

2019 and 2020 NCAA Baseball Rules Changes

The following rules changes were approved by the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee and the Playing Rules Oversight Panel. They will be incorporated into the rules book for the 2019 and 2020 seasons.

Rule	Rules Change, Rationale
1.15a	To require that all non-roster bat/ball persons wear a double ear flap protective helmet while performing their duties. Rationale To enhance the safety of bat/ball persons located in or near the field of play.
1.16b	To prohibit uniformed team personnel, coaches and extra on-deck hitters from standing or sitting in the dugout extension area or dead-ball area on the home plate side of the dugout during play. Rationale To enhance the safety of bat/ball persons who are supposed to be in this area by restricting coaches and team personnel from entering these areas to observe the game.
2.7	To allow the defensive team's head coach to signal the umpire that the coach intends to intentionally walk the batter without throwing four (4) pitches. Rationale To improve pace of play and more closely align the NCAA rules with professional baseball.
5.15a.2	To penalize a batter for using tactics with the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit a balk or disrupting the pitcher's delivery. If this occurs and a balk or illegal pitch is called, or if the pitch is called a ball, the call shall be nullified. Rationale To prevent unsporting behavior aimed at disrupting the pitcher's delivery.
6.2d	To clarify that during the backswing, if the batter unintentionally hits the catcher or the ball, the pitch shall be called a strike, the ball will be dead and no runners shall advance on the play. Rationale To clarify that any bat contact with the catcher during the backswing, not just when the ball is caught by the catcher, will be considered backswing interference. Although this play is still a judgment call, this clarification will enhance consistency.
Rule 6.5f	To allow six (6) defensive conferences per game for a regulation game. A maximum of three (3) of these defensive conferences may include a coach. Rationale

	To improve pace of play by limiting the number of defensive conferences initiated by defensive players (such as the catcher or infielders) to three (3) beyond the three (3) visits the coach is currently permitted to make.
Delete 6.5f.4	To charge an offensive conference if the batter runner or runners leave their position during a defensive conference. Rationale To decrease the number of unnecessary delays during breaks in the game and allow for consistency in charging offensive and defensive conferences.
8.2d.1	To penalize the batter with a strike and not award first base if, in the judgement of the umpire, the batter makes an intentional movement to be hit by a pitch, regardless of where the pitch is located. Rationale To provide guidance in enforcing the hit by pitch rule and to deter batters from attempting to be hit by the pitch. “Freezing” by a batter is not considered making an intentional movement. A batter who freezes inside the batter’s box and who is hit by a pitch shall be awarded first base.
8.3e-1 Note	To clarify that a defensive player may not block any part of the base with any part of their body unless they have clear possession of the ball. If the defensive player blocks a base before having clear possession of the ball, the umpire shall call obstruction, the ball shall be dead immediately and the runner involved shall be awarded one base beyond the last base the runner had attained before the obstruction. Rationale To provide consistent application and simplify umpire judgement at all bases when a defensive player attempts to block the base. This is also intended to reduce the amount of collisions during scoring plays at the plate.
8.5k	To clarify that a runner will be out if the runner is touched by a batted ball in fair territory before the ball is touched by a fielder. If a fair ball goes through or by an infielder and touches a runner after having been deflected by a fielder, the runner shall not be out. Rationale To clarify the language within the existing rule regarding situations when a batted ball in fair territory contacts a runner and what the umpire should rule on the play.
9.1a	To require that to be in the windup position, the pitcher shall stand with: a) His chest and shoulders generally facing the batter, b) His pivot foot touching on or in front of the pitcher's plate and c) The free foot touching or behind the plane of the front edge of the pitcher’s plate. Rationale

	To clarify the windup pitching position for umpires to properly apply applicable pitching rules and to further distinguish the windup position from the set position. (A diagram will be included in the rules book.)
9.1b	<p>To require that to be in the set position, the pitcher shall stand with his pivot foot in contact with and parallel to the pitcher’s plate and his free foot in front of the pitcher’s plate. Further, the pitcher may turn his shoulders and face the batter while receiving the sign prior to facing the respective foul lines and bringing the hands together in the set position.</p> <p>Rationale To clarify the set pitching position for umpires to properly apply applicable pitching rules and to further distinguish the set position from the windup position.</p>
9.1b	<p>To clarify that the motion known as “the stretch” is part of the set position.</p> <p>Rationale To clarify the set and the stretch pitching motions for umpires to properly apply applicable pitching rules to the set position.</p>
9.3a	<p>To penalize a pitcher by calling a balk for faking a throw to third base and then throwing to first base.</p> <p>Rationale To hopefully eliminate the “fake to third and throw to first” play, which is considered a deceptive move by the pitcher, and to more closely align the rules with professional baseball.</p>
APPENDIX E, Section 2	<p>To expand the existing list of plays that allow the use of video review to include the following to assist umpires in deciding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Force and tag plays at any base. 2) Plays involving runners passing a preceding runner, scoring prior to the third out and whether a runner touched a base. 3) Plays involving hit by pitch. 4) If a runner failed to retouch his base after a fair or foul ball is caught. 5) The umpire’s placement of a batter runner or runners following a boundary call. 6) If interference occurred in an attempt to break up a double play. <p>Rationale To expand the use of available technology in certain situations to improve college baseball and enhance the chances that the correct call is made.</p>
Appendix E Section 2	<p>To establish a coach’s challenge process for the administration of video review by permitting each head coach two (2) challenges for the duration of the game.</p> <p>Rationale To allow each head coach a maximum of two opportunities to request the result of a play reviewed. The play must be one of the 12 types of plays listed in Appendix E, Section 2.</p>

<p>Appendix E Section 2</p>	<p>To permit, if the coach’s challenge process is approved, that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) A coach can challenge any of the 12 reviewable plays at any time, and b) The crew chief can decide to review plays 1-6 at any time during the game, but only review plays 7-12 during the last 2 innings of regulation and extra innings. <p>Six plays that are currently reviewable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) If a batted ball is fair or foul, when the ball has first touched the ground, or a fielder beyond the initial position of the first and third baseman. 2) If a batted ball is a ground rule double or a home run. 3) If any catch or no catch call in the outfield or foul territory. 4) If a call of “no catch” can be changed to “catch” within the infield if the catch results in the third out with any runners or at any time with a batter runner only. 5) If spectator interference occurred. 6) Scoring plays at home plate, including collisions or time plays. <p>Six additional plays that are being recommended to be reviewable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7) Force and tag plays at any base. 8) Plays involving runners passing a preceding runner, scoring prior to the third out and whether a runner touched a base. 9) Plays involving hit by pitch. 10) If a runner failed to retouch his base after a fair or foul ball is caught. 11) The umpire’s placement of a batter runner or runners following a boundary call. 12) If interference occurred in an attempt to break up a double play. <p>Rationale To control the potential for excessive delays with the expanded use of video review and to align the rules of video review more closely to those used in professional baseball.</p>
<p>Appendix F</p>	<p>To require that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The time between innings shall be increased from the current 90 seconds (for untelevised games) and 108 seconds (for televised games) to 120-seconds for all games, and b) The 120-second clock shall begin when the last out is made. The current rule stating that the clock shall stop when the pitcher begins his pitching motion for the first pitch to the first batter of the inning will remain unchanged. <p>Rationale To improve the consistency of the time between innings for all games, untelevised (currently 90 seconds) or televised (currently 108). Although the length of time between innings would be potentially increased, the rule for when to start the clock would be more restrictive. Specifically, starting the clock when the last out is made, instead of when the last fielder</p>

	crosses the foul line, will create a consistent inning break and should reduce the overall duration of game and improve the pace of play.
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