



BASEBALL 2025

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

Who Is In Charge?

Head Coaches Face Severe Consequences for Unethical Acts



There is a reason the NCAA Baseball Rules Book checks in at more than 120 pages despite the game being governed by just 10 rules.

Ever since bat was first put to ball, there have been people looking to exploit those rules to their advantage. In many cases such gamesmanship can be commended, as time and again players and coaches have discovered loopholes

Umpire Jason Rogers, Phoenix, breaks up a mound visit. If an umpire discovers a pitcher has committed an illegal act by placing a foreign substance on the ball, a rule change for 2025 not only calls for the ejection of the player, but the head coach as well.

that provide a legal, competitive edge, leaving a flustered opponent to simply wonder, "Why didn't I think of that?" Such is the lure of

competitive sports: finding a way to use all of one's physical and mental talents to secure victory.

That said, what happens when being a smart baseball man crosses the line into behavior that's not within the spirit of the game? To be blunt: How do you eradicate cheating from the game, and when it happens, who do you hold responsible?

See "Who Is In Charge?" p. 3



Welcome to the 2025 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 this great country.

The information in this 2025 NCAA Preseason Baseball Guide is designed to provide not only information, but clarifications leading into the season. Umpires, always keep this publication with your development materials for use in your study and pregame discussions. Coaches, please keep it with your gameday materials as a quick reference.

In addition, coaches, I strongly urge you to join in our collaborative efforts with the American Baseball Coaches Association (ABCA) leadership team to improve our great game by registering with RQ+ at www.refquest.com to access the NCAA's Home Plate page.

“The continued growth of college baseball makes it imperative that we strive to assign well-trained and qualified umpires to every game throughout the season.”

The standards of the NCAA Baseball Umpire Program is for ALL stakeholders affiliated with 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.

I mentioned at our annual meetings this past summer that I was extremely proud of how the coaching and umpiring communities not only addressed the unprecedented behavioral hurdles, but the impactful rules changes and game-changing challenges presented in the 2024 season; and that this successful



George Drouches

NCAA National Coordinator of Umpires

collaborative effort, once again, will be required in 2025 as we begin a new two-year rules cycle.

Rule interpretations will continue to be issued by Randy Bruns, NCAA Baseball secretary-rules editor, as needed to clarify and educate all to the provisions.

During 2024, the Incident/Ejection/Suspension Reports decreased 21% from 2023 across all divisions. In Division I alone, ejections were down 38%. Tangible findings on ejections and suspensions from 2023, implementing the National Strike Zone and Prolonged Arguing Initiatives, combined with a commitment by head coaches to take ownership in improving behavior in 2024, led to this impressive decrease. However, and as a reminder: Whether you are a coach, an official, or a student-athlete, when you are in control of your emotions, one can communicate in a professional manner. Umpires, use formal warnings whenever possible, discipline yourself to be credible and concise in your communication, and remember your true role of managing the game. Coaches, it is very

important for the integrity of our game to select officials for the championship who are adhering to the rules, points of emphasis and the NCAA Baseball Umpire Program's protocols. We have high expectations of our officials.

Continuing in 2025, all head coaches' appeals of an umpire's decision or interpretation of the rules for a play on the bases are to be made at the middle point of the team's respective foul line. A head coach cannot enter the dirt circle for decisions or interpretations of the rules for plays at home plate or for lineup changes. Continued respect to on-field health and safety protocols: Players, coaches and umpires should maintain physical distancing in 2025 as well.

I encourage all coaches, administrators and umpires to review the 2025 NCAA Video Review Regulations. Centralized Video Review in the 133 games played in the 2024 NCAA Division I Baseball Championship indicated 222 total reviews: 173 reviews were coach/team-initiated challenges, 143 of the 222 reviews were in the force/tag category, 169 of the 222 video reviews were confirmed or stands, 53 were overturned. The average length of review was 1:20.

The continued growth of college baseball makes it imperative that we strive to assign well-trained and qualified umpires to every game throughout the season.

Much appreciation as well to the conference baseball umpire coordinators for their dedication with collaborative educational efforts and the recruitment of new officials.

Finally, I would like to formally thank Mr. Craig Keilitz and the ABCA for their steadfast efforts in improving our great game of NCAA college baseball.

NCAA baseball has never been in a better place. Have a great season, everyone, thank you. ●

Who Is In Charge?

Continued from p. 1

Those two questions plague many stakeholders in NCAA baseball, and therefore received plenty of attention from the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee during the offseason. The result is two new penalties added to the NCAA rule book for the 2025 season to address unethical behavior.

The first new penalty addresses the increased use of technology in the college game, centered around one-way electronic communication devices that may now be employed to relay pitch or play calls. While the parameters of rule 5-16 regarding the devices and their use continue to be massaged on a yearly basis, the biggest alteration for this season is with what happens if a team is found to be using electronic communication in an illegal manner. Not only is the offending party ejected from the game upon discovery, so is the head coach.

The second new penalty addresses the use of foreign substances on the baseball by pitchers. Previously, a violation of rule 9-2e resulted in the ejection of the offending player. This spring, upon discovery, the head coach is also ejected.

The rationale behind both penalty adjustments is clear-cut: The NCAA expects full compliance with the intent and spirit of NCAA rules, and that compliance is a top-down process that begins with head coaches who must be held responsible for the actions of their entire team when on the playing field.

“It’s an ethics question moving forward. It’s an ethics stance on,

where are we at?” said George Drouches, the NCAA national coordinator of baseball umpires. “In my opinion, working with these coaches, it’s challenging the coaches to take ownership in the ethics of the game.”

Last year, the NCAA issued a preseason directive to coaches that it was not willing to tolerate a repeat of a substantial spike in incident/ejection/suspension reports during the 2023 season, a majority of which involved student-athletes. That warning was heeded across all three levels of competition and the number of submitted reports was drastically reduced in 2024.

Now, the NCAA is tackling another issue by adding teeth to the punishment when technology is not used properly or a foreign substance is used.

“You did a great job last year because you turned the corner on the incident reports,” Drouches said. “The next step is to get these guys to understand you can’t cheat in the dugout and you can’t cheat by putting stuff on the ball.

“This challenges the coaches regarding their ethical stance. Hopefully this will eradicate itself. Take ownership in the ethics of what’s going on. If we can cleanse the ethical issues, college baseball will be tremendous.”

