

April 17, 2003

NCAA BASEBALL UMPIRE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

CLARIFICATIONS – RULES/MECHANICS QUESTIONS

CCA Mechanics – I have witnessed several umpires not working under the new CCA mechanics system. All umpires continually must strive to work these systems during both conference and non-conference games.

Fights/Ejections/Suspensions – Umpires are again reminded that a suspension report forms must be submitted when an ejection for fighting occurs. Please remember that simply attempting to punch constitutes fighting and a suspension is in order. Umpires should review the fight rule if they have any questions. Coaches, players or institutional administrators should not try to influence an umpire's reporting of such actions. Such attempted influence should be reported to your conference coordinator or the NCAA. Umpires never should put their hands on any players or coaches during a fight situation. Umpires should stay back and record the participants.

Batter's Box Rule – Very few umpires are enforcing this rule effectively. Batters are leaving the box and delaying the game when not allowed. Umpires must double their efforts in enforcing this rule.

Batter's Box and Catcher's box – We have witnessed several games where the batter's and catcher's boxes have not been drawn correctly. Umpires should not begin any game unless the field is marked properly.

Misplaced Rule in 2003 Book – An Approved Ruling (A.R.) was misplaced in the 2003 Baseball Rules Book. The A.R. appears on Page 82 under Rule 8-4-a-1. It should be placed in Rule 8-6. The A.R. reads: "If the runner is attempting to return to his original base after a fly ball that is caught and the ball is thrown out of play, the runner may retouch and the award is made from his original base." The committee apologizes for any confusion created with this error.

Checking Bats and Helmets – Again, umpires have been observed starting a game without checking bats and helmets. Our rules require umpires to handle this task 20 minutes prior to each game. The NCAA recommends that at least two umpires enter the dugout when inspecting bats and helmets. When inspecting bats and helmets before the game, umpires are instructed to only remove bats that are flat on the hitting surface or cracked. Dented bats are not to be removed. Umpires should alert team personnel that they are removing the bats and place them in a secure area for the remainder of the day or series, if applicable. If in doubt, umpires should always seek the opinion of their partner before removing a bat or helmet. At least two umpires must agree that a bat is flat in order to be removed.

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Tobacco – We have had a few ejections for tobacco use. Remain diligent and remember that zero tolerance means zero tolerance for all.

Five or Eight Pitches for Relief Pitcher – All relief pitchers are allowed eight warm-up pitches upon entering the game even if they are beginning an inning.

Balk Followed by a Pitch – Umpires need to remember that in order for a balk to be ignored both the batter and all runners must advance at least one base. Therefore the following scenarios apply:

- Ball four or batter hit by pitch with a runner on first – ignore the balk.
- Ball four or batter hit by pitch with a runner on second only, third only or second and third – enforce the balk.

Umpires also must know that if the batter and all runners advance at least one base, they are at their own jeopardy to advance beyond those bases.

Representing Your Conference – All Division I umpires must be aware that they are highly visible representatives of conferences and the NCAA. Umpires should not be seen socializing with players, coaches or fans of any institution for which they officiate. I recently have witnessed a highly respected umpire sitting in the stands of a Division I game (between two local schools) with fans of one of the teams. This and similar unprofessional acts should be not be tolerated.