is dead and the batter is awarded first base with a single. Runner(s) advance if forced.**

**A.R.**—If a fair-hit ball touches an umpire after having passed a fielder other than the pitcher, or having been touched by a fielder, including the pitcher, the ball is in play.

- g. Interference is called on another runner, or
- h. If any runner intentionally interferes with a batted or thrown ball with a helmet or other personal equipment, the ball is dead, the runner is out, and any runner in advance of the interference shall return to the

base last occupied at the time of interference. The batter-runner is awarded first base.

### **Delayed Dead Ball—Runners Return or Advance**

SECTION 3. The ball becomes dead and base runners return when:

- a. The plate umpire interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw anywhere;
- b. The batter interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner who is attempting to steal second or third base.

**PENALTIES for b.—(1) The batter is out (see 7-11-f);**

**(2) If the batter strikes out, the runner is also out; and**

**(3) If the catcher's throw retires the runner and the batter does not strike out, the batter is not out and the interference is disregarded. The ball remains live and other runners may advance.**

- c. The batter-runner is obstructed **after** safely reaching first base. The umpire shall call, "That's obstruction," but shall allow the play to continue until all play has ceased. Award bases, if any, that will nullify the act of obstruction.
- d. Batter-runner is obstructed **before** reaching first base. There are three situations to consider:
  1. Batter-runner is obstructed on a ground ball to an infielder.

**PENALTY—Umpire calls, "Time," and the batter-runner is awarded first base.**

2. Batter-runner is obstructed on an infield line drive or pop-up.

**PENALTY—Umpire calls, "That's obstruction," but leaves the ball in play. If the ball is caught, the batter is out. If the ball is dropped, award bases.**

3. Batter-runner is obstructed on a ball hit to the outfield.

**PENALTY—Umpire calls, "That's obstruction," but leaves the ball in play until all action has ceased. If the fly ball is caught, the batter is out. If the batted ball was a fair ball and not caught, award bases. The batter-runner is protected to at least first base.**

### **Immediate Dead Ball—Runners Advance**

SECTION 4. The ball becomes dead and base runners advance one base without liability to be put out when:



- a. A spectator or any other individual intentionally interferes with any thrown or batted ball.

**PENALTY—The ball is dead at the moment of interference and the umpire shall impose such penalties as to nullify the act of interference;**

- b. Any legal pitch hits a runner trying to score;
- c. A pitched ball touches a batter or a batter's clothing while in the legal batting position. Runners, if forced, advance (see 8-2-d);
- d. A pitched ball lodges in the umpire's or catcher's equipment other than the catcher's glove and remains out of play, or goes over, through or wedges in the field fence or padding so as to delay play on the ball (see 8-3-k);

e. Any fielder obstructs any base runner on whom the play is being made. More than one base may be awarded if the circumstances warrant.

### **Dead Ball—Play Suspended**

SECTION 5. Time shall be called by the umpire and play is suspended when:

- a. Weather, ground conditions or light conditions are judged unfit for play;
- b. A player or spectator is ejected from the playing field;
- c. An unusual circumstance interferes with the normal progress of the game, such as any crowd action, animal, ball, or other object on the field (see 6-4-a PENALTY);

**A.R. 1—**If offensive interference occurs after each runner, including the batter-runner, advances at least one base, interference penalties shall be assessed from the base last touched at the time of interference.

**A.R. 2—**If a fielder reaches into a dugout, bullpen or dead-ball area to catch a foul fly ball and an opponent interferes with the attempted catch, the batter shall be declared out and no runners shall advance.

- d. An umpire or player is injured, except that if injury occurs during a live ball, time shall not be called until no further advance or putout is possible;

**A.R.—**If a player is injured and cannot proceed to the entitled base(s), a substitute runner may be used to complete the play.

- e. A player or coach requests time for a substitution, a legal conference with the pitcher, for equipment changes or for similar cause;

**A.R.**—A conference is a legal meeting between the player and the coach or a nonplaying representative.

- f. A coach or player calls a fourth offensive timeout during a regulation game. There are a maximum of three offensive meetings allowed per team per game. An offensive meeting shall be charged anytime a coach or player delays the game or calls timeout to talk to an offensive player, whether a hitter, base runner, an on-deck batter going to the plate, or to another coach. If the game goes into extra innings, one additional offensive meeting shall be permitted for every three extra innings played.
- (1) Umpires shall record offensive meetings and notify the coach when each meeting is charged.
  - (2) After the maximum offensive meetings have been used, the umpire shall warn the coach before penalizing the offending team.

**PENALTY for (2)—The player involved in the meeting shall be removed from the game. If the meeting is between the head coach and the assistant coach, the assistant shall be removed from the game.**

- (3) Offensive meetings not previously used may be used in extra innings.
  - (4) Offensive meetings shall not be charged during a defensive team's timeout.
  - (5) An offensive meeting shall not be charged if time is called for the purpose of making an offensive substitution, attending to an injured player or making an equipment change.
- g. The umpire wishes to examine the ball, or
- h. When the plate umpire holds up a hand instructing the pitcher not to pitch until the batter or umpire is ready, the ball is dead and no other play shall be allowed until the umpire's hand is lowered signifying "Play."

### **When Play Resumes**

**SECTION 6.** After a dead ball, play resumes when the pitcher engages the rubber with possession of the ball and the umpire calls or signals "Play."

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# RULE 7

## Batting

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### A Batter

SECTION 1. a. Each player of the side at bat shall become a batter and must take a position within the batter's box in the order that the name appears in the team's batting order.

- b. A batter shall not leave the position in the batter's box after the pitcher comes to the set position or starts the windup unless permission is granted by the umpire.

**A.R.**—Umpires may grant a batter's request for "Time" once the hitter is in the batter's box, but the umpire should do so for safety reasons only.

- (1) The batter shall not leave the position in the batter's box after the pitcher comes to the "set" position, or starts the windup (see 9-3-g A.R.).

**PENALTY for (1)**—If the pitcher pitches, the umpire shall call "ball" or "strike," as the case may be. The batter leaves the batter's box at the risk of having a strike delivered, unless "Time" is requested and granted from the umpire. If the pitch is made, the ball is live.

- (2) If the batter refuses to take the position in the batter's box during the time at bat, the umpire shall order the pitcher to pitch and shall call "strike" on each such pitch. The pitch shall be a live ball. The batter is declared out after the third strike regardless of the location of the pitch.

- c. Batter's-Box Rule. This rule is designed to speed up play by controlling the actions of the batter **between pitches**.

- (1) The batter must keep at least one foot in the batter's box throughout the time at bat.

Exceptions—A batter may leave the batter's box but not the dirt area surrounding home plate when:

- (a) The batter swings at a pitch.

- (b) The batter is forced out of the box by the pitch.
- (c) A member of either team requests and is granted time.
- (d) A defensive player attempts a play on a runner at any base.
- (e) A batter feints a bunt.
- (f) A wild pitch or passed ball occurs.
- (g) The pitcher leaves the dirt area of the pitching mound after receiving the ball.
- (h) The catcher leaves the position to give defensive signals.

**PENALTY for (1)—If the batter intentionally leaves the batter's box and delays play, and none of these exceptions apply, the plate umpire shall award a strike. The pitcher shall not pitch but the ball is live (e.g., a pick-off attempt).**

(2) The batter **may leave the batter's box and the dirt area** when time is granted for the purpose of:

- (a) Making a substitution.
- (b) An offensive conference.
- (c) A defensive timeout or conference.

d. If the batter's-box penalty is applied, and the batter then refuses to reenter the batter's box, the umpire shall award an additional strike. The pitcher shall not pitch but the ball is live.

*Note: Umpires shall encourage the on-deck hitter to get in the batter's box quickly after the previous batter reaches base or is retired.*

e. A batter's legal position in the box shall be defined as having both feet completely within the box (lines are part of the box).

**A.R.** —Umpires are to enforce this rule as written. If the line of the batter's box has been erased, the umpire shall require that upon the batter's initial stance, both feet are no closer than 6 inches from the inside edge of home plate.

**PENALTY—Require the batter to move to a proper position.**

### **Designated Hitter**

**SECTION 2.** a. The designated hitter (DH) is a player designated to bat for the starting pitcher and all subsequent pitchers. The DH may bat in any position in the lineup, and this position cannot be changed. The DH

must be so designated before the game and included in the lineup cards presented to the umpire-in-chief. In this case, the team actually is using 10 players, with the pitcher not listed in the batting order.

- b. It is not mandatory that a player be designated to bat for the pitcher. If the pitcher is listed in the starting batting order, **the pitcher automatically becomes the DH**. In this case, the pitcher is to be considered as two players, both pitcher and DH, and can be substituted for as such.

*Note: For substitution purposes, the pitcher is not to be considered a defensive position.*

- c. The designated hitter is subject to the following conditions:

**Pitcher or DH is moved to a defensive position (10-player lineup)**

- (1) If the **DH is not the pitcher** and the DH or the pitcher is moved to a defensive position (this change must be made when the team is on defense):
- (a) The DH is terminated for the remainder of the game.
  - (b) The pitcher being placed at a defensive position must bat in place of the defensive player removed, unless more than one substitution is made. The coach must designate their positions in the batting order at that time (see 5-5-e and 5-5-e A.R.).
  - (c) If only one substitution is made, the new pitcher must bat in the previous spot of the DH.

A.R. 1.—Multiple substitution, used for the purpose of changing the batting order, does not occur unless two new players (not including the pitcher going to a defensive position) are brought into the game.

A.R. 2.—The DH is moved to a defensive position and the pitcher remains in the game as the pitcher. If the DH is placed at a defensive position, the DH is terminated. The former DH, who now is a defensive player, must continue to bat in the original DH spot. The pitcher must bat in the lineup spot of the removed defensive player (see 5-5-d).

**Game pitcher is not the DH (10-player lineup)**

- (2) If the game pitcher is not the DH and is replaced as the pitcher, the replaced pitcher may:
- (a) **While on offense**, 1) replace the DH and bat only in the DH spot. If the pitcher becomes the DH, the pitcher may not reenter the game in any other capacity, or 2) pinch hit or pinch run for the DH only.

- (b) **While on defense**, 1) be moved to a defensive position and must bat in place of the defensive player removed. The DH is terminated, or 2) be removed as a pitcher but remain in the game and bat for the DH. This change must be announced at the time the pitcher is removed. **There is no loss of the DH but the player may not reenter the contest in any other capacity.**

**DH is not the pitcher (10-player lineup)**

- (3) If the DH is not the pitcher and is replaced offensively, the original DH may replace the pitcher at the time of substitution.
  - (a) The individual may not return as the DH or in any other capacity.
  - (b) There is no loss of the DH.
  - (c) Once a player leaves the offensive lineup, that player cannot return offensively.

A.R.—The DH may go in to pitch, then subsequently be relieved as the pitcher and still remain the DH.