Craig Keilitz, now in his 11th year as executive director of the American Baseball Coaches Association, believes the NCAA coaching community will answer that challenge and take whatever steps necessary to make sure their players are competing on a level playing field.

“When you’re the head coach you

take responsibility of your student-athletes — good, bad or indifferent. Just like they do in all walks of life — classes, school work, being a good person,” Keilitz said. “They get that and they accept that. The really good coaches make sure they know every aspect of what’s going on within the game and with their student-athletes and so I can’t see it changing that much.

“I feel like we’re in good hands and we’ll get it figured out with very little disruption. I think everybody wants to see our game played fairly and evenly, and see the game played under those circumstances and see how the outcomes come out.”

Ever since bat was first put to ball, there have been people looking to exploit those rules to their advantage.

Like Drouches, Keilitz believes college baseball has established itself as a premier product in the collegiate sports landscape and is hopeful this newest initiative will only continue to serve that purpose.

“I think the game of baseball right now, our college game, has never been better — facilities, salaries, operating budgets. And the game on the field has never been better. It’s an upward rocket,” Keilitz said. “I couldn’t feel better about our game, it’s in the best shape and we’re only getting better.” ●

Acknowledgments

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2025 NCAA Rule Changes

Head coach responsibility for ethical behavior, timing/action clock requirements and safety headline the topics receiving attention from the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee this past offseason as part of the sport's bi-annual rules change cycle.

The following rule changes, crafted by the committee and approved by the Playing Rules Oversight Panel, will go into effect at the beginning of the 2025 season.

Electronic Devices (5-16 Note 1 and Pen.)

The language regarding the use of a specifically designed one-way communication device has been changed so the device is now permitted to be used from the dugout, coaches' boxes or a position player on the field for the purpose of relaying a pitch or play call. Previous rule book language allowed for its use only from the dugout to the field.

The rationale for the rule change is it allows for play calling when a team is on offense to occur outside of the dugout.

Play 1: The umpires notice the offensive team's head coach, standing in the third-base coaching box, is using an electronic device to give a play call to B1 before he enters the batter's box.

Ruling 1: This use of an electronic communication device from the coaching box is now legal.

In addition to the change to the rule, the penalty for any violation of the requirements spelled out in rule 5-16 has also been tweaked. The violator(s) and the head coach shall be ejected from the game for any violation. Previously, only the violator(s) were the target of any penalty, and on a first occurrence umpires were required to issue a warning.

The rationale is it increases the penalty to align with the NCAA baseball code of ethics and the expectation of full compliance with the intent and spirit of NCAA rules.



While changes have been made in college baseball regarding where a coach can use the one-way electronic communication device, the catcher is still the only defensive player who may be on the receiving end of any direct oral communication.

Play 2: The umpires notice (a) F2, or (b) F1 has an earpiece and is receiving direct verbal pitch call instructions from the pitching coach sitting in the dugout. **Ruling 2:** Legal in (a). In (b), the pitching coach and head coach are ejected from the game upon discovery. Only the catcher may receive direct oral communication through an earpiece.

Pitching Violations-Foreign Substances (9-2e Pen.)

Rule 9-2e states it is a violation for pitchers to possess or have any foreign substance on their person. The penalty for this violation has been changed to require the ejection of both the pitcher and the head coach. Previously, only the pitcher was subject to ejection.

Again, the rationale is it increases

the penalty to align with the NCAA baseball code of ethics and the expectation of full compliance with the intent and spirit of NCAA rules.

Play 3: The umpires check F1's glove and discover a sticky substance on the outside webbing. F1 tells the umpires he is using the substance to get a better grip on the baseball.

Ruling 3: F1 and the head coach are ejected from the game.

Pitch/Between Innings Clock Protocol (Appendix F-II, No. 9-11)

Two changes have been made regarding administration of the 20-second action clock.

First, batters must now be in the batter's box, alert and ready to hit with eight or more seconds remaining. Previously, batters needed to be ready ▶

▶ within 10 seconds. The two-second change promotes the safety of hitters by not requiring them to be alert to the pitcher so early and for so long in the sequencing of the 20-second clock.

Second, rule language has been added to address when a pitcher starts a preliminary motion or motion to deliver a pitch before the batter is alert and ready to hit. On a first occurrence, the plate umpire shall call “time” and issue a warning. A pitcher shall receive only one warning.

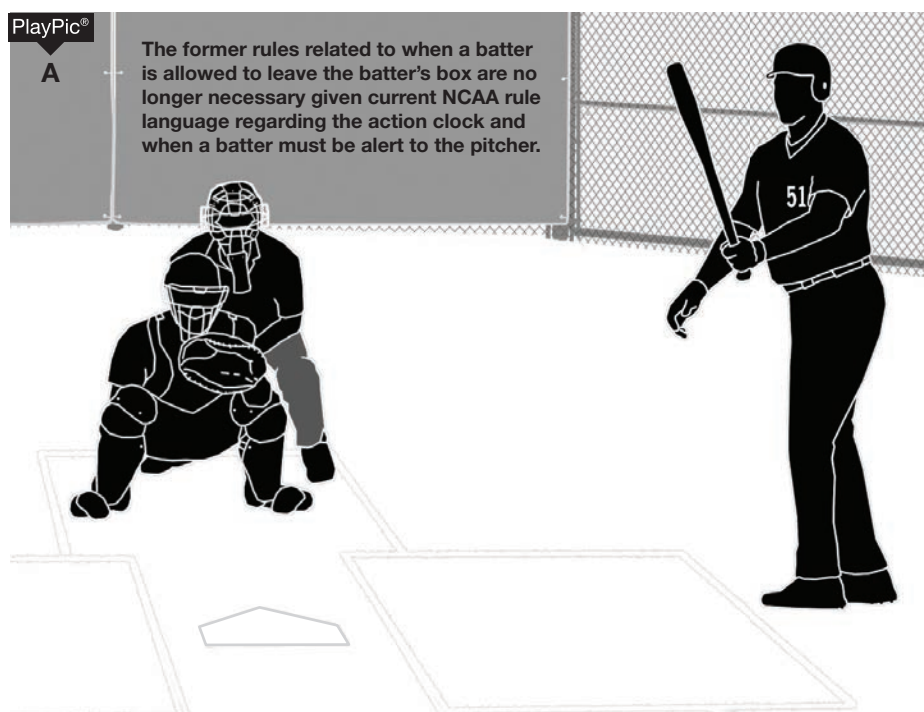
With no runners on base, the warning is assessed and any subsequent violation results in a ball being awarded to the batter. With any runner on base, the initial warning also serves as the one “reset” for that at-bat and any subsequent violation results in a ball being awarded to the batter.

