



# Case Book For Fast Pitch



Version 9, 2022-2023  
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#### **FORWARD**

The play situations and explanations are based on questions that have been raised in administering the many games played each season. The purpose of each play situation and ruling is to clarify the intent of the rules, since the rulebook does not include rules for every play or situation that could occur.

Interpretations in this book were approved by the USSSA Fast Pitch Rules Committee and are official for situations as outlined.

#### **CASE BOOK FORMAT**

Teams are referred to as Team A and Team B.

For convenience, all players of the team in the field (on Defense) are given a number as follows:

1 – Pitcher, 2- Catcher, 3- First Base, 4- Second Base, 5- Third Base, 6- Shortstop, 7- Left Field, 8- Center Field, 9- Right Field.

Any fielder is referred to as F with the appropriate proper number, i.e., F1 is the pitcher and F7 is the left fielder.

A runner is referred to as R. If there is more than one runner, R3 is the runner who is on third base at the time of the pitch, R2 is the runner who is on second base at the time of the pitch, and R1 is the runner who is on first base at the time of the pitch.

Each batter is referred to as B or B/R for batter-runner. In cases involving more than one batter the batters are numbered B1 is the first batter, B2 and so on.

When a runner (including the batter-runner) is touched with the ball by a fielder or with the glove or hand holding the ball, while such runner is not on a base, reference is made to a runner being tagged.

The statement “B HITS TO F4” means the batter hits the ball in the direction of the second baseman. It should not be interpreted to mean a safe hit but merely a ball hit to fair ground in that direction.

# RULE 1 - Playing Field

## THE FIELD

**SITUATION A:** As the umpires arrive at the field for a game, they notice that the left field fence is (a) 175 feet or (b) 240 feet.

**RULING:** Legal; Distances for outfield fences are only recommendations, not mandatory. (1-1)

**SITUATION B:** During the pregame conference, the umpires notice that the temporary fences do not extend beyond the foul lines, and the fences are not secured (loose) to the ground.

**RULING:** The issue should be covered at the pregame conference as a ground rule noting that any ball which goes through, under, or after landing in fair territory bounds beyond the temporary fence will be a dead-ball and two base award. (8-14-C-1; 10-1-F-4)

## BASES

**SITUATION A:** It is brought to the umpire's attention before the game, that the bases have tapered edges.

**RULING:** Legal, provided the maximum thickness of the base at the center is 5 inches. (1-2-B)

**SITUATION B:** During the pre-game conference, Team A's coach informs the umpires that bases that disengage their anchor systems are being used, and protests that the bases are considered non-traditional playing equipment.

**RULING:** Protest denied; this type of base is legal. (1-2-B)

**SITUATION C:** In the bottom of the first inning, the home team or umpire(s) notice that the bases are not the correct distances. The visiting team protests that in fairness to both teams the inning should be replayed.

**RULING:** Anytime an incorrect distance (bases or pitcher's plate) is discovered, the error shall be corrected **immediately**, even though one team may have been placed at a disadvantage.. (1-1 NOTE)

## DOUBLE FIRST BASE

**SITUATION A:** The coach of Team A tells the umpire during the pre-game conference that the game must be played with a double first base.

**RULING:** The double first base has been adopted by USSSA; it may be used but is **not required**. The game will be played with the base(s) provided. (1-2-C)

**SITUATION B:** During a game in which the double first base is being used, B1 hits a ground ball to F5. In advancing to first base, B1 touches (a) the white portion of the base or (b) the colored portion of the base, and in both situations, collides with F3 who is about to catch a thrown ball and is touching the white portion of the base.

**RULING:** In (a), interference is ruled and B1 is out. In (b), obstruction is ruled and B1 is awarded first base. During playing action in which the batter-runner is part of a force play at first base, B1 is required to use the colored portion of the base. (1-2-C; 8-19-C; 8-13)

**SITUATION C:** During a game in which the double first base is being used, B2 hits a fly ball that is caught by F9. While attempting to advance toward second base, R1 (who was on first base) realizes the ball is caught and returns toward first. F9 throws to first in an attempt to retire R1, but the throw is wide and travels into foul territory. F3 retrieves the ball in foul territory and tags the orange portion of the bag before R1 gets back to the white portion of the bag.

**RULING:** R1 is out. When a runner is tagging up on a fly ball, the offensive and defensive players may use either the white or colored portion of the double first base. (1-2-C; 8-19-E)

**SITUATION D:** During a game in which the double first base is being used, F3 misplays B1's batted ball in fair territory and the ball rebounds into foul territory. F3 retrieves the ball and touches the colored part of first base before B1 arrives.

**RULING:** B1 is out. The initial fielding attempt resulted in the ball being misplayed. In the subsequent play, the defensive player may use either the white or colored portion of the double first base. (1-2-D; 8-19)

## INCORRECT PITCHING DISTANCE

**SITUATION A:** In the top of the first inning, Team A scores several runs because the pitcher had difficulty throwing strikes. At the end of the half-inning, as Team B's pitcher is taking warm-up throws and complains that the pitcher's plate was not set at the correct distance. When measured, it is discovered that the distance is incorrect.

**RULING:** Anytime an incorrect distance (pitcher's plate or bases) is discovered, it shall be corrected immediately, even though one team may have been placed at a disadvantage. (1-1)

## RULE 2 - Equipment

### SOFTBALLS

**SITUATION A:** The tournament management provides the umpires with optic yellow softballs with blue stitches for the games.

**RULING:** Legal; USSSA softballs must be optic yellow with blue stitching for all Fastpitch play. (2-3)

**SITUATION B:** Prior to the game, the umpires are provided the game balls. Upon inspection of the balls, the umpire notices that two of the balls show a COR on the cover of .45. The other ball is labeled as having a COR of .47. Do all the balls need to have the same COR?

**RULING:** Yes. The specs of COR must be identical for all balls used in each game. The COR shall be 46.25 +/- 0.75. (2-3)

**SITUATION C:** Balls given to the plate umpire prior to the game do not have the USSSA Authenticating Mark. Are these balls legal?

**RULING:** No. All balls shall have the USSSA Authenticating Mark labeled on the cover. The umpires shall require authenticated balls prior to starting the game. (2-3)

### BATS

**SITUATION A:** Prior to the game the umpire discovers a bat that has the handle flush with the knob in Team A's dugout.

**RULING:** The umpire shall inform the coach of Team A that the bat is illegal and shall not permit its use. For safety purposes, all bats shall have a knob which is securely fastened on the handle end of the bat to prevent the bat from slipping out of the hands of the batter when she swings. (2-10)

**SITUATION B:** B1 steps into the batter's box with the bat handle wrapped with (a) plastic tape or (b) athletic tape.

**RULING:** Illegal in (a). Legal in (b). Bat handles may not be wrapped with a material or substance that causes the handle to be slippery. (2-10)

**SITUATION C:** B1 steps into the batter's box with a bat that does not meet the USSSA Bat Performance Standard, and the pitcher, in position with a live ball, is standing on the pitcher's plate.

**RULING:** The batter is OUT. The umpire should not wait for a pitch to be thrown, the penalty is immediately enforced. The bat shall be removed for the duration of the tournament, additionally for altered or non-approved bats, both player (for the remainder of the current game only), and head coach (for remainder of this game and his team's next game) are ejected. For other illegal bats (damaged), first offense: Warning, a subsequent offense with the same bat results in player restricted to the bench area/dugout and ejection of the head coach. (2-10;7-18-W)

**SITUATION D:** B4 steps into the batter's box with a metal bat that is found to have neither the 2014 or 2021 USSSA FASTPITCH USSSA BPF thumbprint..

**RULING:** The bat is illegal. The player and head coach are ejected for the remainder of that game, and the head coach is suspended from coaching the team's next game as well. (2-10-D;12-1)

**SITUATION E:** A well-used bat has no marking stating Official Softball.

**RULING:** Bat is ILLEGAL. To be legal it must be marked "Official Softball" and have the 2014 USSSA 1.20 BPF mark or the 2020 USSSA Fastpitch certification on the taper. (2-10-C; 2-10-D-1)

**SITUATION F:** The umpire notices that B1's bat has a "tacky" substance extending beyond the taper (a) before she steps into the batter's box or (b) after hitting a long foul ball.

**RULING:** In (a), B1 may obtain a legal bat without penalty. In (b), B1 would be declared out for using an illegal bat. (2-10; 2-10-L-4)

**SITUATION G:** An umpire notices that Team A is using a donut on a legal bat as a warm-up device for on-deck batters.

**RULING:** Illegal. Devices added to a bat for warm up purposes shall be manufactured specifically for softball bats and securely attached. Only USSSA approved bat weighted devices may be used. Nothing such as a donut or fan may be used. (2-10-B; 2-12)

**SITUATION H:** The on-deck batter begins warming up with (a), a weighted bat and two softball bats or (b), a weighted bat and a softball bat, both utilizing weighted sleeves.

**RULING:** In (a), the umpire shall inform the on-deck batter that she is limited to two bats and that she must return one of the three bats to the bench or dugout. Legal in (b). (2-12)

**SITUATION I:** An Umpire observes the on-deck batter is removing a bat from a bat warmer.

**RULING:** Legal if the bat warmer is a USSSA approved Pyroflite bat warmer. Any other bat warmer would be illegal. (2-11)

## BATTING HELMETS

**SITUATION A:** B1 (a) is standing in the batter's box when the umpire notices that the protective helmet does not have a NOCSAE permanent stamp, or (b) hits safely and reaches first base and the umpire notices that the warning label is missing on the helmet.

**RULING:** In (a) and (b), the umpire shall require the player to secure a proper helmet. The coach shall be warned that the next player who does not wear a legal batter helmet shall be restricted to the dugout/bench for the duration of the game. (2-1)

**SITUATION B:** The on-deck batter appears in the on-deck circle not wearing a batting helmet.

**RULING:** The umpire shall instruct the on-deck batter to secure a batting helmet immediately; otherwise, the batter will not be permitted in the on-deck circle. The umpire shall warn the coach that the next player not wearing the required batting helmet shall result in the ejection of the head coach and the player will be restricted to the dugout/bench for the duration of the game. (2-1)

**SITUATION C:** Between innings, the umpire notices that a player in the coach's box is not wearing a batting helmet.

**RULING:** The umpire shall have the player secure a batting helmet immediately. There is no penalty, since the inning had not begun. (2-1)

**SITUATION D:** In (a) R1, upon reaching first base, adjusts their helmet by lifting it, but not above the temples, and replaces it, or (b) B3 doubles and removes the helmet, tossing it in the air in celebration, or (c) after hitting a home run over the fence removes the helmet prior to touching home plate.

**RULING:** In (a), and (c) there is no violation. In (a) the helmet was not considered removed, in (c) the ball was not live. In (b), the ball is dead immediately and the player's head coach shall receive a team warning, if it is that team's first offense. Subsequent offenders shall result in the ejection of the head coach and the player being restricted to the dugout/bench for the duration of the game. (2-1; 10-2-F)

**SITUATION E:** During the game the umpire notices a batting helmet (a) with a face protector that doesn't have the NOCSAE approval, (b) a batting helmet that has a glare (mirror like) surface, or (c) a tinted eye shield.

**RULING:** Illegal in (a), (b) and (c) In (a) all helmets must have an attached face protector with the NOCSAE stamp on them. In (b) no helmet may have a glare (mirror like) surface and in (c) any eye shield must be clear (no tint) and allow 100% light transmission. (2-1)

## CATCHER'S EQUIPMENT

**SITUATION A:** The coach instructs a relief pitcher to begin warming up. The umpire notices the catcher puts on a hockey style helmet and mask but without an added throat protector.

**RULING:** As long as the helmet and face mask has the NOCSAE stamp on it, it is legal. A hockey style helmet is manufactured with an attached throat protector and needs nothing added (2-2)

**SITUATION B:** During the game, the umpire notices that the catcher's helmet has a tinted eye shield.

**RULING:** Illegal: Any attached eye shield must be clear and permit 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission. The catcher must make that helmet legal or obtain a different legal catcher's helmet. A team warning will be issued to the head coach. (2-2)

**SITUATION C:** Prior to the game, the umpire notices a player warming up the pitcher while wearing (a) a batter's helmet with a face mask, or (b) a defensive player's face guard, while within the confines of the playing field.

**RULING:** Illegal. Coaches have the responsibility for minimizing the risk of their players. The umpire's jurisdiction begins upon the umpire's arrival on site. The umpire(s) shall stop the pitcher and catcher from warming up, find the team's head coach and issue a team warning for a player not wearing proper safety equipment when required to do so. FIRST OFFENSE: is a team warning. SECOND OFFENSE and any subsequent violation the offender and the head coach shall be ejected. (2-2; 11-2-C)

**SITUATION D:** During the game, the umpire notices that the catcher is wearing a skull cap style helmet without ear flaps.

**RULING:** Illegal: In the Youth program the catcher shall wear a NOCSAE approved head protector (with dual earflaps) and approved mask with throat protector. The catcher shall obtain a different legal catcher's helmet. A team warning will be issued to the head coach. (2-2)

## GLOVES / MITTS

**SITUATION A:** R3 is on third and R2 on second with one out when B1 bats with a 2-2 count. B1 hits a fly ball to right field. F9 catches the ball and R3 tags up and scores as R2 advances to third. The defensive team immediately notifies the umpire that F9 is wearing a first baseman's mitt.

**RULING:** The play stands. It is legal for F9 to wear a first baseman's mitt. Any fielder can wear a glove, or a mitt as long as it meets the dimension specifications. The catcher's mitt or glove can be any size. (2-9)

## TEAM EQUIPMENT

**SITUATION A:** A team hangs its bats and helmets on a portable rack that attaches to the fence, but in live-ball area.

**RULING:** The umpire shall require such equipment to be located in dead-ball territory. However, if a ball touches such loose equipment, it is considered a blocked ball. The ball would be dead, and, if caused by the defense, runners awarded bases. When the offensive team causes a blocked ball, the runner closest to home is out. If no play is obvious, no player is out, but all runners shall return to the last base touched when the ball became dead. (3-BLOCKED BALL; 8-14-E-2; 8-18-AA; 14-12-C)

## PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

**SITUATION A:** Team A's pitcher comes out to pitch wearing (a), a defensive face mask with an attached tinted eye shield, or (b) a helmet with a glare (mirror like) surface.

**RULING:** Illegal in both (a) & (b). The pitcher must remove the illegal equipment, or make it legal. Defensive face masks are optional, but if worn they must meet the transparency requirements of all eye shields, and must be constructed of a molded, rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission. A team warning is issued and any subsequent offenses will result in the player being restricted to the dugout, and the head coach being ejected. (2-7)

## UNIFORMS

**SITUATION A:** In (a) eight members of a team are wearing red shorts and the ninth player is wearing long pants or a red skirt for religious reasons or (b), the player-coach is wearing a jacket while the coaching box; or (c), a player asks to wear a jacket over her uniform while running the bases or (d), the pitcher is wearing a sweatshirt in inclement weather..

**RULING:** Illegal in (a), (c) and (d) unless the tournament director has given permission for that player to wear a different style uniform. Legal in (b). (2-8; 2-8 NOTE)

**SITUATION B:** B1 hits a double. F6 informs the umpire that B1 is wearing a bandanna tied around her neck.

**RULING:** The umpire will require that B1 remove the bandana, and issue a team warning. (2-8-A)

## UNIFORM NUMBERS

**SITUATION A:** Team A arrives at the field wearing numbers on the back of their jerseys that are less than 6 inches high.

**RULING:** legal uniforms. Numbers must be a minimum of 3 inches and clearly visible for all Qualifiers, National and World Series play. (2-8-C)

## SHOES

**SITUATION A:** During a; (a) 12U or (b), 14U game, the umpire detects multiple players of Team A wearing metal-crest shoes.

**RULING:** Illegal in (a); during 8 and under thru 12 and under play, metal cleats are prohibited. In (b) legal, in all divisions 13U and older, players may wear metal cleats. (2-4-A; 2-4-B)

**SITUATION B:** In (a) a 12U or (b) a 14U game, R1 is on second base when B2 hits a double to center field. B2 advances to second base and R1 scores. After the score, the catcher points out to the umpire that the R1 is wearing metal cleats.

**RULING:** Illegal in (a) Metal cleats are prohibited for 12U players. The umpire will issue a Team Warning. R1 must remove the metal cleats. All play stands. If the Team was issued a previous warning, R1 is restricted to the bench, and the Head Coach is ejected. The run does not score. B2 returns to 2B. In (b) Legal, metal cleats are allowed for 13U and older divisions of play. (2-4-A)

## JEWELRY

**SITUATION A:** B3 is at bat when the umpire is notified by F2 that B3 is wearing a necklace that is a), securely taped down and completely covered or b), exposed and loose.

**RULING:** Exposed Jewelry that is dangerous is prohibited in youth play. Legal in (a); in b) Illegal if deemed dangerous. **PENALTY:** First offense is a team warning. Second offense and any subsequent violation, the player is restricted to the bench for the remainder of the game and the coach shall be ejected. (2-5; 11-2- E; 14-12-Q)

**SITUATION B:** In the second inning, a player on Youth Team A is discovered wearing exposed jewelry, which is judged to be dangerous, which results in a team warning. Later in the game, the coach of Team B notices that same player, now sitting on the bench, is still wearing the jewelry and informs the umpire.

**RULING:** The jewelry rule applies only to players in the game, not on the bench. The player wearing a necklace on the bench is not subject to penalty. (11-2-E; 14-12-Q)

**SITUATION C:** In the third inning the base umpire detects the F9 wearing sunglasses on her hat and instructs the fielder to either wear the sunglasses correctly or remove them as they would be considered jewelry.

**RULING:** Incorrect ruling. There is no rule classifying sunglasses as jewelry and nothing prohibiting a fielder from removing sunglasses and putting them on their caps. Fielders must have access to the sunglasses when they are needed, and can't be expected to run to the dugout for them when needed. (2-5)

## MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

**SITUATION A:** The umpire notices R1 wearing; (a) a hard cast on her forearm; (b) a knee brace with exposed metal hinges; (c) a metal splint on her finger; or (d) an artificial leg.

**RULING:** In (a) and (c), each item must be properly padded and not considered dangerous by the umpire. In (b), Legal, a knee brace that is unaltered from the manufacturer's original design does not require padding. In (d), the tournament director will decide whether or not the prosthesis is safe. If it is judged to be hazardous, that player may not compete. (2-6)

**COMMENT:** Braces, casts and splints need to be inspected on a game-by-game basis. The plate umpire of the game has the authority to rule on the legality of the equipment and his or her decision shall be final and not based upon a previous ruling of another umpire. (2-6)

**SITUATION B:** A player with a broken nose or jaw is wearing a protective mask similar to the type worn by a hockey goalie.

**RULING:** A commercially manufactured mask of this nature is legal. (2-7)

## RULE 3 - Definitions

### CATCH

**SITUATION A:** B1 hits a fly to F8. The ball is momentarily in F8's hands but falls out (a) when F8 falls to the ground and rolls over or (b), when F8 collides with another fielder or the fence or (c), when F8 starts to throw to the infield.

**RULING:** in (a) and (b), Live ball, no catch. In establishing a valid catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove complete control and that the release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. In (c), it is a legal catch if the umpire rules that the ball was dropped as F8 attempts to transfer the ball to her throwing hand. (3-CATCH-A)



**SITUATION B:** B1 hits a deep fly ball toward the left field fence. In (a) F7 places a foot on the temporary fence (which is still upright) while making the catch. In (b), F7 leaps to make the catch and in the process, knocks down the temporary fence. After making the catch, F7 lands on the fence (now lying flat on the ground).

**RULING:** In (a) and (b), Valid Catch and the batter is out. In (a), Live Ball; a collapsible fence is considered in play as long as the fielder is not standing on the fence while it is lying flat on the ground beyond its original plane. In (b), Live ball and Legal catch, but the ball becomes DEAD when the fielder contacts the fence lying on the ground.(3-CATCH-A-4; 3-CATCH-B-5 & 7)

**SITUATION C:** B1 hits a fair line drive that is touched in flight by F4, after which it hits an umpire standing behind F4. The ball is then caught by F6 before it touches the ground.

**RULING:** B1 is not out. The ball remains live because it touched a fielder before touching an umpire. A batted fair ball in flight that hits an umpire, after being touched by a fielder, is ruled the same as the ball hitting the ground where the umpire is standing. (3-CATCH-B-6)

**SITUATION D:** B1 hits a ground ball to F6 who throws to first. F3 juggles the ball so that it rolls up F3's arm. F3 clamps the ball to the body by an elbow or forearm just as B1 touches first base.

**RULING:** B1 is safe. It is not a catch until the ball is securely in a hand or glove. (3-CATCH-B-2)

**SITUATION E:** B1 hits a ground ball to F6. With her foot on first base, F3 secures the thrown ball while her hand is on top of the ball and the ball has contact with the ground. F3 turns her hand over and upward to demonstrate she has control of the ball.