**Replaced as a DH (nine-player lineup)**

- (4) When the P/DH, whether as the starting P/DH or a subsequent one, is replaced as the DH, the individual may remain in the game as a pitcher. However:
  - (a) The P/DH cannot subsequently move to a defensive position.
  - (b) The P/DH cannot return as the designated hitter.

**P/DH replaced as a pitcher (nine-player lineup)**

- (5) When replaced as the pitcher, the P/DH may:
  - (a) Remain as the DH and bat only in the DH spot. If remaining a DH, the individual or a subsequent DH cannot enter the game in any other capacity (i.e., as the pitcher, defensive player or pinch runner).
  - (b) While on defense, be moved to a defensive position at the time, but:
    - (1) The DH is terminated for the remainder of the game.
    - (2) The P/DH being placed at the defensive position must bat in the original DH spot.

- (3) The new pitcher must bat in the spot of the replaced defensive player.
- (4) If the P/DH goes to a defensive position, the individual may return as a pitcher once since the P/DH originally was considered as two different players. If the P/DH was removed as a pitcher on the second trip of an inning or after the third free trip, the player cannot return to pitch.

**Defensive player becomes the pitcher (nine- or 10-player lineup)**

- (6) If a defensive player becomes the pitcher:
  - (a) The DH is terminated for the remainder of the game.
  - (b) The DH may assume the defensive player's position.
  - (c) Any substitute player who comes in for the defensive player must bat in the DH spot.

**Runner or batter substituted for the DH (nine- or 10-player lineup)**

- (7) A runner or batter may be substituted for the DH and then become the DH.
  - (a) A replaced DH may remain in the game only as a pitcher and the change must be announced at the time of substitution.
  - (b) The DH may not run for any other player in the lineup at any time.

**Pinch hitter enters the game to pitch (nine- or 10-player lineup)**

- (8) Once the pinch hitter bats for any player in the batting order and then enters the game to pitch, the DH's role is terminated for the remainder of the game.
- (9) **A player who is removed** from the game cannot reenter in any capacity.

**Pitcher as a pinch hitter or pinch runner (10-player lineup)**

- (10) If the lineup change is made while the pitcher's team is on offense, the pitcher may pinch hit or pinch run only for the DH and be both. The pitcher then may be replaced as the DH and remain as the pitcher.

**PENALTY—A violation of this rule requires that the pitcher be disqualified from the game.**

**DH ejected from game (nine- or 10-player lineup)**

(11) If ejected from the game, the DH may be replaced by another DH. The DH position is not terminated by the ejection.

**A.R.**—If the DH also was the pitcher (P/DH), the DH may be replaced by two players—a pitcher and a DH—or by one player, a P/DH.

### **First Batter Each Inning**

**SECTION 3.** After the first inning, the first batter in each inning shall be the player whose name follows that of the last batter who completes a full turn at bat in the preceding inning.

### **A Strike**

**SECTION 4.** A strike is:

- a. A legal pitch struck at by the batter without the ball touching the bat;
- b. A legal pitch that enters the strike zone (see definition and diagram in Rule 2) in flight and is not struck at;**

**A.R.**—The plate umpire should determine if the pitch is a strike in relationship to the batter's normal position as the pitch crosses home plate. Any part of the ball passing over any part of the plate, from the bottom of the kneecaps to directly below the batter's arm pits, is a strike. The pitch should be judged to be a strike or a ball as it crosses home plate, not where it is caught by the catcher.

- c. A legal pitch that becomes a foul not caught on the fly when the batter has fewer than two strikes;
- d. An attempt to bunt that results in a foul not legally caught;
- e. A legal pitch that touches the batter when the batter swings and misses;
- f. A foul tip, and
- g. Awarded after the batter fails to take a position in the batter's box immediately after ordered by the umpire (see 7-1-b-[2] and 7-1-d).
- h. Awarded if the batter deliberately steps back in the box or swings in such a manner to attempt to create catcher's interference. If the swing hits the catcher or the mitt, the batter shall be called out. All base runners shall return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

### **A Ball**

**SECTION 5.** A ball is:

- a. A pitched ball at which the batter does not strike and which does not enter the strike zone on the fly;

**A.R.**—If a pitched ball strikes the ground in front of the batter and the batter swings at it, the ball is in play if hit and a strike if missed.



- b. Called by the umpire when the pitcher takes more than two pumping motions before delivering the ball when the bases are unoccupied;
- c. Called by the umpire when the pitcher makes an illegal pitch or a quick return pitch with the bases unoccupied, unless the batter safely reaches base;
- d. Called by the umpire when the pitcher takes the signal from an illegal position, or
- e. Called by the umpire when, with the bases unoccupied, the pitcher fails to deliver the ball within 20 seconds after receiving the ball (see 9-2-c).

### **Fair Ball**

SECTION 6. A fair ball is a legally batted ball that:

- a. Settles on fair ground between home plate and first base or between home plate and third base;
- b. Is on or over fair ground when bounding to the outfield past first or third base;
- c. First falls on fair ground on or beyond first or third base, or
- d. While on or over fair ground, touches the umpire or player.
- e. Touches a base in fair territory unless previously touched by a fielder or runner while the ball was in foul territory.

**A.R. 1**—A fair fly must be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul ground at the time the ball is first touched.

**A.R. 2**—If a batted ball hits the top of the fence while in fair territory and then bounces over the fence, it is a home run.

### **Foul Ball**

SECTION 7. A foul ball is a legally batted ball that:

- a. Settles on foul ground between home plate and first base or between home plate and third base;
- b. Bounds past first or third base on or over foul ground;
- c. First falls on foul ground beyond first or third base;
- d. While on or over foul ground, touches an umpire, a player or any object other than the playing surface;
- e. Hits the batter in the batter's box, or hits the dirt or home plate and then hits the batter or the bat while in the batter's box; or
- f. Hits the pitcher's rubber and rebounds into foul territory between home plate and first or third base, without touching a fielder.

**Foul Tip**

SECTION 8. A foul tip is a ball batted by the batter while standing within the lines of the batter's box that travels directly from the bat to the catcher's hands and is caught legally by the catcher. If trapped or not caught, it simply is a foul ball. Any foul tip that is caught is a strike, and the ball is in play. It is not a catch if it is a rebound, unless the ball first has touched the catcher's glove or hand.

**Bunt**

SECTION 9. A bunt is a legally batted ball not swung at but intentionally met with the bat and tapped within the infield by the batter. If the attempt to bunt results in a foul ball not legally caught, it is a strike.

**Illegally Batted Ball**

SECTION 10. An illegally batted ball is:

- a. A ball hit, fair or foul, by the batter when either one or both of the batter's feet are upon the ground entirely outside the lines of the batter's box or when touching home plate, or

**A.R.**—If the pitch is missed, a strike shall be called.

- b. A ball hit with a bat that does not conform with 1-11-b.

**PENALTY**—The batter is out (*Exception: 1-11-c PENALTY*).

**When Batter or Batter-Runner Is Out**

SECTION 11. A batter is out when:

- a. On appeal by the opposing team, the individual fails to bat in the proper turn and another batter completes a time at bat in that place;
  - (1) The proper batter may replace the improper batter before the batter becomes a runner or is put out, and any balls and strikes shall be counted against the proper batter.
  - (2) If the improper batter becomes a base runner or is put out and an appeal is made to the umpire-in-chief before a pitch to the next batter of either team, or a play or attempted play, the proper batter is declared out and all runners return to bases held before action by the improper batter. However, any advances by a runner(s), (e.g., stolen base, balk, wild pitch, passed ball) while the improper batter is at bat are legal. If the proper batter is declared out, the next person in the lineup shall be the batter (see 8-6-b-[1]).
  - (3) If a proper appeal is not made, the improper batter becomes the proper batter and the results of the time at bat become official.

- (4) When the action of the improper batter becomes official, the batting order resumes with the following batter.
- (5) If the defensive team has ignored an improper batter who now is on base when the “official” turn at bat arrives, the individual shall be passed over and the next person in the lineup shall be the proper batter.

**A.R.**—The umpires, official scorer or public-address announcer shall not call attention to the improper batter. If this occurs, the umpire-in-chief shall warn the official scorer and/or the public-address announcer that on the next infraction the offending person will be removed from the position.

- b. After a third strike not caught or after the player hits a fair ball, the individual or first base is tagged before reaching that base;
- c. The individual hits a fair or foul fly other than a foul tip, and the ball is caught legally by a fielder;
- d. The individual bats the ball illegally (see 1-11-b PENALTY);
- e. The individual steps from one batter’s box to the other while the pitcher is in position ready to pitch;
- f. 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.

**PENALTY for f.**—**The runner(s) return to the base occupied at the time of interference;**

**Exceptions—**

- (1) If the runner is advancing to home plate and there are fewer than two outs, the runner, instead of the batter, is out.
  - (2) The batter is not out if any runner attempting to advance is put out, or if the runner trying to score is called out for batter’s interference.
  - (3) If the batter also should strike out on the play, it is a double play.
  - (4) If a batter/runner and a catcher fielding the ball make contact, no call shall be made unless either player attempts to alter the play.
- g. A third strike legally is caught by the catcher (see Rule 2—Foul Tip);
  - h. A third strike is not caught, provided a runner occupies first base and there is not more than one out;
  - i. A bunt on the third strike is a foul ball;
  - j. An infield fly is called (see Rule 2—Infield Fly);

- k. The individual attempts to hit a third strike and is touched by the ball (the ball is dead);
- l. A batted fair ball touches the batter-runner before touching a fielder;
- m. After hitting or bunting a fair ball, a bat still in the hand(s) hits the ball a second time in fair territory. The ball is dead and no runners may advance. If the batter-runner drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory and there was no intent to interfere with the course of the ball, the ball is live and in play;
- n. A whole bat is thrown into fair territory, whether intentionally or not, and it interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play. Interference shall be called;

**A.R.**—It is not interference and the ball remains in play if the bat breaks and a part of it is hit by the batted ball in fair territory or a part of it hits a runner or a fielder. If a part of this bat or a whole bat is touched by the batted ball in foul territory, it is a foul ball;

- o. After hitting or bunting a foul ball, the batter-runner intentionally deflects the course of the ball in any manner while running to first base; or intentionally interferes with the catcher's attempt to field a third strike. The ball is dead and no runner may advance;
- p. In running the last half of the distance from home plate to first base while the ball is being fielded to first base, the batter-runner runs outside the 3-foot restraining line or inside the foul line and, in so doing interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base, except that the batter may go outside these lines to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball;

**A.R. 1**—If the batter-runner runs illegally inside the foul line for the last 45 feet and interferes with the attempted catch of the thrown ball, or is hit by the throw, the batter-runner shall be called out even if the runner is in his approach to the base.

**A.R. 2**—The batter-runner is considered outside this 3-foot lane **if either foot** is outside either line.

**A.R. 3**—On a tag play between home plate and first base, a batter-runner may retreat toward home plate to evade a tag, but shall be declared out after touching or passing home plate, or leaving the base line. The ball remains live.