Play 4: With a runner on first base and the action clock showing 15 seconds, F1 begins to come set while B1 is standing with only one foot in the batter’s box and adjusting his batting gloves. Before completing his set, F1 makes a pickoff attempt at first base and R1 is tagged before returning to the base. **Ruling 4:** A warning is given to F1 for starting his preliminary motion before B1 is in the batter’s box, alert and ready to hit. The pickoff attempt is ignored.

Play 5: Following the events of Play 4, the count is now 3-1 on the batter. F1, not happy with the signal he is receiving from F2, steps back off the pitching plate. **Ruling 5:** A ball shall be awarded to B1, as F1 already used his one reset for the at-bat when he was warned for starting early with a runner on base.

Batter’s Box Rule

Former rules 7-1d and 7-1e, known as the batter’s box rule and designed to speed up play by controlling the actions of the batter between pitches, have been removed from the NCAA rule book (see PlayPic A). The various rules related to the action clock and timing requirements made these rules obsolete.



First, Second and Third Bases (1-7b)

The Division I, II and III baseball committees now have the option to permit the use of the double first base in their respective postseason tournaments. The guidelines for the use of the double first base have been added to the rulebook.

Bat Testing (1-12g, Appendix G)

At the Division I level, all non-wood bats will be required to undergo bat testing prior to the start of play for each date of competition. Division II and Division III will continue to require bat testing prior to the start of play of each series or single date of competition.

In conjunction with the new testing requirement, the bat testing compliance sticker for each day of competition is required to be placed by each team on the lineup card given to the plate umpire.

Ejection and Postparticipation Ejection (2-26e)

A player listed as a relief pitcher will now serve a two-game suspension following their first ejection. A player listed as the starting pitcher will continue to serve a four-game suspension following an ejection.

The rationale for the rule change is relief pitchers operate and are available to participate in a manner more similar to a position player — who is suspended for only one game due to an ejection — than a starting pitcher.

Fight Rule (5-15c)

New rule language has been added to the fight rule stipulating players already on the field in the vicinity of a potential altercation will not be penalized if they are judged not to be participating in escalating or inciting the altercation.

Team personnel who leave their position to go to the vicinity or participate or incite an altercation will continue to be subject to ejection.

Batter Becomes Base Runner (8-2e Exc.)

A clarification has been added to the rule language regarding what is considered stepping in front of home plate by a defensive player during squeeze play/steal of home situations.

If the catcher or any other fielder steps on or in front of any part of the plate without possession of the ball, or touches the batter or the bat, the pitcher shall be charged with a balk, the batter shall be awarded first base on the interference and the ball is dead. ▶

PlayPic®
B



When there is a possible violation of the force-play-slide rule, it is now a delayed dead ball until the play is completed, allowing the play on the batter-runner at first base to remain should the slide ruling go to review and be overturned.

► Force-Play-Slide Rule (8-4c Penalties)

When ruling a violation of the force-play-slide rule (see PlayPic B), it is now a delayed dead ball until the play is completed.

The rationale is to allow the play to continue after the ruling as this is a reviewable play, and if this ruling is overturned, it would allow the play at first base on the batter-runner and the advance of any other runners to remain.

Pitching Positions (9-1a)

Clarified language has been added to the rule language regarding what a pitcher may legally do when pitching out of the windup. The new language states during the delivery of the ball to the batter, the pitcher may take one step without gaining ground toward home plate and one step forward toward home plate with the free foot.

Pitching Violations (9-2b Pen.)

Language has been removed that previously stated if the pitcher dropped the ball with no one on base, it is a no pitch if the ball does not cross the foul line. In all instances, this is now a ball

awarded to the batter, and if there is a runner on base, it remains a balk.

Pitching Violations (9-2i)

A pitcher is now allowed to throw an unlimited number of warm-up pitches within the 120-second window between innings.

Previously, pitchers were limited to five warm-up pitches between innings, no matter how much time remained on the clock.

Pitching Violations and Pitch/Between Innings Clock Protocol (9-2i, Appendix F)

A relief pitcher is now allowed to throw an unlimited number of warm-up pitches within 150 seconds. The clock starts when a new pitcher who is entering the game, either at the start of an inning or as part of a mid-inning pitching change, crosses the warning track or otherwise leaves the bullpen area if the bullpen is on the playing field.

Also, a pitcher warming up in the bullpen must immediately leave the bullpen when signaled by the umpire. If the pitcher does not do so, the clock shall start.



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Removing Pitcher (9-4b Note 2)

If a new pitcher enters the game due to an injury or ejection, he may take his warmup pitches either from the bullpen mound or the pitching mound on the field. If he elects to do both, the relief pitcher timing protocols shall be followed. ●

NCAA Hosts Umpire Prospect Camp

It's one of the age-old dilemmas in the officiating sphere: in order to make money, you have to spend money, and sometimes a lot of it.

Ask any umpire who has harbored dreams of advancing from the high school ranks to college baseball — or once in the college game, who has desires of moving up from the junior college or Division III levels — and you will hear stories of thousands of dollars spent on various instructional and evaluation camps and clinics, all in the hopes of catching the eye of that one assignor

who holds the key to a bigger and better schedule.

It's a barrier to entry that both George Drouches, the NCAA national coordinator of baseball umpires, and Ben Brownlee, associate director of officiating for the NCAA, have been mentally grappling with for the past several years.

"One of the consistent pieces of feedback we get when we ask what prevents you from getting into officiating is the cost they didn't realize on the front end," Brownlee said. "One of the things we want to

do in baseball and across all of our other sports is to break down those barriers where we can, because the one thing we want to prevent is a shortage of officials."

Thus, the creation of the NCAA Umpire Prospect Camp.

Using various communication channels, the NCAA announced this past offseason a first-of-its-kind camp that would bring umpires interested in gaining a foothold into college baseball together for instruction and evaluation in one

See "Umpire Prospect Camp" p. 11



NCAA Division I umpire Jeff Gosney instructs those who assembled in Vero Beach, Fla., this past fall for the NCAA Umpire Prospect Camp.

