



MLBA Youth Umpire Responsibilities

1. I have read and understand the following:
 - ✓ Current local rule books (as applicable) available at lebobaseball.org in the Coaches Corner section,
 - ✓ Umpire Study Guide- Baseball Umpiring Basics document,
 - ✓ “Ten Commandments of Umpiring” and “Umpire Credo” in Umpire Study Guide,
 - ✓ Umpire Study Guide- Fair or Foul,
 - ✓ 2-Man Umpire Mechanics Overview.
2. I will read/review information sent to me and respond to requests by the Umpire Director in a timely manner.
3. I will arrive at my assigned field at least 10 minutes prior to the game’s schedule start time.
4. Before each game I will conduct a pre-game meeting and introduce myself to each head coach.
5. I will conduct myself in a professional manner at all times and always dress appropriately.
6. I will report to the Umpire Director any conflict or incident involving a coach, parent, player or fan that, as judged by me, is inappropriate or is disrespectful of the MLBA or the game of baseball.
7. I will not wait until the last minute to turn back / decline games via Assignr.com site and if necessary will find a substitute to work a game if I have to miss and it is too late to turn back an assignment.
8. I understand that missing an assignment is unacceptable and can be cause for losing the privilege of umpiring.
9. I will update the Assignr.com website after each assignment with a game report.
10. I will respect the umpire equipment and keep it in good order by returning it to the equipment bag at the end of each game.

NOTE: MLBA Local Division Rules will always take precedence over any conflicted rule below.

Objectives of the Game

Baseball/Softball is a game between two teams of 9-10 players, played on a field.

The objective of each team is to win by scoring more runs than the opponent, but having fun and learning are stressed.

A RUN (or SCORE) is made by an offensive player who advances from batter to runner and touches first, second, third and home bases in that order. The order of the bases is in a counter-clockwise direction around the square from home to first, etc.

A BATTER is an offensive player who takes his/her position in the batter's box and attempts to hit a ball thrown by the pitcher.

A PITCHER is the player designated to deliver the pitch to the batter. The pitcher pitches the ball to the batter and the batter attempts to hit the pitch and become a runner.

The DEFENSE attempts to catch the ball after it is hit and put the batter and/or runners out.

Baseball Umpiring Basics



A PITCH is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher.

The CATCHER is the fielder who takes his/her position in back of the home base and catches the pitcher's pitch when the batter does not hit the pitch.

A RUNNER is an offensive player who is advancing toward, or touching, or returning to any base.

The winner of the game shall be that team which shall have scored, in accordance with these rules, the greater number of runs at the conclusion of a regulation game.

- A **Half INNING** is the portion of a game within which one team is on offense and the other team is on defense in which there are **three** OUTS for the offensive team.
- A **Full INNING** is two Half Innings where each team has a turn on offense and defense (six OUTS total). The Visiting team bats first (top of the inning) and the Home team bats second (bottom of the inning).
 - An OUT is one of the three required retirements of an offensive team during its turn at bat.

When three offensive players are legally put out (*or MLBA run limits are reached*), that team takes the field and the opposing team becomes the offensive team.

How a Team Scores

One run shall be scored each time a runner legally advances to and touches first, second, third and home base before three Batters/Runners are put out to end the inning.

EXCEPTION: A run is not scored if the runner advances to home base during a play in which the third out is made (1) by the batter-runner before he/she touches first base; (2) by any runner being forced out; or (3) by a preceding runner who is declared out because he/she failed to touch one of the bases.

How the Game Is Played

The players of the home team shall take their defensive positions, the first batter of the visiting team shall take his/her position in the batter's box, the umpire shall call "Play" and the game shall start.

When the ball is put in play at the start of, or during a game, all fielders other than the catcher shall be on fair territory. Failure to do so results in a fielder's balk and all base runners shall be awarded one base (rarely called).

The **batting order** shall be followed throughout the game unless a player has to leave the game – *in MLBA every player bats and there are no substitutions or designated hitters. There is no penalty for a batter being skipped if they can no longer play (left the park or injured).*

- Each player of the offensive team shall bat in the order their name appears in the batting order.
- The first batter in each inning after the first inning shall be the player whose name follows that of the last player who legally completed his/her turn at bat in the preceding inning.

A batter has legally completed his/her turn at bat when he/she is **put out** or becomes a runner.

The Batter

A batter may be **put out** in any of the following ways:

1. Batter's fair or foul FLY BALL is legally caught by a fielder (catch);
 - A FLY BALL is a batted ball that goes high in the air in-flight straight from the bat without first touching the ground.
 - A CATCH is the act of a fielder in getting secure possession in his/her hand or glove of a ball in flight and firmly holding it; providing he/she does not use his/her cap, protector, pocket or any other part of his/her uniform in getting possession.



2. After batter hits a fair ball, he/she or first base is tagged before he/she touches first base;
 - A TAG is the action of a fielder in touching a base with his/her body while holding the ball securely and firmly in his/her hand or glove; or touching a runner with the ball, or with his/her hand or glove holding the ball, while holding the ball securely and firmly in his/her hand or glove.
3. A third strike is legally caught by the catcher;
 - A STRIKE is a legal pitch when so called by the umpire, which:
 - a. Is struck at by the batter and is missed (this includes a FOUL TIP);
 - b. Is not struck at, but any part of the ball passes through any part of the STRIKE ZONE;
 - The STRIKE ZONE is that area over home plate the upper limit of which is a horizontal line at the midpoint between the top of the shoulders and the top of the uniform pants (*arm pits is a good upper limit for MLBA*), and the lower level is a line at the knees. The Strike Zone shall be determined from the batter's stance as the batter is prepared to swing at a pitched ball.
 - A FOUL TIP is defined as "a batted ball that goes directly from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught. It is not a FOUL TIP unless caught. Any FOUL TIP is a strike, and the ball is in play – consider it as a swing and a miss."

The batter becomes a runner and is entitled to first base without liability to be put out when:

1. Four "balls" have been called by the umpire;
 - A BALL is a pitch which does not enter the strike zone in flight and is not struck at by the batter.
 - A BASE ON BALLS (often called a Walk) is an award of first base granted to a batter who, during his/her turn at bat, receives four pitches outside the strike zone.
2. The Batter is touched by a pitched ball (also called "Hit by Pitch" or "Hit Batsman") that:
 - a. Is outside of the strike zone,
 - b. *and* he/she attempts to avoid it (or had no opportunity to avoid it),
 - c. *and* he/she did not swing at the pitch.
 - Any time the batter is touched by a pitched ball, the umpire shall declare the play DEAD.
 - A hit by pitch is also called on a pitch that has touched the ground. Such a bouncing pitch is like any other, and if a batter is hit by such a pitch, he/she will be awarded first base if b. and c. above are true.