**RULING:** B1 is out if F3 raises her glove with the ball inside before B1 reaches first base or after B1 passes first base. (3-CATCH)

## CONFERENCES

**SITUATION A:** The coach of the defensive team has used their three charged conferences. In the seventh inning, the coach (a), stops play to confer with her infielders about a bunt situation or (b), checks with F1 who has just been hit by a batted ball. .

**RULING:** In (a), the pitcher must be removed as pitcher for the remainder of the game. In (b), this is not a charged conference. The umpire should accompany the coach to check on the injured player and make sure coaching does not take place. (3-CONFERENCE, CHARGED; 4-8-A & C)

**SITUATION B:** Team A has had two charged conferences. The coach of Team A is granted time to visit the pitcher. At the same time the assistant coach goes out to talk to the first baseman. The opposing team's coach claims two conferences should be assessed and the pitcher be removed, since it would be the team's fourth conference.

**RULING:** As long as the assistant coach does not delay the game when play is to resume, there is no penalty. If the coach does delay, her team is subject to an additional charged conference being called, which would then require the pitcher to be removed as pitcher for the rest of the game.(3-CONFERENCE, CHARGED; 4-8)

**SITUATION C:** F1 just walked the bases full. The catcher requests "time" from the Plate Umpire, to calm the pitcher down. When F2 goes to the pitcher's circle, R1, R2 and R3 all go speak with the third-base coach.

**RULING:** Illegal; A charged conference is not charged when a defensive player requests time to speak to one or more defensive players. Base runners may not abandon the vicinity of their bases without being charged with a conference.(3-CONFERENCE, CHARGED; 4-8-B NOTE)

## CONFERENCE-PREGAME

**SITUATION A:** During the pregame conference, an adult assistant coach verifies to the plate umpire that all players are properly equipped and are in compliance with USSSA rules and they understand the guidelines and will display proper sporting behavior.

**RULING:** Correct procedure: It is permissible for an adult coach to attend the pregame conference. (3-CONFERENCE, PREGAME)

**SITUATION B:** during the pregame conference (a) F1 is throwing pitches in foul territory between first base and home plate, (b) Team A assistant coach is on the foul line hitting grounders to infielders and fly balls to outfielders, (c) F1 is throwing warm up pitches to F2 outside the playing field, (d) F1 and F2 are playing catch in the outfield.

**RULING:** Improper in (a), (b), (d). Legal in (c). There shall be no balls hit or thrown in the live ball territory during the pre-game conference. (4-8-D)

## FAIR BALL

**SITUATION A:** B1 hits a fly ball to the infield that falls untouched (a) behind second base, or (b) behind the pitching circle, but just in front of second base. After hitting the ground, the ball continues to spin and rolls between home and first base and comes to rest on foul ground.

**RULING:** in (a), fair ball. In (b) foul ball. 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 in fair or foul territory. (3-FAIR BALL; 3-FOUL BALL)

## FOUL BALL

**SITUATION A:** Without touching any person, (a), a batted ball hits the pitcher's plate or (b), a fly ball, touches fair ground, between home and third. In both (a) and (b) the ball then bounces to foul ground without having passed first or third.

**RULING:** The ball is foul in both (a) and (b). (3-FOUL BALL)

**SITUATION B:** A batted ball goes no higher than the batter's head. The catcher lunges and catches the ball in foul territory, before it touches the ground.

**RULING:** The batter is out. This is a caught foul ball not a foul tip. (3-FOUL BALL)

**SITUATION C:** With R1 on base, B2 attempts to bunt on the first pitch, the ball goes directly from the bat to F2's mitt, then rebounds towards F1 who catches the ball as R1 is advancing.

**RULING:** It is not a foul tip and R1 may not advance. It is a foul ball. (3-FOUL BALL)

## FOUL TIP

**SITUATION A:** With R1 on first, B2 hits a foul which goes directly to the catcher's mitt and (a) is caught, or (b) is dropped. In either case, R1 advances to second.

**RULING:** In (a), it is a foul tip and is treated the same as any other strike; hence, R1 has stolen second. FOUL BALL in (b), R1 must return to first. (3-FOUL TIP NOTE; 3-FOUL BALL)

**SITUATION B:** With R2 on second base and no one out, a pitch touches the bat of B2. In (a), it goes directly to the catcher's glove then rebounds against the protector and rebounds into the hand or glove, or (b) it goes directly to the catcher's protector or mask and rebounds into the hand or glove.

**RULING:** In (a), it is a foul tip and a catch. The ball remains live. In (b), the ball becomes dead when it touches the body of F2. (3-FOUL TIP)

**SITUATION C:** B1 fouls the pitched ball off. The ball goes directly from the bat to the catcher's glove where it is caught.

**RULING:** This is a foul tip and a strike. The ball remains live. Runners may advance or be put out, the same as after any strike. To be a foul tip, the ball must be caught by the catcher. (3-FOUL TIP)

## INFIELD FLY RULE

**SITUATION A:** With R2 on second, and R1 on first; (a) B3 bunts or (b), swings and hits a pop up which falls between home and third and cannot be caught by any fielder.

**RULING:** In (a), a bunt is never an infield fly. In (b), since no fielder could catch the ball with ordinary effort, this is not an infield fly. (3-INFIELD FLY)

**SITUATION B:** R2 and R1 are on second and first base, respectively, with no outs. B3 hits a high pop foul between home and first base with F3 losing sight of the ball because of the sun. The ball lands on foul ground without being touched and rolls into fair territory halfway between home and first base. F1 picks the ball up and throws to F4 covering first, who touches R2 with the ball while the latter is off base.

**RULING:** Fair ball. Even though the infield fly was not called, it is still in effect. B3 therefore, is out. R2 is also out. (3-INFIELD FLY; 8-17-H)

**SITUATION C:** With a runner on third base and no outs, the batter hits a high fly ball above the second baseman's head. the Base Umpire erroneously calls, "Infield fly, the batter is out." The second baseman subsequently drops the ball. The runner from third base scores and the batter ends up on second base.

**RULING:** The play would stand. Both teams have the responsibility to know the conditions for an infield fly. The batter-runner should attempt to reach base safely despite the umpire's error. (3-INFIELD FLY; 8-4-A; 14-12-H)

## INTERFERENCE

**SITUATION A:** B2 hits a grounder to F6. Just as F6 starts to throw to first base, R2 on the way to third base, yells at F6, which startles F6, causing the ball to be thrown over F3's head into dead-ball territory.

**RULING:** R1 is called out immediately for interference. The ball is declared dead. If this interference, in the judgment of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and it occurs before R1 is put out, the immediate succeeding running, B2, shall also be called out. (3-INTERFERENCE-A; 8-18-F, 8-18-H Note 1)

**SITUATION B:** With R3 on third base, R2 at second base and R1 at first base, a batted ball by B4 hits R2 before passing the shortstop. R3 runs home and R1 is tagged on her way to second base.

**RULING:** The ball became dead when it hit R2. B4 is awarded first base and R1 would be awarded second base. Unless R3 scored before the interference occurred, R3 would be returned to third base. (3-INTERFERENCE-A; 8-18-G & H; 8-16-C; 8-18-N)

**SITUATION C:** R1 is advancing to second base when B2's batted ball; (a) is dropped by F3 and is deflected toward R1 or (b), passes several feet to the right of F3 who is playing in front of the baseline. In either case, the ball then touches R1.

**RULING:** There is no interference in (a) unless R1 purposely gets hit by the ball. In (b), if in the umpire's judgment, no other fielder had an opportunity to make an out, the ball remains live. (3- INTERFERENCE-A; 8-7-E)

**SITUATION D:** While covering a play at third base, the umpire collides with (a) a base runner who is subsequently tagged out, or (b) a fielder, who is unable to make the play and the runner scores.

**RULING:** Neither (a) and (b) are considered umpire interference. The ball remains live and the play stands. (3-INTERFERENCE-B; 8-16-G)

## OBSTRUCTION

**SITUATION A:** F6 fakes a tag as R1 approaches second base. R1 decides to continue on to third base and is thrown out.

**RULING:** F6 is guilty of obstruction. Faking a tag is obstruction. In the judgment of the umpire, R1 would have reached third base if not for the obstruction; R1 would be ruled safe. Otherwise, R1 is out.. (3-OBSTRUCTION; 8-13-C)

**SITUATION B:** B1 rounds first base on a hit. F3 is standing on the bag without possession of the ball. B1 does not elect to try for second base because the ball was already thrown to F6.

**RULING:** The umpire shall signal and call obstruction, but would not advance the runner if, in the umpire's judgment, the runner would not have reached second base had the obstruction not occurred. (3-OBSTRUCTION; 8-13)

**SITUATION C:** The throw from F9 draws F2 into the path of R3. Contact occurs between F2 and R3 prior to F2 catching the ball. The contact is not malicious.

**RULING:** The umpire shall signal delayed dead ball, and vocalize obstruction. At the conclusion of play or if the obstructed runner is put out (whichever occurs first), the umpire declare the ball dead and award R3 the base or bases that would have been attained had there been no obstruction. (3-OBSTRUCTION; 8-13)

## OVERSLIDING, OVERRUNNING

**SITUATION A:** B1 hits the ball and overruns first base. In coming to a stop, B1 turns toward second base but makes no attempt to advance or feint an advance and returns to touch first.

**RULING:** The player may return without liability of being put out. (8-10)

**SITUATION B:** R1 is stealing second when B2 receives a fourth ball. R1 over slides second or after reaching base, steps off toward third. In either case, R1 is tagged.

**RULING:** R1 is out since the ball does not become dead on a fourth ball. (3-BASE ON BALLS)

## INITIAL PLAY

**SITUATION A:** With R2 on second base, B2 hits a ground ball to F6. The ball deflects off of F6's arm and lands; (a) one step in front of or to the side of F6, (b) one step behind F6, (c) more than one step behind F6, or (d) more than one step in front of F6. In all situations, as F6 attempts to make a play on the ball, R2 makes contact with F6 preventing F6 from getting to the ball.

**RULING:** In (a) and (b), the ball is dead and R2 is out for interfering with the initial play on a batted ball. In (c) and (d), since F6 is not within a "step and a reach" of the ball, F6 is guilty of obstruction for impeding R2. (3-INITIAL PLAY; 8-18-G)

**SITUATION B:** With R2 on second base, B2's batted ball is deflected by (a) F1. or (b) F5. In both cases the ball goes directly to F6 who attempts to field the ball and make a play. R1 makes contact with F6 preventing F6 from making the play.

**RULING:** In (a), R2 is out for interfering with F6 since the ball was deflected by the pitcher. F6 is still considered to be making the initial play on the batted ball. In (b), since the ball has been touched by a fielder other than the pitcher, R2 has not interfered with F6. If F6 is not in possession of the ball, F6 has committed obstruction for impeding R2. (3-INITIAL PLAY; 8-18-G; 8-13)

## STRIKE ZONE

**SITUATION A:** During a conversation with the coach, the plate umpire informs the coach that for a strike to be called the ball must be legally pitched and the entire ball must pass through the batter's strike zone.

**RULING:** Incorrect. It is a strike when *any* part of the ball on a legal pitch enters the strike zone in flight. The umpire shall determine a batter's strike zone when the batter assumes a natural batting stance. (3-STRIKE ZONE)

## TURN AT BAT

**SITUATION A:** With two outs and a 1-1 count on B4, R1 is thrown out attempting to steal second base for the third out.

**RULING:** B4 is the first batter next inning with a new count. (3-TURN AT BAT)

## WALK

**SITUATION A:** B1 receives ball four and a teammate or a coach of Team A immediately requests time.

**RULING:** The umpire shall ignore the request until B1 reaches base and instruct B1 to go to first base. A player or coach of Team A may now be granted time by the umpire. All other base-runners, if forced to advance, also must advance one base before "time" is granted. (3-BASE ON BALLS)

# RULE 4 - The Game

## STARTING A GAME

**SITUATION A:** After the game has started, spectators begin occupying an area near a dead-ball line and interfere with usual overthrow conditions.

**RULING:** The plate umpire should call both coaches together and state ground rules which may be necessary to cover special conditions.

**SITUATION B:** During the pre-game conference in an elimination game, both coaches inform the umpires that they mutually agree to not use the tie-breaker procedure if the regulation game ends in a tie.

**RULING:** Incorrect. Coaches and managers can not alter game rules by mutual agreement. All USSSA FastPitch rules are in effect and must be followed. When a winner is needed, ties will be broken when either seven innings or the time limit have expired by implementing the International Tiebreaker procedure. (4-5)

## ENDING A GAME

**SITUATION A:** At the end of the third inning; (a) the score is tied or (b), either team is ahead when rain halts play.

**RULING:** In (a) and (b) the game is a suspended game and will be started from the point of interruption, if conditions warrant. If the game ends because of weather conditions and the tournament director feels that the possibility of resuming the game is not likely, it is then a regulation game provided a full three innings have been played; or if the home team has scored an equal or greater number of runs in two or two and a fraction of turns at bat, or if play has gone beyond three full innings and is called when the teams have not had an equal number of completed turns at bat. The score shall revert back to the end of the last complete inning; unless the home team in its half of the incomplete inning, scores a go ahead run. (4-6)

**SITUATION B:** Team A is home and is losing by 2 runs, with a time limit of 90 minutes. Team B records the third out of the 6th inning and as the teams are leaving the field the timer goes off. The visitors believe the game is over.

**RULING:** Incorrect. A new inning began as soon as the third out was recorded. The new inning must now be played to completion.(4-3)

**SITUATION C:** After the pre-game conference has ended the home team gathers in a huddle to listen to the coach's instructions. The umpire informs the coach that the clock is ticking. The home coach contends the clock shouldn't start until the defense has taken the field.

**RULING:** The coach is incorrect. The time begins when the pre-game conference ends and the home team is "allowed" to take the field. (4-3)

**SITUATION D:** With bases loaded, B5 hits a ground ball to the shortstop who throws the ball out of play. (a) in the bottom of seventh with the score tied at 5 to 5, or (b) in bottom of sixth with the home team ahead 7 to 0. What is the final score?

**RULING:** All runners advance two bases on the dead ball award. In (a) two runs score and final score is 7 to 5. In (b), the final score is 8 to 0 because the final score cannot exceed the run rule.(4-2-B)

## CHARGED CONFERENCES

**SITUATION A:** After walking two consecutive batters, (a) F1's coach or (b) F5 goes out to talk with F1.

**RULING:** In (a); this is a charged conference. In (b), this is not a charge conference. F5 may request time to go and talk to F1. (3-CONFERENCE-CHARGED; 4-8-A)

**SITUATION B:** After having previously used one charged conference, the coach requests time. In a), the coach removes the pitcher then gives the substitution to the home plate umpire. in b) after the relief pitcher walks two batters, the coach goes out again to calm the pitcher down.

**RULING:** a) This is not a charged conference since the coach removes the pitcher. In b), this is a charged conference; the coach's second of three of the game. (3-CONFERENCE-CHARGED, 4-8-A)

**SITUATION C:** The coach of the team on defense goes out to talk to her pitcher in the eighth inning (a) after having used the three allowable defensive charged conferences in the first seven innings, or (b) not having used any of the three allowable defensive charged conferences in the first seven innings.

**RULING:** There is no penalty in either (a) or (b). A team is permitted three defensive charge conferences in a seven-inning game, and if a game goes into extra innings, that team is permitted one charged defensive conference in each of the extra innings. Any unused defensive charged conferences in the first seven innings are no longer available. (4-8-A)

**SITUATION D:** Team A has had two charged conferences. The coach of Team A is granted time to visit with her pitcher. At the same time her assistant coach goes out to the first baseman. The opposing team's coach claims two conferences should be assessed and the pitcher be removed, since it would be that team's fourth conference.

**RULING:** As long as the assistant coach does not delay the game when play is resumed, there is no penalty. If the coach does delay, her team is subject to an additional charged conference being called, which would then require the pitcher to be removed as pitcher for the rest of the game. (4-8-A)

**SITUATION E:** In the top of the fifth inning, (a) the defensive team's head coach asks for "Time" to check on her center fielder who appears to be ill, and (b) at the same time the assistant coach goes to the pitcher mound to visit with the pitcher.

**RULING:** A conference is not charged when "Time" is called for an obviously incapacitated player. In (A), if the umpire judged the player to be apparently ill, then no conference be charged. In (b), since "Time" is out the assistant coach is permitted on the field to talk to any defensive player. When play is to resume, if she is not off the field, she shall be charged a conference for delay. NOTE: If the umpire feels that a player is faking an injury, a Charged Conference will be assessed. (4-8-A; 4-8-C-3)

**SITUATION G:** The coach of the offensive team requests time to confer with third base runner, the batter and on-deck batter simultaneously.

**RULING:** Legal. Time may be granted for this purpose, provided the conference is the first one of the inning. (4-8-B)

**SITUATION H:** R2 runs over to confer with the third base coach during (a) a defensive charged conference, (b) a charged offensive conference, or (c) a time out request by the catcher to talk to F1.

**RULING:** (a) Legal as long as R2 returns to 2B without delaying the game when the defensive conference is over. Legal in (b), this will result in the one allowable offensive conference for the inning. In (c) Illegal. This is not a charge conference. Runners may not leave the vicinity of their base unless it is a charged conference. (4-8)

## **RULE 5 - Players and Substitutes**

### **PLAYER POSITION/LINEUPS**

**SITUATION A:** The batting order lists No. 5 as an additional player, however No. 5 is late, and not present in the team area at the beginning of the game.

**RULING:** Illegal, only players present in the dugout prior to the start of the game may be listed on the lineup card. When #5 arrives the coach may add her to the lineup as a substitute. (5-1-A & C)

**SITUATION B:** Team A is using the DP/FLEX option in their lineup. When the lineup is given to the umpire, the DP is listed as the fourth batter in the lineup, and the FLEX is listed in the fifth lineup spot.

**RULING:** Incorrect. The DP is properly listed in the batting position where she will bat, however the FLEX player must be listed last in the line-up in a **non-batting** position. (5-4-A & B)

**SITUATION C:** The visiting team's hands the umpire a lineup with No. 4, Jamie Brown, listed eighth in the batting order and playing second base. However Jamie Brown is actually wearing No. 21. After reaching base in the third inning, the coach of the defensive team appeals to the umpire that Brown is batting out of order.

**RULING:** This is not batting-out-of-order. Jamie Brown is the name of the batter who should be batting in the order. While Jamie Brown technically has violated the rule that requires the player's name, shirt number and position to be correct on the lineup card, there is no penalty. The incorrect number shall be corrected on the lineup card. If the number was correct but the player batting was not Jamie Brown, the batting-out-of-order penalty would be imposed. (5-1, 9-10)

**SITUATION D:** A player is ejected from the game for unsportsmanlike play. The team has no eligible substitutes and can only field 8 players.

**RULING:** The game continues with an absent player. A team may play shorthanded when they lose a player for any reason, including ejection. The team will take an out whenever the Absent Player is due to bat. (5-2)

**SITUATION E:** Team B is using the standard lineup with two APs and has no eligible substitutes. Three members of the team are ejected for fighting.

**RULING:** Team B may continue the game with three unfilled batting positions with an out being taken for each of the absent players, when they are scheduled to bat. (5-2-1)

**SITUATION F:** The team has exactly 10 players and utilizes the DP/FLEX option. Two players are ejected, neither of which is the DP or the FLEX. Can the game continue?

**RULING:** No. The game is Forfeit. Although the team can field 8 defensive players, it has only 7 players in the batting order. The FLEX player can only bat in the DP's batting position, and therefore is unable to play offensively in this situation. (5-2-A).

**SITUATION G:** The team has 16 rostered players present. The coach declares Roster Batting and presents a lineup with 3 APs, the DP/FLEX and 3 substitutes.

**RULING:** ILLEGAL. When Roster Batting, ALL players must be in the batting lineup. Therefore, there can not be a DP/FLEX or substitutes. (5-2).

**SITUATION H:** The coach of Team A, with 15 rostered players present in the dugout, declares Roster Batting and hands the umpire a lineup with 4 APs and states that the two players sitting on the bench will not be playing due to injury.

**RULING:** The umpire should accept the lineup card and inform the coach that the two injured players are ineligible for the entire game if the team elects Roster Batting. (5-1-D)

**SITUATION J:** A team is batting all ten of its players who are physically present. In the seventh inning batter No. 10 just completed her at-bat, when the coach called time and asked to insert a late arriving player into the lineup as batter No. 11. The other coach opposes this and protests to the umpire.

**Ruling:** ILLEGAL, unless the team has declared Roster Batting at the start of the game, the late arriving player may not be added as batter No. 11, but may serve as a substitute for another player in batting order 1-10. Although the team may be batting every player physically present, when the number of batters is 9, 10, or 11, they **must declare at the pregame** conference that they are ROSTER BATTING; otherwise, they are (by default) using a traditional lineup (5-1)

## ABSENT PLAYER

**SITUATION A:** A team (a) starts the game with eight players in the lineup, or (b) in the second inning the tenth batter leaves due to illness, creating an Absent Player spot in the batting lineup. Later the coach wants to insert a late arriving eligible player in the vacant spot.

