



UNITED STATES SPECIALTY  
SPORTS ASSOCIATION

# Case Book For Fast Pitch



*Disney Wide World of Sports Diamondplex*

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## Table of Contents

<b>RULE 1 - Playing Field.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>RULE 2 - Equipment.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>RULE 3 - Definitions .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>RULE 4 - The Game .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>RULE 5 - Players and Substitutes.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>RULE 6 - Pitching.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>RULE 7 - Batting .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>RULE 8 - Base Running .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>RULE 9 - Appeals .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>RULE 10 - Dead Ball .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>RULE 11 - Sportsmanship.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>RULE 12 - Coach/Manager or Player Ejection.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>RULE 13 - Protest.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>RULE 14 - Umpiring .....</b>	<b>38</b>

### 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 Softball National Umpire 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, the one on a base is referred to as R1 for runner closest to home. R2 is the runner next closest to home. (i.e. R1 is on third, R2 is on first)

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 female fast pitch game, the umpires notice that the left field fence is (a) 175 feet or (b) 240 feet.

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

### BASES

**SITUATION A:** Upon inspecting the field before the game, the umpire notices that the bases have tapered edges.

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

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

**RULING:** This type of base is legal. (1-2-D)

### DOUBLE FIRST BASE

**SITUATION A:** The coach of the visiting team tells the umpire during the pre-game conference that the team does not want to play with the double first base that the home team has installed.

**RULING:** The double first base has been adopted by USSSA, it may be used. The visiting team must comply. (1-2-D)

**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-D, 8-19)

**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-D, 8-19)

**SITUATION D:** During a game in which the double first base is being used, F3 misplay 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 her warm-up throws, she complains that the pitcher's plate was not set at the correct distance. When measured, it is discovered that she is right. Is the pitcher's plate to be reset immediately at the proper distance or does the pitcher of Team B have to finish the inning pitching at that distance?

**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 home team provides the umpire with three optic yellow softballs for the game.

**RULING:** USSSA has approved the optic yellow for all Fast Pitch play. (2-3)

**SITUATION B:** The home team coach provides the umpire with an optic yellow and a white softball for the game.

**RULING:** The color of game balls shall not be mixed. USSSA use only optic yellow softballs. (2-3)

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

**RULING:** All balls shall have the USSSA Authenticating Mark labeled on the cover. (2-3)

### BATS

**SITUATION A:** Prior to the game, while inspecting each team's bats, 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 step 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. (7-14-A)

**SITUATION D:** A metal bat is found to have no marking of BPF.

**RULING:** The bat is illegal. (2-10-D)

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

**RULING:** Bat is legal if legal in all other respects. (2-10-C)

**SITUATION F:** The umpire notices that B1's bat has a "tacky" substance extending beyond the 15-inch limit (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. (3-10, 7-14-A)

**SITUATION G:** Team A is using a donut on a legal bat as a warm-up device for on-deck batters. The umpire notice the donut flies off the barrel of the bat.

**RULING:** The device is illegal. (2-10-B)

**SITUATION H:** The on-deck batter begins warming up with a weighted bat and two softball bats.

**RULING:** 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. (2-11)

**SITUATION I:** The on-deck batter enters the on-deck circle with a weighted bat and a softball bat, both utilizing weighted sleeves.

**RULING:** This is legal. (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/beach 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 be restricted to the dugout/beach 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 her helmet by lifting it, but not above the temples, and replaces it, or (b) B3 doubles and removes her helmet, tossing it above her head in celebration.

**RULING:** In (a), there is no violation because the helmet was not considered removed. In (b), the coach of the appropriate team shall receive a team warning, if it is that team's first offense. Subsequent offenders shall be restricted to the dugout/beach for the duration of the game. (2-1, 10-4-G)

**SITUATION E:** A player needs to wear a face mask when she bats. The coach provides (a) a batting helmet with attached mask that is commercially manufactured that came assembled from the manufacturer and meets the NOCSAE standard, (b) a football helmet with a lineman's face mask, or (c) a batting helmet that meets the NOCSAE standard and a face mask that requires assembly.

**RULING:** Legal in (a) and (c) as long as the face guard and helmet has the NOCSAE stamp on them. Illegal in (b). In (c) even though assembly is required, as long as the face mask is designed specifically for that helmet, there is no violation. (2-1)

## CATCHER'S EQUIPMENT

**SITUATION A:** The coach instructs a relief pitcher to begin warming up. The assigned catcher puts on a hockey style helmet with a mask but with out a throat protector.

**RULING:** As long as the helmet and face mask has the NOCSAE stamp on it, it is legal. (2-2)

**SITUATION B:** While the game is in progress, the umpire notices that a non-adult is warming up the pitcher, but is not wearing a catcher's mask and throat protector.

**RULING:** If the non-adult is within the confines of the field, the umpire shall warn the pitcher's coach of the infraction and prohibit the pitcher from warming up with that individual until the non-adult secures a legal catcher's mask and throat protector. (2-2)

**SITUATION C:** During the course of the game, the umpire notices a non-adult or a player not wearing a mask while warming up the pitcher, outside the confines of the field.

**RULING:** Coaches have the responsibility for minimizing the risk of their players. The umpire's jurisdiction is restricted to the confines of the field. Umpires would not be prohibited from informing the coach of the activity indicated above. (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 umpires 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 any fielder can wear a mitt as long as it meets the dimension specifications. The catcher's mitt/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 runners awarded bases. (3-10, 8-14-E-2, 8-18-AC)

## UNIFORMS

**SITUATION A:** In (a) eight members of a team are wearing red shorts and the ninth player is wearing a long pants; (b) the player-coach is wearing a jacket while the coaching box; or (c) the player ask to wear a jacket over her uniform while running the bases.

**RULING:** Illegal in (a). Legal (b) and in (c). (2-8)

## 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-B)

## SHOES

**SITUATION A:** Before the game, the coach of Team B informs the umpire that the players of Team A are wearing metal-cleat shoes.

**RULING:** In 8 and under thru the 18 and under are prohibited. (2-4-A) In the 18 and over may wear metal-cleats. (2-4-B)

**SITUATION B:** R1 is on second base when B2 hits a double to center field. B2 ends up on second and R1 scores. After the score, the catcher points out to the umpire that the R1 is wearing metal cleats.

**RULING:** Metal cleats are illegal. R1 is out and ejected from the game. The run does not score. B2 returns to 2B. (2-4-A)

## JEWELRY

**SITUATION A:** B3 is at bat when the umpire is notified by F2 that B3 has jewelry around her neck that is securely taped down.

**RULING:** Jewelry is prohibited in youth play. 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-D)

**SITUATION B:** A youth player is wearing a necklace medic alert device.

**RULING:** Wearing a medical-alert necklace is legal if it is properly taped. (2-5)

**SITUATION C:** B1 is wearing a class ring. B1 tapes the ring so that it is no longer visible.

**RULING:** Illegal in youth play. Jewelry, even though taped, may not be worn. The umpire will instruct B1 that she must remove the ring or she will not be permitted to play. If this is the first jewelry violation for that team, a team warning shall be issued. (11-2-D-PENALTY)

**SITUATION D:** In the second inning, a player on Youth Team A is discovered wearing jewelry, which results in her team warning. Later in the game, the coach of Team B notices that the player, now sitting on the bench, is wearing a necklace 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. (2-5, 11-2-D)

## 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), the exposed hinges must be covered. In (d), the umpire and /or the tournament director will decide whether or not the prosthesis is safe. If it is judged to be hazardous, that player may not compete.

**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 must wear a protective mask similar the type worn by a hockey goalie. Is the mask legal, even though the rule states that all casts, braces and splints must be padded?

