

All the following are taken from Jim's Baseball Rules Website

<http://baseball-rules.com>

I have no idea who Jim is or the correctness of his information, but this does provide some good scenarios and explanations.

Interference

There are 4 types of interference:

1. Offensive
2. Defensive (This only applies to interfering with the batter. Hindering a runner is called OBSTRUCTION)
3. Umpire
4. Spectator

1. Offensive interference is an act by a member of the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder **attempting** to make a **play**.

Note that interference may be caused by any member of the offensive team. A batter, runner, base coach, player in the dugout, or in the bullpen.

Note however, that the act of interference must be with a fielder "**ATTEMPTING TO MAKE A PLAY.**"

A "PLAY" is an act of throwing, a tag attempt of a runner or a base. An out is not called unless the fielder is hindered while actually attempting to make a play. An out is not called simply because the fielder could have, or should have, or would have, or might have, had a play.

A fielder chasing after an overthrown, loose ball, is not a play. However, an out could be called if the offense did something intentional and blatant to hinder the fielder. Otherwise, it is nothing.

It is not interference, if the fielder starts to throw and then stops because an offensive player is in his way. Also, interference on a thrown ball, or throw attempt, or tag attempt, must be intentional.

Interference is judged and penalized several different ways, depending on where the interference occurs and who caused it. There are many different offensive interference situations:

1. batter in the box after a swing
2. batter in the box after a pitch is caught
3. batter in the box after a pitch is missed by the catcher
4. batter out of the box
5. coach interference
6. on-deck batter or other player interference
7. runner interference with a batted ball

The runner must avoid a fielder who is attempting to field a *batted ball*. The fielder's protection begins the moment the ball is hit. That protection continues as he completes his initial play, up through the act of throwing. His protection ends if he misplays the batted ball and has to move more than a step and a reach to recover it. Umpire school manual.

Contact with the fielder is not necessary for interference to be called. If the runner does not avoid the fielder, the ball is dead and he is out. No other runners may advance beyond the base they last held at the time of the interference. Rule 7.09(L). If the batter-runner has not reached first base, runners remain at their bases held at the time-of-pitch. 7.08(b)

If a fielder is in the base path and attempting to field a batted ball, the runner must avoid him. The fielder is protected even if he is not in the path and then moves into the path. The runner has the responsibility to avoid the fielder wherever he may move to try to field the ball. If the runner does not avoid the fielder, it is interference whether the act was intentional or not. 7.08(b).

If a fielder is **not** in the base path, the runner is considered to have avoided the fielder, if the runner stays in the path. Running in the base path in front of a fielder, who is not in the path, is **NOT** interference. The runner has a right to the path when the fielder is not in the path. However, the runner must simply run in the path. If he does something while in the path that, in the umpire's judgment, was intent to hinder or interfere with the fielder, he may be called out even while in the path or after having avoided the fielder.

8. runner interference with a thrown ball

Difficult calls are the ones involving thrown balls. Interference with a thrown ball must be judged as an intentional act. Rule 7.08(b), 7.09(L). If a thrown ball hits a runner while running the bases, the runner is not out unless the umpire judges that the runner intentionally interfered, obstructed, hindered or confused the defense attempting to make a play.

Some examples of interference are:

1. Yelling at a fielder as he attempts a catch or play (Note that the rule states "the team at bat." This includes coaches and players on the bench)
2. Waving his arms to distract the fielder
3. Making contact with the fielder as he attempts a throw (except during a legal slide. A legal slide is one in which the runner slides into the base within reach of an arm or foot and touches the ground before reaching the base)
4. Making contact with the fielder as he attempts to catch a batted ball

5. Making INTENTIONAL contact with a fielder as he attempts to catch a thrown ball. The runner has a right to the base path except when a fielder is attempting to field a BATTED ball
6. Making INTENTIONAL contact with a thrown ball
7. Stopping directly in front of a fielder attempting to field a ground ball with no good reason

There can be interference with a play or without a play. An out is only called when there is interference with a *play*. On interference with no play, the ball is dead and runners may not advance, but there is no out call.

A **PLAY** is:

1. A tag or tag try of a runner
2. Tag or tag try of a base
3. Throw to another fielder in a try to put out a runner
4. Rundown, or
5. Balk

For an out to be called a play must be in action. Interference is not called because a fielder *could have*, or *might have*, made a play. He must be actually in the act of making a play.

Example:

1. A fielder starts to throw and stops because a runner is in his way but no contact is made and no intentional acts are made by the runner to cause interference. This is **not** interference because the runner did not interfere with a play in progress.
2. A fielder has his arm hit during his throwing motion of an actual throw. This *is* interference *if* the runner did it intentionally or could reasonably have avoided it.

Running Lane

The batter is out if, in running to first base, the batter-runner is hit by a throw while running outside of the 3 foot running lane, or interferes with the fielder **taking the throw** at first base. He could be called out even if he is not hit by the throw, if the umpire judges that by being outside the lane he interfered with the fielder's attempt to field the throw. There must be a throw before interference can be called and the throw must be a quality throw. Rule 6.05(k).