- q. With less than two out and first, first and second, first and third or first, second and third bases occupied, an infielder intentionally drops a batted or bunted fair fly ball or line drive. The ball is dead, and the runner or runners shall return to their original base or bases;

**A.R. 1**—The batter is not out if the ball drops untouched to the ground, except when the infield fly rule applies.

**A.R. 2**—If a declared infield fly is dropped intentionally or allowed to fall untouched, the batter is out, the ball is live and in play, and the runners may advance at their own risk. They do not need to retouch their bases.

- r. In a force situation, a preceding runner intentionally interferes with the play of a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball or to throw the ball in an attempt to complete any play (see 8-5-d);
- s. With two out, a runner on third base and two strikes on the batter, the runner attempts to steal home plate on a legal pitch and the ball hits the runner in the batter's strike zone. The umpire shall call "Strike three"; the batter is out, and the run shall not count. With fewer than two outs, the umpire shall call "Strike three"; the ball is dead, and the run counts; all other runners advance one base.
- t. Spectator interference clearly prevents a fielder from catching a fly ball, if inside the playing field;
- u. The batter does not proceed to first base after a dropped third strike when the ball is in play. The batter shall be declared out if touched or the base is touched, or if the batter-runner abandons the bases by reaching the dead-ball area, the dugout or dugout steps; or
- v. If the batter hits, or attempts to hit, a throw made to home plate by the pitcher who is not in contact with the pitching rubber, and is attempting to retire a runner stealing home, interference shall be called and the ball is dead.

**PENALTY for v.—With two outs, the batter is out. With less than two outs, the runner shall be out.**

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# RULE 8

## Base Running

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### Legal Order of Bases

SECTION 1. a. The runner must touch each base in legal order (first, second, third and home) and, when obliged to return while the ball is in play, must retouch the base or bases in reverse order.

**PENALTY—For failure to touch a base advancing or returning: The runner is out if touched by the ball in the hands of a fielder before returning to each untouched base. If the base missed was one to which the runner was forced, the runner is out when tagged or if the ball is held by a fielder on any base the runner failed to touch (including home plate) (see 8-6-a-[4]).**

- b. A base runner having acquired legal title to a base cannot run bases in reverse order to either confuse the fielders or make a travesty of the game. A runner violating this rule is out.
- c. If a runner is being run down between bases and the following runner occupies the same base the first runner has left, the second runner cannot be put out while occupying said base. If the first runner, however, returns safely to the base last touched and both runners then are occupying the same base, the second runner is out, if touched with the ball.
- d. The failure of a preceding runner to touch or retouch a base (and who is therefore declared out) shall not affect the status of a following runner who touches each base in proper order, except that, after two are out, a following runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for failing to touch a base.

### Batter Becomes Base Runner

SECTION 2. The batter becomes a base runner:

- a. Instantly after the individual makes a fair hit;
- b. Instantly after four balls have been called by the umpire;
- c. Instantly after a dropped third strike, unless there is a runner on first and fewer than two outs;

- d. When hit by a pitched ball at which the individual is not attempting to strike;

**A.R.**—If the batter **intentionally** gets touched by moving or rolling any part of the body outside of the batter's box into the pitch, or positions the body in the batter's box so that any part of the body is outside the vertical lines extending above the batter's box, the umpire shall call a strike or ball in accordance with Rules 7-4 and 7-5.

- (1) If the batter is hit by a pitch in the strike zone, the pitch is a strike, the ball is dead, no runners may advance and the batter is not awarded first base.
  - (2) If the batter makes no attempt to avoid being touched by the ball and the pitch is out of the strike zone, the pitch shall be called a ball. The ball is dead, no runners may advance and the batter is **not** awarded first base.
  - (3) If the pitch is ball four, the batter shall be awarded first base and credited for being hit by the pitch (the ball is immediately dead).
- e. If any defensive player interferes with the batter's swing or prevents the individual from striking at a pitched ball;

**A.R.**—Catcher's interference on a batter should be called only on the batter's actual swing to hit the pitch. If a batter, during preliminary loosening-up swings, hits the catcher or the catcher's mitt during the backswing, the umpire immediately should call time, and not interference. The pitch or swing should not be allowed since the batter's concentration or rhythm could be affected.

- (1) If a play follows the interference, the offensive team may elect to ignore the interference and accept the play. However, if the batter reaches first base and all other runners advance at least one base, the interference is ignored.
- (2) Any runner attempting to advance on a catcher's interference with the batter's swing shall be awarded the base the runner is attempting to reach.

If a runner is not attempting to advance on the catcher's interference, the individual is not entitled to the next base, if not forced to advance because of the batter being awarded first base.

- f. If a fair ball strikes an umpire on fair ground before the ball has touched a fielder or passed a fielder other than the pitcher, the ball becomes dead. Runners advance if forced. If a fair-hit ball strikes the umpire in foul territory, the ball remains in play;

- g. If a fair ball touches a base runner in fair territory before the ball has touched or passed an infielder, other than the pitcher, who has a reasonable chance to field the ball, the ball is dead, the runner is out and the batter-runner is awarded first base; or
- h. If a fielder interferes intentionally with a batted fair ball with detached player equipment, or with a batted foul ball that in the opinion of the umpire might become fair, each runner is awarded three bases. The ball remains live.

### **Entitled to Bases**

SECTION 3. The base runner shall be entitled to an unoccupied base if the individual touches it before being put out. The base runner is entitled to this base until put out or the individual may be advanced one or more bases under the following conditions:

- a. If forced to vacate the base because of a following runner;
  - A.R.—With two outs, if a runner is awarded home but does not touch the plate before a following runner is put out for the third out, the run scores.
- b. If forced to vacate the base because the batter was awarded that base;
- c. If the batter hits a fair ball that touches another base runner or an umpire before it has been touched by or has passed a fielder, providing the runner is forced to advance;
- d. If the umpire calls a balk;
- e. If obstruction by a fielder is committed:
  - (1) Against a batter-runner before reaching first base, a delayed dead ball shall be called.

**PENALTY—The obstructed runner is awarded the bases he would have obtained had there been no obstruction (See Rule 6-3-d).**

- (2) Against a runner on whom a play is being made, “Time” shall be called.

**PENALTY—The obstructed runner is awarded at least one base beyond the base last touched legally before the obstruction.**

- f. Visual obstruction by a defensive player may be called if a fielder interferes intentionally with a base runner’s opportunity to see the ball on a defensive play.

**PENALTY for f.—The ball is dead and all runners shall advance, without liability to be put out, to the bases they would have reached had there been no obstruction. The**



**obstructed runner shall be awarded at least one base beyond the base last touched legally before the obstruction. The offender's team shall be warned, and a second offense by that team shall result in the ejection of the offending player because of an unsportsmanlike act.**

- g. If a fielder intentionally touches a batted fair ball with a cap, glove, mask, helmet or any part of the uniform while detached from its proper place on the body, a runner or runners shall be entitled to three bases.
- (1) If it is a thrown ball, the individual shall be entitled to two bases.
  - (2) If it is a pitch, the individual shall be entitled to one base. The bases to be awarded shall be determined by where the runners were at the time of the touch. In all cases, the runners may advance further at their own risk;
- h. If a fair ball goes over the fence in flight or is prevented from going over by being touched by a spectator or by a fielder's detached equipment, all runners, including the batter, are entitled to score;
- i. If a thrown or pitched ball strikes an umpire, the ball is in play and the base runner or runners are entitled to all the bases they can make;
- j. If a thrown ball strikes a base coach on foul ground, the ball is in play. If the coach interfered intentionally with such a thrown ball, the runner is out and any other runners must return to the last base touched;
- k. Each runner is awarded one base if a pitch or any throw (e.g., a pick-off attempt) by the pitcher from a pitching position on the pitching rubber goes into the stands, bench or other dead-ball territory, touches a spectator or lodges in an umpire's or catcher's equipment other than a glove;
- l. If a fair batted or thrown ball becomes lodged in a player's uniform, the ball shall be declared dead and bases awarded at the umpire's discretion.
- m. For fields with fences, if a fielder legally catches a batted ball, and then jumps over or falls over or through the fence and retains the ball, the batter is out and the ball becomes dead. All runners advance one base. If a fair ball is dropped outside the fence, it becomes a home run. This same dead-ball ruling applies to foul flies legally caught near dugouts when

the fielder falls into the dugout and retains the ball;

- n. When a spectator or any other individual interferes intentionally with any thrown or batted ball, the ball is dead at the moment of interference and the umpire shall impose such penalties as will nullify the act of interference (see 6-4-a);
- o. Each runner is entitled to two bases:
  - (1) If a fair ball bounces over or passes through a fence, unless local ground rules stipulate otherwise (see 4-5).
  - (2) If a fair ball bounces or is deflected into foul territory outside the playing field and goes into the stands or spectator area; or if it goes through or under a field fence, through or under a scoreboard or through or under shrubbery or vines on the fence; or if it sticks in such fence, scoreboard, shrubbery or vines.
  - (3) If a live thrown ball goes into the stands or dead-ball area, spectators or a players' bench, lodges in the equipment of an umpire, or sticks in the fence, shrubbery, etc., and provided it is not thrown by a pitcher from the pitching rubber, the ball is dead.

**A.R. 1**—If the thrown ball is the first play by an infielder, the position of the runners at the time of the pitch shall determine the awarding of bases. Exception—If all runners, including the batter-runner, advance one base before the time of the throw (meaning the release of the ball), the bases awarded shall be measured from the time of the throw, not the time of the pitch. If the throw is made by an outfielder, award bases to all runners from the time of the throw.

**A.R. 2**—For the purpose of this rule, the act of fielding the ball or a faked or feinted throw is not considered a play; a “play” must be a legitimate attempt by a fielder to retire a runner.

**A.R. 3**—Any runner who reaches or passes the base the runner would have received on an award is considered to have advanced to that base even if subsequently declared out for not touching the base.

- (4) If, during an attempt to field a wild pitch or passed ball, the catcher or any other fielder deflects the ball into a dead-ball territory, the runner(s) shall be awarded two bases from the bases occupied at the time of the pitch.
- (5) If any batted or thrown ball **intentionally** is kicked, thrown, deflected or carried into a dead-ball territory, the runner(s) shall be awarded two bases from the time of the intentional act, or
- p. If, on an attempted squeeze play or steal of home plate, the catcher steps on or in front of home plate without possession of the ball or touches the batter or the bat, the pitcher shall be charged with a balk and the catcher with interference.

**PENALTY**—The ball becomes dead, the batter shall be awarded first base on the interference, the run scores and all other runners advance one base.

### **Force-Play-Slide Rule**

SECTION 4. The intent of the force-play-slide rule is to ensure the safety of the defensive player. **This is a safety as well as an interference rule.** Whether the defense could have completed the double play has no bearing on the applicability of this rule. This rule pertains to a force-play situation at any base, regardless of the number of outs.

- a. On any force play, the runner must slide on the ground and in a direct line between the two bases.