**RULING:** A commercially manufactured mask of this nature is legal. Likewise, a batting helmet with a protective bar or shield is also legal if commercially manufactured. (2-7)

## RULE 3 - Definitions

### CATCH

**SITUATION A:** B1 hits a fly to F8. F8 gets the ball in her hands but drops it (a) when she falls to the ground and rolls over, or (b) when she collides with a fielder or a wall, or (c) when she starts to throw to the infield.

**RULING:** in (a) and (b), it is not a catch. 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. (3-14)

**SITUATION B:** With one out and R1 on first, B3 hits a fly. F4 catches it, but intentionally drops it for an attempted double play.

**RULING:** The umpire should immediately declare the ball dead and call B3 out. R1 must return to the base that was occupied at the time of the pitch. (8-17-C, 10-3-K)

**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 hits an umpire, it is ruled the same as the ball hitting the ground where the umpire is standing. (3-14)

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

**RULING:** B1 is safe. It is not a catch until the ball is securely in a hand or glove. (3-14)

**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. (3-14)

### CONFERENCES

**SITUATION A:** during the per-game conference (a) F1 is throwing pitches in foul territory between first base and home plate, (b) F1 is throwing warm-up pitches in the outfield, (c) B1 is in the outfield hitting balls toward the infield, or (d) F1 and F2 are playing catch in the outfield.

**RULING:** Improper in (a), (b), (c). Legal in (d). There shall be no ball hit or thrown in the infield area during the pre-game conference. (4-22)

## FOUL BALL

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

**RULING:** The ball is foul in either case. (3-28)

**SITUATION B:** A batted ball goes no higher than the batter's head. The catcher lunges to her left in foul territory and catches the ball before it touches the ground. The batter is out. This is a caught foul ball not a foul tip.

**RULING:** The batter is out. This is a caught foul ball not a foul tip. (3-28)

**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. (3-30)

## FOUL TIP

**SITUATION A:** With R1 on first, B2 hits a foul which goes directly to the catcher 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. In (b), R1 must return to first. (3-30, 3-28)

## INFIELD FLY RULE

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

**RULING:** In (a), a bunt is never an infield fly. In (b), this is not an infield fly. (3-35)

**SITUATION B:** R1 and R2 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 up the ball and throws to F4 covering first, who touches R2 with the ball while the latter is off base.

**RULING:** Fair ball. The infield fly rule should be used if, in the umpire's judgment, normal effort would catch the ball. Even though the infield fly was not called, it could still be in effect. In which case, B3 would be out. R2 is out also unless the umpire believes his error caused R2's out. If a no call was correct (i.e. it would have taken more than ordinary effort to catch the ball), B3, who advanced to 1B would be on 1B and R2 would be out. (3-35, 8-17-H, 14-12-O)

## INTERFERENCE

**SITUATION A:** B2 hits a grounder to F6. Just as F6 starts to throw to first base, R1 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. (3-39, 8-18-F)

## OBSTRUCTION

**SITUATION A:** F6 fakes a tag as R1 approaches second base. R1 decides to continue on to third base where she 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 had she not been obstructed, she would be ruled safe. Otherwise she is out. (3-41)

**SITUATION B:** B1 rounds first base on a hit. F3 is in her way, but B1 does not elect to try for second, because the ball was already at second base. Is this obstruction?

**RULING:** Yes. The umpire should 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. (3-41)

## OVERSLIDING, OVERRUNNING

**SITUATION A:** B1 hits and overruns first base. In coming to a stop she turns towards second but makes no attempt to advance or feint an advance but 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. (3-60)

## STRIKE ZONE

**SITUATION A:** Does the entire ball, when legally pitched and before it touches the ground but not swung at, have to pass through the batter's strike zone to be called a strike.

**RULING:** No. 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. (3-57)

## 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 order 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. (3-1, 3-3)

# 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 captains or coaches together and state ground rules which may be necessary to cover special conditions.

**SITUATION B:** The right-field fence is 200 feet. The coaches agree to a ground rule that provides for a double instead of a home run if the batter hits the ball over the fence.

**RULING:** The umpire(s) shall not permit ground rules to supersede a rule book rule. Therefore, a batted ball that clears the fence in fair territory shall be a home run. (1-1, 8-14)

**SITUATION C:** In the third inning rain begins. In the fourth inning, F1 is having a hard time maintaining her footing. The home team's coach (a) brings in sand or a substance to help dry the area around the pitcher's plate, or (b) set up an artificial surface for the pitcher to use.

**RULING:** Legal in (a) only under the supervision of the home plate umpire and approval of the tournament director. Illegal in (b). If field conditions are so poor that the safety of the players is threaten then the home plate umpire shall call the game. (4-1, 14-14-H)

**SITUATION D:** During the pre-game conference, 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:** No, coaches and managers can not alter game rules. There are no ties in USSSA Fast Pitch, all games that are tied go to the International Tie breaker. (4-5)

## ENDING A GAME

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

**RULING:** In (a) the game is a suspended game and will be started from the point that the game was stop at. In (b) if the tournament director feels that the possibility of resuming the game is not likely, it is then a regulation game. (4-6-A&B)

**SITUATION B:** Team A is leading Team B 40-0 in the bottom of the second inning. The two teams have played for 2 hours and home team gets the last out.

**RULING:** In Pool play game is over. In World Series play it must go to the third inning (4-3)

**SITUATION C:** At the end of the fifth, sixth or seventh inning (a) one team is ahead or, (b) the score is tied when rain halts play.

**RULING:** In (a) and (b) the games are suspended. If the game is to be completed, it will be continued from the point of suspension, with the lineup and batting order of each team exactly the same as the lineup and batting order at the moment of suspension.

## RULE 5 - Players and Substitutes

### PLAYER POSITION/LINEUPS

**SITUATION A:** The batting order lists an additional player who is not in the team area at the beginning of the game.

**RULING:** Illegal (5-1-A)

**SITUATION B:** The lineup card lists the Designated Hitter (DH) and the person being DH for, the Defensive Player (DP), in the same batting position.

**RULING:** Legal. When using a DH, the players should both be listed in batting position where the DH will bat. 1st name is DH second name is DP. (5-4)

**SITUATION C:** F4 Brown, who is listed in the batting order as wearing uniform No. 4, is 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:** While Brown technically has violated the rule that requires that player's name, shirt number and position to be on the lineup card, there is no penalty, since the batting-out-of-order rule requires only that the name be in the proper order. If the number was correct but the player batting was not Brown, the batting-out-of-order penalty would be imposed. Listing of both numbers and position provides easier record keeping for scorekeepers and umpires. (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 is a forfeit. A team may not play short handed because of an ejection. (5-2)

**SITUATION E:** R1 is on third and R2 on second, with one out. The defensive coach instructs the pitcher to intentionally walk B4 and send F3 in behind the plate to back up F2.

**RULING:** This is not legal. All defensive players except the catcher must be in fair territory. The ball is dead immediately and an illegal pitch is called. A ball is called on the batter and each runner advance one base. (5-1-C)

## ABSENT PLAYER

**SITUATION A:** The team with an Absent Player spot in the batting order, due to injury, wants to insert a late arriving eligible player in the vacant spot.

**RULING:** Legal. The arriving player must enter the lineup immediately. (5-2)

**SITUATION B:** With two outs, the pitcher walks a batter to get to the spot vacated by an injured player with no substitute in the order for the third out.

**RULING:** Legal. There is no provision prohibiting. (7-14-E)

## CHARGED CONFERENCES

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

**RULING:** Legal in (a); this is a charged conference. In (b); F5 may go and talk to F1 this is not a charge conference. (3-16, 4-8-A)

**SITUATION B:** The manager requests time and

a) goes directly out to talk to the pitcher. After talking with the pitcher, he informs the umpire he is changing pitchers.

b) before crossing the foul line, informs the umpire that he is changing pitchers.

