REPORT OF THE
NCAA BASEBALL RULES COMMITTEE
JULY 13-15, 2015, ANNUAL MEETING

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative Items.
   • None.

2. Nonlegislative Items. The NCAA Baseball Rules Committee agreed to the following experimental rules proposal for the 2016 season. The committee requests approval from the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) for the following item:

   a. Expansion of Pitch Clock Limit to Include Pitching with Bases Occupied. (Rule 9-2-c; Appendix F):
      (1) Recommendation. With runners on base, pitchers must begin a legal pitching move within twenty seconds. The clock will begin when the pitcher receives the ball and is in the dirt circle around the pitching rubber. The clock will stop when the pitcher being the pitching motion, feints or makes a pickoff move to any base or if the umpire calls for time. If a pitcher violates the 20-second rule, he shall be warned by the umpire. After being warned, if the pitcher continues to violate the rule, a ball shall awarded for each violation. There shall be one warning for each pitcher. Batters will adhere to Rule 7-1-c, the Batter’s Box Rule.

      (2) Effective Date. Immediate for experimental implementation.

      (3) Rationale. The proposal is intended to maintain the pace of play of the game while runners are on base. This experimental rule proposal would extend the 20-second clock limit currently in place for situations with no runners on base to situations with runners on base.

      (4) Estimated Budget Impact. Minimal. Institutions could incur cost to install visible clock.

      (5) Student-Athlete Impact. Minimal.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. Welcome. The committee chair, Dick Cooke, welcomed the committee and guests and began the meeting with introductions.
2. **Approval of the April 7, 2015, Teleconference.** The report of the April 7, 2015, teleconference was approved as written.

3. **General Policies.** The committee reviewed the schedule and agenda for the meeting. Staff reviewed the operations manual, including the NCAA conflict of interest policy, guidance for committee members regarding meeting minutes, notes and email; voting procedures; principles for rules writing; and experimental playing rules guidelines.

4. **PROP Review.** Staff provided an overview of PROP procedures and guidelines. The committee was reminded of the one-year implementation directive from the Panel for rule proposals with a financial or facility impact.

5. **Review of Statistical Trends for 2015.** The committee reviewed the Division I statistics that were provided. The committee discussed trends from the 2015 season and the impression the use of the flat seam baseball had on offensive trends. The committee noted the positive response from the membership regarding the new ball.

6. **Report from the Active Umpires.** George Drouches, NCAA National Coordinator of Baseball Umpires, provided the committee with a report of the national umpiring program. He noted the many protocols that were developed and implemented to improve the program in his first year. The committee was provided points of emphasis that have been put into place with the supervisors around the country. He noted that the program is looking toward the future, working to develop new umpires and helping those umpires gain important experiences. He noted that of the eight umpires at the College World Series, four were in Omaha for the first time.

7. **Report from the National Umpiring Program.** Mr. Drouches provided information to the committee regarding ejections and suspensions. The data provided was a report for each of the three divisions. He discussed the areas that the program is focusing on for the next year through the umpiring clinics.

   a. **Ejections and Suspension Reporting.** The committee reviewed and discussed the current protocol for ejections and suspensions. The committee discussed the importance of information being provided to the program to codify the event and resolve the incident. The committee discussed the current protocol and felt that with the Misconduct and Penalty Chart spelling out the offense and the prescribed penalty. The committee reviewed a request to review the protocol as it pertained
to the appeal of suspensions. The committee felt with the Misconduct Chart and the review by Mr. Drouches of suspensions issued, no appeal is necessary.

b. Certification Requirement for Umpires. The committee discussed the importance of umpires taking and passing the NCAA certification test. There was discussion regarding issues that have arisen when institutions play at neutral site venues that supply umpires. These umpires are not always NCAA umpires and do not always apply NCAA rules properly. The committee urged the National Umpiring Program to emphasize the importance of certification for umpires to all supervisors.

