

Top 40 Baseball Rules Myths

1. The hands are considered part of the bat.

The hands are part of a person's body. If a pitch hits the batter's hands the ball is dead; if he swung at the pitch, a strike is called (NOT a foul). If he was avoiding the pitch, he is awarded first base.

Rules: 2.00 PERSON, TOUCH, STRIKE (e) and 6.05(f)

2. The batter-runner must turn to his right after over-running first base.

The batter-runner may turn left or right, provided that if he turns left he does not make an attempt to advance. An attempt is a judgment made by the umpire. The requirement is that the runner must immediately return to first after overrunning or oversliding it. Rule: 7.08(c and j)

3. If the batter breaks his wrists when swinging, it's a strike.

A strike is a judgment by the umpire as to whether the batter attempted to strike the ball. Breaking the wrists, or the barrel of the bat crossing the plate are simply guides to making the judgment of an attempt, these are not rules.

Rule: 2.00 STRIKE

4. If a batted ball hits the plate first it's a foul ball.

The plate is in fair territory. There is nothing special about it. If a batted ball hits it, it is treated like any other batted ball.

5. The batter cannot be called out for interference if he is in the batter's box.

The batter's box is not a safety zone. A batter could be called out for interference if the umpire judges that interference could or should have been avoided. The batter is protected while in the box for a short period of time. After he has had time to react to the play he could be called for interference if he does not move out of the box and interferes with a play.

Many people believe the batter's box is a safety zone for the batter. It is not. The batter MAY be called out for interference although he is within the box. The key words, impede, hinder, confuse or obstruct apply to this situation.

An umpire must use good judgment. The batter cannot be expected to disappear. If he has a chance to avoid interference after he has had time to react to the situation and does not, he is guilty. If he just swung at a pitch, or had to duck a pitch and is off-balance, he can't reasonably be expected to then immediately avoid a play at the plate. However, after some time passes, if a play develops at the plate, the batter must get out of the box and avoid interference. The batter should always be called out when he makes contact and is outside the box. Rules: 2.00 INTERFERENCE, 6.06(c)

6. The ball is dead on a foul-tip.

There is nothing foul about a foul-tip. If the ball nicks the bat and goes sharp and direct to the catcher's hand or glove and is caught, this is a foul-tip by definition. A foul-tip is a strike and the ball is alive. It is the same as a swing-and-miss. If the ball is not caught, it is a foul ball. If the nicked pitch first hits the catcher somewhere other than the hand or glove, it is not a foul-tip, it is a foul ball. Rules: 2.00 FOUL-TIP, STRIKE

7. The batter may not switch batter's boxes after two strikes.

The batter can switch boxes at any time, provided he does not do it after the pitcher is ready to pitch. Rule: 6.06(b)

8. The batter who batted out of order is the person declared out.

The PROPER batter is the one called out. Any hit or advance made by the batter or runners due to the hit, walk, error or other reason is nullified. The next batter is the one who follows the proper batter who was called out. Rule: 6.07(b, 1)

9. The batter may not overrun first base when he gets a base-on-balls.

Rule 7.08(c and j) simply state that a batter-runner must immediately return after overrunning first base. It doesn't state any exceptions as to how the player became a runner. It could be a hit, walk, error or dropped third strike. In Little League the runner may overrun. In FED rules he may not and in Professional baseball, he may not. In other programs that use the OBR he may if that is how the program rules it.

To overrun means that the runner's momentum carried him straight beyond the base after touching it. It does not mean to turn and attempt to advance. Nor does it mean that he stepped over it or stopped on it and then got off of it.

10. The batter is out if he starts for the dugout before going to first after a dropped third strike.

The batter may attempt first base anytime prior to entering the dugout or a dead ball area.

The batter becomes a runner when the third strike is not caught. Therefore, if there are 2 outs and there is a runner at first, first and second, or bases loaded, the batter creates a force by becoming a runner. These runners are all forced to advance and an out may be obtained by making a play on any one of them. If the bases are loaded the catcher may step on home or throw to third, second or first. Rule: 6.05(c), 6.09(b) Casebook interpretation

11. If the batter does not pull the bat out of the strike zone while in the bunting position, it's an automatic strike.

A strike is an attempt to hit the ball. Simply holding the bat over the plate is not an attempt. This is umpire judgment. Rule 2.00 STRIKE Rule 2.00 BUNT is a batted ball not swung at, but INTENTIONALLY met with the bat. The key words are "intentionally met". If no attempt is made to make contact with a ball outside the strike zone, it should be called a ball. An effort must be made to intentionally meet the ball with the bat.

12. The batter is out if a bunted ball hits the ground and bounces back up and hits the bat while the batter is holding the bat.

The rule says the BAT cannot hit the ball a second time. When the BALL hits the bat, it is not an out. Also, when the batter is still in the box when this happens, it's treated as simply a foul ball. If the batter is out of the box and the bat is over fair territory when the second hit occurs, the batter would be out. Rules: 6.05(h) and 7.09(b)

13. The batter is out if his foot touches the plate.

To be out, the batter's foot must be ENTIRELY outside the box when he contacts the pitch and the ball goes fair or foul. He is not out if he does not contact the pitch. There is no statement about touching the plate. The toe could be on the plate and the heel could be touching the line of the box, which means the foot is not entirely outside the box. Rule: 6.06(a)

14. The batter-runner is always out if he runs outside the running lane after a bunted ball.

The runner must be out of the lane AND cause interference. He is not out simply for being outside the lane. He could be called for interference even while in the lane. This is a judgment call.

