

OFFICIAL RULES OF BASEBALL- CANADIAN CONTENT

(This entire section has been revised, from cc 12 to cc 40.)

Baseball Canada Umpires Committee **Rule Interpretations / Case Studies**

DRAFT BASEBALL CANADA RULE INTERPRETATIONS – EXPLANATORY NOTE

Baseball Canada’s 2010-2014 Strategic Planning Document outlines a number of objectives relating to officials. These include making the rules more user-friendly for officials, and adding consistency to training and officiating nationally.

In accordance with this objective, the High-Performance sub-committee of the Baseball Canada Umpire Development Committee has committed to undertake an update of the Baseball Canada Rule Interpretations of the Official Rules of Baseball.

In May of 2014, working through the Baseball Canada office, the High-Performance sub-committee requested and received consent from the Office of the Commissioner of Baseball to access and adapt the MLB UMPIRE MANUAL RULE INTERPRETATIONS for amateur use in Canada.

The MLB Manual is considered by the High-Performance sub-committee to be the preeminent authority on interpreting the Official Rules of Baseball. Upon reviewing the MLB Manual, it is the opinion of the High-Performance sub-committee that many of the practices and interpretations in the MLB Manual are already in effect within Baseball Canada, whether currently codified or not. Further, a majority of the current 24 Baseball Canada Rule Interpretations use language largely similar to that found in the MLB manual.

After reviewing the MLB Manual, the following approach to the update is recommended:

- All interpretations from the MLB Manual will be adopted for use by Baseball Canada, minimizing the discrepancy between the MLB Rule Interpretations and the Baseball Canada Rule Interpretations, with the following exceptions:
 - Interpretations that are not appropriate for amateur play will be removed or amended;
 - Where current Baseball Canada interpretations offer a more clear explanation of a situation, that language shall be utilized;
 - The Baseball Canada Rule Interpretations will be updated accordingly as the MLB Manual is updated.

The draft has been developed in accordance with these principals.

The High-Performance sub-committee will work in conjunction with the other sub-committee leads to determine how this updated document serve as a resource on their respective mandates.

The below table is a summary of all changes between the MLB Interpretations and the DRAFT Baseball Canada Interpretations. This is NOT a Table of Contents for the new document.

“Column A” lists the rule being interpreted.

“Column B” explains how the interpretation is being proposed for use.

“Column C” references the current Baseball Canada Interpretation Number.

Rule	Note	Former BC Int. Reference
Rule 1.11: JACKETS	MLB REMOVED: Not appropriate for amateur baseball.	
Rule 1.12: CATCHER’S MITT	MLB REMOVED: Not appropriate for amateur baseball.	
Rule 2.00: BALL STRIKES BIRD OR ANIMAL	MLB REPLACES BC: Interpretation properly covers content.	16
Rule 3.03: MULTIPLE SUBSTITUTIONS AND DOUBLE-SWITCHES	MLB EDITED: Removed reference to public address announcer, and umpire signaling to the bullpen.	
Rule 4.07: EJECTIONS AND SUSPENSIONS	MLB EDITED: Removed reference to the dugout runway, replaced with “proximity to the dugout.”	
Rule 4.12(c): LINEUP CARDS FROM SUSPENDED GAMES	MLB REMOVED: This refers largely to MLB procedure.	

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Rule 5.00: BALL GOING INTO PLAYER'S UNIFORM	MLB REPLACES BC: Interpretation properly covers content.	8
Rules 6.03 and 6.06: BATTER'S POSITION IN BATTER'S BOX	MLB REPLACES BC: Interpretation properly covers content.	10
Rule 6.06(c): BACKSWING (FOLLOW-THROUGH) HITS CATCHER	MLB and BC MERGED: Baseball Canada's interpretation of a batter pulling back a bunt attempt has been added to the end of the MLB interpretations.	9
Rules 6.08(c), 7.04(d), and 7.07: CATCHER'S INTERFERENCE	MLB REPLACES BC: Interpretation properly covers content.	6(1)
Rule 6.10: DESIGNATED HITTER	BC ADDED: Baseball Canada's interpretation has been used, replacing the MLB interpretation.	3
Rule 7.01: APPEAL PLAYS—APPROVED RULINGS	MLB and BC MERGED: Baseball Canada's language regarding the defensive team leaving the infield has been added to the end of the MLB interpretations.	12, 13
Rules 7.05(g) and 7.10: PLAY OR ATTEMPTED PLAY	MLB and BC MERGED: Baseball Canada's language regarding plays and attempted plays has been added to the beginning of the MLB interpretations.	6(2)
Rule 7.05(h): BALLS DEFLECTED OUT OF PLAY	MLB REPLACES BC: Interpretation properly covers content.	18, 19, 20
Rule 7.06: OBSTRUCTION MECHANIC	MLB REPLACES BC: Interpretation properly covers content.	4
Rule 7.06(a): BATTER-RUNNER OBSTRUCTED BEFORE REACHING FIRST BASE	MLB REPLACES BC: Interpretation properly covers content.	1
Rules 7.06(a) 7.06(b), 7.09(j), and 4.03(c): OBSTRUCTION AND INTERFERENCE PLAYS—APPROVED RULINGS	MLB and BC MERGED: Baseball Canada's language regarding the runner specifically crossing the back edge of the plate has been added to the beginning of the MLB interpretations.	11
7.08(c) RUNNER STEALING ON BALL FOUR	BC ADDED: Baseball Canada interpretation has been inserted in to the document, as the MLB content did not cover this situation.	2
7.08(f) RUNNER HIT BY INFIELD FLY	BC ADDED: Baseball Canada interpretation has been inserted in to the document, as the MLB content did not cover this situation.	17
Rule 7.09(a): BATTER INTERFERES AFTER THIRD STRIKE NOT CAUGHT	MLB EDITED: Reference to former versions of the rule were removed.	
Rule 8.01(a): WINDUP POSITION	MLB EDITED: Reference to former versions of the rule were removed.	
Rule 8.03: RESTRICTIONS ON PITCHERS WARMING UP	MLB REMOVED: Not appropriate for amateur baseball.	
Rule 8.03: PITCHER	BC ADDED: Baseball Canada interpretation has been inserted in to the document, as the MLB content did not cover this situation.	22, 23
Rule 8.05: CALLING "TIME" AFTER A	MLB REPLACES BC:	5

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BALK	Interpretation properly covers content.	
Rule 8.05: BALK REGULATIONS	MLB REPLACES BC: Interpretation properly covers content.	14, 15
Rule 8.05: BALK REGULATIONS	MLB EDITED: Reference to the slapping leg mechanic removed, edited to allow managers to ask umpires about all types of balks.	
Rule 8.06: TRIPS TO THE MOUND	MLB EDITED: Interpreter reference removed	
Rule 8.06: TRIPS TO THE MOUND	MLB EDITED: Baseball Canada's interpretation of player/coach and player/manager visits was added, and Baseball Canada's interpretation of a visit beginning and ending at the 18' circle replaced the MLB interpretation.	7, 21
Rule 9.02(c): VOLUNTARY STRIKE	MLB REMOVED: Not appropriate for amateur baseball.	
Rule 9.04(a)(6): FORFEITED GAMES	MLB REMOVED: This refers largely to MLB procedure.	

Baseball Canada Rule Interpretations

Baseball Canada Umpire Development Committee

This document was adapted from the Major League Baseball Umpire Manual, with permission from the Office of the Commissioner of Baseball.

Baseball Canada offers it's sincere thanks to Major League Baseball for permission to use this contents.

Preamble

This document builds upon the Official Rules of Baseball. By providing supplementary explanations to the official rules, as well as multiple case studies, this document offers increased clarity and consistency to all officials across Canada.

RULE INTERPRETATIONS

Rule 2.00 and 7.09: OFFENSIVE INTERFERENCE

While contact may occur between a fielder and runner during a tag attempt, a runner is not allowed to use his hands or arms to commit an obviously malicious or unsportsmanlike act—such as grabbing, tackling, intentionally slapping at the baseball, punching, kicking, flagrantly using his arms or forearms, etc.—to commit an intentional act of interference unrelated to running the bases. Further, if in the judgment of the umpire such intentional act was to prevent a double play, the umpire would rule the batter-runner out as well.

Rule 2.00: INTERFERENCE WITH INTERVENING PLAY

Play: Play at the plate on runner attempting to score; runner is called safe. A following play is made on the batter-runner, who is called out for interference outside the three-foot lane.

Ruling: With less than two out, the run scores and batter-runner is out. With two out, the run does not count. The reasoning is that an intervening play occurred before the interference. Runners would return to base last legally touched at the time of interference. However, with two out, the runner reached home on a play in which the batter-runner was out before reaching first base. (See also the Comment to Official Baseball Rule 2.00 (Interference)(a).)

Rule 2.00: BALL STRIKES BIRD OR ANIMAL

If a batted or thrown ball strikes a bird in flight or other animal on the playing field, the ball is considered alive and in play, the same as if it had not touched the bird or animal. If a pitched ball strikes a bird in flight or other animal on the playing field, the pitch is nullified and play shall be resumed with the previous count.

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Rule 2.00: INFIELDER INTERFERES WITH COURSE OF BALL

When a batted ball is rolling fair down the foul line between home plate and either first or third base and a fielder stoops down over the ball and blows on it or in any other manner does some act that in the judgment of the umpire causes the ball to roll onto foul territory, the umpire shall rule a fair ball. The ball is alive and in play.

Rule 2.00: LEGAL CATCH

The following guidelines shall apply in ruling whether the ball was or was not caught:

- (1) If a fielder, after catching the ball, crashes into a stand and drops the ball, it is not a catch.
- (2) If one fielder collides with another and drops the ball, or if, after a fielder has caught the ball, another fielder collides with him and the ball is dropped, it is not a catch.
- (3) If a fielder gets a hand or hands on the ball and falls down in the attempt, a fielder must “come up” with the ball to be ruled a catch.

A ball will be ruled caught when the momentum of the catch is completed and the player voluntarily releases the ball.

These examples do not apply where a fielder has completed a legal catch, and then drops the ball while in the act of drawing back his arm to make a throw.

A fielder may not jump over any fence, railing, or rope marking the limits of the playing field in order to catch the ball. A fielder may (1) reach over such fence, railing, or rope to make a catch; (2) fall over the same after completing the catch; (3) jump on top of a railing or fence marking the boundary of the field to make a catch; or (4) climb onto a fence or on a field canvas and catch the ball. In all four cases the catch would be legal, as dictated by the best judgment of the umpire.

The same restrictions apply to a foul ball descending into a stand. A catcher or fielder may not jump into a stand to catch such a ball, but reaching into the stand and making the play is permitted.

Play: Bases loaded, one out. Fielder catches fly ball and momentum carries him into the stands. Fielder remains standing. Can the fielder throw for a play? Ruling: No. “Time” is called and all runners advance one base.

As provided in Comments to Official Baseball Rule 6.05(a), no fielder may step into or go into a dugout to make a catch. However, if a fielder, after catching a fly ball on the playing surface, falls down in the dugout, or falls into a dugout, bench, or grandstand at any point while in possession of the ball, the base runners shall be entitled to advance one base and the ball shall be dead.

Rule 2.00: FOUL TIPS

Regarding the definition of a foul tip, the proper interpretation is that a foul tip must be caught by the catcher.

It is recommended that umpires indicate foul tips by signaling foul tip followed by a strike mechanic, particularly on check-swing foul tips and foul tips that are caught close to the ground.

Rule 3.03: SUBSTITUTIONS

A player or players may be substituted during a game at any time the ball is dead.

A substitution is completed and the player is considered as having entered the game when the manager or his designee notifies the plate umpire of the substitution. If no such notification is given to the umpire or after notification no announcement is made, the player shall be considered as having entered the game when:

- (1) If a pitcher, he takes his place on the pitcher’s plate prior to delivering a pitch (preparatory or otherwise);
- (2) If a batter, he takes his place in the batter’s box;
- (3) If a fielder, he reaches the position usually occupied by the fielder he has replaced, and play commences;
- (4) If a runner, he takes the place of the runner he has replaced.

Umpires should confirm all substitutes from the manager and inform the opposing manager of all substitutes.

NOTE: If a pitcher has been brought into the game but has not faced one batter (or retired the side) when the game is stopped for weather, such pitcher may, but is not required to, continue pitching when the game is resumed.

Refer also to Official Baseball Rules 3.03, 3.06, 3.07, and 3.08 for further information concerning substitutions.

Rule 3.03: MULTIPLE SUBSTITUTIONS AND DOUBLE-SWITCHES

When a manager makes two or more substitutions at the same time, the manager must, at the same moment, advise the plate umpire of the names of the substitutes, their defensive positions, and in what place each will hit in the batting order. The manager cannot give notice of one of the substitutions, leave the umpire, come back to the plate umpire, and then locate the other player in the lineup. In case the manager fails or refuses to make a decision, the plate umpire is authorized to decide the necessary batting order changes, and the umpire’s decision is final.

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A manager may give the umpire a double-switch while defensive players are entering the playing field. However, in the unlikely event that an unannounced pitcher takes a position on the pitching rubber before the manager confers with the umpire, Official Baseball Rule 3.08(a)(1) provides such pitcher to have entered the game. In such case, a subsequent attempt by the manager to make a double-switch shall not be allowed.

Rule 3.03: PITCHER CHANGING DEFENSIVE POSITIONS

Under the Comment to Official Baseball Rule 3.03, a pitcher may change to a defensive position other than pitcher only once an inning. In other words, a pitcher may change to another defensive position and then return to the mound during the same inning, but after so doing he may not leave the mound again in that inning (unless, of course, he is removed from the game). If such a pitcher returns to the mound during the same inning, he is allowed the usual eight warm-up pitches.

