



2020 SOFTBALL

GAME MANAGEMENT MANUAL



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

One of the basic tenets of the Southern Conference is the belief that “well managed intercollegiate athletic competition is an important component of higher education (preamble, Southern Conference Constitution).” With this belief in mind, the Softball Game Management Manual was designed for the purpose of providing an organized means of competition between the teams of student-athletes at our respective academic institutions.

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE MISSION STATEMENT

Preparing student-athletes for life’s challenges since 1921.

Southern Conference

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2020 SOUTHERN CONFERENCE SOFTBALL GAME MANAGEMENT MANUAL

Artificial Noisemakers

Artificial noisemakers (air horns, electronic amplifiers, whistles, clappers, etc.) are not permissible in Southern Conference venues except those amplifiers that are part of the official home or visiting team pep band or cheerleading squad. Such instruments shall be removed from the facility when discovered. Thunder sticks will be allowed on an experimental basis at softball games if distributed as part of a game-day promotion conducted by the home institution.

Balls

The official softball (Rawlings NC 12L-SC) as designated by the Conference office shall be used in all Conference games.

Bat Testing

Bat testing will take place two hours before the first pitch with the Crew Chief, or the home institution administrator if the Crew Chief is not available. Representatives from both schools need to be present during the testing. Testing will occur each day of the Conference series and the location of the testing will be done in close proximity to the field.

- A. Each team will be supplied with two conference mandated stickers of different colors. Prior to the beginning of the season, the conference office will let each team know which color to use on each day.
- B. The bat testing machine must be the NCAA approved version (Portable Barrel Compression Fixture).

Cheerleaders, Pep Bands, Dance Teams, Mascots

Cheerleader Responsibilities

Cheerleaders should be encouraged to help maintain good sportsmanship among the students and others in attendance. The head cheerleader should be ready at all times to instigate the most popular cheer in case an unpleasant situation should occur.

Cheerleader Restrictions

Megaphones may never be turned toward the playing area. Amplified microphones are prohibited. No pyramids may be performed that are more than two tiers (persons) high. No flips may be conducted other than those made from the ground. Mini-trampolines may not be used. Cheerleaders should never be located behind an opposing team's dugout.

Pep Band Restrictions

Bands are allowed to play only during pre-game, between games, post game and between innings.

Dance Teams and Mascots

Regulations as they apply to cheerleaders also apply to dance teams and mascots.

Travel Restrictions

Cheerleading squads, pep bands and dance teams may travel during softball season only on weekends.

Complimentary Tickets

The home team shall provide the visiting team with 50 complimentary tickets for each Conference game, provided that the home team is charging admission. The 50 complimentary tickets should be provided from a pass list given to the home institution by the visiting institution upon its arrival. In accordance with Southern Conference Sportsmanship Code Regulations, the seating area immediately behind the visiting team dugout should be reserved for fans and parents of the visiting team.

Conference Scheduling

Each school shall play all members of the Conference three times during the regular season (normally in a three-game weekend series at the site of one of the competing teams). The Southern Conference office shall produce a league master schedule at least three years prior to the start of each season. Conference games shall be played either on Friday and Saturday or Saturday and Sunday. Teams reserve the right to make changes to the Conference master schedule as long as participating athletics directors are agreeable to the moves and the moves are approved by the conference office. (Approved 6/10. Updated 10/18)

Make-Up Games

No make-up dates may be utilized to complete a Conference series if it is unable to be completed during a scheduled series window (i.e. Friday-Saturday or Saturday-Sunday).

Moving Games

Conference games may be moved to alternate or neutral locations if forced to due to inclement weather or other extenuating circumstances. Games may be moved to alternate days in advance only in extenuating circumstances (exams, holidays, weather, etc.). The doubleheader may be played on the first day of competition in anticipation of bad weather (i.e. Friday-Saturday or Saturday-Sunday). Each conference series shall be played within two consecutive days. The decision to move the games shall be decided by Wednesday at Noon Eastern Time the week of the Conference series. Teams reserve the right to make changes to the Conference series playing days due to future inclement weather as long as participating athletics directors are agreeable to the moves and the moves are approved by the Conference Office. In all other instances, once a visiting team has arrived at a site, games may not be moved to alternate days.

