



Most Often Misinterpreted Rules

This page describes some often miss understood rules and situation that coaches and parents often get wrong. We find these issues are often the source of arguments with umpires. Having a better understanding of these rules will also help in your coaching job.

Do You Know the Answers to these Misinterpreted Rules:

This quiz contains questions regarding the most frequently misinterpreted rules. See if you have the correct ruling for the following situations

1. ARE THE HANDS CONSIDERED PART OF THE BAT? *Answer: No.* See rule 2.00 Ball, Person, Touch, Strike(e)(f). 6.08(b). If the batter is hit anywhere on his body, including the hands, it is a strike if he is swinging at the pitch or is hit in the strike zone. He gets first base if he did not swing and attempted to avoid the pitch. Being hit on the hands is an immediate dead ball, and is NEVER a foul ball. It is a strike. If it is strike three, the batter is out.

2. IF A BATTED BALL HITS THE PLATE FIRST, IS IT A FOUL BALL? *Answer: No.* The plate is in fair territory and is treated the same as the ground. Rule 2.00 Fair, Foul. If it settles on the plate it is also a fair ball.

3. IS THE BALL ALWAYS IMMEDIATELY DEAD WHEN THE UMPIRE CALLS "BALKI"? *Answer: No.* If the pitcher throws a pitch or throws to a base after the call, the ball is live (delayed dead). At the end of the play, the balk will be enforced or ignored depending on what happened. Rule 8.05 PENALTY. If ALL runners advance on the play, the balk is ignored. If ANY runner is put out, or does not advance on the play, the balk is enforced from the time of the balk.

4. IF A PITCH HITS THE GROUND, THEN HITS THE BATTER, AND THE BATTER DID NOT SWING; IS THE BATTER ENTITLED TO FIRST BASE? *Answer: Yes.* A pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. It doesn't have to be in-flight to be a pitch. The batter can hit a ball off the ground and it is a legal hit. The ball is dead when it hits the batter. The batter is awarded first. Rule 2.00 Pitch, 5.09(a), 6.08(b).

5. MUST THE BATTER TURN TO HIS RIGHT WHEN RETURNING TO FIRST BASE AFTER A SAFE HIT? *Answer: No.* The runner is out when tagged, only if the umpire judges that he made an attempt to go to second base after he reached first. Rule 7.08(c) EXCEPTION and 7.10(c). An attempt is a judgment call. Usually an attempt is judged when the runner takes a step toward second with thoughts of going and lifts the other foot off the ground and moves it toward second.

6. WHEN A FIELDER THROWS THE BALL OUT-OF-PLAY, ARE THE RUNNERS AWARDED THE BASE THEY WERE GOING TO, PLUS ONE? *Answer: No.* If the wild throw is the first play by an infielder, runners are awarded 2 bases from the bases they held at the time of the pitch. If it is the second play by an infielder, or any throw from an outfielder, it is 2 bases from where they were physically positioned when the wild throw was released by the fielder. Not from the time it went out-of-play. It makes no difference which direction they were running at the time of the throw. If all runners have advanced at least one base before the release of the wild throw that was the first by an infielder, all runners are awarded 2 bases from where they were positioned at the time of the release. Rule 7.05(g) & APPROVED RULING. If the pitcher steps off the rubber before making a pick-off attempt, he is considered a fielder and runners are awarded two bases if the throw goes into dead ball area.

7. AT ALL LEVELS OF PLAY, THE RUNNER MUST SLIDE IF THE DEFENSIVE PLAYER IS FIELDING THE BALL ON A CLOSE PLAY, OR HAS THE BALL. TRUE OR FALSE? *Answer: False.* There is no must slide rule. The runner must slide, OR attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball waiting to make a tag. The runner may NEVER deliberately crash into the defender, with or without the ball. However, if an unavoidable collision occurs on a close play, the runner is NOT out. In an attempt to get around the fielder, the runner may not go more than three feet from the baseline. Rule 7.08(a)(3). In T&C's league he must slide at home plate if the catcher, pitcher or other fielder has the ball in position.