COURTESY OF NCAA

TEST YOURSELF

In each of the following, decide which answer(s) is/are correct using the 2025 NCAA rules.

1. Lineups become official when:

- The head coaches provide the lineups to the plate umpire.
- The head coaches exchange lineups with each other.
- The plate umpire accepts a lineup card.
- The lineup cards have been exchanged, verified and then accepted by the plate umpire during the pregame conference.
- When the umpire hands a copy to each coach.

2. A DH is hitting for the visiting team's pitcher. The visiting coach makes his first mound visit in the seventh inning. He wants to move his starting pitcher to left field and bring in a reliever.

- The role of the DH is terminated.
- The pitcher now playing left field must bat in the former left fielder's spot in the batting order.
- The pitcher now playing left field may bat in the replaced DH's spot.
- A and B.
- A and C.
- None of the above.

3. The visiting team batting order is Abel, Baker, Charles, Daniel, Edward. Charles had batted leadoff the entire season and goes to bat first, striking out to begin the game. Baker comes to bat next and doubles. The home team head coach appeals that Baker batted out of order.

- Rule Daniel out, remove Baker from second base and bring Edward up to bat.
- Legal play. Baker was listed as the second batter and batted in the proper order.
- Rule Baker out and bring Daniel up to bat next.
- Rule Baker out and bring Charles up to bat again.

4. With a runner on second and no one out, B2 attempts a sacrifice bunt. As B2 runs to first, he is outside the runner's lane. F2 fields the bunt and looks toward first but doesn't throw due to B2's position.

- B2 is safe at first base, R2 remains at third base.
- B2 is safe at first base, R2 returns to second base.
- B2 is out for interference, but R2 remains at third base.
- B2 is out for interference and R2 returns to second base.

5. Team A's starting pitcher walks the first batter in the sixth inning. The pitching coach uses his first charged conference to speak to the pitcher. After the trip, team B's head coach puts in a pinch hitter. Team A's head coach comes out to make a second trip and replace the pitcher.

- Warn the head coach he cannot make a second trip. If he continues, he is ejected and the pitcher will be substituted for after he completes the at-bat.



If this baserunner comes up bleeding after completing his slide, how long does he and his team have to address it before he must be removed from the game? See question No. 6.

- Warn the head coach he cannot make a second trip. If he continues, he is ejected but the pitcher may remain in the game with no penalty.
- Allow the trip and the substitution is required.
- Allow the trip, but the substitution is not required if a coach has not been involved in three charged conferences.

6. A player slides into second base and suffers a laceration or wound that is bleeding.

- A decision whether to substitute for the injured player must be made within a reasonable amount of time from the time play is stopped.
- A decision whether to substitute for the injured player must be made within 10 minutes from the time play is stopped.
- No substitution is required even if the wound is still bleeding.
- The player must immediately be removed from the game.

7. R2 is attempting to steal third base. The home-plate umpire interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw the ball to retire R2.

- The umpire's interference results in an immediate dead ball and R2 is returned to second base.
- The umpire's interference results in a delayed dead ball and R2 may be returned to second base.
- If the catcher's throw directly retires the runner, the interference is disregarded.
- B and C.

8. Between innings, the current pitcher returns to the mound and begins throwing warm-up pitches. The head coach then tells the plate umpire he is bringing in a relief pitcher to face the leadoff hitter. The current pitcher is not injured or ill.

- If the current pitcher goes to the mound but has not started his warmup throws and is not ill or

injured, he may be replaced.

- The current pitcher must pitch to the first batter of the inning unless a pinch-hitter is substituted or the current pitcher becomes ill or injured.
- This is legal.
- If the current pitcher leaves the dugout but has not crossed the foul line, he still must retire the first batter of the inning before he can be replaced.

9. A conference is held on the pitching mound with the head coach and all infielders that results in the pitcher being replaced. The conference is concluded when:

- One of the players initially starts to return to his position.
- The head coach leaves the dirt circle of the pitching mound.
- The new pitcher begins his warm-up pitches.
- The head coach crosses the foul line on the way back to the dugout.
- B or C.

10. An obstructed runner who is being played on and is returning to a base is awarded:

- The base to which he was returning.
- A mandatory two bases.
- A minimum of one base beyond the base he had last legally touched before the obstruction.
- There is no minimum award for an obstructed runner returning to a base.

11. Each team receives one extra defensive and offensive charged conference for each extra inning played.

- True.
- False.

12. B1 steps into the batter's box with a bat that does not have a sticker showing it has been

approved during a bat testing procedure for that game. F2 points out the bat to the umpire. No pitch has been thrown.

- a. B1 is out and the bat is removed from the game.
- b. The bat is removed from the game. The batter is allowed to change to a legal bat without further penalty.
- c. B1 is ejected for trying to use an illegal bat.
- d. A team warning is issued. If one has been issued in the game, the player and head coach are ejected.
- e. Play proceeds unless the bat is otherwise illegal.

13. If team A wants to protest an umpire's enforcement of a rule on a play that ends a game, it has until when to voice its intention to do so?

- a. Until the start of team A's next scheduled game.
- b. The offended team has until all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher has cleared the dirt circle to voice its protest intentions.
- c. Until the umpires have left the field.
- d. Game-ending plays are not subject to protest.

14. With a runner on second and one out, B3 swings and misses the pitch for strike two. His follow-through unintentionally hits F2 attempting to throw out R2, who successfully steals third base.

- a. This is interference. Both R2 and B3 are declared out.
- b. This is interference and R2 is declared out and B3 remains at bat.
- c. This is interference. B3 is out and R2 returns to second base.
- d. There is no interference, the ball is dead, and R2 returns to second base.
- e. There is no interference. The play stands.

15. With R1 on first and no one out, B2 hits a low line drive at F3, who traps the ball for "no catch." R1, believing the ball was caught, returns to first and is on the base when F3 touches the base before B2 arrives and then tags R1.

- a. B2 is out, removing the force against R1, who is safe.
- b. Both runners were forced to advance during the play, so both runners are out.
- c. R1 is out for interfering with the play by running the wrong direction. B2 is out on the tag of first for a double play.
- d. R1 is out as soon as he touches first base because B2 was entitled to the base. The ball is dead and B2 is placed at first.

