ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

   • None.

2. Nonlegislative items. The NCAA Baseball Rules Committee approved the following rules change proposals for the 2019 and 2020 seasons. The committee requests approval from the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) for the following items:

   a. Protective equipment (Rule 1.15.a).

      (1) Recommendation. To require that all non-roster bat and ball persons wear a double ear flap protective helmet while performing their duties.

      (2) Effective date. Immediately.

      (3) Rationale. To enhance the safety of bat/ball persons located in or near the field of play.

      (4) Estimated budget impact. Minimal.

      (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

   b. Dugouts (Rule 1.16.b).

      (1) Recommendation. To prohibit uniformed team personnel, coaches and extra on-deck hitters from standing or sitting in the dugout extension area or dead-ball area on the home plate side of the dugout during play.

      (2) Effective date. Immediately.

      (3) Rationale. To enhance the safety of bat and ball persons who are supposed to be in this area by restricting coaches and team personnel from entering these areas to observe the game.

      (4) Estimated budget impact. None.

      (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

   c. Base on balls (Rule 2.7).
(1) **Recommendation.** To allow the defensive team’s head coach to signal the umpire that the coach intends to intentionally walk the batter without throwing four (4) pitches.

(2) **Effective date.** Immediately.

(3) **Rationale.** To improve pace of play and more closely align the NCAA rules with professional baseball.

(4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.

(5) **Student-athlete impact.** None.

d. **Game misconduct (Rule 5.15.a.2).**

(1) **Recommendation.** To penalize a batter for using tactics with the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit a balk or disrupting the pitcher’s delivery. If this occurs and a balk or illegal pitch is called, or if the pitch is called a ball, the call shall be nullified.

(2) **Effective date.** Immediately.

(3) **Rationale.** To prevent unsporting behavior aimed at disrupting the pitcher’s delivery.

(4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.

(5) **Student-athlete impact.** Minimal.

e. **Fight rule (Rule 5.16.c).**

(1) **Recommendation.** To penalize players and team personnel who enter the field of play or leave their positions on the field when a potential altercation develops by ejecting them from the game and suspending them from the team’s next contest.

(2) **Effective date.** Immediately.

(3) **Rationale.** To keep players and team personnel from entering the field from the dugout or bullpen or leaving their current positions when a potential altercation occurs to reduce the escalation of the situation beyond those initially involved. The penalty for players and team personnel who participate in a fight will remain a four (4) game suspension.

(4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.
(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal.

f. Batter contact with catcher during backswing (Rule 6.2.d).

(1) Recommendation. To clarify that during the backswing, if the batter unintentionally hits the catcher or the ball, the pitch shall be called a strike, the ball will be dead and no runners shall advance on the play.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. To clarify that any bat contact with the catcher during the backswing, not just when the ball is caught by the catcher, will be considered backswing interference. Although this play is still a judgment call, this clarification will enhance consistency.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal.

g. Defensive conference (Rule 6.5.f).

(1) Recommendation. To allow six (6) defensive conferences per game for a regulation game. A maximum of three (3) of these defensive conferences may include a coach.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. To improve pace of play by limiting the number of defensive conferences initiated by defensive players (such as the catcher or infielders) to three (3) beyond the three (3) visits the coach is currently permitted to make.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal.

h. Offensive conference (Delete Rule 6.5.f.4).

(1) Recommendation. To charge an offensive conference if the batter runner or runners leave their position during a defensive conference.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. To decrease the number of unnecessary delays during breaks in the game and allow for consistency in charging offensive and defensive conferences.
(4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.

(5) **Student-athlete impact.** Minimal.

i. **Hit by pitch (Rule 8.2.d.1).**

(1) **Recommendation.** To penalize the batter with a strike and not award first base if, in the judgment of the umpire, the batter makes an intentional movement to be hit by a pitch, regardless of where the pitch is located.

(2) **Effective date.** Immediately.

(3) **Rationale.** To provide guidance in enforcing the hit by pitch rule and to deter batters from attempting to be hit by the pitch. “Freezing” by a batter is not considered making an intentional movement. A batter who freezes inside the batter’s box and who is hit by a pitch shall be awarded first base.

(4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.