Crowd Control

The home Athletics Director or his/her designee shall serve as the game management director for all Conference games. The home Athletics Director or game management director designee has the direct responsibility for crowd control as outlined in the Southern Conference Sportsmanship Code Regulations. It is strongly encouraged by the Southern Conference office that a designated game management director be present throughout the game.

Southern Conference Code of Conduct Public Address Announcement

The Southern Conference Code of Conduct Public Address Announcement should be read twice per contest – at the beginning of the contest and midway through the contest - and as necessary during the course of competition. The public-address announcer may read the following: *“The Southern Conference and its member institutions are committed to principles of good sportsmanship. We believe that all student-athletes, coaches and spectators should strive to represent the very best spirit and tradition of college athletics. We request your cooperation by supporting the participants and officials in a positive manner at all times. Those in attendance should report any act that goes against this policy to game management or security personnel immediately. Thank you.”*

Additionally, an announcement should be made informing spectators of the proper procedure to register complaints or concerns they may have regarding the behavior of other spectators. The host institution is responsible for addressing any such reported concerns in an appropriate and timely manner.

Field Requirements

All Conference fields are required or recommended to have the following:

- A. A backstop with a minimum distance of 25 feet and a maximum of 30 feet from home plate (required);
- B. An outfield fence with foul poles (required); an institutional field with a 4-foot fence must be a minimum of 210 feet in left and right fields and 230 in center field, and it is highly recommended that a municipal field with a 4-foot fence used by the institution be at those same distances. Beginning in 2018, foul poles on institutional fields shall be a minimum of 10 feet high and be either white or optic orange.
- C. A scoreboard (required);
- D. Dimensions of a minimum of 190 feet from home plate down the left and right field lines and a minimum of 200 feet from home plate to the centerfield fence. No portion of a fence shall be more than 225 feet from home plate;
- E. An infield tarp (recommended);
- F. A skinned infield and natural grass outfield (recommended);
- G. Separate bullpens for each team equipped with regulation-sized home plates and pitcher’s plates placed at regulation distance (recommended);
- H. If separate bullpens are not available, a single bullpen must be large enough to accommodate two pitchers (one from each team).

Game Day Auxiliary Personnel

Scoreboard Operator

This person will need the ability to stay focused and keep up with scoring changes.

Official Scorer

The home team shall provide an official scorer for all Conference games. The scorer should arrive on site and be introduced to the umpires prior to the start of the game. The visiting team may provide a scorer for the purpose of improving the accuracy of data collection during a game. The home team scorer shall always be designated the official scorer.

Public Address Announcer

Host institutions should provide a public-address announcer for pre-game introductions and to give specific information to the fans. (For more information regarding the duties of the public-address announcer, reference regular-season sport regulation 7.1)

TV liaison (if applicable)

Host institutions shall provide a TV liaison for televised games if asked to do so by the broadcasting network or the Conference office. This person's job is to serve as an on-field link between the officiating crew and the television producer, notifying the home plate umpire when it is acceptable to resume play between commercial breaks.

Game Format

Start Times

The home team shall set all game times and locations for a Conference series. Night games may not be required for the last day of a series. Games on the last day of the series may not start prior to 1:00 p.m. unless a doubleheader is needed or both competing athletics directors are agreeable to starting prior to 1:00 p.m. Games may start after 6:00 p.m. only with the approval of the athletics directors or designee of the competing teams. For the resumption of halted games on the last day of a series, the resumption or starting time will be agreed upon by the two coaches, and if no agreement is possible, the umpire crew chief for the series shall set the time.

Between Games

For all Conference doubleheaders, 30 minutes will be used between games unless otherwise agreed upon by the two head coaches and umpires in advance.

