

# Baseball Rules Interpretations - 2017

By NFHS on February 10, 2017

## baseball

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**SITUATION 1:** The coach runs out of the dugout, yelling profanity and throwing his hat at the base umpire as he disputes a call. **RULING:** When an unsportsmanlike act involving profane language directed at an umpire is judged to be a major violation, the penalty is an immediate ejection. No warning is necessary. These actions warrant an immediate ejection. (3-3- 1f2 Penalty)

**SITUATION 2:** While objecting to a call, the head coach commits what he believes is a minor offense. However, due to the nature of the offense, the umpire issues a written warning and restricts the coach to the dugout. The coach states that since he has not yet received a verbal warning, he cannot be given a written warning and subsequently be restricted to the bench. **RULING:** A coach does not have to first receive a verbal warning to receive a written warning. The three options available to an umpire do not have to be completed in succession. Umpires do not have to give a verbal warning before issuing a written warning. Additionally, for major offenses, an offender shall be ejected immediately. The coach is restricted to the dugout. (3-3-1fk Penalty)

**SITUATION 3:** In the third inning, the head coach was restricted to the bench/dugout because one of his players was discovered to be using an illegal bat while at bat. In the fifth inning, the head coach commits a minor violation in arguing a call. The minor violation by itself does not warrant an ejection. **RULING:** The head coach is eject-ed. Because the head coach was previously restricted, he shall be ejected for any subsequent offense. (3-3-1f Penalty, 4-1-3b Penalty)

**SITUATION 4:** After a close play at second base on an attempted steal where the base umpire judged the runner out, the player addresses the umpire with his thoughts on the umpire's decision. **RULING:** Since the statements by the player are such that they cannot be ignored, the player is ejected. Players, except for illegal substitution, cannot be restricted to the bench for misconduct. (3-1-1, 3-3-1f2 Penalty)

**SITUATION 5:** Early in the game, the home team received a team warning for a player wearing a bandanna. A few innings later the coach argues a call and is issued a verbal warning. Because of the previous team warning the coach is ejected. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. The previous team warning is just that – a warning to the team with the next offender on the team being ejected. It is not an action against the head coach. All the coach has received is a verbal warning for his actions in arguing a call and is not restricted. (3-3- 1d Penalty, 3-3-1f Penalty)

**SITUATION 6:** For a minor offense in the third inning, the head coach was restricted to the bench. In the fifth inning, his assistant coach leaves his coaching box to object to a call at second base. **RULING:** The assistant coach will receive a written warning and will be restricted to the dugout for the remainder of the game. With the head coach already restricted, he is now ejected from the game due to the penalty for the assistant coach leaving his coaching box to argue a call. (3-3-1f6 Penalty)

**SITUATION 7:** With bases loaded and no outs, the batter hits a slow ground ball to the shortstop, who fields the ball and throws home. The runner from third base slides in a direct line between third base and home plate and arrives at home before the ball arrives. The runner's slide carries the runner over home plate and into the catcher, who is now unable to make a play on another runner because of the contact by the runner. There was nothing malicious in nature with the slide. **RULING:** Because the runner slides in a direct line between the two bases, it is permissible for his momentum to carry him through the plate in the baseline extended. With the slide being legal, merely sliding past home and into a fielder does not constitute an illegal act. The runner is safe and there is no resulting penalty. (2-32-2c)

**SITUATION 8:** With runners on second and third, the third-base runner is taking his lead-off position well in foul territory to the side of third base. The batter hits a ground ball to the second baseman, who fields the ball and throws home in an attempt to put out the runner advancing from third. The runner from third base, still in the base path he established when he first attempted to advance home, slides over home plate and into the catcher. The catcher was knocked down by the contact from the runner from third base and is unable to make a play on the batter-runner advancing to second base. **RULING:** Since the runner from third base slides in a straight line in his established base path, and there are no other aspects of the slide present that would make the slide illegal, the run counts and play continues. There is no penalty on the play. (2-32-2c)

**SITUATION 9:** The runner from third base slides past home plate, out of his established base path. He then contacts the catcher, preventing him from making a play on the runner at second base. **RULING:** If the play at home plate was a non-force play, the run would count, but the ball would be dead when the runner contacted the catcher. An out on the runner at second base would be called due to the third-base runner's interference. If the play began as a force play, because the runner slides out of his base path, this is now force-play slide interference. The ball is immediately dead, the run will not count, and the runner plus the batter-runner will be declared out. (2-32- 2c, 8-4-2b Penalty)

**SITUATION 10:** The home team believes the visiting team's pitcher has violated the state's pitch-count policy by exceeding the maximum number of pitches as his team leads in the sixth inning, 8-0. The home team asks the plate umpire to forfeit the game or, at a minimum, have the pitcher removed as a pitcher. **RULING:** Each state association will set its own regulations and protocols for violation of Rule 6-1-6. The umpire should suggest the coach contact and/or notify the state association. (6-1-6)