**RULING:** Legal. The late arriving player is **required** to enter the lineup immediately. (5-2-C)

**SITUATION B:** In the third inning, B2 slides into home plate, rolls her ankle and leaves the game. The team has no substitutes and is now playing shorthanded with eight players. In the fifth inning the coach attempts to re-enter B2.

**RULING:** Illegal; even though B2 may have a re-entry left, an Absent Player may not return to the lineup unless they left due to the Blood Rule. (5-2-A-2)

**SITUATION C:** In the second inning of a day-long tournament, F8 runs into the fence chasing a fly ball and exhibits signs of a concussion. After being helped off the field the coach informs the umpire he will take responsibility for F8 returning to action, or (b) F8's father says his daughter may return to play.

**RULING:** In (a) and (b) F8 will not be permitted to return to play until a written medical clearance from a licensed medical doctor is in the possession of the Team Manager/USSSA State director. (USSSA POLICY RE: FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL CONCUSSION LAWS)

**SITUATION D:** In Non-ELITE SELECT play, Team A is batting eleven in the lineup using 2 APs. One player has left the game due to injury when F1 is hit with a line drive and unable to return to play.

**RULING:** In Non-ELITE SELECT divisions, a team may drop more than 1 batting position (ie, may have multiple absent players), provided the lineup is maintained with at least 8 batters physically present. Whenever an Absent Player is scheduled to bat, an out will be taken. (5-2)

## SUBSTITUTIONS

**SITUATION A:** In the third inning, S1 reports to the plate umpire, but (a) S1, is not listed on the lineup card but was present in the dugout at the start of the game. or (b) S1 arrived after the game had started and, therefore, was not on the lineup card, or (c) S1's name is listed properly, but her number is listed incorrectly.

**RULING:** In all cases, S1 is eligible to enter the game as a substitute. In (a) and (b) S1's name will be added to the lineup card, and in (c) the number is corrected, without penalty. (5-1-B)



**SITUATION B:** At the pregame conference, after the lineup cards have been exchanged and accepted as official by the plate umpire, the defensive coach wishes to start the game with the DP playing the defensive position of the FLEX who is the pitcher.

**RULING:** Legal; the DP may play defense for the FLEX player and the FLEX player is considered to have left the game (using a substitution), reducing the number of players by eliminating the FLEX position in the lineup. The FLEX can be re-established if the FLEX player re-enters or is replaced by a substitute. (5-4-F-G; 8-3-G)

**SITUATION C:** B1 has a count of one ball and two strikes when the coach decides to enter S1 to pinch hit.

**RULING:** The coach shall ask for time and give the substitution to the plate umpire. Upon entering, S1 is charged with a one ball and two strike count. (5-5)

**SITUATION D:** While batting, The Coach of Team A tells the plate umpire that Lauren Jones will hit for Beth Smith and re-enter on defense.

**RULING:** The plate umpire shall accept Lauren Jones as the batter and make the appropriate announcement to the other team. However, Beth Smith cannot be re-entered until Lauren Jones is withdrawn. In general, there must be one and only one person occupying each position in the lineup. It should be suggested that the coach wait until the team is going on defense before reporting Beth Smith's re-entry. Projected substitutions are not allowed. (5-5)

**SITUATION E:** While batting, the Coach of Team A tells the plate umpire that Joan Johnson will replace Deb Lee, who just completed her time at bat, in left field the next time they are on defense.

**RULING:** The plate umpire shall accept the substitution and make the appropriate announcement to the other team. (5-5)

**SITUATION F:** At the top of the sixth inning, the Coach of Team A tells the plate umpire that three of his players, who have not yet played, will be batting in the inning, Alice Able will bat first, Betty Buck will bat second and Cathy Conroy will bat third.

**RULING:** The plate umpire shall accept the substitutions and make the appropriate announcement to the other team; Able, Buck and Conroy are now officially in the game. (5-5)

**SITUATION G:** (a) Before the pregame conference ends, or (b) after the pregame conference ends, Team A's coach decides not to start F1.

**RULING:** Lineups become official after they have been exchanged, verified and then accepted by the plate umpire during the pregame conference. In (a), lineup changes may be made without penalty unless the plate umpire has accepted them as official. In (b), F1 uses a substitution but may re-enter the game at any position. (5-5)

**SITUATION H:** With one ball and one strike on B2, F1 is sent to center field. F8 becomes the pitcher.

After B2 is put out or has reached first base, F1 again exchanges places with F8 and becomes the pitcher.

**RULING:** This is legal one time per inning. A pitcher returning to pitch in the same half-inning shall not be allowed warm-up pitches. (5-5; 6-1-L)

**SITUATION I:** F1 pitches to the first five batters in the lineup and is then replaced by F3, who pitches to the remaining batters. The coach of Team A wants to follow this practice throughout the game.

**RULING:** Legal; a pitcher may be removed as a pitcher and return to pitch once per inning, provided the return as pitcher does not violate either the pitching, substitution or charged conference rules. (5-5)

**SITUATION J:** S1 is a courtesy runner for the catcher in the top half of the sixth inning. In the same half of the inning S1 pinch hits for F4.

**RULING:** Illegal. A courtesy runner is not eligible to enter the game as a substitute during the same half-inning in which they have served as a courtesy runner. S1 is an illegal substitute and is ejected along with the head coach, for the remainder of the game. The head coach is also ineligible to coach the team's next game. Additional Penalties will apply depending on when the illegal player was discovered. **EXCEPTION:** If a player is injured and there are no available substitutes, S1 would be permitted to enter as a substitute. (5-7 & PENALTY; 8-3-D Exception)

**SITUATION K:** In the eighth inning, the incorrect runner is placed on second base (a) as the tiebreak runner, or (b) as a courtesy runner for the pitcher or catcher. In either case on the first pitch to the next batter, the runner steals third base. The defense then notifies the plate umpire of the violation.

**RULING:** In (a) no penalty and all action stands. If an incorrect tie break runner is placed on base, they are removed and replaced by the correct runner immediately, even if a pitch has been thrown or the runner has advanced. In (b) the incorrect Courtesy Runner is declared out and a Team Warning issued for the first offense. Any subsequent offense will result in the head coach being ejected for the remainder of the game in progress, only. (4-5; 8-3-B PENALTY)

## SUBSTITUTIONS RE-ENTERING

**SITUATION A:** Before the game, but after lineups have been given to the plate umpire, the home coach withdraws F1 from the contest, (a) for disciplinary reasons, or (b) due to injury. In both situations, S1 is the home pitcher for the first three innings. The home coach then informs the plate umpire that F1 will come into the game to pitch in the top of the fourth inning.

**RULING:** In both (a) and (b), Legal. F1 is entitled one re-entry the same as any other player, F1 may re-enter at any position defensively, including pitching, provided she does not violate the substitution or charged conference rule. There is no rule requiring F1 to pitch to the first batter. (5-5; 5-6)

**SITUATION B:** In the second inning, S1 pinch-hits for B6. Later in the game, S1 is re-entered to pinch-hit for B6.

**RULING:** Legal. S1 was in the game during the second inning and therefore may re-enter once. (5-6)

## UNREPORTED SUBSTITUTE

**SITUATION A:** R1 is at third base; S1 bats for B2 without reporting to the umpire and gets a hit driving in R1. In the next inning the opposing coach informs the umpire that S1 entered the game as an unreported substitute the previous inning. After confirming the offending coach's observation, the umpire informs the offending coach that S1 is an unreported substitute and issues the offending team a "team warning." Does all action stand?

**RULING:** Yes, the first time an unreported substitute is detected in the game, the offending team is issued a team warning, and all action on the play stands. The unreported substitute is officially in the game. (5-5)

**SITUATION B:** The team at bat has already received a first warning for an unreported substitute. S1 is batting for B1 and (a) has a 3-2 count or (b) has reached first base when the defensive coach brings to the attention of the home plate umpire that B1 is an unreported substitute.

**RULING:** Because this is the second offense by the same team, the head coach is ejected. All play stands and S1 is legally in the game. (5-5)

**SITUATION C:** S1, an eligible substitute, replaces F4 and does not report to the plate umpire and is discovered, (a), after the next pitch, or (b) three innings later..

**RULING:** Upon discovery, S1, is legally in the game, but has entered as an unreported substitute. A team warning is issued and a second offense will result in the head coach being ejected for the remainder of the game only. (5-5 Penalty)

## DP/FLEX

**SITUATION A:** In the fifth inning, Lynne Jones enters the game as the DP and is placed at the bottom of the batting order.

**RULING:** Illegal. The DP must be announced prior to the start of the game with the name and number entered in the starting lineup. (5-4-A)

**SITUATION B:** DP-Lynne Jones hits a triple and sprains an ankle sliding into third base. The coach has S1, Aubrey Green enter the game to be a pinch-runner for the DP-Lynne Jones.

**RULING:** Legal. A pinch-runner or pinch hitter may replace the DP. That player then becomes the new DP. The original DP, Jones may re-enter later or the FLEX could bat in S1's position (the DP position) later and be legal as well.

**SITUATION C:** Team A is using 10 players in the lineup, utilizing the DP/FLEX. The DP is batting third. The FLEX is playing right field and is a very fast runner. In the first, third and sixth innings, after the DP gets on base, the coach enters the FLEX to run.

**RULING:** The FLEX may legally run for the DP anytime, and any number of times, without using a substitution. However, The starting DP would have used her re-entry in the third inning, and would be an illegal player if re-entered in the sixth. (5-6; 5-4-D & E)

**SITUATION D:** DP-Lynne Jones is on first base and is replaced by substitute-Ali Green. Later in the game, starting DP-Lynne Jones re-enters as a batter and reaches first base safely. Substitute-Casey Cooper then replaces DP-Lynne Jones as a runner. During extra innings, starting DP-Lynne Jones is at the plate with a 1 ball and 2 strike count when the situation is brought to the plate umpire's attention.

**RULING:** Illegal re-entry, DP-Lynne Jones is called out if at bat or on base, disqualified along with the head coach, and replaced by a legal substitute. (5-4; 5-4-J)

**SITUATION E:** A team is playing with a standard lineup of 9 players, plus one AP and the DP/FLEX. In the sixth inning, the head coach (a) wants the DP to replace the FLEX and play defense only, (b) have the FLEX enter in the DP's batting position and play offense only, with the AP playing defense for the FLEX, or (c), have the DP play defense for someone other than the FLEX and the FLEX remain at their defensive position.

**RULING:** Illegal in (a). The DP can never play defense only. In (b) and (c), legal. In (b), the FLEX can play **offense only** if and only if; the FLEX is properly inserted in the DP's batting position in the batting order AND the lineup is sufficient size (at least 1 AP) to field 9 players on defense without the FLEX's participation. Legal in (c) because the DP can play defense for any player, and both the DP and the FLEX can be in the game defensively at the same time. (5-4-F; 5-4-G)

## ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION

**SITUATION A:** In the ninth inning the FLEX enters the game unreported to bat for F1 and has a 1 ball-1 strike count when discovered. In (a) F1 is the DP, or (b) is not the DP.

**RULING:** Legal substitution in (a), and all action stands. The umpire will issue a Team Warning to the head coach for the first offense, followed by an ejection for a subsequent violation. In (b) the FLEX is an ILLEGAL Player. Both the FLEX and the Head Coach are ejected. The Illegal Player is not called out and may be replaced by a legal substitute, or the DP, (if re-entry is available), and the replacement will assume the batter's count. Placing the FLEX in the batting order for someone other than the DP is an ILLEGAL PLAYER. (5-4-J; 5-7)

**SITUATION B:** Team A is using a traditional lineup of 11 batters and 12 players by utilizing the DP/FLEX option. After batter eleven bats and receives a walk, the FLEX mistakenly enters the batter's box, as the twelfth batter. The first pitch to the FLEX is wild and B11 advances to second base. The defense appeals Team A for batting-out-of-order.

**RULING:** This is not batting-out-of-order, and the appeal should be denied. Placing the FLEX into the batting order for someone other than the DP is an illegal player violation. The FLEX is ejected along with the head coach. B1 was the batter who follows B11 in the lineup, making the FLEX a substitute for B1. No out will be taken since the violation was discovered before the FLEX completed a turn at bat. B1 or a legal substitute will complete the at-bat with a one ball, no strike count. B11's advance on the wild pitch is legal. (5-7)

**SITUATION C:** In the third inning, S1 entered as a pinch runner for the B2, Lacy Jones, the second baseman. Jones re-entered defensively in the top of the fourth inning. In the fifth inning S1 entered as a pinch hitter for B5.

**RULING:** Illegal substitution. S1 had re-entry rights, the same as all players, but after entering for Jones and batting in the second batting position, S1 can only re-enter in that batting spot. S1 and the Head Coach are ejected. If S1 was discovered while still batting, B5 would re-enter to complete the at-bat. (5-7-A)

**SITUATION D:** B2 after being ejected in the second inning for unsporting conduct, re-enters the game in the fifth inning.

**RULING:** Illegal Player. B2 is removed from the game and the Head Coach is ejected. (5-7)

**SITUATION E:** A player has been disqualified from the game by either the umpire or by rule. The player returns to the game and the substitution is (a) announced to the plate umpire, or (b), not announced to the by the coach/manager.

**RULING:** In (a) and (b), the re-entry of the disqualified player would result in an ILLEGAL PLAYER. However, a violation does not occur until the player enters the game **and** a pitch is thrown. In (a), the umpire shall not accept the change and inform the coach that re-entry will result in an illegal player violation. In (b), the violation is correctable until a pitch is thrown. If discovered after a pitch, the illegal player and the head coach are EJECTED. Additional penalties may apply depending on whether the illegal player is on offense or defense, and when the violation is discovered. The illegal player may be replaced by any eligible substitute (5-7)

## ADDITIONAL PLAYERS

**SITUATION A:** Team A turns in a lineup batting nine plus two APs. In the third inning the coach enters them on defense for the SS and F9.

**RULING:** Legal. APs will be placed in the batting order and can also play defense (only 9 defensive players in the field) but must remain in the same position in the batting order. When playing defense neither the AP(s) or the defensive starter being replace have used a substitution. (5-3)

**SITUATION B:** (Non-Elite Select Division) At the pregame conference, Team A's coach presents a lineup which has 12 batters (2 APS and one a DP) and a 13th player listed as the FLEX. Team B's coach has a lineup of 13 batters (4 APs) and 2 substitutes.

**Ruling - ILLEGAL** in both situations; the umpire should **not** accept the lineups in the presented format. If a team wishes to bat more than the eleven batters allowed by a traditional lineup, the **entire roster must be batted**. Roster batting prohibits the listing of a DP/FLEX, or substitutes, because every player physically present at the start of the game must be included in the **batting order** (5-2-D)

## INJURED/BLEEDING PLAYER

**SITUATION A:** In the second inning of the first game of a day-long tournament, F3 runs into the fence chasing a fly ball and exhibits signs of a concussion. After being helped off the field, (a) the coach tells the umpire the coach will take responsibility for F3 returning to action or (b), F3's parents say their daughter may return to play.

**RULING:** In (a) and (b), the coach is responsible for attending to F3, who must be removed from the game immediately and may not return to play in the current or any subsequent game until cleared by appropriate health-care professional in writing. (5-9-B)

**SITUATION B:** R1 slides into second base and scrapes a knee, causing it to bleed.

**RULING:** The umpire shall stop play and summon the player's coach to attend to the injured player. If appropriate treatment can be administered in a reasonable amount of time, based on umpire judgment R1 may resume playing without having to leave the game. (5-10)

**SITUATION C:** R1 stole second base and is injured when hit by the catcher's attempted throw. The team doesn't have any substitutes and the coach places the Last Completed at Bat on second base to replace the injured player.

**RULING:** Legal. If a player is injured, the player may be replaced by one not currently on base who had the Last Completed at Bat (LCAB). This exception does not apply to any future time at bat, and the injured player may not return to the game. (5-2-A-1 EXCEPTION)

## RULE 6 - Pitching

### PRIOR TO THE PITCH

**SITUATION A:** F1 steps on the pitching plate with their hands already together.

**RULING:** Illegal; F1 is required to take a position on the pitching plate with their hands separated. Therefore this is an illegal pitch. (6-1-A)

**SITUATION B:** While in contact with the pitcher's plate, the pitcher proceeds to take the catcher's signal with the ball in their glove and their other hand at the side.

**RULING:** Legal. The pitcher shall take (or simulate taking) the catcher's signal from the pitcher's plate with the ball in the glove or pitching hand with the hands separated. (6-1-B & C)

**SITUATION C:** With R2 on second, R1 on first and one out, F1 fails to bring the hands together, and then delivers the pitch to B3 who hits into a double play.

**RULING:** Illegal pitch. The pitcher shall bring the hands together in front of the body for not more than 10 seconds before releasing the pitch. The coach of the team at bat has the option of taking the result of the play or accepting the effect of the illegal pitch which is a ball on the batter and R2 at second and R1 at first base. (6-1-D; 6-3-C)

**SITUATION D:** With R2 on second, R1 on first and one out, F1 merely touches the hands together for less than one second, immediately begins the windup and then delivers the pitch to B3.

**RULING:** Legal pitch. The pitcher's hands shall come together for not more than ten seconds before releasing the ball. The hands may be moving or motionless. (6-1-D)

**SITUATION E:** F1, takes a position on the pitcher's plate with (a) the heel of their foot touching the front edge of the pitcher's plate, or (b) with the toe of the pivot foot touching the back edge of the plate.

**RULING:** LEGAL in both (a) and (b). The pitcher is required to have the pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate. (6-1-A)

**SITUATION F:** F1 is (a) behind the pitcher's plate, takes a signal from F2, then steps on the pitcher's plate immediately bringing the hands together or, (b) while on the pitcher's plate takes a signal from the coach in the dugout, then simulates taking a signal from F2, before bringing the hands together; or (c) behind the pitcher's plate, takes a signal from the coach or F2, steps on the pitcher's plate, simulates taking a signal from F2 before bringing the hands together.

**RULING:** Illegal pitch in (a) the pitcher must pause, re-take or simulate taking signal before bringing the hands together; Legal in (b) and (c) since the pitcher simulated or paused prior to bringing the hands together. (6-1-C)

**SITUATION G:** The pitcher takes a position on the pitcher's plate with (a) the ball behind their back, (b) the ball in their glove. The coach from the opposing team complains to the umpire that F1 does not present the ball before delivering.

**RULING:** Legal. The pitcher has satisfied the requirements of the pitching rule. There is no definition or requirement to "present the ball." (6-1)

**SITUATION H:** F1 takes a position on the pitcher's plate so that the pivot foot is on the outside edge of the pitcher's plate and the non-pivot foot (a) in or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate, or (b), completely outside the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.

**Ruling:** LEGAL in (a). ILLEGAL PITCH in (b). Prior to the pitch, the pitcher is required to have both feet on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.(6-1-A)

## ABOUT THE PITCH

**SITUATION A:** After assuming a legal pitching position, F1 steps backward with the non-pivot foot, off the pitcher's plate (a) before bringing the hands together; (b) while hands are together; (c) after she takes one hand off the ball.

**RULING:** Legal in (a) and (b). Illegal pitch in (c). Any step back with the non-pivot foot must begin before the start of the pitch. The pitch starts when F1 takes one hand off the ball after the hands have come together. Once the hands are separated, the only step F1 may take must be toward the batter. (6-1-E-1 & 2)

**SITUATION B:** In delivering a pitch, F1's pivot foot breaks contact with the pitcher's plate and becomes airborne prior to the non-pivot ("stride") foot having touched the ground.

**RULING:** Legal pitch. The pivot foot may push off and drag away from the pitcher's plate **or** become airborne prior to the non-pivot foot touching the ground. The pitcher may leap from the pitcher's plate, land with the non-pivot foot and with a continuous motion deliver the ball to the batter(6-1-E-3)

**SITUATION C:** F1, while winding up, slides her pivot foot forward just off the pitcher's plate to enable her to pivot without catching her cleats as she turns to deliver a pitch. As a result, F1's foot is not in contact with the pitcher's plate when the ball is released.

**RULING:** If F1 slides her pivot foot forward as she pivots, there is no penalty. However, if F1 slides her pivot foot forward without pivoting and loses contact with the pitcher's plate or ground, she has delivered an illegal pitch. (6-1-E-3)

## THE WINDUP

**SITUATION A:** The pitcher comes to a stop and then takes the ball in their pitching hand back past their hip, and then makes a complete revolution releasing the ball the second time past the hip.

**RULING:** Legal pitch. There is nothing in the rules that states the ball must be released the first time past the hip. The pitcher may not make more than one and one half revolutions. (6-1-G-4)

**SITUATION B:** After releasing the ball simultaneously with the forward step, the pitcher continues their arm action (a) up and toward her head and then stops, or (b) up and around, stopping just before reaching her hip a second time.

**RULING:** Legal pitch in (a), because the action after releasing the ball is considered a follow through.

Illegal pitch in (b) because the pitching arm's action after the release of the ball is considered to be a continuation of the windup. (6-1-G-5 Note)

**SITUATION C:** F1 steps on to the pitcher's plate, brings their hands together then removes the ball from their glove with the throwing hand and swings their arm backward to approximately shoulder height. F1 continues forward in a windmill delivery, releasing the ball the second time it passes the hip.