Rule 3.16: SPECTATOR INTERFERENCE

The umpire shall call spectator interference by first signaling and calling "Time" (both hands overhead) to halt play and then grasping the left wrist with right hand (held above the head) to indicate spectator interference.

When there is intentional interference with a ball in play, either by a spectator or by a person permitted on the playing field (as covered in Official Baseball Rule 3.15), the ball is dead the instant the interference occurs. The umpire who calls the interference (any umpire may call it) should consult with other umpires to determine what reasonably might have happened had the interference not occurred.

The spectator interference rule states specifically that the umpire shall impose such penalty or penalties as in the umpire's judgment will nullify the act of interference, and the ball is dead the instant the interference occurs.

It is possible to have spectator interference on a ball pitched to the batter. If a wild pitch does not go into the stands but remains in play and is interfered with by a spectator, the spectator interference penalty shall apply.

The very nature of the game requires different consideration of what may at first seem the same play (dimensions of the ball park, speed of runner, etc.). The umpires should consider all factors in determining penalties for spectator interference. Refer also to Official Baseball Rule 3.16.

Rule 3.17: ON-DECK CIRCLE

The next batter up must be in the on-deck circle, and this is the only player who should be there (i.e., not more than one player at a time). No other player of the side at bat will be permitted on the field except the batter, base runners, and coaches.

Rule 4.01: LINEUP CARDS

Each manager should write the name of each eligible player on the face of his club's batting order card in addition to furnishing the starting lineup. However, a manager's failure to list an eligible player does not prevent that player from entering the game, nor is such failure grounds for protest, as the listing of eligible players is simply a courtesy.

Rule 4.03: FIRST BASEMAN PLAYING IN FOUL TERRITORY

Official Baseball Rule 4.03 provides that 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. In particular, when holding a runner on first base, the first baseman shall position him with both feet in fair territory. There is no penalty specified for violation other than the first baseman shall be instructed to keep both feet in fair territory if brought to the attention of the umpire or— if blatant or recurring violation— upon immediate direction of the umpire. If a player, after so directed by the umpire, blatantly refuses to comply, the player is subject to ejection.

Rule 4.07: EJECTIONS AND SUSPENSIONS

A manager, player, coach or trainer who has been ejected from a game may not stand in proximity to the dugout.

A manager who has been suspended shall take no part in the direction of his team during a game, either directly or indirectly.

Rule 4.12(a): WEATHER TAKING PRECEDENCE

The note to Official Baseball Rule 4.12(a) states that weather and similar conditions shall take precedence in determining whether a called game shall be a suspended game. If a game is halted by weather, and subsequent light failure or an intervening curfew or time limit prevents its resumption, it shall not be a suspended game. If a game is halted by light failure, and weather or field conditions prevent its resumption, it shall not be a suspended game. (See Note to Official Baseball Rule 4.12(a).)

If play is stopped because of weather and during the delay (before the tarps have been removed), light failure occurs and causes the game to be terminated, the game will be considered as having been terminated because of weather and shall not be a suspended game.

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If play is stopped because of weather and during the delay (before the tarps have been removed) a curfew or time limit prevents its resumption, the game will be considered as having been terminated because of weather and shall not be a suspended game.

However, in games that have been delayed because of weather, once the umpires direct the grounds crew to remove the tarps and prepare the field for play, the weather factor is then removed. In such cases, if light failure then occurs or if a curfew or time limit is subsequently reached, the game will be considered a suspended game.

If play is stopped because of light failure and rain subsequently occurs before play can be resumed, the umpires shall then determine the ultimate reason for terminating the game.

EXAMPLES:

(1) Game stopped because of light failure; rain occurs during light failure; lights come back on during or after rain; field determined to be unplayable. Ruling: Game called due to weather. Not a suspended game.

(2) Game stopped because of light failure; rain occurs during light failure; field determined to be unplayable but still no lights. Ruling: Game called due to weather. Not a suspended game.

(3) Game stopped because of light failure; a light rain occurs during light failure; rain stops and field determined to be playable but still no lights. Ruling: Game called because of light failure. This is a suspended game.

Rule 4.12(c): LINEUPS AND SUSPENDED GAMES

The Comment to Rule 4.12(c) states that if immediately prior to a game becoming suspended, a substitute pitcher has been put into the game but has not retired the side or pitched until the batter has been put out or has become a base runner, when the game is resumed such a pitcher may, but is not required to, start the resumed portion of the game. If such pitcher does not start when the game is resumed, he will be considered as having been substituted for and may not be used in that game.

If a game is suspended during a manager's or coach's trip to the mound (or after the trip but while the same batter is still at bat), a new pitcher may be substituted when the game is resumed.

If a pitcher has been brought into the game but has not faced one batter (or retired the side) when the game is stopped for weather, such pitcher may, but is not required to, continue pitching when the game is resumed.

Rule 5.00: BALL GOING INTO PLAYER'S UNIFORM

If a batted or thrown ball inadvertently goes inside a player or coach's uniform (or lodges in the catcher's face mask or paraphernalia), the umpire shall call "Time." He will, using common sense and fair play, place all runners in such a manner that, in the umpire's judgment, will nullify the action of the ball going out of play. In no case may any outs be recorded on such play.

Note that this interpretation does not apply to situations where a batted or thrown ball lodges in a fielder's glove. In those cases, the ball is alive and in play. A fielder may legally throw the glove with the live ball lodged in the glove. Any fielder in possession of the glove containing the lodged ball is considered in possession of the ball for the purpose of the Rules. For example, a fielder could legally tag a runner or a base while in possession of the glove containing the lodged ball.

Rules 5.09(f) and 7.09(k): BATTED BALL STRIKING THE RUNNER

The concept of the runner being in jeopardy after the ball goes past an infielder and strikes the runner in a situation where another infielder still has a chance to make a play on the ball applies ONLY when the ball PASSES the first infielder without being touched or deflected by him. This concept DOES NOT APPLY if the ball is touched or deflected by the first infielder, even though another infielder has a chance to make a play on the ball.

In other words, after a ball has been touched (deflected) by any infielder (including the pitcher), if the ball then strikes a runner (unintentionally on the part of the runner), the ball is alive and in play even if another infielder may be in position to field the ball. (See Official Baseball Rules 5.09(f) and 7.09(k).)

The reasoning for the above concept is that a runner cannot be expected to avoid a deflected ball while running and should not, therefore, be in jeopardy of being called out for being struck by such a deflected ball. Of course, a runner may still be guilty of intentional interference even after an infielder deflects the ball if the runner deliberately deflects the ball or allows it to strike him when he could have reasonably avoided it. The fact that the ball has been deflected by an infielder should not be taken as a license for a runner to interfere intentionally. (See Official Baseball Rules 7.09(f) and (g).)

After a batted ball has been touched (deflected) by an infielder, if the ball then strikes a runner (unintentionally on the part of the runner), it is alive and in play despite the fact that another infielder may be in position to field the ball. This is not the case if a fielder is making a play on the ball. Specifically, if a batted ball is deflected by an infielder and another infielder has a play on the

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ball, the runner must avoid the fielder. If the runner interferes with the fielder making a play—even though the ball has been touched by another fielder—the runner is declared out. Under the rules, a fielder making a play on a batted ball takes priority.

On the other hand, if a batted ball goes through or by an infielder (other than the pitcher) without touching the fielder and then strikes a runner immediately behind the infielder, the umpire must then determine if another infielder has a chance to make a play on the ball. If the umpire determines another infielder does have a chance, the runner is out. If the umpire determines another infielder does not have a chance, the ball is alive and in play.

The interpretation to be made with regard to the phrase “a fair ball goes through, or by, an infielder, and touches a runner immediately back of him” (Official Baseball Rules 7.09(k) and 5.09(f)) is that this refers to a ball that passes through the infielder’s legs, or by his immediate vicinity, and strikes a runner directly behind the infielder.

EXAMPLES:

(1) Runner on second base, one out. The batter hits a ball on the ground toward the hole. The third baseman charges in on the grass to try to cut the ball off as the shortstop breaks deep toward the hole while the runner is advancing. The ball gets past the third baseman without the third baseman having touched it and strikes the runner in the base path. The shortstop had a play on the ball.

Ruling: Runner from second is out and the batter-runner is awarded first base. The ball passed by but was not touched by an infielder other than the pitcher before striking the runner. However, another fielder behind the runner was deprived of an opportunity to field the ball.

(2) Runner on second base, one out. The batter hits a ground ball toward the hole. The third baseman charges in on the grass to cut the ball off and the shortstop breaks deep toward the hole as the runner advances. The ball is deflected by the third baseman in the direction of the shortstop. The shortstop would have had a play on the ball, but the ball struck the runner, resulting in no play being possible.

Ruling: Runner from second is not out and the ball is alive and in play (assuming no intentional interference by the runner from second). The fact that the shortstop would have been able to make a play on the ball had it not struck the runner is disregarded because the ball was deflected by the first infielder.

(3) Runner on first base, one out. Runner is stealing on the next pitch. The batter hits a ground ball back toward the pitcher. The pitcher deflects the ball in the direction of the second baseman, who definitely has a chance to make a play on it. However, the ball strikes the runner before it reaches the second baseman.

Ruling: Runner from first is not out; the ball remains alive and in play (assuming no intentional interference by the runner). Compare this play with the following play.

(4) Runner on first base, one out. Runner is running on the next pitch. The batter hits a ground ball back toward the pitcher. The pitcher deflects the ball in the direction of the second baseman. As the runner is running directly to second base, he unintentionally bumps into the second baseman, who is attempting to field the deflected ball.

Ruling: Interference is called and the runner from first is declared out. Even though deflected, this is still a batted ball and the runner must avoid the fielder. The batter-runner is awarded first base.

(5) Runners on first and second, both runners stealing. Batter shows bunt, the first and third basemen move in, and the shortstop moves to cover third. The batter swings at the last minute and hits a ground ball in the direction of the shortstop position. However, the shortstop has moved to cover third base, and no one is in position to field the ball. The ground ball strikes the runner advancing from second base.

Ruling: Runner from second is declared out for being struck by a batted ball. The batter-runner is placed at first base. The ball is not considered to have gone through or by an infielder in this play.

(6) Runners on first and second, first and third basemen in for a bunt, both runners stealing. Batter shows bunt but swings at the last minute and hits a chopper over the head of the third baseman who has moved in about 20 feet. The ball strikes the runner advancing from second. Two parts: (a) Assume the shortstop was in a position to make a play on the ball; (b) Assume the shortstop was not in position to make a play on the ball.

Ruling: In (a), runner from second is declared out. The ball is considered going by the third baseman, but another fielder had a chance to make a play on the ball. In (b), the ball is alive and in play. The ball is considered going by the third baseman, but no other infielder had a chance to make a play on the ball.

(7) Runner on first base, hit-and-run. Batter hits a ground ball towards the second base position (which has been vacated by the second baseman, who is covering the bag at second). The ground ball strikes the runner advancing from first base.

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Ruling: Runner from first is declared out for being struck by a fair batted ball. Batter-runner is awarded first base. The ball is not considered having passed through or by an infielder in this play.

(8) Runner on first base, one out. Runner is running on the next pitch. The batter hits a ground ball back toward the pitcher. The pitcher deflects the ball in the direction of the second baseman, who definitely has a chance to make a play on it. However, the ball strikes the runner before it reaches the second baseman. As a result of striking the runner, the ball caroms into the shortstop's glove, and the shortstop throws the batter-runner out at first base while the runner who was struck with the batted ball goes to second.

Ruling: The ball remains alive and in play (assuming no intentional interference by the runner originally on first). The batter-runner is out, and the runner originally on first is allowed to remain at second base.

(9) Runner on first base, first baseman positioned in front of the runner. Batter hits a ground ball just outside the reach of the first baseman as the first baseman dives to his right. The ball then strikes the runner.

Ruling: In this play the ball is considered having passed by an infielder. The umpire must now judge if another infielder has the chance to make a play on the ball. If the umpire judges yes, then the runner is declared out. If the umpire judges no, the ball is alive and in play.

(10) Bases loaded, no out. The infield is playing in. The batter hits a sharp ground ball that the third baseman deflects in the direction of the shortstop. Runner from second, seeing that the shortstop definitely will have a good chance of making a play on the ball, allows it to strike the runner. The ball caroms into left field and all runners take off.

Ruling: Runner from second has intentionally interfered with a batted ball to break up a possible double play. Runner from second is out and so is the batter-runner. Runners return to first and third. Runner from second has violated Official Baseball Rule 7.09(f).

(11) Runner on third, no out. Batter hits a sharp ground ball down the third base line that strikes the runner on third base in fair territory while the runner is still in contact with third base. The runner was not attempting to interfere intentionally, and the third baseman is playing behind the runner.

Ruling: Runner is declared out. Ball is dead, and batter-runner is awarded first base. The fact that the runner had contact with the base when struck with the batted ball has no bearing on the play. (An exception to this is when the runner is hit by an Infield Fly while on base.)

(12) Runner on second base, no one out. Batter bunts the ball down the third base line. Pitcher and third baseman hover over the ball and let it roll down the line towards third, hoping it will go foul. The ball continues to roll down the line in fair territory with the pitcher and third baseman following it. The ball ends up rolling to third base, strikes the base, and then strikes the runner from second base who is now standing on third.

Ruling: Even though the ball has technically not passed a fielder, the ball is alive and in play because the fielders had an opportunity to field the batted ball but chose not to. The runner is not out in this situation.

TO SUMMARIZE:

A runner is out when struck by a batted ball (unintentional on the part of the runner) unless:

- (1) The ball has been touched by an infielder; or
- (2) The ball has passed through or by an infielder AND no other infielder has a chance to make a play on the ball.

Also, a runner must attempt to avoid a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball, even if the ball was deflected by another fielder.

