



BASEBALL 2019

A supplement to the NCAA Baseball Rules • Prepared by the editors of *Referee*

GAME TIME: Rule Changes Target Pace of Play

It's a rule-change year for college baseball and the changes for 2019 and 2020 are significant — “game changing,” according to George Drouches, NCAA national coordinator of baseball umpires.

The NCAA Baseball Rules Committee and the Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) approved changes that range from an expansion of video review and adding coaches' challenges to updating the hit by pitch rules so intentionally making a movement to get hit results in a strike regardless of pitch location.

There are also significant changes that aim to improve pace of play, which remains squarely in the crosshairs for college baseball.

“Let's not kid ourselves here — the approved rule changes are, literally, game changers. Coaches, players and officials will have to make adjustments to their once-comfortable routines,” Drouches said.

“The committee felt that with the increasing popularity of our sport, pace of play was a very important topic to address during this rules change year,” said Jim Carone, chair of the NCAA baseball rules committee. “The committee recommended numerous changes that we firmly believe will help increase the pace-of-play issue. Having a consistent time limit between innings and limiting the amount of mound visits by players will certainly help keep the game flowing.”

Some of the significant pace-of-play rule changes are:



Rule changes for 2019 and 2020 include several aimed at pace of play, including changes to the time between innings. Alex Ortiz of Los Angeles signals to the plate umpire there are 30 seconds left between innings.

Time Between Innings/Between Pitches – Appendix F

Consistent enforcement of both time limits between innings and between pitches are important to a game's pace of play.

The time between innings shall increase from 90 seconds for untelevised games and 108 seconds for televised games to 120 seconds for all games. The 120-second clock shall begin when all defensive players have started to leave their position after the last out is made. The clock stops when the umpire calls “play” for the first pitch of the first batter of the next half-inning. A team may use one of its charged conferences to avoid a penalty. If the offensive team is not ready within the 120-second limit, the umpire shall call a strike. If the defensive team is not ready, the umpire will award a ball to the first batter.

The committee noted that 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 crosses the foul line, will create a consistent inning break and should reduce the overall duration of games and improve the pace of play, the committee noted.

Further, the 2019 and 2020 rules recommend use of a visible clock to make this easier for coaches, players and umpires. The rules committee recommended a rule change that would have made use of a play clock mandatory, but PROP rejected that recommendation, citing the cost implications, particularly for Division II and Division III programs. Where no visible clock is used, conferences may

See “Pace of Play” p. 3



Welcome to the 2019 College Baseball Season

An important aspect and responsibility of the NCAA Baseball Umpire Program is the training and education of officials to increase knowledge, consistency and standard interpretations across the country.



George Drouches

NCAA National Coordinator of Umpires

The 2019 NCAA Preseason Baseball Guide is designed to provide information and clarifications leading into the season. Umpires, keep this guide with your development materials — for use in

your study and pregame discussions; coaches, please keep with your gameday materials as a quick reference. In addition, coaches, please join in our collaborative efforts to improve our great game by registering with www.ncaabaseball.arbitersports.com to access the NCAA’s Home Plate page.

The Collegiate Commissioners Association (CCA) passed two updates to policy related to NCAA Division I baseball umpiring at its annual spring meeting this June. The CCA administers officiating policy for regular-season competition. Both changes bring the umpire requirements for regular-season Division I competition in line with the standard requirements for being eligible to umpire in NCAA Division I postseason play.

1. An umpire must be registered with ArbiterSports.
2. Complete the annual NCAA umpiring examination.

The mission statement of the NCAA Baseball Umpire Program’s Home Plate is as follows:

- To maintain the integrity of the game of baseball;
- To ensure officiating consistency and quality throughout NCAA baseball;
- To provide umpires with necessary resources and technology to improve

umpiring performance;

- To promote a national and consistent approach to rule application and interpretation, mechanics, and approach to handling in-game situations; and,
- To improve the student-athlete’s experience in NCAA baseball.

Ultimately, the vision of the NCAA Baseball Umpire Program is for ALL umpires officiating NCAA Baseball to align to the training, education and testing benchmarks as this will all but eliminate the possibility that the integrity of our great game can be compromised.

As we move to 2019, much credit should be given to Randy Bruns, NCAA secretary-rules editor, conference baseball coordinators, the Division I Baseball Committee (Ray Tanner, chair) and the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee (Jim Carone, chair) for moving forward rule changes that are not only enforceable by umpires, but will greatly improve our great game and the student-athlete’s experience as well.

The several rule changes respective to pace of play for 2019 and 2020 are game-changers. More consistency of enforcement with the batter’s box rule, between-inning clock and play clock timing rules will compliment the overall pace-of-play effect desired by the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee.

The expansion of video review aligns to reduce excessive delays and enhances the chances, with available technology, that the correct call was made. The conference baseball coordinators and Bruns have clarified the pitching positions. The safety of the student-athlete was also addressed as defensive players will not be allowed to block a base without possession of the baseball.

In 2018, the national coordinator of umpires received 859 NCAA ejection reports (708 in 2017; 692 in 2016; and 658 in 2015). These included 337 Division I reports (302 in 2017; and 264 in 2016). Of this list for 2018: 150

were head coaches, 50 were assistant coaches and 137 were student-athletes. In Division I alone, the total number of suspended games in 2018 was a record 368 games (up from 287 in 2017). In response, the Baseball Rules Committee asks the following:

Coaches: Calibrate your emotions.

Umpires: Adhere to NCAA protocol, no exceptions.

Student-Athletes: Eliminate profanity as a retort.

Neutral-site contests continue to be problematic as head coaches and directors of athletics are not notifying their respective conference coordinators of these scheduled contests. It is required that all neutral-site games involving Division I opponents have conference-coordinator approved umpires. Many such events occur early in the season at neutral sites; however, use of conference coordinators to approve officials will help ensure quality umpiring at such events.

Looking ahead to 2019, we will continue to teach proper handling, proper language and minimizing of the confrontational situations between coaches and officials and hold umpires accountable. Finally, consistency of mechanics, increased teamwork, consistency of rule interpretations and situation management will continue to be important goals.