(5) **Student-athlete impact.** Minimal.

j. **Defensive player blocking a base (Rule 8.3.e.1).**

(1) **Recommendation.** To clarify that a defensive player may not block any part of the base with any part of their body unless they have clear possession of the ball. If the defensive player blocks a base before having clear possession of the ball, the umpire shall call obstruction, the ball shall be dead immediately and the runner involved shall be awarded one base beyond the last base the runner had attained before the obstruction.

(2) **Effective date.** Immediately.

(3) **Rationale.** To provide consistent application and simplify umpire judgment at all bases when a defensive player attempts to block the base. This is also intended to reduce the amount of collisions during scoring plays at the plate.

(4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.

(5) **Student-athlete impact.** Minimal.

k. **Runner touched by batted ball in fair territory (Rule 8.5.k).**
(1) **Recommendation.** To clarify that a runner will be out if the runner is touched by a batted ball in fair territory before the ball is touched by a fielder. If a fair ball goes through or by an infielder and touches a runner after having been deflected by a fielder, the runner shall not be out.

(2) **Effective date.** Immediately.

(3) **Rationale.** To clarify the language within the existing rule regarding situations when a batted ball in fair territory contacts a runner and what the umpire should rule on the play.

(4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.

(5) **Student-athlete impact.** Minimal.

### i. The windup (Rule 9.1.a).

(1) **Recommendation.** To require that to be in the windup position, the pitcher shall stand with his chest and shoulders generally facing the batter; his pivot foot touching on or in front of the pitcher’s plate; and the free foot touching or behind the plane of the front edge of the pitcher’s plate.

(2) **Effective date.** Immediately.

(3) **Rationale.** To clarify the windup pitching position for umpires to properly apply applicable pitching rules and to further distinguish the windup position from the set position.

(4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.

(5) **Student-athlete impact.** Minimal.

### m. The set (Rule 9.1.b).

(1) **Recommendation.** To require that to be in the set position, the pitcher shall stand with his pivot foot in contact with and parallel to the pitcher’s plate and his free foot in front of the pitcher’s plate. Further, the pitcher may turn his shoulders and face the batter while receiving the sign prior to facing the respective foul lines and bringing the hands together in the set position.

(2) **Effective date.** Immediately.
(3) **Rationale.** To clarify the set pitching position for umpires to properly apply applicable pitching rules and to further distinguish the set position from the windup position.

(4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.

(5) **Student-athlete impact.** Minimal.

**n. The stretch (Rule 9.1.b).**

(1) **Recommendation.** To clarify that the motion known as “the stretch” is part of the set position.

(2) **Effective date.** Immediately.

(3) **Rationale.** To clarify the set and the stretch pitching motions for umpires to properly apply applicable pitching rules to the set position.

(4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.

(5) **Student-athlete impact.** Minimal.

**o. Fake to third, throw to first (Rule 9.3.a).**

(1) **Recommendation.** To penalize a pitcher by calling a balk for faking a throw to third base and then throwing to first base.

(2) **Effective date.** Immediately.

(3) **Rationale.** To hopefully eliminate the “fake to third and throw to first” play, which is considered a deceptive move by the pitcher, and to more closely align the rules with professional baseball.

(4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.

(5) **Student-athlete impact.** Minimal.

**p. Video Review (Appendix E, Section 2).**

(1) **Recommendation.** To expand the existing list of plays that allow the use of video review to include the following to assist umpires in deciding:

   1. Force and tag plays at any base.
2. Plays involving runners passing a preceding runner, scoring prior to the third out and whether a runner touched a base.

3. Plays involving hit by pitch.

4. If a runner failed to retouch his base after a fair or foul ball is caught.

5. The umpire’s placement of a batter runner or runner following a boundary call.

6. If interference occurred in an attempt to break up a double play.

(2) **Effective date.** Immediately.

(3) **Rationale.** To expand the use of available technology in certain situations to improve college baseball and enhance the chances that the correct call is made.

(4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.

(5) **Student-athlete impact.** Minimal.

q. **Coach’s challenge (Appendix E, Section 2).**

(1) **Recommendation.** To establish a coach’s challenge process for the administration of video review by permitting each head coach two (2) challenges for the duration of the game.

(2) **Effective date.** Immediately.

(3) **Rationale.** To allow each head coach a maximum of two opportunities to request the result of a play reviewed. The play must be one of the 12 types of plays listed in Appendix E, Section 2.

(4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.

