

2014 National Fastpitch Coaches Association Convention
Rules and Officials Committee Meeting
December 3, 2014 | Bally's Las Vegas | Las Vegas, Nevada

NFCA Rules & Officials Committee Liaison, Brian Stanley called the meeting to order at 8:31 am PST

In attendance: Mike White, Oregon (D1 Rep), Edith Gallagher, Mansfield (D2 rep/via cell phone), Brittany Stroop, Eastern University (D3 rep), Thomas Armstrong, College of the Desert (Cal JC/Committee Chair), Travis Wilson, Florida State (Asst. Coach Rep.), Anthony LaRezza, Immaculate Heart Academy (N.J) (High School Rep), John Bennett (Affiliate-Umpire). Also participating, Dee Abrahamson (NCAA Secretary Rules Editor), Vicki VanKleeck (Rules Editor Elect), Jay Miller, Louisville

Introductions: Mr. Stanley introduced himself to the group as the new Director of Media Relations and committee liaison. Mr. Stanley also introduced new committee chair, Thomas Armstrong (College of the Desert) and turned the floor over to him.

Thomas Armstrong (College of the Desert) introduced himself and asked everyone in attendance to do the same. He then turned the floor to Dee Abrahamson to go over the Links Rule.

- A. Links Presentation (Dee Abrahamson)
 - 1. Handed out a worksheet and went over in detail the similarities and differences between the DP/Flex and Links rule. Pros & Cons, Advantages/Disadvantages, Strategies
 - 2. Explained the NCAA committee talked about it at length and are continuing to feedback
 - i. Majority of feedback came from umpires; Would need to redesign lineup cards (wider)
 - ii. Positive – Would be able to warm up pitcher as many time as a coach wanted to (i.e. 1st base/Catcher)
 - 3. The NCAA committee will vote on proposal in June 2015
- B. Group Feedback/Discussion
 - 1. Mr. Armstrong (Cal JC) talked about verbage and term of OP. Cal JC is very supportive because of its simplicity as well as so many coaches and umpires don't understand it.
 - 2. Solves temporary DP problem
 - 3. Mr. Wilson explained what Florida State thought about links when using it in the fall
 - i. It was a huge advantage if you have a hitting pitcher
 - ii. Have a batter not run bases the entire season.
 - iii. Runner that doesn't know softball can run and not bat the entire season.
 - iv. Hurt the integrity of the game.
 - v. You have to manage the game as a coach.
 - vi. Not in favor.

4. John Bennett –
 - i. Stated that umpires are for it because it's easier.
 - ii. However, he realizes that it's mostly because people just don't or want understand the rule.
 - iii. It will be confusing with the lineup card.
 - a. Mr. Miller suggested a standardized lineup card
 5. Ms. Abrahamson (Possible amendment to the rule) - Links needs to complete turn at bat before making change.
 6. Mr. Armstrong – Explained a case study he and some Cal JC coaches conducted and all came to same conclusion
 - i. 50/50 on whether umpire let them do it
 - ii. There is too much confusion between coaches and umpires
 - iii. We have a rule too many people on both sides don't understand
 - iv. Avoid having the game dictated by someone who doesn't know the rule
 - v. Try to find something we think works
 - vi. Asked Dee about experimental rule?
 - a. Ms. Abrahamson explained that you can have a conference adopted experimental rule, however you would have to play non-conference and postseason without it. No program/conference would be interested in that.
 7. Mr. Armstrong asked if you can experiment with it at a lower level (for example Cal JC)
 - i. Mr. Bennett and Ms. Abrahamson replied yes
 - ii. Need to convince the Cal JC to do for a season
 8. Mr. White posed a question about introducing it for a year
 - i. Ms. Abrahamson stated that it can be put it in a rule book and that it can be rescinded after one year if it doesn't work.
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- C. Mr. Bennett presented rules differences, codes and rule consistency. He passed out *The Umpire Handbook of Softball Rules Differences* and provided a handout with a few examples.
 - D. Discussed reducing rule differences by changing verbage to make rules more consistent across the board
 1. Get ASA / High School Federation on board to write a proposal
 2. For a start, have Mr. Bennett identify some of those rules that need just one word changed, so the rule is the same across the board.

E. Other Topics

1. Mr. White – talked about the need for pitchers to have a universal pause while on rubber, not just any pause (for example taking signal from behind rubber and proceed to go into motion). Brief discussion ensued.
2. Mr White brought up the use of the safety base (double base). Ms. Abrahamson shared injury study results. Statistics favored more injuries happened with the base.
3. Brief Discussion on Replant / crow hop / leap
4. Mr. Stanley and Mr. Armstrong suggested a survey be sent out to gauge which rules generate the most discussion and that they would get together after the convention and put one together and distribute to the membership.

Meeting adjourned at 9:47 am