**Exception**—A runner need not slide directly into a base as long as the runner slides or runs in a direction away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder.

- (1) “On the ground” means either a head-first slide or a slide with one leg and buttock on the ground.
- (2) “Directly into a base” means the runner’s entire body (feet, legs, trunk and arms) must stay in a straight line between the bases.

**A.R. 1**—If a runner goes into a base standing up and does not make contact or alter the play of the defensive player, interference shall not be called.

**A.R. 2**—If the runner is attempting to return to his original base after a fly ball that is caught and the ball is thrown out of play, the runner may retouch and the award is made from his original base.

- b. Contact with a fielder is legal and interference shall not be called if the runner:

- (1) Makes a legal slide directly to the base, or
- (2) Is on the ground at the time of contact and the fielder moves directly down the line between the two bases to attempt a play.
- (3) Makes a legal slide and makes contact with a defensive player who is on or over, but not beyond, the base.

**A.R.**—When the base runner slides beyond the base, but does not (1) make contact with, or (2) alter the play of the defensive player, interference shall not be called.

- c. Actions by a runner are **illegal** and interference shall be called if:

- (1) The runner slides or runs out of the base line in the direction of the fielder;
- (2) The runner uses a rolling, cross-body or pop-up slide and either makes contact with or alters the play of a fielder;

- (3) The runner's raised leg makes contact higher than the fielder's knee when in a standing position;
- (4) The runner goes beyond the base and either makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder;

**A.R.**—"Beyond the base" means any part of the offensive player's body makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder beyond the base.

- (5) The runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg;
- (6) The runner illegally slides toward or contacts the fielder even if the fielder makes no attempt to throw to complete a play.

**PENALTY for 1-6—(1) With less than two outs, the batter-runner, as well as the interfering runner, shall be declared out and no other runner(s) shall advance.**

**(2) With two outs, the interfering runner shall be declared out and no other runner(s) shall advance.**

**(3) If the runner's slide or collision is flagrant, the runner shall be ejected from the contest.**

**A.R.**—If the bases are loaded with no outs, a double-play attempt is made, and interference is called, all other runners must return to their original bases.

*Note: On a force play, with a two-man umpiring system, if the plate umpire does not have a potential play at the plate, he should move toward the base to observe the runner going into second or third base. In this situation, the base umpire must follow the throw and may not see the true effect of the lead runner's action.*

### **When Runners Are Out**

**SECTION 5.** A runner is out when:

- a. In running to any base, while trying to avoid being tagged out, the runner runs more than three feet left or right from a direct line between the base and the runner's location at the time a play is being made.

**Exception**—It is not an infraction if a fielder attempting to field a batted ball is in the runner's proper path and the runner runs behind the fielder to avoid interference.

- b. After reaching first base safely, the runner leaves the baseline in an obvious move to continue an attempt to advance to the next base and is tagged;
- c. After reaching a base safely, the runner leaves the baseline and obviously heads toward a defensive position or the dugout, believing a put out was made. In this case, the runner has abandoned any effort to run the bases. The ball remains in play for the other runners;

- d. The runner interferes intentionally with a throw or thrown ball, or interferes with a fielder who is attempting to field a batted ball. If a double play is likely, and the runner intentionally interferes with the fielder who is attempting to field the ball, both runner and batter-runner shall be declared out;

**A.R. 1**—If two fielders attempt to field a batted ball, the umpire shall determine which fielder is more likely to make the play and only that fielder is protected from interference by the runner.

**A.R. 2**—If a batted ball is deflected by the pitcher and another fielder has a legitimate play to retire a runner, the fielder is protected and a collision by a base runner results in interference.

- e. If the batter-runner interferes intentionally or unintentionally with a batted ball or the fielder fielding it, with a double play likely, the batter-runner and the runner closest to home plate are out, regardless of where the double-play attempt may have taken place;
- f. A coach or another runner, by touching or holding a runner, physically assists the runner in returning to or leaving a base (see 3-3-e);
- g. While third base is occupied, the coach stationed near that base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the base line while a fielder is making or trying to make a play and thereby draws a throw to home plate. The base runner on third shall be declared out for the coach's interference with or prevention of the legitimate play (see 3-3-f);
- h. One or more members of the offensive team stand at or around a base for which a base runner is trying, thereby confusing the defensive team. The base runner shall be declared out.
- i. The individual is touched by the ball (when not dead) securely held in the hand or glove of a fielder while the runner is not touching the base;

**Exception**—If a batter-runner safely touches first base and then over-slides or overruns it, the player immediately may return to first base without liability of being tagged out, provided no attempt to run to second was made. Also, if any base comes loose from its fastening when any runner contacts it, such a runner cannot be tagged out because the base slides away (see 1-7-b A.R.).

- j. The individual fails to reach the next base before a fielder tags the runner or the base after the runner has been forced to advance because the batter became a runner;

**Exception**—No runner can be forced out if a runner who follows in the batting order is put out first. However, if a runner is put out during live

action, it does not remove the force on any runners who might subsequently be declared out for a running infraction.

**A.R. 1**—No run may score on any play when the third out is either a force out or the result of a batter-runner's failure to reach first base safely.

**A.R. 2**—The force is removed as soon as the base runner touches the base to which the runner is forced to advance; and if the runner overslides or overruns the base, the runner may be tagged out.

**A.R. 3**—If a runner tags the base to which the runner is forced and for some reason retreats to the previous base, the runner is again subject to a force out.

- k. The runner, including a runner in contact with a base, is hit while in fair territory by a batted ball before it has touched or passed all infielders, other than the pitcher, who have a reasonable chance to field the ball. If two runners are hit by the same fair ball, only the first runner is out (see 6-2-e).

**A.R. 1**—A runner who is touching a base when hit by an infield fly (See Rule 2—Infield Fly), is not out. If the runner is off a base and hit by an infield fly, both the runner and the batter are out; the ball is dead.

**A.R. 2**—A runner who, while touching a base, interferes with the fielder attempting to field a batted ball, is not out unless the umpire rules intentional interference. In this case, the batter is out if there are two outs. If there are less than two outs, both the batter and runner are out.

- l. The individual attempts to score when the batter interferes with the play at home plate provided two are not already out. If two are out, the batter is out because of the interference and the runner does not score;
- m. The individual passes an unobstructed preceding runner before such runner is out. The ball is live;

**A.R.**—With fewer than two outs, if a batter, while running the bases after a home run outside the playing field, passes a preceding runner, the batter is out; but all preceding runners score. With two outs, only those preceding runners score who have touched the plate before the batter is declared out. **This is a time play, not an appeal play.**

- n. The individual runs bases in reverse order to confuse opponents or to make a travesty of the game;

**PENALTY for n.**—**The ball is dead and other runner(s) return to the base last touched.**

- o. A batter-runner throws the bat, which interferes with a defensive player making a play (see 7-11-n);
- p. A batter or any other runner who just has been put out interferes with a play being made on said runner;
- q. Any member of the offensive team does not vacate any live-ball area, thus interfering with a defensive player attempting to field a batted or thrown ball, or

A.R.—This includes the batter, once the pitch has crossed the plate.

**PENALTIES for q.—(1) With less than two outs, the runner is out if there is a play at the plate, and any other runners return to the base occupied at the time of the interference.**

**(2) If there are two outs, the batter is out.**

### **When Runners Are Out on Appeals**

SECTION 6. a. A runner shall be called out on specific appeals that are made when:

- (1) The base runner does not retouch the base before a fielder tags the runner or the base after a fair or foul fly ball is touched in making a legal catch;
- (2) The runner starts from a position behind the base in order to get a running start, whether on a pitch or tagging up for a fly ball, or
- (3) The runner fails to touch each base in order when advancing or returning to a base. Either the runner or the missed base may be tagged.

A.R. 1—No runner may return to touch a missed base after a following runner has scored.

A.R. 2—When the ball is dead, no runner may return to touch a missed base or the one just left if the runner has advanced to and touched a base beyond the missed base.

(4) The runner does not touch home plate and does not make an attempt to touch it. **The fielder may touch either the runner or home plate.**

b. The appeals made under this section must take place before the next pitch, play or attempted play or before the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory on their way to the dugout, if it is an inning-ending or game-ending appeal.

(1) The procedure for a base-running appeal play is as follows:

- (a) A live ball is returned to the base, and
- (b) If the ball is dead, the pitcher must receive a ball from the umpire and then toe the rubber. After the umpire calls “Play,” the pitcher then may legally step back off the rubber and return the ball to the base.

(2) An appeal is not to be considered as a play or an attempted play. **Exception**—If the pitcher balks on an appeal attempt, it is considered a play.

- (3) The defensive team receives only one chance on an appeal. If the team throws the ball out of play in attempting to make the appeal, the appeal has ended.
- (4) If the offensive team initiates a play before the next pitch, the defensive team does not lose its right to appeal.
- (5) If the defensive team errs on an appeal play and the ball remains in live-ball territory, the appeal will be allowed if:
  - (a) The ball immediately is returned to the base being appealed, and
  - (b) No runners advance on the misplay. If a runner(s) advances, no appeal shall be allowed.
- (6) If there possibly is more than one runner involved in an appeal at a base, the defensive team must declare on which runner the appeal is being made. If the defensive team fails to identify such runner, the umpire should give no sign. If the appeal is made on the improper runner, the umpire shall give the safe sign and no further appeal shall be allowed at that base.

**A.R.**—If, before making the first appeal, the defense announces that it intends to appeal multiple infractions, a throwing error shall cancel only the first appeal if the ball remains in play, or base runners do not advance.

- (7) If there are two or more appeals during a play, which could make a total of “four outs” in an inning, the defensive team may choose to take any out it desires.
- (8) If a violation occurs during a play that ends an inning, the appeal must be made before the defensive team leaves the field. When the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher has left the position on their way to their bench, the team is considered to have left the field.
- (9) If there are two outs before the appeal on a runner, the appeal becoming the third out, no runners following the appealed out shall score, and if the appeal is a force out, no runners preceding or following the appealed out shall score.
- (10) It is not a balk for a pitcher, while in contact with the rubber (does not step back), to throw to an unoccupied base for the purpose of making an appeal play.



### Collision Rule

SECTION 7. The rules committee is concerned about unnecessary and violent collisions with the catcher at home plate, and with infielders at all bases. The intent of this rule is to encourage base runners and defensive players to avoid such collisions whenever possible.

- a. When there is a collision between a runner and a fielder who **clearly is in possession of the ball**, the umpire shall judge:
  - (1) Whether the collision by the runner was avoidable (could the runner have reached the base without colliding) or unavoidable (the runner's path to the base was blocked) or
  - (2) Whether the runner actually was attempting to reach the base (plate) or attempting to dislodge the ball from the fielder.