I would be remiss if I did not formally recognize Scott Taylor and Don Umland for their efforts respective to Divisions II and Division III. I would like to thank all who participate in our NCAA Baseball Umpire Program for their selfless passion to service. In addition, much appreciation as well to the conference baseball coordinators. We have much work to do in 2019. We are all accountable to the game, coaches, players and umpires.

Remember who you are. Who you represent. Why we do what we do. Wishing all the stakeholders of our great game of NCAA college baseball the very best in 2019. □

Pace of Play

Continued from p. 1

choose to instruct on-field umpires to use a stopwatch. “In either case, these time limits must be administered consistently at all levels of NCAA play,” the new rules state.

“We’re not mandating a visible clock, but we are recommending it, just to regulate our existing rules,” said Randy Bruns, NCAA baseball secretary-rules editor.

Visible clock or not, baseball officials want the pace-of-play rules enforced: “One of the things we are making a direct point in our training this year is these are not guidelines,” Bruns said. “We’re making a big point about that at all levels. These are no longer guidelines. These are like the football play clock and basketball shot clock.”

Umpires who do not enforce the pace-of-play rules may face postseason consequences: “If we have umpires not enforcing those (pitch/between inning time) limits, they will probably not be considered for postseason selection,” Bruns said. “Because what other rules are you not trying to enforce?”

Umpires who manage the between-inning timing on a stopwatch should put up their arm with 30 seconds remaining and visually cue the plate umpire. The plate umpire should then relay, “30 seconds left,” to the pitcher and catcher, and summon the lead-off batter to the plate. At 15 seconds, the base umpire should hold an arm off to the side. At expiration, the base umpire should point to the plate umpire.

If the catcher is the third out or on base when the third out was made, and the 120-second time limit has expired, he will still be allowed to throw the ball down following the last warmup pitch.

“It should be easy if we just get



Jason Rogers of Phoenix visits the mound to break up a conference. Rule changes for 2019 and 2020 include limits on defensive conferences.

used to doing it and using it,” Bruns said.

Defensive Conferences 6-5-f

A team will be allowed six defensive conferences during a regulation game. A maximum of three of these defensive conferences may include a coach.

“If a player does something to delay a game, calls timeout or just goes out to talk to the pitcher, or delays the game in some way, it’s a charged defensive conference,” Bruns said.

If the game goes into extra innings, the team will receive one extra defensive conference and one extra offensive conference, plus any unused conferences from the first nine innings. If there is a pitching change, there is no charged conference.

“This hits right home to the pace-of-play issue, which is exactly

why professional baseball instituted something similar,” Bruns said.

He said incidental communication is not considered a charged conference. Further, if a pitcher and catcher are crossed up on the signals, an umpire could direct them to meet even if the six conference have been used. Additionally, if there’s an injury to a player or umpire, there is no charged conference.

But this change could impact the old strategy of having the catcher make a visit to waste a little time while a new pitcher warms up, followed by the coach coming out. If the coach doesn’t make a pitching change in that visit, that would be two charged conferences, Bruns said. (If the coach went out the same time as the catcher and didn’t remove the pitcher, that would be only one conference.)

See “Pace of Play” p. 4

Acknowledgments

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Pace of Play

Continued from p. 3

“We don’t want to be too critical of what’s going on. People need to know if there’s communication that’s going to delay the game, it’s probably going to be a charged conference.”

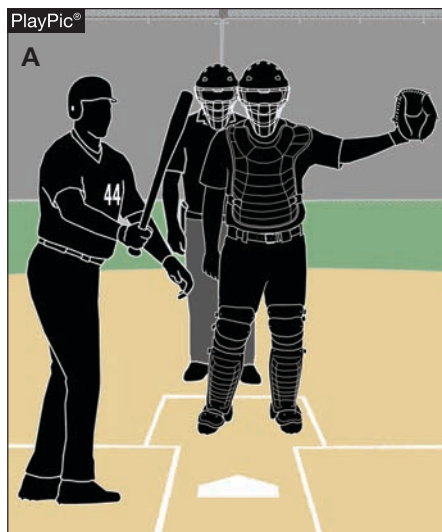
Offensive Conferences 6-5-f-4 (deleted)

There’s no such thing as a free lunch — or a free offensive conference during a defensive-charged conference. An offensive conference will be charged if any batter or runner leaves their position during a defensive-charged conference.

However, a pitching change is not a charged conference and the next batter and any runners are allowed to leave their positions to meet with a coach, but should return before the last warmup pitch so the game can be started promptly.

This rule change is aimed at pace of play by decreasing the number of unnecessary delays during breaks in the game and to allow for consistency in charging offensive and defensive conferences.

Bruns said these new rules about conferences require all umpires, not



just the plate umpire, to be aware of the number of conferences remaining and to communicate with each other. That way, for example, if a shortstop goes to talk to the pitcher and that team has used its six conferences, that can be halted, Bruns said. And if the player acts in defiance of authority, he may be ejected, Bruns said.

No-Pitch Intentional Walk – 2-7 (also 7-5)

The defensive team’s head coach will be able to signal to the umpire that he or she intends to intentionally walk the batter without throwing four

pitches (PlayPic A). This change aligns the NCAA with professional rules, which adopted a no-pitch intentional walk for the 2017 season.

Play: R2 on second. With a count of 1-2, the head coach requests that B3 be issued an intentional walk. During the intentional walk, R2 steals third. Ruling: B1 is awarded first. The ball is live, so R2’s steal is legal.

Feint to Third from Pitching Plate 9-3-a

Pitchers will no longer be able to step directly to third from the pitching plate and feint the throw. That effectively ends the move of feinting to third and spinning around and throwing to first – the so-called “third-to-first move.” Third base will be treated like first base: a pitcher who steps there on a pickoff throw cannot feint to the base; a throw must be made or a balk will be called. This change aligns the NCAA with professional rules, which adopted the change in 2013.

“The end result of that is from a pitching position, the only place you can feint a throw is second base,” Bruns said. “You can still step off and feint, but you’ve got to step off and become an infielder before you do that.” □

Video Review Expanded; Challenges Added

For the 2019 and 2020 seasons, NCAA baseball rules-makers approved expansion of video review to include additional plays and added coaches’ challenges.