A runner is not free from interference while in the lane, nor automatically guilty when out of the lane. If he is out of the lane he is in serious jeopardy of being called for interference, but it is not automatic, unless he is hit by the throw, or commits an **intentional** act of interference. The rule states that he is out when out of the lane **AND** causes interference **with the fielder taking the throw**. If he is out of the lane and is hit by the throw, that is always interference. If he is in the lane he could still cause interference, but it would have to be something obviously intentional (like grabbing the fielder's arm or glove, or deliberately touching a thrown ball). If the catcher does not make a throw because the runner is outside the lane, this is not interference. Interference with a thrown ball must be intentional. Such as, deliberately making contact with it. Or in this case if the runner is hit by the throw while outside the lane. The lines marking the lane are part of that "lane," but the runner must have **both** feet within the lane or on the lines marking the lane, to be judged as "in" the lane. Rule 7.09(k) casebook, N.A.P.B.L 4.14.

If the runner is hit by the throw or a collision occurs on his last step before touching the base; generally interference is not called. The runner has to step into fair territory to touch the base that is in fair territory.

Obstruction

Obstruction (Rule 7.06) is called when the defense hinders the runner's ability to run the bases. There are two different applications of the rule. One causes an immediate dead ball and the other is delayed dead. If a play is being made on a runner who is obstructed, the ball is immediately dead. If no play is being made the ball is delayed dead. A **play**, for purposes of this rule is when the ball is being thrown, or is in-flight, heading toward the base to which the runner is heading, an attempted tag, or when the runner is caught in a run-down. The rulebook definition is:

"OBSTRUCTION is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding the ball, impedes the progress of any runner.

If a fielder is about to receive a thrown ball, and if the ball is in flight, directly toward, and near enough to the fielder, so he must occupy his position to receive the ball, he may be considered "in the act of fielding a ball." It is entirely up to the judgment of the umpire, as to whether a fielder is in the act of fielding a ball. After a fielder has made an attempt to field a ball, and has missed, he can no longer be in the "act of fielding" the ball. For example: an infielder dives at a ground ball and the ball passes him and he continues to lie on the ground and delays the progress of the runner, he very likely has obstructed the runner."

A fake tag is considered obstruction. A fake tag is when the fielder is **at a base** and takes an action that simulates an attempted tag, which causes the runner to slow down or slide. Faking a catch of a ball while not near a base or the basepath, is not a fake tag.

The fielder may stand in the basepath without the ball **IF** the *throw* is almost to him, and he needs to move there to catch the ball. This is considered "the act of fielding." However, he may not actually block access to the base until he has possession of the

ball, or starts the act of fielding. Until he has possession, or becomes “in the act of fielding” the ball, he must give the runner some way to get to the base.

It is never obstruction when the fielder is in the base path while he is attempting to field a *batted ball*. Obstruction only applies when the fielder is in the path for no reason, or is in the path prior to being in the act of fielding a *throw*, or does not have possession of the ball.

A fielder's "attempt to field" a batted ball ends immediately upon missing or deflecting the ball and such fielder must, in effect, disappear or risk obstruction.

A fielder is "in the act of fielding" and it is NOT obstruction, if, his block of the base, is a fluid, continuous result of his effort to glove the ball.

Separate, discontinuous movement, whose sole purpose is to block the base, is obstruction.

As with interference, obstruction is also a tough judgment call. Contact between the runner and fielder is not necessary to meet the definition. If a runner must slow down or alter his path to avoid a fielder who is not in possession of the ball or "in the act of fielding" a throw, he has been obstructed.

If no play is being made on the runner at the time he is obstructed, the play continues. “Time” is not called until all play ends. The tough part comes when the play stops. The umpire will award the runner the base to which the umpire believes he would have reached had he not been obstructed. The play ends and “Time” is called, when the obstructed runner is tagged out, or he ceases to continue to advance, or he gets caught in a run-down, or all action ends. At that time, the umpire **may**, award bases or not, in order to nullify the obstruction.

For example: the batter hits a ball in the gap for what looks like an easy double. No play is being made on him. As he rounds first the fielder is in his path and they collide. The batter stops at first. The umpire will award the runner second base, if he believes; the runner was making a legitimate effort to advance to second base and could have made it, had he not been obstructed. The umpire will protect the runner back to first base, if the runner was not making an attempt for second, but the obstruction hindered his ability to get back to first, before being put out.

It does not matter where the obstruction occurs. If a runner is obstructed at first base and the umpire believes he could have made it to third base, he will be awarded third. The umpire must be the judge. If, in the umpire's judgment, a runner is slowed down at first base, and the umpire judges that the runner had a chance for a triple, but then is thrown out at third base, the out should be nullified because of the obstruction at first. However, if the runner is obstructed at first base and the umpire believes that only a double is possible, and the runner advances to third and is thrown out; the out would stand.

If the runner reaches the base to which the umpire has protected him, and he advances further during the action, and is put out, the out will stand.

An immediate dead ball obstruction is called when obstruction occurs while a play is being made on the runner.

