



2017 EXPERIMENTAL RULES – FAQs
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New FAQs are Highlighted

CONFERENCES:

- 1. Can I use more than one conference per half inning, without a pitching change, if I still stay under 6 for the game?**

No, you can only use one conference per half inning unless you make a pitching change and that pitcher has not yet pitched in that half inning (only in effect during the regulation game and not in extra innings).

- 2. If a player, currently playing in the field, initiates a conference, which a coach does not join, does that count as the allowable conference for the inning?**

No, that is a player-to-player conference. No changes have been made to a defensive player, the catcher for example, calling time to go talk to the pitcher. *This can be done as long as it is not directly after an out.* The one exception to this would be in the catcher calls time to go talk to the coach in the dugout and then delivers information to the pitcher. This would constitute a conference.

- 3. Would a coach be able to have a conference in the same half inning that a player initiates a player only conference without making a substitution?**

A player-to-player conference is not considered one of the six (6) allowable conferences. A coach could have a charged conference after a player-to-player conference. Reminder: if the coach is going out to make a pitching change and indicates this to the umpire prior to crossing the foul line, this is not a charged conference.

- 4. If a coach has already had a conference and an on-field player initiates a second conference in the same half inning, without a coach joining that conference, is that player ejected?**

No, when an on-field player meets with another on-field player this is not a charged conference.

- 5. If the coach takes an additional conference during an extra inning, will she/he be ejected?**

Yes, a coach only has one conference for each extra inning. If the coach initiates an additional charged conference in that extra inning, he/she would be ejected.

- 6. A batter wants to call a conference with the third base coach. The third base coach tries to stop the conference as she knows she has already used her allotment of conferences. Will the player be ejected?**

Whoever initiates the charged conference that a team is not entitled to is ejected. The umpire will warn this player not to go confer with her coach if the coach has already had an offensive conference in that half inning or has used their six (6) allowed conferences. If the player ignores this warning and initiates a conference with the third base coach, this player will be ejected.

NO HUDDLE DEFENSE:

- 1. Can the infield huddle after an error?**

Yes, the infield can huddle after an error. They cannot huddle after an out.

2. If after an out and after the infield throws the ball around, can the infielder who has the ball bring it to the pitcher, high five, etc. or is that a huddle?

After an out, the infield can throw the ball around and then must throw it directly to the pitcher. The last positional player to have the ball must throw it to the pitcher. She cannot bring it to the pitcher or high-five the pitcher. That would be considered a huddle.

3. After a strikeout, before the next pitch is thrown, if the infield huddles, is that a violation of the rule? For example, the pitcher shakes off a sign so the catcher goes to talk to the pitcher.

After any out, including a strikeout, the defensive team cannot huddle. This would be a violation and a ball would be awarded to the upcoming batter (if the team had previously been warned for huddling after an out). If the catcher or other infielders want to go talk to the pitcher, they must do so after she throws a pitch.

4. Congratulatory huddle after a big out. Your second baseman makes a diving play, can the team go high five her?

If a defensive player makes an outstanding play, a quick congratulatory high five with other players is allowed. The intent of the no huddle defense is not to take away the emotional response that comes from an outstanding play.

5. Huddle to walk a batter. Can you just huddle to award four straight balls to the batter to avoid throwing pitches?

Just as a pitcher cannot throw four illegal pitches to walk a batter (Rule 10.15), a team cannot violate the no huddle defense to avoid throwing pitches to walk a batter.

6. If play is suspended after an out (e.g., for an injury or for a coach to umpire discussion) may a team huddle?

A team may huddle after an out if time is stopped for an injury or a coach to umpire discussion. The huddle must end when the umpire indicates that the game is ready to be resumed.

7. Can a team have a quick celebration after a significant strike out?

Yes, teams can have a quick high five or other celebratory action as long as it is immediate and they're ready to go when the next batter gets to the plate. The intent of the no huddle defense is not to prevent celebratory actions after a spectacular defensive play or strikeout.

8. Can a team still call a timeout after an out as a new batter comes to the plate for the catcher to discuss strategy with the pitcher for the next batter?

Yes, if in the opinion of the plate umpire it is not an obvious tactic to delay the game (Rule 6.10.1.2). The plate umpire still must ensure the pace of play and flow of the game in this situation.

9. After an out with no runners on base the third baseman drops the ball in the pitcher's glove, slaps a very quick low give (or high five) and heads back to her position. The new batter hasn't even left the on deck circle yet. Is this legal?

The purpose and intent of the no huddle defense is not to delay the game after an out. These actions that are quick, don't delay the start of the next batter at bat and don't constitute "meeting on the mound or elsewhere on the field" are allowed. Basically, we want to apply common sense and not the "letter of the law" in the application of any rule.

90 SECONDS BETWEEN INNINGS:

1. Can you throw as many pitches as you want within the 90 seconds?

Yes, the pitcher can throw as many pitches during the 90 seconds between innings. She is still entitled to one throw to first base. At the end of the 90 seconds, the pitcher must be in position to pitch when the lead-off batter enters the batters box.

2. Does the 90 seconds include the completion of throwing warm-up pitches?

The 90-seconds includes: the completion of throwing warm up pitches; one throw from the pitcher to first base; the catcher throwing down to a base; and the defensive team huddling in the circle or anywhere on the field.

3. Would the team be able to converse/high five/huddle within the 90 sec span between pitches?

Any activity that a team wants to do must be completed during the 90 seconds. If it is not completed and the leadoff batter is at the plate and the plate umpire is ready to start play, a ball would be awarded to the leadoff batter

4. Is the lack of or improper enforcement of the 90 second window grounds for protest?

If the umpire(s) improperly enforce the 90 seconds between innings, a coach can protest the misapplication of this rule. However, umpire judgement or discretion may still not be protested nor argued (e.g., what an umpire considers undue delay).

5. If during a televised game the teams are being held from commencing an inning and 90 seconds has expired, can the pitcher continue to throw warm-up pitches until the commercial break is over?

If there is a delay in a televised game and the time between innings exceeds the 90 seconds, the pitcher can continue to throw as long as she is ready when TV indicates they are ready. This assumes that the catcher has thrown down, the team has huddled on the mound, etc. by the end of the 90 seconds.

6. What if a substitution needs to be made for injury and does not occur within the 90 second window?

If an injury occurs before or during the 90 second window between innings, the umpires will exercise discretion to ensure the safety and welfare of the student-athlete. If this injury precipitates a substitution, it will be allowed even if the 90 seconds have expired.

7. What if a coach is arguing a call and infringes on the 90 second window?

The umpire shall issue a warning if a coach, player or any other team personnel is arguing a call after the 90 second window has expired. If this person continues to argue after the warning, he/she will be ejected.

8. In the top of the 1st inning can the home team pitcher throw as many pitches as she wants? Are we timing 90 seconds in this half inning?

After the national anthem and/or the defensive team is in place, the 90 seconds time will start. If the defensive team is ready to play before the end of the 90 seconds, the plate umpire will signal play ball.

9. What if the commercial break is longer than 90 seconds? Will the team still get a warning with 30 seconds left?

Yes, if the TV timeout is 2 minutes, for example, the teams will get a 30 second warning at the minute and 30 second mark. Whatever the length of time is for the commercial break, the teams will get a warning 30 seconds before the expiration of this time. The 30 second warning is always 30 seconds prior to the TV break ending.