Rule 5.10(b): TEMPORARY FAILURE OF LIGHTS

The note to official rule 5.10(b) states that a league may adopt its own regulations governing games interrupted by light failure. The following are the regulations to be adopted:

In the event of a temporary failure of lights while a ball is in flight or a play is in progress and the umpires are not able to follow the play because of the light failure, the umpires will immediately call "Time." If a play is in progress when such light failure occurs and further action is possible, the entire play shall be nullified. When the lights are restored, play shall resume with the same situation as existed at the start of the play that was interrupted by the light failure.

NOTE: If runners are being awarded bases at the time of light failure, after the lights have been restored runners are allowed to run bases in accordance with base-running rules.

Play: Batter hits ball out of ballpark for home run. After the ball has left the park and runners are rounding the bases, light failure occurs.

Ruling: When the lights are restored, runners are allowed to run bases in accordance with base-running rules.

Rules 6.03 and 6.06: BATTER'S POSITION IN BATTER'S BOX

OFFICIAL RULES OF BASEBALL- CANADIAN CONTENT

When the batter assumes a batting stance in the batter's box, he shall have both feet entirely within the batter's box; i.e., no part of either foot may extend beyond the outer edge of the lines defining the box when the batter assumes a position in the box. There is no penalty specified for violation other than the batter shall be instructed to stay within the batter's box if brought to the attention of the umpire, or—if blatant or recurring violation—upon immediate direction of the umpire. If a player, after so directed by the umpire, blatantly refuses to comply, the player is subject to ejection. See Official Baseball Rule 6.03.

Under Official Baseball Rule 6.06(a), if a batter hits a ball (fair, foul, or foul tip) with one or both feet on the ground entirely outside the batter's box, the batter shall be declared out. (See Official Baseball Rule 6.06(a).)

TO CLARIFY: There are two different rules regarding the batter's position in the batter's box. Rule 6.03 requires the batter to have both feet within the batter's box when assuming an initial position in the box prior to hitting (no portion of the foot may be outside the line under this provision, although no penalty is prescribed other than the instructions given above). Rule 6.06(a) provides that the batter be declared out if he hits the ball with one or both feet on the ground entirely outside the batter's box. (So long as any part of the foot is touching any part of the line when the batter hits the ball, he is within the rules.)

Rule 6.05(a): FIELDER GOING INTO DUGOUT OR STANDS

The Comment to Official Baseball Rule 6.05(a) stipulates that no fielder may step into or go into a dugout to make a catch. However, if a fielder, after catching a fly ball on the playing surface, falls down in the dugout, or falls into a dugout, bench, or grandstand at any point while in possession of the ball, the base runners shall be entitled to advance one base and the ball shall be dead.

In order to make a legal catch, the fielder must have one or both feet on or over the playing surface (including the lip of the dugout) and neither foot on the ground inside the dugout or other out-of-play surface.

A fielder is considered to be in the dugout—and thereby unable to make a valid catch—when the fielder has one or both feet on the surface inside the dugout (for example, on the steps or on the floor of the dugout) or has dived into the dugout with neither foot on or above the playing surface. The lip of a dugout (i.e., the top of the dugout steps that is even with the playing surface, even if it is a different material than the playing surface) is considered outside the dugout for purposes of this rule.

As an example, a player who catches a pop-up with one foot on the lip and the other foot on a step inside the dugout would be deemed to be inside the dugout, and no catch would be allowed. On the other hand, a player who catches a pop-up with one foot on the lip and the other foot in the air over a step or over the dugout floor would not be deemed to be inside the dugout, because in that example one foot is on the playing surface and neither foot is on the ground inside the dugout.

NOTE: A ball striking equipment on the lip of the dugout is dead. Clubs should make best efforts to keep all equipment off the top step (lip) of the dugout.

EXAMPLES:

(1) Catcher catches a foul pop-up on the field of play, and momentum carries him into the dugout. While in the dugout the catcher drops the ball in attempting to throw it.

Ruling: Legal catch. "Time" is called and all runners awarded two bases from the time the catcher dropped the ball (time of throw).

(2) Catcher catches a foul pop-up on the field of play, and momentum carries him into the dugout. While in the dugout he falls down.

Ruling: Legal catch. "Time" is called and all runners awarded one base from the time of the pitch.

(3) Catcher catches a foul pop-up on the field of play, and momentum carries him into the dugout. While in the dugout the catcher falls down, then drops the ball.

Ruling: Foul ball.

(4) Catcher makes a diving catch and slides into the dugout after catching the ball. The catcher ends up on the floor of the dugout, face-down, with possession of the ball.

Ruling: Legal catch. "Time" is called and all runners awarded one base from the time of the pitch.

(5) Bases loaded, one out. Fielder catches ball and momentum carries him into the stands. May the fielder throw for a play?

Ruling: No. "Time" is called and all runners advance one base.

Rule 6.05(h): THROWN BALL STRIKES HELMET OR BAT

If a thrown ball strikes a helmet or bat accidentally (no intent on the part of the runner to interfere) in fair or foul territory, the ball remains in play the same as if it had not hit the helmet or bat.

OFFICIAL RULES OF BASEBALL- CANADIAN CONTENT

If, in the umpire's judgment, there is intent on the part of a runner to interfere with a thrown ball by dropping his helmet or bat or by throwing either at the ball, then the runner is out, the ball dead, and runners return to the last base legally touched.

Rule 6.05(L): INFIELDER INTENTIONALLY DROPS FLY BALL OR LINE DRIVE

Under Official Baseball Rule 6.05(L), the batter is out, the ball is dead, and runner(s) return to their original base(s) when an infielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball or line drive with runners on first, first and second, first and third, or bases loaded (with less than two out).

Note that the batter is not declared out in this situation if the infielder permits the ball to drop untouched to the ground except when the Infield Fly rule applies.

When an infielder deliberately drops a fair ball or a line drive to set up a double play situation, runners may safely return to the bases they occupied at the time of the pitch. The same application shall be made if an outfielder has come so close to the infield to set up a double play situation if he intentionally drops the ball.

Runners cannot advance under this rule. Umpires shall immediately call "Time," when, in their judgment, the ball is intentionally dropped.

Rule 6.06(c): BATTER INTERFERES WITH CATCHER

If the batter interferes with the catcher's throw after the batter is out on strike three, the runner is declared out for batter's interference.

Rule 6.06(c): BACKSWING (FOLLOW-THROUGH) HITS CATCHER

If a batter strikes at a ball and misses and in the umpire's judgment unintentionally hits the catcher or the ball in back of the batter on the follow-through or backswing while the batter is still in the batter's box, it shall be called a strike only (no interference). The ball will be dead, however, and no runner shall advance on the play. If this infraction should occur in a situation where the catcher's initial throw directly retires a runner despite the infraction, the play stands the same as if no violation had occurred. If this infraction should occur in a situation where the batter would normally become a runner because of a third strike not caught, the ball shall be dead and the batter declared out.

This interpretation applies even if the catcher is in the act of making a throw to retire a runner. That is, if the batter is in the batter's box and his normal back-swing or follow-through unintentionally strikes the catcher or the ball while the catcher is in the act of throwing, "Time" is called and runners return (unless the catcher's initial throw retires the runner).

Where a batter is attempting to bunt and decides to pull his / her bat backwards and not attempt to strike the ball, this is not considered a follow-through or backswing as the batter is in full control of his / her bat. Should the batter interfere with the catcher by pulling his / her bat backwards and there is no play being made on a runner, "Time" shall be called but no interference. This does not give the batter the license to pull his back intentionally interfering with the catcher. If the catcher is making an attempt to retire a runner when the batter pulls his / her bat backwards, interference should be called on the batter and no runners may advance. If the catcher's first throw retires the runner attempting to advance, then the interference shall be disregarded.

Rule 6.06(c): BATTER INTERFERES WITH CATCHER'S THROW BACK TO PITCHER

If the batter interferes with the catcher's throw back to the pitcher by stepping out of the batter's box while at bat (no runners attempting to advance), it shall not be considered interference under Official Baseball Rule 6.06(c). In such cases, the umpire shall call "Time" only (no interference). The ball is dead and no runner shall advance on the play.

This interpretation does not, of course, give the batter license to interfere intentionally with the catcher's throw back to the pitcher, and in such cases the batter shall be called out. If the batter becomes a runner on ball four and the catcher's throw strikes him or his bat, the ball remains alive and in play (provided no intentional interference by the batter-runner).

If the batter interferes with the catcher's throw to retire a runner by stepping out of the batter's box, interference shall be called on the batter under Official Baseball Rule 6.06(c).

Rules 6.08(c), 7.04(d), and 7.07: CATCHER'S INTERFERENCE

Under Official Baseball Rule 6.08(c), if catcher's interference is called with a play in progress, the umpire will allow the play to continue because the manager may elect to take the play—unless the batter reaches first base and all other runners advance one base, in which event the play stands and the manager has no option to take the interference penalty.

However, if the batter is standing in the batter's box and he or his bat is struck by the catcher's throw back to the pitcher (or throw in attempting to retire a runner) and, in the umpire's judgment, there is no intent on the part of the batter to interfere with the throw, the ball is alive and in play.

The umpire should indicate catcher's interference by pointing at and calling the infraction.

The manager shall make the election to take the play or take the interference penalty by advising the plate umpire immediately following the play, and once made, such election cannot be changed.

OFFICIAL RULES OF BASEBALL- CANADIAN CONTENT

If the batter-runner misses first base, or a runner misses his next base, he shall be considered as having reached the next base, as referred to in the Note to Official Baseball Rule 7.04(d) and as stated in the Approved Ruling of Official Baseball Rule 8.05:

A runner who misses the first base to which he is advancing and who is called out on appeal shall be considered as having advanced one base for the purpose of this rule.

If a runner is attempting to steal a base when the catcher interferes with the batter, the runner is awarded the base on the interference. Runners not attempting to steal or not forced to advance remain on the base they occupied at the time of the interference unless Official Baseball Rule 7.07 applies.

Under Official Baseball Rule 7.07, if a runner is stealing home when the catcher interferes with the batter, the additional penalty of a balk is invoked, which enables all runners on base to advance (whether or not they were stealing).

See also Official Baseball Rules 6.08(c), 7.04(d) and 7.07.

Rule 6.09: FLY BALL STRIKING TOP OF OUTFIELD WALL

Unless provided otherwise by local ground rule, a fair fly ball striking the top of the outfield wall and bounding back onto the playing field shall be treated the same as a fair fly ball that strikes the outfield wall and rebounds back onto the playing field (in play but may not be caught for the purposes of an out).

Unless provided otherwise by local ground rule, a fair fly ball striking the top of the outfield wall and bounding over the wall shall be ruled a home run.

Unless provided otherwise by a local ground rule, a fair fly ball striking the top of the outfield wall and remaining on the top of the wall shall be deemed a ground-rule double.

Rule 6.09(b): ABANDONING BASE PATHS

Under the Comment to Official Baseball Rule 6.09(b), a batter who strikes out on a third strike not caught is treated differently than the plays relating to abandoning the base paths found in the Comments to Official Baseball Rule 7.08(a)(2).

Specifically, the following interpretations shall govern a batter who has struck out on a third strike not caught:

A batter who does not realize his situation on a third strike not caught, and who is not in the process of running to first base, shall be declared out once the batter leaves the dirt circle surrounding home plate.

The above ruling shall also apply to a batter who strikes out on third strike not caught and who makes no effort to advance to first base within, in the umpire's judgment, a reasonable amount of time. For example, a batter who "lingers" at home plate, removing a shin guard, and then takes off for first base shall also be declared out.

Due to the variation in size and shape of dirt circles surrounding home plate in different ballparks, in the umpire's judgment when the batter-runner has shown no effort to advance to first base on a third strike not caught such batter may be declared out. In any case, should the batter leave the dirt circle surrounding home plate before attempting to advance to first base, the batter shall be declared out.

Umpires must be alert to time-play situations when a runner abandons an effort to touch the next base, as demonstrated in the following play:

Play: Bases loaded, two out, score tied in the bottom of the ninth inning. Batter hits a home run out of the ballpark. Runner on first, thinking the home run automatically wins the game, leaves the baseline and heads toward the dugout. The runner on first is declared out before the runner from third reaches home plate. Other runners continue around the bases and eventually touch home.

Ruling: No runs score; the third out was made before the runner from third touched home plate. Game continues in the top of the tenth inning with the score still tied. NOTE: If there were less than two out, the game would end the moment the winning run touched home plate. See also Official Baseball Rules 4.09(b) and 4.11(c).

Rule 6.10: DESIGNATED HITTER

Situation: The pitcher is removed from the mound and is now playing short stop, and the new pitcher enters the game from the bullpen.

Rule: 6.10 states that the game pitcher can only pinch hit (bat) for the DH. Which means the new pitcher would have to bat in the batting position that was occupied by the DH.

Ruling: This is a multiple substitution and the manager can choose where he wants the players to bat. If the manager does not specify, the new pitcher will bat in the batting position that was occupied by the DH.

Rule 7.01: APPEAL PLAYS—APPROVED RULINGS

(1) Runner on first, one out. The batter doubles. Runner on first rounds the bases and tries for home. On the play at the plate, the catcher misses the tag and runner misses the plate in sliding by. As the catcher begins to chase the runner to apply a tag, the batter-runner tries for third base.

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Seeing this, the catcher throws to the third baseman, who retires the batter-runner. May the defensive team still appeal at home on the runner originally on first?

Ruling: Yes. The catcher's play on the batter-runner at third base was still part of the continuous action created by and following the batted ball. Therefore, the defensive team would not lose its rights to make an appeal by playing on the runner at home or the batter-runner at third and may still appeal at home.

