

Baseball Rules Interpretations - 2018

SITUATION 1: With a runner on second base and one out, the batter attempts to check his swing on a 3-2 count. As the pitch skips by the catcher, the batter takes off for first base. The plate umpire eventually checks with the base umpire as to whether the batter checked his swing (in which case it would be ball four) or if the batter did swing at the pitch (in which case it would be strike three). As the batter runs through first base, the base umpire answers the plate umpire by announcing that the batter did not swing, that he successfully checked his swing. The catcher throws the ball to the first baseman, who tags the batter as he directly returns to first base.

RULING: The batter is not out. A batter-runner who reaches first base safely and then overruns or overslides may immediately return without liability of being put out provided he does not attempt or feint an advance to second. This applies to base hits as well as a base on balls. (8-2-7)

SITUATION 2: The home team gives the home plate umpire and the opposing team its lineup card at the plate conference. No one notices that only eight players are listed to bat in the lineup. The pitcher is the defensive position that was not listed. In the bottom of the second inning, the ninth batting position comes to bat and the starting pitcher gets in the batter's box. At that time, the visiting team calls "Time," and shows the plate umpire that the ninth player for the home team is not listed. The visiting team's head coach argues that the game should be forfeited or the opposing coach should be ejected or the team must bat for the rest of the game with only eight players and each time the ninth position comes to bat an out must be called.

RULING: The omission should have been caught by the umpire and the coaches at the pre-game conference before the game. However, knowing that it is the pitcher who was left off the lineup, the plate umpire should allow the lineup card to be corrected by adding the pitching position and putting the starting pitcher in the spot. The game continues with no penalty to the home team. (1-1-2, 4-1-3)

SITUATION 3: Adams is the catcher for the home team and is to lead off in the bottom of the third inning. Smith pinch-hits for Adams and hits a lead-off single. The home team's head coach legally re-enters Adams into the game and then requests to have a courtesy runner run for Adams. The opposing coach argues that this is not legal.

RULING: This is legal. Smith was not the catcher of record the last half-inning the home team was on defense and, as a result, a courtesy runner cannot run for him. But the coach may choose to re-enter Adams, the catcher of record, and have a courtesy runner run for him. (Case Book CR 17)

SITUATION 4: Several members of Team A are wearing plastic wristbands in support of a cause for one of their team members. They were told that these bracelets are not considered jewelry.

RULING: Plastic bracelets are jewelry and shall not be worn. (1-5-12, 3-3-1d)

SITUATION 5: With one out and a runner on third base, the defense is warming up a pitcher in its bullpen, which is located inside the fence in live-ball territory along the left-field fence. A ball from the bullpen gets past the bullpen catcher and goes to the fence to the left of the catcher. Meanwhile, the pitcher throws a wild pitch that gets past the catcher and goes to the fence to the right of the catcher. The catcher retreats to the fence, picks up the bullpen ball and throws it to the pitcher covering the plate for an apparent out on the runner advancing home.

RULING: The runner is safe. Only the game ball can be used to record an out. (1-3-1)

SITUATION 6: The home team's pitcher, when he comes to the mound to pitch, brings his personal rosin bag with him. At the end of the half-inning, the pitcher picks up his rosin bag and takes it to the dugout with him.

RULING: This is not legal. The same rosin bag must be made available to both teams. The home team pitcher may use his rosin bag only if he leaves it on the mound for the opposing pitcher to use. [3-3-1f(4)]

SITUATION 7: A team has renovated its field with artificial turf throughout the playing area. At the home plate area, a "normal" plate was not put in. A part of the turf was painted the legal size and placement of a home plate. Is this legal?

RULING: Yes, this is legal for a home plate. (1-2-10)

SITUATION 8: R3 and R2 are on base with one out. B1 hits a single to the outfield. R3 scores and R2 is thrown out at home for the second out. B1 misses first base and ends up on second base. The defense appeals that the batter-runner missed first base and the appeal is upheld for the third out. Does R3's run count?

RULING: No, it does not count. A run does not count if the runner advances to home plate during action in which the third out is made by the batter-runner before he touches first base. (9-1-1a)

SITUATION 9: The visiting team arrives for the game with all fielders wearing camo sleeves. The pitcher had black compression sleeves. The home team's coach complains that this is not legal as all players must be dressed the same.

RULING: Camo sleeves worn by a pitcher are not allowed. Other players on the team may wear camo compression sleeves provided they are approximately the same length and are not ragged, frayed or slit. (1-4-2)

SITUATION 10: A pitcher has a black compression sleeve that comes to his elbow on his non-pitching arm and a dark-colored compression sleeve that comes to his wrist on his pitching arm.