**RULING:** a) This is a charged conference. b) This is NOT a charged conference. (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 seven-inning game, and if a game goes into extra innings, that team is permitted only one charged defensive conference in each of the extra innings, and any unused defensive charged conferences in the first seven innings are no longer available. (4-8-A)

**SITUATION D:** The coach of the defensive team has used three charged conferences. In the seventh inning, the coach (a) stops play to confer with her infielders about a bunt situation or (b) check 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, but may play in another defensive position. 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. (4-8-A)

**SITUATION E:** 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 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. (4-8-A)

**SITUATION F:** In the top of the fifth inning, (a) the defensive team's head coach ask 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 play. 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. For instance, she is allowed to check with the pitcher regarding the delay and how it is affecting her. She is not allowed to coach. Any coaching on the part of either coach would result in a charged conference. When play is to resume, if she is not off the field, she shall be charged a conference for delay (4-8-A, 4-8-C)

**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)

## SUBSTITUTIONS

**SITUATION A:** S1, an eligible substitute, replace F4 and does not report to the plate umpire until after the next pitch, legal or illegal.

**RULING:** S1 has entered the game as an unreported substitute. A team warning is issued, with the next offender restricted to the dugout/beach area for the remainder of the game. (5-5)

**SITUATION B:** S1 is discovered in the game three innings after not reporting to the umpire.

**RULING:** S1 has entered the game as an unreported substitute. A team warning is issued, with the next offender restricted to the dugout/beach area for the remainder of the game. (5-5)

**SITUATION C:** S1 replaces B1. Before or after S1 enters the batter's box, F1 is replaced. S1 is then replaced.

**RULING:** A substitute at bat does not have to complete a turn at bat. (5-5)

## 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 for disciplinary reasons. 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:** Illegal. Although F1 is entitled one re-entry as any other players, she may not re-enter to pitch. (5-5-A, 5-6)

**SITUATION B:** The coach wants to re-enter a substitute in the same place in the batting order.

**RULING:** Legal. All players 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 offended coach informs the umpire that S1, who entered the game in the last inning, was an unreported substitute. After confirming the offended 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 stand. The unreported substitute is now 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 she 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)

## RULE 6 - Pitching

### PRIOR TO THE PITCH

**SITUATION A:** F1 takes her pitching position with her hands together.

**RULING:** Illegal, the umpire shall call 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 the glove and her other hand at her side.

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

**SITUATION C:** With R1 on second, R2 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. (6-1-D)

**SITUATION D:** With R1 on second, R2 on first and one out, F1 merely touches the hands together for less than one second, and then delivers the pitch to B3 who hits into a double play.

**RULING:** Legal pitch. 7-1-D states "hands together ... for not less than one second". However any touching the hand or ball to glove is acceptable. (6-1-D)

**SITUATION E:** F1, after stepping onto the pitching plate with the hands separated and taking her signal, brings the hands together. She immediately begins the wind-up motion.

**RULING:** Legal. A one-second pause is not required after bringing the hands together. The rule does state, however, that the hands shall be brought together for at least one second before releasing the ball. (6-1-D)

**SITUATION F:** F1 steps onto the pitcher's plate and looks to her coach in the dugout for a signal.

**RULING:** This is legal; provided she at least gives the appearance that she has taken a signal from F2. (6-1-C)

**SITUATION G:** The pitcher does not present the ball before delivering.

**RULING:** Legal. There is not definition or requirement to "present the ball". (6-1)

**SITUATION H:** The first baseman prior to giving the ball to the pitcher rubs dirt on the ball.

**RULING:** Illegal. (6-1-I)

## ABOUT THE PITCH

**SITUATION A:** After assuming a legal pitching position, F1 takes one hand off the ball and then steps backward off the pitcher's plate.

**RULING:** Illegal pitch. The pitch starts when F1 takes one hand off the ball. Once the hands are separated, the only step F1 may take must be toward the batter. (6-1-E-2)

**SITUATION B:** In delivering a pitch, F1's pivot foot breaks contact with the pitcher's plate but not the ground before the non-pivot ("stride") foot has touched the ground.

**RULING:** Legal, The pivot foot may push off and drag away from the pitcher's plate. (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 is guilty of an illegal pitch. (6-1-E-3)

## THE WINDUP

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

**RULING:** Legal. There is nothing in the rules that states the ball must be released the first time past the hip. One revolution in fast pitch is interpreted as not two revolutions. (6-1-G-4)

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

**RULING:** In (a), it is a legal pitch because the action after releasing the ball is considered a follow through. In (b) it is an illegal pitch because the action after the release of the ball is considered to be a continuation of the windup. (6-1-G-5)

**SITUATION C:** F1 steps on to the pitcher's plate, brings her hands together and after pausing one second, removes the ball from her glove with her throwing hand and swing her arm backward to approximately shoulder height. She continues forward in a windmill delivery. Releasing the ball the second time it passes the hip.

**RULING:** Legal. The starting point is where F1's arm started forward (behind her, shoulder height). Even though the ball passed her hip twice, F1's arm did not make two complete revolutions. (6-1-G-5 Note)

## INFRACTION BY PITCHER

**SITUATION A:** With R1 on second base, the pitcher uses a legal delivery. However, she throws the ball up in the air and catches it.

**RULING:** The umpire must determine if the action was deliberate or accidental.

If this procedure was used for the purpose of putting the batter on base without pitching to the batter, the umpire should rule an illegal pitch, award R1 third base and award the batter a ball. The umpire shall warn the pitcher if this procedure is repeated, she will be guilty of unsportsmanlike like conduct and ejected from the game. (6-1-J)

However, if it was unintentional, the ball would remain alive and award the batter a ball. (6-1-M)

**SITUATION B:** F1 is wearing yellow or white color wristlet

**RULING:** Any items on the pitching hand, arm, wrist or thighs which may be distracting to the batter shall be removed. 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. (6-1-H)

**SITUATION C:** After walking B1, F1 walks out of the 16-foot circle and licks her fingers on the throwing hand. With the ball in the glove, she walks on to the pitcher's plate and begin her delivery.

**RULING:** Any time F1 licks the fingers on her throwing hand, she shall wipe them before touching the ball, otherwise an illegal pitch shall be called. The umpire shall declare the ball dead immediately and an illegal pitch shall be called. (6-1-I)

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

**RULING:** In (a), (b) and (c), the coach of the team at bat has the option of the play or the penalty for an illegal pitch. (6-1-Effect A-K)

**SITUATION E:** 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:** Illegal unless the umpire explicitly gives permission. The restriction of five warm-up pitches can be waved when the umpire delays the game due to substitutions, conferences, injuries or other administrative duties. (6-1-L)

**SITUATION F:** In an effort to deliberately walk a batter without having to throw a pitch (a) F1 intentionally violates the 20-second rule by not delivering a pitch, or (b) F2 does not return the ball directly to F1, but instead throws the ball to another fielder.

**RULING:** The spirit of the rule is being violated in (a) and (b) 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 count remains the same. No ball is awarded the batter. (6-1-J, 6-2-B Exception, 11-2-L)

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

**RULING:** That technique is defined as a "crow hop" and is illegal. (6-1-E-3 Note 2)

## ILLEGAL PITCH

**SITUATION A:** Bases loaded, one out and a 3-2 count on the batter. The pitcher went to the glove two times and the plate umpire has a illegal pitch (delayed dead ball) as the pitcher starts her pitch the runner comes off first base. At that time, the base umpire calls no pitch.