16. Umpires call an infield fly that is allowed to fall to the ground untouched in fair territory.

- a. The ball is dead, the batter is out, and all runners need to retouch their bases.
- b. Call time, the batter is out and all runners are awarded one base.
- c. The ball is dead and the batter is awarded first base. Any runners advance one base if forced.
- d. The ball remains live, the batter is out and any runners advance at their own risk.

17. With a runner on third and one out, B3 hits a pop foul near the first-base dugout. F3 makes

the catch before stepping into the dugout with one foot. He maintains his balance and immediately returns to live-ball territory.

- a. The ball remains live if the ground rules state "catch and carry" into the dugout is allowed if the fielder doesn't fall down.
- b. The catch is disallowed; foul ball.
- c. The ball is dead, the batter is out and R3 scores.
- d. The batter is out and R3 stays at third.

18. With a runner on second, one out and a 1-2 count, B3 strikes out swinging on a pitch in the dirt. The ball deflects off F2 and contacts B3's leg, falling directly to the ground. F2 picks up the ball, then drops it and fails to make a play on either R2 or B3.

- a. Any time a deflected pitch touches the batter, it is dead.
- b. The ball remains live unless B3 clearly hinders F2's attempt to field the ball.

19. With a runner on second and one out, B3 fakes a bunt and remains in the batter's box. F2's return throw to the pitcher hits B3's bat and rolls toward first. R2 attempts to advance to third but is thrown out.

- a. Interference. Batter is out and R2 returns to second base.
- b. No interference. The ball remains live and the result of the play stands.
- c. No interference, but the ball is dead. R2 returns to second base.

20. Speedy B1 hits a fair ball that bounds into the right-field corner. A spectator leans over the fence onto the playing field and picks up the ball. The umpires have the option of placing the runner at third base if they think B1 would have obtained that base without the spectator interference.

- a. True.
- b. False.

21. Team A's head coach is ejected for arguing balls and strikes after a warning. An assistant coach takes over the duties and responsibilities of the head coach. Several innings later, this substitute head coach is ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct directed at the plate umpire. What is his penalty?

- a. He will serve a one-game suspension in addition to the ejection, if it is his first unsportsmanlike ejection of the season.
- b. Since he was acting as the head coach, there is no suspension penalty other than the ejection.
- c. Since he was the substitute head coach, this behavior is considered continued and excessive arguing, so he will serve a two-game suspension in addition to the ejection.
- d. Any additional penalty to the ejection depends on the governing authority.

22. B3 requests and is granted time to talk to the third-base coach. While they are conferring, a defensive team coach motions for the pitcher to quickly meet him near the foul line. As the offensive conference concludes, the defensive team coach returns to the dugout.

- a. Neither an offensive nor defensive conference is charged.
- b. Only an offensive conference is charged.
- c. Both offensive and defensive conferences are charged.
- d. Only a defensive conference is charged.

23. With R1 stealing on the pitch, B2 hits a ground ball to F6, who throws to second base, but R1 is safe. F4 then throws to first to attempt to put out B2 (who had not yet reached first base), but the ball gets by F3 and goes out of play.

- a. R1 stays at second, B2 stays at first.
- b. R1 scores, B2 to second.
- c. R1 to third, B2 to second.
- d. R1 scores, B2 to third.

24. F2 sets up prior to a pitch with his entire right foot out of the catcher's box.

- a. Call time and request F2 to take a legal position.
- b. There is no requirement where F2 takes his initial position, except for pitches during an intentional walk.
- c. F2 must only have one foot in the catcher's box until the pitcher begins his motion to pitch.
- d. F2 is required to have both feet in the catcher's box until the ball is released.
- e. F2 is required to have both feet in the catcher's box at the time of the pitch.

25. R1, who is in the starting lineup, is struck in the head by a thrown ball while running the bases trying to go from first to third on a base hit and tells his coach he is a bit "woozy." A pinch runner can enter the game for him, and R1 can re-enter the game later after getting medical attention.

- a. True.
- b. False.

ANSWERS

1. e 4-4a
 2. e 7-2b-8, 7-2b Note 2
 3. a 7-11a4
 4. a 7-11p
 5. c 9-4c
 6. b 3-9 Note
 7. d 6-3a
 8. b 9-4f
 9. e 9-4d
 10. c 8-3e1 Pen.
 11. b 6-5f
 12. a 1-12b Pen., Appendix G
 13. b 5-13b
 14. d 6-2d
 15. a 2-33, 8-5j Exc.
 16. d 2-48 Note, 7-11q Note
 17. c 6-1d-1, 6-4e
 18. b 7-11h Note
 19. b 7-11f Note
 20. a 6-4a, 8-3n
 21. a 2-26g
 22. c 9-4a-2
 23. b 8-3o3 Note 1
 24. c 5-4a
 25. a 5-5k



Q&A:

NCAA National Coordinator of Umpires

Q: You are beginning your 11th year as the NCAA's national umpiring coordinator. That's a long run for a national coordinator. Can you reflect on the job now and how it compares to when you first took over in September 2014?

A: It has been an incredibly exciting 11 years — the growth of college baseball has been tremendous during this time. My goal has always been to grow the NCAA Baseball Umpire Program (BUP) and lead the many facets of the program. I have been blessed with a dedicated and passionate staff during these many years of service to the coaches, umpires and student-athletes.

Q: From a national umpiring perspective, were you pleased with what you saw during the 2024 season?

A: Extremely so — the umpiring just gets better and better each year. The 2024 NCAA Baseball Championship, in all divisions, produced excellent results. Umpire competition is at an all-time high, which is one reason why college baseball has never been in a better place.

Q: Conversely, what did you see in the 2024 season that caused you concern or made you think it's something that needs to be addressed going forward?

A: Championship umpire compensation needs to be addressed, and hopefully can be increased in future years.



George Drouches

NCAA National Coordinator of Umpires

Q: The 2025 season is going to present some new challenges for college umpires due to the massive conference realignment that has taken place at the Division I level. How does this impact your role as a national coordinator?

A: College baseball at the Division I level will definitely have some realignment in 2025. Speaking specifically to realignment: not only have the ACC, Big Ten, Big 12 and SEC conferences been realigned, but many umpires as well. This added influx of umpires in these conferences will drive umpire competition to a whole-new level.

Q: The 20-second action clock continues to receive a lot of attention, undergoing another tweak this offseason to allow

hitters an additional two seconds to become alert to the pitcher. Do you anticipate any issues with this rule change for the coming season?