RULING: This is legal. (1-4-2)

SITUATION 11: With R2 on second base, a grounded batted ball deflects off F1's ankle. The ball deflects toward F5 as he moves in to field the ball and he is run over by R2. Both R2 and the batter-runner are safe. Is this interference or obstruction?

RULING: This is interference and R2 will be declared out. F5 must be given the opportunity to field this batted ball on his initial attempt. The batter-runner will be awarded first base unless it is judged the interference prevented the defense from making a double play. (8-4-2g)

SITUATION 12: The pitcher's spot in the lineup is due to bat. The coach substitutes another player for the pitcher and, after the player gets on base, requests that a courtesy runner run for him.

RULING: This is not legal. The player is a pinch-hitter, not the pitcher of record the last half-inning on defense. The team may not use a courtesy runner for him. (Suggested Speed-Up Rules)

SITUATION 13: With the bases loaded, the batter hits a ground ball to the second baseman, who attempts to tag out R1 who is advancing to second base from first. A short run-down ensues in which R1 is eventually tagged after the runner from third base touches home plate. The offensive team's coach argues that the run should count as it scored before the tag-out which was not played as a force out.

RULING: The run does not score. The tag-out is still a force out and a run cannot score when the third out is made by another runner being forced out. (9-1-1b)

SITUATION 14: A runner is caught in a rundown between home and third base. The third baseman is chasing the runner back to third and has clear possession of the ball when he reaches out and tags the runner. After the tag, the fielder stumbles and within a few steps falls to the ground causing the ball to come out of the glove.

RULING: The runner is safe. The fielder must maintain control of the ball from the tag through any subsequent activity. Falling down and dropping the ball results in a no tag on the runner. [2-24-4, 8-4-2h(2)]

SITUATION 15: The batter's hit deflects off home plate and the catcher stands up and catches the ball in midair. The plate umpire points fair and expects the catcher to throw to first base, but instead, the catcher throws the ball back to the pitcher who immediately assumes his pitching position on the pitching plate. No one on either team realizes the ball was declared to be fair, so neither the batter nor the defense takes any resulting action. What should the plate umpire do?

RULING: The umpire should continue to signal a fair ball. Regardless of how much time has elapsed or how the two teams have reacted, the umpire must continue with the call as he sees it. (10-2-1)

SITUATION 16: While taking his warm-up pitches, the plate umpire notices the pitcher is wearing a medical-alert bracelet on his pitching hand. Is the pitcher allowed to continue to wear the medical-alert bracelet? RULING: If a medical-alert bracelet is to be worn by the pitcher, it shall be worn on the non-pitching hand. (1-5-12)

SITUATION 17: With the bases loaded and one out, the batter hits a high pop fly that is properly declared to be an infield fly. The ball glances off the first baseman's glove over fair territory and bounces into the first-base dugout.

RULING: The ball is dead and the batter is declared out. The runners from third base and second base are awarded home, and the runner from first base is awarded third base. (2-5-1f, 2-19-1, 5-1-1f, 8-3-3c, 8-4-1j)

SITUATION 18: With the game tied in the bottom of the seventh inning, the home team has runners on first base and second base. During a time-out, R1 and R2 switch places to put the fastest runner on second base so that the team has a better chance to score from second base. The ball is made live and the defensive coach notices the changes and tells the plate umpire.

RULING: The umpire shall call both runners out (one for passing a runner and another out for running the bases in reverse order) and eject them. A warning is given to the coach unless the umpire knows without a doubt the coach was involved, in which case the coach would be ejected. If the switch was detected before the ball was made live, the infraction would be corrected with only a warning given to the team. [3-3-1f(4); 8-4-2m, n]

SITUATION 19: With a runner on first base, the batter hits a base hit to the right-field fence. The runner from first goes all the way to third base and, as he steps on the base, it dislodges and slides into foul territory. The runner takes several steps toward home, slips and heads back to third where he touches the ground where the base would have been as the third baseman applies a tag on him.

RULING: The part of the ground where the base was located shall serve as the base. It will be umpire's judgment as to whether the runner reached the place where the base was located before being tagged. (8-4-2h1)

SITUATION 20: With one out and runners on second base and third base, the batter hits a deep ball into right center field. The right fielder makes a spectacular catch and an even more spectacular throw to get the runner from third base out at home plate for the third out. The defensive team in the first-base dugout runs out of the dugout to celebrate the catch and throw to home. One of its team members bumps the batter as he turns to head to his dugout on the third-base side. As the batter walks past the pitcher, words are exchanged and they begin to fight.

RULING: With the ball being dead, there is no penalty for the defensive team being outside the dugout. When the one defensive player bumps the batter, a team warning (at a minimum) should be given to the team and, depending on the circumstances, the defensive player might be ejected for his action. The batter and the pitcher are ejected for fighting. Any players on either team who moved from their position when the fight began shall also be ejected. (3-3-1f PENALTY, 3-3-1p)