Halted Games

All Conference games shall be seven innings in length. The Southern Conference shall adhere to the policies of the NCAA Softball Rules regarding regulation and halted games. No more than two games may be started in one day, but a halted game may be completed and two games started in one day with no game starting after 6:00 p.m. unless approved by both athletics directors or designee of the competing teams. If the last game of a series is not completed and the score is tied after becoming a regulation game (please see NCAA Softball Rule 6.14), it shall be a complete game/tie.

Media Format

All Conference games shall use the media format rule as stated in the NCAA Women's Softball Rules Book.

International Tie-Breaker

The international tie-breaker rule shall be used in all regular season Conference games at the beginning of the 10th inning.

Eight-Run Rule

The eight-run rule shall be in effect for all Conference games.

Game Management

The home Athletics Director (or his or her designee) shall serve as the game management director for all Southern Conference games. It is suggested that the game management director visit briefly with the officials and the visiting head coach prior to a game to answer any questions and inform them of his or her availability. The home Athletics Director and/or game management director also has the direct responsibility for crowd control as outlined in the Southern Conference Sportsmanship Code Regulations.

Host Institution Responsibilities

The following provisions shall be provided to the visiting team by the home team:

- A. Bench: One 10-gallon cooler of water, one ice chest with ice and bags, two sleeves of cups, bench towels, one biohazard box.
- B. Dressing Room: A dressing room with showers if requested in advance.
Showed towels as needed if requested in advance.

Motorized Vehicles, Explosive Devices, Live Mascots

The home Athletics Director shall decide the policy regarding the use of explosive devices (cannons, rifles, rocket launchers, fireworks, etc.), live mascots (horses, birds, dogs, etc.), and motorized vehicles in their facility. Visiting Athletics Directors need to request permission for use of these items at least two weeks in advance, and approval or denial of the request must be given immediately by the home Athletics Director.

Officials

Conference officials are considered "Independent Contractors" for the purposes of employment. The Conference will use three-person officiating crews. Mickey Call, Southern Conference Coordinator of Softball Officials, shall assign all officials.

Payment

For 2020, each official shall be paid a flat fee of \$665 for a 3-game conference series. Lodging for officials shall be the responsibility of the host institution. The host institution shall provide three rooms for one night. (Revised 8/15)

Amenities

Host institutions should provide officials with a dressing area, and an ample supply of water and/or isotonics before and after each game. Hosts should provide a snack to officials in between games of a double header.

Security

Game management directors should make certain that officials know where they are to enter and leave the dressing room and field of play before and after each game. Uniformed security or game management directors should be present with officials at all times when they enter and exit the field of play.

Hydration During Games

The Southern Conference requests that officials be supplied (by any trainer, manager, or non-uniformed personnel) with water or isotonic beverages as follows during all games:

Plate Umpire: Bottom of 2nd and 5th innings;
Base Umpire: Bottom of 3rd and 6th innings.

NOTE: Intervals should be shortened during games with extreme heat or humidity.

NCAA Major Rules Changes

Playing rules as adopted by the NCAA shall be in effect for all Southern Conference games. See Appendix C for major rules changes or can be accessed at the link below.

[2020 and 2021 Major Rules Changes for Softball](#)

Pre-Game Format

The home institution shall provide a minimum of two “official” conference softballs (Rawlings NC 12L-SC) to be used during Conference games. The host institution shall provide the visiting head coach with a pre-game itinerary and/or time line at least 72 hours prior to the start of a Conference game. The visiting team shall be given equal access to batting cages, field space, pitching machines, machine balls, screens and tees as the home team. This policy applies equally to indoor and outdoor facilities.

Additionally, as part of the pre-game format, the home institution shall provide an opportunity to test all bats of the competing teams each day of a conference series provided that a bat testing machine is available on site. (*See Bat Testing*)

Pre-Game Meeting

It is suggested that the game management director visit briefly with the official(s) and the visiting head coach(es) prior to the game to answer any questions and to inform them of his or her availability.