**PENALTY—If the runner, a) could have avoided the collision and reached the base, or b) attempted to dislodge the ball, the runner shall be declared out even if the fielder loses possession of the ball. The ball is dead and all other base runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.**

**A.R. 1**—If the fielder blocks the path of the base runner to the base (plate), the runner may make contact, slide into, or collide with a fielder as long as the runner is making a legitimate attempt to reach the base or plate.

**A.R. 2**—If the collision by the runner was **flagrant**, the runner shall be declared out and also ejected from the contest. The ball shall be declared dead.

- b. If the defensive player blocks the base (plate) or base line clearly without possession of the ball, obstruction shall be called. The runner is safe and an immediate dead ball shall be called.

**A.R.**—If the base runner collides flagrantly, the runner shall be declared safe on the obstruction, but will be ejected from the contest. The ball is dead.

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# RULE 9

## Pitching

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### Pitching Positions

SECTION 1. There are two legal pitching positions, the wind-up and the set. Either position may be used at any time.

- a. **The Wind-up.** The pitcher shall stand facing the batter, with the entire pivot foot on or in front of and touching, but not off the end of the pitcher's rubber, and the other foot free. From this position, any natural movement associated with the delivery of the ball to the batter commits the pitcher to pitch without interruption or alteration. The pitcher shall not raise either foot from the ground, except that in the actual delivery of the ball to the batter, the pitcher may take *one step backward or sideward* and one step forward with *the free foot*.
  - (1) A pitcher may assume the wind-up position with: (a) hands together in front of the body, (b) hands apart (both arms or the throwing arm at the pitcher's side) and then go directly into the delivery to the plate, (c) hands apart and then bring the hands together and come to a stop to adjust the grip on the ball before beginning the delivery to the plate. From these positions the pitcher may:
    - (a) Deliver the ball to the batter;
    - (b) Step and throw to a base in an attempt to pick off a runner, or
    - (c) Disengage from the pitching rubber by stepping back with the pivot foot first before separating the hands or stepping back with the free foot.
  - (2) With a runner on base, the pitcher shall pitch to the batter immediately after making any motion with any part of the body such as the pitcher habitually uses during the delivery.
  - (3) With a runner on base, the pitcher may disengage from the rubber as long as no natural pitching motion with the body, legs or free foot has been started.

- (4) With a runner on base, the pitcher may throw to that base without first disengaging the pivot foot from the rubber as long as no natural pitching motion has been started.
- (5) The pitcher cannot move from the wind-up position to the set position without disengaging the pivot foot from the rubber.
- (6) The pitcher must step directly and gain ground toward a base in an attempt to pick off a runner. "Directly" is interpreted to mean within a 45 degree angle measuring from the pivot foot toward the base the pitcher is throwing to or feinting a throw.
- (7) A pitcher, when stepping off the rubber, shall not drop the heel of the free foot before disengaging the pivot foot from the rubber.

**PENALTY for 1-7—With the bases occupied, a balk shall be called. With the bases empty, the umpire shall rule no pitch.**

- (8) The pitcher shall not take a forward step with the pivot foot in using the wind-up delivery. This is commonly known as "running into the pitch" and is an illegal pitch.

**PENALTY for (8)—With the bases occupied, a balk shall be called. With the bases empty, the umpire shall call a ball.**

- b. **The Set.** The set position shall be indicated when the pitcher stands facing the batter, with the entire pivot foot on or in front of and touching but not off the end of the pitcher's rubber and the free foot in front of the pitcher's rubber, holding the ball in both hands in front of the body and coming to a complete and discernable stop.

From such set position, the pitcher may pitch, throw to a base or step backward off the pitcher's rubber with the pivot foot. Before assuming the set position, the pitcher may elect to make any natural preliminary motion such as that known as "the stretch," but the pitcher shall come to the set position using a continuous hand motion before pitching to the batter. After assuming the set position, any natural motion associated with the pitch commits the pitcher to the pitch **without** alteration or interruption.

- (1) When taking the sign before assuming the set position, the pitcher must have the pitching hand at the side or behind the body.
- (2) The pitcher shall deliver the pitch from a set position only after coming to a complete and discernible stop with his entire body.

**A.R.**—With the bases unoccupied, the pitcher does not need to come to a complete and discernable stop.

- (3) When the pitcher starts the delivery from the set position and the entire free foot **or any part of the stride leg** breaks the plane of the back edge of the pitcher's rubber, the pitcher is committed to throw or feint a motion toward second base or pitch to home plate.

**PENALTY—For violations of 1, 2 or 3, a “balk” shall be called.**

- c. At any time during the pitcher's preliminary movements and until the natural pitching motion begins, the pitcher may throw to any base provided a step that **gains ground and is directed** toward such base is taken before making the throw (see 9-1-a-[6]).
- d. If the pitcher makes an illegal pitch with the bases unoccupied, it is a ball unless the batter reaches first base on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batter or otherwise.
- e. The pitcher, upon breaking contact with the pitcher's rubber by stepping backward with the pivot foot, becomes an infielder. If the pitcher then makes a wild throw, it is the same as a wild throw by any other infielder.

**A.R.**—To “step off” the pitcher's rubber, the pitcher must 1) step **back** off the rubber and 2) disengage the pivot foot before moving the free foot.

- f. When taking signs, the pitcher must have the pivot foot touching the pitcher's rubber. If the sign is taken in the windup position, the pitcher must use the windup to deliver the ball. If the sign is taken in the set position, the pitcher must use the set position to deliver the ball. If the pitcher steps back off the pitcher's rubber with the pivot foot, this breaks the continuity. When the pitcher again touches the pitcher's rubber, the delivery appropriate to the stance now assumed on the mound must be used. If the pitcher takes a sign from other than a legal position, the pitch shall be called a ball.

### **Pitching Violations**

SECTION 2. The pitcher shall not:

- a. Make an illegal pitch or quick pitch with the bases unoccupied;

**PENALTY—A ball, unless the batter reaches first base.**

- b. Intentionally or unintentionally drop the ball while in contact with the rubber;

**PENALTY—With no one on base, if the ball drops or slips out of the hand, intentionally or accidentally, it is no pitch if the ball does NOT cross the foul line. If it does cross the foul line, it**

**is a ball. If there is a runner(s) on base and the ball is dropped, it is a balk.**

- c. Delay the game at any time. With the bases unoccupied, the pitcher shall deliver the ball within 20 seconds after receiving the ball;

**PENALTY—A ball shall be called each time a pitcher violates this rule.**

- d. If the pitcher is not in contact with the pitching rubber, the pitcher may go to the mouth while in the dirt area; however, the pitcher must wipe off the fingers before pitching.

A.R.—A pitcher may not go to the mouth while in contact with the pitching rubber.

**PENALTY for c. and d.— A ball shall be called each time a pitcher violates this rule.**

- e. Apply any foreign substance or moisture to the ball or to the pitching hand or fingers, or do anything to deface the ball. The pitcher may use bare hands to rub up the ball.

A.R.—The pitcher shall not use a bandage or any other distracting item on the pitching hand or fingers. A cast or bandage may be used on the non-pitching hand if it is not white in color or distracting to the batter or umpire.

- f. Intentionally delay the game by throwing the ball to players other than the catcher when the batter is in position, except in an attempt to retire a runner;

**PENALTY for e. and f.—Warn the pitcher one time and, upon the second offense, eject the pitcher from the game.**

- g. Intentionally pitch at the batter;

**PENALTY for g.—If the umpire believes such a violation has occurred, a warning shall be issued to the pitcher and both opposing coaches that future violations by any pitcher will be cause for immediate ejection of the pitcher and the coach from the game.**

- (1) If, in the umpire's judgment, the situation warrants drastic action to diffuse a potentially volatile situation, the umpire may eject the pitcher without a warning. Each coach should be warned, but the coach of the offending team should not be ejected at that time unless the umpire believes it is appropriate (see 5-16-d).
- (2) A warning may be issued to both teams before the start of the game or at any time during the game.

(3) A pitcher who is ejected from a game for intentionally throwing at a batter shall be suspended under the provisions of the fight rule (see 5-16-d).

- h. Wear a garment with ragged, frayed or slit sleeves, or attach tape or other material of a color different from the uniform or glove to the glove, arms or clothing. The pitcher shall not wear another glove under the regular glove. If a pitcher wears a helmet, it must have a nonglossy finish. A pitcher shall not wear jewelry or clothing items that a batter or umpire considers distracting (e.g., chains, white logos, wrist bands, loose lacing on glove).

**PENALTY for h.—The pitcher shall remove the distracting item upon request of the umpire or be ejected from the contest.**

- i. At the beginning of an inning, throw more than five pitches to the catcher. A relief pitcher is allowed eight pitches, but these pitches shall not consume more than one minute. In case of an injury or an ejection of the pitcher, the umpire-in-chief shall allow the relief pitcher an adequate time to warm up;

**PENALTY for i.—A ball shall be called for each violation of this rule.**

- j. Take the signs from the catcher with the pivot foot not touching the pitcher's rubber, or

**PENALTY for j.—A ball shall be called each time a pitcher violates this rule. If the pitcher pitches from this illegal position and the batter reaches first base and no other runner is put out before advancing at least one base, the play shall proceed without reference to the violation.**

- k. Pitch both right-handed and left-handed to the same batter during a plate appearance (ambidextrous-pitcher rule).

**PENALTY—If a pitcher changes pitching hands during a batter's time at bat, the umpire shall:**

- (1) Call a balk if a runner(s) is on base;**
- (2) Call a ball for an illegal pitch if no runner(s) is on base;**
- (3) Warn the pitcher; or**
- (4) Eject the pitcher if the offense is repeated.**

**A.R. 1—**When facing a switch hitter, an ambidextrous pitcher shall declare the hand with which to pitch to the hitter.

**A.R. 2—**If a pinch hitter replaces a batter during a turn at bat, the pitcher may change pitching hands.

**Balk**

SECTION 3. A balk shall be called for the following action by a pitcher:

- a. From a pitching position, any feinting motion (without completing the throw) toward the batter or toward first base when it is occupied by a runner;
- b. When, before throwing to any base from a pitching position, the pitcher feints a throw to a base and, without breaking contact with the rubber, throws to another base;

**A.R.**—On the attempted pick-off play where the pitcher fakes a throw to third base and then throws to first base, the pitcher:

- (1) Must step directly and gain ground toward third base;
  - (2) Must break contact with the rubber before throwing to first, and
  - (3) Need not feint a throw to third; however, if the pitcher does, the feint must be directed toward third base.
- c. While in a pitching position, throw to any base in an attempt to retire a runner without first stepping directly toward such base; or throw or feint a throw toward any base when it is not an attempt to retire a runner or prevent the runner from advancing;
    - (1) The pitcher, while touching the pitcher's rubber, must step toward the base, preceding or simultaneous with any move toward that base. The pitcher is committed, upon raising the lead leg, to throw to the base being faced, to second base or to the plate. When throwing or feinting a throw to a base not being faced, the pitcher must step immediately, directly and gain ground toward that base.

**A.R.**—If the pitcher throws to the first baseman who is playing off the base, a balk shall not be called if the fielder moves toward first base in an attempt to retire the runner.