A: No, not really, as the two-second change promotes the safety of hitters by not requiring them to be alert to the pitcher so early, and for so long, in sequencing of the 20-second action clock.

Q: Overall, how do you feel umpires have been handling enforcement of the action clock, and where is there room for improvement?

A: First off, there is always room for improvement; however, what has been witnessed at the Division I level, the visible action clock has greatly reduced any coach, umpire or student-athlete apprehensions surrounding this rule. In addition, game times have been reduced as well.

Q: Which of the other new rules crafted for the 2025 season do you expect to have the greatest impact on the game from an umpiring perspective?

A: The NCAA Baseball Rules Committee increased the penalty for electronic devices in the dugout to indicate that the violator(s) and head coach shall be ejected from the contest. There are no longer any warnings as well. Second, the Rules Committee increased the penalty to eject the pitcher and head coach for a foreign substance violation. Both of these rule changes increase the penalty to align with the NCAA baseball code of ethics and ▶

► the expectation of compliance wholeheartedly with the intent and spirit of the rules.

Q: Several mechanics changes were proposed during the offseason. Why is it important for the umpiring community to continue to examine umpiring mechanics on a yearly basis?

A: The 2025 CCA Baseball Umpires Manual Committee is comprised of some of the best and brightest minds, representing coordinators and umpires from all three divisions, and the NCAA BUP staff. This is a collaborative effort

of like-minded people working together to provide umpires with a clear path and direction for success with the shared vision for a consistent and uniform set of mechanics and points of emphasis to be followed across the country.

Q: Sportsmanship continues to attract a lot of attention throughout all levels of college baseball. Do you feel sportsmanship and the treatment of umpires moved in the right direction in 2024? What needs to continue to be done in 2025 to move things in the right direction?

A: During 2024, the Incident/Ejection/Suspension reports decreased 21 percent from 2023 across all divisions. In Division I alone, ejections were down 38 percent. I credit and thank the head coaches for taking ownership in improving overall behavior in 2024. Looking to 2025, all of us need to just remember that when you are in control of your emotions, one can communicate in a professional manner. ●

Umpire Prospect Camp

Continued from p. 7

centralized location at almost no cost to the campers themselves.

Umpires with limited NCAA experience, as well as those looking to break into the NCAA ranks, were invited to apply for one of 50 available slots for the five-day camp that was held in mid-October at the Jackie Robinson Training Complex in Vero Beach, Fla. — the former spring training home of the Los Angeles Dodgers and now the home base for MLB’s professional umpire training. The only cost to the campers? The airfare or tank of gas necessary to get to the Sunshine State.

Gone were the thousands of dollars in camp fees, lodging and food that accompany traditional camp attendance. All of those costs were covered by the NCAA.

“This has been a discussion point for several years. We looked at doing something like this in Indianapolis (where the NCAA is headquartered) at Grand Park (in nearby Westfield, Ind.),” Drouches said. “It’s been in the works for a while. It’s wonderful to see this come to a reality.”

The NCAA received 140 applicants, and once all the details eventually

shook out, 37 umpires arrived in Vero Beach for instruction. Once on site, they found themselves under the watchful eye of national coordinators Drouches (Division I), Jon Browar (Division II) and Don Umland (Division III) while receiving instruction from several key NCAA baseball stakeholders including national director of umpire training Billy Haze; national secretary-rules editor Randy Bruns; baseball umpire advisors Jim Jackson and Bill McCallum; Division I conference umpiring coordinators Troy Fullwood, Paul Guillie, Robert Holloway, Tom Honec and Chris Marshall; and MLB manager for umpire development Tyler Funneman.

NCAA Division I postseason umpires Jeff Gosney and Brian deBrauwere served as the head of curriculum for the camp, which included field drills, cage work, classroom sessions and game simulations featuring local high school baseball teams.

“We’ve been really blessed in terms of our staff,” Drouches said. “It’s been a pleasure to watch these men teach.”

“I’m very pleased to see the quality and ability here,” added Drouches about the campers themselves. “Of the 37, many should be able to umpire at least at the Division III level.”

“The enthusiasm for umpiring and officiating 100 percent is there for this group,” Brownlee said. “I’m thrilled with the turnout and the energy and enthusiasm the campers brought.”

A key part of the camp was having camp staff sit down with each camper to discuss desired paths of progression, and committing to facilitate networking between the umpires and conference umpiring coordinators from throughout the country.

“I think the important thing on this is the buy-in from Don (Umland) and Jon (Browar) with the conference coordinators,” Brownlee said. “It’s coming from the national coordinators. We feel like there is some extra credibility there.”

While the camp was still in session, Brownlee was already looking ahead to the future and how the NCAA can continue to provide strong assistance to the umpiring avocation.

“I don’t see this as a one-off. I’m seeing this as a successful camp,” Brownlee said. “We need to do other things in the interim to keep the momentum. Is there a way to help offset costs at conference camps?”

“We’re committed to continuing with this camp and these types of camps as we continue to move forward with officiating.” ●



Guidance on Foreign Substance Checks

The use of foreign substances on baseballs has a material impact on performance, providing pitchers with an unfair advantage over hitters and contributing to a lack of control. The NCAA Baseball Playing Rules prohibit possessing foreign substances or applying foreign substances to baseballs. The 2025 and 2026 NCAA Baseball Rules Book references Baseball Playing Rule 9-2 (e) and notes are included below for reference purposes. Please note the change to the penalty for this playing rule is highlighted below in yellow:

e. Have on their person or possess any foreign substance. The pitcher may apply rosin to their bare hand or may use bare hands to rub up the ball. The pitcher or defensive player(s) shall not apply any foreign substance or moisture to the ball or to the pitching hand or fingers, or do anything to deface the ball.

Note 1: The pitcher shall not use a bandage or any other distracting item on the pitching hand, wrist or fingers. A cast or bandage may be used on the nonpitching hand if it is not white in color or distracting to the batter or umpire, in the umpire's judgement.

Note 2: A substance may be used by an athletic trainer for the purpose of stopping bleeding, provided the substance dries sufficiently before resuming play.

Note 3: The home team shall supply a rosin bag before the start of each game. In the case of wet weather, the umpire may request the pitcher put the rosin bag in their pocket.

Note 4: A batted or thrown ball is in play after it hits the rosin bag.