Public Address Announcer

Only the designated public-address announcer may use a microphone during a Southern Conference match. The public-address announcer is responsible for whatever is said over the PA system. The primary function of the announcer is to give specific information to the fans, not to incite them by unnecessary inflection of voice.

Score Reporting

The home team shall be responsible for recording NCAA statistical information for both teams and compiling an official NCAA box score. The home stats crew must send a completed final NCAA box score via e-mail to the Southern Conference office on the same day that a Southern Conference game is completed. The visiting head coach should receive a copy of the official NCAA box score after the conclusion of each Conference game.

Signs

Signs of a derogatory nature directed towards an individual opponent, visiting team or match officials are not permitted in Conference venues. It is the responsibility of the home institution to ensure that such signs are immediately removed.

Southern Conference “Branding” Items

The following items will be provided to each institution (if needed) for use during the season for the purpose of Conference “branding”:

Field Stencil

A plastic stencil should be used to assist schools in the painting of the word “SoCon” on the playing field. If a school is unable to paint “SoCon” on its field, it should be painted in another visible location within the stadium (outfield wall, wall inside the stadium, etc.).

Team Sportsmanship Guidelines

The following guidelines have been developed to promote sportsmanship during Conference matches:

- A. First and foremost, a coach must control his or her own team. A coach must establish sportsmanship and demand it of his or her players. A coach must never condone cheating and must overrule his or her own team anytime erroneous calls are observed;

- B. Each coach should meet with any official who works a Conference match and encourage the official to be observant;
- C. The home coach must be willing to address the crowd in cases where crowd behavior becomes abusive or unsportsmanlike. This would include taunting but also cases where spectators are making distracting noises during play;
- D. A visiting coach should be smart and counsel his or her players wisely. They should try to ignore the crowd and under no circumstances should they engage in conversations with spectators. This is a confrontation the visiting team can never win and makes crowd control all the more difficult for the officials and home coach;

Weather Decisions

When weather or field conditions require a decision as to whether a game shall be started, the following procedure shall be used:

- A. When the visiting team is not on site, the administration of the host institution shall determine if the game shall start on the day and time scheduled;
- B. When both teams are on site, after consulting with both coaches, the home game management director shall determine if the game is to start, except for the second game of a doubleheader;
- C. Should bad weather or unfit conditions (excluding lightning) prevail during a game, the home plate umpire shall be the sole judge as to suspension, resumption, or termination of play. The home plate umpire of the first game shall be the sole judge as to whether playing conditions permit the start of the second game of a doubleheader;
- D. In the case of lightning in the area, the home game management director shall have the authority to suspend and resume play and shall not be overruled by the home plate umpire.

Uniforms

For all Conference series, it is recommended that the home team wear light colored uniforms and the visiting team wear uniforms of contrasting color on the first day of competition. The home team may wear a colored shirt and the visiting team a contrasting shirt on the second day of competition. It is required that all Conference schools place a Southern Conference logo on their game uniforms. The recommended placement is on the left or right sleeve of the jersey, facing the side, approximately three inches above the bottom of the sleeve; or on the left chest on sleeveless jerseys.

APPENDIX A:

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE GAME MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES





Southern Conference Game Management Principles

The purpose of having sound game management procedures in place is to insure the competition, safety and enjoyment of a SoCon athletic event for all participants and spectators alike.

All home SoCon contests must have an administrator from the host institution present at the start of the contest. If possible, the administrator should remain throughout the contest, monitoring all game management issues. Should the administrator be called away from the site by other responsibilities, he/she must remain available via phone if circumstances warrant consultation.

The host institution is responsible for providing a proper and appropriate level of security for all SoCon contests. All on-site administrators should have immediate access to a phone in the event of a crowd control or medical emergency requiring additional assistance.

The primary game management administrator must introduce himself/herself to the opposing team's head coach and game officials prior to the start of the contest to let those parties know they are available to assist with any crowd control or game management issues.