**RULING:** Penalty: Ball is dead; The runner on first base is out for leaving the base too soon (8.18.K). The batter is awarded a ball which is ball 4 and is awarded first base. The runners on second base is awarded third base. The runner on third base is awarded home and scores. (6-1-A-K Effect)

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

# RULE 7 - Batting

## STRIKES, BALLS AND HITS

**SITUATION A:** B1 takes a stance with her feet wide apart which causes her shoulders to be lower than if she stood with her 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 forward armpit and the top of her 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 her strike zone. (3-57)

**SITUATION B:** As F1 releases her first pitch to B1, B1 steps out of the batter's box.

**RULING:** B1 is charged with a strike. The ball remains live. (7-8)

## BATTING INFRACTIONS

**SITUATION A:** With F1 on the pitcher's plate ready to deliver, B1, in the batter's box, holds up her 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 her pitch, B1 requests time by either stepping out of the box or by putting her hand up. The pitcher (a) hesitates or stops her 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 has both feet on the ground with the left foot on the batter's box line and the right foot in side the lines of the box.

**RULING:** Lines of the batter's box are part of the batter's box. (3-8, 7-9)

**SITUATION D:** B1 strides forward when making contact with the pitched ball. Her 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, (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 being out 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 her. R1 steals second.

**RULING:** B2 is out. The ball becomes dead and R1 must return to first. (7-5-C, 10-1-3)

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

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

**SITUATION G:** B1, while standing in the batters box, bunts the ball and the ball rebounds up against the bat a second time while being held by the batter, still in the batters box.

**RULING:** Foul ball. Dead Ball. (7-9)

## BATTER INTERFERES WITH CATCHER

**SITUATION A:** With less than two outs. R1 on second and B2 at the plate, R1 attempts to steal third. In the process, B2 does not swing or does swing and (a) make no attempt to get out of the way of the catcher throwing to third 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). B2 is entitled to her position in the batter's box and is not subject to interference unless she moves or re-establishes her position after F2 has received the pitch, which then prevents F2 from attempting to play on a runner. Failing to move so the catcher can make a throw is not batter interference. (7-12)

**SITUATION B:** With one out and R1 on third base, B3 interferes with F2. In (a), R1 makes an attempt to score, or in (b), R1 attempts to return to third base.

**RULING:** Dead ball. In (a), R1 is out. In (b), B3 is ruled out and R1 must return to third base. With two outs, B3 is out in both (a) and (b). (7-12)

**SITUATION C:** R1 is on third base and R2 is on first base. B3 is at bat with (a) a 2-1 count, or (b) a 2-2 count. F1 delivers an outside pitch as R2 attempts to steal second. B3 swing and misses the pitch which is caught by F2. After the pitch is caught, B3's momentum carries her across the plate and interferes with F2's throw to second base.

**RULING:** Batter interferes in (a), B3 is out and R2 must return to first base. R1 remains at third base. In (b), this is interference by a retired runner. R1 is out (runner closest to home) and R2 must return to first base. (7-12)

**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) her bat breaks and hits the ball or F5 as F5 attempts to field the ball.

**RULING:** In (a) the ball is dead immediately. B1 is declared out for interference, because B1 is responsible for controlling her 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)

## 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. In (b), B2 is safe at first if she reaches first before being tagged out or thrown out. (7-14-D)

**SITUATION B:** With R1 on second, a third strike bunt attempt by B2 is (a) an uncaught foul or (b) a caught foul (not a foul tip). R1 reaches third before the ball becomes dead in (a), or before the catch in (b). May R1 remain on third?

**RULING:** No. In (a), R1 must return to second. In (b) since the foul was caught, B2 is declared out and the ball remains live. On appeal, R1 may be thrown out at second before she retouches. (7-14-C, 8-18-J)

**SITUATION C:** The umpire calls “infield Fly” but the ball curves to foul territory.

**RULING:** The call is reversed. It is not an infield fly but an ordinary foul. The batter is not out unless the foul fly is caught. If caught, each runner shall retouch the base occupied at the time of the pitch. (7-17-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, the ball hits the bat in fair territory; (c) while advancing to first, drops the bat to intentionally contact the ball in fair territory.

**RULING:** In (a), it is a foul ball. In (b), the ball remains live and in (c), the batter is out and the ball is dead. (7-14-F)

**SITUATION E:** 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 from her. R1 on third takes off for home, just as the umpire declares the ball dead because F6 intentionally dropped the ball. The umpire then returns R1 to third. The coach of the team at bat claims that the ball should not have been declared dead, since the batter would have been out anyway due to the infield fly rule.

**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. In this play, the umpire made a mistake when the umpire declared the ball dead, which prevented R1 from scoring. Even if the runner was close to scoring, she shall be returned to the last base she occupied at the time of the ball was declared dead. (8-17-H; 8-17-C)

**SITUATION F:** B1, while in the batters, box bunts the ball and drops the bat between the ball and the foul line. The bat rolls into the ball on fair territory.

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

## 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. Batter is out.

## RULE 8 - Base Running

### LOOK BACK RULE

**SITUATION A:** R1 is on third base when B2 receives ball four. R1 comes off the base on the pitch. The catcher throws the ball directly back to the pitcher in the 16-foot circle. R1 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 on 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 her chin as she adjusts her hair. Is R1 governed by the 16-foot circle rule?

**RULING:** Yes, because F1 is considered to have possession of the ball. (8-2)

**SITUATION C:** Just after ball four is called on B2 and she is on her way to first base, R1 dances off third base and is moving back and forth between third and home. F2 throws the ball immediately to F1 in the 16-foot circle.

**RULING:** R1 is not restricted and govern by the look-back rule until B2 reaches first base. (8-2)

**SITUATION D:** The pitcher has both feet on the lines of the 16 foot circle. The feet are partially within and partially outside the circle.

**RULING:** The pitcher is in the 16 foot circle unless at least one foot is completely outside the line. The pitcher is in the circle when both feet are within or on the lines of the circle. (8-2)

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

**RULING:** Legal. (8-2)

**SITUATION F:** R1 leaves 3B legally, R2 leaves 2B legally, B1 walks, F2 returns the ball directly to F1 who is in the circle, R1 & R2 stand still off base as F1 watches B1 round 1B.

**RULING:** Dead Ball, R1 is out. Once B1 reaches 1B both R1 & R2 must return or advance. However, only one out may be recorded on this play. (8-2)

**SITUATION G:** B1 hits the ball to F4; B1 is safe at 1B; B1 overruns 1B and circles to the right. The ball is returned to F1 in the 16 foot circle. B1 breaks toward 2B.

**RULING:** Dead Ball, B1 is out. When B1 turned right, B1 was committed to returning to 1B. (8-2)

**SITUATION H:** The pitcher leaves the circle; does not have control of the ball; fakes a throw (raises hand or makes move).

**RULING:** The Look Back Rule is not in effect. (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 her throwing hand, F1 raises her arm (a) slightly and loosen up her arm, or (b) above her head to better position her jersey sleeves and to stretch her arm, or (c) and simply 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. Therefore, in (a) and (b), the umpire is unlikely to consider these acts as attempted play. However, in (c) whether the arm is raised or drawn back sidearm or underhand, if in the umpire's judgment, F1 is making the motion in an effort to hold R1 close, 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 and before pitching to the batter, she tucks her glove (containing the ball) between her knees to adjust her hair device.

