



# SOFTBALL OFFICIALS ORGANIZATION, INC.

## CHARGED DEFENSIVE CONFERENCES

"There shall be only three charged conferences between the manager or other team representative from the dugout with any defensive player(s) in a regulation game. The defense shall not be charged with a conference if the pitcher is removed from the pitching position, *provided* the defense makes the pitching change known to the umpire(s) prior to conducting an *actual* conference."

**Play 1:** Team A has been charged with one defensive conference. In the third inning, the manager of Team A goes to the circle to but fails to notify the umpire of a pitching change prior to doing so. After just a few seconds, the pitcher hands the ball to her manager and a new pitcher enters the circle.

**Ruling 1:** Because the delay was only so long as to permit the manager to inform the pitcher that she was being removed and to take the ball from her and make a pitching change, a conference shall not be charged. Here, there was no delay that would meet the rationale for limiting conferences. The umpires must consider the timing of the notification in conjunction with the *actual* delay.

**Play 2:** Team A has been charged with one defensive conference. In the third inning, the manager of Team A goes to the circle to speak with his pitcher. After conferring with his infielders long enough for the umpire to record the conference, brush off home plate and walk out to the circle, the pitcher hands the ball to her manager and a new pitcher enters the circle.

**Ruling 2:** Here, there was a substantial delay. Limiting the number of charged conferences is intended to keep the game moving without an excess of delays. The umpires shall charge Team A with a charged conference.

**Play 3:** Team A has been charged with three conferences. In the fifth inning, the manager of Team A goes to the circle to speak with his pitcher.

**Ruling 3:** Team A has exhausted its three charged conferences. The pitcher must be removed from the pitching position. The umpires shall not allow an actual conference to take place. By rule, the pitcher must be removed if there is a fourth charged conference. Preventing a charged conference also permits that pitcher to return to pitch later in the same game. Using proper mechanics and game management prevents a "double delay" (i.e., one for the conference and one for warm-ups) to take place and also keeps the pitcher eligible to return to pitch.

**Note 1:** Use common sense, good judgment and thoughtful reasoning for every game situation.

**Note 2:** Any clear delay that allows for the discussion of strategy or additional time for a relief pitcher to warm-up should result in a charged conference, provided all other criteria for a charged conference are met, regardless of whether a pitching change is made.

**Note 3:** Umpires shall consider the length of the actual delay and timing of the notification rather than the location of the coach at the time the coach notifies the umpire of the change of pitchers.

**Note 4:** During a new pitcher's warm-ups, the coaches (on both offense and defense) are permitted to confer with their team members without being charged with a charged conference, provided they are ready to play without undue delay once the warm-ups are completed.

NYSSO INTERPRETATION Brad White – Assistant Rules Interpreter/VP -03/22/15

**Web site:** <https://sites.google.com/site/nyssoump/>