- (2) The “spin” or “open” move to second base is legal if the pitcher raises the lead leg and immediately, with a continuous motion, steps directly toward second base. The pitcher need not throw.
- (3) The pitcher shall step “ahead of the throw.” A snap throw followed by a step directly toward the base is a balk.
- (4) The pitcher may not deceive a base runner by prematurely flexing either leg before stepping directly and throwing to first base.
- (5) The jump-turn move is legal if the pitcher's free foot steps toward and gains ground to the base that the ball is being thrown. Otherwise, a balk shall be called.

- (6) Stepping toward either second or third base without completing the throw is legal if the base is occupied by a runner or there is an attempt to retire a runner.
- d. Making an illegal pitch, such as a quick pitch;  
**A.R.**—If a runner on third base breaks for home plate, the pitcher may speed up the delivery but must continue to use a normal pitching sequence and arm action.
- e. Unnecessarily delaying the game;
- f. While not in possession of the ball, the pitcher stands with either foot or both feet on any part of the dirt area (circle) of the mound during a hidden-ball-play attempt;
- g. Failing to throw to the batter immediately after making any motion with any part of the body such as the pitcher habitually uses in the delivery;  
**A.R.**—If the pitcher, with a runner on base, stops or hesitates the delivery because the batter steps out of the box, holds up a hand or uses any other action as if calling time, it shall **not** be a balk. The rule has been violated by both the batter and the pitcher, and the umpire shall call “Time” and begin the play anew.
- h. The pitcher takes either hand off the ball after having taken a stretch or set position unless making a pitch or throwing to any base;
- i. The pitcher pitches while the catcher is not in the catcher’s box. The catcher must have both feet within the catcher’s box until the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand;
- j. The pitcher delivers the pitch from the set position without coming to a complete and discernable stop, or the pitcher comes to more than one stop from the set position (see 9-1-b);  
**A.R.**—With the bases unoccupied, the pitcher does not need to come to a complete and discernable stop.
- k. From the windup position, the pitcher makes more than two pumping motions before delivering to the plate;
- l. From the set position, if the **entire free foot** or **any part of the stride leg** breaks the plane of the **back** edge of the pitcher’s rubber and the pitcher does not throw or feint a motion to second base or pitch to home plate (see 9-1-b-[3]), and
- m. When the pitcher makes a natural pitching motion while not touching the pitcher’s rubber.

**PENALTY for a. through m.**—**Balk. The ball becomes dead and each runner must advance one base.**

- (1) **If the balk immediately is followed by a pitch that permits the batter and each runner to advance a minimum of one base, the balk is ignored and the ball remains live.**



**Example:** The batter and all runner(s) advance when a wild pitch is either ball four or strike three.

- (2) If a balk immediately is followed by a wild throw to a base that permits a runner(s) to advance to or beyond the base to which that runner is entitled, the balk shall be ignored and the ball remains live.

A.R.—A runner(s) may advance beyond the base which is entitled at the runner's own risk.

- (3) If only the runner advances to or beyond the base which is entitled because of a wild pitch after a balk, the balk is still acknowledged and the pitch is nullified. The batter will resume the at-bat with the same pitch count as before the balk was committed.

### Removing Pitcher

SECTION 4. The conditions for removal of the pitcher are as follows:

- a. A coach is allowed three free trips to the mound in a game, plus one extra free trip in the event of an extra-inning game (with the exception of 9-4-b provisions).

- (1) A free trip is one in which the coach does not remove the pitcher.  
(2) The coach cannot circumvent this rule by asking a player to act for him, and neither can the coach or his representative leave the bench or dugout and approach the base lines to confer with the pitcher for the purpose of evading this rule.

A.R. 1—If a coach holds a defensive conference with a defensive player, it shall be considered a trip whether the player goes to the mound or not.

A.R. 2—Unused free trips to the mound during the first nine innings may be used during any extra innings.

A.R. 3—For the purpose of identifying trips to the mound on a batter, a player becomes the batter as soon as the previous batter reaches base, or is put out. The new batter does not have to enter the batter's box to be considered the batter.

A.R. 4—If the offensive team has a prolonged injury timeout, the pitcher may leave the mound and confer with the coach, or the coach may go to the mound to talk with the pitcher without being charged with a defensive trip. If the defensive conference further delays play, a trip shall be charged to the defensive team.

*Note: The plate umpire shall record on the lineup card each free trip and the inning that it occurred.*

- b. If a coach or his nonplaying representative goes to the mound a second time in the inning to talk to the same pitcher, the pitcher must be removed from the pitcher's position **for the remainder of the game**. The

coach is to indicate the relief pitcher to an umpire immediately after crossing the foul line (see 7-2-c-[5]-[b]-[4]);

**A.R. 1**—If, after one trip to the same pitcher in the same inning, or three free trips in a game, the coach goes to the plate umpire to announce a pitching change (does not go to the mound), a second trip shall be charged. If moved to a defensive position, the pitcher shall not return to pitch.

**A.R. 2**—The relief pitcher, when called from the bullpen by the umpire, must proceed immediately to the mound. Any additional pitches thrown in the bullpen will be subtracted from the eight preparatory pitches permitted on the mound.

- c. A coach may not make a second trip to the mound in the same inning with the same batter at bat. However, if a pinch-hitter is substituted, the coach may make a second trip but must remove the pitcher;

(1) In this pinch-hitter situation, a relief pitcher, having just been brought in to pitch, may not be removed from the game before pitching completely to one batter (see 5-5-b).

(2) If the coach previously has used the allowed free trips and mistakenly is allowed to go to the mound for a conference, the pitcher shall be removed from the position after the batter completes the turn at bat. The pitcher may not reenter the game as a pitcher.

(3) If the coach starts to the mound for a second trip with the same batter at bat in the same inning, the umpire shall warn that this act is not permitted. If the coach continues to the mound, the coach shall be ejected and the pitcher must complete pitching to the batter; when the batter's turn is completed, the pitcher shall be removed from the game. The coach should be warned of the impending removal so that another pitcher can start warming up. The substitute pitcher shall be permitted the eight preparatory pitches unless circumstances justify additional pitches.

**A.R.**—If the umpire originally fails to recognize that the coach is making a second trip during the same batter, the coach shall not be penalized.

- d. The trip to the mound shall be considered concluded as the coach crosses the foul line, and
- e. A pitcher who is removed from the pitching position but remains in the game as a defensive player may return to the mound only once [with the exceptions of 7-2-c-(5) and 9-4-b provisions].

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# RULE 10

## Scoring

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All references to “box score” refer to the Official NCAA Baseball Box Score. All information in the game summary refers to the Official NCAA Baseball Scorebook.

### Official Scorer

#### Scorer’s Duties

SECTION 1. a. The home team, conference commissioner or tournament director shall appoint an official scorer before each game. The scorer shall have sole authority to make all decisions involving judgment. He shall communicate such decisions to both teams and all members of the news media present.

- b. The official scorer should sit in the press box or stands (if no press box) and not near or in a dugout.
- c. The official scorer shall exercise his function based on the following:
  - (1) To achieve uniformity in keeping the records of collegiate games, the scorer shall conform strictly to the NCAA Baseball Rules. The scorer shall have authority to rule on any point not covered specifically in these rules;
  - (2) If the teams change sides before three outs are made, the scorer immediately shall inform the umpire of the mistake;
  - (3) If the game is protested or halted, the scorer shall make note of the exact situation at that time, including the score, number of outs, position of any runners and the count on the batter;

*Note: It is important that a halted game resume with exactly the same situation as existed at the time of suspension. If a protested game is ordered replayed from the point of protest, it must be resumed with exactly the situation that existed before the protested play.*

- (4) The scorer shall not make any decision that conflicts with the NCAA Baseball Rules or an umpire’s decision, and

- (5) The scorer shall not call the attention of the umpire or any member of either team to the fact that a player is batting out of turn.

## Batting

### Batting Record

SECTION 2. Each player's batting record shall include:

- a. In columns 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the box score, the number of times he batted, the runs he scored, the base hits he made and the runs batted in he was credited with. The batter is charged with an official time at bat whenever he completes his turn, unless he has been awarded first base as in 8-2-b, d and he has been credited with a sacrifice (10-8). In columns 5 and 6, the number of bases on balls and strikeouts credited to the batter shall be recorded, and

*Note: An official time at bat shall not be charged against a player when he hits a sacrifice bunt or sacrifice fly, is awarded a base on balls, is hit by a pitched ball or is awarded first base because of interference or obstruction.*

- b. In the summary, the number of extra base hits (10-6), sacrifice hits, sacrifice flies and stolen bases.

### Batting Out of Turn

SECTION 3. If a player bats out of turn and is put out, and the proper batter is called out before the ball is pitched to the next batter, charge the proper batter with a time at bat and score the putout and any assists the same as if the correct batting order had been followed. If an improper batter becomes a runner and the proper batter is called out for having missed his turn at bat, charge the proper batter with a time at bat, credit the putout to the catcher and ignore everything entering into the improper batter's safe arrival on base. If more than one batter bats out of turn in succession, score all plays just as they occur, skipping the turn at bat of the player or players who first missed batting in the proper order.

### Base Hit

SECTION 4. A base hit is credited when a batter advances to first base safely:

- a. Because of his fair hit (rather than because of a fielder's error as in 10-16);

**Exception**—It is not a base hit if any runner is out on a force play caused by the batter advancing toward first base or would have been forced out except for a fielding error.

- b. Because a runner is declared out for being hit by a batted ball as in 8-5-k or the umpire is hit by a batted ball as in 8-3-c;
- c. When a fielder attempts to put out a preceding runner but is unsuccessful although there is no fielding error, and the official scorer believes the batter-runner would have reached first base with perfect fielding;
- d. When a batter reaches first base safely on a fair ball hit with such force, or so slowly, that any fielder attempting to make a play has no opportunity to do so. A hit shall be scored even if the fielder deflects the ball from or cuts off another fielder who could have put out a runner;
- e. When a fair ball that has not been touched by a fielder touches a runner or an umpire, or

**Exception**—It is not a base hit when a runner is called out for having been touched by an infield fly.

- f. When a batter reaches first base safely on a fair ball that takes an unnatural bounce so that a fielder cannot handle it with ordinary effort, or that touches the pitcher's rubber or any base (including home plate) before being touched by a fielder and bounces so that a fielder cannot handle it with ordinary effort.

*Note: In applying the above rules, always give the batter the benefit of the doubt. A safe course to follow is to score a hit when exceptionally good fielding fails to result in a putout.*

### **Fielder's Choice**

SECTION 5. This term is used by official scorer's to account for the following situations (the batter shall be charged with an official time at bat but no hit in all such situations):

- a. When a batter-runner advances one or more bases while a fielder who handles a fair hit attempts to put out a preceding runner;
- b. When a runner advances (other than by a stolen base or error) while a fielder is attempting to put out another runner;
- c. When a runner advances solely because of the defensive team's indifference (undefended steal), or
- d. When a batter apparently hits safely and a runner who is forced to advance by reason of the batter becoming a runner fails to touch the first base to which he is advancing and is called out on appeal.