(2) Runner on first base, one out. The pitcher attempts a pickoff but throws the ball past the first baseman down the right field line. Runner misses second base but tries for third. The right fielder's throw to get the runner at third base is too late, although the runner is tagged by the third baseman. May the defense appeal at second base that the runner missed it?

Ruling: Yes. The third baseman's attempted play on the runner at third base was still part of the continuous action created by and following the aborted pick-off throw. Therefore, the defensive team does not lose its right to make its appeal by playing on the runner at third base and may still appeal.

(3) Runners on first and third, two out. The pitcher's next pitch is a wild pitch back to the screen. While the ball is being chased down, the runner on third crosses the plate. Runner from first misses second base but tries for third. The catcher's throw to third base gets past the third baseman, and the runner tries to score. The shortstop, backing up third, attempts to throw the runner out at the plate, but the catcher's tag is too late and the runner is ruled safe. May the defensive team still appeal at second base on the runner originally on first?

Ruling: Yes. The defensive team's attempted plays on the runner originally on first at third and home were still part of the continuous action created by and following the wild pitched ball. Therefore, the defensive team does not lose its right to make its appeal by attempting these plays and may still appeal at second base on the runner originally on first.

(4) Runner on first, one out. The batter singles. Runner from first misses second base and advances to third without a play. The ball comes into the infield and is returned to the pitcher. The pitcher stretches, comes to a set position, and then legally steps off the rubber to start an appeal at second base. The original runner from first (now on third) breaks for home as the defense starts its appeal. The pitcher, instead of completing the appeal play, throws home to get the runner, but the tag is too late and the runner is ruled safe. May the defensive team still appeal at second base?

Ruling: No. The defensive team's attempt to retire the original runner at home occurred after a definite break in the original continuous action that was created by and followed the batted ball. Therefore, the defensive team lost its right to make any appeals once it made the play at home and may not appeal at second nor at any other base.

(5) Runner on first, one out. Runner from first goes to third on a single but misses second base. Runner is safe at third on a sliding tag play. The ball is returned to the pitcher, who steps on the rubber, stretches, and comes to a set position. The defense intends to appeal, but the pitcher balks in stepping off the rubber. After the penalty is enforced, may the defense still appeal at second base on the original runner from first?

Ruling: No. The defense did not lose its right to appeal by playing on the runner originally on first at third base; that play was still part of the continuous action created by and following the batted ball. However, a balk is considered a play for the purpose of this section of the appeal rule. Because the defensive team cannot appeal following a play or attempted play, the pitcher's balk cost the defensive team its right to make an appeal. NOTE: The pitcher is not required to step off the rubber prior to throwing to a base to make an appeal (see Official Baseball Rule 8.01).

(6) Runner on second, one out. Runner from second attempts to score on a single but misses third base. Runner is safe at home on a sliding tag play. On the throw home, the batter-runner tries to take second and is safe there on a sliding tag play, as the catcher's throw is too late to retire the batter-runner. Time is called. The pitcher steps on the rubber, stretches, and comes to a set position. The defense intends to appeal at third on the runner originally on second. The pitcher legally steps back off the rubber, checks the runner at second base, and steps to throw to third for the appeal. The pitcher's throw, however, is wild and goes out of play. The runner on second is properly awarded home. May the defense still make its intended appeal at third on the runner originally on second when a new ball is put into play?

Ruling: No. The attempted plays to retire the runner originally on second at home and the batter-runner at second occurred during the continuous action that was created by and followed the batted ball and do not nullify the defensive team's right to make an appeal. However, once the defensive team "errs" (i.e., throws the ball out of play) in its attempt to appeal at third on the runner originally on second, it loses its right to make an appeal. Throwing the ball out of play in this situation is considered an attempted play that occurred after a definite break in the continuous action play.

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(7) No runners. The batter doubles but misses first base. Time is called. The pitcher steps on the rubber, stretches, and comes to a set position. The defense intends to appeal at first base. The pitcher legally steps off the rubber and checks the runner at second base. The pitcher's throw for the appeal gets past the first baseman but remains in play. The runner advances to third as the ball is being retrieved. May the defensive team still make its intended appeal at first base?

Ruling: Yes. Because the ball is live and in play, if the ball is retrieved and thrown back to first base immediately (i.e., no intervening play), the appeal is allowed.

(8) Runner on first, one out. The batter singles. Runner on first misses second base but is safe at third on sliding tag play. Time is called. The pitcher steps on the rubber, stretches, and comes to a set position. The defense intends to appeal at second base. The pitcher legally steps off the rubber. Seeing this, the runner originally on first (now on third) bluffs as if to go home. The pitcher, now off the rubber, steps toward third and cocks his arm as if to throw but does not throw. May the defensive team still make its intended appeal at second base on the runner originally on first?

Ruling: Yes. The attempted play at third on the runner originally on first was still part of the continuous action created by and following the batted ball and therefore did not nullify the defensive team's right to make an appeal. The bluff by the pitcher (step and cocked arm) to check the runner at third is not considered a play or attempted play. Therefore, the defensive team may still attempt its intended appeal at second base.

(9) Runner on first, one out. Batter hits a home run out of ballpark. Runner from first misses second and batter-runner misses first. After both runners cross the plate, the umpire puts new ball in play. Pitcher takes a position on the rubber, steps off, and intends to make an appeal at first base on the batter-runner. However, the pitcher's throw is wild and goes into the stands. The umpire then puts another ball into play, and the pitcher again takes a position on the rubber and steps off. This time the pitcher intends to make an appeal at second base on the runner originally on first. Should the umpire allow the appeal?

Ruling: No. If the pitcher throws the ball out of play when making an appeal, such act shall be considered an attempted play. No further appeal will be allowed on any runner at any base.

(10) Runners on first and third, one out. Runner from first is stealing on the pitch. Batter hits a fly ball to right field that is caught for the second out. Runner on third tags and scores after the catch. Runner from first tries to return to first base after the catch, but the right fielder's throw beats the runner to the bag and the runner is declared out for the third out of the inning. Runner from third base touched home plate before the third out was made at first base.

Ruling: Run counts. This is a time play, NOT a force play.

(11) May a runner who has missed a base return to retouch the missed base after having entered the dugout?

Ruling: No.

(12) Batter-runner hits a ground ball and beats the play at first base but misses the bag.

Ruling: The proper mechanic is for the umpire to call the runner safe, indicating he beat the play. If the defense appeals by tagging the runner (or base) and appealing that the runner missed first base before the runner returns to first base, the batter-runner would be declared out. Note also Official Baseball Rule 7.08(k) Comment.

(13) Runner on first, no outs, hit-and-run. Batter hits a line drive which strikes the pitcher in the back, flies into the air, and is caught in flight by the third baseman for an out. The runner on first is nearly to second base when the ball is caught. The third baseman throws to first, attempting to double the runner off first base; however, his throw is wild and goes into the stands. At the time of the throw, the runner from first has not quite reached second base. When the ball goes out of play, the runner from first has rounded second base (touching second as he rounded it) and is several steps towards shortstop.

(a) What is the proper award? Ruling: Third base—two bases from the time of the pitch because this is the first play by an infielder.

(b) What if the runner is beyond second base at the time of the throw? Is the award then home? Ruling: No, the award is still third because the throw was the first play by an infielder.

(c) In the original play may the runner go back and retouch first base while the ball is dead? Ruling: Yes, provided he does so before touching third base (and provided he touches all bases in order, both returning and advancing). See Official Baseball Rule 7.10(b) Approved Ruling (2). This is a key point. Because the runner left first base too soon, the runner must return and retouch first base. Because the ball is dead, the runner must return to first base before the runner touches the next base. The runner's "next base" is determined by the runner's position at the time the ball went out of play. At the time the ball went out of play, the runner was between second and third. Therefore, in this play, the runner must return and retouch first base before touching third.

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(d) May the runner return to first base to retouch after the runner touches third base? Ruling: No. (See preceding question and ruling.)

(e) What if the runner attempts to return to first base after the runner touches third base? Should the umpire stop the runner from doing so? Ruling: No. The umpire should not intervene in any way other than to realize that after the runner has touched third, the runner's retouch of first base is meaningless. After touching third base, if the runner should attempt to retrace his steps while the ball is dead (from third, back to second, back to first, then to second, and finally to third), the umpire would not physically stop the runner from doing so. However, the runner's retouch of first base would not correct the fact the runner left too soon because when the ball is dead, the runner must correct his base-running error before he touches the next base. (Again, see Official Baseball Rule 7.10(b) Approved Ruling (2).)

(f) In this play, when the ball went out of play, the runner was already past second. Isn't the runner already a "base beyond" the base the runner left too soon? And therefore, the runner should not be able to return to first base because the runner has already reached second base, correct? Ruling: No. The "base beyond" or "next base" is determined by the runner's position at the time the ball goes out of play. In this play, the runner's "next base" is third base.

(g) In this play, how can the runner correct the fact the runner left first base too soon? Ruling: When the ball is dead (out of play), the runner should stop advancing towards third and retrace his steps in order, touching second and then first (all before touching third base). The runner should then advance to third (his awarded base) by touching second and then third, in order.

(h) If the runner goes directly to third base on the award (and does not retouch first base while the ball is dead), may the defense appeal the fact the runner left too soon at first? Ruling: Yes, after the ball is put back in play, the defense may appeal by tagging the runner or first base. (See Official Baseball Rule 7.10(a).)

(i) After the ball is back in play, may the defense put the runner out by appealing at second base? Ruling: No. The runner may be put out only by tagging the runner or the base the runner left too soon. (See Official Baseball Rule 7.10(a))

(j) Doesn't the act of the third baseman throwing the ball out of play nullify a succeeding appeal attempt? That is, hasn't the defense erred on its first attempt to appeal? Ruling: No. The wild throw by the third baseman is part of the continuous action created by the batter hitting the ball and does not nullify a subsequent appeal after the continuous action has ended.

(k) Suppose the defense does appeal at second base, and the umpire declares the runner safe (after ascertaining what the defense is appealing). May the defense then appeal at first base? Ruling: Yes, because an appeal itself is not considered a play or attempted play.

(l) What if the defense appeals at first base, but the pitcher balks in making the appeal? Ruling: No subsequent appeal would be allowed, because a balk is considered a play.

(m) What if the defense appeals at first base, but the pitcher throws the ball into the stands? Ruling: No subsequent appeal would be allowed, as this is considered an attempted play.

(n) Can the second baseman back up the appeal play at first? Ruling: While the second baseman may run onto foul territory after the ball is put into play, the umpire may not put the ball in play until all fielders (other than the catcher) are on fair territory. See Official Baseball Rule 4.03.

(o) What if the defense appeals at first base, but the pitcher throws wildly and the ball rolls down the right-field line? Ruling: If the wild throw is retrieved and thrown back to first base immediately (i.e., no intervening play), the appeal would be allowed.

(p) To begin the appeal, the pitcher steps off the rubber, then fakes a throw to third to bluff the runner back. Is this an attempted play? Ruling: No.

(q) When the pitcher steps off the rubber to start the appeal, the runner breaks for home. Pitcher throws to the catcher, and the runner gets in a rundown, ending up safely at third base. May the defense now appeal at first? Ruling: No.

(14) May a runner return to touch a missed base after the third out?

Answer: No. Example: Runner on second base, two out. Batter hits a base hit but is thrown out attempting to reach second base. Runner originally on second crossed the plate before the third out but missed the plate. After the third out at second base, the runner who missed the plate then returns and touches the plate. Defense, before leaving the infield, then appeals at home.

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Ruling: Initially the run scores (runner reached home plate before the third out). However, the defense's appeal is sustained and the runner is called out because no run may score after the third out is made. See Official Baseball Rule 4.09(a).s

For the purposes of an appeal of this nature, the defensive team only includes the pitcher and all infielders crossing the foul line. As long as one of these members of the defensive team remains on the playing field within the foul lines, a legal appeal may be made.

In addition to the preceding approved rulings regarding appeal plays, the examples and plays found in the Comments to Official Baseball Rule 4.09 also pertain to appeal plays. In particular, plays found in that section of the Official Baseball Rules demonstrate the following three concepts:

(1) No run shall score during a play in which the third out is made by the batter-runner before the batter-runner touches first base.

(2) No run shall score during a play in which the third out is a force out.

(3) Following runners are not affected by an act of a preceding runner unless two are out.

Rule 7.03: TWO RUNNERS IN CONTACT WITH BASE

Under Official Baseball Rule 7.03, if two runners are touching a base at the same time, the following runner is out when tagged (unless, of course, the lead runner is forced). It is suggested that the umpire clearly indicate by pointing which runner has been declared out in such situations. See Official Baseball Rules 7.03(a) and 7.03(b).

Rule 7.05(c): DETACHED EQUIPMENT TOUCHING PITCHED OR BATTED BALL

Any defensive player deliberately touching a batted ball over foul territory that, in the umpire's judgment, has an opportunity to become a fair ball with detached equipment will entitle all runners—including the batter-runner—to advance three bases from the time the ball was touched without liability to be put out. The ball is in play, and runners may advance beyond the awarded base at their own risk.

If a defensive player deliberately touches a batted ball over foul territory that, in the umpire's judgment, clearly has no opportunity to become a fair ball, the umpire shall rule a foul ball.

See also Official Baseball Rule 7.05(c).

Rules 7.05(g) and 7.10: PLAY OR ATTEMPTED PLAY

A play or an attempted play shall be considered as one of the five following situations:

- Tag or attempted tag of a runner
- Tag or attempted tag of a base
- Throw from another fielder in an attempt to get an out
- Rundown
- Balk

This interpretation of "play or attempted play" applies to both awarding of bases (Official Baseball Rule 7.05(g)) and appeal plays (Official Baseball Rule 7.10):

A play or attempted play is interpreted as a legitimate effort by a defensive player who has possession of the ball to actually retire a runner. This may include an actual attempt to tag a runner, a fielder running toward a base with the ball in an attempt to force or tag a runner, or actually throwing to another defensive player in an attempt to retire a runner. (The fact that the runner is not out is not relevant.) A fake or a feint to throw shall not be deemed a play or an attempted play.