The batter becomes a runner and is liable to be put out when:

1. He/she hits a FAIR BALL;
 - A FAIR BALL is a batted ball that settles on fair ground between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that is on or over fair territory when bounding to the outfield past first or third base, or that touches first, second or third base, or that first falls on fair territory on or beyond first base or third base, or that, while on or over fair territory touches the person of an umpire or player, or that, while over fair territory, passes out of the playing field in flight.



- A fair fly shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time he/she touches the ball.
- If a fly ball lands in the infield between home and first base, or home and third base, and then bounces to foul territory without touching a player or umpire and before passing first or third base, it is a foul ball; or if the ball settles on foul territory or is touched by a player on foul territory, it is a foul ball. If a fly ball lands on or beyond first or third base and then bounces to foul territory, it is a fair hit.
- FAIR TERRITORY is that part of the playing field within, and including the first base and third base lines, from the point on home base to the bottom of the playing field fence and perpendicularly upwards. All foul lines are in fair territory.

The Runner

A runner acquires the right to an unoccupied base when he/she touches it before he/she is put out. He/she is then entitled to it until he/she is put out, or forced to vacate it for another runner legally entitled to that base.

In advancing, a runner shall touch first, second, third and home base in order. If forced to return, he/she shall retouch all bases in reverse order, unless the ball is dead. In such cases, the runner may go directly to his/her original base.

Two runners may not occupy a base, but if, while the ball is alive, two runners are touching a base, the following runner shall be out when tagged. The preceding runner is entitled to the base.

Each runner including the batter-runner may, without liability to be put out, advance to home base, scoring a run, if a fair ball goes out of the playing field in flight and he/she touched all bases legally - This is called a HOMERUN.

Any runner is out when:

1. He/she is tagged, when the ball is ALIVE, while off his/her base.
EXCEPTION: A batter-runner cannot be tagged out after overrunning or over-sliding first base if he/she returns immediately to the base (it does not matter which direction the batter-runner turns!);
 - A TAG is the action of a fielder in touching a base with his/her body while holding the ball securely and firmly in his/her hand or glove; or touching a runner with the ball, or with his/her hand or glove holding the ball, while holding the ball securely and firmly in his/her hand or glove.
2. He/she fails to retouch his/her base after a fair or foul fly ball is legally caught before he/she, or his/her base, is tagged by a fielder. He/she shall not be called out for failure to retouch his/her base after the first following pitch, or any play or attempted play. This is an appeal play;
3. He/she fails to reach the next base before a fielder tags him/her or the base, after he/she has been forced to advance by reason of the batter becoming a runner. However, if a following runner is put out on a force play, the force is removed and the runner must be tagged to be put out. The force is removed as soon as the runner touches the base to which he/she is forced to advance, and if he/she over-slides or overruns the base, the runner must be tagged to be put out. However, if the forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason towards the base he/she had last occupied, the force play is reinstated, and he/she can again be put out if the defense tags the base to which he/she is forced;

EXAMPLE of when a runner is forced to run when the batter hits a fair ball he/she must run to first base. If a runner is on first base, that runner is forced to run to second. If a runner is on second and no runner is on first, the runner at second is NOT forced to run when the batter hits a fair ball, because first base is vacant.

Baseball Umpiring Basics



4. He/she is touched by a fair ball in fair territory before the ball has touched or passed an infielder. The ball is dead and no runner may score, nor runners advance, except runners forced to advance.
5. He/she passes a preceding runner before such runner is out;
6. He/she fails to return at once to first base after overrunning or over-sliding that base. If he/she attempts to run to second he/she is out when tagged. If, after overrunning or over-sliding first base he/she starts toward the dugout, or toward his/her position, and fails to return to first base at once, he/she is out when he/she or the base is tagged;
7. In running or sliding for home base the runner fails to touch home base and makes no attempt to return and touch home base and leaves the field of play (for example, enters the dugout), and a fielder with the ball in his/her glove/hand touches home base.

NOTE: The runner is at risk of being put out if he/she overruns or over-slides second or third base.

LEGAL BASEBALL PITCHING DELIVERY

There are two legal pitching positions, the Windup Position and the Set Position, and either position may be used at any time.

1. The Windup Position.
 - The pitcher shall stand facing the batter, his/her entire pivot foot on, or in front of and touching and not off the end of the pitcher's plate, and the other foot free. From this position any natural movement associated with his/her delivery of the ball to the batter commits him/her to the pitch without interruption or alteration. He/she shall not raise either foot from the ground, except that in his/her actual delivery of the ball to the batter, he/she may take one step backward, and one step forward with his/her free foot.
2. The Set Position.
 - ✓ Set Position shall be indicated by the pitcher when he/she stands facing the batter with his/her entire pivot foot on, or in front of, and in contact with, and not off the end of the pitcher's plate, and his/her other foot in front of the pitcher's plate, holding the ball in both hands in front of his/her body and coming to a complete stop. From such Set Position he/she may deliver the ball to the batter, throw to a base or step backward off the pitcher's plate with his/her pivot foot. Before assuming Set Position, the pitcher may elect to make any natural preliminary motion such as that known as "the stretch." But if he/she so elects, he/she shall come to Set Position before delivering the ball to the batter. After assuming Set Position, any natural motion associated with his/her delivery of the ball to the batter commits him/her to the pitch without alteration or interruption.

Basic Glossary:

Term	Description
Balk	An illegal motion by the pitcher with one or more runners on base, entitling all runners to advance one base. A balk can be one of a number of movements related to the pitching motion but the intention is to catch the runners off balance.
Ball	A pitch which does not enter the strike zone and is not struck at by the batter.
Base	The four points of the baseball diamond (first through third bases and home plate) that must be touched by a runner in order to score a run.