The changes are reflected in Appendix E, Section 2: “Getting the Call Right with the use of video review.”

Under the new rules, each team’s head coach will be permitted two challenges per game. The head coach should notify an umpire immediately — within approximately 10 seconds — at the end of a play if he intends to use a challenge on the previous play. If on a game-ending play, the coach must call for a review before all umpires leave the field of play.

Those challenges can be used on any of the 12 plays identified as eligible for the use of video review — the first six unchanged from the 2017-18 rules; the last six new for 2019-20.

The original six reviewable plays are:

- a. Deciding if a batted ball is fair or foul. The ball must first touch the ground or a fielder beyond the initial position of the first or third baseman.
- b. Deciding if a batted ball is either a ground-rule double or a home run.
- c. Any catch or no-catch ruling in the outfield or foul territory.
- d. A no-catch ruling in the infield in some instances. With runners on base, a no catch within the infield can be changed to a catch only if it results in a

third out. With no runners on base, a no catch within the infield can be changed to a catch at any time.

- e. Spectator interference.
- f. Deciding scoring plays at home plate inclusive of collisions (illegal and/or malicious slides) or time plays. Added to the list of reviewable plays:
 - g. Force and tag-play calls at any base.
 - h. Calls involving whether a base runner passes a preceding runner; determining whether a base runner scored ahead of a third out; and upon an appropriate appeal by the defensive team, determining whether a base runner touched a base. ▶

- ▶ i. Plays involving a hit by pitch.
- j. Deciding if a runner failed to retouch a base after a fair or foul ball is legally caught.
- k. Non-home run boundary calls including the placement of runners following a boundary call.
- l. Deciding if interference occurred on a runner's attempt to break up a double play.

The crew chief, at his discretion at any time during the game, may also initiate a video review on items a-through-f. The crew chief may initiate a review of plays g-through-l only during the last two innings of regulation and any extra innings.

Randy Bruns, NCAA secretary-rules editor, said that limitation was aimed at keeping a balance between pace of play and video review. "How many video reviews do you want to have if you're going to want to keep the pace of play

realistic? If we're just going to review every close play that happens, then we're going to slow down the game even more," Bruns said. However, there are some plays that deserve to be reviewed and that is why coaches could still use one of their two challenges to have any of the plays reviewed at any time during the game.

When centralized video review is used, the off-field video review official will be considered an extension of the umpiring crew and will have the ability to notify the umpires on the field that a review should be initiated. The off-field video review official will follow the same review protocols as the crew chief, including initiating review on items a-through-f at any time; and items g-through-l during the final two innings or during extra innings.

Bruns said most amateur umpires aren't accustomed to video review and

the new thought process it introduces; some umpires are hesitant to initiate a review on their own. "There's this view that it's a sign of weakness to go to video review," Bruns said. "That is not the case. It's making best use of the tools that we have available to get the judgment right."

Using technology to get another look can even help avoid an argument with a coach and a potential ejection.

As video review capabilities expand, including to the Division II and Division III levels, Bruns said more and more umpires will be introduced to using this technology to review decisions.

Bruns recommends umpires carry a card listing what plays are reviewable. Also, it would be helpful for teams to post a sign in the dugout so coaches know what they can challenge. □

Intentionally Move to Get HBP = Strike

Under a new rule for 2019 and 2020, a batter is not permitted to make an intentional movement to be hit by a pitch, regardless of where the pitch is located. If, in the umpire's judgment, a batter makes an intentional movement to be hit by a pitch, the batter will not be awarded first base and, instead, will be charged with a strike. The pitch is ruled a strike regardless of the pitch's actual location.

The rule change provides guidance in enforcing the hit-by-pitch rule and to deter batters from attempting to be hit by the pitch. A batter who "freezes" inside the batter's box and gets hit by a pitch shall be awarded first base. "Freezing" by the batter within the batter's box is not considered making an intentional movement.

"The whole idea is to encourage people to continue to avoid being hit whenever possible," said Randy Bruns, NCAA baseball secretary-rules editor. "But we know there's a fastball that rises up that the batter didn't have a

See "Intent" p. 6



If the batter had intentionally moved to get hit by the pitch, under a rule change for 2019 and 2020, a strike would be charged to the batter regardless of the pitch's location.

Intent

Continued from p. 5

chance to get out of the way. We expect those batters to go to first base.”

At the same time, freezing and getting hit outside the batter’s box doesn’t protect the batter.

Play: A batter gets frozen on a pitch but he is outside of the batter’s box when his arm gets hit by the pitch.
Ruling: If the batter freezes and allows a pitch that is not within the batter’s box to hit him, the ball is dead and a strike is called. The batter is not awarded first base.

Bruno said the hit-by-pitch rule change stems from players moving in such ways as to intentionally get hit by a pitch — something dangerous in college baseball.

“There were still some people that were intentionally trying to make it look like they were avoiding being hit and they were turning in a such a way where they were sticking out an elbow and leaning in and turning backward,” Bruno said. “In reality, they were trying to get their elbow, hip or knee closer to the path of the ball and in effect stealing first base.”

“We understand hit by pitch

happens, but we want to try to avoid the ones that were intentional,” Bruno said.

Because judging whether a batter intentionally makes a movement to be hit by a pitch involves a ball/strike decision, coaches may not argue the call, but they can use one of their two video review challenges.

“That’s a decision on a pitch like a ball and strike,” Bruno said. “But with video review, a coach has two challenges and that is something a coach can use one of their two challenges on.” □

Pitching Position Rule Change

Two rule changes about pitching positions aim to clarify when a pitcher is in the windup position and when a pitcher is in the set position.