**RULING:** Legal pitch. The starting point is where F1's arm started forward (behind their shoulder height). Even though the ball passed F1's hip twice, F1's arm did not make more than one and one-half revolutions. (6-1-G-4)

## INFRACTIONS BY PITCHER

**SITUATION A:** In an effort to deliberately walk a batter without having to throw a pitch F1 (a) intentionally violates the 20 second rule by not delivering a pitch or (b), bounces the ball on the ground to get an illegal pitch called.

**RULING:** The spirit of the rules is being violated. A ball will be awarded to the batter, which may be declined by the offensive coach. The first offense results in a team warning. For any subsequent violations the offender and the head coach will be ejected for the remainder of the game. (6-1-J)

**SITUATION B:** With R2 on second base, B3 has a 3 ball 2 strike count when the pitcher uses a legal delivery, but (a) intentionally throws the ball up in the air and catches it for the purposes of putting the batter on first base; (b) had the ball accidentally slip from her hand into the air and catches it.

**RULING:** The umpire must determine if the action was intentional or accidental. If intentional in (a) an Illegal pitch is called.. The umpire awards the batter one ball, which may be declined by the offensive coach, and shall warn the pitcher that any subsequent offense will result in both the player and coach being ejected from the game. Legal in (b), the ball remains in play and runners may advance at their own risk (6-1-J; 6-1-M).

**SITUATION C:** F1 is wearing a (a) yellow wristband on their throwing wrist or (b), black athletic tape on the elbow of F1's throwing arm, or (c), a flesh colored band aid on the index finger of their throwing hand.

**RULING:** In (a), Illegal if the umpire determines the wristband is distracting. The prohibition of what a pitcher may wear on her hand, wrist, or arm that may be distracting to the batter as judged by the umpire, such as wristbands or batting gloves, pertains only to the pitching hand. Legal in (b) and (c). The pitcher's fingers, hand wrist, forearm or elbow maybe taped for injury, providing the tape is a neutral color. (6-1-H; 6-1-2)

**SITUATION D:** After walking B1, F1 walks out of the 16-foot circle and (a) licks the fingers on the throwing hand or (b), picks up a resin bag or handful of infield dirt with the pitching hand. F1, immediately puts the ball in their pitching hand, walks on to the pitcher's plate and begins her delivery, without wiping the substance off.

**RULING:** In (a) Illegal pitch. Any time F1 licks the fingers of their throwing hand, wiping the fingers before touching the ball is required. The umpire shall declare the ball dead immediately and an illegal pitch shall be called. Legal in (b); under the supervision and control of the Umpire, the pitcher may use dirt, (but not chalk), or an approved drying agent such as resin or Gorilla Gold, to dry the hand without wiping their hand. (6-1-I; 6-1-I-1)

**SITUATION E:** R1 is on second base. B2 hits an illegal pitch and reaches first base safely. R1 is (a) thrown out at third base or (b), thrown out at home, or (c) safe at third base.

**RULING:** In (a), the coach of the team at bat has the option of the play or the penalty for an illegal pitch. In (b) and (c), since the batter and all other runners advanced at least one base, the illegal pitch is canceled and no option is given. (6-3-A & C; 6-3-B)

**SITUATION F:** While the umpire is reporting a substitute to the official scorer, a pitcher continues to throw in excess of her five warm-up pitches.

**RULING:** Legal. If the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, or other umpire responsibilities the pitcher may exceed the five practice pitches allowed. At any other time if the pitcher exceeds five warm-up pitches, a ball shall be awarded to the batter for each pitch in excess of five. (6-1-L EXCEPTION)

**SITUATION G:** F1 re-plants her pivot foot completely in front of the pitcher's plate and pushes off a second time toward home plate before releasing the pitch.

**RULING:** Illegal pitch; crow hop. The pitcher's push off to drag, or leap must start from the pitcher's plate. The pitcher must not crow hop or push off from any place other than the pitcher's plate. (6-1-E-3 Note 2)

**SITUATION H:** With R3 on third base and R1 on first, F1 commits an illegal pitch by double touching their glove. The plate umpire calls an illegal pitch but before the ball is released by the pitcher, R1 leaves 1B. The base umpire calls "dead ball" and rules R1 out.

**RULING:** Both the offense and the defense have committed violations that will be penalized. A delayed dead ball is called when F1 commits an illegal pitch. It's an immediate Dead Ball when R1 leaves first base before F1 releases the pitch. The illegal pitch is also enforced, by awarding a "ball" to B3. (6-3-A; 8-18-K)

## INFRACTION BY CATCHER

**SITUATION A:** F1 delivers a ball outside the strike zone to B1 with no runners on base. F2 throws the ball to F5.

**RULING:** Illegal. The umpire shall award a ball to the batter for F2 not returning the ball directly to F1 with no runners on base. (6-2-B)

**SITUATION B:** In an effort to deliberately walk a batter without having to throw a pitch, F2 does not return the ball directly to F1, but instead, without attempting to make a play, throws the ball to another fielder.

**RULING:** The spirit of the rule is being violated. The umpire shall warn the coach of the defensive team and if the act is repeated, the violator shall be ejected. As this is an attempt to walk the batter without pitching, the offensive coach may decline the awarded ball to the batter. (6-2-B Exception, 11-2-N)

**SITUATION C:** With no runner on base, B1 has a count of no balls and one strike. On the next pitch, B1 hits a foul ball, which the catcher retrieves and throws to F5

**RULING:** Illegal. A ball is awarded to the batter and the count becomes one ball and one strike. (6-2-B EXCEPTION)

## RULE 7 - Batting

### STRIKES, BALLS AND HITS

**SITUATION A:** B1 takes a stance with their feet wide apart, causing their shoulders to be lower than if B1 stood with their feet closer together.

**RULING:** If it is a natural batter stance, the ball before touching the ground, must enter the area over home base between the batter's forward armpit and the top of their knees, before it will be called a strike. The umpire will call the strike zone as it would be in the batter's natural stance, if the batter takes an unnatural crouch in order to reduce the size of their strike zone. (3-STRIKE ZONE)



## BATTING INFRACTIONS

**SITUATION A:** With F1 on the pitcher's plate ready to deliver a pitch, B1, while in the batter's box, holds up their hand and digs a hole in the box to get better footing.

**RULING:** The umpire will not permit F1 to pitch and B1 will be cautioned about the 10 second count. If the batter's box is in poor condition because of rain during a game, or for some other good reason, the umpire will properly grant time out to the batter to make the adjustment. (7-8)

**SITUATION B:** F1 starts their pitch. B1 requests time by either stepping out of the box or by putting their hand up. The pitcher (a) hesitates or stops their pitch or (b) legally delivers the ball.

**RULING:** In (a) the umpire shall declare a "no pitch" and in (b) the umpire shall call a strike. (7-8 Note 1 & 2)

**SITUATION C:** The batter enters the batter's box and assumes their stance with part of their foot (a) on the batter's box line or (b) touching the ground outside the batter's box line.

**RULING:** Legal in (a), the batter must have both feet completely in the batter's box. The lines of the batter's box are considered part of the batter's box. Illegal in (b), the umpire shall hold up the pitcher from pitching and instruct the batter to have both feet completely within the batter's box. If the batter refuses, the umpire will call a strike after 10 seconds. The batter may touch the lines, but no part of the foot may be outside the lines of the batter's box prior to the pitch. (3 BATTER'S BOX; 7-4-A; 7-8)

**SITUATION D:** B1 strides forward when making contact with the pitched ball. B1's front foot (a) is in the air when contact is made and it then lands completely outside the line of the batter's box, or (b) is partially on the line of the batter's box and partially on the ground outside the line of the batter's box when contact is made, or (c) is on the ground entirely outside the line of the batter's box when contact is made.

**RULING:** In (a) and (b), this is legal but in (c) the batter is out for making contact with the pitched ball while having one foot completely on the ground outside of the batter's box. The ball is dead immediately. (7-9)

**SITUATION E:** With R1 on first, B2 has two strikes. B2 strikes at the next pitch which touches B2. R1 steals second.

**RULING:** Dead ball strike is ruled. As this is strike three, B2 is out and R1 must return to first. (7-5-C, 8-4-D)

**SITUATION F:** The batter steps across in front of the catcher to the other batter's box while the pitcher is in position to pitch.

**RULING:** Illegal. The batter is out. (7-10)

**SITUATION G:** B1 bunts the ball and the ball rebounds up against the bat a second time while the bat is still in B1's hands and B1 is still in the batter's box.

**RULING:** Foul ball. Dead Ball. (7-14-F EXCEPTION)

## BATTER INTERFERES WITH CATCHER

**SITUATION A:** With less than two outs. R2 on second and B2 at the plate, R2 attempts to steal third base. In the process, B2 does not swing, or does swing and (a) makes no attempt to get out of the way, or (b) is unable to make an attempt to get out of the way of the catcher throwing to third. As a result, F2 is unable to play on the runner.

**RULING:** B2 is not guilty of interference in (a) or (b) Failing to move so the catcher can make a throw is not batter interference. B2 is entitled to their position in the batter's box and is not subject to interference unless B2 moves or re-establishes their position after F2 has received the pitch, preventing F2 from attempting to play on a runner. (7-12)

**SITUATION B:** With R2 on second base and no outs, B2 swings and misses a pitch. F2 throws to third attempting to make a play on R2 who was stealing on the pitch. F2's throw hits B2 who; (a) is stationary in the batter's box (has not moved since swinging at the pitch); (b) has stepped backwards into F2's throwing lane but is still within the batter's box; or (c), is outside the batter's box when contacted with the throw.

**RULING:** In (a) there is no interference. If B2 has not made no movement that the umpire judges hindered F2's attempt to play on a runner, there is no interference. In (b) although still in the batter's box, B2 has made a movement, intentional or not, that hindered F2's attempt to play on R2, and is guilty of interference. In (c), B2 has interfered with F2's throw by stepping out of the batter's box. In (b) and (c), B2 is ruled out and R2 must return to third base. (7-12, 8-16-C)

**COMMENT:** The batter's box is not a safe haven protecting the batter from being guilty of interference. As discussed in (b), if the batter moves in a way that the umpire judges hindered F2's attempt to play on a runner, the batter is guilty of interference even if they remain completely inside the batter's box.

**SITUATION C:** R3 is on third base and R1 is on first base. B3 is at bat with a (a) 2-1 count, or (b) 2-2 count. F1 delivers an outside pitch as R1 attempts to steal second. B3 swings and misses the pitch which is caught by F2. After the pitch is caught, B3's momentum carries the batter across the plate and interferes with F2's throw to second base.

**RULING:** Interference. In (a), B3 is out and R1 must return to first base. R3 remains at third base. In (b), this is interference by a retired runner. R3 is out (runner closest to home) and R1 must return to first base. (7-12; 8-16-C; 8-18-H-NOTE 2)

**SITUATION D:** In hitting a slow roller to F5, the (a) whole bat slips out of B1's hands and interferes with F5 or (b) B1's bat breaks and hits the ball or F5 who is attempting to field the ball.

**RULING:** In (a) the ball is dead immediately. B1 is declared out for interference, because B1 is responsible for controlling the bat and not allowing it to interfere with a defensive player attempting a play. In (b), there is no penalty and the ball remains live. (7-13)

**SITUATION E:** With R1 attempting to steal second base, B2 squares to bunt, and pulls the bat back before the ball crosses the plate. In pulling the bat back, B2 makes contact with F2's mitt, knocking the ball to the ground.

**RULING:** F2 did not commit obstruction since F2 did not hinder or impede B2's attempt to make contact with the pitched ball. Instead, this is interference by B2 for hindering the catcher's attempt to play on R1. B2 is called out and R1 is returned to first base. (7-12)

## BATTER IS OUT

**SITUATION A:** With R1 on first, B2 who has two strikes swings at the next pitch. F2 does not catch the ball and fails to throw to F3 at first. There are (a) no outs or (b) two outs.

**RULING:** In (a) B2 is out since first base is occupied with less than two outs. In (b), B2 is safe if they reach first base before being tagged out or thrown out. (7-14-D)

**SITUATION B:** With R2 on second, a third strike bunt attempt by B2 is (a) an uncaught foul or (b) a caught foul (not a foul tip). In both situations R2 is standing on third base at the end of the play.

**RULING:** In (a), FOUL BALL, DEAD BALL, B2 is out, and R2 must return to second. In (b) since the foul was caught, B2 is declared out and the ball remains live. R2 is required to tag up on the caught foul ball and may be called out on appeal, if R2 doesn't retouch second base. (7-14-C; 8-18-J)

**SITUATION C:** The umpire calls "infield fly" but the ball curves to foul territory.

**RULING:** The Infield Fly call is reversed. It is an ordinary foul ball, not an infield fly. The batter is not out unless the ball is caught. If caught, each runner shall retouch the base occupied at the time of the pitch. (8-17-H)

**SITUATION D:** B1 swings and; (a) hits the ball which strikes home plate and bounces up hitting the bat while the batter is in the batter's box; (b) after laying down the bat and running to first base, the ball hits the bat in fair territory; or (c), while advancing to first, B1 drops the bat in fair territory and the bat, while still moving, hits the ball.

**RULING:** In (a), Foul Ball; in (b) the ball remains live; when the ball hits the stationary bat, there is no violation and the ball remains live. In (c), Dead Ball, and the batter is out. (7-14-F)

**SITUATION E:** Left handed B1 attempts to slap the ball. The batted ball hits the ground, rebounds and hits B1 while; (a) B1's trail foot is on the front line of the batter's box and the lead foot is in the air, or (b) B1's lead foot is on the ground outside the batter's box and the trail foot is in the air.

**RULING:** Dead Ball. Anytime a batted ball contacts the batter the ball is dead. In (a) Foul Ball; B1 is still in the batter's box because no foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the box. In (b), Dead Ball; the batter is called out for being outside the batter's box when contacted with a fair, batted ball. (3-FOUL BALL; 3-INTERFERENCE; 7-14-G)

**SITUATION F:** With the bases loaded and less than two outs, B5 pops up in the infield. The umpire calls "infield fly". F6 intentionally drops the ball which then bounds away. R3 is attempting to score, when the umpire declares the ball dead for being intentionally dropped and returns R3 to third base. The coach of the offensive team claims the ball should not have been ruled dead since the batter would have been out due to the infield fly rule being in effect..

**RULING:** The infield-fly rule takes precedence over the intentionally dropped fly ball. Therefore, the ball remains live and runners may advance at their own risk. The umpire made a mistake by declaring a dead ball, preventing R3 from scoring. Even if R3 was close to scoring, the runner shall be returned to the last base she occupied at the time the ball was declared dead. (8-17-C; 8-17-H)

**SITUATION G:** B1, while in the batter's box, bunts the ball and drops the bat between the ball and the foul line. The bat rolls into the ball in fair territory.

**RULING:** The ball is dead, B1 is out and baserunners may not advance. (7-14-F)

**SITUATION H:** With two outs, the pitcher walks a batter to get to the Absent Player spot in the order to get the third out of the inning..

**RULING:** Legal. There is no provision prohibiting walking a batter to get to the automatic out. (7-14-E)

## COACH INTERFERENCE

**SITUATION A:** The base coach, feeling he is protected in the coach's box, impedes a defensive player from reaching a fly ball in foul territory.

**RULING:** Interference. The batter is out. (8-18-Z)

**SITUATION B:** On a fly ball to the outfield, R3 legally tags up and attempts to score. The throw from F7 hits the third base coach who is out of the coach's box. In (a) F7 throws wildly from fair territory, or in (b) F7 throws from foul territory. In both cases, the base coach does not intentionally interfere with the thrown ball.

**RULING:** In (a) there is no violation and the ball remains live. In (b) if the coach is positioned between F7 and the plate and in the umpire's judgment the coach interferes with the defense's opportunity to get an out, a Dead Ball would be ruled and R3 would be declared out and any other runner (s) would return to the last base occupied at the time of the interference. (3-COACH'S BOX; 7-18-H; 8-18-AA)

## RULE 8 - Base Running

### LOOK BACK RULE

**SITUATION A:** R3 is on third base when B2 receives ball four. R3 comes off the base on the pitch. The catcher throws the ball directly back to the pitcher in the 16-foot circle. R3 remains off third base until B2 has reached first base.

**RULING:** Legal. The look-back rule does not go into effect until the batter-runner has touched first base and the pitcher has possession of the ball in the 16-foot circle. At that time, all runners off base must immediately move forward or return to their base. (8-2)

**SITUATION B:** Following ball four to B1, F2 returns the ball to F1 in the 16-foot circle. F1 places the ball under the chin and neck area as hair adjustments are made.

**RULING:** B1 is governed by the Look-Back rule because F1 is considered to have possession of the ball. (8-2)

**SITUATION C:** Just after ball four is called on B2 while on the way to first base, R3 dances off third and is moving back and forth between third base and home. F2 throws the ball immediately to F1 in the 16-foot circle.

**RULING:** R3 is not restricted and governed by the look-back rule until B2 reaches first base. (8-2)

**SITUATION D:** The pitcher has the ball in the 16-foot circle with both feet on the lines; partially in and partially outside of the circle.

**RULING:** The Look-Back rule would be in effect as the pitcher is in the circle when both feet are within or partially within the lines of the 16-foot circle. (8-2)

**SITUATION E:** B1 walks, F2 returns the ball directly to F1 who is in the 16-foot circle, B1 rounds first base and without any hesitation or stopping continues toward second. B1 stops 5 feet from 2B and immediately returns to 1B.

**RULING:** Legal. Any runner in motion may continue or may stop once and then immediately return to the previous base, or advance to the next. (8-2)

**SITUATION F:** R3 leaves third base legally, R2 leaves second legally on ball four to B3. F2 returns the ball directly to F1 who is in the circle, R3 and R2 stand motionless off base as F1 watches B1 round first base.

**RULING:** Dead Ball, R3 is out. Once B1 reaches 1B both R3 and R2 must return or advance. However, only one out may be recorded on a Look-Back Rule violation. (8-2)

**SITUATION G:** B1 hits the ball to F4; B1 is safe at first base, then overruns the base and circles to the right. The ball is returned to F1 in the 16-foot circle when B1 breaks toward second base.

**RULING:** Dead Ball, B1 is out. By turning to the right, B1 committed to returning to first base and must do so immediately. (8-2)

**SITUATION H:** R1, is legally off first base after a pitch. The pitcher (a) leaves the circle, (b) puts the ball on the ground, or (c) fakes a throw by making a move intended to get a reaction from R1.

**RULING:** The Look Back Rule is no longer in effect in (a), (b) or (c). In (a) the pitcher is not within or partially within the lines of the pitching circle; in (b) the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball; in (c) F1 has made a play (the pitcher is considered to be making a play when the throwing arm is raised **or** any forward movement of the body is made towards the runner) on the runner, releasing the run from the restrictions of the Look-Back rule. (8-2)

**SITUATION I:** B1 receives ball four and trots to first base. F2 returns the ball directly to F1 who is in the 16-foot circle. B1 touches and rounds first base, takes two steps off the base, then stops and looks at the pitcher. F1 raises her throwing arm with the ball in her hand.

**RULING:** B1 has not violated the Look Back Rule. When the pitcher makes an attempt to play on the runner the Look Back Rule is no longer in effect. (8-2)

**SITUATION J:** B1 hits to F6, beats out the throw, and overruns first base toward right field. F3 immediately returns the ball to F1 who is standing in the 16-foot circle. After coming to a stop B1 (a) turns to the right, (b) turns to the left and heads directly to first base, (c) turns to the left towards second base but heads to first base, (d) turns left and takes three steps towards second base, or (e) moves back towards first base, but prior to touching first base, runs towards second base.

**RULING:** In (a), (b) and (c), legal. In (d) and (e), the runner violated the look back rule and is out (8-2)

## **RUNNER RELEASED**

**SITUATION A:** With R1 on first, F2 returns the ball to F1 in the 16-foot circle after the pitch. With the ball in the throwing hand, F1 raises their arm (a) slightly and loosens up their arm, or (b) above their head to better position their jersey sleeves, or (c) makes a motion intended to get a reaction from R1.

**RULING:** In the umpire's judgment, if the arm motion by F1 is an attempt to make a play, R1 is released from base. In (a) and (b), the umpire is unlikely to consider these acts as attempted plays. However, in (c) whether the arm is raised or drawn back sidearm or underhand, if in the umpire's judgment, F1 is making the move in an effort to hold R1 close to the base, the umpire shall consider such an act as an attempted play. The benefit of any doubt goes to the runner. (8-2)

**SITUATION B:** F1 is within the 16-foot circle during a live ball, with runners on base. Before pitching to the batter, F1 tucks the glove (containing the ball) between the knees to adjust a hair device.

**RULING:** The ball is considered to be in the pitcher's possession; therefore, the runners are not released. (8-2)

**SITUATION C:** With the ball in F1's possession and in the 16-foot circle. B1 rounds first base on a walk. F1 steps toward (a) third base or (b) first base.

