

Offensive and Defensive Charged Conferences

1. Is a defensive timeout charged when the catcher goes out to the mound after the last pitch thrown between innings?

Updated timing rules require the pitcher to be ready to throw the first pitch of the inning prior to the expiration of 120 seconds between innings. The catcher could visit the pitcher briefly within that time frame without a charged conference as long as the timing rule is not violated or ask the umpire for extra "time" to go visit the mound after the last pitch but be charged one of the team's 6 conferences.

2. Is a defensive timeout charged if the catcher goes out to the mound after an umpire or hitter is hit with a pitch or foul ball?

No, during a time out for an injury to a player or umpire, another player visiting the pitcher is not a charged conference, provided that the visit does not otherwise delay the return to game action. This has typically been a courtesy visit to give the umpire/catcher/batter time to collect themselves.

3. Can the offensive base runners, batter and coaches' conference during a pitching change without being charged a timeout?

Yes, the offense can get together during a pitching change as that is not a charged conference. However, the base runners must be back at their bases prior to the last warm-up pitch so the game can be started without waiting for them to return. If they are slow returning and the game is delayed waiting for them to return to their bases, it would be a charged offensive conference.

4. If the catcher goes out first and then the coach comes out before the defensive conference is over, how many timeouts are charged?

As long as the coach joins a conference in progress, only one conference (to the coach) would be charged if the pitcher is not removed. NOTE: The initial conference (catcher or other defensive player) is over when the home plate umpire deems it to be completed and asks the defensive player to leave the mound for play to resume. Home plate umpires should be clear in summoning the player away from the mound and should look to the defensive dugout to see if the coach is entering the field.

If the pitcher is removed, no conference is charged. However, if the catcher goes to the mound and the umpire indicates to him that it's time to start play, then the coach asks for "time" to also confer with the pitcher, 2 defensive conferences could be charged (or 1 for the catcher's conference if the pitcher is

removed). The practice of sending the catcher out to delay while a relief pitcher warms up quickly before the coach comes out of the dugout risks using additional defensive conferences.

5. What will determine a conference/trip?

The requesting of and granting of time by an umpire. Umpires may confirm with the defensive player that they want a "charged conference" before granting.

6. What is the penalty for going over your allotted defensive trips?

If a player asks for time for an additional conference, it will be denied. If the player ignores the umpire and delays the game anyway, he could be ejected as a last resort. If the coach takes the extra conference, the pitcher is removed.

It will be critically important to keep coaches; infielders and the catcher informed so they know how many conferences have been charged.

7. If a relief pitcher comes in to start an inning, directly from the bullpen, can the catcher go to the mound to get the signals straight, without being charged a timeout?

Yes, we want to encourage the catcher to discuss the signs before the pitcher starts his warm-ups if the catcher was at the mound when the pitcher was changed. A pitching change is not a charged conference and the catcher can visit the pitcher briefly to make sure they are clear about the signs as long as he keeps the game moving.

8. If there is an injury on the field and trainers or coaches come on to the field to assist a player, can the defense go to the mound while the offense or defensive player is being attended to?

Yes, however, if a different player is injured and a coach comes out to visit with the pitcher, it is a charged conference.

If the pitcher himself may be injured, handle that the same way as we always have. Coach can request to check on the pitcher's potential injury and plate umpire should accompany the coach to the mound. If pitcher is OK and no other strategy is discussed, it is NOT a charged conference.

9. In the event of a cross-up can the catcher visit without penalty?

No, a conference is charged for the catcher to go out to talk to the pitcher if conferences remain. However, if all 6 charged conferences have been used and the umpire feels it is important from a safety perspective that he and pitcher make sure they are on the same page giving and receiving signals, the plate umpire can allow the catcher to go out for a brief conference. The umpire will accompany the catcher much like they treat a potential injury to the pitcher. As long as the signals are quickly confirmed, there is no penalty.

10. If all the "Position Player" defensive conferences have been used (3) and the catcher asks to visit because "he was crossed up", will one of the "coach" trips be charged if they have trips remaining? This could exhaust a last remaining trip and put the team in jeopardy of having to change a pitcher on the next coach visit?