Note 5: The ball may not be dusted with rosin from the bag or with the rosin bag. Rosin from the bag may not be applied to the glove or to any part of the pitcher's uniform.

PENALTY for e. — Eject the pitcher and the head coach from the game. If the pitcher expectorates on their hand, ball or glove or rubs the



College baseball umpires must understand the protocols for foreign substance checks related to pitchers. John Deschenes, Gig Harbor, Wash.

ball on the glove, person or clothing and, in the judgement of the umpire, the pitcher did not intend to alter the characteristics of the baseball, then the umpire may, at the umpire's discretion, warn the pitcher in lieu of ejecting the pitcher from the game. If the pitcher persists in violating this rule, the umpire shall then eject the pitcher and the head coach from the game.

Umpire Inspections

Option #1 - NCAA Baseball Umpire Program Recommends:

Starting pitchers will have one mandatory check within the first three innings. If the starting pitcher is removed from the game earlier than the first three innings, the umpire will check upon their removal. Each relief pitcher will be subject to at ▶

- ▶ least one check at the conclusion of the inning in which he entered the game, or when he is removed from the game during a pitching change. If a relief pitcher enters the game in a half-inning where the game could end, the umpire should check the pitcher prior to his appearance. In addition, a relief pitcher that pitches in more than two innings should be checked more than once. Rosin bags will be checked at the start of the game and at other times throughout the game.

Pitchers may be subject to checks before or after innings in which they pitch, and head coaches may make inspection requests of a pitcher or position player either before or after an at-bat. If a head coach makes a request for inspection, the umpire will determine whether and when to inspect the pitcher, considering when the pitcher was last inspected and whether the request was made in good faith. Any player who refuses to cooperate with an inspection conducted by the umpire will be presumed to have violated the rules and the penalties described in Rule 9-2 (e) will apply. In addition, the head coach and team personnel may not argue with an umpire in reference to foreign substance inspections, scope, determination, etc.

Umpires are instructed to conduct a quick, yet thorough check of the pitcher's hand and fingertips, but may expand the scope of the inspection, if necessary. Umpires will remain focused on suspicious behavior by players that suggests the potential use of foreign substances. For example, if an umpire observes a pitcher attempting to wipe off his hands prior to an inspection the player may be subject to immediate ejection for violating the rules by attempting to conceal a foreign substance. In addition, catchers also are subject to routine inspections, including checks on their equipment. As always, if the umpire concludes that the pitcher was applying a

foreign substance to the baseball for the purpose of gaining an unfair competitive advantage, the penalties described in Rule 9-2 (e) will apply.

Option #2 - Upon Conference Adoption:

Umpires have been instructed to conduct randomized foreign substance checks of pitchers and rosin bags. Pitchers may be subject to checks before or after innings in which they pitch, and head coaches may make inspection requests of a pitcher or position player either before or after an at-bat. If a head coach makes a request for inspection, the umpire will determine whether and when to inspect the pitcher, considering when the pitcher was last inspected and whether the request was made in good faith. Any player who refuses to cooperate with an inspection conducted by the umpire will be presumed to have violated the rules and the penalties described in Rule 9-2 (e) will apply. In addition, the head coach and team personnel may not argue with an umpire in reference to foreign substance inspections, scope, determination, etc.

Umpires are instructed to conduct a quick, yet thorough check of the pitcher's hand and fingertips, but may expand the scope of the inspection, if necessary. Umpires will remain focused on suspicious behavior by players that suggests the potential use of foreign substances. For example, if an umpire observes a pitcher attempting to wipe off his hands prior to an inspection the player may be subject to immediate ejection for violating the rules by attempting to conceal a foreign substance. In addition, catchers also are subject to routine inspections, including checks on their equipment. As always, if the umpire concludes that the pitcher was applying a foreign substance to the baseball for the purpose of gaining an unfair competitive advantage, the penalties described in Rule 9-2 (e) will apply.

Use of Rosin as a Foreign Substance:

Although the NCAA Baseball Playing Rules permit a pitcher to "apply rosin to their bare hand", when used inappropriately, rosin also may constitute a prohibited foreign substance. Thus, when used excessively or otherwise misapplied (i.e., to gloves, other parts of the uniform, mixing rosin with another substance), rosin may be determined by the umpires to be a prohibited foreign substance. If the pitcher's hands start to become sticky over the course of the game due to the use of rosin or otherwise, it is the pitcher's responsibility to clean his hand before continuing to pitch.

Pitchers may be subject to checks before or after innings in which they pitch, and head coaches may make inspection requests of a pitcher or position player either before or after an at-bat.

It should go without saying that a pitcher should not clean his hand in a way that creates excessive stickiness (i.e., cleaning hands with an alcohol-based product and immediately re-applying rosin).

If an umpire's inspection reveals that the pitcher's hand is unquestionably sticky or shows clear signs of the presence of a foreign substance, the umpire will conclude that the pitcher applied a foreign substance to the baseball for the purpose of gaining an unfair competitive advantage in violation of the rules, and the penalties described in Rule 9-2 (e) will apply.

As a reminder, if a pitcher has a bona fide medical reason to have a foreign substance on their hand, the substance must dry sufficiently before resuming play and should not create excessive stickiness or its use otherwise to gain an unfair competitive advantage. ●



Weight Management as We Age



Dr. Douglas J. Ramos

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

Managing weight as we age requires a combination of mindful eating, regular physical activity, and adjustments to match changes in metabolism and body composition. There are a few things to focus on to help in that goal.

1. Adjust caloric intake as metabolism slows with age, our bodies burn fewer calories at rest. It is important to adjust food portions and caloric intake accordingly. Know the caloric value of the food you eat and focus on nutrient dense foods that provide essential vitamins and minerals without excessive calories. Choose whole grains, lean proteins, fruits and vegetables. Limit processed foods, added sugars and high-fat foods.

2. Prioritize protein because muscle mass tends to decrease with age, which can slow metabolism, so more protein helps maintain muscle and strength.

3. Stay hydrated, it is important for metabolism and overall health. Thirst

signals can become weaker as we age. Make water your go-to beverage.

4. Strength training or resistance training is crucial to build or maintain muscle, boosts metabolism and enhances overall functionality. Incorporate weight training, resistance bands or body weight exercises 2-3 times a week. Remember, walking is a resistance exercise and may be a good place to start.