For example: a runner on first is attempting to reach third on a hit. A fielder obstructs him, between second and third, as the throw from the outfield is heading toward third. This is a play on the runner. The umpire should call "time" when the obstruction occurs and award the runner third base. Another example is a run-down play. It does not matter which way the runner is heading. If he is obstructed while being played upon in a run-down, he is awarded at least one base beyond the last base he held.

If a runner is obstructed attempting to get back to first on a pick-off play, the ball is dead and he is awarded second.

Rule 7.06 covers obstruction. 7.06(a) is when a play is being made and 7.06(b) is when there is no play being made.

Obstruction Photos



This catcher is properly setup as not to be guilty of obstruction.

He has given the runner an unimpeded path to the base, and made part of the base available to be touched by the runner.

The area to the left of the red line is a path to the base, left for the runner.

From this position the fielder may move into the area to the left of the red line, IF, in the umpires judgment, the fielder must move to that position as a necessary act in order to glove the ball. The ball must be in-flight and near to the fielder before he may move into the runner's path.



The catcher above is also in a legal position. The runner has an unimpeded path and access to the base.



The catcher above will be guilty of obstruction unless he gets possession of the ball, before the runner arrives at this space.



The catcher above may be guilty of obstruction. It would depend on the runner's path to the base.



These are examples of a first baseman legally awaiting a pick-off throw from the pitcher. The fielder may not move into the runner's path, unless he must do so as an act necessary to glove the ball.



The first baseman above will be guilty of obstruction if the runner is impeded before the ball is in the glove.

Award of Bases

The basic thing to remember is awards are different when the pitcher throws a ball out of play, versus a fielder:

When the pitcher throws the ball into dead ball territory ***while he is in contact with the rubber***, the runners are awarded one base from where they were at the time of the windup.

If the pitch goes out of play on ball four, the batter only gets first base, but all other runners get one base from the base they held at the time of the pitch (windup). If the pitcher is not in contact with the rubber, he is a fielder. When any ***fielder*** throws the ball into dead ball territory, the runners are awarded two bases.

When a fielder throws the ball into dead ball territory, the runners are awarded two bases.

The complicated part of this rule is deciding from what position the two bases are awarded. There are several exceptions that can affect the award. The award is either from the "***time of pitch***" (T.O.P.) or the "***time of throw***" (T.O.T.). The time of throw means at the instant the ball leaves the thrower's hand. Not the time the throw goes into dead ball area.

If the throw is the ***first play*** by an infielder, the award is, two bases from where the runners were at the T.O.P. in 99% of the plays. There is an exception that will be described later. The time of pitch is the start of the windup or the moment the pitcher separates his hands from the set position.

If the throw was the **second play** by an infielder, or any play by an outfielder, the award is, two bases from the time the throw left the fielder's hand (T.O.T.). The moment when the ball enters dead ball territory has no effect on the determination of the placement of the runners. The placement is from where the runners were at the time of the pitch or the time the throw left the thrower's hand depending on whether the play was the first play by an infielder or some other play.

A key thought to remember is: "first play in infield = time of pitch. Second play or outfield = time of release." The award is, always two bases. The only decision is: from where?

EXCEPTIONS:

If ALL runners including the batter runner have advanced one base before the **first play** by an infielder, the award is from time of release. Otherwise, the award is from the time of the pitch. The key word is "ALL."

PLAY: Runner on second. A high pop-up is hit to the shortstop. The runner holds. The shortstop drops the ball, and then throws to first attempting to get the batter who has already rounded the base before the release of the throw, and the ball enters dead ball territory. This was the first play by an infielder, which means the award is from time of pitch. The exception states that ALL runners must advance a base before the time of release award is used. Because the runner at second held his base, ALL runners did not advance before the throw, therefore, the award is from time of pitch. The runner on second is awarded home and the batter is awarded second. If the runner on second had advanced to third before the throw to first, ALL runners would have advanced before the throw, so the batter would be awarded third base and the runner on second would get home.

A play for purposes of this rule is a legitimate attempt to retire a runner. A throw to a base, an attempted tag or attempting to touch a base for a force out are plays. A fake throw or fielding a batted ball, are not plays for purposes of this rule.

PLAY. (a) Runner on first. Ground ball to SS. The throw to second is too late and R1 is safe. The second baseman throws to first and the ball goes into dead ball area. R1 is awarded home and the batter is awarded second. The second baseman's throw was the **second play** so time of release applies. R1 was at second when the throw was made. The batter was not at first at the time of the release.

PLAY. (b) Runner on first. Runner takes off on the pitch. Ground ball to SS. The runner reaches second before the SS releases the throw to first that then goes into dead ball area. R1 is only awarded third because the throw was the first play by an infielder, which makes the award from the time of pitch. R1 was at first at the time of pitch.

Appeals

APPEAL is an act of a fielder in claiming violation of the rules by the offensive team. Such as: batting out of order, failing to retouch after a caught fly or failing to touch a base while advancing or retreating on the bases. Rule 2.00 Appeal, 7.10.