Baseball Umpiring Basics



Batter	The offensive player who is currently positioned in the batter's box.
Batter's Box	Either of the areas next to home plate where the batter stands during his/her turn at bat. Note that the batter's box is different sizes in baseball and softball.
Bunt	A legally batted ball not swung at but intentionally met with the bat and tapped within the infield.
Catch	The act of a fielder in getting secure possession in his/her hand or glove of a ball in flight and firmly holding it.
Catcher	The defensive player whose position is directly behind home plate.
Dead Ball	<p>Ball considered out of play because of a legally created temporary suspension of play. After the ball is dead, play shall be resumed when the pitcher takes his/her place on the pitcher's plate with the ball in his/her possession and the plate umpire calls "Play."</p> <p>While the ball is dead no player may be put out, no bases may be run and no runs may be scored, except that runners may advance one or more bases as the result of acts which occurred while the ball was alive (such as, but not limited to a balk, an overthrow, interference, or a home run or other fair ball hit out of the playing field).</p> <p>The ball is dead when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ A batter is touched by a pitch or a batted ball (hit by pitch)✓ The plate umpire hinders a catcher's throw attempt and the throw does not directly retire a runner✓ A ball is illegally batted, such as when a batter hits the ball while outside of the batter's box✓ A foul ball is not caught✓ A fair ball touches a runner or an umpire in fair territory before it touches an infielder (including the pitcher)✓ A fair ball touches a runner or an umpire <u>before</u> it has passed an infielder other than the pitcher✓ A live ball lodges in the umpire's or catcher's equipment or in a fence or in another object on the field✓ Any legal pitch touches a runner trying to score✓ A live ball passes out of the playing field (unless it hits or crosses over a base on the ground)✓ A runner or spectator commits interference ✓ An umpire calls time. <p>In general, the ball does not automatically become dead after playing action ends.</p>

Term	Description
Defense	The team currently in the field.
Designated Hitter	A player who may be designated to bat instead of the pitcher.

Baseball Umpiring Basics



Double	A play in which the batter makes it safely to second base without stopping.
Double Play	A defensive play in which two offensive players are put out as a result of one continuous action.
Dugout	The seating area for team members not currently on the playing field.
Fair Ball	A legally batted ball that settles on or over fair territory.
Fair Territory	That part of the playing field within and including the first base and third base lines, from home plate to the playing field fence and perpendicularly upwards.
Fielder	One of the nine defensive players, including pitcher, catcher, first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, left fielder, center fielder and right fielder.
Fielder's Choice	The act of a fielder who handles a fair grounder and, instead of throwing to first base to put out the batter runner, throws to another base in an attempt to put out a preceding runner.
Fly Ball	A ball which goes high in the air when batted.
Force Play	A play in which a runner loses his/her right to occupy a base when the current batter becomes a runner.
Foul Ball	A batted ball that lands on foul territory between home plate and first base or third base, bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory, first touches foul territory beyond first or third base, or touches a player, umpire or any object not part of the playing field while over foul territory.
Foul Territory	That part of the playing field outside the first and third base lines extended to the outfield fence and perpendicularly upwards.
Foul Tip	A batted ball that goes sharp directly from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught. If the ball is not caught, it is not a FOUL TIP. Any FOUL TIP that is caught is a strike and the ball is in play – consider it as a swing and a miss.
Ground Ball	A batted ball which rolls along or bounces close to the ground.
Ground Rule Double	When a batted ball bounces in the field of play then leaves the field of play (fair or foul), the hit is scored typically scored as a ground rule double, the batter advances to second base and all runners advance two bases from their position at the time of the pitch. Exception – if a batted ball bounces off a fielder and over the fence in fair territory, the hit is scored as a Home Run.
Home Plate	The base over which an offensive player bats, and to which he/she must return after touching all three bases in order to score a run.
Home Run	A play in which the batter makes it safely around all bases and back to home plate without stopping.

Baseball Umpiring Basics



Home Team	The team on whose field the game is played. If the game is played on neutral grounds, the home team shall be designated by mutual agreement.
Infield	The diamond-shaped portion of the playing field bordered by the four bases.
Infielder	A fielder who occupies a position in the infield.

Term	Description
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Infield Fly	A fair fly ball which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, which first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied before the second out.
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Infield Fly Rule	On the infield fly rule the umpire is to rule whether the ball could ordinarily have been handled by an infielder not by some arbitrary limitation such as the grass, or the base lines. The umpire's judgment must govern, and the decision should be made immediately. When an infield fly rule is called, runners may advance at their own risk. If on an infield fly rule, the infielder intentionally drops a fair ball, the ball remains in play.
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In Flight	Describes a batted, thrown, or pitched ball which has not yet touched the ground or some object other than a fielder.
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Inning	That portion of the game within which the teams alternate on offense and defense and in which there are three outs for each team. Each team's turn at bat is a half-inning.
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Interference	See detailed description after this glossary.
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Line Drive	A ball which is batted directly to a fielder without touching the ground.
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Obstruction	See detailed description after this glossary.
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Offense	The team currently at bat.
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Out	A declaration by the umpire that a player who is trying for a base is not entitled to that base.
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Outfield	The portion of the playing field that extends beyond the infield and is bordered by the first and third baselines.
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Outfielder	A fielder who occupies a position in the outfield, which is the area of the playing field most distant from home base.
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Pitch	The ball delivered by the pitcher to the batter.
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Pitcher	The fielder designated to pitch the ball to the batter.
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Quick Pitch	An illegal pitch, made with obvious intent to catch the batter off balance.
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Run	The score made by an offensive player who has safely touched all bases and home plate.
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Baseball Umpiring Basics



Runner	An offensive player who is advancing toward, touching or returning to any base.
Safe	A declaration by the umpire that a runner who is trying for a base has not been tagged or forced out, and is therefore entitled to that base.
Single	A play in which the batter puts the ball in play and safely makes it to first base, not by way of an Error, Fielder's Choice.
Strike	A legal pitch when so called by the umpire, which: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Is struck at by the batter and missed;✓ Is not struck at, if the ball passes through the strike zone;✓ Is fouled by the batter when he/she has less than two strikes;✓ Is bunted foul;✓ Touches the batter as he/she strikes at it;✓ Touches the batter in flight in the strike zone; or✓ After being batted, travels directly from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught by the catcher (FOUL TIP).