EXAMPLES:

A play or attempted play:

(1) Runners on first and second, ground ball to the shortstop, who makes a swipe at the runner from second but misses and then throws beyond first base into the stands.

Ruling: The swipe by the shortstop is an attempted play; thus the throw to first is not the first play by an infielder (even though it is the first throw), and the proper award of bases would be from the time of the throw.

(2) Runner on first and ground ball to second baseman who flips ball to short to get runner from first but who is safe. Shortstop throws beyond first into the stands.

Ruling: The flip by the second baseman to the shortstop is an attempted play, even though unsuccessful. The throw to first is not the first play by an infielder and thus runner should be placed from the time of the throw. Runner who was on first would score and batter-runner would be placed at second.

Not a play or attempted play:

(1) A fake or a feint to a base but not actually throwing, even though the fielder draws an arm back to feint a throw.

(2) A pitcher feinting a throw toward a base to hold or check a runner's progress in order to complete an appeal play at another base.

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(3) Runner on first, ground ball to the shortstop, who starts to flip the ball to the second baseman but does not and throws the ball beyond first and out of play.

Ruling: The feint to the second baseman is not considered a play or attempted play, and award of bases is from the time of the pitch.

(4) Runners on first and third, runner on first stealing as ground ball is hit to shortstop. The shortstop feints a throw home but does not throw—instead throws to first and into the stands; during this time the runner from first has rounded second base.

Ruling: The feint by the shortstop toward home is not considered a play or attempted play; thus the throw beyond first is the first play by an infielder and awards should be made from the time of the pitch.

Rule 7.05(g): AWARDING BASES ON WILD THROWS

See Official Baseball Rule 7.05(g) regarding awarding of bases on balls that are thrown out of play. In making such awards, keep the following points in mind:

(1) If the throw is the first play by an infielder and the batter-runner has not reached first base when the throw was made, award all runners from time of pitch.

(2) If the throw is the first play by an infielder and all runners including the batter-runner have advanced a base when the throw was made, award all runners from their positions at the time of the throw.

(3) If the throw is not the first play by an infielder or the throw is made by an outfielder, award all runners from their positions at the time of the throw.

The Approved Ruling of Official Baseball Rule 7.05(g) provides that when the first throw is by an infielder after runners and batter have advanced one base, then runners are awarded two bases from their position when the throw was made. (See item (2) above.) This can happen on a high fly that an infielder goes back to catch but drops, during which time the batter and runners have clearly advanced one base; then, in an attempt to put out the batter-runner, who has already passed first base, the fielder throws the ball into the stands. While it is the first throw by an infielder, the runners, including the batter-runner, had advanced one base before the throw and accordingly are awarded two bases from the base they last touched when the throw was made. Before awarding two bases from the base last touched by the runners, the umpire must judge that all the runners—including the batter-runner—have definitely advanced to the next base before the throw was made. The term “when the wild throw was made” means when the throw actually left the player’s hand and not when the thrown ball hit the ground, passed a receiving fielder, or went out of play into the stands.

When a runner is awarded bases without liability to be put out because the ball has gone out of play, the runner is not relieved of the responsibility to touch the awarded base and all intervening bases.

In awarding of bases, crews should have the benefit of input of their partners. If there is any question as to the proper award, it is suggested the umpires confer as a crew.

Rule 7.05(g): TIME OF PITCH

The time of pitch is defined as the moment the pitcher’s movements commit the pitcher to deliver the ball to the batter.

- In a windup position, this is defined as the moment the pitcher begins the natural movement associated with the pitcher’s delivery of the ball to the batter (i.e., the start of his windup or delivery).
- From a set position, this is defined as the moment the pitcher begins the natural movement associated with the pitcher’s delivery of the ball after the pitcher has come set with both hands together in front of his body.

A runner who advances while the pitcher is in contact with the rubber is considered to occupy the base last touched at the time the pitcher initiates his actual pitching motion to the batter. The pitching motion is defined as any movement that commits the pitcher to deliver the ball to the batter.

So long as the pitcher is not committed to pitch, a runner may advance and is considered to occupy the last base touched at the time the pitcher initiates his actual delivery to the batter.

The preliminary motion known as the “stretch” is not considered the start of the pitching motion.

Rule 7.05(h): BALLS DEFLECTED OUT OF PLAY

The Approved Ruling of Official Baseball Rule 7.05(h) provides that when a pitched ball deflects off the catcher and goes directly out of play, the award is one base from the time of the pitch. Likewise, when a throw from the pitcher while in contact with the rubber deflects off a fielder and goes directly out of play, the award is also one base.

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However, the Approved Ruling also provides that if the pitched ball (or ball thrown by the pitcher while in contact with the rubber) goes through or by the catcher (or fielder), remains on the playing field, and is subsequently kicked or deflected out of play, the award is two bases from the time of the pitch.

The above rulings apply if the deflection is unintentional on the part of the fielder. If, in the judgment of the umpires, a fielder intentionally kicks or deflects any batted or thrown ball out of play, the award is two bases from the time the ball was kicked or deflected.

The following list helps summarize awards when a ball is deflected out of play:

- If a pitched ball deflects off the catcher and goes directly out of play, the award is one base from the time of the pitch.
- If a ball thrown by the pitcher while in contact with the rubber deflects off a fielder and goes directly out of play, the award is one base from the time of the throw.
- If a pitched ball (or a ball thrown by the pitcher while in contact with the rubber) goes through or by the catcher (or fielder), remains on the playing field, and is subsequently kicked or deflected out of play (unintentionally in either case), the award is two bases from the time of the pitch. This ruling applies without regard to whether or not the ball would have gone out of play had it not been kicked or deflected. (See the Approved Ruling to Official Baseball Rule 7.05(h).)
- If a thrown ball deflects off a fielder and goes directly out of play, the award is two bases from the time of the pitch if it is the first play by an infielder; otherwise the award is two bases from the time of the throw.
- If a thrown ball goes through or by a fielder, remains on the playing field, and is subsequently kicked or deflected out of play (unintentionally in either case), the award is two bases from the time of the throw.
- If a fair fly ball is deflected in flight by a fielder and then goes out of the playing field in flight over fair territory, it is a home run.
- If a fair fly ball is deflected in flight by a fielder and then goes out of play outside the foul lines, the award is two bases from the time of the pitch.
- If a fair ball not in flight is deflected by a fielder and then goes out of play, the award is two bases from the time of the pitch.
- If a fielder has complete possession of a batted or thrown ball and subsequently deflects or kicks the ball out of play, the award is two bases from the position of the runners at the time the ball was kicked or deflected.
- If a fielder has complete possession of a batted or thrown ball and drops the ball while he is out of play, or if the fielder drops such a ball and it then goes out of play, the award is two bases from the position of the runners at the time the ball was dropped.
- If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally kicks or deflects a batted or thrown ball out of play, the award is two bases from the time the ball was kicked or deflected.

Rule 7.06: OBSTRUCTION MECHANIC

There are two types of obstruction and a different mechanic is used with each type.

Ⓞ The first type of obstruction (Official Baseball Rule 7.06(a)) deals with cases when the runner is obstructed WHILE a play is being made on such runner. Examples of this type of obstruction include:

- (1) Runner is obstructed during a rundown.
- (2) Runner is obstructed as a fielder is making a direct throw to a base in an attempt to retire that runner.
- (3) Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a ground ball to an infielder.
- (4) Any other example where a play is being made directly on the runner at the moment the runner is obstructed.

This type of obstruction is to be signaled by the umpire immediately calling "Time" (both hands overhead) and then pointing laterally at the obstruction while calling loudly and clearly, "That's obstruction." The ball is dead immediately under this section of the obstruction rule, and all runners shall be awarded bases they would have reached had there been no obstruction. Furthermore, the obstructed runner shall be awarded at least one base beyond his last legally touched base at the time of obstruction.

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Note that this section of the obstruction rule (i.e., runner obstructed while play being made on such runner) also provides for cases when a thrown ball is in flight at the moment the obstruction occurs. In such cases, the umpire shall take into consideration the results of the throw when making the award. As an example, if a throw is in flight at the moment the obstruction occurs (umpire calls “Time”) and if the throw turns out to be wild and goes out of play, all runners will be awarded two bases (even though the umpire had called “Time” before the ball went out of play). In such cases as this, the umpires have the responsibility of determining whether a throw is made before or after the obstruction. If the umpire judges that a throw was made after the obstruction, the obstructed runner will be awarded only one base from the base such runner last touched at the time of obstruction.

② The second type of obstruction (Official Baseball Rule 7.06(b)) deals with cases when the runner is obstructed while NO PLAY is being made on such runner. Examples of this type of obstruction include:

- (1) Batter-runner is obstructed in rounding first base on a base hit while the ball is in the outfield.
- (2) Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a ball hit to the outfield.
- (3) Runner from first steals second; catcher’s throw is wild and goes into center field; runner is obstructed in attempting to advance to third base. Ball is loose in the outfield when obstruction occurs.
- (4) Runner from second is obstructed while rounding third base on a hit to the outfield.
- (5) Any other example where no play is being made directly on the runner at the moment he is obstructed.

Under this section of the obstruction rule, the obstruction is to be signaled by the umpire pointing laterally at the obstruction while calling loudly and clearly, “That’s obstruction.” The ball is not dead, however, and the umpire shall allow play to continue until all play has ceased and no further action is possible (see exception in NOTE (1) below). At that moment, the umpire shall call “Time” and impose such penalties, if any, that in the umpire’s judgment will nullify the act of obstruction. It is important to note that in cases occurring under this section of the obstruction rule, the umpire shall not call “Time” until all action has ceased and no further play is possible.

NOTE (1): If a runner is obstructed under this second section of the obstruction rule, play is to proceed to completion—even if it results in a play later being made on the runner who was previously obstructed. However, if such a play on a previously obstructed runner results in that runner actually being tagged out before reaching the base to which such runner would have been awarded because of the obstruction, the umpire shall in that case call “Time” at the moment the runner is tagged out. The umpire shall then impose such penalties that will nullify the obstruction, which will include, of course, the obstructed runner being awarded the base to which such runner would be entitled because of the obstruction.

NOTE (2): Runner Obstructed While No Play Being Made on Him. In determining what base a runner will be awarded under this second section of the obstruction rule, it is permissible for the umpire to consider the position and speed of the runner, ball, and fielder at the moment the obstruction occurs. However, the ultimate decision in placing the runners shall not be made until all play has ceased and shall be based on the principle that the obstructed runner will be entitled to the base such runner would have reached had no obstruction occurred.

NOTE (3): If a runner is obstructed while no play is being made on him, the umpire making the call should have the benefit of input of his partners in determining what bases, if any, shall be awarded to the obstructed runner. In other words, the crew may confer in order to determine what reasonably might have happened had the obstruction not occurred.

EXAMPLE: Play: Batter-runner hits a fair ball down the right field line and is obstructed in rounding first base. At the moment the obstruction occurs, the right fielder has not yet fielded the ball, and it appears at that moment that the batter-runner will end up with a stand-up double. However, as play proceeds, the ball gets by the right fielder, and the batter-runner continues on to third. The batter-runner is then thrown out at third base on a very close play.

Ruling: Because it is permissible for the umpire to consider the position of the runner, ball, and fielder at the moment the obstruction occurs, the umpire may initially plan on “protecting” the batter-runner as far as second base. However, as play continued, it became apparent that had the batter-runner not been obstructed in rounding first base, the batter-runner would have reached third safely. Therefore, the moment the batter-runner is tagged out at third base, “Time” is called and the batter-runner is awarded third on the obstruction. This decision is made on the principle that the umpire, in making awards on this type of obstruction, shall allow play to continue until no further action is possible and then shall make awards—if any—that will nullify the obstruction. In this example if the umpire felt that the obstruction had no bearing on the fact that the batter-runner was thrown out at third, the out would stand.

Rule 7.06(a): BATTER-RUNNER OBSTRUCTED BEFORE REACHING FIRST BASE

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When the batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base, it is not always the case that the batter-runner will be awarded first base on this type of obstruction. For example, if the batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a fly ball or line drive that is caught, the batter-runner is out. The reasoning here is that the obstruction had no bearing on the fact that the batter hit a fly ball that was caught by the defense. Similarly, should the batter-runner be obstructed before reaching first base on a foul ball not caught, the foul ball prevails. Again, the reasoning is that the obstruction had nothing to do with the fact that the batter hit a foul ball.

Situations where the batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base can generally be divided into three cases. Again note that in this type of obstruction, it is not always the case that “Time” is called immediately and the batterrunner awarded first base.

Case 1: Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a ground ball to an infielder. It appears that the infielder will have an easy play on the ball.

Ruling: This is obstruction under Official Baseball Rule 7.06(a). “Time” is called immediately and batter-runner is awarded first base.

Case 2: Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a pop-up or line drive to an infielder.

Ruling: Call the obstruction by pointing at the obstruction and calling, “That’s obstruction.” However, leave the ball in play. If the pop-up or line drive is caught, batter-runner is out. However, if the pop-up or line drive is dropped (and is a fair ball) and if the batter-runner has not yet reached first base when the ball is dropped, “Time” is called and the batter-runner is awarded first base under Official Baseball Rule 7.06(a). Other runners would be awarded bases they would have reached had no obstruction occurred. (In this case, the play reverts back to Case 1 above.) On the other hand, if the batter-runner has clearly reached (or rounded) first base when the fly ball is dropped, play is allowed to continue until no further action is possible with the umpire then making awards—if any—that will nullify the obstruction.