8. Review of Injury Surveillance Data. Zack Kerr, Director of the NCAA Injury Surveillance Program, provided a detailed review of injury surveillance data. He noted to the committee the five year average of data provided was at a reporting rate of 1.4 percent of sponsoring institutions, although the 2014-15 reporting is currently at approximately 3.5 percent. The data indicated that of the injuries reported, non-time lost injury is approximately 30 percent of the injuries reported. One-third of the injuries reported are to student-athletes identified as pitchers. The data indicated only 16 reported concussions over the last five years in baseball. He concluded his report noting that overuse and sport specific specialization injuries have been seen as the most prevalent in many sports, including baseball.

9. Review of Rules Communication. Jim Paronto, NCAA secretary-rules editor, discussed the interpretations issued through the 2014-15 season. The committee reviewed and approved the interpretations for inclusion in the online version of the Baseball rule book as Administrative Rulings. The committee also reviewed the communication send to conferences requesting approval for use of video instant replay during conference play and conference tournaments.

10. Rules Proposals. The committee reviewed and discussed several rules proposals for inclusion in the 2017 Rules Book. Since it was not a rules change year, the committee did not take action on the proposed changes. Significant discussion took place regarding the expansion of plays available for video review, ejections and suspensions, hit by pitch and ways to improve pace of play. Included above is the experimental rule proposed out of the discussion regarding pace of play.

11. Discussion regarding Baseball and Softball proposed changes. NCAA staff brought forward a rule change proposal being moved by the NCAA Softball Rules Committee for discussion. The committee discussed the proposal regarding dugout fence requirements and
asked that communication be provided regarding those proposals following the August PROP call for future discussion regarding the need for this proposal in baseball.

12. **Instant Replay Discussion.** The committee discussed the potential of expanding the reviewable situations for replay. Jim Paronto and George Drouches discussed the positive steps taken during the Division I Super Regional round of reviews from a central location in Atlanta, GA. The committee discussed the need for expansion of the process to allow for an off field person to review the play and to keep the umpires on the field with two headset units. The committee discussed the inclusion of a recommendation to expand the replay protocols and process in the next rules cycle.

13. **Points of Emphasis.** The committee discussed points of emphasis for the 2016 season. The committee emphasized the need for clarification regarding the intent of the hit by pitch rule and how best to instruct the umpires for consistency. The committee asked that clarification regarding the sliding process and path to the plate be emphasized to the umpiring program and provided to the membership. The committee also discussed the importance of all umpires working NCAA games, not just post-season, to pass the NCAA test. The committee noted the importance of inclusion of the conference offices to stress the continuity in the umpiring improvement program.

14. **Future meetings and teleconference dates.** The group discussed the teleconference dates. NCAA staff will provide teleconference dates and date for in-person meeting for July 2016.

15. **Election of chair.** The committee elected Mr. Casey Scott as chair for 2015-16.

16. **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m. Eastern time, Wednesday, July 15, 2015.

*Committee Chair:* Dick Cooke, Davidson College, Atlantic 10 Conference  
*Staff Liaison(s):* Ben Brownlee, Championships and Alliances, Playing Rules and Officiating

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<th>July 13, 2015</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attendees</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Benim, Pennsylvania State University Erie, the Behrend College</td>
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<td>Dick Cooke, Davidson College</td>
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Elvis Dominguez, Bradley University
Rusty Eggen, Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Jim Paronto, secretary-rules editor
Casey Scott, Kansas State University
Jason Trufant, Dowling College
Alfred White, Conference USA

Other Participants: George Drouches, national coordinator of baseball umpires; Randy Bruns, incoming secretary-rules editor; Ben Brownlee, NCAA staff; Damani Leech, NCAA staff; Randy Buhr, NCAA staff; Rachel Seewald, NCAA staff; Dan Calandro, NCAA staff; Zack Kerr, NCAA Injury Surveillance Program.