



June 7, 2018

Rule Interpretative Bulletin 18-1

WBSC Pitching Rule – Fast Pitch

With the one-year trial of the WBSC Pitching Rule for competition in U16 Male and U19 Female age groups and above, several questions have come forward regarding the interpretation and application of the rule. Below are some interpretative comments that seek to address some of the common questions.

Pause

The 2 to 5 second pause in the WBSC rule is only applicable to those categories included in the WBSC pitching rule trial. These include U16M / U19F and above categories. All other age groups will continue to be covered by the Softball Canada rule, which demands a 1 to 10 second pause.

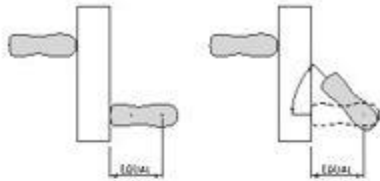
Umpires should strictly enforce a full two second pause. While the one second pause in the Softball Canada rule has been interpreted to simply mean a complete stop, the WBSC rule purposely demands a full pause for a minimum of two seconds. Umpires should also focus on enforcement of the five second maximum. Pitchers cannot wait out the batter, delaying for them to relax before beginning the pitch.

Footwork

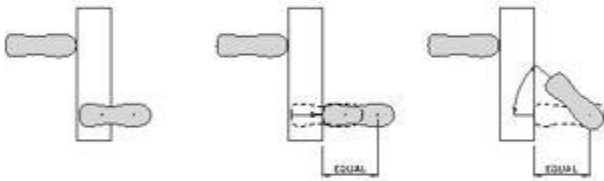
The pitcher may take a signal from the catcher with one or both feet on the pitching plate. After taking (or appearing to take) a signal, they may step back and then bring their hands together or they may carry out both actions simultaneously. The pause does not begin until the joined hands come to a stop in front of or at the side of the body (hands must be visible to batter) and the feet and body are still. Once the pause is established, all movement must be forward with the pitch. Any backward movement after the pause will be a violation.

As with the Softball Canada rule, the pitcher may continue to make adjustments of the ball and their hand within the glove during the pause.

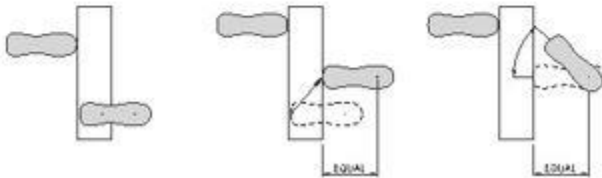
On the step forward, the pitcher may slide their pivot foot sideways or forward on the pitching plate as long as they do not lift the foot (they may clear their cleats slightly if necessary). They may also rotate on the ball/toes of their foot to push off. Loss of contact with the heel of the pivot foot is permissible during the rotation as long as the point of the pivot foot does not move forward (see image below). Any step forward (visible forward movement of the toe of the pivot foot) is a violation.



1. Both feet in contact. Pivot foot legally rotates.



2. Both feet in contact. Pivot legally slides forward and may legally rotate.



3. Both feet in contact. Pivot legally slides forward and may legally rotate.

Pitchers may leap, land and throw as long as the hands have separated and the arm rotation has started prior to the pivot foot landing. The pivot foot may land prior to the release provided there has been no stoppage in the arm rotation and there is a fluid continuous motion.

Case Plays

Play A: After establishing their feet and taking a signal from the catcher, a pitcher brings their hands together, stops and immediately (less than two seconds) begins the motion to pitch.

Ruling: This is violation. Primary jurisdiction for this offense lies with the home plate umpire. If it is a first offense, the umpire may elect to issue a warning. Subsequent infractions shall be enforced.

Play B: A pitcher has both feet on the pitchers plate. After taking a signal from the catcher, the pitcher steps back and then brings their hands together to begin the pause.

Ruling: This is a legal action. The pitcher's movement to step back preceded the pause.

Play C: A pitcher has both feet on the pitcher's plate. After taking a signal from the catcher, the pitcher brings their hands together in front of the body and initiates a pause (hands, feet and body coming to a stop) **prior** to stepping back with the non-pivot foot.

Ruling: This is a violation. Once the hands come together in front or at the side of the body and their feet and body come to rest, this would be considered the start of a pause. The start of any backwards movement of the feet **after** the pause has started should be enforced as an illegal pitch.

Jeff Whipple
National Director of Umpires

Jeff.Whipple@outlook.com
506 461 3991