Case 3: Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base on a ball hit to the outfield.

Ruling: Call the obstruction by pointing at the obstruction and calling, “That’s obstruction”; however, leave the ball in play until all action has ceased. Then call “Time” and impose such penalties, if any, that will nullify the act of obstruction. If a fly ball is caught in this situation, batter-runner is out. If the batted ball was a fair ball not caught, the batter-runner will always be “protected” at least to first base.

Rules 7.06(a) 7.06(b), 7.09(j), and 4.03(c): OBSTRUCTION AND INTERFERENCE PLAYS—APPROVED RULINGS

(1) Runner on first base; batter-runner gets in rundown between home and first. Can obstruction be called going back to home?

Ruling: No, unless the obstruction is intentional.

NOTE: In situations where the batter-runner gets in a rundown between first and home, if the batter-runner retreats and reaches **the back edge of** home plate, the batter-runner shall be declared out.

(2) Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base with no play being made on him (for example, on a ball hit to the outfield).

Ruling: Call the obstruction by pointing at the infraction and calling, “That’s obstruction”; however, leave the ball in play until the play is over. Then impose such penalties, if any, that will nullify the act of obstruction. If fly ball is caught in this situation, the batter-runner is out. If the batted ball was a fair ball not caught, the batter-runner will always be “protected” at least to first base.

(3) Runner is on second base when the batter-runner is obstructed after reaching first base. The umpire intends to award the batter-runner second base on the obstruction. What happens to the runner on second?

Ruling: Runner on second is awarded third base.

(4) With bases loaded, batter hits a sharp ground ball that deflects off of the shortstop and starts to roll away from him. As the shortstop starts to go after the ball, the runner from second collides with the shortstop.

Ruling: After the ball deflects off the shortstop, if the ball is within the fielder’s immediate reach, the runner must avoid the fielder, and if contact occurs under those circumstances, interference shall be called and the runner declared out. (In this situation the fielder is still considered “in the act of fielding” the ball and has not “missed” as described in the Comment to Official Baseball Rule 2.00 (Obstruction).) However, if the ball is not within reach of the fielder after it deflects off the fielder (i.e., the fielder must chase after the ball), the fielder must then avoid the runner, and if contact occurs under those circumstances, obstruction shall be called under Official Baseball Rule 7.06(b).

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(5) With a runner on first base, the batter hits a line drive back to the pitcher that deflects off of the pitcher's glove and rolls towards the second baseman. As the second baseman is attempting to field the ball, the runner from first collides with the second baseman.

Ruling: In the judgment of the umpire, if the second baseman has a legitimate play on the ball, the runner from first is called out for interference. The ball is dead at the moment of interference, and the batter-runner is placed at first base (provided the interference was not intentional; if intentional, both runner and batter-runner are declared out). However, if the umpire rules that the second baseman does not have a legitimate play on the ball (i.e., the second baseman was merely moving in the direction of a loose ball), then obstruction is called under Official Baseball Rule 7.06(b).

(6) Runner on first base, no one out. On a hit-and-run play, the batter hits a fair ball down the right field line. In rounding second base and heading for third, the runner from first collides with the shortstop and falls down. Because of the collision, the runner is not able to advance to third base and returns to second as the ball is being thrown back to the infield. Had the runner not collided with the shortstop, the runner would have easily advanced to third base.

Ruling: Obstruction is called when the collision occurs, but the ball remains in play because no play was being made on the obstructed runner at the moment such runner was obstructed. "Time" is called when all action has ceased, and the obstructed runner is awarded third base because that is the base such runner would have reached had no obstruction occurred. The batter-runner would also be placed at the base such batter-runner would have reached had no obstruction occurred (either first or second, depending on the umpire's judgment).

NOTE: In this play, if the runner from first had been thrown out going back into second base, the umpire would call "Time" the moment the runner is tagged out. The obstructed runner would then be awarded third base (assuming that is the base such runner would have reached had no obstruction occurred), and the batter-runner would also be placed at the base the batter-runner would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had no obstruction occurred.

(7) Batter hits a ground ball or pop-up between home and first base that the pitcher and first baseman both attempt to field. Batter-runner makes contact with one or both fielders in running to first base.

Ruling: Under Official Baseball Rule 7.09(j), if two or more fielders attempt to field a batted ball and the runner comes in contact with one or more of them, the umpire shall determine which fielder is entitled to the benefit of the interference rule, and shall NOT declare the runner out for coming in contact with a fielder other than the one the umpire determines to be entitled to field such a ball. It is therefore possible for the umpire to make either an interference or obstruction call on this play based upon the umpire's determination as to which fielder was entitled to field the batted ball. If the runner makes contact with a fielder other than the one the umpire determines to be entitled to field the ball, such a fielder has very likely obstructed the runner.

(8) Runner on second base, no outs. Pitcher attempts a pick-off at second, and the runner gets in a rundown between second and third. During the rundown the runner is obstructed by the third baseman while a throw is in flight from the shortstop. The shortstop's throw is wild and goes into the dugout.

Ruling: The runner is awarded home (two bases from the runner's position at the time of the throw). The runner was obstructed while a play was being made on him ("Type 1" obstruction), and the umpire should call "Time" at the moment the obstruction occurs. However, under the Comment to Official Baseball Rule 7.06(a), if a thrown ball is in flight before the obstruction is called by the umpire, runners shall be awarded such bases on wild throws as they would have been awarded had no obstruction occurred. Therefore, even though the runner was obstructed while a play was being made on him, in this situation the runner is awarded two bases from the time of the throw (and not the customary "at least one base beyond the base he last legally touched before the obstruction").

(9) Runner on first base, no outs. Ground ball up the first base line. First baseman picks up the ball and throws to second base for a force out. After the out at second, the batter-runner is obstructed by the pitcher.

Ruling: "Time" is called and the batter-runner is awarded first base. The out at second base stands.

(10) Runner on first base, two out. Batter hits a fair ball into the right-field corner. Right fielder throws to second to retire the batter-runner, who is advancing on the play. The throw is off-target and goes into left field. The batter-runner gets up and attempts to advance. The shortstop starts chasing after the ball and runs into the batter-runner. The batter-runner continues to advance and is thrown out on a close play at the plate.

Ruling: Obstruction is called when the contact occurs between the shortstop and the batter-runner. Play is allowed to continue because no play is being made on the runner at the moment such runner is obstructed. After the runner is out at home, if the umpires deem that the runner would

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have scored had such runner not been obstructed (i.e., the obstruction caused the runner to be out), “Time” is called and the batter-runner awarded home.

(11) Runner on third base, one out. Batter hits a fly ball to right-center field, and the runner goes back to third base to tag up. Third baseman approaches the runner, faces him, and jockeys back and forth, intentionally trying to block the runner’s view of the fielder catching the ball.

Ruling: This is obstruction under Official Baseball Rule 7.06(b). The umpire should call the infraction when it occurs and award bases, if any, in the appropriate manner.

(12) With a runner on first base, the first baseman—rather than holding the runner in the traditional manner—jockeys back and forth in front of the runner, several feet to the second base side of the bag. In the umpire’s judgment the first baseman is doing this intentionally to block the runner’s view of the pitcher.

Ruling: While Official Baseball Rule 4.03(c) allows a fielder to position himself anywhere in fair territory, if the umpire deems the fielder’s actions are a deliberate effort to block the runner’s view of the pitcher, it is illegal and clearly not within the spirit of the Rules. The first baseman should be warned to stop, and if he persists, he is subject to ejection.

(13) Runner on first base is stealing, no outs, no count on the batter. Pitcher pitches out. Batter, observing the pitch-out, intentionally throws his bat at the catcher in a feigned swing, and the bat strikes the catcher as he is catching the pitch or attempting to throw. Batter remains in the batter’s box during this time.

Ruling: Interference. Batter is declared out unless the catcher’s initial throw retires the runner, in which case the play stands.

(14) Runner on first base is stealing, three balls on the batter. The next pitch is a check-swing that the plate umpire initially rules a ball. The batter-runner takes off for first base and in so doing interferes (out of the batter’s box) with the catcher’s throw to retire the runner attempting to reach second. Runner is safe at second. An appeal is made to the base umpire regarding the check-swing, and the base umpire rules a swing.

Ruling: Batter’s interference. Batter is declared out and runner returns to first base. Note that if this situation occurred with two strikes on the batter, then both the batter and runner are declared out.

7.08(c) RUNNER STEALING ON BALL FOUR

Play: With a runner on first, with a 3-1 count on the batter, the runner attempts to steal second on the pitch, and the umpire calls the runner out. Ball four was called on the pitch. The runner, because of being called out, is now off the base is tagged again.

Ruling: Because the runner was entitled to second base on ball four, and is called out in error, the umpire shall call time, and place the runner back at second.

7.08(f) RUNNER HIT BY INFIELDFLY

Under rule 7.08(f), any runner is out when — he 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.

If an infield fly touches a runner not on his or her base, both the runner and batter are out. The ball is dead and runners may not advance.

Rules 7.08(k), 7.10(b), and 7.08(d): RUNNER MISSES HOME PLATE

Rule 7.08(k) states that should a runner, in scoring, fail to touch home plate and continue on the way to the bench (making no effort to return), the runner may be put out by the fielder touching home plate and appealing to the umpire for a decision. However, this rule applies only where a runner is on the way to the bench and the catcher would be required to chase the runner. It does not apply to the ordinary play where the runner misses the plate and then immediately makes an effort to touch the plate before being tagged. In that case, the runner must be tagged. In such cases, base path rules still apply to the runner (i.e., he may not run more than three feet from the “base path” between him and home plate).

On a play at the plate, should the runner miss home plate and the fielder miss the tag on the runner, it is preferable that the umpire make no signal on the play. As outlined in the previous paragraph, the runner must then be tagged if the runner attempts to return to the plate; if the runner continues on the way to the bench, the defense may make an appeal.

A runner may no longer return to touch a missed base—home plate or otherwise—after having entered the dugout.

If two runners arrive at home plate about the same time and the first runner misses home plate but the second runner legally touches the plate, the first runner may not return to retouch home plate and may be put out on appeal. If the appeal on the runner is sustained for the third out of the inning, neither run scores. See Official Baseball Rule 7.10(b) Approved Ruling (1).

Rule 7.09(a): BATTER INTERFERES AFTER THIRD STRIKE NOT CAUGHT

Under this updated rule, it no longer matters if the batter is in the vicinity of home plate or up the first baseline when the infraction occurs. If, in the umpire’s judgment the batter-runner “clearly

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hinders the catcher in his attempt to field the ball,” the batter-runner is declared out, the ball is dead, and runner(s) return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. The location of the batter-runner is no longer relevant.

Rule 7.09(b): INTENTIONALLY DEFLECTING COURSE OF BALL

Official Baseball Rule 7.09(b) provides that the batter or runner is out for interference if he intentionally “deflects the course of a foul ball in any manner.” While picking up a foul ball or otherwise touching it may not, by such act itself, actually deflect the course of the ball, an umpire may judge such act as deflecting the course of the ball if, in the umpire’s judgment, the ball might have become a fair ball had it not been touched.

It would be better if no member of the offensive team picked up or otherwise touched a foul ball. There is no objection to a coach returning a foul ball to the umpire after it has passed first or third base, but the coach should not touch a ball that possibly may go fair. (See also Official Baseball Rule 6.05(i).)

Rules 7.09(e), 7.09(f), 7.09(g), and 6.05(m): WILLFUL AND DELIBERATE INTERFERENCE

Rules 7.09(f) and 7.09(g) were added to the Official Baseball Rules to add an additional penalty when a base runner or a batter-runner deliberately and intentionally interferes with a batted ball or a fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball to deprive the defensive team of an opportunity to complete a possible double play. Keep in mind the rules provide that the runner or batter-runner must interfere with the obvious attempt to break up a double play.

Rule 6.05(m) was added to the Official Baseball Rules “to penalize the offensive team for deliberate, unwarranted, unsportsmanlike action by the runner in leaving the baseline for the obvious purpose of crashing the pivot man on a double play rather than trying to reach the base.”

If, in the judgment of the umpire, a runner willfully and deliberately interferes with a fielder attempting to catch a thrown ball or attempting to throw a ball with the obvious intent to deprive the defense of the opportunity to make a double play, the umpire shall declare the runner out for interference and shall also declare the batter-runner out for the interference of his teammate.

GUIDELINES:

In sliding to a base, the runner should be able to reach the base with his hand or foot.

A runner who, in the judgment of the umpire, contacts or attempts to make contact with a fielder with a slide or roll block that is not a bona fide effort to reach and stay on the base may be called out for interference and, when appropriate, a double play may be called.

Any definite change in direction by the runner to contact the fielder would be considered interference.

If a runner hits the dirt, slides, and rolls, it does not constitute a rolling block unless the runner leaves his feet and makes contact with the fielder before the runner slides on the ground. If the initial contact is with the fielder instead of the ground for the purpose of breaking up a double play, it is a roll block.

EXAMPLES:

(1) Bases loaded, no outs, ground ball to shortstop. Anticipating a double play, runner from second intentionally crashes into the shortstop and grabs him just as the shortstop is beginning a throw to second.

Ruling: Runner from second is guilty of willfully and deliberately interfering with a fielder with the obvious intent to deprive the defense of the opportunity to make a double play. The runner from second is declared out and so is the batter-runner. Runners return to first and third.

(2) Runners on first and third, no outs. Runner on first is stealing as batter hits a ground ball to shortstop. Anticipating a double play, runner from first intentionally rolls into and grabs the second baseman who is covering second and waiting for the throw from the shortstop.

Ruling: Runner on first has willfully and deliberately interfered with a fielder with the obvious intent to deprive the defense of the opportunity to make a double play. Runner from first is declared out and so is batter-runner. Runner returns to third.

