



2018 and 2019 NCAA Softball Official Rules Interpretations, Clarifications and Situations

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TAKING THE SIGNAL (Rules 10.2.1 and 10.2.2)

As a follow-up to the September 12, 2018 interpretation on taking the signal, the following is further clarification on how and when the pitcher complies with the taking the signal rule:

- The pitcher receives the ball from her catcher and positions both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate and her hands separated. She looks at her catcher or coach in the dugout to get the signal for the next pitch. She brings her hands together and starts the pitch. **LEGAL PITCH.**
- The pitcher receives the ball from her catcher and positions both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate and her hands separated. Her coach signals the pitch from the dugout. The pitcher looks at her signal arm band. She brings her hands together and starts the pitch. **LEGAL PITCH.**
- The pitcher receives the ball from her catcher. While standing behind the pitcher's plate she receives the signal from her coach and looks at her signal arm band for the pitch she will throw. She positions both feet in contact with pitcher's plate and her hands separated. She then looks at EITHER her arm band, catcher or her coach in the dugout. **LEGAL PITCH.** Umpires are to assume that looking at her arm band or the catcher equates to taking a signal.
- The pitcher DOES NOT take a signal from either behind the pitcher's plate or while positioned on the pitcher's plate. She does not look at a signal arm band, her catcher or a coach in the dugout for a signal. When she positions both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate and her hands separated, she pauses for a noticeable stop of 2 seconds to simulate taking a signal. **LEGAL PITCH.** A pitcher who does not take a signal of any sort is likely a rare occurrence.
- The pitcher receives the ball from her catcher. While standing behind the pitcher's plate she receives the signal from her coach and looks at her signal arm band for the pitch she will throw. She positions both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate and her hands separated. She does NOT look at her signal arm band or her catcher but simply brings her hands together to start the pitch. **ILLEGAL PITCH.**
- The pitcher DOES NOT take a signal from either behind the pitcher's plate or while positioned on the pitcher's plate. She does not look at a signal arm band, her catcher or her coach in the dugout. She simply positions both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate and immediately brings her hands together to start the pitch. **ILLEGAL PITCH.**



Reminder: Rule 10.18 Time Allowed Between Pitches. “10-10-5”.

After the pitcher receives the ball to prepare to pitch or the umpire calls “Play Ball”, the pitcher must be on the pitcher’s plate, the catcher in the catcher’s box and the batter in the batter’s box **within 10 seconds**.

After the pitcher, catcher and batter are in position, the pitcher has **10 seconds** to bring her hands together to start the pitch.

The pitcher then has not more than **5 seconds** to deliver the pitch.

Review A.R.s 10-19 through 10-23 in the 2019 Softball Casebook.

New A.R. 10-3

The pitcher, who is wearing a signal arm band, positions both feet in contact with the pitcher’s plate and gets the signal from the dugout. She has her hands separated and at her sides with the ball in her throwing hand. After receiving the signal, using the hand holding the ball, she reaches over to her opposite wrist and uses her finger to help locate the signal on her arm band. She then drops her hands back to her sides. Is this legal?

RULING: Yes, her hands are not considered to have separated after coming together to start the pitch when she is using one hand to assist with finding a signal on her opposite wrist. The intent of Rule 10.3, which defines when a pitch begins, is to let the batter and umpire know that the pitch is imminent. There is no possibility that either the batter or umpire would think this act is the hands coming together to start the pitch. However, while on the pitcher’s plate, it would not be legal for the pitcher to hold the ball in her glove while she uses her throwing hand to find the signal, and then transfer the ball from her glove to her throwing hand and bring her hands back to her sides. This would constitute an illegal pitch.

(Rules 10.2 and 10.3)