



NCAA Baseball Interpretations/Clarifications April 2, 2018

Rule 5-15-a-2 - Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Play: With a 3-0 count, the batter drops the bat while standing in the batter's box while the pitcher is beginning his pitching motion from the set or windup position.

It is obvious that the batter is trying to make the pitcher alter his pitching motion to create a balk, an illegal pitch, or ball four. If the batter drops his bat and the umpire can call time before the pitch is thrown so that the batter does not benefit, the umpire could warn the batter and put the ball back into play. If it happens again, eject the batter for this intentional act. In any case, do not let the batter or offense benefit from this behavior.

Appendix F - Pitch/Between Innings Clock Protocol

There is a slight discrepancy with the current language in the Pitch/Between Innings Clock Protocol in Appendix F. In the "Between Innings for the 90-108-Second Time Limit" section, part 1 says that the 90 or 108 second period shall start "when the last defensive player crosses the foul line nearest his dugout and stops when the pitcher begins his windup for the first pitch to the first batter of the inning." Then in part 2, it states "For non-televvised games teams have 90 seconds to be ready to pitch and to have a batter ready to step into the batter's box after the end of each half inning." Then in part 4, the appendix states, "With 30 seconds left, the base umpire will visually cue the plate umpire, who will then signal to the pitcher and catcher '30 seconds left' (usually enough time for two warm-up pitches) and summon the lead-off batter to the plate." Part 5 states that "Continuing pitchers shall have the 90- to 108—second time limit to complete their five warm-up pitches."

It seems unlikely that within the last 30 seconds the pitcher can throw his last 2 warm-up pitches, throw the ball down to second, and be ready to begin his motion for the first pitch. This has not really been a problem in the past as the umpires have not administered this rule consistently. With a visible clock being used in some conferences, this becomes more obvious.

Based on feedback from this season, the language in part 1 can be rewritten so that the between innings clock can be stopped when the umpire is ready to put the ball in play for the start of the inning. At the end of the time limit, the pitcher must be ready to pitch and the batter must be standing next to the batter's box, ready to step in. When the umpire signals "Play", the regular 20-second limit to pitch will apply. The language in parts 2-8 can be followed as they are.

Rule 6-1-d – Catch and Carry Rule

Last year's rules cycle added the "catch and carry" rule 6-1-d and 6-1-d-1 that referred to "a fielder must catch and have secure possession of the ball before touching dead-ball territory with either foot or falling into dead-ball territory. A fielder may enter the dead-ball area as long as he re-enters live ball territory at the time of the catch."

A question was posed about a wild pitch that deflects off the catcher toward a dugout. Ball is still rolling as the catcher slides, plants a foot on first step down (dead ball area) and collects the still rolling ball.

- If the catcher is already in dead-ball territory when he possesses the ball and the ball would have rolled into the dugout, 8-3-h applies, one base from time of pitch for a pitch or pickoff throw directly from the pitcher's rubber. (Same as if the ball would have rolled directly into the dugout or dead ball area.)
- If the catcher fields the wild pitch and **then** steps into a dead-ball area, this would be like Rule 8-3-o-4 where the catcher or fielder deflects the ball into a dead-ball area. (Catcher in live ball area touched the ball before it would have gone into dead ball area.) Award 2 bases from the time of the pitch.
- Rule 8-3-o-4-Note 1 says "If the ball has stopped rolling or it is clear that the ball will not roll into dead ball territory and a new impetus is applied to the ball by a defensive player, the awards are two bases from the time of the act." (Catcher or fielder has ball that would not have entered dead-ball area and carried it into such area.)