Term	Description
Strike Zone	An area directly over home plate, from the bottom of the batter's kneecaps to the midpoint between the top of the batter's shoulders and the top of the batter's uniform pants (<i>in MLBA use the armpits</i>). The right and left boundaries of the strike zone correspond to the edges of home plate. A pitched ball that barely "touches" the outer boundary of the zone is as much a strike as a pitch that is thrown right down the center. The black around the plate is NOT part of home plate!
Tag	The action of a fielder in touching a base with his/her body while holding the ball, or touching a runner with the ball, or with his/her hand or glove while holding the ball.
Throw	The act of propelling the ball toward a given objective, usually a teammate. A pitch is not a throw.
Time or Timeout	Only and umpire can call "Time" and will typically do so after being asked to do so by a participant (coach or player). An umpire in chief (plate umpire) will also call "time" when: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Weather, darkness or similar conditions make play impossible or dangerous✓ Light failure makes it difficult or impossible for the umpires to follow the play✓ An accident incapacitates a player or an umpire✓ The umpire wishes to examine the ball, to consult with either manager, or for any similar cause.✓ An umpire orders a player or any other person removed from the playing field.✓ A balk or obstruction is committed and immediate ensuing play ends✓ The catcher interferes with the batter before the time of pitch
Triple	A play in which the batter makes it safely to third base without stopping.
Triple Play	A defensive play in which three offensive players are put out as a result of one action.



Umpire	The official who judges the legality of individual plays and who otherwise enforces the rules of the game.
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INTERFERENCE

Interference is an infraction where a person, other than a defensive player on the field, illegally changes the course of play from what is expected. Interference might be committed by players on the offense, players not currently in the game, umpires, or spectators; each type of interference is covered differently by the rules.

Offensive Interference

The most common incidence of interference is when a member of the offensive team physically hinders the defensive team, decreasing their chances to make an out or increasing the chance that a base runner will advance. Whenever this offensive interference occurs, the ball becomes dead. If the interference was committed by a batter or a base runner, that player is called out and all other runners must return to the bases they occupied at the time of the interference. If interference is committed by a runner with the obvious intent of preventing a double play, the batter-runner will be called out in addition to the runner who committed the interference. If interference is committed by the batter-runner before he/she reaches first base with the possible intent of preventing a double play, the runner closest to scoring is called out in addition to the batter-runner. If interference is committed by a retired runner or by some other member of the offensive team, the runner who is most likely to have been put out will be called out.

Under our rules, if interference is committed by a runner with the effect of preventing a likely double play, regardless of intent, the batter-runner will be called out in addition to the runner who committed the interference.

Baseball Umpiring Basics



All runners are required to attempt to avoid collisions; if a runner fails to do so, he/she may be guilty of malicious contact, which is one kind of offensive interference. Malicious contact carries the additional penalty of ejection from the game at the judgment of the umpire.

In addition to the subjective definition of offensive interference, it is also interference by specific rule when:

- ✓ The bat hits the ball a second time in fair territory, such as while the bat is being dropped;
- ✓ A batter or runner intentionally deflects the course of a batted ball in any manner;
- ✓ A member of the offensive team stands near a base to impersonate a base runner or to otherwise confuse or hinder the defense;
- ✓ A coach physically assists a runner in returning to or leaving first or third base;
- ✓ A batter is struck by a ball thrown from the home plate area while running to first base with a foot entirely outside the three-foot running lane, before the batter reaches first base;
- ✓ A runner makes contact with a batted ball that did not go through or by a fielder, unless no infielder had a chance to immediately field the ball (in this instance, the runner is out and the batter is credited with a hit);
- ✓ A runner makes contact with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, except the batter with the catcher in the immediate vicinity of home plate immediately after the ball was batted; or
- ✓ A member of the offensive team intentionally touches a thrown ball, or intentionally hinders a fielder attempting to make a throw.
- ✓ The batter physically hinders the catcher's opportunity to throw out a base runner while standing outside of the batter's box.

There are some exceptions to the penalty for offensive interference.

If there are fewer than two outs and a runner is trying to score, and the batter interferes with the tag attempt at home plate, then the runner is out for the batter's interference, while the batter is not out. If there are two outs in this situation, the normal interference penalty applies: the batter is out and the run does not score.

Verbal Interference

At some levels of play, verbal as well as physical hindrance can be called for interference. For example, if a runner or other member of the offense calls out "foul" on a fair ball or "mine" on a fly ball, he/she may cause the defense to react differently than they otherwise would have, resulting in an interference call.

Umpire Interference

Base Umpire: It is umpire's interference when an umpire is struck by a fair batted ball before it touches or passes near an infielder other than the pitcher. This can occur either because an umpire is inside the diamond or because the ball crosses 1st or 3rd base in fair territory then hooks or slices foul into the umpire positioned just outside the line behind the bag. In this case, the ball is dead, the batter is awarded first base, and all other runners advance only if forced. A common example is when a batter hits a fair ball down the first base line so hard that the first base umpire can't avoid it. Even though the hit could have been a double or triple without the interference, it is only a single and runners advance no more than one base.

Plate Umpire: If the umpire interferes with the catcher's attempt to return the ball to the pitcher, the ball is immediately dead, and runners remain on the bases occupied at the time of the pitch. If the umpire interferes with a catcher's attempt to retire a runner (a pick-off play or a throw to prevent a stolen base), the ball is delayed dead. If the catcher's first throw retires a runner, the umpire hindrance is ignored. If the runner is not retired, the ball is dead and runners return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch.

It is not Umpire Interference if the umpire is hit by a thrown ball - the ball is live and play continues.

Spectator Interference

When a spectator or other person (such as bat boys/girls) alters play in progress, it is spectator interference. For instance a spectator running onto the field to catch their runaway dog interferes with a base runner. The ball



becomes dead, and the umpire will award any bases or charge any outs that, in his/her judgment, would have occurred without the interference.

Interference - Common Misconceptions

When a fielder hinders a base runner, the situation is called obstruction (see section below), not interference.

Not all physical contact in baseball is interference. Accidental contact that has little or no effect on play will usually be ignored; physical contact must result in an advantageous situation for the offense to be considered offensive interference. Nor must physical contact occur for interference to be called. A runner may interfere with a fielder simply by hindering the fielder's ability to attempt to make a play on a batted ball.

If a base runner is hit by a fair-batted ball while standing on a base, the runner is out, unless the ball has already passed an infielder OR it's a declared infield fly. The base is not a sanctuary.

Being in contact with a base may protect a base runner from being called out for interference in the case of a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.