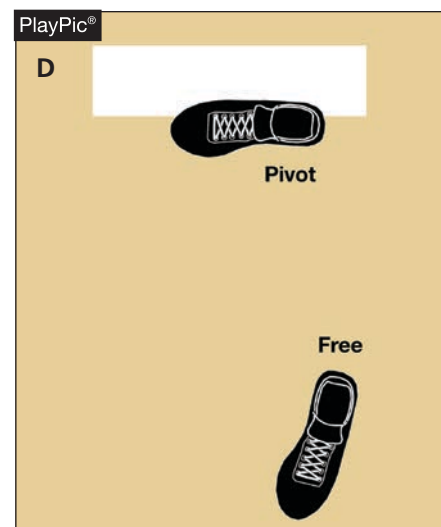
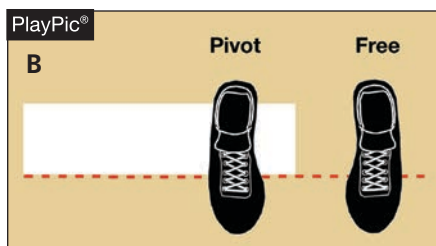
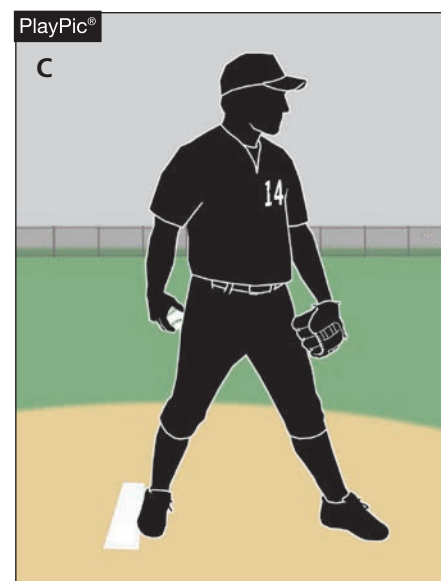
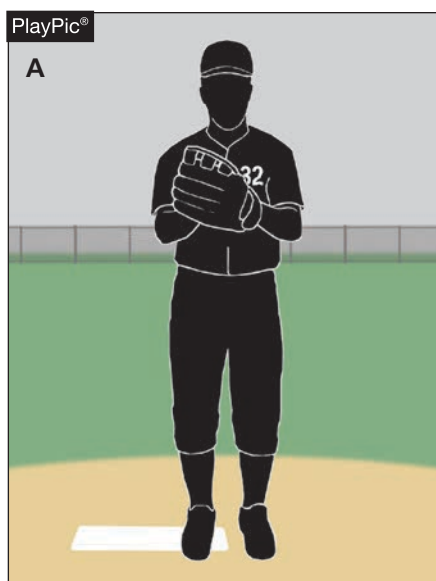
Windup Position – 9-1-a

To be considered in a windup position, a pitcher must stand with his chest and shoulders generally facing the batter, with the pivot foot on or in front of and touching the pitcher’s plate (PlayPic A). The pitcher’s free foot must be touching or be behind the plane of the front edge of the pitching plate (PlayPic B).

This clarifies the windup pitching position for umpires to properly apply the applicable pitching rules and further distinguish the windup position from the set position.

Set Position 9-1-b

For a pitcher to be in a set position, the pitcher must stand with his chest and shoulders generally facing the respective foul line (PlayPic C). The pitcher’s pivot foot must be in contact parallel with the



pitching plate, and his free foot must be in front of the pitcher’s plate (PlayPic D). It is permissible for the pitcher to turn his shoulders and face the batter while getting the sign and before bringing his hands together in the set position.

See “Pitching Positions” p. 7

Possessing Ball Key in Obstruction Rule

In a change to Rule 8-3-e-1 Note, a defensive player may not block any part of the base with any part of his body unless he has 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.

Randy Bruns, NCAA baseball secretary-rules editor, said the rule change is aimed at player safety and reducing collisions. Effectively, the obstruction rules don't change, he said — for example, nothing in the language involving the definition of obstruction has changed, neither have the collision rules — instead, what really changes is the interpretation of what it means to be in the act of fielding the ball.

"The act of fielding is much more restrictive and we're trying to make that more consistent at every base," Bruns said.

"Now that play all has to happen right at the base," Bruns said. "If that throw is off, you're not going to be able to go up three steps because that's where the throw was taking you. If that's where the throw is taking you and you block the runner's access to the base, that's probably going to be obstruction. But if you're giving that runner the path to the base and now you've got to jump or step in order to catch that — everything coming there at the same time — that's in the act of fielding."

Play: R1 is attempting to steal second base. F6 sets up with his leg and foot blocking access to the base (as shown in the PlayPic). R1 slides into F6's foot, the catcher's throw arrives and R1 is tagged before he can get his hand on the base. Ruling: F6 is guilty of obstruction and R1 is awarded second base.

Play: R2 on second. Batter gets



a base hit to center field. R2 tries to advance to third. F8's throw to F5 is slightly off, and at the last moment, F5 is pulled into the path of R2. F5 tags out R2. Ruling: F5 was in the act

of fielding the ball and is not guilty of obstruction. R2 is out.

Previously, the language in 8-3-e-1 Note only applied to pickoff plays, and now it applies to all plays. □

Pitching Positions

Continued from p. 6

Randy Bruns, NCAA baseball secretary-rules editor, said the rules committee tried to address pitching positions two years ago by stressing language related to the shoulders. However, a problem remained because of the rule language allowing the free foot to be placed anywhere, and in certain pitching positions it wasn't immediately clear if a pitcher was in the windup or set position.

"It just became harder and harder to determine which position are you in," Bruns said.

In the set position, the pivot foot must be parallel to the pitching plate. In the windup, the free foot — the non-pivot foot — must be touching or breaking the plane of the front edge of the pitching plate.

"Now I should know based on where the feet are what's going to happen with that first motion," Bruns said.

Brunns said it was also important to stress an existing rule related to the step with the free foot in the windup position — that can be sideways or backwards, but not forward. □

Test Yourself

In each of the following, decide which answer(s) is/are correct using the 2019 and 2020 NCAA rules.

1. Which of the following do not result in an immediate dead ball?

- a. Runner interference.
- b. Batter interference.
- c. Base umpire interference.
- d. A fair batted ball touches a spectator.

2. With R3 on third and one out, B1 hits a foul pop up near third base. R3 inadvertently prevents F5 from making the catch.

- a. B1 is out.
- b. R3 is out.
- c. R3 is out only if the interference was deliberate.