**RULING:** The ball is considered to be in her 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:** B1 at first base is not released in (a) because there is obviously no play being made on her. In (b), if in the judgment of the umpire, the step toward first base was intended to play on the runner, the runner will be released. (8-2)

## COURTESY RUNNER

**SITUATION A:** Team A's courtesy runner runs for the pitcher and later in the same half-inning runs for the catcher.

**RULING:** The courtesy runner can run for one or the other, but not in the same inning. This is an ineligible courtesy runner and shall result in the courtesy runner being declared out and a team warning issued. For subsequent offense, the coach is also ejected. (8-3-A/B Penalty)

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

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

**SITUATION C:** The catcher 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)

**SITUATION D:** Smith is a courtesy runner for the catcher in the first inning. She then courtesy runs for the pitcher in the sixth inning.

**RULING:** The same player can be a courtesy runner for both positions in the same game as long as it is not the same inning. (8-3)

**SITUATION E:** 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 end PENALTY)

**SITUATION F:** F2 hits a single to start the bottom of the fourth inning. The offensive team's coach reports courtesy runner CR1 to run for F2. After CR1 advances to third, the coach of the offensive team wishes to send in courtesy runner CR2 to replace CR1.

**RULING:** CR1 cannot be replaced by another CR2 unless CR1 is injured. (8-3-E)

## PITCHER OR CATCHER RE-ENTERS

**SITUATION A:** S1 pinch hits for the pitcher and reaches base in the third inning. S1's coach informs the umpire that the pitcher is going to re-enter for S1 and then Jones will be a courtesy runner for the pitcher.

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

## INELIGIBLE COURTESY RUNNER

**SITUATION A:** S1 pinch runs for F7 in the second inning, and then leaves the game. She enters the game as a courtesy runner for the catcher in the eighth inning.

**RULING:** Illegal. S1 is an illegal substitute and is declared out and the team warning issued. On the second offense: The manager is ejected for the remainder of the game only. (8-3-B)

**SITUATION B:** Lee is a courtesy runner for the catcher in the top half of the sixth inning. She then enters to pinch hit for F4 later in that half-inning.

**RULING:** A courtesy runner is not eligible to enter the game as a substitute during the same half-inning in which she has served as a courtesy runner. Therefore, Lee is an illegal substitute and is declared out and a team warning issued. On the second offense: The manager is ejected for the remainder of game only. (8-3-D)

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

**RULING:** Legal, if Jones and Smith are both eligible courtesy runners and have reported to the plate umpire as they enter as courtesy runner. (8-3-E)

**SITUATION D:** The catcher singles and is replaced by a courtesy runner. B2 walks. 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 E:** A courtesy runner is running for the pitcher and is injured sliding safely into second base. In (a), the pitcher for whom she is running returns to the game and replaces her on second base, or (b), the coach removes the courtesy runner and places a substitute on second base or (c) replaces her 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 and then hits B1.

**RULING:** B1 is entitled to first base unless no effort was made to avoid being hit. (8-4-D)

**SITUATION B:** With two strikes, B1 swings and the ball touches any part of the batter's person.

**RULING:** The ball is dead and B1 is out on strikes. (7-5-C)

## CATCHER OBSTRUCTION

**SITUATION A:** R1 is on third. R1 starts home as in a squeeze play. F3, who is playing close for a bunt, cuts off the pitch and tags R1.

**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, R1 is awarded Home and B2 is awarded first base. (3-41, 8-4-E-NOTE1)

**SITUATION B:** R1 is on second with one out. F2 obstructs B3 who hits a ground ball to F4. F4 throws B3 out. F3 overthrows to third in an attempt to retire R1 who scores on the overthrow.

**RULING:** The coach of the team at bat may elect to take the result of the play scoring R1 and B3 out for 2nd out, or she may accept the catcher's obstruction penalty, placing R1 back on second and B3 on first. (3-41, 8-4-E)

**SITUATION C:** R1 is on second base with one out. B3 hits a long fly ball to F8 although being obstructed by F2 on her swing. R1 tags up and scores after the catch.

**RULING:** coach or captain of the team on offense may advise the plate umpire that she elects to decline the obstruction penalty (R1 on 2B, B3 on 1B, one out.) and accept the resulting play (R1 scores, B3 out, two outs). Such election shall be made before the next pitch (legal or illegal). (3-41, 8-4-E)

## RUNNER RETURNS TO BASE

**SITUATION A:** R1 is on first base and 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, she will be also be given the appropriate award for the overthrow. If she does not make an attempt to return to second base, the awarded base for the overthrow may be administered, but if the defense then makes a proper dead-ball appeal, she will be called out. (10-3-G-4; 8-6-A)

## DEFENSIVE OBSTRUCTION

**SITUATION A:** With one out, R1 on second and R2 on first, B4 hits a ground ball directly to F1 who throws to F5 for the force on R1 at third F6 grabs R1 to prevent her from advancing to third.

**RULING:** The umpire will signal obstruction when it occurs, and then call time at the end of playing action or when the obstructed runner is put out before reaching the base she would have, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction. The umpire will award R1 and any other runners the base or bases they would have reached had there been no obstruction. F6 shall be either warned or ejected for unsporting behavior. (3-41, 8-13)

**SITUATION B:** A throw from F9 draws F2 into the base path of R1. The ball and R1 arrive simultaneously causing contact between F2 and R1. F2 drops the ball and R1 scores. The contact is not intentional or flagrant.

**RULING:** There is no obstruction or interference. This is viewed simply as a collision. The run counts.

**SITUATION C:** B1 collides with F3 when rounding first base after hitting a single (a) with no chance to advance, or (b) while attempting to advance on a hit.

**RULING:** In both (a) and (b), the umpire would call a delayed dead ball when the obstruction occurred. In (a), the umpire would leave the runner at first since she had no chance to advance to second base. In (b), the umpire could award second base if the umpire's judgment the runner would have reached second base had there been no obstruction. (3-41; 8-13)

**SITUATION D:** With R1 on second, B2 hits a fly ball to F8 who makes the catch. R1 who is near third base when the catch is made, attempts to return, but is obstructed by F6 and is tagged out.

**RULING:** If in the umpire's judgment, R1 could not have made it safely to second, the umpire would leave the runner at second base. If the umpire felt that the runner could have made it to third base safely, third base would be awarded. (3-41; 8-13)

**SITUATION E:** On a hit and run with R1 on first base, B2 hits a ground ball between first and second. F4 dives for the ball. R1 sees that she cannot avoid F4 in time and elects to hurdle her. F4, in getting up, makes contact with R1.

**RULING:** At the time R1 made a commitment to hurdle, F4 was lying on the ground. R1 is legal, even if contact is made. If by getting up, F4 contacts R1, F4 should be called for obstruction if she does not have the ball. (8-15-B-4; 8-18-C)

## VERBAL OBSTRUCTION

**SITUATION A:** R1 attempts to steal second. (a) F5 yells "get back get back". R1 starts back to first where she is tagged out. (b) F5, seeing F2 going to the outfield, yells "slide". R1 slides late into 2B. (c) F5 yells to F3 "you have the bag".

**RULING:** In (a) and (b), this is verbal obstruction and the umpire should call "obstruction" and signal a delayed dead ball. The umpire will award R1 the base or bases she would have reached in the umpire's judgment had there been no obstruction. In (c), this is normal defensive communications. (3-41, 8-13, 8-15-B-4, 10-5, 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 where she 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 her the base or bases she would have reached in the umpire's judgment had there been no obstruction. (3-41; 8-13, 8-15-B-4, 10-5) In addition, F2 is guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct and is ejected (11-2-W)

## 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. Umpire will also issue a warning on fake tag. (3-41; 8-13, 8-15-B-4; 10-5; 11-2-A)

## DETACHED EQUIPMENT

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

**RULING:** R2 is out. Both R1 and B3 are awarded two bases from their positions when F3's detached mitt or glove touched the thrown ball. In this situation, or any other situation where the detached glove or mitt touches a ball, prior to the ball becoming dead because of going into a dead-ball area, the rule governing detached player equipment prevail. 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-2)

**SITUATION B:** R1 is on second base. A fielder then throws her 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. The third baseman throws the glove which contacts the ball on fair ground and the ball comes to rest on fair ground.