**SITUATION 11:** On the first pitch of the at-bat, the runner on first base attempts to steal second base. The catcher brings his arm back to throw and makes contact with the plate umpire. The catcher (a) continues his throw but because of the contact throws the ball into center field, or (b) makes no throw as he dropped the ball. The runner arrives safely at second base. **RULING:** In both instances, this is umpire interference. The runner will be returned to first base. (8-3-6)

**SITUATION 12:** The pitch bounces off the catcher and rolls away from home plate. The plate umpire, trying to get out of the way of the catcher, moves into the catcher's path as he attempts to retrieve the pitched ball. The contact causes the catcher to lose enough time so that he cannot make a play on the runner advancing. **RULING:** This is not umpire interference. The play stands. (8-3-6)

**SITUATION 13:** On an attempted steal of second base, the catcher throws quickly toward second base. The throw sails into the base umpire and rebounds off the umpire into right field. By the time the ball is retrieved, the runner advances to third base. **RULING:** This is not umpire interference. The play stands. (8-3-6)

**SITUATION 14:** With runners on second and third, and a fly ball is hit deep to right field, the third-base coach grabs the third base runner's shirt to force him to tag properly. The runner from second base legally tags as the ball is caught. Both runners, during the course of the play, score. **RULING:** The runner at third base is called out immediately when the coach physically assisted him in tagging properly. Play continues and the run scored by the second-base runner will count. (3-2-2 Penalty, 8-4-2s)

**SITUATION 15:** With runners on first and third, a ball is hit to center field. The coach physically holds the runner up at third base until he sees that the fly ball is not caught. The runner from first base is later thrown out as he attempted to advance to third base. **RULING:** The runner at third base is immediately called out when the third-base coach physically prevented him from advancing until he knew if the fly ball was caught. Play continues and the first-base runner's out at third base stands. (3-2-2 Penalty, 8-4-2s)

**SITUATION 16:** With a runner on first base, the batter hits a single down the right-field foul line. As the runner from first base nears second base, he is obstructed by the shortstop, which causes him to not touch second base. The runner continues to advance and arrives safely at third base. The defense calls "time," and then appeals the runner missing second base. **RULING:** The runner is not out on appeal. If, in the umpire's judgment, the obstruction caused the runner to miss second base, the appeal is denied and the runner's advance is legal. (CB 8.2.5E)

**SITUATION 17:** The runner from first base is advancing to second base on a passed ball and is obstructed halfway to second base by the second baseman. The ball rolls farther away from the catcher allowing the runner to advance to third base. The runner failed to touch second base as he advanced. The defense calls "time," and appeals the runner's failure to touch second base. **RULING:** The runner is declared out on the

valid appeal by the defense. In the umpire's judgment, the runner's failure to properly touch second base was not caused by the obstruction. (8-2-6c, CB 8.2.5E)

**SITUATION 18:** With two outs and a runner on third base, the batter hits a ground ball to the pitcher. The pitcher fields the ball and throws home to retire the runner from third base. A run-down ensues and the runner is obstructed returning to third base. The defense gives up on the runner from third base and throws to retire the batter-runner who had touched first base and was advancing to second base. This third out occurs before the runner from third base advances and touches home. Does his run count? **RULING:** Yes. The runner will be awarded home due to the defense's obstruction during the run-down back to third base. The obstruction award requires a minimum of a one-base award from where the runner was at the time of the obstruction. So, the runner is awarded home. The third out was a not a force out so the run will count. (8-3-2, 9-1-1)

**SITUATION 19:** With runners on first and third with one out, the batter takes a called third strike. Both runners were off on the pitch for a delayed double steal. The batter strides across home plate to return to his dugout as the catcher throws to second base. The batter contacts the catcher, batter's interference is called by the plate umpire, but the catcher's throw is still in time to record the out on the runner advancing from first base. The runner from third base scores before the out at second base. The defensive coach tells the plate umpire that he does not want the result of the play; he wants the penalty for the batter's interference. **RULING:** The run will count. This is a time play and the run scored prior to the third out being made. Once the out was made on the runner at second, the batter interference is ignored. The defensive coach has no option available. (7-3-5 Penalty, 9-1-1)

**SITUATION 20:** Runners on first and third. The catcher attempts to pick off the runner at third base, who was not advancing to third base but was simply off the base. The batter leans over and interferes with the catcher attempting to throw to third. The catcher stops his throw to third and instead throws to second base to retire the runner from first base advancing on a delayed steal. During this play, the runner from third comes home to score. **RULING:** The plate umpire should have declared the ball dead when the catcher did not make the first play. The batter would be declared out and the runner returned to first base. The ball remains a delayed dead ball on the first play by the catcher. If an out does not occur, the ball shall become immediately dead. (5-2a.1., 7-3-5 Penalty)