The host institution is responsible for giving the visiting team the same fair chance to compete that the host wants when it becomes a visitor. This includes insuring the security of the visiting team bench area and dressing room.

The host institution is ultimately responsible for controlling the behavior of its support groups and spectators. Incidents of physical abuse, repeated verbal abuse, throwing items at opposing teams or onto the playing field or court must not be tolerated. The host institution's security force should eject those committing these violations.

The SoCon's sportsmanship announcement should be read twice per contest - at the beginning of the contest and midway through the contest. Additionally, an announcement should be made informing spectators of the proper procedure to register complaints or concerns they may have regarding the behavior of other spectators. The host institution is responsible for addressing any such reported concerns in an appropriate and timely manner.

The host institution is responsible for providing adequate security for all participants and game officials entering and leaving the area of play. Both team and officials' dressing rooms should be private and secure.

The host institution must not permit organized groups of students from sitting directly behind the visiting team bench to harass, intimidate or otherwise verbally or physically abuse visiting team personnel. Students who are more intent on verbally abusing the opponents rather than cheering for their own team should not be encouraged by SoCon administrations.

Coaches and administrators critical of game management practices at another member institution must have the courtesy and fortitude to contact the administration of the other institution and express their concerns as soon as practical after the contest is concluded. Critical comments made to the conference office should be made only after contact has first been made with the other administration.

APPENDIX B:

CROWD CONTROL

GLOBAL CHECK LIST/TOOL KIT





Crowd Control Global Check List/Tool Kit Alternatives for Institutions to Consider

The following will serve as a check list (or tool kit) for institutions to consider as they plan for crowd control measures. The Committee recognizes there are vast differences in venue capacity, student enrollment and departmental approaches to game management at their respective institution. However, the purpose of this list is to provide a number of ideas that might help prevent postgame celebrations that may end in institutional reputation damage, property damage, injury to fans, and even death to those celebrating, regardless of NCAA division.

Check List/Tool Kit

- 1. Establish clear roles and responsibilities for game management staff at your institution. Must have approval from director of athletics and must be a priority.*
- 2. Conduct preseason meetings with athletics department, university administration (e.g., vice president student services), university law enforcement, and student body representatives on roles, responsibilities and expectations of behavior at athletics events.*
- 3. Establish, adopt and/or review existing state laws governing public event behavior and University Student Code of Conduct, and insure the existing codes are applicable to athletics events. Establish and publicize consequences for violation of Code of Conduct, university policy and procedures, etc., for student and season-ticket holders. Strict adherence to these policies and procedures must be enforced to insure the integrity of the policy.*
- 4. Develop public service announcements and print ads featuring persons in authority (e.g., president/chancellor, director of athletics, head coach, student-athlete) encouraging good sportsmanship and information on post game celebrations. Repetitive statements in game day programs, media guides and public announcements will help reinforce the message of good sportsmanship.*
- 5. Conduct a mock disaster drill, which simulates a post game celebration that does not go as planned. The main purpose of this exercise is to ensure that all entities (e.g., police, medical, game operations) are effectively communicating and that lines of responsibility are clearly defined.*
- 6. Review seating location of all groups in the venue (e.g., students, visiting fans, season-ticket holders) to avoid areas of possible confrontations. Make certain law enforcement and security personnel are strategically located in problem areas, especially as it relates to access to the playing field/court. Keep the same security people in the same key areas to establish contact and relationships with fans.*