**RULING:** Under detached equipment this is a three base award, all runners score and the B/R is out on the infield fly. (8-14-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 first-base line enabling B4 to reach first and second while F1 chases down the ball. F1 then overthrows third attempting to put out R1. The ball goes into the stands.

**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 has reached second prior to the thrown ball leaving the hand of F1. (8-14-C-3; 10-3-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 touch the fly ball. The ball then rebounds off the fence, strikes the fielder's glove and ricochets over the fence in fair territory.

**RULING:** Home Run. Any fair batted ball that goes over the fence in fair territory without touching the ground is a home run. (8-14-A-1)

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

**RULING:** The awards are made from the time of the pitch. B2 and R1 are awarded two bases. R1 will end up on third, while B2 will get second base. (8-14-C-1)

**SITUATION E:** No outs, R1 on First, B2 lines out to F6. As R1 returns to 1B, F6 throws the ball out of play.

**RULING:** R1 is awarded 3B. The fact R1 is returning to 1B does not matter. She is awarded 2 bases from last base touched. (8-14-C-3)

**SITUATION F:** R1 is on 1B when B2 hits a fly ball. The ball is caught as R1 rounds 2B on way to 3B. R1 returns to 1B as F8 throws ball out of play. (a) R1 was between 3B and 2B when the ball was thrown, or (b) R1 was between 2B and 1B when the ball was thrown.

**RULING:** Because R1 was retreating to 1B he is allowed to continue and retouch. In (a) R1 is awarded home, in (b) R1 is awarded 3B. (8-15-C)

## BALL CARRIED INTO DEAD BALL TERRITORY

**SITUATION A:** How are awards determined when a fielder carries or throws a live ball into the dugout or any dead-ball area?

**RULING:** The award is one base if

- a ball is unintentionally carried into a dugout or other dead-ball area, or
- a fielder loses possession and the ball goes out of play, or
- a pitch goes into dead ball area, the award is one base.

Any other time a live ball is carried or thrown into dead-ball area, the award is two bases. (8-14-C-5; 8-14-D-1; 10-3-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, in his/her opinion, they would have reached had there been no spectator interference. (8-14-E-I, 10-3-I)

## BATTER RUNNER INTERFERENCE

**SITUATION A:** With R1 on third base, R2 on first and two outs, B5 hits a fair slow roller toward first base. B5 interferes with F3, who is trying to field the ball. However, R1 score 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. (8-18-6, 4-2-B-3)

**SITUATION B:** There are no runners on base with two outs; B3 has a count of 3-2. 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 into her, knocking her down.

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

## 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 any runners on base will return to the base they were at, at the time of the pitch. (8-17-C)

**SITUATION B:** R1 on First; B2 hits a fair fly ball to F6. B2 does not run. F6 lets ball bounce and throws F6-F4-F3.

**RULING:** Double Play (8-17-C; 8-18-M)

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

**RULING:** Manipulating the ball to the ground is prohibited, because the act violates the spirit of the rule. Allowing the ball to drop to the ground untouched is not considered an intentionally dropped ball, as long as it was not touched. If the ball is intentionally dropped, it is dead immediately, B5 is out and all runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. (8-17-C)

## THREE FOOT RUNNING LANE

**SITUATION A:** With the bases loaded, B4, who bats 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 is on her way to first base. B4 is in fair territory, but not reached the 30-foot running lane.

**RULING:** There is no violation, unless the batter-runner intentionally interfered with F3's throw. (8-17-F)

**SITUATION B:** With R1 on third base, B2 hits a fair ground ball to F3 who fields the ball beyond first base. F3 throws to F2 attempting to retire R1. The throw hit B2 who is running on the foul line.

**RULING:** B2 has not interfered, since she was running in the prescribed base path, the same as if advancing toward any other base. (8-18-A)

**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 her left foot in the three foot lane and her right foot completely out of the three foot lane. (a) F2 throw and hits B1 who is to the right of the three foot lane (b) F2 realizes she can not throw without hitting B1 and does not throw.

**RULING:** (a) B1 is out for interfering with the catcher's throw (b) Live ball. F2 must throw to have interference. (8-18-F)

## BATTER RUNNER RETREATING TOWARD HOME

**SITUATION A:** With R1 on first base, B2 bunts to F3 who fields the ball on the first bounce near the foul line. B2 stops and retreats toward home plate to avoid being tagged out by F3.

**RULING:** The batter is out as soon as she retreats. The ball is dead immediately and R1 must return to first base if she had not reached second base at the time of the infraction. (8-17-G)

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

**RULING:** Legal. R1 may retreat without penalty. To retire R1, R1 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. (8-17-I)

**SITUATION B:** With three balls and no strikes on B2 and (a) R1 on second, or (b) no one on base, the next pitch is ball four and goes into the stands.

**RULING:** In both (a) and (b), B2 is entitled to first base only, and in (a) R1 is awarded third base. (8-14-D-1)

**SITUATION C:** With two outs, the bases loaded and a three-and-two count on B6, the next pitch is a wild pitch. R1 begins advancing to home. R2, on second base, is off with the pitch. She rounds third base, but is caught off the base by an excellent throw by F6 for the third out. R1 had not touched home when R2 was tagged out at third.

**RULING:** R1 became entitled to home as soon as ball four was declared. Consequently, as soon as R1 touches the plate, her run counts. (8-14-D-4)

## 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:** If F2 does not throw to first, there is a chance B3 could reach base safely. However, B3 should be declared out if she entered dead-ball territory. (8-17-J). This rule does not apply in the 10 and under program. The batter is out. (8-17-I, 15-3)

**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:** As soon as B2 starts to run to first, the umpire shall announce that B2 is out (because of the third strike and first base being occupied). The ball remains live. (7-14-D)

**SITUATION C:** With two outs and two strikes on B3, 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, the ball is not caught because it hit the dirt. B3 can attempt to advance. (8-4-B)

## RUNNER LEAVING BASE PATH

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

**RULING:** B1 is considered to have established her baseline directly from that position to the base she is moving toward. (8-18-A-NOTE)

**SITUATION B:** R3 is on third base and R1 is on first with no outs. B1 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 automatically out. The ball is live. B1 is out. R1 may attempt to advance at her own peril. (8-18-S)

## RUNNER LEAPING FIELDER

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

**RULING:** Legal. A runner may leap over or hurdle a defensive player who is lying on the ground. (8-13, 8-18-C-NOTE, 8-18-G)

**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:** R2 is out for hurdling over F2. R2's run does not count. The ball is alive unless interference is called. (8-18-C)

## RUNNER INTERFERES WITH FIELDER

**SITUATION A:** All bases occupied and no outs when B4 hits a ground ball to F4. As (a) F4 is fielding the ball or (b) the ball bounces off F4 but remains within reach, and R3 collides with her.

**RULING:** In both (a) and (b) The ball became dead when the interference occurred. R3 is declared out. If this 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 runner closest to home would be declared out. All other runners must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. (8-18-B, 8-18-H)

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

**RULING:** In (a) and (b), B4 is out, because of the infield-fly rule. In (a), R1 is out and the ball becomes dead. In (b), R1 is not out unless she intentionally interfered. The ball would be ruled dead or live depending on 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). As R1 advances toward home, R1 contacts F5 causing F5 to miss the fly ball.