Appeals must be made while the ball is in play (live). When the ball is dead, it becomes in play when the pitcher has the ball and is on the rubber and the umpire says, "Play." Rule 5.11.

One appeal may be made on each runner at each base.

Any defensive player who has the ball may make an appeal if the ball is live. It is not necessary for the pitcher to have the ball on the mound before making an appeal, if the ball is already live. If the ball is live, a fielder may make an appeal in any of the following ways:

1. By touching the runner whom they believe committed a base running infraction;
2. Or by touching the base they believe was missed while the runner was advancing;
3. Or by touching the **original** base that a runner left before a fly ball was caught.

If the umpire has called "Time" or the ball has become dead for any other reason; the ball must be made live before an appeal can be made. The ball is made live by having the pitcher stand on the rubber with the ball in his possession and wait for the umpire to say, "Play." The pitcher or any fielder may then make an appeal. If the pitcher balks before the appeal, all appeals are lost. The pitcher may throw to a base from the rubber to make an appeal, provided he makes no motion associated with the start of a pitch prior to doing this.

In all cases, the fielder must make a verbal appeal to the umpire **or** complete an act that is unmistakably an appeal. Accidentally touching a base that was missed is not an appeal. A throw to a base to catch a runner who had not retouched is unmistakably an appeal.

Appeals must be made before the next pitch or play. If the fielder makes an appeal after "time" has been called, the umpire should say "put the ball in play and appeal again." Since no runner may advance or be put out while the ball is dead, this is not a play and the defense has not lost their right to appeal after the ball is put in play.

The appeal itself is not a play. A fake throw to hold a runner is not a play. It **is a play** when a balk is committed during an appeal. It is **not** a balk if the pitcher throws to an unoccupied base from the rubber for the purpose of making an appeal. Plays that occur during "continuous action" after an infraction do not cancel the defense's right to appeal.

The defense loses their right to appeal when any of the following actions occur:

1. When the throw made in an appeal attempt goes into dead ball territory. When this occurs, no more appeals may be made on any runner at any base. This is an "err" on an appeal and is interpreted to be the same as a play.
2. A balk is committed before or as part of an appeal attempt. (It is not a balk if the pitcher throws to an unoccupied base from the rubber, for the purpose of making an appeal.) N.A.P.B.L. 6.6.
3. A pitch is made to the batter.
4. A play is made that is not part of continuous action.

Continuous action definition and example:

Continuous action is an uninterrupted progression of play, starting with the pitch, and ending typically when the runners have ceased trying to advance and a fielder has possession of the ball within the infield.

Runner on first misses second as he advances to third on a hit. The defense makes a play on him at third and he is safe. The play was part of continuous action after the hit; therefore, the defense may appeal the infraction at second.

An appeal should be clearly intended as an appeal, either by a verbal request by the player or an act that unmistakably indicates to the umpire that it is an appeal. Rule 7.10 covers appeals.

There are no inadvertent appeals. An appeal must be obvious and unmistakably indicated by voice, or manner, or both; so, it cannot be an appeal if a fielder happens to step on a base with no intent or purpose of making an appeal.

Example of obvious appeal: R2, one out. R2 is leading off about 4 steps. The batter hits a line-drive that is caught by the second baseman, who throws to the shortstop, who tags second base before R2 retouches it. This is an appeal because it was obvious that R2 had failed to retouch.

If there is an appeal at a base that more than one runner has passed, the fielder should specify which runner is under appeal. If the fielder does not specify, the umpire may ask which runner's action is being appealed.

When there are two outs and more than one base running infraction has occurred, the defense may choose the out that gives them the best advantage.

PLAY: Runners at first and third with 1 out. The batter pops-up a bunt attempt. The pitcher catches the ball for the second out. Both runners left without retouching. The pitcher throws to first base before R1 can return, which is the third out. R3 crossed the plate before the out at first.

Ruling: If the defense does nothing and leaves the field, R3's run counts. If the defense makes an appeal at third on R3 before the last defensive player crosses the

foul line, R3 is the third out and the run is canceled. This is called "an apparent fourth out."

Balks

It is NOT a balk if any members of the offensive team do anything for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher balk. Rule 4.06(a, 3).

Some general statements pertaining to the pitcher:

- The pitcher does **not** have to step backward off the rubber to throw to a base. (You don't want to throw to a base after stepping off. If the throw goes out of play, it is a 2 base award. If the throw goes out of play when the throw is from the rubber, it is a 1 base award.)
- The pitcher may throw from the rubber to a base from the windup position. (It must be done before **any** movement that is part of the normal motion that is part of his windup.)
- The pitcher may fake a throw to second or third base from the rubber, but not to first base. This may be done from the windup or the set position. It must be done before **any** movement that is part of the normal motion that is part of his windup. (You do **not** have to step off the rubber to fake to 2nd or 3rd. Only if you fake to 1st.)
- A jump turn is legal and considered being in contact with the rubber. A "jump turn" is when a right-handed pitcher's right foot comes off the rubber, but stays in front of the rubber and is followed quickly by a lift and step with the left foot toward first base. This is technically not legal, but is accepted. The free foot must land toward the base being thrown at and before the release of the throw. This move is considered a throw from the rubber.
- The pitcher may place his hands in a different set location before each pitch. He must come to a set before pitching to the batter, but not before throwing to a base. He may not set twice before the pitch.
- A stretch move prior to the set is optional.
- He must disengage the rubber with his pivot foot first. He must step on the outfield side of the rubber.
- He must step in the direction of the base and prior to the release of the throw.
- Lifting the free or front **foot** prior to a throw is NOT a balk. However, the foot must come down ahead of the throw and in the direction of the base.

