

**Umpires: These are situations that will test your knowledge of the rules:**

**Equipment:**

- (1) Chinstraps are included as part of the helmet and, as such, they must be fastened and worn properly.
- (2) Insure that players wear properly fitted helmets.
- (3) If a player, during play, removes his/her helmet or causes his/her helmet to come off, he/she shall NOT necessarily be called out, but should be warned by the umpire not to intentionally remove his/her helmet. If it continues to happen, the player may be called "out" and removed from further play for unsportsmanlike conduct, as this can cause an unsafe condition.
- (4) All infielders must wear the mandated face protection during all warm-ups & practices as well as games.
- (5) All batters & baserunners must wear the mandated head protection during all warm-ups & practices as well as games.

**Coaches:**

- (1) While adult base coaches are permitted, it is acceptable to use players as the base coach.
- (2) Language from anyone that reflects badly upon opposing players, manager, coach, an umpire or spectators. Penalty is ejection.
- (3) Do everything humanly possible to prevent a forfeit. Do not take the game away from the children, if possible. Play an "exhibition" game of some sort with those players present.
- (4) If, as the umpire, you feel that you cannot complete a full inning, it's best not to start it.
- (5) With a runner on third and one out, there is a fly ball hit to deep left. Runner on third stays on the bag waiting for the third-base coach to signal when the catch is made. The coach slaps the runner on the back when the ball is caught; he/she runs home and scores. Ruling: WRONG! Runner declared out because the third base coach touching him/her was illegal assistance. All other runners return to the bases occupied at the time of the interference. If no play is being made on the assisted runner, the umpire shall signal that the runner is out and allow plays on other runners if possible.
- (6) The batter hits a home run with the bases loaded. Each runner is congratulated with a "high five" as he/she rounds third by the base coach. Ruling: No call. This is not assistance.
- (7) The offensive team's pitcher is not allowed to coach base runners from the mound. He/she is allowed to interact with the batter until the ball is pitched. He/she shall not seek possession of the ball until after "Time" has been called. He/she will attempt to get out of the way of all batted balls and plays by the defensive team.
- (8) Arguing rules is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. This does not mean that, within reason, one cannot respectfully ask for clarification on a ruling.

**Calling of "Time"**

- (1) Runner on first, home plate umpire believing all play had ceased, turned his back on the field to dust off home plate and (i) the runner takes off for second or (ii) a fielder tags the runner

standing off first talking with first base coach. There should be nobody out in any such situation as “Time” should have been called when the play ended. Although the plate umpire technically didn’t yell “time”, it was implied when he turned to dust off home plate. Remember to call time at the conclusion of every play – this is “retroactive time”! (Coaches are told that the play is live until “Time” is called.)

- (2) In 3-Pitch, the “No Pitch” signal (raising one hand up while facing the pitcher) is the same as calling “Time”.
- (3) If the umpire does call “Time” while a play is in progress, the umpire must then determine what would have occurred had he/she not suspended play. This may involve calling a runner out (very tricky!) or advancing runners or sending them back. Much better to wait a second while “thinking TIME” before yelling it out; i.e. use “Retroactive TIME”.

#### **Fair or Foul:**

- (1) Umpires shall not make a verbal call on a fair ball, simply a point into fair territory. Remember when you call “foul”, you live with that call. You cannot change a foul call after it is made.
- (2) While it may be a surprise to some, home plate is entirely in fair territory. A ball hitting home plate can result in being either a fair or foul ball, depending on what follows.
- (3) A batted ball that lands in foul territory and then, without touching any foreign object, rolls into fair territory between first and home, or third and home, where it then settles is a fair ball. (Umpires are advised to withhold yelling “foul” if there is any chance it may roll back fair.)
- (4) A batted ball that lands in the infield in fair territory and then, without being touched by a fielding player, rolls into foul territory between first and home, or third and home, where it then settles is a foul ball.
- (5) A ball hit to the outfield is fair if it lands in fair territory and foul if it lands in foul territory no matter where it bounces or rolls thereafter.
- (6) All foul lines (and bases) are actually in fair territory so a ball hitting any of them is fair.
- (7) A batted ball that hits the white section of the double base at first shall be declared fair. A batted ball that hits the orange section, without first touching or bounding over the white section, shall be declared foul. (In the middle is fair!)
- (8) A foul fly shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on foul or fair territory at the time the fielder touches the ball.
- (9) On a caught fly ball, whether in fair or foul territory, runners may legally tag up and advance— but must do so within 2 seconds of the catch or “Time” will be called by the plate umpire and then no advances can be initiated.

#### **Batters:**

- (1) In 3-Pitch, if the pitch touches the ground before reaching the plate, i.e. bounces, it is immediately “dead” and this cannot be a hit nor a strike. Ruling: “No pitch.”
- (2) In T-Ball there is an imaginary “dead ball” line; there is no such line in 3-Pitch.

