



**MINUTES OF THE
NATIONAL FASTPITCH COACHES ASSOCIATION
DIVISION III HEAD COACHES COMMITTEE**

March 16, 2023

The meeting was brought to order at noon ET by NFCA Division III liaison Dave Hines and NFCA Division III Board Rep Leslie Huntington.

Participants were Hines and Huntington (Wisconsin-Eau Claire); NFCA Executive Director Carol Bruggeman; NCAA Assistant Director, Championships and Alliances Caleb Kolby; NCAA Division III Softball Committee Chair Brad Duckworth (Wisconsin-Stevens Point); NCAA Secretary-Rules Editor Vickie Van Kleeck; NCAA Softball National Coordinator of Umpires Steve McCown and Glenda Bates, special guest; Charlie Dobbins (William Peace); Brandon Elliott (Virginia Wesleyan); Monica Harrison (Carnegie Mellon); Brooke Kalman (Gettysburg); Ryan Konitzer (Wisconsin-Stevens Point); Janet Lloyd (Chapman); Heather Ross (Worcester Polytechnic); Whitney Sowers (Millikin).

1. Roll call
2. NCAA rules
 - a. Ms. Van Kleeck reminded coaches to register for a free account on RefQuest to get clarifications and rules updates shared with you via email.
 - b. No contest vs. forfeit
 - i. If a team doesn't show up, it's a no contest.
 - ii. If a team shows up but doesn't take the field, it's a forfeit (and the coach is suspended two games).
 - c. Video in the dugout (addressing sports information social media updates)
 - i. You are NOT allowed to have a manned camera in the dugout.
 - d. **ACTION ITEM: Rule-change proposals are due to the NCAA on March 31.**
 - i. Form is on RefQuest or via <https://forms.ncaa.org/playingRules/new>
 - ii. You should have received an email from the NFCA on March 1 that also contains this link.
 - iii. Ms. Van Kleeck asked that individuals reach out to her for assistance (ncaasbsre@gmail.com) with their rule proposal(s), if needed.
 - iv. Ms. Van Kleeck said one of the proposals (which she supports) will be about implementing one-way electronic communication of signals.
 - v. Ms. Van Kleeck said proposals would not be turned away if submitted after the deadline, but they would not be able to be included on the survey seeking coaches' feedback.

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- vi. Ms. Huntington inquired about the timing of the annual survey, and would it be possible to not do it during the season, though she sees BOTH why it would be useful to do it while rules are front of mind for coaches (in-season) and ALSO how response (traditionally low) might be better if it is not when coaches are in the middle of their busiest time of the year.
 - 1. Ms. Van Kleeck said the NCAA has asked in the past for the best timing for coaches, while also taking into account the print lead time needed to get rules books into coaches and officials' hands in a timely fashion (i.e. September print for November distribution).
 - 2. She said she'd talk again with NCAA staff to see if any improvements to that production timing can be made.
- e. Next approved bat list will be released on April 10.
- f. Ms. Huntington asked whether any early feedback has come in about the experimental use of a double first base (comments aren't due until June).
 - i. Ms. Van Kleeck said some has come in from those playing early dates at the Spring Games in Florida.
 - 1. Ms. Harrison said her team had a double-base issue come up during a game, on a player using the inside of the base while heading for second to try for a double (there was no play at first that would require use of both sides of the bag), which was correctly called and the reasoning behind it also explained well.
 - 2. Ms. Harrison, who was one of the early Spring Games participants, said event organizers told coaches on-site that the double base would be used, and there was no communication ahead of time or in event contract language, and also the double base wasn't available at all of the event's game fields (i.e. double base used at DiamondPlex site, but not at Auburndale location).
 - a. Ms. Van Kleeck reminded all that the way the NCAA set up the usage process is that participating coaches need to mutually agree if they are going to be using the double base for their games.
 - 3. Ms. Harrison said concerns raised by coaches in that early group playing at the Spring Games led to communication by event organizers with upcoming participants that the double base is being utilized in some places games are being played there.
- g. Ms. Huntington made a general statement that it is frustrating to see inconsistency between umpire calls (player out of the box was the example given) in their games and contests seen on television. Obviously the rule is the same across divisions, but the enforcement can vary from umpire to umpire, which makes it hard on all umpires, as well as coaches and players.

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- c. Mr. Elliott suggested HCC members utilize a list for their respective division to reach out to encourage membership from current non-members (including the members-only ability to nominate their school's student-athletes and coaches for award honors) and he said he'd be willing to pay for a fellow coach to become a member, as in his view the HCC reps are supposed to lead the way in the division, to which Mr. Dobbins also said he'd be willing to do that.
 - d. Suggestion (off Zoom) was made to approach conferences for help encouraging schools to support their sport coaches being members of their respective coaching associations, whether that's NFCA, ABCA, NABC or another group.
5. 2024 NFCA Division III Leadoff
- a. Mr. Hines reported that the 24-team field for the NFCA Division III Leadoff Classic on March 1-3, 2024 at the South Commons Complex in Columbus, Ga., is filled, and a wait list has been created for any teams interested in being considered in the unlikely event that a spot in the tournament opens up.
6. Adjournment
- a. The meeting was adjourned at 12:58 p.m. ET.

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