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MEMORANDUM

January 18, 2008

TO: NCAA Conference Coordinators of Umpires and Head Baseball Coaches.

FROM: Jim Paronto, secretary-rules editor
NCAA Baseball Rules Committee

Dave Yeast, national coordinator
NCAA Baseball Umpire Program.

SUBJECT: Interpretations and guidance.

Included in this document are several interpretations and answers to questions presented at recent pre-season clinics. These are official interpretations that the committee hopes will assist umpires and coaches in the understanding of several new rules for the 2008 season.

1. Pitching conferences.

Question 1: When does a pitching conference end?

Answer 1: A pitching conference is considered complete when the coach leaves the dirt circle of the mound or when a relief pitcher starts his eight preparatory pitches.

Question 2: Can a coach stay on the field and conference with his infielders until the pitcher has completed his eight warm-up pitches?

Answer 2: As noted in question one, the pitching conference has ended when the coach leaves the dirt circle or the relief pitcher begins his warm-up pitches from the mound. If the coach remains after either of these two scenarios, he will be charged with an additional conference. This has ramifications in that, if he is out of "free" conferences, the relief pitcher that was just brought into the game must be replaced after pitching to one batter.

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In the NCAA/Referee Magazine pre-season supplement, two plays have incorrect answers. The correct answers are below:

Page 4, Play 2: During a time out for a conference, the defensive team's pitching coach makes a pitching change. Can he stay on the field during the warm up throws?

Answer: No. The pitching coach may not remain on the field once he has made the pitching change and he leaves the dirt circle or the new pitcher begins his eight pitches. If he remains, his team would be subject to being charged with another conference.

Page 4, Play 3: During a time out for a conference, the defensive team's pitching coach makes a pitching change. While the new pitcher is taking his warm up throws, can the coach continue to confer with other defensive players?

Answer: No. The coach cannot confer with other defensive players once the new pitcher begins his eight warm-up pitches. To do so would result in the team being charged with another conference.

2. Flattened Bat. The following is guidance for dealing with dented and flattened bats this season:

- a. When a flattened bat is discovered, it must be taken from the contest and placed in the umpire's locker room or secure place until the series is over. In the case of a single game, the bat should be returned to the offending team at its conclusion.
- b. If the bat is discovered **before** a pitch is thrown to the hitter, the bat is taken out of play and the player is required to get a new bat that conforms to NCAA rules.
- c. If detected after a pitch has been thrown, the batter is out.
- d. A dented bat is not necessarily a flattened bat just because it has one or more dents. A bat must be flat in a specific area to be removed from play.

3. Fielder in foul ground prior to an appeal. All fielders, other than the catcher, must be in fair territory to start an appeal play after "Time" has been called. If a fielder, (other than the catcher) is in foul territory, the umpire should not put the ball back into play. If the umpire inadvertently does so, there is no penalty. This action should not be ruled as a balk. This action would not nullify a subsequent appeal attempt on the same runner once the ball had been properly put back into play. A fielder may go into foul territory to back up an appeal after the ball has been put back into play.

4. **Batter Interference/Catcher Obstruction.** To assist in the application of this rule, the following guidance is provided: “It is neither interference nor obstruction unless either player attempts to alter the play.”
5. **Ball on hip or behind back in preset position.** As the pitcher is engaging the hitter (receiving signs from the catcher), if the ball is not placed on the hip or behind the back to deceive the offensive team, the following protocol will be used:
 - a. One warning will be issued per team, per game.
 - b. A warning to one team does not constitute a warning to the opponents.
 - c. Once a warning has been issued, a balk shall be called on subsequent offenses.

The committee hopes this guidance is helpful as umpires and coaches prepare for the 2008 season. Thank you for your attention to this information.

If you have any questions, please contact Jim Paronto (paronto25@aol.com) or Dave Yeast (dyeast@earthlink.net).

JP:DY:nkb