- (3) Batters are not permitted to take a half-swing. If the umpire feels the batter is taking a half-swing, the hit will be ruled a "dead ball" and the batter will be called back to swing again. If the offensive team protests that the swing is actually a "full swing" for that particular batter, the fielding team will be advised of such and allowed to re-position its infielders for the subsequent swings. If the batter swings harder on any of these swings, he/she will be immediately declared "out", the ball is dead and no runners can advance. (This is a safety issue.)
- (4) Batter hits the ball while the front of his/her foot is on home plate and his/her heel is on the batter's box line. Ruling: Whatever play follows stands and the batter is not out for being outside the batter's box. The batter is declared out only if one (or more) of his/her feet is entirely outside the batter's box. Ruling: Batter is declared out, ball is dead, and no runners can advance. (We give batters warnings on this to help avoid this situation.)
- (5) For 3-Pitch, each batter's strike zone is determined by the plate umpire based on numerous factors: stance, swing, skill level, etc. not excluding the pitcher's ability to provide good pitches.
- (6) Scorekeepers and umpires should never call attention to either team that a player is batting out of turn. It is an appeal play that must be discovered by the opposing team. This rule is designed to require managers and coaches from both teams to pay attention to who should bat and who is batting. The game cannot be protested if the official scorekeeper says something. The official scorekeeper should, however, be counseled as to his/her responsibilities

#### **Baserunners:**

- (1) If a base is dislodged from its position during a play, any following runner on the same play shall be considered as touching or occupying the base if, in the umpire's judgment, that runner touches or occupies the dislodged bag or the point marked by the original location of the dislodged bag.
- (2) It is 100% acceptable for a batter-runner to overrun first base. He/she cannot be tagged out for doing so unless he/she makes an effort (or fakes an effort) to advance to second base or fails to return to first immediately.
- (3) Runners may try to advance the instant the fly ball is touched by a defensive player. If no such intent is shown within 2 seconds, the plate umpire shall call "Time" and no advances may be initiated.
- (4) With a runner on first and one out, a ground ball hit sharply to first baseman, who touches the base and the batter-runner is out. The force play on the runner heading to second is removed at that moment and the runner advancing to second must be tagged. (That runner could also retreat back to first as it is now unoccupied.)
- (5) Be aware that the base runner makes his/her own baseline as he/she progresses (or regresses) around the bases. Depending on the circumstances, his/her baseline frequently may change as the play develops.
- (6) The offense has the right to the baseline except when a fielder is making a play on a batted ball or already has the ball in his/her possession; i.e. waiting for a throw does not give a defensive player the right to block the runner's path.

- (7) There are runners on first and third, no outs. Ball grounded towards second. The runner on third going home. The runner on first stops momentarily in front of the second baseman causing him/her to miss the ball. Ruling: This is intentional interference. The runner from first AND the batter-runner are called out. The runner from third is returned to third base.
- (8) A runner believing he/she is called out on a tag at one of the bases starts for the dugout and professes a reasonable distance still indicating by his/her actions that he/she is out, shall be declared out for abandoning the bases. (Watch out! If the umpire makes an "out" call and then changes his/her mind, this contributed to the confusion and the runner should not be penalized.)
- (9) One runner may assist another runner in the base line providing the assisting runner is not out or has not passed the runner being assisted! For example: With a runner on first, the batter hits the ball in between the outfielders. The runner on first falls down on his/her way to second. Batter-runner picks up the runner and sets him/her down on second and returns to first. Ruling: This is a legal play as long as batter-runner does not pass the other runner.
- (10) Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner, the batter-runner must use the orange section of the first-base bag on his/ her first attempt to tag first base. NOTE: On extra-base hits or other balls hit to the outfield when there is no chance for a play to be made at the double first base, the batter-runner may touch either the white or orange section of the base. Should, however, the batter-runner reach and go beyond first base, he/she may only return to the white section of the base. Penalty: If the umpire deems there could have been a play on the batter-runner, and the batter-runner touched only the white portion or returned to the orange section, the umpire with signal (as per following #11). If the runner does not correct the situation by touching the proper bag, the batter-runner is at peril of being called out. (Warnings may be given early in the season as determined at the pre-game meeting.)
- (11) We do not entertain "appeal" plays for runners who may have missed touching a base. If one of our umpires sees such a "miss", he/she will immediately point at the runner with one hand and the base with the other until the play ends and "time" is called by the home plate umpire. If the runner didn't come back and tag up, the runner is then "out". If no such signals are given by the umpire, then the runner has been deemed to have touched the base and the play stands.