**RULING:** In (a), B1 is not released from 1B, because there is obviously no attempted play being made by F1. In (b), if the umpire judges the step toward first base by F1 was an attempted play, B1, will be released from the Look Back Rule.. (8-2)

## **COURTESY RUNNER**

**SITUATION A:** S1 is used as a courtesy runner for the pitcher twice in the same inning.

**RULING:** Legal. (8-3-A)

**SITUATION B:** F2 doubles with no outs. Two outs later the coach sends out a courtesy runner for the catcher.

**RULING:** Legal. The decision to use a courtesy runner for the catcher or the pitcher can be made any time the catcher or pitcher reaches base safely. (8-3-A)

**SITUATION C:** S1 runs as a courtesy runner for F2 in the first inning. S1 then courtesy runs for F1 in the sixth inning.

**RULING:** Legal. The same player may courtesy run for both the pitcher and catcher, in the same game as long as it is not in the same inning. (8-3-A)

**SITUATION D:** The coach of Team A sends out a courtesy runner for the pitcher and fails to report the change to the plate umpire.

**RULING:** The unreported courtesy runner (CR) penalty is the same as the unreported substitution penalty. The first instance is a team warning and the unannounced CR is legal. For each additional offense, the coach is ejected but the CR is legal. (8-3 and PENALTY)

**SITUATION E:** In Non-ELITE SELECT play, F2 hits a single and the coach wants a CR but has no eligible substitutes. The coach requests to utilize the Last Completed at Bat (LCAB) as the courtesy runner.

**RULING:** LEGAL. In Non-ELITE SELECT divisions, if a team has no eligible substitutes they may use the Last Completed at Bat (LCAB) to courtesy run for the pitcher or catcher. (8-3-B)

**SITUATION F:** B4 leads off the inning and hits a pitched ball over the fence. B4 falls down and is injured and unable to continue, while attempting to run the bases. The coach wants to insert a) B3, the Last Completed at Bat (LCAB), or (b) a substitute to fulfill B4's base running responsibility.

**RULING:** Legal in both situations. In (a) provided the team has no unused substitutes available. When no substitutes are available, and an Absent Player situation is created due to injury, and while the player is either a batter-runner or runner, the Last Completed At Bat (LCAB) may be used to fulfill the injured player's base running responsibility. This exception doesn't apply to any future at-bat and the injured player may not return to the game. In (b), legal. A legally eligible substitute may be entered during the dead ball to fulfill a player's base running responsibilities related to an award arising while the ball was live. (5-2-

A-1- EXCEPTION)

**SITUATION G:** With one out the Coach sends a courtesy runner in for F2. After the second out of the inning, the Coach replaces the courtesy runner with F2.

**RULING:** Illegal. Once a courtesy runner is designated for that half inning, no other courtesy runner nor the pitcher or catcher may return to run for the original courtesy runner (8-3-E).

**SITUATION H:** In the top of the fourth inning, the DP entered the game to pitch for the FLEX. In the bottom of the fourth inning the DP hits a double. The coach reports a courtesy runner for the DP.

**RULING:** Legal, the DP was the pitcher of record in the top of the inning and is eligible to have a CR.. (8-3-F).

**SITUATION I:** The starting pitcher bats in the top of the first inning and hits a double. S1 enters as the Courtesy Runner for F1. While warming up, F1 is injured and unable to face the first batter (throw one pitch) in the bottom of the inning.

**RULING:** Legal, however, S1 is now retroactively a substitute for F1, and can no longer courtesy run for the remainder of the game. F1 has left the game but may re-enter, at any position other than the pitching position. When an injury or disqualification occurs in the top of the first inning to the player listed as pitcher or catcher on the lineup card and they are unable to face the first batter (throw one pitch), the player who served as the Courtesy Runner is retroactively the substitute (unless the courtesy runner was an LCAB Courtesy Runner) (8-3-G)

**SITUATION J:** In Non-ELITE SELECT play, Team A has no available substitutes. B3 the right fielder bats and is on 2nd base (R2), when the catcher, (B4), receives a walk. B2, a slow runner, would be the Last Completed at Bat, but the coach does not immediately ask for a Courtesy Runner. B5 is up to bat, when the pitcher throws a wild pitch, allowing R2 (B3) to score from second base. The coach now enters B3, who just scored as the Last Completed at Bat Courtesy Runner for the catcher.

**RULING:** Legal in Non-ELITE SELECT divisions. The Last Completed at Bat Courtesy Runner is determined at the time a courtesy runner is requested, skipping batters who are; currently on base, who are the pitcher or catcher of record, or who have already courtesy run for the other position in that same inning. (8-3)

**SITUATION K:** In Non-ELITE SELECT play, Team A is Roster Batting. When F1, Jen Smith, the fifth batter, gets a hit, the coach requests to use the Last Completed Bat, Lauren Jackson the #4 batter, who is also the catcher of record.

**RULING:** Improper Courtesy Runner. The Last Completed at Bat is determined at the time the Courtesy Runner is requested, skipping batters, who are: currently on base; the pitcher or catcher of record; or have already courtesy run for the other position in the same inning. Pitchers and catchers may not be used as LCAB courtesy runners. (8-3-B NOTE 1-3)

## PITCHER OR CATCHER RE-ENTERS

**SITUATION A:** S1 pinch hits for F1 and reaches base. The coach informs the umpire that the F1 is re-entering for S1 and then S2 will be a CR for the pitcher.

**RULING:** Illegal. Since F1, the pitcher, has not batted and legally earned their way on base, S2 may not courtesy run for the pitcher. (8-3-A)

## INELIGIBLE COURTESY RUNNER

**SITUATION A:** The pitcher gets on base and S1 enters as a Courtesy Runner. Later in the same half-inning S1, a courtesy runner for F2, is standing on 1B when the opposing team brings it to the umpire's attention, before a pitch is thrown.

**RULING:** Illegal, S1 is declared out. A courtesy runner can run for the pitcher and catcher during the game, but not for both in the same inning, This is an ineligible Courtesy Runner. An ineligible courtesy runner is considered in the same as soon as they take the place of the pitcher or catcher on base (a pitch does not need to be thrown). The coach is issued a team warning (first offense), and any subsequent violations will result in the head coach is ejected along for the remainder of the current game, only. (8-3-A/B Penalty)

**SITUATION B:** S1, Jones runs for the catcher in the first inning but S2, Smith, comes out to run for the catcher in the third inning.

**RULING:** Legal, if both substitutes are eligible courtesy runners and have properly reported to the plate umpire. (8-3-E)

**SITUATION C:** B1, the catcher, singles and is replaced by a courtesy runner. B2 walks and before the next pitch, the courtesy runner is replaced by another courtesy runner.

**RULING:** Illegal. A courtesy runner may not be replaced by another legal courtesy runner. (8-3-E)

**SITUATION D:** A courtesy runner is running for the pitcher and is injured sliding safely into second base. In (a), the pitcher who was being courtesy run for, returns to the game and replaces the injured courtesy runner on second base; (b), the coach removes the courtesy runner and places a substitute on second base or (c), replaces the injured courtesy runner with another courtesy runner

**RULING:** Legal. In (a), (b) and (c). A courtesy runner may be entered for the injured courtesy runner. The pitcher may also run for the injured courtesy runner. The pitcher may be replaced by normal substitution procedures with substitution and re-entry rules applying. (8-3-E)

## PITCHED BALL HITS BATTER

**SITUATION A:** A pitched ball touches the ground in front of the plate before hitting B1.

**RULING:** B1 is awarded first base. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter, and B1 is **not** required to make an effort to avoid being hit. (8-4-D)

**SITUATION B:** With two strikes, B1 swings and the ball touches B1's body or clothing.

**RULING:** Dead Ball Strike; and since it was strike three, B1 is called out. (7-5-C; 8-4-D-1)

**SITUATION C:** B1 is at bat. F1 throws an illegal pitch. B1 intentionally moves to get hit by pitch.

**RULING:** The ball is dead immediately. When a batter intentionally moves to get hit by the pitch, it is a strike or ball depending on location of the pitch. B1 remains at bat unless it is a third strike, (B1 is out) or ball four (awarded a base on balls). (8-4-D Exceptions-1 & 2)

**SITUATION D:** With R1 on 1B, F1 delivers; (a) a legal pitch or (b), an illegal pitch to B2 who swings and subsequently is hit by the pitch.

**RULING:** Dead Ball in both (a) and (b). Anytime a pitched ball hits any part of the batter or the batter's clothing, the ball becomes dead. In (a) the batter is charged with a Dead Ball Strike (if it's the third strike the batter is called out). In (b) a Delayed Dead ball is signaled and an illegal pitch is called, followed by a Dead Ball when the batter is hit. The offensive coach will have the option of the result of the play (a strike on B2), or the penalty (ball awarded to B2). (6-3-C; 8-4-D EXCEPTION-1)

## CATCHER OBSTRUCTION

**SITUATION A:** R3 is on third base. R3 starts home on an attempted squeeze play. F3, who is playing close for a bunt, cuts off the pitch and tags R3.

**RULING:** This is treated the same as catcher obstruction. The ball becomes dead at the end of playing action. The coach or captain of the team at bat has the option of the play or penalty. If the penalty is accepted, R3 is awarded Home and B2 is awarded first base. (3-OBSTRUCTION-A, 8-4-E-NOTE 1)

**SITUATION B:** R2 is on second with one out. F2 obstructs B3 who hits a ground ball to F4 who throws B3 out. F3 attempts to throw out R2 at third base, but overthrows the ball, allowing R2 to score.

**RULING:** The coach of the team at bat may elect to take the result of the play scoring R2 and taking the out of B3 at second, or accepting the catcher's obstruction penalty, placing R2 back on second and B3 on first. (3-OBSTRUCTION-A; 8-4-E)

**SITUATION C:** R2 is on second base with one out. B3's swing is obstructed by F2, but B3 is able to hit a long fly ball to F8. R2 tags up and scores after the catch.

**RULING:** Delayed Dead Ball. The coach or captain of the team on offense may advise the plate umpire they choose to decline the enforcement of the obstruction penalty (leaving R2 at 2B, while B3 is awarded 1B, with one out) and accept the resulting play (R2 would score, and B3's out would stand as the second out of the inning). The option shall be decided before the next pitch (legal or illegal). (3-OBSTRUCTION-A, 8-4-E)

## RETOUCHING MISSED BASE

**SITUATION A:** R1 is on first base when B2 singles to left field. R1 misses second base while advancing to 3B. F7 throws the ball out of play before R1 reaches third.

**RULING:** R1 is permitted to complete their base-running responsibilities before a dead-ball appeal can be made. If R1 makes an attempt to return to and retouch second base, the appropriate award of two bases from the time the ball left F7's hand, will be given. If R1 does not attempt to return to second base, the awarded base for the overthrow is administered, but R1 would be declared out if properly appealed by the defense. (10-1-G-4; 8-6-A)



## DEFENSIVE OBSTRUCTION

**SITUATION A:** R2 is on second base and R1 is on first base with no outs. B3 hits the next pitched ball for a single. R2 advances to and stays at third base. R1 advances to second base and is obstructed rounding the base, but continues toward third base in spite of the obstruction. The ball is thrown to third base and the fielder tags R1.

**RULING:** Delayed Dead Ball is signaled and obstruction called at the time of the infraction, followed by a dead ball when R1 is put out. An obstructed runner may not be put out between the two bases where the obstruction occurred unless an exception applies. If the umpire judges R1 would have reached third base without the obstruction, R1 will be awarded third. When the preceding runner, R2 is forced to advance by the awarding of a base to an obstructed runner (R2), the umpire shall award the preceding runner the necessary base or bases. If, in the umpire's judgment, R2 would NOT have reached third base, R2 is awarded second base and R1 remains at third base. (3-OBSTRUCTION; 8-13)

**SITUATION B:** F2 is standing in the base path of R1 waiting to catch a throw from F9. In (a) contact (which is not malicious) occurs between F2 and R1, or (b) no contact occurs but F2 forces R1 to alter the runner's base path, just prior to F2 catching the ball.

**RULING:** In both (a) and (b) F2 has committed obstruction; R1 will be awarded the base that would have been reached had there been no obstruction. When a fielder is not in possession of the ball and not making the initial play on a batted ball, they cannot impede the runner. Contact is not required. (3-OBSTRUCTION; 8-13)

**SITUATION C:** A throw from F9 draws F2 into the base path of R1. Contact occurs between F2 and R1 just prior to F2 catching the ball. The contact is not malicious.

**RULING:** F2 has committed obstruction; R1 will be awarded the base that would have been reached had there been no obstruction. (3-OBSTRUCTION; 8-13)

**SITUATION D:** With no runners on base, B1 hits a pop-up far over F4 for a single. As the ball is being thrown into F6, B1 rounds first base, brushes F3 standing in the way of the runner without possession of the ball. The umpire correctly signals and calls obstruction. B1 returns to first base, but sees the umpire's obstruction signal and takes off in a slow jog to second base and is tagged out by F6.

**RULING:** Obstruction was correctly called by the umpire. The general rule is that an obstructed runner can't be put out between the two bases where the obstruction occurred. However, one of the exceptions to that general rule is that if the runner obtains the base(s) they would have reached in the umpire's judgment without the obstruction, then subsequently leaves that base, the runner is no longer afforded protection and is liable to be put out. (3-OBSTRUCTION; 8-13-D-1)

**SITUATION E:** With R2 on second, B2 hits a fly ball to F8 who makes the catch. R2 who is near third base when the catch is made, attempts to return to second base, but is obstructed by F6 and is tagged out.

**RULING:** If in the umpire's judgment, R2 could not have made it safely to 3B, the umpire would award the runner second base. If the umpire felt R2 would have made third base safely had there been no obstruction, then R2 would be awarded third base. (3-OBSTRUCTION; 8-13)

**SITUATION F:** On a hit and run with R1 on first base, B2 hits a ground ball between first and second bases. F4 dives for the ball. R1 cannot avoid F4 and elects to hurdle the fielder. F4, in getting up, makes contact with R1.

**RULING:** At the time R1 made a commitment to hurdle, F4 was lying on the ground. Therefore, R1 is legal, even if contact is made. If by getting up, F4 contacts R1, F4 should be called for obstruction if not in possession of the ball. (8-15-B-3; 8-18-C)

**SITUATION G:** R1 is caught in a rundown between home and third base. In an attempt to get back to third base, R1 is forced to run completely around F5 who is in the base path without the ball. R1 is tagged out at third base by F6.

**RULING:** Obstruction. A Delayed Dead Ball will be signaled and called at the time R1 was obstructed. When R1 is putout, a Dead Ball will be called. Since R1 was put out prior to reaching the base that would have been reached (3B) had there been no obstruction, the umpire shall award R1 third base. An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where the obstruction occurred unless an exception applies. (8-13-D)

**SITUATION H:** R1 is on second base when B2 hits a pitched ball for a single to center field. R1 is deliberately obstructed by F5 and unable to touch third base, but continues home and scores. After all play has stopped the defense makes a dead ball appeal on R1 for missing third base.

**RULING:** Obstruction; Delayed Dead ball is verbalized and signaled when the infraction occurs. The appeal should be denied. If the runner (despite a good-faith effort to do so) is physically unable to touch a base because of obstruction, that runner should not be called out for failure to touch the base. This is similar to a runner's responsibility when a base is dislodged. In both cases, a good-faith effort to touch the required base (as judged by the umpire) gives the benefit of doubt to the runner. The offending defensive player might also be issued a warning for unsporting behavior. (8-6-E; 8-13; 11-2-T)

**SITUATION I:** F2 in possession of the ball; (a) blocks the plate and prevents the sliding runner from reaching the plate and tags the runner; or (b), blocks the plate and the runner slides into the tag causing the ball to roll out of F2's glove onto the ground. F2 then regains control of the ball and applies the tag before the runner touches the plate.

**RULING:** F2 may legally block home plate while in possession of the ball. In (a), the runner is out. In (b), once the ball is dislodged, F2 is no longer in possession of the ball and may not impede the progress of the runner. If in the umpire's judgment, F2 impeded the progress of the runner after the ball was dislodged, obstruction should be called and the runner awarded home.

**SITUATION J:** R1 is obstructed by F5 at third base: (a) is subsequently assisted by the third base coach while rounding the base; (b) violates the look-back rule after rounding third base and the ball being thrown to the pitcher in the circle.

**RULING:** Delayed Dead ball, followed by a Dead ball. In both (a) and (b) the out would not stand. Under the general rule for obstruction, R1 may not be put out between the two bases where obstruction occurred unless there was an EXCEPTION, such as interference by the obstructed runner, malicious contact, passing another runner, or being legally appealed for a missed base or one left too soon on caught fly ball. When R1 was called out in (a) for being assisted by a coach or (b) for violating the Look-Back rule, the exception to the general obstruction rule do not apply in either case, and R1 is awarded the base(s) that would have been reached had there been no obstruction, as determined by the umpire. (8-13-EFFECT)

## VERBAL OBSTRUCTION

**SITUATION A:** R1 attempts to steal second base; (a) F5 yells "get back get back". R1 starts back to first and is tagged out; (b) F5, seeing F2's throw going to the outfield, yells "slide" causing R1 to slide late into second base; or (c), F5 yells to F3 "you have the bag".

**RULING:** In (a) and (b), this is verbal obstruction and the umpire should vocalize "obstruction" and signal a delayed dead ball. The umpire will award R1 the base or bases that would have been reached in the umpire's judgment had there been no obstruction. In (c), this is normal defensive communications. (3-OBSTRUCTION; 8-13; 8-15-B-3; 10-3; 11-2-A)

**SITUATION B:** R1 attempts to steal second. F2, upon receiving the pitch, throws a pop-up to F6. F5 yells “get back, get back”. R1 thinks B2 has hit a pop-up and starts back to first and is tagged out.

**RULING:** This is verbal obstruction on F5. The umpire should call “obstruction” and signal a delayed dead ball. The umpire will call time when R1 is tagged out and award the base or bases that would have been reached in the umpire’s judgment had there been no obstruction. In addition, F2 is guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct and is ejected (3-OBSTRUCTION; 8-13; 8-15-B-3; 10-3; 11-2-N)

## FAKE TAG

**SITUATION A:** R1, who is on first base, attempts to steal second base. F2 (a) does not make a throw or (b) throws the ball into center field, and in either case, F6 fakes a tag on R1.

**RULING:** Obstruction is always called on a fake tag. The umpire will signal delayed dead ball for the obstruction by F6. In both (a) and (b), the umpire will award the base or bases R1 would have reached had there been no obstruction. The Umpire will also issue a warning for unsporting behavior for the fake tag. (3-OBSTRUCTION; 8-13, 8-15-B-3; 10-3; 11-2-A)

## DETACHED EQUIPMENT

**SITUATION A:** R2 is on second and R1 is on first when B3 hits a ground ball to F6. F6 fields the ball, steps on second for the force on R1 and then throws wildly to F3. F3 tosses their glove into the air hitting the ball. The ball bounces into the dugout.

**RULING:** R1 is out. Both R2 and B3 are awarded two bases from their positions when F3’s detached glove touched the thrown ball. In this situation, or any other situation where the detached equipment touches a ball, prior to the ball becoming dead because of going into a dead-ball area, the rule governing detached player equipment prevails. If the detached glove or mitt touches the ball after the ball has become dead because of going into a dead-ball area, the ruling governing detached player equipment has no bearing. (8-14-C; 8-15-B-1)

**SITUATION B:** R2 is on second base. A fielder then throws their glove which hits; (a) a batted ball over fair ground preventing the ball from going over the center field fence in flight; or (b), a fair batted ball preventing it from bouncing over the fence.

**RULING:** The award is from the base occupied at the time of the pitch. The number of bases awarded is four in (a) and three in (b). (8-14-A-5; 8-14-B-1)

**SITUATION C:** The bases are loaded with one out. B1 pops up to the third baseman who lets the ball fall to the ground untouched. The umpire declares “Infield Fly Rule, batter is out, if fair.” Spin on the ball starts the ball toward the foul line between home and third base. F5 throws their glove and contacts the ball over fair territory, where the ball comes to rest.

**RULING:** The batter-runner is ruled out due to the infield fly rule. When the ball was contacted by the F5’s detached glove, the penalty is a three base award, and all runners score. (8-14-B)

**SITUATION D:** F3’s thrown glove makes contact with a fair batted ball. The batter-runner is thrown out at (a) third base, or (b) home plate.

**RULING:** Delayed Dead ball at the time the fair batted ball is touched by detached player equipment (thrown, tossed, held or kicked) by a fielder. All runners are awarded three bases but may advance further at their own risk. In (a) Dead Ball when the batter-runner is thrown out, and a three base award is given by the umpire. In (b), the infraction is ignored since the batter-runner attained third base, the out stands and the ball remains live. (8-14-B-1; 8-14-D NOTE 1; 10-2-B)

## BALL ENTERS DEAD BALL TERRITORY

**SITUATION A:** With two outs and R1 on first, F2 does not catch a third strike which rolls along the first-base line enabling B4 to reach first and second while F1 chases down the ball. F1 overthrows 3B into dead ball territory, in an attempt to put out R1.