It is a balk if the pitcher stands on or astride the rubber without the ball. If he drops the ball while standing on the rubber, it is a balk if the ball does not cross the foul lines.

Once he is on the rubber, he may do one of three things:

1. Throw to a base
2. Deliver a pitch
3. Disengage the rubber (pivot foot first)

In (1) and (2) above, the move must be completed without interruption or alteration, except for a fake to 2nd or 3rd. Any movement that is started and not completed with a pitch or pick-off throw, is a balk. He must step ahead of the throw to a base and step in the direction of the base.

The ball is not immediately dead if a pitch or throw is completed after the umpire yells, "That's a balk." The play continues until all continuous action ends. If the balk is enforced the pitch is neither a ball nor strike, it is a no-pitch. If the balk is ignored, the pitch counts.

Example play:

A runner is on second, 2-2 count. The pitcher stretches, but does not come to a set before delivering the pitch. The umpire yells, "Balk!" but the pitch is thrown and the batter hits a grounder to shortstop. F5 looks the runner back and throws to first too late to get BR. What's the call? Where do you place the runners?

Answer: R2 is awarded third and the batter returns to the plate with the count 2-2. Because **all** runners including the batter-runner did not advance, the balk is enforced.

In Pro rules, and Little League®, the ball is not immediately dead when a balk is called. If the pitch is thrown or a pick-off attempt is made the ball is still live. (Sometimes called delayed dead ball.) The ball becomes dead when all play has ended after the balk call or when the pitch or pick-off throw is caught.

Rule 8.05 – PENALTY. The ball is dead, and each runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out, unless the batter reaches first 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.

APPROVED RULING: In cases where a pitcher balks and throws wild, either to a base or to home plate, a runner or runners may advance beyond the base to which he is entitled at his own risk. If the runner does not touch the base to which he is entitled, he is considered to have reached the base for purposes of this rule.

What the 2 preceding paragraphs mean in simpler terms is:

When the play ends, the ball is dead, but not until then. When a balk is committed and a pitch is thrown, if **all** offensive players advance at least one base on the play; ignore the balk. If **any** runner is put out **before** he advances one base or does not advance during the play; put everyone back where they were before the play began and then award all runners one base. If a runner is put out after all runners have advanced one base, the out stands and the balk is ignored.

If a base runner misses a base while advancing and continues to advance, he is considered to have reached the base he missed for purposes of this rule, but he may be put out on appeal later, for missing the base.

Example: Runner on first. The pitcher balks but throws the pitch, which is hit for a single. R1 misses second as he advances toward third where he is thrown out.

Ruling: the out stands and the balk is ignored because he is considered to have reached second base for purposes of the balk rule. However, if on the same play he was thrown out **before** reaching second base, he would be awarded second, the pitch is nullified and the batter would return to the plate. If, on the same play, he is safe at third, he would be out if the defense makes a legal appeal of the missing of second base, again because he is considered to have advanced to the base even though he missed it.

The ball becomes dead when the catcher catches the pitch. If it is a passed ball or a wild pitch, or the ball is batted fair, the ball remains alive until all play ends. When the balk is made in a pick-off attempt, the ball is dead when the fielder catches the throw. If the throw is wild, play continues.

Example: Runner on first. The pitcher balks during his throw to first and the ball gets away from the first baseman. The runner attempts to get to third and is thrown out. The out stands. He made the one base he would have been awarded and went beyond it at his own risk. If he had been thrown out at second, the out would not count, and he would be awarded second because of the balk. If he reaches third without touching second, he would be out if appealed and the balk is not enforced. He is considered to have reached second when he passed it. NOTE after 7.04.

The offensive team does **not** get an option on this type of play. The balk is either enforced or not depending on whether all runners advanced or not.

Batting Out of the Batters Box

NOT Legal



The batter is not legally in position.

His toes are outside the lines.

As the pitcher delivers the pitch, the batter's feet must be WITHIN the lines. (Rule 6.03)

Legal



Both batters are in a legal position to await a pitch.

They are within the box.

Out of box illegally



This batter's foot is entirely outside the box.

If the bat contacts a pitch at this time, the ball is dead and the batter is out, whether the ball goes fair or foul. All runners return to the bases held at the time of the pitch.

(Rule 6.06a and 5.09d)

Out of box Legal



The heel of these batters' front feet are touching the line.