There are not "position player" conferences and "coach's" conferences. There are 6 defensive charged conferences. A coach can be involved in up to 3 of those, but if the players use 5 of them, the coach would have one more that he could be involved with. The umpire could grant the "I got crossed up" reason for an additional quick conversation with his supervision after those 6 have been used at his discretion.

11. During a charged trip to the defense, an offensive coach (first, third, or bench) leaves their position to confer with the batter, and the batter does not leave their position, is this a charged offensive conference?

Incidental conversation that is brief and does not delay the game is not a charged conference. But if someone leaves their position to confer with a member of their team, it is. The offense does not get a free conference during a defensive charged conference under the new rule. If they were 20 feet away from each other, either the base coach was a long way from his position or the batter also left his position to meet the base coach part way, charge a conference, but remember the offense has 3 to use. If the coach takes a few steps and has an encouraging statement for the batter, there is no charged conference.

Intentional Base of Balls

12. With the new rule for intentional base on balls coming from the head coach, will there be wording that this constitutes a play/attempted play or pitch for the purpose of nullifying the defensive teams right to appeal? Runner misses first on a double. Batter enters box and head coach tells the PU to put him on. No pitch was thrown and no play/attempted play took place. By rule (8-6-b, pg 82), there was no pitch, can there still be an appeal??

After a potential missed base, it is the defensive team's responsibility to appeal in a timely manner. If the next batter steps into the box and the defensive head coach indicates to the plate umpire that he wishes to intentionally walk that next batter, he has lost his option to appeal. The indication of an intentional base on balls takes the place of throwing 4 pitches to the batter; therefore, the indication to the umpire is the same as a pitch or play for purposes of this rule.

13. If in the umpire's judgment the batter intentionally allows himself to be hit by the pitch outside of the box, but does not make a move to get hit intentionally, he will remain in the box, but a ball will be awarded?

No, if the batter intentionally allows himself to be hit outside of the batter's box, then he will remain in the box and a strike will be awarded

14. If in the umpire's judgment the batter "freezes" in the box, is hit by the pitch he will be awarded first base?

Yes

15. Since this ruling is NOT allowed to be argued, will a warning be issued to a person wanting to discuss or argue this hit by pitch rule?

Yes, the umpire should hold up his hand and warn the coach not to proceed and argue, as this is ball & strikes. In games with instant replay, the coach can inform the umpire he would like to challenge this HBP, if he has a challenge available in innings 1-7, Crew Chief can go to review 8th inning & beyond

16. I see a backup breaking ball posing a tremendous issue. Hitter is diving over the plate anticipating spin and the ball rides back into him...

A strike is charged when in the umpire's judgment a batter intentionally moves to get hit by a pitch or intentionally allows himself to be hit by a pitch that is not within the batter's box. If there was no intent, the batter should be awarded first base unless the pitch was in the strike zone.

Faking throws to 3rd Base

17. With runners on first and third, if a pitcher fakes a throw to third and the runner takes off from first, is he allowed to pivot and throw, since his intention was to only fake a throw to third? Basically, if there is a runner on first then a pitcher cannot feint a throw to third, period?

It is a balk if with runners on first and third, the pitcher steps toward third and does not throw, merely to bluff the runner back to third; then seeing the runner on first start for second, turn and step toward and throw to first base.

18. Can they fake to 3rd with runners on 2nd and 3rd?

No, but...It is legal to feint a throw to second base.

19. What is the rule for the pick attempt at 3B? Where does the 3rd baseman need to be in relation to the bag? Does he just need to be in line with 3B or does he need to be a certain distance away from the bag? Does he need to actually try and tag the 3B runner?

The rule doesn't specify a certain distance, but the fielder must make a legitimate attempt to retire the runner at third or it would be a balk. A feint to third is still allowed if the pitcher steps off the rubber first. Please refer to rule 9-3-c....Note: If the pitcher throws to the first or third baseman who is playing off the base, a balk shall not be called if the fielder moves toward the occupied base in an attempt to retire the runner.

20. Can you fake to third and throw to second base if the base is occupied?

You can no longer fake a throw to third base from a pitching position at any time. Third base is now treated the same as first base. The rule change eliminates the "third to first" move, but the throw to any base after a feint to third base is irrelevant as the feint to third is what created the balk. This rule change is consistent with professional baseball also.