(3) Bases loaded, no outs, ground ball to shortstop. The shortstop’s throw to second retires the runner from first. However, anticipating a double play, the runner from first intentionally slides out of the base line and crashes into the second baseman just as the second baseman is beginning a throw to first base. Runner is not able to reach second base with his hand or foot.

Ruling: Runner has willfully and deliberately interfered with a fielder with the obvious intent to deprive the defense of the opportunity to make a double play.

Batter-runner is declared out for runner’s interference, and runners return to second and third. Note in this example that if the runner had not been ruled out at second (i.e., if the throw pulled the fielder off the bag) and the runner had still intentionally interfered in the manner described, both such runner and the batter-runner would be declared out.

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(4) Runner on first, no outs. Batter hits a ground ball to the second baseman, who attempts to tag the runner. However, the runner, in the judgment of the umpire, intentionally tries to slap the ball out of the fielder's glove, or tackles or grabs hold of the fielder so that the fielder is not able to make a play.

Ruling: The runner has willfully and deliberately interfered with a fielder with the obvious intent to prevent a double play. Runner from first is declared out and so is the batter-runner.

In interference plays of this nature, the umpire shall be governed by the intent of the base runner. If the umpire judges that the runner willfully and deliberately interfered with the obvious intent to deprive the defense of the opportunity to make a double play, the umpire shall declare both the runner and batter-runner out. If this is not the case, the umpire shall declare only the runner out. Note, however, that if the runner has already been put out, then the runner on whom the defense was attempting to make a play shall be declared out. (See Official Baseball Rule 7.09(e).)

Rule 7.10(b): RETOUCHING BASES WHEN BALL IS DEAD

While the ball is dead, no runner may return to touch a missed base or one he has left too soon after he has advanced to and touched a base beyond the missed base. A runner may return to a missed base (or one he has left too soon) during the time the ball is dead if he has not touched the next base. A runner may, of course, return to any missed base (or one he has left too soon) while the ball is in play unless a following runner has scored. See Approved Rulings (2) and (1) to Official Baseball Rule 7.10(b).

The "next base" or "base beyond" in this section refers to the position of the runner at the time the ball went out of play.

EXAMPLES:

(1) Batter hits a home run out of the ballpark or a ground-rule double and misses first base (ball is dead).

Ruling: The batter-runner may return to first base to correct the mistake before touching second; but if the batter-runner touches second he may not return to first, and if defensive team appeals the batter-runner is declared out at first.

(2) Batter hits a ball to shortstop who throws wild into stands (ball is dead); batter-runner misses first base but is awarded second base on the overthrow.

Ruling: Even though the umpire has awarded the batter-runner second base on the overthrow, the batter-runner must touch first base before touching second base. If the batter-runner does not return to first base before touching second, the batter-runner would be out on appeal at first.

(3) Batter hits single to right field and misses first base in rounding it. Right fielder makes quick throw to first baseman in an attempt to pick off the batter-runner, who has rounded the base. However, the right fielder's throw is wild and goes into the dugout.

Ruling: Batter-runner is awarded third base. However, the batter-runner must return to and touch first base before touching second. While the ball is dead, the batter-runner may return to first base to correct the error before touching second; but if the batter-runner touches second he may not return to first, and if the defensive team appeals, the batter-runner is declared out at first.

(4) Runner on second base, no outs. Batter hits fly ball to right field that is caught for the first out. Runner at second base leaves too soon. Runner slides into third base safely, but the right fielder's throw goes into the dugout.

Ruling: Runner is awarded home. However, while the ball is dead the runner must return to and retouch second base. Furthermore, because the runner had already reached third base before the ball went out of play, the runner must return to second base before touching home (his next base). If the runner touches home, the runner may not return to second, and if the defense appeals the runner is declared out at second.

(5) Runners on first and second, one out. Batter hits deep fly ball that is caught by right fielder. The runner from second was running when the ball was hit, did not tag up, and proceeds to touch and round third base. After the runner from second has rounded third base, the right fielder throws behind the runner from first, who is returning to first base. The fielder's throw is wild and goes out of play. The umpires call "Time" and award the runners home and third. When the umpires call "Time" the runner from second is between third and home, and the runner from first is between first and second. At this point the manager yells to the runner from second (who is between third and home) to go back and tag up at second base. Is this permissible, or is the runner considered a "base beyond" the base the runner left too soon?

Ruling: It is permissible for the runner to return to second base while the ball is dead. When the ball went out of play the runner originally on second base was past third (between third and home). The runner's "next base" is therefore home. While the ball is dead the runner may return to second base and retouch at any time prior to touching home plate. However, if the runner advances to and touches home while the ball is dead, the runner may not return.

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(6) Runner on first, one out. Hit-and-run. Batter hits a line drive to the shortstop, who catches the ball for the second out. Shortstop's throw to first is wild and goes into the stands. Runner originally on first is between first and second when the wild throw is made and goes out of play.

Ruling: Runner is awarded third. However, while the ball is dead, the runner must return to and retouch first base before touching second on the way to third. If the runner touches second, the runner may not return to first, and if the defensive team appeals the runner is declared out at first.

(7) Runner on first, hit-and-run. Batter hits a fly ball to left field that is caught. The runner touches second in advancing but misses second on the way back to first. The throw back to first base is wild and goes into the stands. When the wild throw was made the runner was between first and second.

Ruling: Runner is awarded third base. If the runner retouches first and then second in advancing to the awarded base, the runner's failure to touch second base in returning to first is "corrected" under the theory that touching the base the "last time by" corrects any previous error.

Rule 8.01(a): WINDUP POSITION

Pitchers assume the windup position in one of three ways:

(1) Facing the batter, hands together, pivot foot in contact with the rubber, other foot free. This is the "traditional" windup position. From this position (hands together) any natural movement associated with his delivery of the ball to the batter commits the pitcher to pitch without interruption.

(2) Facing the batter, hands apart (usually at the side), pivot foot in contact with the rubber, other foot free. From this windup position, the pitcher goes directly into his delivery to the batter. If the pitcher uses this windup position (hands at side), the first movement of his hands or arms or feet that is associated with his delivery commits the pitcher to pitch.

(3) Facing the batter, hands apart, pivot foot in contact with the rubber, other foot free. From this position (hands apart), the pitcher receives the sign from the catcher and then brings his hands together in a stationary position ("pause") before beginning the delivery. Once the pitcher's hands are together, the pitcher is in the "traditional" windup position. If a pitcher uses this windup position, the act of bringing his arms up and positioning his hands in front of his body shall not be construed as the start of his actual delivery UNLESS some other action is initiated by another part of his body simultaneously and is associated with the actual delivery.

Any of the three positions described above is considered a legal windup position, and from such windup position (regardless of whether the pitcher's hands are together or apart), the pitcher may:

(1) deliver the ball to the batter, or

(2) step and throw to a base in an attempt to pick off a runner, or

(3) disengage the rubber by stepping back with his pivot foot first.

(Disengaging the rubber by stepping back with his free foot first is a balk when runners are on base regardless of whether the pitcher's hands are together or apart.)

From any of the three types of windup positions referred to in this section, the pitcher may step and throw to a base in an attempt to pick off a runner (i.e., the pitcher is not required first to step off). Although this is not frequently seen, it is legal provided the pitcher does not make any motion associated with his delivery to the batter before the pitcher throws to the base.

Play: Bases loaded, pitcher in windup position. Before making any motion associated with his delivery of the pitch to the batter, the pitcher turns, steps, and throws to second (or to first or to third) in one continuous motion in an attempt to pick off the runner.

Ruling: Legal move.

TO CLARIFY:

(1) If the pitcher's hands are held together in front of his body in a stationary position before the pitcher delivers to the batter, the preliminary action of bringing his hands together is not interpreted as the start of the actual windup or delivery to the batter. If, however, this preliminary action is accompanied by any other natural movement that is associated with the delivery to the batter, then the pitcher is committed to pitch without altering or interrupting his delivery once such motion is initiated.

(2) If a pitcher does not assume a stationary, hands-together position prior to initiating his actual delivery, any natural movement associated with the start of their delivery commits the pitcher to pitch.

From the windup position, the pitcher may not go into a set or stretch position—if he does so, it is a balk when runners are on base.

In the windup position the pitcher must have both feet squarely on the ground.

(a) Only a portion of the pitcher's pivot foot must be in contact with the rubber. This applies to both windup and set positions. Pitchers may pitch "off the end" of the rubber, as long as any part of the pivot foot is in contact with the rubber.

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(b) In the windup position, the pitcher's free foot may be on the rubber, in front of the rubber, to the side of the rubber, or behind the rubber.

(c) In the windup position, the pitcher is permitted to step to the side during his delivery (previously prohibited).

8.02(a)(1): PITCHER GOING TO HIS MOUTH

Should the pitcher go to his mouth while off the 18-foot circle, he should wipe off before contacting the ball, as to do otherwise could possibly violate Rule 8.02(a)(4).

8.03 PITCHER

When a pitcher takes his position at the beginning of each inning, or when he relieves another pitcher, he shall be permitted to pitch not to exceed eight preparatory pitches to his catcher during which play shall be suspended. A league by its own action may limit the number of preparatory pitches to less than eight preparatory pitches. Such preparatory pitches shall not consume more than one minute of time. If a sudden emergency causes a pitcher to be summoned into the game without any opportunity to warm up, the umpire-in-chief shall allow him as many pitches as the umpire deems necessary.

If a pitcher is ejected during an inning in which he is pitching, the substitute pitcher shall be given as much time as the umpire deems necessary similar to the time allotted for an injured pitcher.

A pitcher may change to another defensive position only once per inning. This would eliminate the Designated Hitter role if being utilized. Upon returning to pitch in the same inning, the pitcher will receive eight warm-up pitches.

Rule 8.05: CALLING "TIME" AFTER A BALK

The penalty for balk allows the play to proceed without reference to the balk if the batter and all runners advance one base on the pitch following the balk (i.e., the actual pitch and/or action caused by the batter hitting the ball). The umpire shall not call "Time" until play stops following the balk. The question therefore arises as to when the umpire is to call "Time" to kill the ball after calling a balk.

The following cases should help explain when play is considered "stopped" and at what moment the umpire should call "Time" following the call of balk:

(1) If the pitcher balks and does not throw the ball, call "That's a balk; Time!" and enforce the balk.

(2) If the balk is followed by a batted ball, leave the ball in play until it is apparent that the batter and all runners will not advance one base. At that moment, call "Time" and enforce the balk.

If, however, the batter reaches first base and all runners advance at least one base on play following the balk, play proceeds without reference to the balk.

EXAMPLES:

(a) If a batted ball follows the balk and results in a fly ball that is caught, call "Time" the moment the fly ball is caught. Then enforce the balk.

(b) If a batted ball follows the balk and results in a ground-out on a previous runner at the base to which the runner would be entitled because of the balk, call "Time" the moment the out is made. Then enforce the balk.

(3) If the balk is followed by a pitch that is caught by the catcher, call "Time" the moment the catcher catches the ball. Then enforce the balk. (Note exception in ball four situations covered in item (5) below.)

(4) If the balk is followed by a pick-off throw to a base that is caught by a fielder, call "Time" the moment the fielder catches the ball. Then enforce the balk.

(5) If the balk is followed by ball four delivered to the batter and is caught by the catcher, call "Time" and enforce the balk unless all runners advance one base because of ball four. In that situation, play proceeds without reference to the balk.

(6) If the balk is followed by a pitch that strikes the batter, call "Time" the moment the pitch strikes the batter. Then enforce the balk unless the hit batter forces all other runners to advance one base, in which case play proceeds without reference to the balk.

(7) If the balk is followed by a wild throw to a base, the Approved Ruling of Official Baseball Rule 8.05 provides that the runner may advance beyond the base to which the runner is entitled at his own risk. In that situation the umpire shall call the balk in the usual manner but shall not call "Time" until all play has ceased (runners have stopped trying to advance and a fielder is in possession of the ball in the infield).

(8) If the balk is followed by a wild pitch, the Approved Ruling of Official Baseball Rule 8.05 provides that the runner may advance beyond the base to which the runner is entitled at his own risk. In that situation, the umpire shall call the balk in the usual manner but shall not call "Time" until all play has ceased (runners have stopped trying to advance and a fielder is in possession of the ball in the infield).

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Note that even if the runner advances to or beyond the base to which the runner is entitled because of a wild pitch following a balk, the balk is still “acknowledged.” That is, the pitch is nullified and the batter will resume the at-bat with the count that existed when the balk occurred unless:

- (a) The wild pitch was ball four on which all runners advanced one base; or
- (b) The wild pitch was strike three on which the batter and all other runners advanced one base.

In both situations (a) and (b) above, play proceeds without reference to the balk, because all runners (including the batter-runner) advanced one base on the pitch following the balk.

Rule 8.05: BALK REGULATIONS

A balk shall be called audibly (“Balk!” or “That’s a balk!”) and by pointing laterally at the pitcher. However, the ball is not dead automatically when this call is made. The ball becomes dead only when the umpire calls “Time” following the call of balk, and the call of “Time” is to be made only when play stops (i.e., when it is apparent that all runners including the batter-runner will not advance one base).

REGULATIONS:

- (a) The pitcher shall be charged with a balk if, while in contact with the rubber, he throws to the first baseman who is either in front of or behind first base and obviously not making an attempt at retiring the runner at first base. However, there is no violation if the pitcher throws the ball directly to first base in this situation. Also note that there is no violation if the pitcher attempts a pickoff at second or third and throws to an infielder who is in front of or behind either of those bases (i.e., this violation is only in reference to pick-offs at first base). Also see next paragraph in this section.
- (b) There is no violation if a pitcher attempts a pick-off at second base and, seeing no fielder covering the bag, throws to the shortstop or second baseman, neither of whom is in the vicinity of the bag nor is making an actual attempt to retire the runner.
- (c) When a pitcher swings any part of his free foot past the back edge of the pitcher’s rubber, it is a balk if he does not pitch to the batter, unless he throws (or feints a throw) to second base on a pick-off play. (Note that this violation is in reference only to the pitcher’s foot. If the knee of the pitcher’s free leg passes behind the back edge of the rubber but his foot does not, he may legally throw to first base with no violation.)