If the bat contacts the pitch at this time, the batter is not out because his foot is not ENTIRELY outside the box. (Rule 6.06a)

After hitting the ball SAFE



This batter has just hit a fair ball and is starting to run to first.
He is considered to be in the batter's box when in this position. His back foot is still touching the ground inside the box.
If he was touched by his batted ball while in this position, it is ruled a foul ball.
After hitting the ball OUT



This batter has just hit a fair ball and is starting to run to first. He is considered to be out of the box when in this position. The box is "empty." Neither foot is touching the lines of the box, or the ground within the box. If he is touched by his fair batted ball while in this position, the ball is dead and he is out. (Rule 6.05f, 7.08f and 5.09f)

Fair and Foul Balls

General notes:

The position of the fielder's body or feet, have absolutely nothing to do with judging whether a ball is fair or foul. The judgment is based solely upon the relationship between the BALL and the LINE at the moment the fielder touches the ball, or at the moment the ball comes to a stop, or on outfield fly balls; the moment it touches the fielder or the ground.

Batted balls that go in-flight from the bat and first touch the ground in the outfield (fly ball to the outfield), are judged a bit different from batted balls that go from the bat and first touch the ground in the infield, before reaching first or third base (ground balls.)

Home plate is irrelevant. Home plate is in fair territory, but other than that, it is just the same as the ground. A ball that hits the plate first, or ends up on the plate, is no different from any other batted ball.

OUTFIELD FLY BALLS

An outfield fly ball is judged to be fair or foul by the relationship of the ball to the foul line at the moment it first touches the ground, or where it first touches a fielder. If the ball touches a fielder in-flight, the judgment is made at where the ball was when it was touched, NOT from where it may land after a miss, or drop of the ball, by a fielder. The position of the fielder is irrelevant. You only focus on the ball and the foul line.

INFIELD GROUND BALLS

Ground balls that bound between home and first, or home and third are a little tricky. The ball is not ruled fair or foul, until the ball comes to a stop, is touched by a fielder, or goes past first or third base.

The ball may zig-zag, back-and-forth, between fair and foul ground an unlimited number of times. The ruling of fair or foul is not made until the ball finally comes to a stop, or is touched, or goes past first or third base.

THE ACTUAL RULE from the rule book

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

A fair fly shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time he touches the ball. If a fly ball lands in the infield between home and first base, or home and third base, and then bounces to foul territory without touching a player or umpire and before passing first or third base, it is a foul ball; or if the ball settles on foul territory or is touched by a player on foul territory, it is a foul ball. If a fly ball lands on or beyond first or third base and then bounces to foul territory, it is a fair hit.

EXAMPLES:



The ball above is a fair ball.
If ANY part of the ball is over the chalk line, the ball is ruled as FAIR.



The ball above is a fair ball.
The batter's box is irrelevant as far as judging a batted ball that does not touch the batter while he is in the box, or any fielder.
If the ball stops untouched as in the picture above, the ball is FAIR.



The ball above is a fair ball.
The plate is in fair territory.
The foul lines run from the back point of the plate, toward first and third.

ALL of the following statements are FALSE.

1. The hands are considered part of the bat.
 2. The batter-runner must turn to his right after over-running first base.
 3. If the batter breaks his wrists when swinging, it's a strike.
 4. If a batted ball hits the plate first it's a foul ball.
 5. The batter cannot be called out for interference if he is in the batter's box.
 6. The ball is dead on a foul-tip.
 7. The batter may not switch batter's boxes after two strikes.
 8. The batter who batted out of order is the person declared out.
 9. The batter may not overrun first base when he gets a base-on-balls.
 10. The batter is out if he starts for the dugout before going to first after a dropped third strike.
 11. If the batter does not pull the bat out of the strike zone while in the bunting position, it's an automatic strike.
 12. The batter is out if a bunted ball hits the ground and bounces back up and hits the bat while the batter is holding the bat.
 13. The batter is out if his foot touches the plate.
 14. The batter-runner is always out if he runs outside the running lane after a bunted ball.
 15. A runner is out if he slaps hands or high-fives other players, after a homerun is hit over the fence.
 16. Tie goes to the runner.
 17. The runner gets the base he's going to, plus one on a ball thrown out-of-play.
 18. Anytime a coach touches a runner, the runner is out.
 19. Runners may never run the bases in reverse order.
 20. The runner must always slide when the play is close.
 21. The runner is always safe when hit by a batted ball while touching a base.
 22. A runner may not steal on a foul-tip.
 23. It is a force out when a runner is called out for not tagging up on a fly ball.
 24. An appeal on a runner who missed a base cannot be a force out.
 25. A runner is out if he runs out of the baseline to avoid a fielder who is fielding a batted ball.
 26. Runners may not advance when an infield fly is called.
 27. No run can score when a runner is called out for the third out for not tagging up.
 28. A pitch that bounces to the plate cannot be hit.
 29. The batter does not get first base if hit by a pitch after it bounces.
 30. If a fielder holds a fly ball for 2 seconds it's a catch.
 31. You must tag the base with your foot on a force out or appeal.
 32. The ball is always immediately dead on a balk.
 33. If a player's feet are in fair territory when the ball is touched, it is a fair ball.
 34. The ball must always be returned to the pitcher before an appeal can be made.
 35. With no runners on base, it is a ball if the pitcher starts his windup and then stops.
 36. The pitcher must come to a set position before a pick-off throw.
 37. The pitcher must step off the rubber before a pick-off throw.
 38. If a fielder catches a fly ball and then falls over the fence it is a homerun.
 39. The ball is dead anytime an umpire is hit by the ball.
 40. The home plate umpire can overrule the other umps at anytime.
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Explanations and Rule References

1. The hands are part of a person's body. If a pitch hits the batter's hands the ball is dead; if he swung at the pitch, a strike is called (NOT a foul). If he was avoiding the pitch, he is awarded first base.