7. *Conduct efficient screening techniques at entrances to venue (e.g., search, pat-down, opening of purses) to check for dangerous objects, alcohol, etc., entering the venue. Place a trash receptacle or table adjacent to the entry gate to serve as a last chance for patrons to dispose of prohibited items.*
8. *Encourage security to get to know fans in their section and appeal to their intelligence and willingness to work with the university to support the team.*
9. *Communicate to visiting team your venue policy and procedures, with a special emphasis on policies that might be unusual for visiting patrons (e.g., open container law).*
10. *Create a pocket-size game management guide that clearly states venue policy, Code of Conduct, and expectations for behavior of patrons attending the event.*
11. *Discuss use of video boards or matrix boards to announce and publicize venue policy. Discourage use of videoboard to incite the crowd through replay of controversial calls.*
12. *Discuss use of public address system and/or microphone on the playing field/court, in order for head coach to address fans after the game.*
13. *Discuss marching/pep band coordinating a post-event function on the playing field/court, which would occupy the area with a planned, publicized event.*
14. *Organize an annual meeting with game management staff within a conference, division, etc., in order to discuss common problems and solutions with peer institutions.*
15. *Discuss feasibility of collapsible goal posts and develop plan for lowering of goal posts at the conclusion of the game.*
16. *Make certain person responsible for videotaping the game continues to videotape the activity on the playing field after the teams have left the field. This will serve as an excellent learning instrument in the event an unplanned post game celebration develops.*
17. *Discuss importance of adherence to stadium policy and procedures to local media, especially the student newspaper and student radio station. Institutional public service announcements the week of the game will also be very beneficial.*
18. *Communicate to student-athletes their role in promoting good sportsmanship among the fans --- whether they realize it or not, their actions have an impact on the conduct and behavior of other students and fans at the event.*
19. *Establish a respectful relationship with student groups that support your team. Encourage their buy-in to spirited, but respectful and safe support of school teams (e.g. establishing spirit groups that meet with the coach, etc., but meet the coach's/administration's expectations for conduct).*

APPENDIX C:

2020-2021 NCAA MAJOR RULES

CHANGES FOR SOFTBALL





2020 and 2021 Major Rules Changes for Softball

The following rules changes were approved by the NCAA Softball Rules Committee and the Playing Rules Oversight Panel. They will be incorporated into the rules book for the 2020 and 2021 seasons.

<u>Rule</u>	<u>Rule Change and Rationale</u>
2.16.3	<p>Prohibit attachments (e.g., screening, flags, pennants, etc.) from being added to the foul side of the pole.</p> <p>Rationale: The foul pole may have screening on the fair side of the pole to enhance visibility of a ball leaving the field of play near the foul pole. Attachments to the foul side of the pole present issues for umpires if they are blowing and the ball hits them in flight while leaving the field.</p>
3.10.8	<p>Require visible undergarments contrast with the color of the ball.</p> <p>Rationale: To acknowledge the difficulty in seeing a batted or thrown ball that is coming off a yellow background. This difficulty was recognized with the 2016 rules change that required the bat barrel shell color(s) contrast with the color of the ball and the same consideration should be made for visible undergarment colors.</p>
5.2	<p>Require softball barrel compression testing (BCT) be conducted according to accepted protocols at a minimum prior to the start of each tournament, series, doubleheader, or single midweek game during the regular season. Implementation – January 1, 2021 for Division I and January 1, 2022 for Divisions II and III. Note – This requires institutions to purchase a BCT machine, which costs \$875. This is not an annual expense.</p> <p>Rationale: Softball BCT has proven to be an effective tool in protecting the integrity of the game, maintaining the delicate balance of offense and defense, ensuring a player’s performance is a result of the player’s skill more than of her equipment, regulating the defender’s available reaction time, and addressing the concerns regarding bat tampering. Requiring BCT to be conducted prior to play during the regular season will protect the integrity of competition and ensure bats being used remain compliant with established performance standards. NCAA baseball approved this requirement in 2017 for implementation beginning with the 2020 season for DI and 2021 season for DII and DIII.</p>
5.11 and 13.6.2	<p>Reclassify the use of equipment to make noise from the “equipment misuse” section of the rules book to the “artificial noisemakers” section of the rules book.</p> <p>Rationale: To more appropriately classify the use of equipment to make noise to the “artificial noisemakers” section of the rules book. This includes banging on a bench/bucket with equipment, shoes, hands, banging bats and balls in the dugout, etc.</p>