**Defensive plays:**

- (1) If a fielder gets a fly ball in his/her hand(s) but immediately drops it when he/she falls to the ground or collides with another fielder, it is not a catch.
- (2) If a fielder gets a fly ball and holds it long enough for the center fielder to regain his/her balance but then drops it in a motion associated with an intended throw, then it is a good catch and the batter is out. (The fielder is deemed to have had complete control of the ball but then lost it on the attempted throw.)
- (3) Once a ball goes out of bounds, i.e. leaves the designated playing area, it is dead and no further plays can be made. (This includes the "last batter" situation in T-Ball in which case each baserunner still has to properly touch all the bases in order to have his/her run count.)

- (4) The defense has the right to the baseline on a batted ball or when he/she already has the ball in his/her possession.
- (5) If a defensive player does not have the ball and impedes the progress of any runner it shall be called obstruction. It makes no difference if the defense is fielding a thrown ball or waiting for the throw, if the defensive player does not have the ball in his/her possession it is obstruction if they impede the progress of any runner.
- (6) When a fielder “errs” on a play, he/she could still be considered as being in the “act of fielding a ball” if he/ she is able to pick up the ball within one step or stride from his/her position. If, however, he/she must move farther than that, he/she would be considered as “chasing an erred ball” and he/she would be liable for a possible obstruction call if such hindered a runner’s progress.
- (7) Runner on first takes off with the crack of the bat. Seeing no trouble making third, he/she rounds second and then collides with the shortstop who is wandering around aimlessly. Runner continues to third and the ball beats him/her there. What is the call? Ruling: When the runner ran into the shortstop, signal and verbalize “obstruction” but allow the play to continue. On the play at third, raise both hands above your head and call “time”. Explain obstruction on the shortstop; runner is “awarded” third base.
- (8) When a play is being made on a runner, the runner establishes his/ her base line as a straight line between his/her position and the base towards which he/she is moving
- (9) Fielders cannot do fake tags – this is dangerous and considered obstruction of a baserunner.
- (10) Tagging or touching a player could include long hair on the player or a jacket “flapping in the breeze.”

#### **Scoring runs:**

- (1) A force play exists any time that a runner is forced off of a base due to the batter becoming a runner. (A fielder can make the out at either the base or by tagging the runner going to the base.) Thus, a runner being touched with the ball while running from first to second on a ground ball by the batter is a force out.
- (2) Unless the third out is on a force-play, all runners crossing the scoring line before the third out is made are safe and their runs count. (This is a timing issue and requires monitoring by both umpires.)
- (3) One out...runners on first and second. Batter smashes a double to left field. Runner from second scores but runner from first is thrown out at the plate. The batter advances to second safely BUT is declared out for missing first base. Does any run score? Ruling: No, because the runner crossed the scoring line on a play in which the batter-runner was the third out before he/she touched first base.
- (4) With a runners on all the bases and one already out, a ground ball hit to a fielder who throws to second to get the force (2 out) and then a throw to first for a double-play 3<sup>rd</sup> out (also a force), would result in no runs scoring.
- (5) With one out and runners first and third, the batter flies out (so now two out). The runner on third tags up and scores while the runner on first tries to retouch first before the throw from the

fielder reaches the first baseman, but does not get back in time and is called out. Three outs. If, in umpire's judgment, the runner from third scored before the out was made at first, the run counts.

**Overall:**

- (1) In order to call an out, you must see something happen, i.e., runner tagged, ball caught, ball beat a runner to a base, etc. If not, he/she must be safe. Don't guess "out". Make sure.
- (2) Any umpire's decision which involves judgment, such as, but not limited to, whether a batted ball is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or not, or whether a runner is safe or out, is final. No player, manager, coach or substitute shall object to any such judgment decisions. Judgment calls are final. Work to get the call right --- paying attention and being in the right position are key --- and resist the frequent requests to check with another umpire
- (3) However, there are times a home plate umpire will be required to make a call on the bases and vice versa. In other words, if you need help, ask before making a call. Example: Swipe tag at first, base umpire does not see a tag, he/she should not make a call, but ask for help..."Did he/she get him/ her?" Plate umpire would signal "out" if tag were made and "safe" if tag were missed. Same applies to pulled foot at a base, etc. If a call is made, and you're having second thoughts, you're empowered to check (in private discussion) with the other umpire. Ultimately, our umpiring team has to live with the call, right or wrong. Do not bow to outcries and attempts at intimidation. If in doubt, common sense prevails; a team should not benefit from doing something wrong. Do what you can to ensure everyone enjoys the game --- but safely! (And not at the expense of others.)
- (4) If there is reasonable doubt that any umpire's decision may be in conflict with the rules, a coach may appeal the decision and ask that a correct ruling be made. Such an appeal shall be made through the umpire who made the decision under discussion with assistance from others working that particular game including, if assigned, a Supervisor.
- (5) Do not allow coaches to have you show them the rule. That's not your job. Your job is to call the game. If he/she wants to protest let him/ her do it, even if it's a judgment call. He'll find out soon enough that judgment calls are not protestable. Use the services of the team's Sportsmanship Managers to deal with situations you aren't enjoying.