**RULING:** Both R1 and B4 are awarded two bases from the base each occupied when the ball left the hand of F1 on the overthrow. In this situation, both R1 and B4 score since B4 reached second prior to the thrown ball leaving the hand of F1. (8-14-C-3; 8-15-C; 10-1-G-3)

**SITUATION B:** With R1 on first base and one out, B3 hits a shallow fly ball to right field. R1 goes halfway to second, and B3 rounds first base. F9 traps the ball. However, believing that the ball was caught, F9 throws to first trying to double off R1. The throw is wild and goes into dead-ball territory.

**RULING:** In this instance, there were two runners between first and second base when the ball left F9's hand. The runners will be placed on second and third. Only the lead runner is awarded two bases in this situation. (8-14-C NOTE)

**SITUATION C:** B1 hits a long fly ball to left field. F7 goes back to the fence, leaps, but is not able to catch the fly ball. The ball goes past F7, deflects off; (a), the top of the fence and lands in the outfield; (b), the top of the fence, strikes the fielder's glove and ricochets over the fence in fair territory; (c), F7's outstretched glove and goes over the fence; or (d) the top of the fence and goes over in fair territory.

**RULING:** In (a), the hit is a live ground ball. In (b), a ground rule double is ruled. When the ball ricocheted off the fence and then off the fielder's glove, it was no longer in flight and ruled a double. In (c), and (d) it is a home run. (3-IN FLIGHT; 8-14-C-1)

**SITUATION D:** On a hit-and-run signal, R1 has reached and passed second base before the ball batted by B2 bounces over or through the fence in right field.

**RULING:** If a fair batted ball becomes dead because of bouncing over or passing through a fence the base awards are made from the time of the pitch. B2 and R1 are awarded two bases. R1 will be placed on third base, while B2 will be awarded second base. (8-14-C-1; 8-15-A-1)

**SITUATION E:** With no outs, R1 is on first base, when B2 lines out to F6. As R1 returns to 1B, F6 throws the ball out of play.

**RULING:** R1 is awarded 3B. R1 legally obtained first base when the ball left F6's hand. The fact that R1 is returning to 1B does not change the bases awarded. (8-14-C-3; 8-15-C)

## RUNNER RETURNS TO BASE

**SITUATION A:** R1, on first base while advancing on a hit, misses second base and heads toward third. F7 throws the ball out of play before R1 reaches third.

**RULING:** R1 is permitted to complete her base-running responsibilities before a dead-ball appeal can be made. If R1 makes an attempt to return to, and retouch second base, the appropriate award for the overthrow will be given. If R1 does not make an attempt to return to second base, the awarded bases for the overthrow will be administered, but if the defense then makes a proper dead-ball appeal, R1 will be called out. (10-1-G-4; 8-6-A)

## BALL CARRIED INTO DEAD BALL TERRITORY

**SITUATION A:** A fielder; (a) carries; (b) throws; or (c), intentionally carries a live ball into the dugout or any dead-ball area.

**RULING:** In (a) a one base award shall be given. Whenever a batted ball is caught in flight and then unintentionally carried into a dugout or other dead-ball area, the award is one base. In (b) and (c) a two base award will be made by the umpire. A live ball intentionally carried or thrown into a dead-ball area results in a two base award (exception: a pitch or thrown ball by the pitcher while in the pitching position). (8-14-C-5; 8-14-D-1; 10-1-I)

## SPECTATOR INTERFERENCE

**SITUATION A:** R1 is on first when B2 hits a fair ball; (a) down the right-field line that rolls into foul territory, or (b), to the left-center field gap. In both cases, a spectator picks up the ball and tosses it to the fielder.

**RULING:** In both (a) and (b) the ball is dead immediately at the moment of interference and the umpire will award R1 and B2 the bases that would have been reached in the umpire's judgment had there been no spectator interference. (8-14-E-I; 10-1-F-3)

## BATTER RUNNER INTERFERENCE

**SITUATION A:** With R3 on third base, R1 on first and two outs, B5 hits a fair ball which slowly rolls toward first base. B5 interferes with F3, who is trying to field the ball. However, R3 scored before the interference.

**RULING:** The run does not score if any runner advanced during action in which the third out was made by the batter-runner before she touched first base. (8-18-G; 4-2-C-3)

**SITUATION B:** There are no runners on base with two outs; B3 has a count of 3 balls and 2 strikes. On the next pitch B3 swings and misses. The ball bounces off F2's shin guard and lands in front of home plate. As F2 moves out to field the ball, B3 runs int, and knocks F2 down.

**RULING:** Dead ball, interference. The umpire shall call "dead ball," and rule the batter-runner out. In addition, if there were any runners on base, they would be returned to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. (8-17-A)

**SITUATION C:** With a runner on first base, and no outs, B2 swings at and misses the pitched ball for strike three. B2 steps across home plate to return to the first base dugout, and is hit by F2's throw causing the ball to ricochet to the backstop; in (a) R1 is returning to 1B, and F2 is throwing the ball back to the pitcher; or (b), R1 is stealing on the pitch, and F2 is attempting to throw R2 out at second base when the ball hits B3's helmet.

**RULING:** In (a) Dead Ball, R1 must return to 1B. This is not Interference since F2 was not making a play but instead, returning the ball to the pitcher. In order to rule interference, the umpire must judge that the actions of the retired player prevented another player from being put out. In (b), Dead Ball, B3 is out on strikes, and is now a retired runner who interferes. R1 would be called out for B3's interference. (8-18-H NOTE 2; 10-1-E)

**SITUATION D:** R3 is on third base with one out. B2 hits the next pitched ball out in front of home plate. B3 does not clear the area as R1 attempts to score and interferes with F2 as she dives in an attempt to make a play on R1 at the plate.

**RULING:** DEAD BALL and INTERFERENCE; B3 (the player who interfered) is OUT for INTERFERING with F2's attempt to make a play on a R1 by failing to make a reasonable effort to vacate home plate when a play was being attempted. If there were other runners on base they would be returned to the last base they had legally touched at the time of the interference (8.12; 8.18.G)

## INTENTIONALLY DROPPED BALL

**SITUATION A:** With no outs. R1 is on first. F5 intentionally drops a fair fly ball hit by B2. R1 advances and is; (a) tagged out, or (b), reaches second or third base.

**RULING:** In (a), and (b), the ball is dead, B2 is out and returned to the base occupied (first base) at the time of the pitch. (8-17-C)

**SITUATION B:** With the bases loaded and one out, B5 bunts the ball in the air. F3 uses the back of the glove to gently knock the ball to the ground, then picks the ball up and throws to home plate where F2 touches home plate and then throws B5 out at first base.

**RULING:** Dead Ball immediately. B5 is out and all other runners return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch. Manipulating the ball to the ground is prohibited because the act violates the spirit of the rule. Permitting the ball to drop to the ground untouched is not considered an intentionally dropped ball, as long as it was never touched. (8-17-C)

**SITUATION C:** With one out and R1 on first base, B3 hits a fly ball that F4 catches but then intentionally drops in an effort to turn a double play.

**RULING:** Dead Ball immediately. B3 is out and R1 must return to the base (first base) occupied at the time of the pitch. (8-17-C)

## THREE FOOT RUNNING LANE

**SITUATION A:** With the bases loaded, B4, batting left-handed, hits a ground ball to F3, who is left-handed. The ball is just inside the foul line. F3 throws to F2, but hits B4, who running to first base. B4 is in fair territory, but has not reached the three-foot running lane.

**RULING:** The Three Foot Running Lane rule only applies to plays or throws made to first base. Unless the umpire judges that the B4 intentionally interfered, there is no violation and the ball remains live. (8-17-E; 8-18-A; 8-18-F)

**SITUATION B:** With R3 on third base, B2 receives ball four and runs completely in fair territory (outside of the three-foot running lane) the last half distance to first base. F2 throws the ball to first base and the throw hits B2.

**RULING:** There is no violation and the ball remains live, unless the umpire judges that the batter-runner intentionally interfered with a legitimate play by the catcher. (8-18-A; 8-18-F)

**SITUATION C:** With bases empty, B1 swings and misses strike three. F2 does not catch the ball which rolls to the screen. B1 runs to first with the left foot in the three foot lane and the right foot completely outside of the lane. F2 throws the ball and (a) hits B1 with the throw; or (b), F2 realizes a throw cannot be made without hitting B1, so therefore, does not throw the ball.

**RULING:** B1 is outside the running lane in (a) and interferes with the attempted play by F2. The ball is dead, and B1 is out for interference. In (b), there must be a throw for there to be interference. Since F2 did not throw the ball, there is no interference and the ball remains live. (8-17-E)

**SITUATION D:** B1 bunts a ball in front of home plate and is running to first base in fair territory (outside the three-foot running lane). The catcher fields the ball and in an attempt to throw B1 out; (a) hits B1 in the back; (b) in the foot; or (c), throws the ball into right field.

**RULING:** (a) and (b) It does not matter where the batter-runner is hit. When running outside the three-foot running lane, if B1 interferes with a legitimate play, the ball is dead and B1 is out. In (c), though a throw must be made, the ball does not have to hit the batter-runner for there to be interference. If B1 is out of the running lane and in the umpire's judgment, interferes with the play at first base, the ball is dead and B1 is out. If the umpire judges there was no interference, the ball remains live. Merely running outside the running lane does not constitute interference. (8-17-E Exception)

**SITUATION E:** With less than 2 outs, and R3 on third base, and using a single first base bag, B2 bunts the ball. After R3 scores, F2 hits B2 who; (a) is running in fair territory several strides prior to first base; or (b), as B2 steps inside fair territory just upon reaching the first base bag.

**RULING:** In (a), the ball is dead, B2 is out for interference. Since R3 has touched home before the interference, R3 scores. In (b) the ball is live and no interference. The batter-runner ran in the running lane legally and came into fair territory in order to touch first base, R3 scores. (8-17-E; 8-16-C).

## BATTER RUNNER RETREATING TOWARD HOME

**SITUATION A:** With R2 on second base, B2 bunts the ball down the first base line. F3 fields the ball and runs toward B2. B2, in an effort to buy time for R2, steps back toward home plate to avoid being tagged out.

**RULING:** Once B2 is out, the ball is dead immediately and R1 must return to second base (the last touched at the time of the inference). (8-17-G)

**SITUATION B:** With R2 on second base and R1 on first, B3 hits a ground ball to F5. R2 starts toward third base but retreats to second.

**RULING:** Legal. R1 may retreat without penalty. In order to record an out, R2 must be tagged, or the ball needs to be thrown to third base. (8-18-M)

## BALL FOUR

**SITUATION A:** The umpire calls ball four on B1 who does not go immediately or directly to first base.

**RULING:** If B1 enters the dugout or does not reach first base before the time of the next pitch, B1 shall be declared out. The ball remains live (8-17-J; 8-18-Q)

**SITUATION B:** B2 is at bat with three balls and no strikes and (a) R2 on second, or (b) no one on base. The next pitch is wild and goes into the stands.

**RULING:** In (a), B2 is entitled to first base only and R2 is awarded third base. In (b), B2 is only entitled to first base. (8-14-D-1)

**SITUATION C:** With two outs, and the bases loaded, B6 is batting with three balls and two strikes. The next pitch is a wild pitch. R3 begins advancing to home. R2, on second base, is off with the pitch, rounds third base but is caught off the base by an excellent throw from F2 for the third out. R3 had not touched home when R2 was tagged out at third.

**RULING:** R2 is out when tagged after overrunning third base. The run by R3 counts as R3 became entitled to home as soon as ball four was declared. (8-14-D-3).

## THIRD STRIKE NOT CAUGHT

**SITUATION A:** F2 does not catch the third strike with two outs. B3 starts toward the dugout but F2 does not throw to first. B3 then makes a quick dash to first.

**RULING:** B3 is entitled to try for first base until entering dead ball territory. If B3 goes into dead ball territory, an out will be declared; B3 is no longer eligible to beat out the dropped third strike. This rule does not apply to the 8 and Under Level (7-14-D Note; 8-17-J; Rule 15).

**SITUATION B:** With less than two outs R1 on first base, F2 does not catch B2's third strike. B2 begins running to first base, F2 attempts to throw B2 out and overthrows F3.

**RULING:** Because first base is occupied, as soon as B2 starts to run to first, the umpire shall announce "batter is out" and the ball remains live. There is no interference as the defense is responsible for knowing the game situation. (7-14-D)

**SITUATION C:** B3 is at bat with less than two outs, R1 on first base and R2 is on second base; F2 does not catch the third strike and B3 begins running to first base. As R1 is returning to first, F2 attempts a pick off and B3 interferes with the throw.

**RULING:** B2 is declared out since first base is occupied with less than two outs. At the time of the interference, the ball becomes dead and B2 is a retired runner that interfered with F2. When a retired runner interferes, the runner closest to home is also out. Since this was not the third out, R1 is returned to first base. (7-14-D; 8-16-C; 8-18-H Note 2).

**SITUATION D:** With two outs and two strikes, B3 swings and misses the next pitch which hits in the dirt and bounces into F2's mitt. B3 attempts to advance to first base.

**RULING:** Legal; this is an uncaught third strike because the ball first hit the dirt before being caught by F2. B3 can attempt to advance. (7-14-D Note)

## **RUNNER LEAVING BASE PATH**

**SITUATION A:** In rounding first in a wide turn, B1 runs considerably outside the normal baseline to second base. B1 is then caught in a rundown between first and second bases.

**RULING:** Legal. B1 is considered to have established their base path their base directly from that position to the base B1 is moving toward. Unless avoiding a defensive player attempting a tag, the runner is not required to run in a direct line between the two bases. (Rule 3 BASE PATH; 8-18-A Note)

**SITUATION B:** R3 is on third base and R1 is on first with no outs. B3 hits a high fly ball to left field. R3 takes a position several steps behind third base to get a running start as F7 catches the ball.

**RULING:** R3 is immediately out and the ball stays live. B1 is out on the catch and R1 may attempt to advance at their own peril. (8-18-R)

## **RUNNER LEAPING FIELDER**

**SITUATION A:** B2 hits a hard line drive up the middle to the right of F4 who dives and misses the ball. R1 coming from first base leaps over F4 who is lying on the ground in the baseline.

**RULING:** Legal. A runner may leap over or hurdle a defensive player who is lying on the ground. (8-18-C-Note)

**SITUATION B:** R2 is on second with no outs when B1 hits safely to right field. F9 throws to F2 who fields the ball in a crouched position about five feet to the left of home plate on the third base foul line. R2 avoids F2's tag by hurdling over F2 and landing on the plate.

**RULING:** Illegal; R2 is out for hurdling over F2 who was not lying on the ground. R2's run does not count. The ball is live unless interference is called. (8-18-C)

## **RUNNER INTERFERES WITH FIELDER**

**SITUATION A:** All bases are occupied with no outs when B4 hits a ground ball to F4 who is run into by R1 as; (a) F4 is fielding the ball or (b), after the ball bounces off F4's glove but is a step away.

**RULING:** Dead ball; R1 is declared out for Interference in both (a) and (b). As long as the ball remains within a step and a reach of F4, the fielder is still considered to be making the initial play on a batted ball and R1 must not impede F4. If the interference, in the judgment of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the immediate trailing runner (B4) would also be declared out. All other runners must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. (8-18-H Note 1; 8-18-H Note 5)

**SITUATION B:** With R2 on second, R1 on first and one out, B4 hits an infield fly. The ball strikes R2 who is; (a) near second base or (b), standing on second.

**RULING:** In (a) and (b), the batter is out, due to the infield-fly rule. In (a), R2 is out for interference and the ball is dead immediately. In (b), R2 is not out unless the umpire judges that R2 intentionally interfered. The ball would be ruled dead or live depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base. (8-17-H; 8-18-N)

**SITUATION C:** With all bases occupied and no outs, B4 bunts a fly ball into the infield (never an infield fly). R3 in advancing toward home, contacts F5 causing the fly ball to be dropped.

**RULING:** R3 is out for interference, B4 is awarded first base and all other runners are forced to advance as the result of the batter-runner being awarded first base. (8-5-D; 8-18-G)



**SITUATION D:** With R2 on second and R1 on first, B3 hits toward third base. R2 interferes by; (a) touching the batted ball or (b), by illegally hindering F5 in fielding or throwing. R1 reaches second before the interference.

**RULING:** In both (a) and (b) ball is dead and R2 is out. Although R1 reached second base prior to the interference, R1 may also be out if the interference prevented a double play. If so judged by the umpire, by rule, the immediate trailing runner is also called out. If not ruled out, R1 must return to the base occupied at time of the interference (second base) and B3 would be awarded first base. (8-18-H Note 2)

**SITUATION E:** With R3 on third base, B2 is batting with a 1-1 count and hits a fly ball in foul territory. The third baseman moves into foul territory under the ball and is run into by R3. F5 catches the ball and tags R3.

**RULING:** Interference is called immediately, and the ball is dead. R3 is out for interference. At the time R3 ran into F5 the ball became dead and any further action was negated. B2 is charged with a foul ball and continues the at-bat with a 1-2 count. (8-18-G; 3-FOUL BALL-E)

**SITUATION F:** R2 is on second base. B2 hits a pitched ball that deflects off F1's glove and rolls toward F6 who is; (a) clearly in the act of fielding the ball or (b), not capable of fielding the ball. R1 collides with F6.

**RULING:** In (a), dead ball and interference; R1 is declared out, and B2 is awarded first base. Because the ball was deflected by the pitcher, F6 is still considered to be making an initial play on a batted ball. In (b), DELAYED DEAD BALL is signaled and OBSTRUCTION is called; F6 is not entitled to initial play protection because F6 did not have a reasonable chance to gain control of the ground ball that no other fielder (except the pitcher) had touched. (3-INITIAL PLAY; 3-OBSTRUCTION; 8-18-G)

## **RUNNER LEAVING BASE EARLY**

**SITUATION A:** B2 is batting with a count of 1 Ball, 1 Strike and one out. Before the pitcher releases the pitch, R1 leaves first base. The pitch is released and B2 hits into center field for a double.

**RULING:** No Pitch, Dead Ball immediately, and R1 is declared out. B2 resumes the at-bat with a 1-1 count and two outs. Any other runners on base would return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch. (8-18-K; 6-4-B)

**SITUATION B:** With R3 on third base and R1 on first base, F1 commits an illegal pitch by double touching the ball and glove. The plate umpire calls an illegal pitch but before the hands separate to deliver the ball, R1 leaves first base in an attempt to steal second. The base umpire calls "NO PITCH" and declares R2 out.

**RULING:** Two Infractions occurred and each penalty is enforced. R2 is out for leaving first base before F1 releases the pitch. And F1's illegal pitch results in a ball awarded to B3. (8-18-K; 6-4-B)

## **INTERFERENCE BY A RETIRED PLAYER**

**SITUATION A:** With R3 on third base, B2 hits a slow roller to F6 who attempts to throw R3 out at home. F2 receives the throw while standing behind home plate, throws to second base attempting to get B2 out after recognizing no play can be made on R3. F2 is; (a) run into by R3 after the runner has crossed the plate, causing the ball to drop from F2's glove (contact is not malicious); (b) maliciously run into by R3 after R3 has crossed the plate; or (c), maliciously run into by R3 and in the judgment of the umpire the collision was a deliberate attempt to stop the throw to second.

**RULING:** In (a), (b) and (c), the run would score because R3 touched home plate prior to interfering with F2. If in the umpire's judgment the interference prevented B2 from being put out, the umpire shall also call the runner closest to home (B2) out. Additionally in (b) and (c), R3 is ejected for malicious contact. (8-18-H-NOTE 2; 11-2-W)

**SITUATION B:** With R3 on third base and no outs, B2 bunts. As F1 fields the ball, R3 holds near third and attempts to score when F1 throws to first base retiring B3. As F3 attempts to throw out R3 at home the fielder is forced to move two steps into fair territory to avoid hitting B2 with the throw. Consequently, F3's throw is not in time to put out R3.

**RULING:** If, in the umpire's judgment, B2 hindered F3's play on R3 the ball is dead and R3 would also be declared out. (8-18-H Note 3)

**SITUATION C:** With R3 on third base; no outs and two strikes, B2 swings and misses, strike three, which F2 catches. B2 advances toward first and F2 throws to F3 attempting a play on B2. R3 advances home and scores.

**RULING:** The guiding principle is that the defense should be aware of the situation (i.e. that the batter has been retired). Therefore, in general, there is no interference on a batter who runs to first after being retired on a caught third strike. If the defense makes a play on the retired runner, other runners may advance. Unsportsmanlike conduct could be ruled on the player if they knowingly run after being out in order to draw a throw. Unsportsmanlike conduct could be ruled on a coach who persuades a runner to advance knowing they are out. If the retired player does cause interference either with a player or the ball, the runner closest to home would be out. (8-18-H Note 3; 11-2-N)

**SITUATION D:** With R1 on first, B2 hits a ground ball to F4 who throws to F6 for the force out at second. R1 does not slide and makes illegal contact with F6, hindering the throw to first base.