Rules: 2.00 PERSON, TOUCH, STRIKE (e) and 6.05(f) Official Baseball Rules

2. The batter-runner may turn left or right, provided that if he turns left he does not make an attempt to advance. An attempt is a judgment made by the umpire. The requirement is that the runner must immediately return to first after overrunning or oversliding it.

Rule: 7.08(c and j) Official Baseball Rules

3. A strike is a judgment by the umpire as to whether the batter attempted to strike the ball. Breaking the wrists, or the barrel of the bat crossing the plate are simply guides to making the judgment of an attempt, these are not rules.

Rule: 2.00 STRIKE Official Baseball Rules

4. The plate is in fair territory. There is nothing special about it. If a batted ball hits it, it is treated like any other batted ball.

5. The batter's box is not a safety zone. A batter could be called out for interference if the umpire judges that interference could or should have been avoided.

Rules: 2.00 INTERFERENCE, 6.06(c) Official Baseball Rules.

6. There is nothing foul about a foul-tip. If the ball nicks the bat and goes sharp and direct to the catcher's hand or glove and is caught, this is a foul-tip by definition. A foul-tip is a strike and the ball is alive. It is the same as a swing-and-miss. If the ball is not caught, it is a foul ball. If the nicked pitch first hits the catcher somewhere other than the hand or glove, it is not a foul-tip, it is a foul ball.

Rules: 2.00 FOUL-TIP, STRIKE Official Baseball Rules

7. The batter can switch boxes at any time, provided he does not do it after the pitcher is ready to pitch.

Rule: 6.06(b) Official Baseball Rules

8. The PROPER batter is the one called out. Any hit or advance made by the batter or runners due to the hit, walk, error or other reason is nullified. The next batter is the one who follows the proper batter who was called out.

Rule: 6.07(b, 1) Official Baseball Rules

9. Rule 7.08(c and j) simply state that a batter-runner must immediately return after overrunning first base. It doesn't state any exceptions as to how the player became a runner. It could be a hit, walk, error or dropped third strike. See Official Baseball Rules

10. The batter may attempt first base anytime prior to leaving the dirt circle around home plate.

Rule: 6.05(c), 6.09(b) Casebook interpretation Official Baseball Rules.

11. A strike is an attempt to hit the ball. Simply holding the bat over the plate is not an attempt. This is umpire judgment.

Rule 2.00 STRIKE Official Baseball Rules

12. The rule says the BAT cannot hit the ball a second time. When the BALL hits the bat, it is not an out.

Rules: 6.05(h) and 7.09(b) Official Baseball Rules

13. To be out the batter's foot must be ENTIRELY outside the box when he contacts the pitch. There is no statement about touching the plate. The toe could be on the plate and the heel could be touching the line of the box, which means the foot is not entirely outside the box.

Rule: 6.06(a) Official Baseball Rules

14. The runner must be out of the box AND cause interference. He is not out simply for being

outside the lane. He could be called for interference even while in the lane. This is a judgment call.

Rules: 2.00 INTERFERENCE, 6.05(k), 7.09(k) Official Baseball Rules

15. The ball is dead on a homerun over the fence. You can't be put out while the ball is dead except when you pass another runner.

Rules: 5.02, 7.05(a) Official Baseball Rules

16. There is no such thing in the world of umpiring. The runner is either out or safe.

17. When a fielder other than the pitcher throws the ball into dead ball area, the award is 2 bases. The award is from where the runners were at the time of the pitch if it is the first play by an infielder before all runners have advanced or from where each runner was physically positioned at the time the ball left the throwers hand on all other plays.

Rule: 7.05(g) Official Baseball Rules

18. Rule 7.09(I) says the runner is out if the coach PHYSICALLY ASSISTS the runner. Hand slaps, back pats or simple touches are not physical assists.

19. In order to correct a base running mistake, the runner MUST retrace his steps and retouch the bases in reverse order. The only time a runner is out for running in reverse, is when he is making a travesty of the game or tries to confuse the defense.

Rules: 7.08(I), 7.10(b) Official Baseball Rules

20. There is no "must slide" rule. When the fielder has the ball in possession, the runner has two choices; slide OR attempt to get around the fielder. He may NOT deliberately or maliciously contact the fielder, but he is NOT required to slide.

Rule: 7.08(a, 3) this rule does not apply to professionals.

