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## MESSAGE FROM: Greg Schmidt, CCSUA Chairman, SUP Regional Advisor

Hello Everyone,

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate John Bennett on his selection to the NCAA National Rules Committee. This is a great honor that John richly deserves. The rules committee has the task of making the rule changes for NCAA Softball.

John brings his many years of experience as an active official along with a tremendous knowledge of the rules to the committee. They meet each year at the WCWS to discuss and determine the direction of future rules. The Softball Rules Committee also announced a two year extension for Dee Abrahamson Secretary Rules Editor for the NCAA. The SUP is excited about this announcement. Dee is a tremendous asset to the game.

John is currently the CCSUA Training Coordinator. Along with that responsibility he has taken the lead in putting together the new CCSUA Central Hub. This site will combine three organizations by mid-summer. We have a lot of new and exciting things coming up so check back often to see what's new.

In other news the SUP continues to see a tendency by some umpires to default to the backside 90 at 2<sup>nd</sup> base when it is not necessary. Please review your priorities with regard to this mechanic.

We have posted on the SUP Central Hub front page at the top a base running power point. This explains in detail the difference between *BASE LINE* and *BASE PATH*. There is a play being used that has a runner sliding wide of the base at 2<sup>nd</sup>. This play is legal and the explanation should be reviewed by all officials.

We are now fully involved in conference play. Take your best game to every game, no matter what the level ***every time with every pitch on every play.***

Continue to work hard, get into the Rule book and Manual; OWN IT... Remember knowledge is power...

*Greg Schmidt*

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## FOCUS AND PREPARTION

### **Last Month of the SEASON!**

For most of us April is the last month of the Season, which means teams are fighting for a post-season position. This is also the time to remain focused and prepared on every pitch of the game whether working the plate or bases, as challenges from coaches will arise to a new level.

Let's all remain consistent in our game management, timing, strike zone and working as a team! If you have issues with work and family, don't discuss them at your pre-game or think about them during the games, as it will only distract you from concentrating on the task at hand, the game. Those issues will still be there once the game is over and you will have ample enough time to handle or dwell on them after you concluded your game. Stay in the moment striving to umpire the best game you can each game for the remainder of the season.

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## IMPORTANT ASSIGNORS INFORMATION REMINDER!!

### **From Joanne, Jim and Rich:**

#### **CHARTING PITCHES**

For those of you who work Division-I games who were asked to chart pitches, please send Joanne and email letting her know the plate umpire's name, date and location. If you are the Crew Chief/Plate umpire of that game, please note it in your report. The charting form itself goes directly to the Plate Umpire after their game.

#### **DP/FLEX**

Please review the DP/Flex rule with your partner(s) during the pre-game, as different situations have occurred. Do not take for granted that a coach understands this rule in its entirety just because they have opted to use the DP/Flex in their game.

#### **SIGNALS**

There is some rumor out there that umpires are not using the correct infield fly signal? I don't

think it's us, but remind each other we are using the fist, not the finger point.

### **RULE CLARIFICATION**

Dee Abrahamson, secretary rules editor and the SUP developed a [PowerPoint presentation](#), located on the SUP Central Hub, which clarifies a runner's base path. If you have already seen it, view it again, as it has been updated.

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## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT CORNER**

**Watch what you say, especially when your words can be perceived by others as being bias, prejudice and unprofessional towards coaches, players and other officials.**

**When one official is in the spotlight on national television for making inappropriate and unprofessional comments regarding any member of a sporting team, it affects ALL officials, as we are perceived as being the same.**

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## **KUDOS CORNER!**

Kudos to John Bennett and our entire CCSUA Board Members for establishing our **NEW CCSUA Central Hub!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Below is a reminder note to take advantage of the training material, articles, kudos and other pertinent information in umpiring the college game.

Have you gone to the new CCSUA Central Hub yet? If not, you are missing out on a lot of useful and important information. The site will be updated on a regular basis. Here are some recent updates:

Rules Corner - all sections for this area are now listed with articles posted for each one.

Mechanics Corner - a new item has been posted.

The CCSUA Shirt Order Form is now available under the CCSUA Information area.

Post-season playoff dates have been added to the Calendar.

A few names have been added to Accolades, and this area has been moved to the left side.

The Play Ball area has a new section, Challenging situations - real happenings on the field.

There is a new area, Lighter Side - check it out and it might bring a smile to your face.

If you have any comments or suggestions for our Central Hub, please contact John Bennett.

**Reminder: don't forget to take the March 2013 quiz. The deadline is April 10.**

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## REALITY vs. PERCEPTION

### **There is no greater feeling than getting a tough play right.**

**“Like hitting a long, majestic drive off the tee, getting a tough play right is an exhilarating experience and perhaps the main reason that keeps officials coming back for more. Maybe you ruled on a catch or no catch that was closed to the fence or trapped by an outfielder as she dove for the ball during a key, game-changing moment and getting the play right and *knowing* it is a thrill that can’t be topped. It’s why we officiate.**

**It’s also that moment of getting a tough play right that can define an official and help him or her advance in his or her career. Not only do you get the thrill and satisfaction from getting the play right, but greater confidence to go out and do it again!**

The above-mentioned statement is another principle from the Referee Magazine article regarding REALITY vs. PERCEPTION. Pat yourself on the back when you get that tough call right, as every umpire should be awarded for the good they do, instead, of always being criticized for the mistake(s) they make from coaches and fans.

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## RULES CORNER

The answer to last month’s rule question regarding: Do you know what constitutes an illegal player? And what is the “one” effect/penalty for any rule situation regarding an illegal player in the game, can be found on pages 81 and 82, all Rules under 8.3.4.

