

Catcher's Interference – Determining Earned and Unearned Runs

Rule Interpretation

The Official Baseball Rules 2007 rule changes included a change to the Earned and Unearned Run rule. In particular determining Earned and Unearned Runs in an inning where a Batter/Runner reaches first Base on a Catcher's Interference.

Listed below are:

1. Extracts from the revised Earned and Unearned Run rule.
2. The Rule Interpretation adopted Nationally, which incorporates the interpretation of Rule 10:16 in its entirety.

Official Rules of Baseball 2007

10.16 Earned Runs And Runs Allowed

An earned run is a run for which a pitcher is held accountable. In determining earned runs, the official scorer shall reconstruct the inning without the errors (which exclude catcher's interference) and passed balls, giving the benefit of the doubt always to the pitcher in determining which bases would have been reached by runners had there been errorless play. For the purpose of determining earned runs, an intentional base on balls, regardless of the circumstances, shall be construed in exactly the same manner as any other base on balls.

(a) The official scorer shall charge an earned run against a pitcher every time a runner reaches home base by the aid of safe hits, sacrifice bunts, a sacrifice fly, stolen bases, putouts, fielder's choices, bases on balls, hit batters, balks or wild pitches (including a wild pitch on third strike that permits a batter to reach first base) before fielding chances have been offered to put out the offensive team. For the purpose of this rule, a defensive interference penalty shall be construed as a fielding chance. A wild pitch is solely the pitcher's fault and shall contribute to an earned run just as a base on balls or a balk.

Rule 10.16 (a) Comment: (Extract)

In an inning in which a batter-runner reaches first base on a catcher's interference, such batter-runner shall not count as an earned run should he subsequently score. The official scorer shall not assume, however, that such batter would have made an out absent the catcher's interference (unlike, for example, situations in which a batter-runner reaches first base safely because of a fielder's misplay of a ball for an error). Because such batter never had a chance to complete his time at bat, it is unknown how such batter would have fared absent the catcher's interference.

EXAMPLE 4::

(4) With two out, Abel reaches first on a catcher's interference. Baker hits a home run. Charlie strikes out. Two runs have scored, but one (Baker's) is earned, because the official scorer cannot assume that Abel would have made an out to end the inning, absent the catcher's interference.

Rule Interpretation – adopted Nationally:

- o When a Batter/Runner reaches 1st Base on a Catcher's Interference, and such Batter/Runner subsequently scores, the run will be Unearned.
- o In determining Earned Runs the Catcher's Interference shall NOT be considered a fielding chance when reconstructing the inning without errors.
- o Runs scored solely because of the Interference will be Unearned.

The interpretation of the entire rule is more complicated than it was previously.

For that reason, and so we can get an idea of the general accuracy of application of the rule, all Scorers are invited (encouraged) to forward a copy of any/all games involving Catcher's Interference where runs scored in the same inning.

Please either attach a scan of the Score Sheet to an email, or, note the innings scenario in an email message. If you would like assistance with application of this rule at any time please don't hesitate to ask.