<p>5.11 EFFECT</p>	<p>The use of artificial noisemakers, musical instruments, air horns and electronic amplifiers by student-athletes and team personnel is prohibited in team areas. EFFECT – When brought to the attention of the umpire by the opposing coach, The umpire shall issue a team warning...</p> <p>Rationale: Eliminate the requirement for the opposing coach to bring the illegal use of artificial noisemakers, musical instruments, air horns and electronic amplifiers to the attention of the umpire. Requiring the opposing coach to bring this rule violation to the attention of the umpire creates a potential hostile interaction between coaches and doesn't allow the umpires to take action/enforce the rule on their own.</p>
<p>6.5.3 EFFECT</p>	<p>The offensive team must keep all personnel, except the base coaches, batter, base-runner(s) and on-deck batter, in the dugout, bullpen or dead-ball area while the ball is live. EFFECT – The umpire shall warn the violator <u>and issue a team warning</u>. If the violator does not immediately comply, the umpire should eject him or her. <u>The next violation of this rule by anyone on the warned team will result in an ejection of the head coach.</u></p> <p>Rationale: To give umpires recourse once a warning has been issued when there are multiple violations of this rule by different personnel. Currently, the umpires would continue to warn the violator(s) without any penalty for repeat offenses.</p>
<p>10.1.1 and 10.2.1</p>	<p>10.1.1 – The pitcher is considered to be in the pitching position when she has her hands apart, <u>her pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate, both feet on the ground within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate, the hips in line with first and third bases,</u> she steps forward, puts both feet on the pitcher's plate, and the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.</p> <p>10.2.1.1 – Both feet must be on the ground in contact with the pitcher's plate. Any part of each foot in contact with the ground or pitcher's plate must be completely within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. <u>The stride foot may be on or behind the pitcher's plate as far back as desired. Once the pitcher initially sets the toe of her stride foot, she may not step back any farther to increase the distance behind the pitcher's plate.</u></p> <p>Rationale: To allow the pitcher to begin with her stride (non-pivot) foot behind the pitcher's plate as far back as desired. It is very difficult for an umpire to see if a pitcher's stride foot is actually in contact with the pitcher's plate, and there is no advantage to establishing the stride foot behind the pitcher's plate as long as the pitcher is not allowed to step farther back during the start of the pitch. This change will provide pitchers with greater balance</p>

	and take into account their variances in sizes and strengths without creating any type of unfair advantage.
10.2.2	<p>While in the pitching position and taking the signal, the pitcher shall pause for a noticeable stop of at least two seconds to must take or simulate taking appear to take a signal. The signal need not come from the catcher. <i>Note: The rule does not preclude the pitcher from taking an earlier signal from someone who indicates the desired pitch and/or location nor the pitcher from referring to an arm band prior to complying with Rule 10.2.2.</i></p> <p>Rationale: To require the pitcher to take a signal while on the pitcher’s plate. Requiring the pitcher to take the signal from the pitcher’s plate has two advantages: 1) It will ensure pitchers pause on the plate while receiving the signal, and 2) It will prevent pitchers from “walking through” the pitch. Quick pitching has become an issue because signals are being taken from behind the pitcher’s plate and the pitcher is stepping on the pitcher’s plate and pitching without pausing.</p>
13.13 EFFECT	<p>EFFECT – If an ejected or suspended student-athlete, coach or other nonplaying personnel violates the conditions of the ejection/suspension and it is discovered during the contest, the game will be forfeited (see Rule 6.20.1.9). <u>If an ejected or suspended student-athlete or other nonplaying personnel violates the conditions of the ejection/suspension and it is discovered once the contest has ended, the suspension (1) for the student-athlete/nonplaying personnel is two games and (2) for the head coach is four games. If an ejected or suspended head coach violates the conditions of the ejection/suspension and it is discovered once the contest has ended, the suspension for the head coach is four games.</u></p> <p>Rationale: To clarify that a forfeit will be the penalty for violations discovered during the contest. Any violation of the conditions of the ejected or suspended personnel rules that is discovered after the contest ends will result in additional game suspensions. Applying additional game suspensions will serve as a deterrent for participating while ejected or suspended.</p>
Experimental Rule	<p>Allow conferences to experiment with video review during conference games (when two conference teams play each other in a conference game), including the conference tournament, in a limited number of situations. The crew chief may initiate a review of designated plays at his/her discretion beginning with the 6th inning, and each head coach has two challenges to initiate a review for the entirety of the game. Conferences electing to experiment must collect specific data and provide that information to the rules committee for review during its June 2020 annual meeting.</p> <p>Rationale: In recent years, enhanced technology in multiple sports has led to the implementation of video review to assist with getting the call right. Softball is a sport that has not delved into video review but is a sport that has</p>

