



MEMORANDUM

January 27, 2021

VIA EMAIL

TO: Head Softball Coaches and Senior Woman Administrators.

FROM: Vickie Van Kleeck, Secretary-Rules Editor  
NCAA Softball Rules Committee

Lexie Vernon, Chair  
NCAA Softball Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: Preseason Softball Reminders for the 2021 Season.

As a new playing season is rapidly approaching, we would like to remind you of a few important items for the 2021 season. The 2021 season will be the second year using the 2020 and 2021 NCAA Softball Rules Book, which can be downloaded as a PDF [here](#).

1. 2020 and 2021 Softball Case Book. The NCAA Softball Rules Committee updated the 2020 and 2021 Softball Case Book that contains approved rulings to use as a supplement to the official rules book. The updates reflect the most recent rules changes and game situations that better explain the application and adjudication of the official written rules. The online only case book is available on the [NCAA Softball Home Plate](#) under the Rules Book tab or the NCAA softball playing rules [website](#).
2. Rules Change for 2021 – Rule 8.6.2 Concussion Protocol Reentry. During its June 2020 annual meeting, the Softball Rules Committee approved a recommendation from the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports to allow a player to be removed from the game to be evaluated for a concussion without being disqualified. NCAA softball rules previously may have directly discouraged or impeded the timely reporting and/or evaluation of a possible concussion. This rule change is consistent with what other sports rules committees implemented. The rules change can be viewed [here](#). As noted above, the 2020 and 2021 Softball Case Book includes approved rulings that better explain the application and adjudication of this specific rule change and all other NCAA softball rules.
3. COVID-19 Waiver to Rule 12.17.3.4.2. Due to challenges resulting from COVID-19, playing rules waivers were granted to ensure consistency with the guidance included in the NCAA Resocialization of Collegiate Sport documents. In this regard, the Softball Rules Committee issued the following waiver to Rule 12.17.3.4.2 for the 2021 season – Offensive team personnel **will be prohibited** from congregating anywhere outside the dugout to congratulate a runner(s) on a home run. This waiver was issued to reduce the spread of germs. Umpires and coaches are encouraged to collaborate to ensure offensive team personnel do not congregate outside the dugout. Should teams violate this COVID-19 waiver, umpires are instructed to warn (see Rule 13.1.1) the offending team and advise them that they must remain in the dugout. For further violations by a team, umpires are instructed to solicit assistance from the on-site administrator

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and file an [NCAA Softball Incident Report](#). Note: Only violations of 12.17.3.4.1 will require a warning and out on subsequent violations per the EFFECT written in the rules book.

4. Artificial Crowd Noise Interpretation. Due to COVID-19, institutions may have restrictions on fan attendance at games during the 2021 season. Therefore, the Softball Rules Committee issued an interpretation permitting piped-in artificial crowd noise during 2021 games with five stipulations. This interpretation may be viewed [here](#) or in the 2020 and 2021 Softball Case Book.
5. Regular-Season Barrel Compression Testing. As a reminder, due to financial challenges from COVID-19, the Softball Rules Committee and Playing Rules Oversight Panel delayed the implementation of required regular-season barrel compression testing (BCT) for Division I until January 1, 2022. This is the same date for Divisions II and III (January 1, 2022). **Please ensure your institution is prepared for regular-season BCT before January 1, 2022, which includes purchasing required equipment.** Information on BCT required equipment and protocol guidelines is available in the [NCAA Softball Bat Compliance and Testing Information](#).
6. Bat List. The current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List (December 14, 2020) is available on the [NCAA Softball Home Plate](#) or the NCAA softball playing rules [website](#). The next planned bat list distribution date is April 12.
7. Registration on the NCAA Softball Home Plate. Head coaches are again encouraged to register on the [NCAA Softball Home Plate](#). It continues to be free for head coaches and houses rules interpretations, clarifications, announcements and updates issued during the season. Officiating updates, clarifications and videos are also posted to Home Plate. If you registered last year, you would need to re-register this year to continue having access to all of the important information.

If you have any questions now or during the season, please contact Vickie Van Kleeck at [ncaasbsre@gmail.com](mailto:ncaasbsre@gmail.com) or 540-819-4655.

Thank you for your attention to this information and good luck this season.

VVK/LV:af

cc: Divisions II and III Conference Commissioners  
Division I Conference Softball Administrators  
NCAA Registered Softball Umpires  
NCAA Softball Rules Committee  
Selected NCAA Staff Members