3. Which of the following result in an immediate dead ball?

- a. A runner is hit by a batted ball before it passes a fielder other than a pitcher.
- b. The catcher interferes with the batter's swing.
- c. The batter interferes with the catcher's throw.
- d. The batter interferes with the catcher's attempt to field a dropped third strike.
- e. A batter hits a fair ball with part of one foot touching the plate and part of the foot touching the line of the batter's box.

4. With no runners on base, B1 grounds into the hole at short. F6 fields the ball, but holds it when he sees he has no play at first. B1 makes a wide turn at first and is on his way back to the bag when F6 decides to make a play. The throw goes into the stands. B1 is awarded:

- a. First.
- b. Second.
- c. Third.



What is the call by plate umpire John Bullock of Fort Worth, Texas, if the batter hits a line drive right back at the pitcher's feet, but the ball misses the pitcher, hits the pitching plate and rebounds across the foul line in front of first base? Question 16 deals with such a scenario.

5. With R1 on first and R3 on third, R1 attempts to steal second. As F2 cocks his arm, his hand hits the plate umpire. F2's throw is wild into centerfield. R1 is subsequently thrown out at third, while R3 scores.

- a. The play stands.
- b. Umpire interference has occurred.
- c. R1 must return to first.
- d. R1 must return to second.
- e. R3 must return to third.

6. With R1 on first, R3 on third and one out, R1 breaks with the pitch. B1 lines to right center and F8 makes a sensational catch. R3 tags and scores, but R1 is doubled off first.

- a. R3's run always counts.
- b. R3's run never counts.
- c. R3's run counts only if he touched home before R1 was retired.
- d. R3's run counts unless the defense appeals that he didn't touch home before R1 was retired.

7. In the top of the first, the visiting coach wants to pinch hit for his

starting pitcher (who has not yet faced a batter).

- a. He may, provided the starting pitcher re-enters in the bottom of the first.
- b. He may, provided the pitcher is also the designated hitter (DH).
- c. He may not.

8. With R1 on first, running on the pitch, F1 pitches wild and the ball rolls near a dugout. The ball rolls to a stop as R1 touches second. The catcher (F2) intentionally kicks the ball into the dugout.

- a. R1 remains on second.
- b. R1 is awarded third.
- c. R1 is awarded home.
- d. F2 is ejected.

9. F8 makes a sensational catch of B1's liner. F8's momentum carries him into the fence and the ball pops out and goes over the fence in fair territory.

- a. Legal catch.
- b. Home run.
- c. Three-base award for B1.
- d. Two-base award for B1.

10. With the bases loaded and the scored tied in the bottom of the last inning, B1 receives a two-out walk. B1 runs down to first as R3 scores, but R1 goes off to celebrate.

- a. The run counts.
- b. The run counts unless an appeal is made on R1.
- c. The run does not count.

11. With R3 on third and one out, the suicide squeeze is called. R3 prematurely breaks for the plate. F1 legally steps back off the pitching plate and fires home. B1 bunts and makes it to first safely as R3 scores.

- a. B1 is out.
- b. R3 is out.
- c. R3 returns to third.
- d. The play stands.
- e. F1 has balked.

12. With the bases empty and a 2-2 count, B1 swings and misses at a low pitch. F2 catches the pitch on one hop. As B1 heads for his first-base dugout, the defensive coach yells for F2 to throw to first. F2 proceeds to throw the ball into right field. The first-base coach now yells for B1 to come to first, which he does.

- a. B1 is out for abandoning his attempt to reach first.
- b. B1 may remain at first if he had not entered the dugout.
- c. B1 may remain at first if he had not left the dirt circle around the plate.

13. The batting order is B1, B2, B3, etc. At the end of the fifth inning, R2 is picked off for the third out while improper batter B3 is at bat with an O-1 count. B2 should have been at the plate. To start the next inning:

- a. Since B3 started the at-bat in the previous inning, he is the legal batter.
- b. B2 is the legal hitter; the end of the inning did nothing to change that.
- c. The defense can appeal for a potentially advantageous fourth out for batting out of order.

14. B1 hits a long fly ball to right field. Before F9 can get to it, the ball hits the top of the fence and goes over.

- a. Home run.
- b. Three-base award for B1.
- c. Two-base award for B1.
- d. Depends on local ground rules.

15. B1 bunts down the first-base line and drops his bat in fair territory. The backspin on the ball causes it to roll back into the bat. F2 fields the ball, but B1 is safe at first.

- a. Dead ball; B1 was out when the ball contacted the bat.
- b. Delayed dead ball; call B1 out after the play is over.
- c. Delayed dead ball; B1 is safe if you judge the contact had no material effect.
- d. Play stands.

16. B1 lines a pitch right back at the pitcher's feet. F1 eludes the ball, but it hits the front edge of the rubber and rebounds across the foul line in front of first base.

- a. Fair ball.
- b. Foul ball.
- c. Depends on local ground rules.

17. In the top of the first inning, team A's coach comes out to the mound to visit his pitcher. There is a brief chat and no pitching change occurs. When does the conference end?

- a. When the coach leaves the 18-foot dirt circle of the mound.
- b. When the coach crosses the foul line.
- c. When the coach reaches the dugout/bench area.
- d. When the umpire calls "play."

18. With a runner on second and one out, B1 skies the ball to right centerfield. R2 tags and attempts to advance to third. F8's throw skips past F5 and hits the third-base coach, who attempts to avoid the ball. The ball deflects off the coach's back and goes into the stands.

- a. The play stands.

- b. The play stands only if the coach was in his box.
- c. R2 is out.
- d. R2 must return to second.
- e. R2 is held at third.

19. In a game where the DH is not used, Bubba pinch hits for B8 in the bottom of the second, but does not take the field in the top of the third. In the fifth inning, Bubba comes to bat again in the same spot in the order.

- a. Legal play.
- b. If Bubba is discovered before completing his at-bat, he can be replaced by a substitute.
- c. Bubba is out when discovered while at bat.

20. Just prior to F1 beginning his pitching motion, B1's preparatory movements bring his bat in contact with F2's mitt.

- a. A ball is awarded.
- b. Catcher interference; B1 is awarded first.
- c. No penalty; the ball is immediately dead.
- d. Delayed dead ball.
- e. If F1 stops his motion, it is a balk.