This month rule’s trivia question is: Can a player temporarily station herself at a different location on the field and it does not constitute as a defensive change? If so, what rule supports this situation? The answer will be noted in our May Newsletter.

The pitcher goes to the dirt but does not wipe off her hand before she touches the ball. Is this legal? Yes, based on an interpretation which was issued last year. We are still having situations in which umpires are calling an illegal pitch for this action. Make sure you are checking the rule interpretations on the SUP Central Hub at least once a week!

**The pitcher’s glove colors – look them up!! A glove with blue on it is NOT legal for the pitcher. A few of you have been allowing this; and when another umpire disallows it, he/she is the one who takes the heat. Do your job on the field!**

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## MECHANICS

Although most of us believe we are pretty savvy with 2-persons mechanics, we tend to forget our College mechanics when we are working three different levels of Softball (ASA, High School and College) at the same time. In order to remain sharp and on the same page with your partner during the game, discuss the following different mechanics during your pre-game:

- Infield-Fly signal (closed fist and the plate umpire initiates it)
- Tag-up responsibility with a runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> only. The base umpire takes the tag-up (leaving early) while the Plate umpire takes the play at 3<sup>rd</sup> base if the runner advances.
- Drop third strike signal. Pointing to the ground if the catcher does not catch the ball on a 3<sup>rd</sup> strike and the batter is entitled to run. We no longer have to indicate that the ball was caught by using a close fist. (This mechanic was posted on the SUP Central Hub 01/08/13 and was addressed at the Glendale clinic on 01/7/13).
- Check Swing and Pick-off attempts when asked by catcher and coach.

The above are just a few differences that need to be discussed during every pre-game.

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## GAME MANAGEMENT

### Arguing Balls and Strikes

We are letting it go too far. As base umpires we have all heard too much complaining (5 or 6 comments in the first few innings from the same coach). Finally the PU tells the coach to stop. We had one reported incident whereby after being told to stop, in the next inning the coach came to the 3<sup>rd</sup> base coach's box and said to U3 "Gees, you guys out here sure are thin-skinned." They must be getting away with arguing balls and strikes in other areas. We cannot allow this to continue. Here are some methods (verbal and body language) and comments frequently used by arguers:

#### The Coach

- Constant comments from the bench.
- Constantly asking the catcher "where was that pitch?"
- Common sayings – "that's not low; we just want you to be consistent; c'mon blue, call it both ways; wake up back there; you're better than that."

#### The Catcher

- When the coach asks her where the pitch was: she shrugs; she motions with her hand that it hit the corner (hand open with fingers together, arm stretched toward the plate and then toward her as if mimicking the pitch over the corner or pointing at corner...); she says "I don't know."
- She looks back at you to ask – whether nicely or not

#### The Defensive players

- Throwing their arms up in exasperation.
- Saying something loud enough for the base umpire to hear – "that plate has a corner, wow"

where was that...”

The Dugout – players, assistant coaches, pitching coach, trainers, anybody else in dugout  
Comments such as: “not your pitch Susie; oh no that’s not low; c’mon blue”

#### How to handle the Coach and Dugout (Team Personnel)

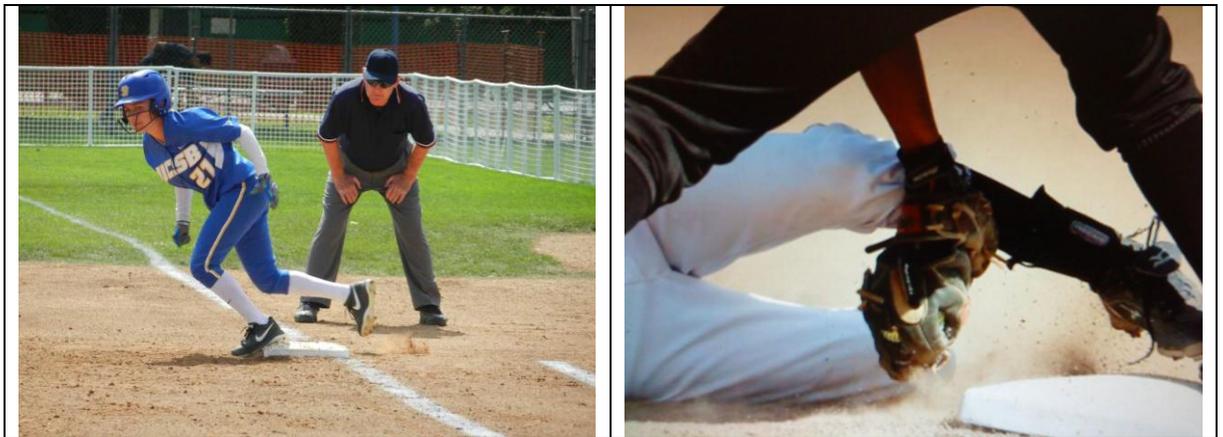
- Find an appropriate moment to swing by the dugout and tell the coach to stop (after moving toward a foul ball, between innings, etc. Use the below verbiage:
  1. Coach, your comments about balls and strikes have to stop (or are inappropriate) and if they continue I will issue a warning.
  2. Coach, I hear your comments (or the dugout comments) and I consider them to be arguing balls and strikes, so tell them to stop.

#### How to handle the Catcher and Defensive Players

- When the catcher looks back tell her she can ask you where was that pitch without turning
- When a defensive player makes inappropriate comments or body language gestures remind her that her behavior or comments are inappropriate or unsportsmanlike.

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## PHOTO CORNER



**Thanks to Joanne Venditto and John Bennett for contributing to this month’s newsletter!**

**Knowledge is Power and Experience is the best teacher.**