OBSTRUCTION

In baseball and softball, when a fielder illegally hinders a base runner, the fielder is guilty of obstruction. When the catcher obstructs the batter-runner, it's called Catchers' Obstruction, which is described below.

Base runners are generally permitted the free privilege to run from base to base without being physically blocked or hindered by a fielder. The only time a fielder need not "get out of the way" of a base runner is when the fielder is fielding or in possession of the ball.

Obstruction occurs when the obstructed runner is not being played upon. The ball does not become dead; rather, the umpire calls "That's obstruction!", but play is allowed to continue. While play continues, the umpire privately decides what base the obstructed runner would have reached without the obstruction. The obstructed runner is now "protected" until he/she reaches that base. When playing action stops, the ball will become dead and the runner will be awarded that base if he/she has not reached it. If the obstructed runner was put out before reaching that base, that out will be nullified and the obstructed runner will be awarded that base. If the runner reaches that base safely, the obstruction is ignored. If the runner continues past that base, the obstructed runner does so at his/her own risk, without protection. There is no minimum base award.

Remember - the ball does not become dead until after playing action ceases.

Catcher's Obstruction

Catcher's obstruction is called when the catcher physically hinders the batter's opportunity to legally swing at a pitched ball. This occurs most often when a catcher squats too close to home plate, so that the batter's bat touches the catcher's glove as the batter swings. This is most likely to happen on attempted steals where the catcher is anxious to catch the ball as soon as possible and may move his entire body or glove forward a bit.

In this case, play continues, and after continuous playing action ceases, the umpire will call time. The penalty here is that the batter is awarded first base, any runner attempting to steal is awarded that base, and all other runners advance only if forced. Additionally, the catcher is charged with an error (although the batter is not charged with an at-bat). However, if the actual playing result is more advantageous than the penalty, the offense may elect to ignore the infraction (e.g., if the batter-runner reaches first safely and all other runners advance at least one base, catcher's obstruction is ignored by rule).

Obstruction - Common Misconceptions

There need not be physical contact for obstruction to be called; rather, if a fielder causes the runner to alter his/her normal running path, the fielder can be guilty of obstruction. Obstruction is not to be confused with interference (see previous section).

Two Umpire Crew 60' & 70' bases; Base Umpire Positioning (Minor & Major Divisions)

Definition of Terms

U1	Plate Umpire; the Umpire-in-Chief at the field
U2	Base Umpire; the umpire responsible for all bases
Position A	The area in foul territory, 8-12' behind first base.
Position B	The area in the outfield between first & second bases, on a line from home plate to the right side of the pitcher's mound & 6-10' behind the edge of the grass.
Position C	The area in the outfield between second & third bases, on a line from home plate to the left side of the pitcher's mound & 6-12' behind the edge of the grass.

Bases Empty

U2 in Position **A** to call play at 1st

Runner on First:

U2 in Position **B** to watch runner at 1st and call play at 1st or 2

Runner on Second: **

U2 in Position **C** to watch runner at 2nd and call play at 1st

Runner on Third: **

U2 in Position **C** to watch runner at 3rd and call play at 1st

Runners on First & Second:

U2 in Position **C** to watch runners at 1st & 2nd and call play at any base

Runners on First & Third: **

U2 in Position **C** to watch runners at 1st & 3rd and call play at any base

Runners on Second & Third: **

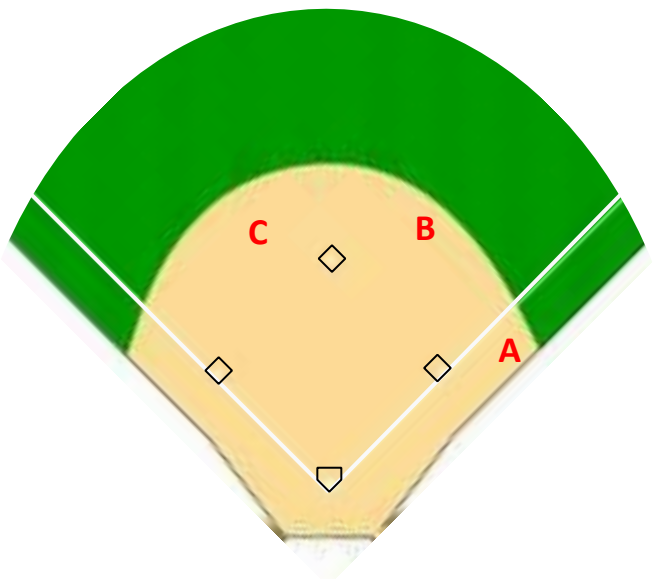
U2 in Position **C** to watch runners at 2nd & 3rd and call play at any base

Bases on First, Second & Third (Loaded):

U2 in Position **C** to watch all runners and call play at any base

NOTE: For positions B & C, the idea is to get into a position that allows you to see the pitcher, batter and runner(s) simultaneously. You cannot call a runner leaving base too early unless you can see all three of these things when the pitch is thrown. Depending upon where the 2nd baseman or shortstop is playing, you may need to adjust your position to get a clear view.

**** Umpire Director's Note:** Although the "correct" position is **C**, I actually prefer **B** since so few non-force plays happen at 3rd base and position **B** puts the umpire in a much better position for the more likely play at 1st or 2nd base. Also, the Plate umpire usually has the better angle to make the calls at 3rd base. I leave it up to each umpire to decide, which position they are most comfortable.



Baseball Umpiring Basics



The **A**, **B** & **C** information above describes the **initial positioning** for the Base Umpire, and the reasons for using that position in the specific situation described. It is important to understand that this describes the positions the Base Umpire is to take **prior to the pitch** and **does not** describe where he/she should be to make their calls.

The Base Umpire should *almost* never make a call from their initial position. It's all about movement and hustle.

Moving from your initial position to the area in which you'll make the call depends on where the ball is hit by the batter. There are a couple of general concepts and 'rules' that will help with this:

Angle over Distance ← *This is probably the single most important concept for a field umpire*

Getting the correct angle from which to make a call is the primary job of the field umpire when it appears there may be a play at a base. The 'correct' angle is described as being "90° from the line of the throw", but often it's not feasible to get that perfect angle; try & get close to that. The distance between the umpire and the base he/she is making the call on is **far less critical** than getting a good angle to begin with. Close the distance when you can, but with the correct angle, you can (in 2-man) easily make that call at 1st base after having started from the **C** position.