ANSWERS

- 1. b – 6-3-b
- 2. b – 8-5-d
- 3. a, d, e – 6-2-e, 7-10-a, 7-11-f Exc.
- 4. c – 8-3-o Note 1
- 5. b, c, e – 6-3-a
- 6. c – 5-6-c Note 2
- 7. b – 7-2-c, 7-2-d-3-a
- 8. c – 8-3-o-4 Note 1
- 9. b – 2-16-a, 8-3-h
- 10. a – 5-8-d Note
- 11. b – 7-11-v
- 12. c – 7-11-u
- 13. b – 7-11-a
- 14. a – 7-6-e Note
- 15. d – 7-11-m
- 16. b – 2-27-d, 2-35-a
- 17. a – 9-4-d
- 18. a – 8-3-j
- 19. c – 5-5-j-1
- 20. c – 8-2-e Note



Q&A with Randy Bruns NCAA Baseball Secretary-Rules Editor



Q: What's most significant about the 2019 and 2020 rule changes?

A: The Rules Committee did a great job passing changes that were needed to keep our game

up to date. The changes are a mix of pace-of-play improvements, safety issues and allowing additional plays to be reviewed using technology.

Q: Many of the changes seem aimed at pace of play — why is pace of play important in college baseball?

A: With the increased interest being shown in college baseball, pace of play is more and more important. Today's players are better engaged in a game that keeps moving. Networks prefer to broadcast games that have lots of action and don't last too long, and fans want to watch that type of game. If we expect to keep growing that interest in our sport, college baseball needs to keep up with the changes that are happening at all levels of play.

Q: What's being expected in the consistent enforcement of rules related to time between pitches and innings?

A: In the past, timing regulations in baseball were often treated as "guidelines," not as rules that should be accurately enforced. Some umpires have been hesitant to enforce the timing rules, often not even having a stopwatch with them on the field. The expectation with the updated timing rules is that they will be enforced consistently at all levels, in every game. Timing rules in baseball are an important step in managing pace of play, no different than they are in other sports like basketball or football.

Q: Are there rules areas that you recommend some extra study emphasis going into the season?

A: Certainly all the rule changes are important. The pitching rules and the updated hit-by-pitch rule are especially critical. The one improvement I would really like to see isn't a new rule but it relates to interactions between umpires and coaches and players. There are still too many situations that escalate to

the point where a coach or player gets ejected. The responsibility to raise the level of professionalism, respect and good sportsmanship rests with all parties. While everyone understands that participants are very competitive and no one is going to agree with every call in a baseball game, there is no place in college baseball for poor sportsmanship, obscene language and personal comments to umpires.

Q: From a rules perspective, what is the state of college baseball?

A: Overall college baseball is in a great position with increased interest and more games being broadcast. With that attention comes the responsibility to provide a game that is competitive and a great experience for the participants at all levels of play, as well as an athletic contest that is enjoyable to watch. Our challenge in the future is to continue to improve our game by balancing baseball's traditions with where we want college baseball to be in the future. It is no longer appropriate to resist change just because "that's not the way we've always done it." □

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Ejections Up in 2018

Reducing the number of ejections and suspensions in college baseball remains a priority, especially as 2018 saw a record number of ejections.

George Drouches, NCAA national coordinator of baseball umpires, said coaches, student-athletes and umpires all could improve in civility.

Drouches said the Baseball Rules Committee has outlined expectations for coaches, student-athletes and umpires.

"For the coaches, calibrate your emotions. Umpires, adhere to the NCAA protocol — no exceptions. That protocol involves a formal warning.

After an ejection, get out of there and get the coach off the field. We don't want umpires showing up coaches, yelling at them, being profane. We lose credibility when that happens. Then, finally, with the student-athletes, plain and simple, just eliminate profanity as a retort. If you don't like the pitch, don't turn around and swear at the umpire.

"I think if we keep it that simple — to those three areas: coaches calibrate your emotions, umpires adhere to our protocol, student-athletes eliminate profanity — the amount of ejections and suspensions should go down." □

2018 NCAA Ejection/Suspension Reports

Division I		
Player	137	
Assistant Coach	50	
Head Coach	150	
	Total: 337	39%
Division II		
Player	126	
Assistant Coach	19	
Head Coach	115	
	Total: 260	30%
Division III		
Player	119	
Assistant Coach	32	
Head Coach	111	
	Total: 262	31%
Grand Total: 859		100%

NCAA Misconduct Penalties

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

Note 1: It is the responsibility of the institution's Head Coach and Director of Athletics to administer and enforce any suspension penalties.

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

Note 3: A listing of ejection and suspension procedures is contained in Appendix D.

Extra Innings: Health and Well-Being

The offseason is an ideal time to do a personal inventory of your health and well-being. It is difficult to



Dr. Douglas J. Ramos

Chair of the
NCAA Committee
on Competitive
Safeguards and
Medical Aspects of
Sports

get the time or the mindset to carry this out in season. To that end, I would like to discuss some of the general personal items to inventory, and address some current and in-game health and safety issues that may arise. As you think about your own health, both physical and mental health issues need to be addressed to not only optimize

your current performance but also to maintain good health and habits later in life. Going extra innings or overtime is not a bad thing if you are in good health. Heat stroke, sun protection, concussions, hydration and sleep are a few issues that can impact your in-game performance or can come into play in the heat of the season.

A very basic item to attend to is hydration. Almost everything we do — every injury and every illness — is made worse by dehydration. As a rough guideline, every individual should drink approximately three liters of fluid per day. During periods of significant sweating, fluid losses can sometimes be as much as one liter per hour in addition to the three liters. The risk of heat stroke, which is more likely to occur in southern climates, is a very serious and life-threatening condition. The risk of heat stroke rises in the presence of dehydration, and sunscreen can offer additional protection from heat stroke. Keep in mind also that alcohol intake contributes to dehydration.

