

## 2007 NCAA Softball Major Rules Changes

The following rules-changes have been approved by the NCAA Softball Rules Committee and by the Playing Rules Oversight Panel. They will be incorporated into next year's rules. The page references are from the 2006 Softball Rules Book.

**Lineup Card Definition. (Rules 1-74 and 4-5, pages 26 and 54)**—The first and last name of the head coach must be listed on the lineup card. If the team has co-head coaches, one head coach must be designated. **Rationale:** This information is not currently required on the lineup card and is helpful to the umpire. In the case of co-head coaches, identifying the one head coach who will be the umpire's contact and responsible for team actions is necessary.

**Field Dimension Errors. (Rule 2-18, page 38)**—If it is discovered that the pitching distance or base distances are incorrect, the error shall be corrected immediately. **Rationale:** The timeframe for fixing the error was not previously listed.

**ASA Certification Seal. (Rule 3-2-a-15, page 46)**—Bats must bear the ASA 2004 certification seal to be legal. Goes in effect in 2008. **Rationale:** This phases out bats that met the older 2000 certification protocol (testing at lower, no longer appropriate speeds).

**Illegal Bat. (Rule 3-2-a-15, page 46)**—If a bat is found to be illegal, the ball is dead, the player is out and ejected, and any advance by the runners on that pitch shall be nullified. **Rationale:** This clarifies that the advance of the runners shall be nullified on the pitch.

**Inappropriate Bats. (Rule 3-2. e, page 46)**—The effect of using any treatment or device that fundamentally changes the specifications of the bats will no longer result in the ejection of the coach. **Rationale:** The penalty for using a treatment or device on the bat is that the batter is out and ejected.

**Electronic Equipment. (Rule 3-6a, page 48)**—Non-uniformed team personnel, including players, may sit outside the team area for the purpose of videotaping a contest, recording pitch speeds, or charting pitches, but in doing so, render themselves ineligible for participation in the game. Note: Turning on and off the camera does not constitute videotaping. **Rationale:** This clarifies that players who are responsible for turning on and off the video camera during the course of a game are eligible to participate in the game. Conversely, a player or coach who sits in the stands to videotape, record pitches or chart pitches is ineligible to participate in the game.

**Gloves/Mitts. (Rule 3-7a, page 49)**—The rules book will no longer differentiate between mitts and gloves. **Rationale:** Any player on the field may use either a glove or mitt on the field. The catcher's mitt may be of any size, but the other defensive players must use a glove or mitt that meets the specifications in the rules book.

**Headgear. (Rule 3-10c, page 51)**—Players may wear headbands of any color and are no longer required to be the same predominant color of other teammates. **Rationale:** While visors and hats worn by all players must still be of the same predominant color, the committee is not interested in legislating headbands. Bandannas are still not allowed.

**On-Site Administrator Duties. (Rule 4-9f, page 54)**—A responsibility will be added to the duties of the on-site administrator to ensure the umpires have safe passage between the field and their dressing room and/or vehicles between and after games. **Rationale:** Threatening incidents have occurred and protection for the umpires must be considered.

**Inaccurate Lineup Card. (Rules 5-6b and 15-7, pages 58 and 212)**—The umpire may ask for the lineup card to be corrected before accepting it as official. **Rationale:** This allows for the umpire to ask for the lineup card to be corrected, which was previously not addressed, eliminating gamesmanship and perceived impropriety.

**Live Ball Base Award. (Rule 6-1b, page 60)**—An exception and an approved ruling will be added to allow for a run to score on a live ball base award after the third out of an inning. **Rationale:** This exception allows a runner who is forced home from third to score if another runner is tagged out before she reaches home plate, which would not have been the ruling without this exception.

**Travel Policies Allowed. (Rule 6-16c, page 67)**—A conference may establish a travel policy which allows a game to conclude prior to the completion of seven innings as long as it is regulation. **Rationale:** Setting a policy for travel in advance of the season and especially the game(s), will benefit teams. Some conferences have already adopted policies.

**Appeals. (Rule 7-1-a-2, page 71)**—If a batter-runner or runner misses an intervening base of a base award while the ball is dead, she may retreat to touch that base as long as she has not touched the final base of the award. Once she touches the final base of an award, she may not return and is vulnerable for an appeal. **Rationale:** The situation was not covered when the ball is already dead.

**Appeals. (Rule 7-1b, page 72)**—When brought to the attention of the umpire, he or she will act on an alleged violation subject to appeal. The umpire may solicit information needed to make a ruling. **Ruling:** This allows for the umpire to ask questions necessary to make a ruling.

**Team Interference. (Rule 9-15c, page 107)**—A baserunner advancing on a dead ball award shall not be touched by offensive personnel, other than the base coaches or other runners. **Rationale:** This rule previously only mentioned baserunners advancing on an out-of-the-park home run and this is not the only dead ball award opportunity.

**Obstruction. (Rule 9-17e, page 110)**—If an obstructed runner is awarded a base she would have made had there been no obstruction and a trailing runner is on that base, the obstructed runner will be awarded the base and the trailing runner will be returned to the preceding base unless forced to advance because of the action of the batter. **Rationale:** The rules did not previously cover the effect of obstruction on the trailing runner.

**Dropped During Pitch. (Rule 10-7b, page 117)**—When the ball accidentally slips from the pitcher's hand during the act of delivering the pitch, the effect has changed. If the batter does not have a reasonable opportunity to hit the ball, a defensive player may retrieve it, the ball is live, a ball is awarded to the batter, and baserunner(s) may advance with liability to be put out. If the batter has a reasonable opportunity to hit the ball but the defensive player retrieves it, obstruction is called. If the batter swings at the pitch, it is a strike or batted ball, whichever is appropriate, and the ball is live. **Rationale:** This covers all of the possible outcomes of the situation, which were not all covered.

**Thrown Bat. (Rule 11-8e, page 130)**—The first time a bat is thrown into foul territory, whether intentional or not, that endangers a participant, a warning will be issued. If it happens a second time, the batter shall be declared out and baserunners shall return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch. **Rationale:** The rule previously only addressed with the bat was thrown in fair territory.

**Contact with Umpires. (Rule 13-8b, page 181)**—The term physical contact with an umpire will be changed to aggressive contact with an umpire. **Rationale:** This is meant to eliminate incidental physical contact that occurs during the course of a game.

**Leaving the Team Area. (Rule 13-8, page 182)**—A coach will not be penalized for leaving the team area to join a brawl if he or she is attempting to prevent his or her own players from joining a brawl or potential fight. **Rationale:** This is another reason the coach may leave the team area that should not be punished.

**Umpire Apparel. (Rule 15-1a, page 207)**—If an umpire wears a T-shirt under a powder blue shirt, it must be white. If a T-shirt is worn underneath a navy shirt, it may be white or navy. **Rationale:** This was not previously allowed but was requested by umpires.

**Umpire Duties. (Rule 15-2m, page 209)**—The plate umpire is empowered to rectify any situation in which a delayed call or a reversal of a call places a player in undue jeopardy. **Rationale:** This addition gives the umpire the written authority to rectify unjust situations, not just ones that involve rule infractions as previous wording required.