Chest to Ball; Head on a Swivel

While getting in the right area of the field in which to make a call, the Base Umpire must be aware of where the ball is. That means that you should work as hard as you can to keep your chest facing the ball once you've moved into position, and use your head (on a 'swivel') to watch the runners. In this way, you let the ball take you to the play.

If the ball is hit to the infield, stay 'out' to make your call

You will not have time to get good position on the inside of the 60' or 70' diamond in this situation. From the **A** position, simply take two steps toward the infield dirt to get a good angle, turn to 1st base, set and make your call. From either the **B** or **C** positions, you'll need to use the 'chest to ball; head on a swivel' concept to know which direction to go.

If the ball is hit to the outfield, come 'in' to make your call

From any position, come in to the infield once you're certain the ball will be played in the outfield. This is critical on those plays where the Base Umpire must move with a runner who is taking multiple bases. There's just no way to keep up with that runner if you're still in the outfield. Again, you must use the 'chest to ball; head on a swivel' concept to know where to go and keep an eye on the runner(s). Remember, the Plate Umpire is responsible for the 'catch/no-catch' call in the outfield on a fly ball; your responsibility in this situation is to watch the runner(s).



The 10 Commandments of Umpiring, by Ford C. Frick (1949)

Commandment

- 1 Keep your eye on the ball.
- 2 Keep all your personalities out of your work. Forget and forgive.
- 3 Avoid sarcasm. Don't insist on the last word.
- 4 Never charge a player and, above all, no pointing your finger or yelling.
- 5 Hear only the things you should hear - be deaf to others.
- 6 Keep your temper. A decision made in anger is never sound.
- 7 Watch your language.
- 8 Take pride in your work at all times. Remember, respect for an umpire is created off the field as well as on.
- 9 Review your work. You will find, if you are honest, that 90% of the trouble is traceable to loafing.
- 10 No matter what your opinion of another umpire, never make an adverse comment regarding him. To do so is despicable and ungentlemanly.

UMPIRE CREDO

Umpires, while on the field, should not indulge in conversation with players. Keep out of the coaching box and do not talk to the coach on duty.

Always be courteous to coaches, players, and fans; avoid visiting in either team's dugout.

Dress appropriately and look professional. Be active and alert on the field.

When you enter a ball park your sole duty is to umpire a ball game as the representative of baseball and the Mt Lebanon Baseball Association.

Keep the game moving! A ball game is often helped by energetic and earnest work of the umpires.

You are the only official representative of baseball on the ball field. It is often a trying position which requires the exercise of much patience and good judgment, but do not forget that the first essential in working out of a bad situation is to keep your own temper and self-control.

You no doubt are going to make mistakes, but never attempt to "even up" after having made one. Make all decisions as you see them. Forget which is the home or visiting team.

Keep your eye everlastingly on the ball while it is in play. It is more vital to know just where a fly ball fell, or a thrown ball finished up, than whether or not a runner missed a base. Do not call the plays too quickly, or turn away too fast when a fielder is throwing to complete a play. Watch out for dropped balls after you have called a runner out.

Do not come running with your arm up or down, denoting "out" or "safe." Wait until the play is completed before making any arm motion.

Most important rule for umpires is always "BE IN POSITION TO SEE EVERY PLAY." Even when your decision is 100% correct, others will still question it if they feel you were not in a spot to see the play clearly and definitely.

Finally, be courteous, impartial and firm, and so compel respect from all.



Good Stuff to Remember

Behavior / Ejections:

As the umpire you are in charge, but you should **ALWAYS** be courteous and professional, even if the coaches, players, parents or fans are not. If I hear or see any of the umpires not treating the coaches, players, fans with respect, your umpiring season is probably over. Even if the ones that should be treating you with respect (coaches, players and parents) are out of line, be the better person and let them make a fool of themselves!

Think twice or three times before ejecting a player or coach or fan from the game. Don't get caught up in the emotions of the game. If a problem persists even after warning the head coach about a specific coach, player, or fan your last recourse is an ejection. However, if you sense a problem brewing, ask someone to find / contact someone in authority (Umpire Director, Division Coordinator, MLBA President or MLBA Board Member). I would hope we could resolve any issues before regretful events take place.

Game Time:

Scheduled Game Time is the time that the time limit clock is to start, regardless of when the first pitch occurred. No new inning starts after 1 hour and 45 minutes. Regular season games can end in a tie! In the Tournament, games must be played until a winner is determined (remember, the home team always gets their last at bats). Exceptions to the start time: If a preceding game went past the start time of the next game or there were weather related delays, the end time may be adjusted by the delay time.

Conferences (2 umpires working as a team):

It is acceptable during the course of a game for a coach to request that the Umpires "conference" with each other on a call, but there is a very specific procedure I have told the coaches they are to follow, which is:

1. Head Coach Requests timeout,
2. When you grant the timeout, the two head coaches are to meet with both umpires
3. They are to explain what they saw or are questioning in a calm manner and request that you consult with each other on the play.
4. They are to leave the immediate area (give you some space) so you may discuss without any influence from either coach.
5. When you make your ruling, they are to accept it and return to their respective dugout.

To minimize abuse of this privilege each head coach is limited to requesting only two (2) "conferences" and to only use it in the case where they are confident the other umpire had a better view of the call that they are sure was missed by the other umpire. If the coaches do not follow the above procedure you may tell them to go back to the bench and not honor their request for an umpire conference. A head coach requesting the Home Plate umpire to ask for help from the base umpire on a check swing does not count as a "conference." If the Home Plate umpire deems no conference is necessary (i.e., didn't see anything that would result in overturning the call), inform the coach there is no reason for a conference and keep the game moving. Also, if you think a team is requesting a conference for the purpose of slowing the game down, don't grant it and keep the game moving.

Check Swings: if requested by the head coach, the plate umpire may ask for help on determining whether or not a batter checked his swing or not. This only works if the base umpire is at his position behind first base and the batter is right-handed. Since the base umpire will never be behind 3rd base, he/she can never help on a left handed batter. If the base umpire is on either side of second base, they aren't much help either, so don't ask them for help. So, how do you tell if the batter went around or not? A simple rule of thumb is if you see the full end of the bat barrel, the batter went around far enough to call it a strike. If you do not see the check swing and the plate umpire asks for help, just say you didn't see the batter go around. This is very simplified approach, but

Baseball Umpiring Basics



should work. The actual rule for a swing or a non-swing is on whether a batter intended to offer at a pitch – hard for anyone to make that call.