**RULING:** Interference, the ball is dead, and R1 is out on the force thus becoming a retired runner who interferes with the subsequent play on B2. The umpire shall call B2 out due to retired runner interference.. (8-18-F, 8-18-H Note 1)

## INTERFERENCE BY A COACH OR NON-RUNNER

**SITUATION A:** R3 is on third and R1 on first with no outs. B3 hits a fly ball to F7. While the ball is in flight, the third-base coach pushes R3 back to third base. After F7 catches the ball; both R3 and R1 tag up and advance one base.

**RULING:** R3 is immediately called out when assisted by the coach. The out on B3 stands. The ball remains live and in play. (8-18-Y; 10-2-D)

**SITUATION B:** R3 is on third and R1 on first with no outs. B3 hits a foul pop up. F5 and F6 make an effort to catch the pop up but run into the third base coach who is standing motionless in the third base coach's box. The ball drops to the ground next to the coach and fielders.

**RULING:** Interference is ruled on the coach. The ball is dead and B3 is out. R3 and R1 must return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch. The coach's box is not a safe haven when a play is being made in the vicinity of the coach's box. The coach must vacate the area to give the fielder whatever space is needed to make the play. (8-18-Z)

**SITUATION C:** The bases are loaded with one out. B5 hits a pitched ball for a double. R3 and R2 both advance to home plate; however, R2 misses home. R3 notices R2's mistake and shoves R2 back towards home plate.

**RULING:** DELAYED DEAD BALL, but R2 is immediately OUT for being physically assisted by someone other than another runner. Although R3 was a runner before the batted ball, R3 is now a retired runner. Physical assistance by retired runners, on deck batters, or players from the bench, is considered interference. (8-18-Y)

## MISSED BASE – APPEAL PLAY

**SITUATION A:** With R1 on first, B2 singles. R1 goes to third but fails to touch second base.

**RULING:** If appealed properly by the defensive team, the umpire shall call R1 out for failing to touch second base. (8-18-T)

**SITUATION B:** With R2 on second, R1 on first and one out, B4 hits a double. Both runners cross home plate but R2 fails to touch third. R2 (a) gets back to third before the ball arrives at third, or (b) after all play has ended. The defensive team makes a dead ball appeal on R2 missing 3B.

**RULING:** In both (a) and (b), the umpire rules R2 out for failing to touch third base. The run by R1 counts because there are only two outs. In (a), the umpire will not allow R2 to return to third base because the following runner (R1) has scored. (8-18-T; 8-6-C)

**SITUATION C:** With R1 on first, B2 hits safely to center field. The ball (a) goes over the fence in flight; (b) bounces over the fence; or (c) is fielded by F8 who overthrows first and the ball goes into the stands. Both runners advance but R1 fails to touch second or B2 fails to touch first.

**RULING:** In (a), R1 and B2 will be awarded home. In (b), R1 will be awarded third base and B2 second base. In (c), R1 and B2 will be awarded two bases from the last base occupied at the time the ball left F8's hand. In (a), (b) and (c), R1 and B2 must go back and touch the base(s) missed before advancing on the award or the defensive team could appeal to the umpire that they missed a base. If appealed properly, the umpire would declare the violator out. If there were two outs, the 3rd out is a force out and no runs would score. (8-14-A-1; 8-14-C-1; 8-14-C-3; 8-18-T)

**SITUATION D:** With R1 on first, B2 singles to right field, F9's throw sails into dead-ball territory; (a), as R1 touches third; or (b) before R1 touches third. In both situations, R1 missed 2nd base.

**RULING:** In (a) and (b), R1 would be awarded home and the B2 would be awarded two bases from the base reached when the ball left the thrower's hand (likely third base in this situation). In both cases, the defense must appeal R1 missing second base. In (a) Because R1 touched the next succeeding base, the base running error can no longer be cured after the ball became dead. In (b), If R1 does not return to touch second base before touching the awarded bases and the defensive team properly appeals, the umpire shall declare R1 out. (8-14-C-3; 8-18-S; 8-18-T; 9-6-A)

**SITUATION E:** B1 hits a slow roller to F5, passes the bag, but misses first base. F3 catches the ball while standing on first base after B1 has beaten the throw.

**RULING:** When the runner passes first base before the throw arrives, the runner is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made. F3 must inform the umpire they're appealing (live ball) B1 for missing first base before B1 returns to the base. (8-6-D)

**SITUATION F:** R2 is on second and R1 on first when B3 doubles. R2 advances to home plate but fails to touch third. R1 touches second, third and home after which (a) R2 realizes the mistake and returns to third, or (b) the defense throws the ball to third.

**RULING:** In (a), if the defense properly appeals, the umpire shall declare R2 out. No runner may return to touch a missed base after the following runner has scored. In (b), the defense may, if it chooses, while the ball is live, play on a runner who commits a base running infraction. Therefore, R2 would be out if properly appealed. (8-6-C; 9-2; 18-8-T)

## RETOUCHING A MISSED BASE

**SITUATION A:** With R1 on first, B2 hits a long foul fly down the right-field line that F9 cannot catch. R1, who is almost at third, does not retouch second on her way back to first.

**RULING:** R1 is not out. If the ball is dead, because of an uncaught foul, it is not necessary for a returning runner to retouch the intervening base. (8-6-B)

**SITUATION B:** R1 is on first when B2 hits a fly ball to right field. R1 goes halfway and F9 makes a diving catch. F9 then throws to F3 but throws the ball into the stands before R1 can retouch.

**RULING:** R1 will have to retouch first base before being awarded third base. If R1 does not retouch first, the defense may appeal the missed base to the umpire, who shall call R1 out for not retouching first base. (8-14-C-3; 8-15-C; 8-18-J; 8-6-J)

**SITUATION C:** R1 is on first when B2 hits a fly ball to left center field. R1 passes second base and is heading for third when F8 makes a diving catch. R1 realizing their mistake tries to go back, but runs directly to first base without touching second.

**RULING:** The runner is subject to being called out on appeal for not retouching the bases in proper order. (8-6-J; 8-18-T)

## TAGGING UP ON FLY BALL

**SITUATION A:** R1 on first when B2 hits a line drive that bounds off F4's glove to F8 who catches it before it touches the ground. R1 leaves first after F4 touches the ball but before the catch.

**RULING:** Legal; R1 may legally advance on the initial touch by F4. B2 is out on the catch. (8-7-D)

**SITUATION B:** With bases loaded and no out B4 flies out to F9. R2 leaves second before F9 touches the ball and R3 advances to home after the catch. F9 throws to home but R3 scores. F2 throws the ball to F4 who tags out R1 at second. F4 returns the ball to F1 who is standing off the pitcher's plate. F1 asks for time and makes a dead-ball appeal on R2 for leaving second base too soon.

**RULING:** The umpire shall declare R2 out for leaving second base before F9 touched the ball. This is a timing play, R3's run counts as it scored before the third out. (8-18-J; 9-8)

**SITUATION C:** With one out and R3 on third, B3 flies to F7 for the second out. R3 scores after the catch, but the umpire observes R3 left third before the catch.

**RULING:** If properly appealed, the umpire will call R3 out. (8-18-J)

**SITUATION D:** R2 is on second and R1 on first with one out. B4 hits a line drive to right-center field. Believing the batted ball will fall for a hit, both runners advance. However, F8 makes a shoestring catch. R2 misses third and touches the plate before R1 is retired at first base. After the third out, the defensive team appeals that R2 missed third base.

**RULING:** R2 is out and R2's run is nullified.

**Note:** The defense could appeal that R2 did not tag up at second base, and R2 would also be called out with the run being nullified (8-18-T; 8-18-J; 9-9).

## RUN SCORES

**SITUATION A:** R3 is on third base and R1 on first base with two outs. B5 hits a bouncer to F4. F4 attempts to tag R1, but R1 gets into a rundown between first and second. F4 finally tags R1 out but not before R3 touches the plate.

**RULING:** The out on R1 is a force out and no run scores. (8-18-M; 4-2-C-1)

**SITUATION B:** Bases loaded with two outs. With a 3-2 count on B6, the runners break with the pitch. B6 walks as overzealous R2 from second slides past third and is tagged out when F2 throws to F5 before R3 touches home plate.

**RULING:** R3 became entitled to home as soon as ball four was declared. R3 is awarded home and R3's run is scored. R2 is out. Three outs. (8-14-D-3)

**SITUATION C:** R3 is on third base and R1 on first base with one out. B4 hits a long fly ball. R1 advances to second. F9 catches the fly ball; R3 leaves third base on the catch; R1 runs back toward first base. F9 throws to F3; R3 touches home plate; F3 catches ball and tags first base before R1 returns.

**RULING:** R1 is the third out on the appeal play. Since this is not a force out, R3's run stands because it occurred before the third out. (9-1-B; 4-2-A)

**SITUATION D:** In the bottom of the seventh inning, with two outs, the score tied and the bases loaded, B6 receives ball four to force R3 home. Because B6 assumes that the game is over, B6 fails to go to first base and leaves the field. The ball is then held at first base.

**RULING:** B6 is out and the run does not score. (8-14; 4-2-A; 4-C-1-A)

## BATTED BALL HITS BATTER

**SITUATION A:** With runners on first and third, B3 hits a little pop up that F1 cannot catch. As B3 is running to first base, the ball kicks sideways hitting B3 (a) in fair territory, (b) in foul territory.

**RULING:** In (a) B3 is out, the ball is dead, and R3 and R1 must return to their previous bases. In (b) it is a foul ball and R3 and R1 must return to their bases. (3-FOUL BALL-D; 8-12; 8-18-N)

**SITUATION B:** B1, a left handed slap hitter, attempts to slap the ball. The batted ball hits the ground, rebounds and hits B1 while, (a) one foot is on the front line of the batter's box and the lead foot is in the air, (b) B1's lead foot is on the ground outside the batter's box and the trail foot is in the air.

**RULING:** In (a), Dead ball, Foul ball. B, with one foot in the batter's box, is still considered in the batter's box. In (b), dead ball, B1 is out. B1 is considered out of the batter's box. (3-BATTER'S BOX; 8-18-N).

## BATTED BALL HITS RUNNER

**SITUATION A:** With the bases loaded and one out, B5 hits a ground ball toward F6. The batted ball hits R2 and prevents F6 from making a play.

**RULING:** The ball is dead. R2 is out; B5 is awarded first base; R1 is forced to second; R3 is returned to third. (8-18-N; 10-1-E)

**SITUATION B:** With R2 on second, B2 hits between F5 and F6, both of whom are playing close for a possible bunt. The ball touches R2 after it passes F5 and deflects into foul territory. F6 was in such a position that there was no chance to play the ball.

**RULING:** Fair Ball; Live Ball. When a runner is hit by a batted ball which has already passed an infielder and no other infielder has an opportunity to make an out, the ball remains live and in play unless the runner purposely permits the ball to make contact.. If the umpire believes R2 intentionally contacted the ball, then interference would be ruled, the ball would be dead, R2 declared out, and B2 would be awarded first base. (8-18-N)

**SITUATION C:** With one out, R2 is on second and R1 is on first. An infield fly by B4 touches R1 who is standing on first base.

**RULING:** The umpire should signal infield fly and call "infield fly-if fair, batter is out". If the ball is fair, B4 is out. The ball is live or dead depending on whether the fielders are in front or behind R1. Unless R1 intentionally interferes with the batted ball, R1 is not out. If the ball is in foul territory and hits R1, it is a foul ball; unless R1 intentionally interferes, then it is a foul ball and R1 is out. (3-FOUL BALL-D; 3-INFIELD FLY; 8-17-H, 8-18-N).

**SITUATION D:** R1 is advancing to second when B2's batted ball (a) is dropped by F3 and deflected toward R1, or (b) passes several feet to the right of F3 who is playing in front of the baseline. In either case, the ball then touches R1.

**RULING:** There is no penalty in (a) unless R1 purposely permits the ball to make contact. If R1 purposely makes contact with the ball, the ball is dead, R1 is out, and B2 is awarded first base. In (b), unless another fielder had an opportunity to make an out, the ball remains live. (8-18-N; 8-18-U).

**SITUATION E:** With R2 on second, B2 hits to F6 who is playing deep. The ball is touched by F6 and dropped so that it rebounds into R2.

**RULING:** Since the ball was touched by a fielder before hitting R2, the ball subsequently touching R2 is ignored. (8-18-N)

## PASSING ANOTHER RUNNER

**SITUATION A:** With R1 on first, B2 hits a ground ball to F9. A throw to third drives R1 back to second. B2 rounds second and passes R1. B2 runs back and finally reaches first without being tagged out.

**RULING:** B2 was out as soon as B2 passed R1. The ball remains live. (8-18-O)

**SITUATION B:** With less than two outs and R1 on first, B2 hits a fly ball that drops in front of F7. R1 hesitates to see if the ball will be caught. B2 rounds first base and passes R1.

**RULING:** B2 is declared out immediately for passing R1. The ball remains live. The force play ended when B2 was called out. (8-18-O)

**SITUATION C:** With R2 at second base, R1 at first base and a 1-1 count on B3, the offensive coach requests time to speak with the runners and batter. When the players return to their bases, R1 and R2 have switched places. After the next pitch to B3, the defensive coach asks for time and informs the umpire that the runners have occupied the wrong bases.

**RULING:** Both players are guilty of base running infractions. The umpire shall rule both R1 and R2 out for their actions. If in the umpire's judgment, the act was deliberate, both players and the coach could be ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct. (8-18-K; 11-2-T; 14-12-I)

**SITUATION D:** With R2 on second base and R1 on first base, B3 hits a ball safely to the outfield fence. After R2 takes off from second base, R2 is obstructed by F6 and knocked down and may be injured. The umpire signals obstruction on F6. Both R1 and B3 pass R2 (who is still on the ground) and subsequently score. F8 finally throws the ball to F6 who tags R2 between second and third bases.

**RULING:** There is no infraction assessed for passing an obstructed runner. Both R1 and B3 score on the play. R2 is also awarded home and scores, as this is the base R2 would have achieved had there been no obstruction. (8-13; 18-0)

## ABANDONING A BASE

**SITUATION A:** B1 reaches first safely. As part of overrunning first base, B1 makes a break for second base and then gives up far away from the baseline.

**RULING:** If B1 is attempting to reach a base, B1 must be tagged out. If B1 enters dead ball territory B1 would be declared out for abandoning a base. (8-18-Q)

**SITUATION B:** B2 hits a grounder to F6 whose throw to F3 is not in time to retire B2. However, B2, who has not been called out, leaves the baseline and heads for the dugout.

**RULING:** If B2 enters dead ball territory, B2 will be declared out for abandoning a base. (8-18-Q)

**SITUATION C:** With a 3 ball 2 strike count and two outs, the next pitch to B3 is (a) a ball, or (b), an uncaught third strike. In either case, B3 does not immediately go directly to first base.

**RULING:** Live Ball. There is no requirement for B3 to go immediately or directly to first base. However if the batter-runner does not attempt to reach first base before all the infielders leave the diamond, and the half-inning ends, or they give up by entering the dugout or bench area, the batter-runner will be called out.. (8-17-J)

## TWO RUNNERS OCCUPYING THE SAME BASE

**SITUATION A:** With F6 trying to tag out R2 between second and third, R1 advances to second. R2 escapes to second. If one or both are on the base when tagged, which one can be put out?

**RULING:** If both are on the base, only R1, (since R2 is legally entitled to the base) when tagged, is out. If only one is on the base when tagged, neither is out. (8-6-G)

**SITUATION B:** With R2 on second base and R1 on first, B3 hits a deep fly ball over F8's head. R1 advances to third as R2 gets in a rundown between home and third. R2 gets back to third base safely but is obstructed on her way to the bag. With both runners standing on third base, the defense then tags R1.

**RULING:** When obstruction occurred, the umpire should verbally call out "obstruction" and signal a delayed dead ball. The obstructed runner would be protected. When R2 returned back to the bag safely, obstruction was ignored since this was the base she would have reached had there been no obstruction. Since R2 is the runner entitled to the base, R1 would be ruled out on the tag. (3-Obstruction, 8-6-G; 8-13)

**SITUATION C:** With R1 on first base, B2 hits a ground ball to F3 who (a) steps on first base and then tags R1 who has remained on first base, or (b) tags R1 while R1 is on first base and then steps on first base. **RULING:** In (a), R1 is not out since the force was removed when B2 was put out. In (b), both R1 and B2 are out. (3-Force Play; 8-6-G)

**SITUATION D:** With R3 on third base, R2 on second base and R1 on first base, R1 legally steals second base but R2 does not advance. The pitcher receives the ball in the circle from the catcher and makes no play on any runner.

**RULING:** The umpire, after allowing a reasonable amount of time for the play to be made, shall declare the ball dead and call R1 out. (8-6-G)

## RULE 9 - Appeals

### LIVE BALL

**SITUATION A:** With R3 on third and one out, B3 hits safely. R3, while watching the ball, misses home plate. F2 calls for the ball, steps on home for the appeal to retire R3 and throws to third to get B3 sliding.

**RULING:** Legal live ball appeal. A runner may be put out by the defense for missing a base during a live-ball appeal by tagging the runner or touching the missed base. (9-1-A, 9-2)

**SITUATION B:** R1 on first base, R3 on third base, with one out. B4 hits a fly ball to F8 that is caught. R1 advances to second base, R3 scores. Both runners left the base prior to the initial touch by F8 without tagging up. The defense throws to first base and appeals R1 left early for the third out. Prior to leaving the infield, the defense appeals R3 for failing to tag up.

**RULING:** This is a proper Fourth-Out appeal. The defense must make the appeal before the infielders leave the infield and the catcher vacates their normal position. R3 is declared out and the run does not count (9-1-B; 9-4-B).

**SITUATION C:** The game is tied in the bottom of the seventh inning with the bases loaded and two outs. B6 receives a walk and advances to and touches first base. R3 also advances and touches home plate scoring the winning run. R1 and R2 do not advance to their respective bases, but rather join in the celebration at home plate. The defense appeals by tagging either runner for not touching their awarded base.

**RULING:** Valid live ball appeal; the violating runner is called OUT. Since this is a force out, no run scores. On the apparent last play of a game, appeals must be made **before the umpires leave the field of play**. Runs scored do no count when the third out of an inning is a force out. (3-FORCE PLAY; 9-4-C)

### DEAD BALL

**SITUATION A:** With R2 on second base, R1 on first base, and one out, B4 hits a double. Both runners cross home plate but R2 fails to touch third base. R2; (a) gets back to third base, or (b), enters the dugout. After all play has ended, the defensive team makes a dead ball appeal verbal appeal.

**RULING:** Proper dead ball appeal; In both (a) and (b) the umpire rules R2 out for failing to touch third base. The run by R1 counts because there are only two outs. No runner may return to touch a missed base after a following runner (R1) has scored or the runner (R2) has left the field of play. If the umpire has put the ball back in play and the defense requests an appeal, the Umpire would again call "time" and allow the appeal. (6-I; 9-1-A; 9-3-B)

**SITUATION B:** With R1 on first base, B2 singles. R1 goes to third base but fails to touch second base. The ball is (a) returned to the pitcher who asks for time or (b) time is called by the coach in both cases a verbal appeal is made on R1 for missing second base.

**RULING:** In both (a) and (b), legal dead ball appeal. The umpire will uphold the appeal and declare R1 out. (9-3)

## BATTING OUT OF ORDER

**SITUATION A:** With R1 on first, B8 erroneously bats in the place of B7. The error is discovered by the opposing team (a) after B8 has received two strikes, or (b) after B8 has received a base on balls or is hit by a pitch, or (c) after B8 has hit a foul that is caught or has hit safely to advance R1, or (d) after a pitch has been delivered to B9.

**RULING:** In (a) B7 takes the place of B8 at the plate with a two-strike, no ball count. If R1 has advanced by stealing or by a wild pitch while the wrong batter was batting, it is a legal advance. In (b) and (c) B7 is out. B8 is removed from base and bats again with no ball or strikes. R1 shall return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch (1B). In (d) no correction is made and B7 and B8 do not bat again until their regular time. (7-2; 9-1-C; 9-10)

**SITUATION B:** The batting order is B1, B2, B3, B4. B3 erroneously bats in place of B1 and the batting infraction is not detected by anyone before a pitch to the next batter, B2. The defensive coach then appeals batting out of order to the umpire

**RULING:** Incorrect appeal. Once a pitch was thrown to B2, B3's batting out of order is legalized. B4 is now the batter due to bat, as that's the name that follows B3 on the line-up card. B4 will replace B2 assuming B2's count. Neither B1 or B2 may legally bat until their time at bat comes around again. (9-1-C; 9-10-D)

**SITUATION C:** With R2 on second and R1 on first, it is B3's turn to bat but B5 bats and hits safely. R2 advances home, R1 advances to second and B5 advances to first. The irregularity is discovered by F6 before a pitch to the next batter.