### **Extra-Base Hit**

SECTION 6. a. A base hit for extra bases is credited to the batter when it is the sole reason for his safe arrival at a base beyond first. Any fairly batted ball

that clears in flight an outfield fence in fair territory, even though it may be deflected by a fielder, is a home run, subject to local ground rules.

- b. When, with one or more runners on base, the batter advances more than one base on a safe hit and the defensive team makes an attempt to put out a preceding runner, the scorer shall determine whether the batter made a legitimate two-base hit or three-base hit, or whether he advanced beyond first base on the fielder's choice.

*Note: Do not credit the batter with a three-base hit when a preceding runner is put out at the plate, or would have been out but for an error. Do not credit the batter with a two-base hit when a preceding runner trying to advance from first base is put out at third base, or would have been out but for an error.*

- c. If a batter overruns second or third base and is tagged out trying to return, he shall be credited with the last base he touched.

**Exception**—If put out while oversliding second or third base, he is not credited with reaching such base.

### **Game-Ending Hit**

SECTION 7. When a batter ends a game with a hit that drives in as many runs as are necessary to win the game, credit him with only as many bases on his hit as the runner who scores the winning run advances, and then only if the batter runs out his hit for as many bases as are advanced by the runner who scores the winning run.

**Exception**—If the batted ball clears an outfield fence in fair territory, the batter shall be credited with a home run.

### **Sacrifice**

SECTION 8. A sacrifice bunt is credited to the batter when, with fewer than two outs, his bunt enables a runner to advance, provided no other runner is put out attempting to advance. A sacrifice fly is credited when, with fewer than two outs, his fly, fair or foul, enables a runner to score. In either case, the sacrifice ruling applies when the batter is put out before he reaches first base or would have been put out if the ball had been fielded without error.

**Exception**—If, in the judgment of the official scorer, the batter is bunting primarily for a base hit, do not score a sacrifice. Instead, charge the batter with a time at bat.

### **Run Batted In**

SECTION 9. A run batted in is credited to the batter when a runner scores because of: A base hit (including batter scoring on a home run); a sacrifice

bunt or sacrifice fly; any putout; a forced advance, such as a base on balls or batter being hit by a pitch, or an error, provided there are fewer than two outs and the action is such that the runner on third base would have scored even if there had been no error.

Scorer's judgment must determine whether a run batted in shall be credited for a run that scores when a fielder holds the ball or throws to the wrong base. Ordinarily, if the runner keeps going, credit a run batted in; if the runner stops and takes off again when he notices the misplay, credit the run as scored on a fielder's choice.

**Exception**—It is not a run batted in if there is a double play from a force or one in which the batter is or should have been put out at first base.

### **Substitute Batter**

SECTION 10. When a batter leaves the game with two strikes on him, and a substitute batter strikes out, charge the strikeout to the first batter. If a substitute batter completes the turn at bat in any other manner, including a base on balls, charge the action to the substitute batter.

### **Stolen Base**

SECTION 11. a. A stolen base shall be credited to the base runner whenever he advances a base unaided (such as by a base hit, fielder's choice, putout, error, balk, base on balls, wild pitch or passed ball). A stolen base shall be credited when a runner starts for the next base before the pitcher delivers the ball and the pitch results in what would otherwise be scored a passed ball or a wild pitch.

#### **Exceptions**—

- (1) Where any runner is thrown out on an attempted double or triple steal, no runner shall be credited with a stolen base.

*Note: On a double-steal attempt with runners on first and third bases, if there is a legitimate attempt by the fielder to retire the runner at second base and the runner is safe, that runner shall be credited with a stolen base even if the runner from third is thrown out at home on a continuous play.*

- (2) If a base runner is tagged out while oversliding a base, he shall not be credited with a stolen base.
  - (3) No stolen base shall be credited to a runner whose advance is the result of the opposing team's indifference.
- b. Caught stealing shall be charged to the base runner whenever he is put out in the following situations:

- (1) When he attempts to steal;
- (2) When he is picked off a base and tries to advance, or
- (3) When he overslides while stealing.

*Note: Do not charge caught stealing unless the runner has an opportunity to be credited with a stolen base when the play starts.*

## Fielding

### Fielding Record

SECTION 12. Each player's fielding record shall include:

- a. In columns 7 and 8 of the box score, the number of times he put out a runner and the number of times he assisted a teammate in putting out a runner, and
- b. In the summary, the number of errors and passed balls he committed.

### Putout

SECTION 13. A putout is credited to a fielder who catches a batted ball in flight, tags out a runner or puts out a runner by holding the ball while touching a base to which a runner is forced to advance or return. When a batter strikes out, a putout is credited to the catcher, unless the catcher fails to field the pitch cleanly and must put the batter-runner out at first base.

#### *Exceptions—*

- (1) When a batter is called out for an illegally batted ball, for a foul third-strike bunt, for being hit by his own batted ball, for interference with the catcher or for failing to bat in his proper turn, the putout shall be credited to the catcher.
- (2) When a batter is declared out on an infield fly that is not caught, the putout is credited to the fielder who is nearest the ball at the time.
- (3) When a base runner is out because of being hit by a fairly batted ball, the putout shall be credited to the fielder nearest the ball at the time.
- (4) When a runner is called out for running out of the base line to avoid being tagged, the putout shall be credited to the fielder whom the runner avoided.
- (5) When a runner is called out for passing another runner, the putout shall be credited to the fielder nearest the point of passing.
- (6) When a runner is called out for running the bases in reverse order, the putout shall be credited to the fielder covering the base he left in starting his reverse run.



- (7) When a runner is called out for interfering with a fielder, the putout shall be credited to the fielder with whom the runner interfered, unless the fielder was in the act of throwing the ball when the interference occurred. In that case, the putout shall be credited to the fielder for whom the throw was intended; the fielder whose throw was interfered with shall be credited with an assist.
- (8) When a batter-runner is called out because of interference by a preceding runner, the putout shall be credited to the first baseman. If the fielder interfered with was in the act of throwing the ball, he shall be credited with an assist. In no case can he be credited with more than one assist on any one play.

### **Assist**

SECTION 14. a. An assist is credited to a fielder when he handles or effectively deflects the ball during action that is connected with a putout or he handles the ball before an error that prevents what would have been a putout. If several fielders handle the ball or one fielder handles it more than once during a play, only one assist is credited to each of such fielders.

b. Do not credit the pitcher with an assist on a strikeout or when after a pitch the catcher tags out or throws out a runner.

*Note: A play that follows a misplay (whether or not it is an error) is a new play, and the fielder making any misplay shall not be credited with an assist unless he takes part in the new play.*

### **Double Play-Triple Play**

SECTION 15. A double play or triple play is credited to one or more fielders when two or three players are put out between the time a pitch is delivered and the time the ball next becomes dead or is next in possession of the pitcher in his pitching position.

**Exception**—When an error or a misplay occurs between the time one player is put out and the time a second player is put out, a double play or triple play is not credited.

*Note: Also credit a double play or triple play if an appeal play after the ball is in possession of the pitcher results in an additional putout.*

### **Error**

SECTION 16. a. An error is charged against any fielder (pitchers included) for each misplay that prolongs the time at bat of the batter or the time as a runner of a base runner or permits a runner to advance one or more bases.

*Note 1: Slow handling of the ball that does not involve mechanical misplay shall not be construed as an error.*

*Note 2: It is not necessary that the fielder touch the ball to be charged with an error. If a ground ball goes through a fielder's legs or a pop fly falls untouched and, in the scorer's judgment, the fielder could have handled the ball with ordinary effort, an error should be charged.*

*Note 3: Mental mistakes or misjudgments are not to be scored as errors unless specifically covered in the rules.*

- b. An error shall be charged against any fielder when he catches a thrown ball or a ground ball in time to put out any runner on a force play and fails to tag the base or the runner, including a batter-runner on a play at first base.
- c. An error shall be charged against any fielder whose throw takes an unnatural bounce, touches a base or the pitcher's rubber, or touches a runner, a fielder or an umpire, thereby permitting any runner to advance. Apply this rule even when it appears to be an injustice to a fielder whose throw was accurate. Every base advanced by a runner must be accounted for.
- d. Charge only one error on any wild throw, regardless of the number of bases advanced by runners.
- e. An error shall be charged against any fielder whose failure to stop, or try to stop, an accurately thrown ball permits a runner to advance, providing there was occasion for the throw. If, in the scorer's judgment, there was no occasion for the throw, an error shall be charged to the fielder who threw the ball.

**Exceptions—**

- (1) A base on balls, a base awarded to a batter for being hit by a pitched ball, a balk, a passed ball or a wild pitch shall not be scored as an error.
- (2) No error is charged to the catcher for a wild throw in an attempt to prevent a stolen base unless the base runner advances an extra base because of a wild throw.
- (3) No player is charged with an error for a poor throw in an attempt to complete a double play unless the throw is so wild that it permits a runner to advance an additional base. However, if a player drops a thrown ball when by holding it he would have completed a double play, it is an error.

- (4) A fielder is not charged with an error for accurately throwing to a base whose baseman fails to stop or try to stop the ball, provided there was good reason for such a throw. If the runner advances because of the throw, the error is charged to the baseman or fielder who should have covered that base.
  - (5) If a fielder drops a fly ball or fumbles a ground ball, but recovers the ball in time to force a runner, he is not charged with an error.
  - (6) No error shall be charged against any fielder who permits a foul fly to fall safely with a runner on third base and fewer than two outs if, in the judgment of the official scorer, the fielder deliberately allows the ball to fall in order to prevent the runner on third from scoring after a catch.
- f. When an umpire awards the batter or any runner or runners one or more bases because of interference or obstruction, charge the fielder who committed the interference or obstruction with one error, no matter how many bases the batter, runner or runners, may be advanced.

*Note: Do not charge an error if obstruction does not change the play in the opinion of the scorer.*

### **Passed Ball**

SECTION 17. A passed ball is a pitch the catcher fails to stop or control when he should have been able to do so with ordinary effort and on which a runner (other than the batter) is able to advance. When a passed ball occurs on a third strike, permitting a batter to reach first base, score a strikeout and a passed ball.

### **Fielder's Choice**

SECTION 18. A fielder's choice is the action of a fielder who handles a fairly batted ball and, instead of throwing to first base to put out the batter-runner, throws to another base in an attempt to put out a preceding runner.

## Pitching

### **Pitching Record**

SECTION 19. Each pitcher's record shall include in the summary: number of innings pitched, base hits, runs, earned runs, bases on balls, strikeouts, hit batters, wild pitches and balks.