Classic heat stroke (non-exertional) in general has a rectal temperature above 40 degrees Centigrade (104 F). Acclimatization helps to decrease the

risk and needs some time to occur. Symptoms can also include profuse sweating or even the inability to sweat, cramping, weakness, flushed skin, poor coordination or other neurologic symptoms or headaches, just to name a few. Treatment with rapid cooling is essential and of the utmost importance. Remember it is life threatening. The most effective method of heat loss is convection, where airflow over a moist surface causes the greatest rate of heat loss. Moisture-wicking clothing may make you feel drier, but may impede this process, and extra garments, which many like to wear, is to be avoided on hot days. The value of moisture-wicking clothing is debatable. Sunscreen should be worn by everyone and an SPF 50 protects from 95 percent of the sun's rays. A higher sunscreen has minimal added effect. Sunscreen not only helps decrease heat risk, but it also decreases the lifetime skin cancer risk, which is higher in individuals with fair complexion.

Concussions can vary in presentation. Some manifest no symptoms initially and don't present until later, maybe even the next day or two. Not everybody responds the same or recovers the same once a concussion is sustained. There is literature to suggest that using the brain during recovery can be beneficial and early return to activity can be detrimental. It appears that it takes longer to recover than initially thought and a second concussion during this recovery period has particularly detrimental effects. A gradual return to activity over the course of a week after being symptom-free is a minimum time for resumption of normal activity. During this time period, activity should be increased incrementally. Since an athletic trainer is often available, if a concussion is suspected, it is not unreasonable to perform a post-injury

neurocognitive testing (SCAT) to establish a post-injury baseline.

Sleep is underrated and like hydration, optimal performance cannot be achieved without adequate sleep. But getting enough sleep is often difficult with travel schedules. Though older individuals may have a little more resistance to sleep deprivation than younger individuals, the impact of lack of sleep on quality of life is underrated. The effect of sleep loss also can vary from individual to individual. Obstructive sleep apnea is often underdiagnosed and more common in individuals who are overweight and have thick necks. This contributes to sleep loss and even increases the risk for many diseases, including cardiac diseases. Chronic partial sleep deprivation is most likely to occur in season. Multiple nights of partial sleep loss is likely to impair some of the precise functions required for the umpire or referee during competitions.

A variety of physical and mental issues do occur to varying degrees in all of us. The first and perhaps most important step is to recognize that there may be a problem and then to seek help. We all need to destigmatize the issue of compromised physical and mental health when it occurs. We are all human and these are real human issues that are more common than we admit. Recognizing and dealing with these issues is a sign of human strength, not weakness.

Last but not least, we are all involved with sports because of the joy of competition, the health benefits it conveys, and the camaraderie that occurs among participants and non-participants alike. It is contradictory to be involved in sports and smoke cigarettes. With the changing landscape, a future discussion on the usage of marijuana and cannabinoids will be forthcoming. The legalization of marijuana opens up a myriad of potential uses and abuses. □

Mechanics Points of Emphasis

Although there were no mechanics changes by the Collegiate Commissioners Association (CCA) for 2019, there were several points of emphasis for the season ahead. Those were broken down under principles of platework and basework and summarized below (see the 2019 CCA Baseball Umpires Manual for the full points of emphasis).

Platework:

- Umpires need to get into proper position when setting up for a pitch. Even at the highest levels, many umpires are too far back and out of the slot. This will lead to the umpire being blocked from viewing the entire strike zone. Poor position and head movement on pitches leads to an inconsistent strike zone.

- Strikes should be signaled without turning the head away from a potential batter’s interference or runner attempting to steal.

- The ability to stay focused pitch after pitch is essential to a plate umpire’s success.

Basework:

- Stop and get set — with the head stable — to see the critical action of a play.

- Read the “true throw” by an infielder before stopping and coming set — an adjustment may be needed to get an optimal view of the play.

- Get the appropriate distance away from a tag play, which may vary depending on the number of umpires working the game, an umpire’s instincts and reaction time. Remember: the “working area” on the field is *not* a destination point.

- Look to the fielder and how he is playing a fly ball before determining whether to go out, and don’t chase the ball — get a good angle to view the play. □

2018 NCAA Championship Umpires

<u>Division I</u>	<u>Division II</u>	<u>Division III</u>
Joe Burleson Las Vegas, NV	Chris Deichman Mt. Vernon, IL	Al Bosdell Mechanicsville, VA
Barry Chambers Little Mountain, SC	Ken Fitts Atlanta, GA	David Fields Davenport, IA
Chris Coskey Springfield, MO	Patrick Griffin Hennessey, OK	Tom Gandolfo Belle Mead, NJ
Perry Costello DeWitt, MI	John Lavin Port Orange, FL	Mike McGlooin Chicago, IL
Jeff Henrichs Sacramento, CA	Mark Lima Succasunna, NJ	Martin Rall Medford, NY
Travis Katzenmeier Mesa, AZ	Brandon Misun Edmond, OK	Ryan Thacker Sanger, TX
Frank Sylvester Philadelphia, PA	Joe Volpe Masontown, PA	Tony Turk Indianapolis, IN
Billy Van Raaphorst Los Angeles, CA	Andrew Wolverton Thousand Oaks, CA	Steve Williams Quincy, MA

NCAA Umpiring Coordinators

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Additional Rule Changes

Other rule changes for the 2019 and 2020 seasons include:

Backswing Interference – 6-2-d

During a batter’s backswing (his follow-through after swinging at the pitch), if the batter hits the catcher or the ball, the pitch shall be called a strike, the ball will be dead and no runner shall advance on the play.

This clarifies that any bat contact with the catcher during the backswing — including when the ball is not caught by the catcher — will be considered backswing interference. Previously, the rule language stated “as the pitch is caught.”

The exception in 6-2-d-2 remains. If a catcher is in the act of throwing when the contact occurs, time is called and the runner returns, unless the catcher’s initial throw retires the runner.

Play: R2 on second steals on the pitch. B2 swings and misses, but as the catcher gets up and steps to throw, B2’s bat contacts F2. F2’s throw does not retire R2. Ruling: Backswing interference. B2 is charged with a strike. R2 is returned to second.

Remember: Backswing interference — a swing that unintentionally interferes with the catcher — is treated differently from batter’s interference, and the penalties for those actions are very different.

Intentionally Disrupting Pitcher’s Delivery – 5-15-a-2

A batter may not use tactics with the obvious purpose of disrupting the pitcher’s delivery. If a balk or illegal pitch occurs, or if the pitch is called a ball, the call shall be nullified. The batter is ejected for unsporting conduct.

