



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA SOFTBALL RULES COMMITTEE
JUNE 18-20, 2018, MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items. The NCAA Softball Rules Committee approved the following rules change proposal for the 2019 season. Although it's a non-rules change year, the committee requests approval from the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) for the following item based on a change by another national governing body:

a. Bats-Game (Rule 3.3.1.4).

(1) Recommendation. Bats shall bear either the permanent ASA 2004 or the new fastpitch USA Softball certification mark and be on the current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List as maintained on the NCAA and the SUP websites indicating compliance with the bat performance standard per the appropriate ASTM testing protocol.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. With ASA rebranding to USA Softball, USA Softball will introduce a new bat certification mark for adult and Junior Olympic fastpitch as early as the 2019 season. As a result, bats may either continue to be introduced into the market with the ASA 2004 mark or manufacturers may begin to test and stamp models with the new fastpitch USA Softball certification mark as early as the 2019 season. Both the ASA 2004 and the new fastpitch USA Softball certification mark will be permitted for NCAA competition to indicate compliance beginning with the 2019 season. In addition to the ASA 2004 or new fastpitch USA Softball certification mark, bats will still be required to also be on the current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List. Please note this rules recommendation will not require the purchase of new bats as long as current bats are marked with the ASA 2004 certification mark and are on the NCAA Approved Softball Bat List. This rules recommendation is simply adding the new fastpitch USA Softball certification mark as an allowable mark to indicate compliance in addition to the existing ASA 2004 certification mark.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. Welcome, introductions and announcements.** The chair welcomed the committee and thanked them for their time. Committee members introduced themselves and provided a brief overview of their background. It was noted one committee member recently took a head coaching position at a different institution and would no longer be permitted to serve on the committee.
- 2. Review schedule, agenda and committee operations manual.** The committee reviewed the meeting schedule, agenda and the committee operations manual. The operations manual included 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 the May 15 teleconference report.** The committee approved the May 15 teleconference report as written.
- 4. Review reports.**
 - a. Injury Surveillance Program.** The committee reviewed the softball injury data provided by the Datalys Center for Sports Injury Research and Prevention. It was noted injuries are equally dispersed across body parts with the majority of injuries occurring in the fourth, fifth and sixth innings. The pitcher is the most injured position. The committee requested Ms. Wasserman from Datalys provide additional trends over time for comparison purposes. During the injury discussion, the committee also discussed wearable technology and whether a certain device should be allowed to be worn on the field for medical purposes. The committee, in consultation with the NCAA Sport Science Institute (SSI) staff, agreed the device was not medically necessary and was marketed as a training tool, therefore, rendering it illegal to be worn on the field under Rule 5.9.8. It was noted the Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports (CSMAS) and the NCAA SSI are in discussions on hosting a wearable technology summit.
 - b. Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP).** The committee reviewed the report from PROP's annual meeting in January. Topics of interest included the use of playing rules during exhibition games, experimental rules process, secretary-rules editor term limits and the request of men's basketball to move to an annual rules process.
 - c. Secretary-rules editor.** The rules committee heard a report from the secretary-rules editor, which included a review of the ejection reports from the 2018 season, which reflected an increase of ejections from 29 in 2017 to 49 in 2018. Of the eight submitted protests, only one was valid. This led to a discussion of whether protests should be allowed. The rules committee agreed to discuss this next year during the rules change year.