READ THIS!!! Umpires - help each other. If you see your partner miss a call and you are 100% sure of it, after the play ends, call timeout. Approach the other umpire and go where no one can hear you to discuss what you saw. If you both agree that a call should be corrected, correct it. If the two of you cannot agree on the call, then the original call stands. Remember, the objective is to get the calls right. In my opinion, corrected calls should not happen very often – only do this if you are 100% sure.

And Even More Good Stuff to Remember

ALL Leagues, All Umpires:

General

Plate Umpires, just because you have a base umpire doesn't remove your responsibility to properly position yourself after a ball has been put in play; and remember to take your mask off whenever the ball is put in play so you can get a better view of what's developing. Too many have been statues once the ball has been put in play.

Don't forget to sell your calls (**be loud** and be decisive)!

Hit By Pitch (HBP) – No matter how many times we go over this, some still call this wrong!

Remember this and it's simple. A ball that bounces before reaching the batter is NO DIFFERENT than a ball in flight.

Case 1. If batter attempts to avoid being hit by a pitch and still gets hit, the ball is dead and the batter is awarded first base (other runs stay put unless forced to advance because the batter is now of first). If the batter does not attempt to avoid being hit (unless scared to death and freezes), the pitch is declared a ball.

Case 2. If the batter swings and gets hit by a pitch, the ball is dead (runners cannot advance), the pitch is declared a strike.

Case 3. (Uncommon) If the batter is hit by a pitch that would have been called a strike (i.e., the batter is leaning over the plate too much), same ruling as in Case 2.

So, if a pitched ball bounces, the batter moves to get out of the way (unless frozen), but still gets hit, it is a HBP!

Balls going out of play (overthrows)

If the ball goes out-of-play, the runner(s) is awarded the base they are going to at the time the ball is thrown, plus one additional base.

Not in the local rules, if a pitched ball rolls out of the field of play (passed ball or wild pitch), each base runner is awarded one base from the base they were on at the time of the pitch.

Running out of the Baseline – for a runner to be declared out for running out of the baseline a fielder must be attempting to make a tag on the runner. Thus, a runner going out the baseline to avoid a collision with a fielder is not declared out (even if the fielder has the ball, but is not attempting to tag the runner).

Leaving the field of play when there are not 3 outs – both cases have happened in the past

Case 1. A base runner mistakenly thinks there are 3 outs, and leaves the baseline heading for the dugout; he/she is considered abandoning his/her efforts to run the bases and should be declared out. Umpires – use your judgment on this, especially in the younger divisions. If the player realizes the mistake and returns to his/her base immediately (without be tagged out), let it be.

Case 2. Umpire mistakenly tells a runner or a fielder there are 3 outs and players start to leave the field, reset everything to how it was before the umpire messed up (this is an actual high school rule – paraphrased).

Baseball Umpiring Basics



Minor and Major Divisions

What to do when the ball is in control in the infield:

1. The ball is live so the runner(s) may advance at their own risk.
2. Do not send any runners back unless a timeout was requested and you CALLED timeout.
3. You should not CALL a timeout in the middle of a play (i.e., base runners still moving or the ball not in possession).
4. If after you call a timeout and a runner tries to advance, send them back. Otherwise, there is nothing stopping a runner from advancing when the ball is live (other than the gentlemen's agreement most coaches have about not abusing this).

Note: if the Pitcher has the ball and is on the rubber, runners cannot advance unless stealing according to the rules of the given league.



Rules Myths:

	Myth	Rule
1.	The hands are considered part of the bat.	The hands are part of a person's body. If a pitch hits the batter's hands the ball is dead; unless the batter swung at the pitch, which makes it a strike (NOT a foul ball).
2.	The batter-runner must turn to his right after over-running first base.	The batter-runner may turn left or right, provided that if he/she turns left he/she does not make an attempt to advance. An attempt is a judgment made by the umpire. The requirement is that the runner must immediately return to first after overrunning or oversliding it.
3.	If the batter breaks his wrists when swinging, it's a strike.	A strike is a judgment by the umpire as to whether the batter attempted to strike the ball. Breaking the wrists, or the barrel of the bat crossing the plate are simply guides to making the judgment of an attempt, these are not rules.
4.	If a batted ball hits the plate first it's a foul ball.	The plate is in fair territory. There is nothing special about it. If a batted ball hits it, it is treated like any other batted ball.
5.	The batter cannot be called out for interference if he/she is in the batter's box.	<p>The batter's box is not a safety zone. A batter could be called out for interference if the umpire judges that interference could or should have been avoided.</p> <p>The batter is protected while in the box for a short period of time. After he/she has had time to react to the play he/she could be called for interference if he/she does not move out of the box and interferes with a play.</p> <p>Many people believe the batter's box is a safety zone for the batter. It is not. The batter MAY be called out for interference although he/she is within the box. The key words, impede, hinder, confuse or obstruct apply to this situation.</p> <p>An umpire must use good judgment. The batter cannot be expected to disappear. If he/she has a chance to avoid interference after he/she has had time to react to the situation and does not, he/she is guilty. The batter should always be called out when he/she makes contact and is outside the box.</p>
6.	The ball is dead on a foul-tip.	There is nothing foul about a foul-tip. If the ball nicks the bat and goes sharp and direct to the catcher's hand or glove and is caught, this is a foul-tip by definition. A foul-tip is a strike and the ball is alive. It is the same as a swing and-miss. If the ball is not caught, it is a foul ball. If the nicked pitch first hits the catcher somewhere other than the hand or glove, it is not a foul-tip; it is a foul ball.
7.	The batter may not switch batter's boxes after two strikes.	The batter can switch boxes at any time, provided he/she does not do it after the pitcher is ready to pitch.
8.	The batter who batted out of order is the person declared out.	The PROPER batter is the one called out. Any hit or advance made by the batter or runners due to the hit, walk, error or other reason is nullified. The next batter is the one who follows the proper batter who was called out.