5. Incorporate cardiovascular exercise to keep the heart healthy and burn calories. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate cardio or 75 minutes of vigorous activity weekly. Start somewhere even if it is less than this amount of time.

6. Monitor portion sizes and this is more important as we age. It's true that even healthy foods in excess can lead to weight gain.

7. Manage stress and sleep as this can lead to weight gain due to the effects on hormones such as cortisol, which can trigger cravings for food. Practice relaxation techniques such as meditation or deep breathing. There are several apps to help with this. Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep per night.

8. Be consistent just like your strike zone, it is a long-term commitment. Focus on sustainable habits rather than quick fixes. Avoid crash diets as they can slow metabolism and lead to muscle loss.

9. Consult a healthcare professional to check your health condition and before embarking on strenuous activities, particularly if you have underlying health issues. You may also be a candidate for one of the current drugs helping diabetes and heart health that also have some weight loss properties.

By making these adjustments, you can maintain a healthy weight, reduce the risk of chronic disease and improve the quality of life as you age. You are likely to feel better and be the best umpire you can be. Batter up. ●



2024 NCAA Championship Umpires

Division I

- Linus Baker, Woodbridge, Va.
- Scott Cline, Nolensville, Tenn.
- Adam Dowdy, Chandler, Ariz.
- Kellen Levy, San Tan Valley, Ariz.
- Mike Morris, Abilene, Texas
- Shawn Rakos, Orting, Wash.
- Grady Smith, Westfield, Ind.
- Jake Uhlenhopp, Tempe, Ariz.
- David Uyl, Gallatin, Tenn.

Division II

- John Bennett, Sarasota, Fla.
- Mike Hinojosa, Revere, Mass.
- Ryan Karle, Topeka, Kan.
- Gary Keller, Rock Hill, S.C.
- Jim LeBeau, Waipahu, Hawaii
- Steve Miller, Toldeo, Ohio
- Mark Moffett, Thornton, Colo.
- Tony Veltri, Fairmont, W.Va.

Division III

- Justin Bertsche, Plain City, Ohio
- Will Bowers, Rumford, R.I.
- Justin Burton, Forest, Va.
- John Grabowski, St. Peters, Mo.
- Brett Koehler, Fort Worth, Texas
- Russ Lundquist, Rosemount, Minn.
- Keith Peterson, Coventry, R.I.
- JB Torres, Staten Island, N.Y.

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 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 plus a four-game suspension for a starting pitcher and a two-game suspension for a relief pitcher.	Ejection from present contest plus a four-game suspension for a starting pitcher and a three-game suspension for a relief pitcher.	Same as second offense.	2-26-e
Game Misconduct – Removing team from the field; refusing to continue	Head coach	Ejection plus a two-game 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.	5-15-c-1
Leaving vicinity of the dugout, bullpen, or position on the field at the time of a potential altercation or fight	Player(s) or team personnel (excluding coaches)	Ejection plus a one-game suspension.	Same as first offense.	Same as first offense.	5-15-c-3
Physical abuse of participants or umpires	Any participant including head coach	Ejection plus a four-game suspension.	Ejection plus a suspension from the team's next five games.	Ejection plus a suspension for the remainder of the season, including postseason competition.	5-15-c-2
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.	5-15-c-4
Verbal abuse/bench jockeying	Any participant or game personnel other than head coach	If the unsportsmanlike conduct continues after the warning or if the initial offense is a major offense, the offender shall be ejected.	If the unsportsmanlike conduct continues after the first ejection in the same game, the head coach shall be ejected along with any other offending team personnel.	If the unsportsmanlike conduct continues, the acting head coach shall be ejected along with any other offending team personnel.	5-15-d
Failure to leave and remain out of 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 plus a one-game suspension.	Same as first offense.	Same as first offense.	8-7
Ejection for tobacco use	Player or team personnel and head coach	Ejection plus a one-game suspension for everyone other than the head coach.	Same as first offense.	Same as first offense.	3-11
Postparticipation ejection for unsportsmanlike conduct	Assistant coach, player (other than pitcher) or team personnel	Ejection 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
Postparticipation ejection	Head coach	Ejected from team's next game—no suspension.	Same as first offense.	Same as first offense.	2-26-c; Appendix D
Postparticipation ejection for a pitcher	Player whose last listed position is that of a pitcher.	Ejection plus a four-game suspension for a starting pitcher and a two-game suspension for a relief pitcher.	Ejection plus a four-game suspension for a starting pitcher and a three-game suspension for a relief pitcher.	Same as second offense.	2-26-e
Possession or use of any foreign substance or moisture applied to the hand or fingers, or do anything to deface the ball.	Pitcher and head coach.	Ejected plus a four-game suspension for a starting pitcher and a two-game suspension for a relief pitcher for everyone other than the head coach.	Ejection plus a four-game suspension for a starting pitcher and a three-game suspension for a relief pitcher for everyone other than the head coach.	Same as second offense.	9-2-e
Use of illegal electronic devices	Player or team personnel and head coach	Ejection for unsportsmanlike conduct plus a one-game suspension for everyone other than the head coach.	Ejection for unsportsmanlike conduct plus a three-game suspension for everyone other than the head coach.	Same as second offense.	5-16

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

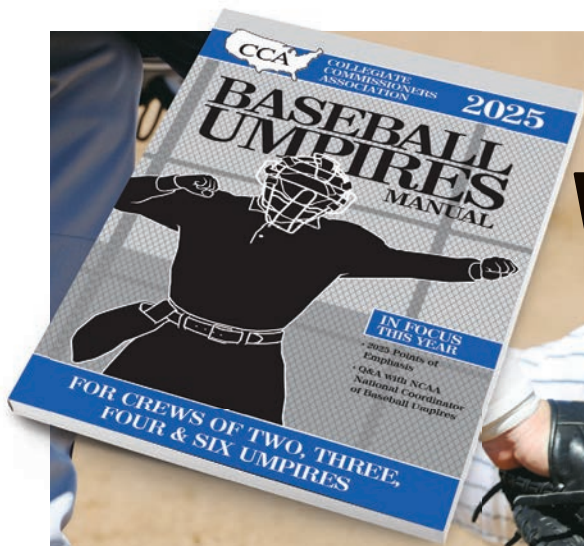
Note 2: Suspension penalties, regardless of the number, shall be served during the offending team's next scheduled contest(s).

Postparticipation 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.

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