See Sliding and Collisions.

21. The bases are in fair territory. A runner is out when hit by a fair batted ball, except an infield-fly.

Rules: 5.09(f), 7.08(f) Official Baseball Rules

22. There is nothing foul about a foul-tip. If the ball nicks the bat and goes to the catcher's glove and is caught, this is a foul-tip by definition. A foul-tip is a strike and the ball is alive. It is the same as a swing-and-miss. If the ball is not caught, it is a foul ball.

Rules: 2.00 FOUL-TIP, STRIKE Official Baseball Rules

23. A force play is when a runner is forced to advance because the batter became a runner. When the batter is out on a caught fly, all forces are removed. An out on an a failure to tag-up, is NOT a force out. Any runs that cross the plate before this out will count.

Rules: 2.00 FORCE PLAY, 4.09 Official Baseball Rules

24. A runner must touch all the bases. If the runner misses a base to which he was forced because the batter became a runner and is put out before touching that base, the out is still a force play. If this is the third out, no runs may score. The base can be touched or the runner can be touched, either way it's a force out.

Rules: 2.00 FORCE PLAY, TAG, 7.08(e), 7.10(b) Official Baseball Rules

25. The runner MUST avoid a fielder attempting to field a BATTED ball. A runner is out for running out of the baseline, only when attempting to avoid a tag.

Rules: 7.08(a), 7.09(L) Official Baseball Rules

26. An Infield-fly is no different than any other fly ball in regard to the runners. The only difference is that they are never forced to advance because the batter is out whether the ball is caught or not.

Rules: 2.00 INFIELD-FLY, 6.05(e), 7.10(a) Official Baseball Rules

27. Yes it can. This is not a force play. A force play is when a runner is forced to advance because the batter became a runner. When the batter is out on a caught fly, all forces are removed. An out on an a failure to tag-up, is NOT a force out. Any runs that cross the plate before this out will count.

Rules: 2.00 FORCE PLAY, 4.09, 7.10(a) Official Baseball Rules

28. A pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. It doesn't matter how it gets to the batter. The batter may hit any pitch that is thrown.

Rule: 2.00 PITCH. (If the ball does not cross the foul line, it is not a pitch.)

29. A pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. It doesn't matter how it gets to the batter. If the batter is hit by a pitch while attempting to avoid it, he is awarded first base.

Rules: 2.00 PITCH, 6.08(b).

30. A catch is legal when the umpire judges that the fielder has COMPLETE control of the ball. The release of the ball must be voluntary and intentional.

Rule: 2.00 CATCH Official Baseball Rules

31. You can tag a base with ANY part of the body.

Rules: 2.00 FORCE PLAY, PERSON, TAG, 7.08(e) Official Baseball Rules

32. In Federation rules it is, not in any others. If a throw or pitch is made after the balk call, the ball is delayed dead. At the end of the play the balk may be enforced or not depending on what happened. On a throw; if ALL runners advance on the play, the balk is ignored. If not, the balk award is enforced from the time of pitch. On a pitch; if ALL runners INCLUDING the batter, advance on the play, the balk is ignored. Otherwise, it is no-pitch and the balk award is made from the time of the pitch.

Rule: 8.05 PENALTY Official Baseball Rules

33. 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.

Rule: 2.00 FAIR, FOUL Official Baseball Rules

34. An appeal may be made anytime the ball is alive. The only time the ball must go to the pitcher, is when time is out. The ball cannot be made live until the pitcher has the ball while on the rubber and the umpire says "Play." If time is not out, the appeal can be made immediately.

Rule: 2.00 APPEAL, 5.11, 7.10 Official Baseball Rules

35. A pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. If the ball is not delivered, it is not a pitch. If this happens with runners on base it is a balk.

Rule: 2.00 PITCH.

36. The pitcher is required to come to a complete stop in the Set position before delivering the pitch, not before making a throw.

Rule: 8.05(m) Official Baseball Rules

37. If the pitcher steps off the rubber he is no longer the pitcher, he is a fielder. He can throw to a base from the rubber, provided he does not break any of the rules under rule 8.05

Official Baseball Rules

38. As long as the fielder is not touching the ground in dead ball territory when he catches the ball, it is a legal catch if he holds onto the ball and meets the definition of a catch. If the catch is not the third out and the fielder falls down in dead ball territory, all runners are awarded one base. If the fielder remains on his feet in dead ball territory after the catch, the ball is alive and he may make a play.

Rules: 2.00 CATCH, 6.05(a), 7.04(c) Official Baseball Rules

39. If an umpire is hit by a batted ball before it passes a fielder, the ball is dead. On any other batted or thrown ball, the ball is alive when the umpire is hit with the ball. Umpire interference also occurs when the plate umpire interferes with the catcher's attempt to prevent a stolen base.

Rules: 2.00 INTERFERENCE, 5.09(b), 5.09(f) Official Baseball Rules

40. The umpire who made a call or ruling may ask for help if he wishes. No umpire may

overrule another umpire's call.
Rules: 9.02(b, c) Official Baseball Rules