	Myth	Rule
9.	The batter is out if he/she starts for the dugout before going to first after a dropped third strike. (only applicable in Softball Seniors, Jr. Pony and up)	The batter may attempt first base anytime prior to entering the dugout or a dead ball area. The batter becomes a runner when the third strike is not caught. Therefore, if there are 2 outs and there is a runner at first, first and second, or bases loaded, the batter creates a force by becoming a runner. These runners are all forced to advance and an out may be obtained by making a play on any one of them. If the bases are loaded the catcher may step on home or throw to third, second or first.
10.	If the batter does not pull the bat out of the strike zone while in the bunting position, it's an automatic strike.	A strike is an attempt to hit the ball. Simply holding the bat over the plate is not an attempt. This is umpire judgment. A BUNT is a batted ball not swung at, but INTENTIONALLY met with the bat. The key words are "intentionally met." If no attempt is made to make contact with a ball outside the strike zone, it should be called a ball. An effort must be made to intentionally meet the ball with the bat.
11.	The batter is out if a bunted ball hits the ground and bounces back up and hits the bat while the batter is holding the bat.	The rule says the BAT cannot hit the ball a second time. When the BALL hits the bat, it is not an out. Also, when the batter is still in the box when this happens, it's treated as simply a foul ball. If the batter is out of the box and the bat is over fair territory when the second hit occurs, the batter would be out.
12.	The batter-runner is always out if he/she runs outside the running lane after a bunted ball.	The runner must be out of the lane AND cause interference. The runner is not out simply for being outside the lane. He/She could be called for interference even while in the lane. This is a judgment call. The runner may step out of the lane a step or two before the base if he/she moves from within the lane to out of it. If he/she is out of the lane the whole distance to the base and is hit with a throw, he/she should be out.
13.	A runner is out if he/she slaps hands or high-fives other players, after a homerun is hit over the fence.	The ball is dead on a homerun over the fence. You can't be put out while the ball is dead except when you pass another runner.
14.	Tie goes to the runner.	There is no such thing in the world of umpiring. The runner is either out or safe. The umpire must judge out or safe. It is impossible to judge a tie.
15.	The runner gets the base he's going to, plus one on a ball that goes out of play.	When a fielder other than the pitcher throws the ball into dead ball area, the award is 2 bases (the one he's going to plus one). However, if a pitch goes out of play, the award is one base.

Baseball Umpiring Basics



16.	Anytime a coach touches a runner, the runner is out.	Rules say the runner is out if the coach PHYSICALLY ASSISTS the runner. Hand slaps, back pats or simple touches are not physical assists.
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	Myth	Rule
17.	Runners may never run the bases in reverse order.	In order to correct a base running mistake, the runner MUST retrace his steps and retouch the bases in reverse order. The only time a runner is out for running in reverse, is when he/she is making a travesty of the game or tries to confuse the defense.
18.	The runner must always slide when the play is close.	There is no "must slide" rule. When the fielder has the ball in his possession, the runner has two choices; slide OR attempt to get around the fielder. He/She may NOT deliberately or maliciously contact the fielder, but he/she is NOT required to slide. If the fielder does not have possession but, is in the act of fielding, and contact is made, it is a no-call unless the contact was intentional and malicious.
19.	The runner is always safe when hit by a batted ball while touching a base.	The bases are in fair territory. A runner is out when hit by a fair batted ball while touching a base, except when hit by an infield-fly or after the ball has passed a fielder and no other fielder had a play on the ball. If the runner is touching first or third, he/she is not out unless the ball touches him/her over fair territory. If one foot is on the base and the other is in foul ground and he/she is hit on the foul ground foot, he/she is not out. It is a foul ball. (If the ball has not passed beyond first or third.)
20.	A runner may not steal on a foul-tip.	There is nothing foul about a foul-tip. If the ball nicks the bat and goes to the catcher's glove and is caught, this is a foul-tip by definition. A foul-tip is a strike and the ball is alive. It is the same as a swing-and-miss. If the ball is not caught, it is a foul ball.
21.	It is a force out when a runner is called out for not tagging up on a fly ball.	A force play is when a runner is forced to advance because the batter became a runner. When the batter is out on a caught fly, all forces are removed. An out on a failure to tag-up, is NOT a force out. Any runs that cross the plate before this out will count.
22.	An appeal on a runner who missed a base cannot be a force out.	A runner must touch all the bases. If the runner misses a base to which he/she was forced because the batter became a runner and is put out before touching that base, the out is still a force play. If this is the third out, no runs may score. The base can be touched or the runner can be touched, either way it's a force out.
23.	A runner is out if he/she runs out of the baseline to avoid a fielder who is fielding a batted ball.	The runner MUST avoid a fielder attempting to field a BATTED ball. A runner is out for running out of the baseline, only when attempting to avoid a tag.

Baseball Umpiring Basics



24.	A pitch that bounces to the plate cannot be hit.	A pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. It doesn't matter how it gets to the batter. The batter may hit any pitch that is thrown. A pitch that bounces before reaching the plate may never be a <u>called</u> strike.
25.	The batter does not get first base if hit by a pitch after it bounces.	A pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. It doesn't matter how it gets to the batter. If the batter is hit by a pitch while attempting to avoid it, he/she is awarded first base.
26.	If a fielder holds a fly ball for 2 seconds it's a catch.	A catch is legal when the umpire judges that the fielder has COMPLETE control of the ball. The release of the ball must be voluntary and intentional.
	Myth	Rule
27.	You must tag the base with your foot on a force out or appeal.	You can tag a base with ANY part of the body.
28.	If a player's feet are in fair territory when the ball is touched, it is a fair ball.	The position of the player's feet or any other part of the body is irrelevant. A ball is judged fair or foul based on the relationship between the ball and the ground at the time the ball is touched by the fielder.
29.	The ball must always be returned to the pitcher before an appeal can be made.	Appeals do not apply in the NFHS rules any more. A player just has to ask the umpire if a runner missed a base.
30.	With no runners on base, it is a ball if the pitcher starts his windup and then stops.	A pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. If the ball is not delivered, it is not a pitch. Therefore it cannot be a ball.
31.	The ball is dead anytime an umpire is hit by the ball.	If an umpire is hit by a batted ball before it passes a fielder, the ball is dead. On any other batted or thrown ball, the ball is alive when the umpire is hit with the ball. Umpire interference also occurs when the plate umpire interferes with the catcher's attempt to prevent a stolen base.
32.	The home plate umpire can overrule the other umps at anytime.	The umpire who made a call or ruling may ask for help if he/she wishes. No umpire may overrule another umpire's call.