(5) **Student-athlete impact.** Minimal.

r. **Coach’s challenge process (Appendix E, Section 2).**

(1) **Recommendation.** To permit, if the coach’s challenge process is approved, that a coach can challenge any of the 12 reviewable plays at any time; and that the crew chief can decide to review plays 1-6 at any time during the game, but only review plays 7-12 during the last two (2) innings of regulation and extra innings.
Six plays that are currently reviewable:
1) If a batted ball is fair or foul, when the ball has first touched the ground, or a fielder beyond the initial position of the first and third baseman.
2) If a batted ball is a ground rule double or a home run.
3) If any catch or no catch call in the outfield or foul territory.
4) If a call of “no catch” can be changed to “catch” within the infield if the catch results in the third out with any runners or at any time with a batter runner only.
5) If spectator interference occurred.
6) Scoring plays at home plate, including collisions or time plays.

Six additional plays that are being recommended to be reviewable:
7) Force and tag plays at any base.
8) Plays involving runners passing a preceding runner, scoring prior to the third out and whether a runner touched a base.
9) Plays involving hit by pitch.
10) If a runner failed to retouch his base after a fair or foul ball is caught.
11) The umpire’s placement of a batter runner or runners following a boundary call.
12) If interference occurred in an attempt to break up a double play.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. To control the potential for excessive delays with the expanded use of video review and to align the rules of video review more closely to those used in professional baseball.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal.

s. Visible 20-second play clock (Appendix F).

(1) Recommendation. To require, effective with the 2019 season for Division I and for the 2020 season for Divisions II and III that:

   a. A visible 20-second play clock be in two (2) locations – one (1) behind home plate between the dugouts and one (1) in or above the left or right centerfield wall to enhance the umpire’s ability to enforce the current 20-second play clock rule.

   b. A 20-second play clock be administered when runners are on base.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.
(3) **Rationale.** Requiring a visible pitch clock will improve the consistency and equitable application of the current 20-second play clock rule and reduce unnecessary delays during the game to improve the pace of play. Consistent with other sports (e.g., football and basketball), baseball benefits from having a play clock to speed up the game. Requiring a visible play clock will enhance the umpire’s ability to enforce the rule and the participant’s ability to compete within the limits of the rule. Available data from the last four (4) years illustrates that pace of play continues to be an issue – at least for Division I. In 2014, Division I regionals averaged 2:54; super regionals 3:05; and the College World Series averaged 3:11. In 2017, the Division I regionals averaged 3:12; super regionals averaged 3:16; and the College World Series averaged 3:15. In 2018, the College World Series averaged 3:33. Comparative data for Divisions II and III from previous years is not available. The estimated cost provided by a Division I conference whose institutions implemented two permanent visible clocks ranges from $3,000-10,000. The use of temporary, portable visible clocks would satisfy this rule as well.

(4) **Estimated budget impact.** Estimates range between $1,000 to $10,000 to facilitate two visible clocks.

(5) **Student-athlete impact.** Minimal.

t. **Time between innings (Appendix F).**

(1) **Recommendation.** To require that:

a. The time between innings shall be increased from the current 90 seconds (for untelevised games) and 108 seconds (for televised games) to 120-seconds for all games, and

b. The 120-second clock shall begin when the last out is made. The current rule stating that the clock shall stop when the pitcher begins his pitching motion for the first pitch to the first batter of the half inning will remain unchanged.

(2) **Effective date.** Immediately.

(3) **Rationale.** To improve the consistency of the time between innings for all games, untelevised (currently 90 seconds) or televised (currently 108 seconds). 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 half inning break and should reduce the overall duration of the game and improve the pace of play.
(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Minimal.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. Welcome and announcements. The chair welcomed the committee and expressed his appreciation for their service throughout the year. Committee members introduced themselves and provided an overview of their background.

2. Review of schedule, agenda, and committee operations manual. The committee reviewed the meeting schedule, agenda and the committee operations manual. Staff reviewed the NCAA conflict of interest policy, guidance for committee members regarding meeting reports, notes and email, voting procedures, principles for rules writing, and experimental playing rules guidelines.

3. Approval of reports from 2017-18 committee teleconference reports. The committee review the teleconference reports from the 2017-18 year and approved the May 15, 2018, teleconference report as written.