Play: On a 3-0 pitch, the batter deliberately drops his bat just before the pitcher delivers the pitch (as shown



in the PlayPic). The pitch is a strike. Ruling: The batter is ejected for a deliberate unsportsmanlike act. The substitute batter assumes a 3-1 count.

Randy Bruns, NCAA baseball secretary-rules editor, said it was important to assess the batter’s intent. If something happens unintentionally, call time and let everybody reset. But if intentional, it’s an unsporting act and the penalty should be invoked. If the pitcher stops his motion or throws ball four, that should be nullified and the batter should be ejected. If the pitcher throws a strike, the batter is still ejected, but the count now includes that strike.

Bat/Ball Persons - 1-15-a

All non-roster, designated bat/ball persons — i.e., team personnel other than players or coaches — must wear a double-ear flap protective helmet while performing their duties. This change is aimed at enhancing the safety of support personnel.

Dugout Extension Area – 1-16-b

Uniformed team personnel, coaches and extra on-deck hitters are prohibited from standing or sitting in the dugout extension area or dead-ball area on the home-plate side of the dugout during play. This is aimed at enhancing the safety of bat/ball persons who are supposed to be in this area by restricting coaches and other team personnel from entering those areas to observe the game.

Runner Touched by Ball – 8-5-k

Rule 8-5-k was modified to clarify the status of the pitcher for purposes of a fair batted ball striking a runner. The change in language codifies existing practices. A runner will be out if hit while in fair territory by a fair batted ball before it has touched a fielder, including the pitcher, or before it has passed all infielders who have a chance to make a play on the ball, other than the pitcher. □

2019 Rules Points of Emphasis

The NCAA Baseball Rules Committee selected the following points of emphasis for 2019:

Pace of Play

- Keep the game moving.
- Consistently enforce rules related to the batter’s box, charged conferences and timing.

Running Lane

- Consistently enforce running lane violations.
- Teams may be intentionally instructing runners to run to first base in fair territory.

Coach/Player/Umpire Interactions

- Maintain professional interactions and reduce the number of necessary ejections.

Q&A: Division II and Division III Coordinators

How did last season go in your division — what stands out?



Scott Taylor *Division II Umpire Coordinator* The goal every year is to improve. Two things stand out for me because I think we did improve. No. 1, three of the eight umpires that ended up going to the national championship in Cary were part-time Division I umpires. In fact, one of the umpires worked Duke/North Carolina the week before our regional. So I was really happy with the quality of umpires.

The other thing that stands out for me, when I was hired before the 2017 spring, George (Drouches, national coordinator) put a vision together that all three divisions work together and we became an umpire development program. Division II wasn't a part of that program as much as I would like to think that they are now. I really think that we're giving Division II umpires more opportunities to improve and go to the next level that I don't know they were getting three, four, five, six years ago.



Don Umland *Division III Umpire Coordinator* I thought the season as a whole was terrific. There were numerous examples of outstanding officiating across the country in the regular season and postseason. However, there is still a growing concern regarding unsportsmanlike behavior. I don't like to focus on the negative (or the total number of ejections) as the behaviors may or may not have led to an ejection.

Officials have to continue to be diligent in addressing behavior and utilize the tools that have been afforded to them in dealing with such behavior. This must be a team effort between officials, coaches and players to accentuate a positive sports climate.

What are you planning to stress with your umpires for 2019?

Taylor Some of the new rule changes, such as pitching positions. That's going to be a major push this year.

The thing with Division II baseball is we start two weeks earlier than Division I. We have a unique opportunity in Division II to step up and enforce the rules as written two weeks before the Division I umpires go to work. Hopefully we've got two weeks of track record going into the Division I season, which makes it easier for them when they start their year.

I think the eye is always going to be on continuing to improve the product we put on the field at the Division II level.

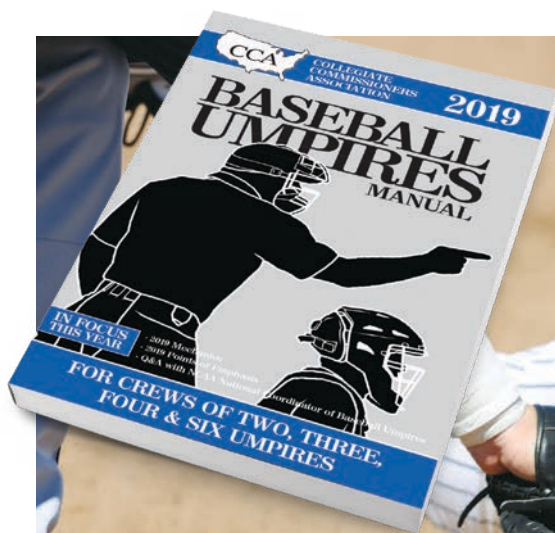
Umland The upcoming season will involve rules and mechanics changes (which occur every two years). Proper and consistent enforcement across the country will be a priority at all levels of NCAA Baseball. Officials must make every effort to attend regional clinics and/or study these changes online and amongst organizations to establish consistent enforcement and verbiage of all rules and mechanics.

What should umpires who have their eye on securing a postseason assignment be doing?

Taylor Umpire every single game like somebody is in the stands watching you who is a decision-maker. Too many umpires at our level think nobody sees them, therefore there is a tendency from time to time to take a game off or take an inning off. When they do that, they get exposed. And I always seem to find a way to find out about it. Especially for those on the radar, you can't take an inning, you can't take a pitch off. You've got to work every single game like it's the national championship. Quite frankly, I don't evaluate Division II postseason umpires at a Division II level. I evaluate Division II postseason umpires at a Division I level, because when I'm done with them, they should never have to come back and work Division II. They should be ready to go to the next level.

Umland 2019 offers a unique opportunity for officials with the introduction of a regional, super regional, and national championship format for the first time. The postseason format falls in line with Division I. It will also offer an increased number of opportunities to participate in the postseason as the number of officials for regional play increases from 53 to 93. The mere addition of the super regionals means that 32 officials will be working an additional weekend! Ultimately, the national championship is to follow, which is exciting as we are moving to a new location. The championship will make its way from Appleton, Wis., to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for a four-year stint.

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