*Note: In computing innings pitched, count each putout as one-third of an inning. If a starting pitcher is replaced with one out in the sixth inning, credit that pitcher*

with  $5\frac{1}{3}$  innings. If a starting pitcher is replaced with no outs in the sixth inning, credit that pitcher with five innings, and make the notation that he faced a specific number of batters in the sixth. If a relief pitcher retires two batters and is replaced, credit that pitcher with two-thirds of an inning pitched.

### **Complete Game**

SECTION 20. To receive credit for a complete game, the pitcher must pitch the entire game.

### **Wild Pitch**

SECTION 21. A pitcher shall be charged with a wild pitch when a legal pitch is such that a catcher cannot catch or control it with ordinary effort, so that the batter reaches first base or any runner advances one or more bases.

*Note: Generally, a pitch that hits the ground before touching the catcher's glove is scored as a wild pitch.*

### **Earned Run**

SECTION 22. a. An earned run shall be charged against a pitcher when a runner scores because of a safe hit, sacrifice hit, sacrifice fly, stolen base, putout, fielder's choice, base on balls, hit batter, balk or wild pitch (even when the wild pitch is a third strike), provided that in each case it is before the defensive team has had an opportunity to make a third putout.

*Note: In determining earned runs, the scorer shall reconstruct the inning as if there were no errors or passed balls. Give the pitcher the benefit of the doubt in determining the advancement of runners, had the defensive team been errorless.*

- b. No earned run shall be charged to a relief pitcher if the runner was on base when the relief pitcher entered the game. Likewise, if a batter has more balls than strikes, unless the count is one ball, no strikes, when a relief pitcher enters the game and the batter receives a base on balls, charge that action to the preceding pitcher. Any other action of the batter shall be charged to the relief pitcher.
- c. No run shall be earned when scored by a runner whose time as a runner is prolonged by an error, if such runner would have been put out by errorless play.
- d. An error by a pitcher is treated exactly the same as an error by any other fielder in computing earned runs.
- e. When pitchers are changed during an inning, the relief pitcher shall not be charged with any run (earned or unearned) scored by a runner who reaches base on a fielder's choice that puts out a runner left on base by a preceding pitcher.

*Note: The intent of this rule is to charge each pitcher with the number of runners he put on base, rather than with the individual runners.*

- f. When pitchers are changed during an inning, a relief pitcher shall not have the benefit of errors made earlier in the inning. Thus, he will be charged with earned runs for which he is totally responsible.

### **Strikeout**

SECTION 23. A strikeout is credited to the pitcher when a third strike is delivered to a batter, even if the third strike is a wild pitch or is not caught or the batter reaches first base. It also is a strikeout if an attempted bunt on a third strike is a foul that is not caught.

## Statistics

### **Game Summary**

SECTION 24. The game summary should include all the items contained in the Official NCAA Box Score, as shown later in this section.

### **Winning and Losing Pitchers**

SECTION 25. a. For all games of eight or more innings, a starting pitcher must pitch at least five complete innings to receive credit as the winning pitcher. For all games of fewer than eight innings, the starting pitcher must pitch at least four innings to get credit for the win. Additionally, the winning pitcher's team must be in the lead when he is replaced and must remain in the lead for the rest of the game.

- b. If the starting pitcher does not pitch enough innings, the win is credited to a relief pitcher in the following manner:

- (1) The winning relief pitcher shall be the one who is the pitcher of record when his team goes ahead and remains ahead throughout the remainder of the game. No pitcher may receive credit for a victory if the opposing team ties the score or goes ahead after he has left the game.

*Note: Whenever the score is tied, the game becomes a new contest insofar as the winning and losing pitchers are concerned.*

**Exception**—If a relief pitcher conforms to the above regulations but pitches briefly and ineffectively, the scorer should not credit him with a win. If a succeeding relief pitcher pitches effectively and helps maintain the lead, the scorer should award the win to that succeeding pitcher.

- (2) By prearrangement, if three or more pitchers are to be used, the pitcher of record shall be considered the winning pitcher.

- c. When a batter or runner is substituted for a pitcher, all runs scored by his team during that inning are to his credit in determining the pitcher of record.
- d. The starting pitcher shall be charged with the loss if he is replaced at any time while his team is behind and remains behind for the remainder of the game. Similarly, any relief pitcher who is the pitcher of record when the opposing team assumes the lead and never relinquishes it is charged with the loss.

*Note: The pitcher of record shall be the one who is in the game at the time the winning team gains the lead, provided that the lead never is relinquished, or the one who is charged with the runs by which the opposing team takes the lead, provided that the lead never is relinquished.*

- e. To receive credit for a shutout, the pitcher must pitch the entire game or enter the game with no outs in the first inning and pitch the rest of the game without any runs scoring.

### **Save**

SECTION 26. If a relief pitcher meets ALL of the following conditions, the official scorer should credit that pitcher with a save:

- a. He is the finishing pitcher in a game won by his team;
- b. He is not credited with the win, and
- c. He meets one of the following conditions:
  - (1) He enters the game with a lead of not more than three runs and pitches at least one inning;
  - (2) He enters the game with the potential tying run on base, at bat or on deck, or
  - (3) He pitches effectively for at least three innings.

*Note: No more than one save may be credited in each game.*

### **Proving Box Score**

SECTION 27. To prove a box score, the total of the team's plate appearances (times at bat, bases on balls, hit batters, sacrifice bunts, sacrifice flies and batters awarded first base because of the interference or obstruction) must equal the total of the team's runs, players left on base and the opposing team's putouts.

### **Called/Forfeited Game and No Contest**

SECTION 28. a. If a regulation game is called, include the record of all indi-

vidual and team actions up to the moment the game ends as specified in Rule 5-7-b.

**A.R. 1**—If the scoring during an incomplete inning has no bearing on the outcome of the contest, include all individual and team records.

**A.R. 2**—If it is a tie game, do not enter a winning or losing pitcher.

- b. If a regulation game is forfeited, include the record of all individual and team actions up to the time of the forfeit. If the winning team by forfeit is ahead at the time of forfeit, enter as winning and losing pitchers the players who would have qualified if the game had been called at the time of forfeit. If the winning team by forfeit is behind or the score is tied at the time of the forfeit, do not enter a winning or losing pitcher. If a game is forfeited before it becomes a regulation game, include no records. Report only the fact of the forfeit.

*Note: If the team awarded the forfeit was tied or behind at the time of the forfeit, the score shall be recorded as 9-0 for a scheduled nine-inning game and 7-0 for a scheduled seven-inning game. The word "forfeit" should accompany this score.*

- c. When a team does not appear (e.g., due to weather conditions, accidents, breakdown of vehicles, illness or catastrophic causes), a forfeit is not recorded. An institution shall not, for statistical purposes, declare a forfeit for nonfulfillment of a contract. Such instances shall be considered as "no contest."

### **Determining Percentages**

SECTION 29. The following procedures should be used to determine various percentages:

- To determine won-lost percentage, divide the total number of games played into the number of games won (each tie game is computed as half won and half lost);
- To determine batting averages, divide the number of official times at bat into the number of base hits;
- To determine fielding averages, divide the total chances (putouts, assists and errors) into the total putouts and assists;
- To determine a pitcher's earned-run average, multiply the earned runs allowed by nine and then divide by the number of innings pitched;

*Note: The statistician may choose to compute earned-run average by multiplying the earned runs allowed by 27 and then dividing by the number of outs recorded (innings pitched times three). Earned-run averages must be based on nine innings.*

- e. To determine slugging percentage, divide the number of official times at bat into the number of total bases; and

*Note: In all cases where the remaining decimal is one-half or more, round to the next whole number.*

- f. To determine on-base percentage, divide the total number of at bats, bases on balls, hit by pitches and sacrifice flies into the total number of hits, bases on balls and hit by pitches.

*Note: For the purpose of computing on-base percentage, ignore being awarded first base by interference or obstruction.*

### **Cumulative Performance Records**

SECTION 30. a. A consecutive hitting streak shall not be terminated if the plate appearance results in a base on balls, hit batsman, defensive interference or a sacrifice bunt. A sacrifice fly shall terminate the streak.

- b. A consecutive-game hitting streak shall not be terminated if all the player's plate appearances (one or more) result in a base on balls, hit batsman, defensive interference or sacrifice bunt. The streak shall terminate if the player has a sacrifice fly and no hit.

c. A consecutive-game playing streak shall be extended if the player plays one-half inning on defense, or if he completes a time at bat by reaching base or being put out. A pinch-running appearance only shall not extend the streak. If a player is ejected from a game by an umpire before he can comply with the requirements of this rule, his streak shall continue.

- d. For the purpose of this rule, all performances in the completion of a suspended or halted game shall be considered as occurring on the original date of the game.





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# APPENDIX B

## Rules for Scoreboards, Video and Audio

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The following regulations apply to all NCAA Baseball games, regardless of stadium or venue:

### A. Scoreboards and video.

1. Scoreboards (and monitors) must not be used to “show up” an umpire, visiting team members, incite the crowd, or distract a player. The following situations may not be shown:
  - a. Replays showing balls or strikes;
  - b. Brushback pitches;
  - c. Fights or disputes between or among uniformed personnel on the field;
  - d. Any episode or event that would embarrass or denigrate an umpire, visiting team member, visiting team official, or official scorer;
  - e. The likeness of an umpire or an umpire’s name be used in any way to embarrass an umpire; and
  - f. Fans or other unauthorized persons running onto the field.  
Exciting plays such as spectacular catches or players circling the bases after homeruns may be shown more than once.
2. Replays may not delay the game. The next batter is expected to immediately step into the batter’s box.
3. Any instance where an umpire has made a judgment call may be replayed only one time at regular speed.
4. No live game action may be displayed. Close-ups of the batter in the on-deck circle are permitted, but once a player steps into the batter’s box, all live action must stop. A still shot, statistics, or other non-moving pictures must remain on the screen until the batter finishes the plate appearance.

5. Arguments or disputes between umpires and players or coaches may not be shown.
6. Live shot of fans are permitted during dead ball periods, but good judgment must be used. Unacceptable behavior should never be shown.

### **B. Audio and LED or LED/Matrix boards.**

All music, chants or crowd-cuing messages must stop when the batter steps into the batter's box. Use of LED or LED/Matrix boards should stop when the batter steps into the batter's box. Music, noise and cheers, as well as use of LED or LED/Matrix boards, may be used during the following times:

1. Before the start of the game;
2. Between innings;
3. During pitching changes;
4. As the batter is heading towards the batter's box; and
5. After the game.

LED or LED/Matrix boards may be operated during a lengthy stoppage in play, but their operation must cease when the umpire calls "Play." Teams are to exhibit good judgment when using messages that encourage fans to cheer or make noise.

Audio (music, organists, etc.) may not be played in a manner that may incite spectators to react in a negative fashion to umpires' decisions or to visiting players.

It is the home team's responsibility to monitor its video and audio operations and abide by all guidelines and policies, including between-inning entertainment.

Should any of the policies in this section be violated by a team, umpires have the authority to stop the game to have the matter corrected. Umpires are to inform their conference office concerning any violation of these guidelines.

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