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SUP Update

BCT Exception for specific models of the Louisville Slugger XENO bats.

The NCAA Softball Rules Committee has granted Louisville Slugger an exception for compliance with the existing NCAA barrel compression testing (BCT) standard. For purposes of BCT conducted by NCAA representatives, the Xeno models will be considered in compliance with a reading of 1400 psi or higher. The exception was granted only for their Xeno models, specifically the FP11x, FP11x8, FP11x9, FP12x, FP12x8, FP12x9, FP12XTB, and FPRIDE models. The standard for all other Louisville Slugger models remains the same as all other manufacturers' models, which is 1550 psi or higher. The exception was granted based on Louisville Slugger and NCAA corroborating testing data that demonstrated compliance with the maximum batted ball speed, even though the Xeno's BCT data is occasionally softer than the aforementioned standard.

Note from CCSUA: This announcement does not affect how we administer the bat list protocol. These models are all on the approved bat list – they can be used.

Rule Interpretations document from DEE has been updated on 3/28/2012.

See the Rule Interpretations section below for details the major new interpretations.

The first "2012 NCAA Softball Quiz" has been posted. Click on the "TESTING" tab then select "2012 NCAA Softball Quiz #1".

The "NCAA Approved Bat List" has been updated - March 15, 2012.

The "Summary of Changes" has been pulled out into a separate document to eliminate confusion. The "Summary of Changes" may NOT be used in place of the "NCAA Approved Bat List" for performing bat checks prior to each game. As a reminder - the entire bat list (10 pages) is not required at bat checks. A team may only provide the pages their bats are listed on.

Mechanics Corner

There are times when U1 never goes inside the diamond on an outfield hit

- No runners on base, no chase - fly ball/line drive to outfield ball is caught
- No runners on base, no chase - single
- Runner on 1b – single

Starting in the standard position and no rotation?

There may be a situation in which the play dictates there might not be a rotation. Runner on 3b only, fly ball/line drive to outfield, no chase, less than 2 outs

- U3 must line up the possible tag
- If the ball is dropped and the BR is already rounding 1b and streaking toward 2b...
- U3 may not have time to get to 2b, so U1 must be aware of this and take the BR to 2b

The NCAA Rule Book and Community College

The NCAA rule book has been written for all NCAA divisions, not just D1. The California Community Colleges have decided to use the NCAA rule book. The only exceptions that were mentioned at the CCSUA meeting in January were:

- Bat lists being printed for every game. If a bat list becomes filled with initials and numbers from previous umpires, let the assignor know and he/she will ask the school to print a new list
- Having a minimum of 12 game balls for the beginning of the game. Their budgets might preclude them from satisfying this requirement. Be reasonable – 3 backup balls are usually enough

Do not be “lenient” with any of the other rules!

Bat List Protocol

There seems to be some confusion as to whether a new bat list must be printed for every game. We are in the process of clarifying this.

We have searched the rule book, the CCA manual, re-watched the SUP Online clinic and reviewed all the SUP documentation regarding the bat check protocol. These state that the coach shall provide a copy of the current bat list. We cannot find anywhere that it states a **new** bat list must be provided for every game. Rule 3.3.2Effect states we cannot start the game until the appropriate lists are presented; it does not state that it must be a newly printed list.

By this part of the season we have all seen bat lists which have previous initials. Until we get a clarification we suggest that if there is room for the plate umpire to write the number and his/her initials, use the list. If the list is getting so filled up with initials it becomes difficult for future umpires to find a place for their initials, use the process described above.

Rules Corner

10.18 Time Allowed between pitches

When should you start the first 10 second count, which is for both the pitcher and batter? Can you answer this question with the rule book language without looking it up right now? If not, how are you going to answer the coach who argues this call when you enforce the rule?

It starts when “the pitcher receives the ball in preparation to pitch...” What exactly does this mean? This is not an official interpretation but an effort to apply some common sense to the enforcement to this rule. Most of the time the pitcher receives the ball back from the catcher while standing in the circle – start the count. If it is after a play is made or she receives and ball outside the circle, start the count when she enters the circle.

We have heard from a number of umpires who state their plate umpire is not enforcing this rule when it should be!! This, again, is not official, but perhaps you may consider this:

- The first time the pitcher gets close to 10 seconds, tell the catcher that the pitcher is close to violating the rule and needs to speed it up
- Be ready to call the violation on any subsequent pitch
- When you call you may be surprised that you do not get much of an argument
- Experience has shown that once the pitcher has been called for this, she tends to move a little faster, thus reducing the time of your game!

Game Management

Coach delaying pitcher from taking warm-up pitches

After the 3rd out the first base coach walks to the circle and meets the pitcher and they engage in a short conversation. It gets to a point where it is delaying the start of the pitcher’s warm-up pitches. What do you do? Although this is not covered in the rule book and you could get push-back from the head coach, here is a suggestion for the plate umpire:

- Go to the circle and ask the coach to break “make it quick” as she is holding up the pitcher from starting her warm-up pitches,
- If it continues tell the coach you will have to charge her a defensive conference.
- There is support for this with rule 6.11: "During a charged conference the game is delayed to allow one or more team representatives to confer with players."
- The rule states nothing about "between innings" and this coach is delaying the game as she is holding up the pitcher from taking her warm-up pitches.

Between innings a player is standing near the plate talking to the catcher and giving her scouting information about the upcoming batters. How do you stop this?

- There are very specific rules to cover what the offense and defense can do between innings, and this is not one of them (6.5.6).
- You can also tell them this is a safety issue and the reason for the rule

Recent Rules Interpretations

Pitcher’s pivot foot and the drag

- The initial push must be off the pitchers plate.

- Can't drag to second push spot, you might notice a hesitation in the arm swing
- Arm swing must be in continuous motion
- The benefit of the doubt should go to the student-athlete
- Make sure you see it in real time and that if you have doubt then don't call it.

REGARDING THE ONE ALLOWABLE STEP TOWARD HOME PLATE, IT IS ILLEGAL IF THE PIVOT FOOT BECOMES AIRBORNE IN A REPLANT, LEAP OR CROW HOP. IT IS LEGAL FOOTWORK IF THE PIVOT FOOT IS IN CONTACT WITH THE PITCHER'S PLATE PRIOR TO THE INITIAL DRIVE AND THEN REMAINS IN CONTACT WITH THE GROUND THROUGHOUT THE PITCHING MOTION AS THE FRONT FOOT LANDS INSIDE THE PITCHER'S LANE.

CAMERAS IN THE DUGOUTS

Rule 5.9.4 and 5.9.8

5.9.8 prohibits cell phone cameras from being used in team areas but does not speak to cameras on tablets or cameras that are simply cameras. Are those types of team cameras also prohibited?

5.9.8 is the old 3.6 and refers specifically to the use of cell phones. For many years, cell phones have been allowed in team areas (but not on the field) and once cameras became the norm on cell phones, their prohibition was clarified here.

5.9.4 addresses all other team cameras (still photography or video) and specifies they are welcome in team neutral areas, preferably one but comparable ones if two are needed. So if a team wishes to have photos taken, they can do so from the designated team neutral camera area, not the dugout.

Note 5.9 refers to electronic equipment used for scouting or by team personnel and does not include cameras for television production.