8. IF A FIELDER IS BLOCKING THE BASE PATH BEFORE HE CATCHES A THROW, IS THIS ALWAYS INTERFERENCE? *Answer: No.* First, interference is something the offense does illegally. A fielder who does not have the ball and is not in the act of fielding, is guilty of OBSTRUCTION. If the throw is in flight and CLOSE to the fielder, he has a right to move wherever it is necessary to catch the ball. Otherwise, he must get out of the way. It is the umpire's judgment as to whether or not the fielder is in the "act of fielding". Rule 2.00 Obstruction. Rule 7.06(a)(b).

9. THE SHORTSTOP HAS THE BALL MUCH TOO FAR FROM THE RUNNER ADVANCING FROM SECOND BASE TO TAG HIM. THE RUNNER ZIG-ZAGS 6 FEET TO EACH SIDE OF THE BASE LINE AS HE RETREATS TO SECOND. IS HE OUT FOR RUNNING OUT OF THE BASELINE? *Answer: No.* Rule 7.08(a)(1) applies at the time the runner moves out of the base line "to avoid a tag", not before. Also, the interpretation of base line for purposes of this rule is that the base line is the line from the runner to the base. Not the line between the bases.

10. AN OUTFIELDER MAKES A RUNNING CATCH, TAKES 4 STEPS AFTER CATCHING THE BALL, FALLS DOWN, ROLLS OVER AND STANDS UP, THEN DROPS THE BALL. IS THE BATTER OUT? *Answer: No.* This is not a legal catch. The release of the ball must be voluntary and intentional. The length of time the ball is held is irrelevant, unless the fielder has complete control of his body and the umpire judges he has complete control of the ball. Rule 2.00 Catch.

11. WHEN THE INFIELD-FLY RULE IS IN EFFECT, IS THE BATTER AUTOMATICALLY OUT IF HE HITS A POP-FLY IN THE INFIELD? *Answer: Yes.* IF the ball can be caught with ordinary effort. This is a judgment call. If the umpire believes it required more than ordinary effort, the batter is not out. Rule 2.00 Infield-fly. It is not an infield-fly simply because it is hit within the infield. The ball must be judged to be able to be caught with ORDINARY EFFORT. The ball may also be caught in the outfield and still be an infield-fly, IF it could be caught with ordinary effort by a fielder who was stationed in the infield at the time of the pitch.

12. IF THE UMPIRES DECLARE "INFIELD-FLY THE BATTER'S OUT" BUT THE FIELDER DROPS THE BALL, CAN THE RUNNERS ADVANCE? *Answer: Yes.* The ball is live and runners may advance at the risk of being put out. The only difference between an infield-fly and an outfield-fly is; the batter is out whether the ball is caught or not. Runners may tag-up after a catch or run if no-catch. Since the batter is out all forces are removed. Rule 2.00 Infield-fly.

13. IF THE BASE COACH SLAPS HANDS WITH A RUNNER AS HE PASSES WHILE THE BALL IS ALIVE, IS THE RUNNER OUT? *Answer: No.* This is a judgment call. If the base coach, by touching or holding the runner, physically assists that runner in returning to or leaving the base, the runner is out. Merely a hand slap or pat on the back is not grounds for an out. Rule 7.09(l).

14. AS THE BATTER ROUNDS THIRD AFTER HITTING A HOME RUN, HIS TEAMMATES HUG HIM AND PAT HIM ON THE BACK AND SLAP HANDS. SHOULD THE BATTER BE CALLED OUT? *Answer: No.* The ball is dead after the ball leaves the field and all runners may advance without liability to be put out. Rule 5.02, 7.09(a). If any runner misses a base, that runner

may be put out on appeal only after the ball is put back in play. The ball is put in play when the pitcher has the ball while standing on the rubber and the umpire says "Play."