	<p>been a benefactor of increased coverage, fan interest and technological advances. The Southeastern Conference experimented with video review during the 2019 SEC Softball Tournament and provided feedback to the committee. Based on this feedback, the committee updated the components of the experiment, including restricting umpire-initiated reviews until the 6th inning, allowing an additional play to be reviewed, and allowing the review to take place on-site by the crew chief or by an off-field official at a centralized location.</p>
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APPENDIX D:

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE

INSTITUTIONAL CONTACTS



SoCon Institutional Softball Contacts

Athletics Directors

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Senior Woman Administrators

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APPENDIX E:

CONCUSSION GUIDELINES





Concussion Guidelines

A concussion is a brain injury that may be caused by a blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an “impulsive” force transmitted to the head. **Concussions can occur without loss of consciousness or other obvious signs.** A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the previous one (hours, days or weeks) can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in brain swelling, permanent brain damage and even death.

Recognize and Refer: To help recognize a concussion, watch for the following two events among your student-athletes during both games and practices:

1. A forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.

-AND-

2. Any change in the student-athlete’s behavior, thinking or physical functioning (see signs and symptoms).

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Signs Observed By Coaching Staff

Appears dazed or stunned.
Is confused about assignment or position
Forgets plays.
Is unsure of game, score or opponent.
Moves clumsily.
Answers questions slowly.
Loses consciousness (even briefly).
Shows behavior or personality changes.
Can’t recall events before hit or fall.
Can’t recall events after hit or fall.

Symptoms Reported By Student-Athlete

Headache or “pressure” in head.
Nausea or vomiting.
Balance problems or dizziness.
Double or blurry vision.
Sensitivity to light.
Sensitivity to noise.
Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy.
Concentration or memory problems.
Confusion.
Does not “feel right.”

An athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, either at rest or during exertion, should be **removed immediately from practice or competition** and should not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional. Sports have injury timeouts and player substitutions so that student-athletes can get checked.

IF A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED:

1. **Remove the student-athlete from play. Look for the signs and symptoms of concussion if your student-athlete has experienced a blow to the head.** Do not allow the student-athlete to just “shake it off.” Each individual athlete will respond to concussions differently.
2. **Ensure that the student-athlete is evaluated right away by an appropriate health care professional.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Immediately refer the student-athlete to the appropriate athletics medical staff, such as a certified athletic trainer, team physician or health care professional experienced in concussion evaluation and management.

3. **Allow the student-athlete to return to play only with permission from a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion.** Allow athletics medical staff to rely on their clinical skills and protocols in evaluating the athlete to establish the appropriate time to return to play. A return-to-play progression should occur in an individualized, step-wise fashion with gradual increments in physical exertion and risk of contact. Follow your institution's physician supervised concussion management protocol.

4. **Develop a game plan. Student-athletes should not return to play until cleared by the appropriate athletics medical staff.** In fact, as concussion management continues to evolve with new science, the care is becoming more conservative and return-to-play time frames are getting longer. Coaches should have a game plan that accounts for student-athletes to be out for at least the remainder of the day.

For further details please refer to the "NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook Guideline on Concussions" or online at www.NCAA.org/health-safety and www.CDC.gov/Concussion.