

BULLETIN #14
MULTIPLE CONSECUTIVE ILLEGAL RE-ENTRIES
RULE INTERPRETATION
FP RULE 3.2.8 EFFECT
SP RULE 3.2.6 EFFECT

Over the past six months the Regional Umpire Coordinators have been reviewing the rules in preparation for the 2022 – 2025 Rules Commission Meeting. We have found a flaw in the Illegal Re-entry rules. While the situation described below has never happened at a World Cup, it could and would be embarrassing for the sport. An example of the problem is:

“The Number One batter is due to bat. Either the Flex or a substitute comes off the bench and bats in the Number One position and gets a hit and is on base. The change was never reported to the umpire. We now have an Illegal (unreported) substitution for Batter Number One who is deemed to have left the game and an Illegal re-entry if it is the Flex in situations where the Number One batter is not the DP. No appeal is made. The original Number One batter now comes to bat and now is hitting in the Number Two spot. This is an Illegal Re-entry as this batter is in a different batting position in the line. This continues for a number of batters causing a domino effect. Under the current rules, the non-offending team can wait until after a number of Illegal Re-entries, while they are still in the game, before appealing. The non-offending team decides to appeal each consecutive Illegal Re-entry. We soon may have no players or coaches left to continue the game on offense, by rule. This could also happen on defense. This was not the intent of the Illegal Re-entry rule.”

In order to avoid this happening at a World Cup or the Olympics, we require either a rule clarification, a new tournament regulation or a rule change. Rules effected are Fast Pitch 3.2.8, 3.3 and Effects 3.2.8; Slow Pitch 3.2.6 and Effects 3.2.6.

We propose the following Interpretation for 2021 and Rule change for 2022 under Effects, Rule 3.2.8 Effect h.

In 2021 for the Olympics and World Championships this interpretation would be adopted as a Tournament Regulation.

If an Illegal Re-entry is not appealed and if this results in both the Illegal Re-entry and the original player remaining in the game, causing a number of consecutive players in the batting order to become Illegal Re-entries:

The non-offending team is only permitted to appeal the most recent Illegal Re-entry. This player and the coach/manager named on the line-up shall be ejected. The Effects for an illegal substitution also apply. A legal substitute must be entered into the game for the ejected player. All other Illegal Re-entries are not the direct subject of the appeal are returned to their original position in the batting order without being considered a re-entry and all plays stand, except as noted.

NOTE: Should the FLEX have entered on offense for a player other than the DP and is one of a multiple of Illegal Re-entries and is on base at the time of the appeal, even though the FLEX is not the direct subject of the appeal, the FLEX shall be removed from the base and returned to the tenth position on the line-up card. This is not an additional out.