15. A RUNNER ADVANCES A BASE ON A PITCH THAT WAS TIPPED BY THE BATTER AND CAUGHT BY THE CATCHER. MUST THE RUNNER RETURN TO HIS ORIGINAL BASE?

Answer: No. The ball is live on a foul-tip. If the tip is not caught it is a foul-ball and the ball is dead. If it is caught, it is a strike and the ball is live. Rule 2.00 Foul-tip. This applies for strike 1, 2 or 3. It is not a foul-tip by definition, unless it is caught. If it is not caught, it is by definition, a foul ball.

16. IF A PLAYER'S FEET ARE IN FAIR TERRITORY WHEN THE BALL IS TOUCHED, IS IT A FAIR BALL? *Answer No.* The position of the player's feet or any other part of the body is irrelevant. A ball is judged fair or foul based on the relationship between the ball and the ground at the time the ball is touched by the fielder. Rule: 2.00 FAIR, FOUL

17. MUST A PLAYER TAG THE BASE WITH THEIR FOOT ON A FORCE OUT OR APPEAL?

Answer No. You can tag a base with ANY part of the body. Rules: 2.00 FORCE PLAY, PERSON, TAG, 7.08(e)

The Following Questions Describe Plays:

18. Two out, runners on first and second base. Batter hits single, runner on second scores, runner on first base missed second but reaches third. The defense properly appeals that he missed second. Does the run which scored count? *Answer: No.* Because the runner started at first this is a force-out. Rule 2.00 Force-play, Rule 4.09(a) EXCEPTIONS: (2). No run can score if the third out is a force-out.

19. One out, runners on first and second. Batter hits a pop fly between third and home, the umpire calls "infield fly if fair", the fielder under the ball, lets the ball strike the ground untouched in foul territory, the ball then rolls into fair territory. The umpire rules an infield fly and declares the batter out. Right or wrong? *Answer: Right.* This is a fair ball, therefore it is an infield fly. Rule 2.00 Fair ball, Infield fly (NOTE:), 6.05(e).

20. Bases full, two out, batter walks. Catcher throws ball to first baseman, ball gets by him into right field. All runners on base score with the batter reaching second. The defense appeals that the batter-runner missed first. The umpire agrees and calls him out. How many runs score? *Answer: None.* Rule 4.09(a) EXCEPTIONS(1). No run can score if the batter is put out before touching first. Runners must touch all bases including those they are awarded. If the runner attempts to advance to the next base, or reaches the next base, he is considered to have "reached" the base he was awarded. If he did not touch the base he was awarded, he is liable to be put out on appeal.

21. Runner goes far out of the base line to avoid a fielder trying to field a fair batted ball. Umpire declares the runner out. Right or wrong? *Answer: Wrong.* The runner must avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball and is not out for running out of the base line. Rule 7.08(b) and 7.09(l) makes him out if he does not avoid the fielder.

22. Runner going from second to third bumps into the shortstop who was standing in the base path without the ball. The third baseman, who fielded the ball, comes over and tags the runner with the ball. Is the runner out? *Answer: No.* This is Obstruction. Rule 2.00, 7.06.

23. A batter with two strikes is hit on his fist while swinging at the pitch. Is he out, or is he awarded first base, or is it a foul ball. *Answer: He is out.* Rule 2.00 Strike(e), Person and Touch. The hands are NOT part of the bat. See answer to question #1 above.

24. The player listed third in the batting order bats when the number two batter should have been up. He gets a double. The defense appeals that he was the wrong batter. The umpire calls number two out and puts number three back up. Is this correct? *Answer:* Yes. When batting out of order occurs, the PROPER batter is out, hits and/or advances that occur when the improper batter becomes a runner are nullified. The next batter up is the spot following the spot that was called out. In this case two is out, three's hit is nullified and because he is the one after the person called out, he bats again. Any advances by runners while the improper batter is at bat, such as steals, are legal. If the batter who is due to bat after an appeal is made, is on base, you skip that spot and the following player bats.