- d. Trends.** The committee reviewed statistical trends from all three divisions and did not see anything alarming. The committee noted it would like to continue reviewing these at the annual meeting each year. The committee requested the trends begin to include the type of strikeout – called vs. swinging. With the NCAA moving to a new statistics program, the committee asked whether the new program will include the offensive player, designated player and flex positions. The staff liaison will follow up with the statistics staff on these two items.
 - e. National coordinator of umpires.** The committee heard a report from the national coordinator of umpires, which included a recap of the Umpire Institute in Oklahoma City, his philosophy on education and training, and vision moving forward. The committee noted it would be helpful to work over the next year to identify those rules that are difficult to see by umpires to allow for discussion before next year’s annual meeting.
 - f. Active umpire.** The committee heard a report from the active umpire, which included a review of the rules that cause the most confusion for umpires. Based on this report, the committee identified topics for the rules survey and future consideration.
 - g. Equipment consultant.** The rules committee heard a report from the equipment consultant, which included a review of the incident reports and an overview of the bats taken out of competition during the 2018 season. 310 were taken out of competition for a wobble or rattle and 17 were removed for failing barrel compression testing. The committee discussed the bat testing procedure in the Washington State University lab and noted 1,000 hits on a bat doesn’t seem like enough for the standard to be established. The equipment consultant noted this concern and will report back after discussing this with the lab. Based on the ball testing results, the committee agreed to take no action at this time but will continue testing every two years. NCAA baseball will begin requiring regular season bat testing in 2020 (DI) and 2021 (DII and DIII), however, based on the in-season barrel compression testing data, the committee did not think softball needed to move in this direction. The committee heard an update on USA Softball’s new bat certification mark that will be introduced in 2019. Based on this timeline, the committee agreed a rules change was appropriate to allow the certification mark to denote bat compliance. See Action Items above for more information.
 - h. National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).** The rules committee heard a report from the NFHS, which included a summary of the NFHS Softball Rules Committee’s annual meeting the previous week. While the actual rules changes couldn’t be discussed since they hadn’t been finalized, it was noted they continue to monitor face protection for defenders and hitters.
- 5. Review of the 2018 and 2019 rules changes.** The committee reviewed the 2018 and 2019 rules changes in conjunction with the rules survey.

- 6. Review of 2018 rules survey.** The committee reviewed the 2018 rules survey in conjunction with the 2018 and 2019 rules changes. It was noted there was a lot of “no opinion” on the survey, which likely was a result of teams not using the new rule (e.g., media timeout).
- 7. Items for future consideration.** The committee identified the following topics for the survey: 1) Remove the requirement that defensive substitutions be reported to the umpire unless they change the lineup; 2) the use of wearable technology; 3) limit player-to-player conferences; 4) only allow players out of the dugout for a home run celebration; 5) remove the pitcher’s lane; and 6) adopt parts of the international pitching rule.
- 8. Rules book assignments.** The committee broke into pairs to review their assigned rules book assignments and reported findings to the full committee. The committee noted a rules book correction in Rules 6.12.4.1 and 6.12.5.1, which should state, “See Rule 6.7.2 for media format.” The language that is currently in the rules book is incorrect and causing some confusion. The committee agreed to begin discussing each rule on its monthly teleconferences to begin preparing for the 2019 annual meeting.
- 9. Future teleconference and meeting dates.** The committee scheduled its 2019 annual meeting for June 17-20 in Indianapolis. The committee agreed to conduct monthly teleconferences on the second Wednesday of each month at noon Eastern time, beginning September 12.
- 10. Selection of chair.** The committee re-elected Edith Gallagher, head softball coach at Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, as chair for the 2018-19 academic year.
- 11. Other business.** The committee discussed a draft experimental rule request from the Southeastern Conference (SEC). The draft request was to allow video review in conference games and the conference tournament for the 2019 season. While the rules committee did not take any action on the draft, it did offer suggested edits for the SEC to consider before submitting the formal proposed experiment by September 1. The rules committee also discussed whether experimenting with an additional umpire (i.e., four-person crew) would be more beneficial than video review. The national coordinator noted he has heard a few conferences discuss this concept but has not heard of any prepared to implement or experiment with an additional umpire.
- 12. Adjournment.** The committee adjourned Wednesday, June 20, at noon Eastern time.

Committee Chair: Edith Gallagher, Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference
Staff Liaison: Ashlee Follis, Championships and Alliances, Playing Rules and Officiating

NCAA Softball Rules Committee June 18-20, 2018, Annual Meeting	
Attendees:	
David Deiros, Florida Gulf Coast University; ASUN Conference.	
Edith Gallagher, Mansfield University of Pennsylvania; Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference.	
David Hicks, King University; Conference Carolinas.	
Rachel Lawson, University of Kentucky; Southeastern Conference.	
Julie Lenhart, State University of New York at Cortland; State University of New York Athletic Conference.	
Kelly Ninemire, Conference USA.	
Vickie Van Kleeck, secretary-rules editor.	
Lexie Vernon, Knox College; Midwest Conference.	
Absentees:	
None.	
Guests in Attendance:	
Dee Abrahamson, equipment consultant.	
Bobby DeMayo, active umpire.	
Craig Hyde, national coordinator of umpires.	
Sandy Searcy, National Federation of State High School Associations.	
Erin Wasserman, Datalys Center for Sports Injury Research and Prevention.	
NCAA Staff Liaison in Attendance:	
Ashlee Follis.	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
Dan Calandro, LaGwyn Durden and Greg Johnson.	