**RULING:** Legal Appeal. B3 is declared out. R2 returns to second, R1 to first and B5 is removed from first base. The next batter is B4, who will be followed by B5. (9-10-A)

**SITUATION D:** With R1 on first, it is B3 turn to bat but B5 comes to bat. B5 takes a pitch as R1 steals 2B. B5 hits safely, R1 advances home and B5 advances to first. F6 appeals batting out of order before a pitch to the next batter.

**RULING:** Legal Appeal. B3 is declared out. R1 returns to second (R1's advancement due to stolen base is considered legal) and B5 is removed from first base. The next batter is B4, who will be followed by B5. (9-1-C; 9-10-A-5 NOTE)

**SITUATION E:** B1 walks to start the inning. B3 bats next and (a) hits into a fielder's choice, or (b) sacrifices B1 to second, or (c) hits into a double play. The opposing coach now appeals, before the next pitch, that B2 should have been the proper batter.

**RULING:** Proper appeal, in (a) B2 is out for not batting in proper order, B1's out on the FC stands, B3 is removed from base and will bat next with two outs. In (b), B2 is out, B3's at-bat is negated, and B1 returns to first base. B3 bats next with one out. In (c), B2 is out, B3's at bat is negated but B1's out on the double play stands. B3 is removed from base and will bat next with two out. (9-C; 9-10-A)

**SITUATION F:** B1 bats out of order and reaches first base. F1 then steps onto the pitcher's plate and (a) drops the ball or (b) commits an illegal pitch. The defense then discovers that B1 has batted out of order.

**RULING:** Legal appeal in (a). Until F1 takes one hand off the ball or makes any motion that is part of the windup, after the hands have been brought together, F1 is not considered to have started a pitch. Therefore, the defense still has the opportunity to appeal batting out of order. Illegal appeal in (b), the defense can no longer appeal batting out of order because the infraction was not discovered prior a pitch (legal or illegal), being thrown to the next batter. (9-4-A, 6-1-E-1)



**SITUATION G:** Following B3's turn at bat, B5 completes a turn at bat with a walk. B6 enters the batter's box and receives a pitch. The opposing coach now appeals that B4 should have been the proper batter.

**RULING:** Improper appeal; once a pitch (legal or illegal) is thrown to the next batter, the opportunity to appeal has closed. All play as a result of B5's walk is now legalized. B6 is the next batter. (9-10-D)

**SITUATION H:** The batting order is Smith, Jones, Holley, and Cooper, but the first batter in the inning is Holley, who singles. Jones follows, making the first out. It is now discovered that Holley should be the next batter, but Holley is on second base. The defensive team appeals batting out of order and requests that Holley be declared out.

**RULING:** Several batters have actually batted out of order before the defensive team makes the batting out of order appeal. When the defensive team did not appeal, batting out of order before the next pitch to Smith, Holley's turn at bat became legal. When a pitch was thrown to Jones, Smith's turn at bat became legal, making Jones the proper batter; the batting order corrected itself. Holley should be the next batter, but since several batters have batted out of order it is too late to appeal. When several players bat out of order before discovery, so that a player's time at bat occurs while that player is on base, their turn in the batting order is skipped without penalty and the batter who follows in the order, Cooper is the next batter. (9-2; 9-10-A; 9-10-D)

## RULE 10 - Dead Ball

### AWARDED BASES MUST BE RUN LEGALLY

**SITUATION A:** R1 is on first when B2 hits a fly ball to F9 who overthrows first in an attempted double play on R1. The throw goes into the dugout. R1 is awarded third base but R1 fails to retouch second on the way to third.

**RULING:** The umpire must wait for the defensive team to make a dead-ball appeal on R1. (10-6-C)

**SITUATION B:** With R1 on first base, B2 hits safely to right field. An overthrow at first base (a) goes into the stands or (b) hits the enclosing wall and rebounds to F2. In going to third base, R1 misses second base and has passed second base or is approaching second base when the ball leaves the hand of F9 who is throwing to the infield.

**RULING:** In (a), R1 will be awarded home if the runner was past second base, or awarded third base if second base was not reached when the throw left the hand of F9. R1 is responsible for touching all bases regardless of whether or not the bases are awarded. If R1 fails to touch any base on the award, and the defensive team makes the proper appeal, the umpire will call R1 out. In (b), if the defensive team makes the proper appeal for R1 missing second base the umpire will declare R1 out. (10-6-C)

**SITUATION C:** With R3 at third base, B2 receives ball four. F2 returns the ball immediately to F1 who is in the 16-foot circle. Before reaching first base, B2 stops and tries to draw a throw from the pitcher.

**RULING:** In the spirit of fair play, B2 should immediately advance to first base. The umpire should rule the ball dead, award B2 first base, put R3 back at third and issue a warning to B2 unsporting behavior. If B2 repeats similar acts, she should be ejected. (11-2-N, 11-2-T)

### DEAD BALL

**SITUATION A:** R2 is on second base when B2 hits the pitched ball on a line toward F1, who deflects the batted ball, which hits R1 as R1 advances toward third base.

**RULING:** LIVE BALL and no violation, unless R1 intentionally interferes. There is no interference when a runner is hit by a batted ball after it is touched by any infielder (including the pitcher) unless the ball is touched intentionally by the runner. (8-18-N; 10-1-F)

**SITUATION B:** A pitched ball is hit in the air close to the stands. The outfielder leans over into dead ball

territory in an attempt to catch the fly ball. A spectator interferes with the defensive player or touches the ball. The outfielder does not make the catch.

**RULING:** DEAD BALL, and either a home run or foul ball based on the position of the ball when it went into dead ball territory. A spectator is not guilty of interference if they hinder a fielder who is reaching into dead ball area to make a play on a batted or thrown ball. (8-14-E-1 EXCEPTION; 10-1-G)

**SITUATION C:** With two outs and R3, R2, and R1 on base, B6 has a count of three balls and two strikes. On the next pitch, B6 swings and misses the ball, which gets past F2 and (a) lodges in the umpire's mask; or (b) the catcher's chest protector.

**RULING:** In both (a) and (b) the ball is dead as soon as it is lodged in either the umpire's or catcher's equipment. B6 and all base runners are awarded one base each. (10-1-5)

**SITUATION D:** With R3 on third base, the Plate Umpire, without calling "Time" turns their back on the field and sweeps off home plate. R3 attempts to score and collides with the plate umpire.

**RULING:** DEAD BALL. When the plate umpire made the move to sweep home plate, "Time" is judged to have been called. The ball is dead and R3 is sent back to third base. (10-5-D)

## SUSPENSION OF PLAY

**SITUATION A:** R1 is on second base. The third base coach or batter yells "time". The pitcher, who has started the pitching motion, stops and does not release the ball.

**RULING:** NO PITCH is declared, the ball is DEAD, and all subsequent action is canceled. No player, manager or coach shall call "Time", employ any other word or phrase, or commit any act while the ball is live and in play to effect an illegal pitch. For a first offense deemed to be minor, the offending player may be warned or the offending coach may be restricted to the bench; for a subsequent offense or one which is not minor, the umpire should EJECT the offender (6-4-E; 10-1-J; 11-2-S & PENALTY L-T)

**SITUATION B:** With R2 on second base, B2 hits a line drive that strikes F1 directly in the face. As F1 falls to her knees covering her face with her hands, the umpire, believing the injury could be serious, immediately calls time as the injured player's coach rushes to assist the injured player.

**RULING:** In this situation safety takes priority and the umpire must use their judgment to determine a fair outcome. If, in the umpire's judgment, B2 and R2 would have advanced one base, then the umpire shall make a one base award. (10-1-P)

## RULE 11 - Sportsmanship

**SITUATION A:** B1 throws their bat (a) in disgust after striking out, or (b) to the on-deck batter.

**RULING:** In (a), B1 is ejected from the game. In (b), there is no penalty. (11-2-B, 11-2-V)

**SITUATION B:** After hitting a line drive toward F5, B1 throws their bat and it strikes the catcher or umpire. The act was judged to be (a) intentional, or (b) unintentional.

**RULING:** In (a), the offender will be ejected from the game. If B1's hit is a base hit, B1 will be replaced with a substitute runner. In (b), the umpire will warn the team for carelessly throwing the bat, and if the act is repeated, any subsequent offender on that team will be restricted to the bench/dugout for the duration of the game. (11-2-V & PENALTY; 11-2-B & PENALTY)

**SITUATION C:** With R1 on first base, B2 receives ball three and begins advancing to first base as if ball four had been called. R1 advances to second base as if B2 has received a walk. F2 quickly asks the umpire if the pitch was ball four, but in the confusion R1 advances to second base safely.

**RULING:** The Defensive team should always be alert to the count and attempt plays accordingly. If the

umpire believes the team at bat purposely had its batter run to first base on ball three, the umpire could eject the batter for behavior not in the spirit of fair play. Otherwise, the umpire may warn the coach of the team at bat and eject the next player to exhibit behavior that is not in accordance with the spirit of fair play. R1's advance to second is legal. (11-2-N & PENALTY L-T)

## ELECTRONIC/VIDEO EQUIPMENT

**SITUATION:** Prior to the game, Team A personnel (either the coach or fans) install video streaming equipment on the backstop. The streaming is viewed by a) Team A's family members unable to be at the game, or b) the Team A's coach in the dugout.

**Ruling:** In a), LEGAL. In b), ILLEGAL. Electronic communications may not be used for coaching purposes during a game. First offense: TEAM WARNING; subsequent violation: offender (if team personnel) is RESTRICTED and Head Coach is EJECTED. (11-2-G & Penalty)

**SITUATION B:** The umpire notices that the coach, while in the coach's box, is using (a) an electronic tablet for scorekeeping; (b) a communication device with headset talking to the dugout; or (c) a scorebook and pencil.

**RULING:** Legal in (a) and (c). Materials/electronic devices used for scoring purposes are permissible. Illegal in (b). All communication devices used for coaching purposes in the coach's box are prohibited. The umpire shall issue a warning to the coach; a subsequent offense would result in the offender and the head coach being ejected for the remainder of the game. (11-2-G)

## MALICIOUS CONTACT

**SITUATION A:** F5 who has the ball, is in position at third base to make a tag on advancing R2. R2 (a) maliciously crashes into F5 and dislodges the ball, or (b) runs into F5 without attempting to avoid the tag and dislodges the ball, or (c) attempts to slide and dislodges the ball, or (d) attempts to avoid F5 but remains in the baseline and dislodges the ball.

**RULING:** In (a) and (b), the ball is dead and R1 is out for not legally attempting to avoid a fielder in the immediate act of making a play on R1. Additionally, in (a) R1 is ejected for malicious contact. In (c) and (d), R1 is safe. (11-2-W)

**SITUATION B:** Upon rounding second, R1 maliciously runs into F6 who is (a) in the basepath, (b) not in the basepath.

**RULING:** In (a) and (b), the ball is dead. R1 is out and is also ejected because of the unsporting act. Malicious contact always supersedes obstruction. (8-18-D; 11-2-W)

**SITUATION C:** R1 is on first base when B2 hits a sharp ground ball to F4. As R1 attempts to advance to second base, F4 maliciously contacts and uses unnecessary force in attempting to tag R1. The ball (a) is; or (b) is not in F4's possession.

**RULING:** In (a), R1 is out. In (b) F4 has committed obstruction; R1 is awarded the base, in the umpire's judgment, that would have been reached had there been no obstruction. In both (a) and (b), F4 is ejected at the end of playing action. (8-13; 11-2-W)

**SITUATION D:** With R3 on third and R2 on second, B4 hits safely and while advancing, maliciously contacts F4 after (a) R3 has scored, (b) R2 has rounded third base, (c) both runners have scored.

**RULING:** In (a) and (c), runs would score. In (b), R2 would return to third base where the runner was at the time of the infraction. B4 is declared out and would also be ejected for malicious contact. (11-2-W)

**SITUATION E:** R2 is on second with one out when BI hits safely to center field. Attempting to score, R2 remains upright and intentionally crashes into F2.

**RULING:** R2 is out and the ball is dead if F2 is about to receive the ball. R2 is out and the ball is dead if F2 has possession of the ball. In addition, R2 is ejected if her act is malicious. (8-18-D)

## FIGHTING

**SITUATION A:** F4 and R1 become involved in a fight near first base. F3 vacates her position immediately to avoid becoming involved in the fight.

**RULING:** F1 and R1 shall be ejected from the game. F3 shall not be ejected even though F3 left her position, she was moving away from the action. (11-2-X & Y)

**SITUATION B:** When a fight breaks out, the team's assistant coach rushes onto the field to try and break up the fight.

**RULING:** Legal coaches who enter the field to restrain their players from fighting are not in violation of the rules. (11-Y)

## RULE 12 - Coach/Manager or Player Ejection

### EJECTION

**SITUATION A:** An ejected coach goes to the car. May the coach communicate with walkie-talkies or electronic equipment (text messages, phone calls) with the team's assistant coach?

**RULING:** No. Such an act could result in the game being forfeited. (11-2-G; 12-1)

**SITUATION B:** An ejected coach leaves but returns to stand behind the outfield fence.

**RULING:** The coach shall leave the premises, which means out of sight and sound. Therefore, the umpire shall instruct the team (or new head coach) to remove the coach. If the coach refuses, the game shall be forfeited by the tournament director or other event management personnel. (12-1)

**SITUATION C:** After the last out of the game, a coach confronts the umpire in an unsportsmanlike manner; (a) during pool play and the team has games remaining in the tournament; or (b) in bracket play where the team has lost its final game of the tournament.

**RULING:** The coach is ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct. Any coach or player ejected after the game has ended must sit out their next game physically played (forfeits do not satisfy the requirement). If the coach does not meet the obligation of the suspension in the current event, it is the responsibility of the State Director to enforce the penalty in the next USSSA event that the participant is scheduled to take part in. This is to prevent a coach or player from unsporting confrontations with an umpire at the end of a game or tournament thinking no additional punishment can be given. (11-2-N, L, P, R & T; 12-1; 14-10; 14-6; Article IV-Section 10 and 12)

## RULE 13 - Protest

### RULE PROTEST

**SITUATION A:** B1 hits a line-drive down the line; the ball hits the outside corner of the third base bag. The umpire ruled that it was a foul ball since it hit the bag on the foul side. B1 had reached first base when the umpire called her back to bat over, before the next pitch the coach protests that the umpire's ruling on the foul ball was improper.

**RULING:** This is a legitimate protest involving a misapplication of the rule regarding a foul ball. It is not a protest over the umpire's judgement. Therefore, the umpire should suspend all play, and notify the tournament officials. The UIC and the tournament director shall make the ruling on the play which will result in B1 being placed on first base; B2 will bat next. (13-3)

## PLAYER ELIGIBILITY PROTEST

**SITUATION A:** P1 playing on Team A, is not listed on the team's online roster. The coach of the other team protests that Team A is playing with a non-rostered player..

**RULING:** The umpire shall stop the game and get the tournament director. After meeting any required protest fees, the tournament director will make a determination on the protest. If a decision cannot be made immediately, the game shall be completed. If the protest is upheld, Team A loses the game, is ejected from tournament and place last in standings. (13-5-A)

## RULE 14 - Umpiring

### GENERAL

**SITUATION A:** An umpire arrives within the confines of the field and sees the catcher without the required equipment warming up the pitcher (a) within or (b) outside the confines of the field.

**RULING:** Umpire jurisdiction begins upon arrival within the confines of the field. Therefore, in (a) the umpire shall require the catcher to wear the required equipment. In (b), the umpire may inform the catcher's coach that the catcher is not wearing the required equipment. (2-2; 14-6)

### UMPIRES CONFER

**SITUATION A:** R2 is on second with one out when F2 throws to second on a pickoff attempt. R2 is ruled safe but the coach of the defensive team asks the base umpire to confer with the plate umpire.

**RULING:** The base umpire may request the opinion of the plate umpire before making the final decision, but is not required to do so. All judgment calls by an umpire are final. (14-8)

**SITUATION B:** F2 attempts to pick off R1 at first base. The base umpire rules the runner out. The offensive coach disagrees with the call and believes the umpire may have been blocked from seeing the runner's hand get back on the base before F3's tag. They request the BU consult with their partner for a correct ruling.

**RULING:** If there is reasonable doubt about the decision being in conflict with the rules (not merely judgment), or the calling umpire felt they may have been blocked, the coach or captain may ask that the calling umpire confer with their partner. The Umpire that made the call may ask their partner for information before making the final decision. **No umpire shall criticize or interfere with another Umpire's decision, UNLESS ASKED TO DO SO by their partner.** The final decision shall rest with the umpire who had authority to originally make the call. (14-8)

### PLATE UMPIRE

**SITUATION A:** After several innings have been played, it starts to rain and play is suspended by the tournament director and the umpire.

**RULING:** The tournament director or umpire may call the game when it is evident that conditions of the field will be impossible to continue play. The umpire should inform the teams they will wait 30 minutes or until the tournament director makes a determination that the fields can not be made ready within a reasonable amount of time and no further play will be possible. (10-5-A)

**SITUATION B:** On a close play at home plate, the umpire rules R3 safe. The catcher curses and spikes the ball in disgust

**RULING:** The Plate umpire shall eject F2 for unsporting behavior. (14-12-I)

**SITUATION C:** R1 attempts to steal second base on a pitch. F2 throws the ball to second base as the plate

umpire calls ball four. The throw is in time and the base umpire calls R1 out. As R1 leaves for the dugout, the base umpire realizes that the batter has been walked and R1 is entitled to second base. Before R1 can safely return to second base, R1 is tagged out by the defense.

**RULING:** Dead ball, and R1 should be returned to second base since the runner was called out in error. The umpire shall rectify any situation in which an umpire's decision that was delayed or reversed placed either team in jeopardy. (14-12-R)

**SITUATION B:** With a count of three balls and two struck on the batter and no one on, the pitch is made and the batter takes what appears to be a half swing. The Plate Umpire calls ball four as the ball gets away from the catcher. The batter trots to first base and the catcher throws the ball to F3 prior to the batter reaching first base. The catcher asks the plate umpire to check with the base umpire to see if it was a strike. The base umpire indicates that the batter did swing at the ball.

**RULING:** If, in the judgment of the plate umpire, the batter-runner would have reached first base on the dropped third strike before the throw had it not been called ball four, then the plate umpire can award the batter-runner first base. The plate umpire can rectify any situation in which an umpire's decision has placed a batter-runner in jeopardy.

**SITUATION C:** A 10U game is being played on a turf field with; (a) the pitcher's circle permanently marked for 43' pitching distance, or (b) a batter's box that is the incorrect size. The umpire informs both teams that it will be his judgment in determining when the pitchers or batters are within the lines of the circle or batter's box.

**RULING:** Correct procedure. The umpire has the authority to make decisions on any situation not specifically covered in the rules. Since this is an unusual circumstance the umpire will use their best judgment to rule on situations involving pitching circle and batter's box. (14-M)

## BASE UMPIRE

**SITUATION A:** The base umpire detects F1 crow hopping and signals a delayed dead ball, and verbally calls, "illegal pitch".

**RULING:** Correct procedure. The Base Umpire has equal jurisdiction with the Plate Umpire to call illegal pitches. (14-13)

## PREGAME CONFERENCE

**SITUATION A:** During the pregame conference, an adult assistant coach verifies to the plate umpire that all players are properly equipped and are in compliance with USSSA rules and they understand the guidelines and will display proper sporting behavior.

**RULING:** It is permissible for an adult coach to attend the pregame conference. (3-17)

**SITUATION B:** The head coach of Team A hands the plate umpire a lineup card listing; (a) only players first names, (b) no positions, or (c) no numbers.

**RULING:** The plate umpire shall not accept the lineup card until the coach has all players first and last names, uniform numbers, and all starters positions, as well as a list of all substitutes. (5-1-B; 12-B)

## ELITE SELECT DIVISION

**SITUATION A:** At the pregame conference, Team A's coach presents a lineup which has 4 (4 APs) and declares Roster Batting.

**Ruling - ILLEGAL** In Elite Select Divisions allows one option: TRADITIONAL lineup (9, 10, or 11 batters with (or without) DP/FLEX for a maximum of 12 players. ROSTER BATTING is not allowed. (5-2-D; USSSA/USA SELECT RULES DIFFERENCES Table)

**SITUATION B:** TEAM A is playing with a Traditional lineup of 11 players (9 batters plus 2 APs). In the 5th inning F8 and F9 are injured when they collide trying to catch a fly ball. Neither are able to return to

play. The coach believes the game can continue since there are 9 remaining players in the lineup.  
**RULING:** INCORRECT. USA ELITE SELECT divisions may only have one Absent Player in their lineup in order to continue play. (5-2; USSSA/USA SELECT RULES DIFFERENCES Table)

**SITUATION C:** Team B is playing with the TRADITIONAL lineup of 11 players and utilizing the DP/FLEX option with no substitutes. In the second inning the coach requests a Courtesy Runner for F1 who is on base after hitting a single.

**RULING:** ILLEGAL in USA ELITE SELECT play. The Courtesy Runner must be a substitute who has not been in the game. Therefore, if a team has no subs they cannot have a Courtesy Runner. (8-3-A & B; USSSA/USA SELECT RULES DIFFERENCES Table)

**For rules not covered in the case book  
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