



**NCAA Baseball Rules Committee**  
**2011 Meeting Report**

**1. Action Item – Experimental Rule for Instant Replay.**

The rules committee, working in conjunction with the Division I Baseball Committee, has approved the use of instant replay on an experimental basis at the Men’s College World Series in Omaha. Many plays were considered for inclusion in the scope of this experiment. The final vote limits reviewable plays to:

- Deciding if an apparent home run is fair or foul.
- Deciding whether a batted ball left the playing field for a home run or a ground-rule double.
- Spectator-interference plays (only on plays involving home run balls).

The instant-replay process will operate under the fundamental assumption that the ruling on the field is correct. The only way a call can be changed is if there is indisputable video evidence to remove all doubt that a ruling was incorrect. Otherwise, the original call will stand.

Any instant-replay review would have to occur before the next pitch or play. If it occurs after a game-ending play, it must be called for before all umpires leave the field of play.

There will not be a formal coach’s challenge opportunity in the instant-replay process. Coaches already have the ability to request a conference among umpires under the “Getting the Call Right” provisions in Appendix E of the NCAA Baseball Rules Book.

The umpire crew chief determines whether to use instant replay. If instant replay is used, the calling umpire and the crew chief and other members of the crew, as deemed necessary, would go to the designated video-replay area to review all relevant video coverage. At least one umpire would remain on the field.

During a video review, the defensive team players would be required to maintain their positions on the field and would be allowed to practice throw if desired. Base runners and the on-deck hitter would remain at their positions. All players and coaches would have to remain in the dugout. Any defensive or offensive conferences would be charged as during any other part of the game.

While there is no time limit for the video review, lengthy reviews (more than two or three minutes) are discouraged and would be considered possible evidence that there is no indisputable video evidence to change a call.

The crew chief may confer and discuss the replays during the review with other members of the umpiring crew, but the ultimate final decision is with the crew chief. This final decision may not be contested by either coach.

If a reversal results in the need to decide the placement of base runners, the crew chief would use his best judgment to determine their locations as if the call had been made correctly. Again, coaches cannot question these decisions.

If a call is changed, the crew chief would notify both head coaches and the official scorer of the ruling.

The committees plan to communicate leading up to the College World Series and will review the use of replay at its 2012 annual meetings.

## **2. Points of Emphasis.**

Overall, the committee believes the rules as written serve the game well. This is the overarching focus the committee hopes all members of the baseball community will adhere to. Two other points of emphasis were approved, however: The coach/umpire relationship and the batter's box rule as it relates to pace of play. The full points of emphasis are included in this information.

## **3. Major Discussion Topics.**

The committee reviewed several key areas of its rules, particularly the rules changes made last season, and submits this report as a summary of the discussions.

- **Bat Standard.** The biggest impact on the game dealt with the Batted Ball Coefficient of Restitution (BBCRO) standard that became effective for all NCAA bats to be used in play effective January 1, 2011. This standard was approved by the rules committee after a recommendation from the NCAA Baseball Research Panel in September of 2008, providing plenty of time for manufacturer adjustment.

The results statistically were clear. In Division I, teams had a .282 batting average compared to .305 in 2010. Home runs per game dropped to 0.52 compared to 0.94 in 2010. Overall scoring dipped from 6.98 last season to 5.58 this year. Also, earned-run averages were 4.67 in 2011 compared to 5.95 in 2010. The overall fielding percentage registered an all-time high of .964.

Divisions II and III statistics mirror those collected in Division I. Division II batting averages dropped from .309 to .289; Division III batters managed a .292 average, down from .314 in 2010. Division II batters hit 0.44 home runs per game in 2011, down from 0.72 per game the previous season. Division III sluggers managed 0.35 home runs a game compared to 0.58 in 2010.

The committee also received a report from the Baseball Research Panel and directed the Panel to continue its compliance testing program and expand testing if possible. The Panel tested all bats used at the College World Series and plans more extensive field testing and compliance testing in the future.

- **Pitch/Between Innings Clock.** The committee's change with regard to the pitch and between innings clock was reviewed at length. Overall, the change has helped with pace of play concerns and the committee plans to continue enforcement of these rules. Across the country, game times were down considerably from previous years, which the committee believes is a product of both the new bat standards and the quickened pace of play.
- **Restricting Players/Bench Personnel to the Dugout Area.** The committee was extremely pleased with the rule it approved to keep celebrating players near the dugout. Previously, players were limited to the area surrounding home plate, which created some unnecessary conflict between the catcher/pitcher and runners/teammates. This change was supported in the NCAA's rules survey and underscores the committee's efforts to improve the game's image and sportsmanship.