4. NCAA Baseball Umpire Program report. The committee heard a review of the 2018 season from the national coordinator of umpires. He highlighted the inaugural online umpire clinic that was used in 2018 and encouraged the committee to attend one of the four in-person umpire clinics that will take place beginning in January of 2019. The national coordinator shared his growing concern regarding the conduct of coaches and student-athletes and shared that a record 858 ejections occurred in Division I in 2018. He indicated that the number of ejections in Divisions II and III have increased as well, but not to the level of Division I. He encouraged the committee to commit to increasing the penalties for ejections as an effort to improve coach and player interaction with umpires.

5. Active umpire’s report. The committee heard the report of an active NCAA umpire, William Haze. Haze shared his thoughts on the state of the game with the committee. Haze shared that pace of play, the use of video review and conduct were three areas of college baseball that other umpires have noted need to be addressed by rules committee.

6. Review of NCAA BBCOR Protocol and Division I postseason bat testing. NCAA staff provided an update on proposed revisions to the BBCOR protocol recommended by the research panel. Staff also shared templates that are being developed to assist the membership and bat manufacturers as new rules for bat barrel color and compression testing go into effect in 2020 for Division I and 2021 for Divisions II and III. Staff reported that Division I postseason bat testing results were still being compiled, but that testing has removed approximately 5% of baseball bats from the postseason for low barrel compression, dents and
flat spots, and bats failing the ring test. Approximately 26% of bats removed from play were because of low barrel compression.

7. **Secretary-rules editor’s report.** The committee received a report from the secretary-rules editor. He shared with the committee interpretations he issued during the 2017 and 2018 seasons, as well as editorial changes recommended for the 2019 and 2020 rules book. The committee approved the interpretations and editorial revisions as proposed.

8. **Review of rules proposals.** The committee reviewed a list of approximately 100 proposed rules changes and considered 19 rules changes for the 2019 and 2020 seasons, as noted above in the Action Items section. The proposed changes included clarifications to the windup and set pitching positions; the elimination of the fake to third throw to first move by a pitcher; limiting the total number of defensive conferences; and that a defensive player must have clear possession of the baseball before blocking a base with any part of his body. Significant rules changes included a revision to the hit by pitch rule; penalizing players and team personnel for leaving their positions or entering the field of play from a dugout or bullpen area at the time of an altercation; expanding the use of video review to include six additional plays; and changing the between inning time from 90/108 seconds to 120-seconds for all games. The committee also proposed requiring a visible 20-second play clock be used. The current playing rules only have a timing rule when there are no runners on base. The committee proposed that the clock be required by all Division I schools for the 2019 season and for all Division II and III schools by the 2020 season. The committee discussed, but did not move, proposals to permit the use of electronic communication between a coach and the catcher; to permit the use of attachments to the knob of the bat for collecting in-game swing data; and to permit the baseball to be made of a non-horsehide or cowhide NCAA approved material(s).

**Development of 2019 points of emphasis.** The committee discussed the need to continue to emphasize student-athlete and coach misconduct issues, continued adherence to the rules for pace of play and re-emphasizing that bat testing will be required beginning in 2020 for Division I.

9. **Future teleconference and meeting dates.** The committee agreed to conduct a teleconference on Monday, August 13, to review the results of the comment period. The 2019 committee annual meeting will be held July 16-18, 2019, in Indianapolis.

10. **Election of chair.** The committee selected Jim Carone, Head Baseball Coach at Wagner College, to continue as chair for the 2018-19 year.

   **Committee Chair:** Jim Carone, Wagner College
   **Staff Liaison(s):** Ben Brownlee, Championships and Alliances
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<th>Attendees:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Randy Bruns, secretary-rules editor.</td>
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<td>Jim Carone, Wagner College.</td>
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<td>John Casey, Tufts University.</td>
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<td>Rusty Eggen, Worcester Polytechnic Institute.</td>
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<td>Rudy Garbalosa, Lynn University.</td>
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<td>Fritz Hamburg, Saint Joseph’s University.</td>
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<td>James Jackson, Cameron University.</td>
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<td>Gary Overton, East Carolina University.</td>
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<th>Guests in Attendance:</th>
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<tr>
<td>George Drouches.</td>
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<td>William Haze.</td>
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<th>NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:</th>
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<td>Ben Brownlee.</td>
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<th>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Greg Johnson.</td>
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<td>Jared Tidemann.</td>
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