**RULING:** R1 is out for interference, B4 is awarded first base and all other runners are forced to advance because of the batter-runner being awarded first base. (8-18-G)

**SITUATION D:** With R1 on first, B2 hits a grounder between first and second with R1 hindering F4's throw to first.

**RULING:** R1 is out and the ball becomes dead when the interference occurs. If the interference clearly prevented B2 from being put out at first as part of a double play, the umpire shall call B2 out. (8-18-F)

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

**RULING:** R1 is out. R2 may also be out if the interference prevented a double play. If R2 is not ruled out, she must return to the base occupied at time of the interference, which was second base. B3 would be awarded first base. (8-4-E-NOTE3, 8-18-H; 10-3-E)

## INTERFERENCE BY A RETIRED PLAYER

**SITUATION A:** R1 is on third. B2 hits a slow roller to the shortstop who attempts to throw R1 out at the plate. F2 receives the throw behind plate. Realizing she cannot make a play on R1, she turns to throw B2 out who is advancing to second and (a) is run into by R1 after R1 has crossed the plate causing her to drop the ball (contact is not malicious); (b) is maliciously run into by R1 after R1 has crossed the plate; (c) same as (b) except in the judgment of the umpire the collision was a deliberate attempt to stop the throw to second.

**RULING:** The run would score in (a), (b) and (c), because R1 interfered after touching the plate. If in the umpire's judgment the interference prevented B2 from being put out, the umpire shall call her out. In (b) and (c), R1 is ejected for malicious contact. (8-18-H-NOTE1)

**SITUATION B:** With R1 on third base and no outs, B2 bunts. As F1 fields the ball, R1 holds near third base. When F1 throws to first base, R1 tries to score. B2 is put out at first base. As F3 attempts to play on R1 at the plate, she 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 R1.

**RULING:** If, in the umpire's judgment, B2 hindered F3's play on R1, Dead Ball; R1 also shall be declared out. (8-18-H)

**SITUATION B:** With R1 on third base; no outs and two strikes, B2 swings at a pitch and misses. F2 catches the pitched ball for the third strike. B2 advances toward first and F2 throws toward first making a play on B2. R1 advances home and scores.

**RULING:** The guiding principal is that the defense should be aware of the situation (i.e. that the batter is out). So, 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 the player ran knowing they are out.

Unsportsmanlike conduct could be ruled on a coach who persuades a runner to advance knowing they are out. (11-2-L)

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)

## INTERFERENCE BY A COACH

**SITUATION A:** R3 is on third and R1 on first with no outs. B1 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 declared out. The out on B1 stands. The ball remains live and in play. (3-39-A, 8-18-H, 10-4-E)

## MISSED BASE – APPEAL PLAY

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

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

**SITUATION B:** With R1 on second, R2 on first and one out, B4 hits a double. Both runners cross home plate but R1 fails to touch third. R1 (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.

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

**SITUATION C:** With R1 on first, B2 hits safely to center field. The ball (a) goes over the fence in flight; or (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. (8-14, 8-15, 8-18-J, 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; (b) before R1 touches third. In both A & B R1 missed 2nd base.

**RULING:** In (a) and (b), R1 would be awarded home. In both cases, the defense must appeal R1 missing second base. In (a) R1 cannot return and retouch second after the ball became dead, because she has touched the next succeeding base. In (b), If R1 does not return to touch second base before touching the awarded base(s) and the defensive team properly appeals, the umpire shall declare R1 out. (8-14-D-3, 8-18-J, 8-18-T)

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

**RULING:** If the runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made. F3 must tell the umpire she's appealing B1 missing first base before B1 returns to the base. (8-10)

**SITUATION F:** R1 is on second and R2 on first when B3 doubles. R1 advances to home plate but fails to touch third. R2 touches second, third and home after which (a) R1 realizes her 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 R1 out. No runner may return to 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, R1 would be out if properly appealed. (8-6-NOTE)

## 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 retuning runner to retouch intervening base. (8-6)

**SITUATION B:** R1 is on first when B2 hits a fly ball to right field. R1 goes half way 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 play and the umpire shall call R1 out for not retouching first base. (8-14-C-3, 8-18-J, 8-18-T)

**SITUATION A:** The runner returning from the area of third base to touch first base because the base was missed runs directly to first base without touching second.

**RULING:** The runner is subject to being called out on appeal for not retouching 2B. (8-6)

## 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. R1 leaves first after F4 touched the ball but before the catch.

**RULING:** This is a legal advance by R1. B2 is out. (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 R1 advances to home after the catch. F9 throws to home but R1 scores. F2 throws the ball to F4 who tags out R3 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. However, R1 would score because she scored before the third out, which was not a force out. (8-18-J, 9-8)

**SITUATION C:** With one out and R1 on third, B3 flies to F7 for the second out. R1 scores after the catch, but the umpire observes R1 left third before the catch.

**RULING:** The umpire must wait for the defensive team to make an appeal before calling R1 out. (8-18-J)

**SITUATION D:** R2 is on second and R1 on first with one out. B1 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. (8-18-J; 9-8, 9-9)

## RUN SCORES

**SITUATION A:** R3 is on third and R1 on first with two outs. B1 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 touched the plate.

**RULING:** The out on R1 is a force out and no run scores. (9-8)

**SITUATION B:** Bases loaded with two outs. With a 3-2 count on B1, the runners break with the pitch. B1 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 is awarded home and R3's run scores. (FP Interp)

## BATTED BALL HITS BATTER

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

**RULING:** B4 is out. R2 is not out unless she intentionally interferes. (3-35; 8-16-H; 8-18-N)

**SITUATION B:** R1 is advancing to second 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 penalty in (a) unless R1 purposely allows the ball to touch her. In (b), unless another fielder had an opportunity to make a play, the ball remains live. (8-18-N)

**SITUATION C:** With R1 on second, B2 hits to F6 who is playing deep. The ball is touched by F6 and dropped so that it rebounds into R1.

**RULING:** Since the ball was touched by a fielder first, the ball subsequently touching R1 is ignored. (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; R3 is forced to Second; R1 is returned to Third. (8-18-N; 10-3-E)

**SITUATION B:** With R1 on second, B2 hits between F5 and F6, both of whom are playing close for a possible bunt. The ball touches R1 and deflects to foul ground. F6 was in such a position that there was no chance to play the ball.

**RULING:** If R1 accidentally touched the ball, it is ignored because the batted ball passed a fielder and no other fielder had an opportunity to make an out. Fair Ball; Live Ball. If R1 intentionally deflected the batted ball, the umpire shall rule interference, the ball becomes dead, R1 is declared out and B2 is awarded first base. (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 she passed R1. (8-18-P)

**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-P)

**SITUATION C:** With R1 at second base, R2 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. (11-2-L; 14-12-I)

## ABANDONING A BASE

**SITUATION A:** B1 reaches first safely. In her overrun, she brakes for second and then "gives up" far away from the baseline.

**RULING:** If B1 is attempting to reach a base, she must be tagged out, but the fielder is not expected to chase her into the outfield. In this case, B1 is out for giving up. (8-10; 8-18-J, 8-18-R)

**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:** B2 may be declared out if the umpire judges the act of B2 to be considered abandoning her effort to run the bases. (8-18-R)

## TWO RUNNERS OCCUPYING THE SAME BASE

**SITUATION A:** With F6 trying to tag out R1 between second and third, R2 advances to second. R1 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 R2, when tagged, is out. If only one is on the base when tagged, neither is out. (8-6-F)

**SITUATION B:** With R1 on second base and R2 on first, B3 hits a deep fly ball over F8's head. R2 advances to third as R1 gets in a rundown between home and third. R1 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 R2.