Items (d) through (i) below deal with step balks:

- (d) Official Baseball Rule 8.05(c) requires the pitcher, while touching the pitcher’s plate, to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base. If a pitcher turns or spins off of his free foot without actually stepping, or if he turns his body and throws before stepping, it is a balk.

NOTE: The pitcher is required to step directly toward a base when feinting a throw to a base.

- (e) (Removed)
- (f) A manager may come out and question the reason for a balk call and shall not be ejected for his visit to learn why the balk was called. The manager may be ejected if he argues the call after explanation.
- (g) If a pitcher, while touching the pitcher’s plate, jumps into the air with both feet simultaneously and his non-pivot foot lands in a step towards first base before he throws to that base, he has made a legal move.
- (h) Under the changes made to the Official Baseball Rules for 2013, the pitcher, while in contact with the rubber, may no longer fake a throw to third base (in addition to not being allowed to fake to first base). This rule change outlaws the so-called “Third-to-First Move.” The pitcher is still allowed to fake a throw to second base while in contact with the rubber provided that he steps towards second.

Note that a pitcher, when faking a throw to second base, is not required to have arm motion in the fake, although a legal step is required.

The pitcher, of course, may properly disengage the rubber and then fake to any base. The pitcher is considered an infielder after he properly disengages the rubber.

See Official Baseball Rule 8.05(b) and the Comments to Official Baseball Rule 8.05(c).

- (i) It is legal for a right-handed pitcher to begin a pick-off move to first base by first moving his pivot foot in the direction of third base provided that he makes a legal step toward first base with the non-pivot foot before throwing there and provided that the move is continuous and without interruption. A pitcher who makes such a pick-off move is considered to be in contact with the rubber when he makes his throw to first base.
- (j) When using the set position with runners on base, a pitcher must come to a complete stop with his front foot on the ground.
- (k) It is a balk if the pitcher, while touching the pitching rubber, accidentally or intentionally drops the ball or if the ball slips or falls out of his hand or glove. However, a pitched ball that slips out of the pitcher’s hand and crosses the foul line shall be called a ball; otherwise it will be called no pitch. If the ball does not cross the foul line, this would be a balk with men on base.

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(l) If the pitcher steps off the rubber with his non-pivot foot when pitching from the windup position, the pitcher shall be charged with a balk.

(m) If the pitcher places the resin bag in his glove with, in the umpire's judgment, the intent of deceiving the runner, it is a balk.

(n) Prior to assuming a legal pitching position (windup or set position) it is permissible for the pitcher to momentarily adjust the ball in his glove. In order for this to be allowed, the movement must be momentary in nature. If the pitcher has his hands together long enough that, in the judgment of the umpire, it appears that he has actually come to a set position or has actually assumed the windup position, then should the pitcher separate his hands, a balk shall be called under Official Baseball Rule 8.05(j).

(o) After coming to a legal pitching position (windup or set), if the pitcher removes one hand from the ball other than in an actual pitch or in throwing to a base, it is a balk.

(p) Under Official Baseball Rule 7.07, if a runner is stealing home when the catcher interferes with the batter, an additional penalty of a balk is invoked which enables all runners on base to advance (whether or not they were stealing).

Rule 8.05: PENALTY FOR BALK

Under Official Baseball Rule 8.05, the penalty for a balk shall be: The ball is dead (when play stops), and each runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out unless the batter reaches first base on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batter, or otherwise and all other runners advance at least one base, in which case the play proceeds without reference to the balk.

The penalty for a balk provides that if a batter reaches first base safely on a hit or error, base on balls, or otherwise on a pitch on which a balk is called, the batter shall be entitled to first base only if all other runners have advanced one base or more on the play, in which case the balk is disregarded. If the batter and all other runners do not advance, the balk penalty prevails, the batter must return to the batter's box with the previous count, and runners advance one base as penalty for the balk.

A runner who misses the first base to which the runner is advancing and who is called out on appeal shall be considered as having advanced one base for the purpose of this rule.

When a balk is made on a pitch that is a fourth ball it shall be ruled the same as when the batter hits a balk pitch and is safe on a hit or error, provided all runners advance at least one base on the play. Therefore, with a runner on first, first and second, or first, second and third, when a balk is called on the fourth ball, the batter goes to first base and all runners advance at least one base. If they attempt to advance more than one base, they do so at their own risk.

However, if first base is not occupied and all other runners do not advance at least one base on the play, the balk penalty prevails: The ball is dead; the batter returns to the batter's box and assumes the same ball and strike count as before the balk pitch; and all runners are allowed to advance one base as penalty for the balk.

Note that in cases where a pitcher balks and throws wild, either to a base or to home plate, a runner may advance beyond the base to which such runner is entitled by the balk, at his own risk.

Rule 8.05(c): STEPPING TO A BASE

The pitcher, while touching the rubber, must step directly toward a base before throwing to that base. If a pitcher turns or spins off his free foot without actually stepping, it is a balk.

In stepping to a base, the pitcher must lift his entire non-pivot foot off the ground and bring it down in a location different from where it started and toward the base. The entire non-pivot foot must move in a direction and distance to the base. This will constitute a step. The pitcher is not allowed to lift his non-pivot foot up and bring it back down in the same spot where it started. In stepping, the heel of the pitcher's free foot may not end up in the same spot it started.

Rule 8.05(d): THROWING TO AN UNOCCUPIED BASE

Official Baseball Rule 8.05(d) provides that the pitcher be charged with a balk if, while in contact with the pitcher's plate, he throws to an unoccupied base except for the purpose of making a play.

EXAMPLES:

(1) Runners on first and second, pitcher in set position. Runner breaks for third base and pitcher throws to third base.

Ruling: Legal play.

(2) Runners on first and second, pitcher in set position. Runner bluffs going to third base and pitcher throws to third base. However, runner did not go.

Ruling: Balk, pursuant to Official Baseball Rule 8.05(d).

The key to understanding the above two plays is for the umpire to use good judgment in deciding whether or not the runner was making an actual attempt to advance to third base or whether the runner was bluffing. These plays will most likely happen with a 3-2 count and two out.

Another interpretation regarding Official Baseball Rule 8.05(d) concerns appeal plays:

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It is NOT a balk for the pitcher, while in contact with the rubber, to throw to an unoccupied base IF it is for the purpose of making an appeal play. (Note that the pitcher does not have to step back off the rubber to make an appeal play.)

Rule 8.06: TRIPS TO THE MOUND

A second trip to the mound to the same pitcher in the same inning by a manager or coach will cause that pitcher's removal from the game.

The manager or coach is prohibited from making a second visit to the mound while the same hitter is at bat, but if a pinch hitter is substituted for this batter, the manager or coach may then make a second visit to the mound, but must then remove the pitcher.

For the purpose of this rule, a batter's time at bat begins the moment the preceding batter is put out or becomes a base runner.

A trip to the mound begins when the manager or coach enters the 18-foot circle surrounding the pitcher's rubber. The trip ends when the manager or coach leaves the 18-foot circle surrounding the pitcher's rubber.

A consequence of the rule regarding trips to the mound is that once a manager or coach has completed a trip to the mound, the pitcher then pitching must continue pitching to the batter then at bat (or retire the side) unless a pinch hitter is substituted or unless one of the following situations applies:

(a) If a game becomes suspended during a manager's or coach's trip to the mound (or after the trip but while the same batter is still at bat), a new pitcher may be substituted when the game is later resumed.

(b) If a rain delay occurs during a manager's or coach's trip to the mound (or after the trip but while the same batter is still at bat), a new pitcher may be substituted when the game is resumed following the rain delay.

If the manager or coach goes to the catcher or an infielder and that player then goes to the mound—or the pitcher goes to that player at the player's position— before there is an intervening play (a pitch or other play), that will be the same as the manager or coach going to the mound.

If a catcher or other player goes to the dugout or manager and then immediately to the mound, that will be deemed a trip.

If a pitcher is removed and the manager or coach remains to talk to the new pitcher, this is not charged as a visit to the new pitcher.

If a coach goes to the mound and removes a pitcher and then the manager goes to the mound to talk with the new pitcher, that will constitute one trip to that new pitcher that inning.

If a manager changes pitchers and leaves the mound, he (or a coach) may come out again to visit the pitcher while the same batter is at bat, but this will constitute one trip to that new pitcher that inning.

If the manager and pitcher are both ejected at the same time, a coach or acting manager may visit the mound to meet with the new pitcher prior to play resuming without a trip being charged— provided that the manager who has been ejected has not already conferred with and left the new pitcher.

For example, if the pitcher and manager are both ejected and a new pitcher takes the mound alone, a coach may come out of the dugout and go to the mound while the new pitcher is warming up without a trip being charged. On the other hand, if the ejected manager remains on the mound until the new pitcher arrives, a subsequent visit to the new pitcher by a member of the coaching staff prior to resumption of play constitutes a trip to the new pitcher.

If a manager or coach's conference with the pitcher takes place on the grass (i.e., off the dirt of the mound), this constitutes a trip. If a manager or coach confers with the pitcher on the grass (or the meeting "moves" from the dirt to the grass), the trip ends when the manager or coach "breaks" from the meeting. He must then keep going and not return to the pitcher. Any attempt—in the umpire's judgment—to circumvent this rule shall be deemed a trip.

In a case where a manager or coach has made his first trip to the mound and then attempts to return a second time to the mound in the same inning with the same pitcher in the game and the same batter at bat, he shall be warned by the umpire that this is not permitted. If the manager or coach ignores such warning, the manager or coach shall be removed from the game and the pitcher required to pitch to the batter then at bat until such batter is retired or gets on base (or the side is retired). After the batter is retired, or becomes a base runner (or the side is retired), then this pitcher must be removed from the game. The manager should be notified that the pitcher will be removed from the game after pitching to one hitter, in order that the manager can have a substitute pitcher warmed up. The substitute pitcher will be allowed eight preparatory pitches or more if, in the umpire's judgment, circumstances justify.

NOTE: If through umpire oversight or inability to warn the manager or coach, the manager or coach is inadvertently allowed to go to the mound a second time while the same batter is at bat

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(without the manager or coach being warned that he cannot do so), the pitcher then pitching will be required to pitch to the batter then at bat until the batter is retired or gets on base (or the side is retired). After the batter is retired or becomes a base runner (or the side is retired), this pitcher must then be removed from the game. However, because the umpire did not warn the manager or coach that a second trip to the mound was not permitted while the same batter was at bat, the manager or coach is NOT ejected from the game in this situation. It is only when the manager or coach ignores the umpire's warning of no second trip that the ejection applies.

The manager may request permission from the umpire to visit the mound in case of injury or illness of the pitcher, and with permission granted it will not be counted as a visit to the mound. The plate umpire shall accompany the manager or coach in such situations and remain in the vicinity of the conference to ensure this regulation is not abused. The opposing manager is to be informed at the conclusion of the conference that this was not a trip. The umpire has the sole authority to count or "wave off" the trip. A trainer does not have to accompany the manager to the mound for the umpire to "wave off" the trip.

A player manager is the person who is designated by his team and is recognized under the roster requirements. A player manager who leaves his position to talk to his pitcher, whether or not time is called, is subject to the same rules provisions as a non playing manager. Therefore, a trip would be charged to the pitcher.

A player (or player coach) may visit a pitcher as permitted by the umpire whether or not time has been called. This would not be considered a trip to the mound. In the case of a player-coach, while playing the coach will be treated as a player until he is considered to have abused the privilege. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the privilege is abused, the player-coach and his manager will be advised that any future visits to the mound will be charged as trips.

Rule 9.02(c): CHECK-SWING APPEALS

The Comments to Official Baseball Rule 9.02(c) provide that the manager or catcher may request the plate umpire to ask a partner for help on a half-swing when the plate umpire calls the pitch a ball. The rule further states that appeals on a half-swing may only be made on a call of ball and when asked to appeal.

The preferred mechanic for asking help on a check swing is for the plate umpire to point assertively with the left arm directly at the appropriate base umpire while asking if the batter swung. This mechanic helps avoid confusion between an appeal and a strike mechanic.

Under the Official Baseball Rules, the plate umpire has an obligation to ask for help when the catcher or manager of the defensive team requests an appeal.

Play (1): Runner on first base, 3-1 count on the batter. Runner is stealing on the pitch, and batter check swings. Plate umpire rules batter did not swing (ball four), but catcher throws the ball to second base nonetheless, resulting in the runner from first being tagged before such runner reaches second.

Ruling: Umpire at second should initially not rule the runner safe or out since it is ball four—unless appealed and ruled a swing. If an appeal is made and ruled a strike, umpire at second should then make the call of "safe" or "out," depending upon the initial play at second. (See Official Baseball Rule 9.02(c) Comment.)

Play (2): Runner on first base is stealing, three balls on the batter. The next pitch is a check-swing that the plate umpire initially rules a ball. The batter-runner takes off for first base and in so doing interferes (out of the batter's box) with the catcher's throw to retire the runner attempting to reach second. Runner is safe at second. An appeal is made to the base umpire regarding the check-swing, and the base umpire rules a swing.

Ruling: Batter's interference. Batter is declared out and runner returns to first base. Note that if this situation occurred with two strikes on the batter, then both the batter and runner are declared out.

Note: The Text in **SHADED AREA** is unique Canadian Content that has been added