**RULING:** When obstruction occurred, the umpire should verbally call out "obstruction" and signal a delay dead ball. The obstructed runner would be protected. When R1 returned back to the bag safely, obstruction was ignored since this was the base she would have reached had there been no obstruction. Since R1 is the runner entitled to the base, R2 would be ruled out on the tag. (3-41)

## RULE 9 - Appeals

### LIVE BALL

**SITUATION A:** With R1 on third and one out, B3 hits safely. R1, while watching the ball, misses home plate. F2 calls for the ball, steps on home to retire R1 and throws to third to get B3 sliding.

**RULING:** Legal. A runner may be put out by the defense for missing a base during a live-ball appeal. (10-2)

### DEAD BALL

**SITUATION B:** The second baseman, not possessing the ball, after time has been requested and called, appeals to the umpire that the runner on first base left early.

**RULING:** The umpire will deliver a decision on the dead ball appeal. (10-3)

### BATTING 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 is returned to 1B. In (d) no correction is made and B7 and B8 do not bat again until their regular time. (7-2, 9-10)

**SITUATION B:** The batting order is B1, B2, B3, B4. If B3 erroneously bats in place of B1 and the batting infraction is not detected by anyone before a pitch to the next batter, is B2 or B4 the next batter?

**RULING:** B4, since her name follows that of B3. Neither B1 nor B2 may legally bat until their time comes again as listed. (9-10-D)

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

**RULING:** B3 is declared out. R1 returns to second, R2 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:** B3 is declared out. R1 returns to second and B5 is removed from first base. The next batter is B4, who will be followed by B5. (9-10-A-5 NOTE)

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

**RULING** B2 is out for not batting in proper order. B3 is the next batter. In addition, a). B1 is also out. B3 is removed from base. Two outs; b). B3 is not out because B2's out supersedes. B3 is removed from base. One Out; c). B1 is also out. B3 is not out because B2's out supersedes. B3 is removed from base. Two outs (9-10-B)

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

**RULING:** In (a), until one hand is taken off the ball or F1 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 may appeal batting out of order. In (b), the defense would not be allowed to appeal batting out of order because the infraction was not discovered prior to the next pitch (legal or illegal). (9-10-B, 6-1-E-1)

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

**RULING:** All play as a result of B5's walk is now legal. B6 is the next batter. (9-10-D)

**SITUATION H:** B6 is at bat with a count of 1 ball and 2 strikes, when the R1 on first is called out for leaving the base early for the third out of the inning.

**RULING:** B6 returns to bat at the beginning of the next inning for her team with no count. (9-10)

## 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 attempt to double off R1. The throw goes into the dugout. R1 is awarded Third 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. (10-8-C)

**SITUATION B:** B1 singles to right. F9 throws the ball into the dugout in attempting a throw to F3. The umpire awards B1 third base, if the batter-runner had touched first base but not yet touched second base when the ball left the hand of F9. B1 cut across the infield to third.

**RULING:** The defensive team must appeal that B1 did not touch second on her way to third, if so the umpire will rule B1 out. (10-8-C)

**SITUATION C:** With R1 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 R1 back at third and issue a warning to B2 for her behavior. If B2 repeats similar acts, she should be ejected. (11-2-L)

## RULE 11 - Sportsmanship

**SITUATION A:** B1 throws her 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. (11-1)

**SITUATION B:** After hitting a line drive toward F5, B1 throws her 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 fair hit ball is a base hit, B1 will be replaced with a substitute runner. In (b), the umpire will warn the team for carelessly thrown bat, and if the act is repeated, any subsequent offender on that team will be restricted to the beach/dugout for the duration of the game. (11-2-B)

### MALICIOUS CONTACT

**SITUATION A:** F5 who has the ball is in position at third base to make a tag on advancing R1. R1 (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 her. Additionally, in (a) R1 is ejected for malicious contact. (11-2-U) In (c) and (d), R1 is safe.

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

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

**SITUATION C:** R1 is advancing to home and creates malicious contact with F2 who is standing out of the baseline. F2 does not have the ball and there is no play at the plate.

**RULING:** This is considered to be interference and the ball is dead immediately. The runner is declared out, and because the act is malicious, the runner is also ejected from the game. Any other runners must return to the base they occupied at the time of the infraction. If declaring the ball dead prevented the defense from completing an obvious double play, the umpire shall call the runner closest to home out. (8-18-D; 11-2-V)

**SITUATION D:** With R1 on third and R2 on second, B4 hits safely and while advancing, maliciously runs over the second baseman after (a) R1 has scored, (b) R2 has rounded third base, (c) both runners have scored.

**RULING:** In (a) and (c), runs would score and 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-V)

**SITUATION E:** R2 is on second with one out when B1 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:** F1 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. (11-2-V) F3 shall not be ejected even though F3 left her position, she was moving away from the action.

## RULE 12 - Coach/Manager or Player Ejection

### EJECTION

**SITUATION A:** An ejected coach goes to the car. May the coach use walkie-talkies to communicate with the team's assistant coach?

**RULING:** No. Such an act could result in the game being forfeited. (11-2-F; 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 have the coach to leave. If the coach refuses, the game shall be forfeited and the league director or tournament director should be notified. (12-1)

**SITUATION C:** After the last out of the game, a coach confronts the umpire in an unsportsmanlike manner.

**RULING:** The coach is ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct. Any coach or player ejected after the game has ended must sit out their next game. This is to prevent a coach or player from unloading on an umpire at the end of a game. (11-2-R, 12-2, 14-6)

## RULE 13 - Protest

### RULE PROTEST

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

**RULING:** The umpire should get the tournament director and the UIC and the tournament director and the UIC shall make the ruling on the play. (13-1)

### PLAYER ELIGIBILITY PROTEST

**SITUATION A:** P1 played on team red, two games later she is playing for a different team, the coach of the other team sees her playing and protest that she is playing for two teams.

**RULING:** The umpire shall stop the game and get the tournament director and the tournament director shall look in to this matter, if she did play for two teams the team that she played for first becomes the team of record (13-5), the game is forfeited, team ejected from tournament and place last in standings.

## 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. (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. It is customary for the tournament director or umpire to wait 30 minutes before making such an announcement. If, at the end of 30 minutes, there is still doubt as to whether or not the game may be resumed, such an announcement should be until the tournament director or umpire is quite certain that no further play will be possible within a reasonable amount of time. (10-7-A)

**SITUATION B:** F1's cap frequently falls off her head. And in the umpire's judgment it is either distracting to the batter or delaying the game

**RULING:** The umpire shall instruct the defensive team's coach that F1's cap must be secured or removed. If this situation is not corrected, F1 will be removed as pitcher. (14-12-J)

**SITUATION C:** With R1 on first and a three-ball, two-strike count on B2, R1 attempts to steal second on the next pitch which is ball four. The base umpire, R1, and F4 do not realize it was ball four and R1 is called out on the play. R1 heads for the bench and is tagged out during the confusion.

**RULING:** R1 will be allowed to go back to second base because the umpire's call caused R1 to leave the base. (14-12-O)

**SITUATION D:** With R1 on second, B2 hits a line drive that strikes F1 directly in the face. As F1 falls to her knees, placing her hands over her face, the umpire, in her judgment, believing the injury could be serious, immediately calls time as the injured player's coach rushes to assist the injured player.

**RULING:** In this unique situation where safety has taken priority, the umpire has to use her judgment to a fair outcome. If, in the umpire's judgment, B2 and R1 would have advanced one base, then the umpire shall make a one base award. (14-12-J)

## **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)

**Any comments, corrections or rules not covered in the case book contact**

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