The runner may step out of the lane a step or two before the base if he moves from within the lane to out of it. If he is out of the lane the whole distance to the base and is hit with a throw, he should be out. Rules: 2.00 INTERFERENCE, 6.05(k), 7.09(k)

15. A runner is out if he slaps hands or high-fives other players, after a homerun is hit over the fence.

The ball is dead on a homerun over the fence. You can't be put out while the ball is dead except when you pass another runner. Rules: 5.02, 7.05(a)

16. Tie goes to the runner.

There is no such thing in the world of umpiring. The runner is either out or safe. The umpire must judge out or safe. It is impossible to judge a tie.

17. The runner gets the base he's going to, plus one on a ball thrown out-of-play.

When a fielder other than the pitcher throws the ball into dead ball area, the award is 2 bases. The award is from where the runners were at the time of the pitch if it is the first play by an infielder before all runners have advanced or from where each runner was physically positioned at the time the ball left the throwers hand on all other plays.

Rule: 7.05(g)

18. Anytime a coach touches a runner, the runner is out.

Rule 7.09(l) says the runner is out if the coach PHYSICALLY ASSISTS the runner. Hand slaps, back pats or simple touches are not physical assists.

19. Runners may never run the bases in reverse order.

In order to correct a base running mistake, the runner **MUST** retrace his steps and retouch the bases in reverse order. The only time a runner is out for running in reverse, is when he is making a travesty of the game or tries to confuse the defense. Rules: 7.08(l), 7.10(b)

20. The runner must always slide when the play is close.

There is no "must slide" rule. When the fielder has the ball in his possession, the runner has two choices; slide OR attempt to get around the fielder. He may NOT deliberately or maliciously contact the fielder, but he is NOT required to slide. If the fielder does not have possession but, is in the act of fielding, and contact is made, it is a no-call unless the contact was intentional and malicious. Rule: 7.08(a, 3) this rule does not apply to professionals.

21. The runner is always safe when hit by a batted ball while touching a base.

The bases are in fair territory. A runner is out when hit by a fair batted ball while touching a base, except when hit by an infield-fly or after the ball has passed a fielder and no other fielder had a play on the ball.

If the runner is touching first or third, he is not out unless the ball touches him over fair territory. If one foot is on the base and the other is in foul ground and he is hit on the foul ground foot, he is not out. It is a foul ball. (If the ball has not passed beyond first or third.) Rules: 5.09(f), 7.08(f)

22. A runner may not steal on a foul-tip.

There is nothing foul about a foul-tip. If the ball nicks the bat and goes to the catcher's glove and is caught, this is a foul-tip by definition. A foul-tip is a strike and the ball is alive. It is the same as a swing-and-miss. If the ball is not caught, it is a foul ball. Rules: 2.00 FOUL-TIP, STRIKE

23. It is a force out when a runner is called out for not tagging up on a fly ball.

A force play is when a runner is forced to advance because the batter became a runner. When the batter is out on a caught fly, all forces are removed. An out on an a failure to tag-up, is NOT a force out. Any runs that cross the plate before this out will count. Rules: 2.00 FORCE PLAY, 4.09

24. An appeal on a runner who missed a base cannot be a force out.

A runner must touch all the bases. If the runner misses a base to which he was forced because the batter became a runner and is put out before touching that base, the out is still a force play. If this is the third out, no runs may score. The base can be touched or the runner can be touched, either way it's a force out. Rules: 2.00 FORCE PLAY, TAG, 7.08(e), 7.10(b)

25. A runner is out if he runs out of the baseline to avoid a fielder who is fielding a batted ball.

The runner **MUST** avoid a fielder attempting to field a **BATTED** ball. A runner is out for running out of the baseline, only when attempting to avoid a tag. Rules: 7.08(a), 7.09(L)

26. Runners may not advance when an infield fly is called.

An Infield-fly is no different than any other fly ball in regard to the runners. The only difference is that they are never forced to advance because the batter is out whether the ball is caught or not. Rules: 2.00 INFIELD-FLY, 6.05(e), 7.10(a)

27. No run can score when a runner is called out for the third out for not tagging up.

Yes it can. This is not a force play. A force play is when a runner is forced to advance because the batter became a runner. When the batter is out on a caught fly, all forces are removed. An out on an a failure to tag-up, is NOT a force out. Any runs that cross the plate before this out will count. Rules: 2.00 FORCE PLAY, 4.09, 7.10(a)

28. A pitch that bounces to the plate cannot be hit.

A pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. It doesn't matter how it gets to the batter. The batter may hit any pitch that is thrown. A pitch that bounces before reaching the plate may never be a called strike or a legally caught third strike. Rule: 2.00 PITCH. (If the ball does not cross the foul line, it is not a pitch.)

29. The batter does not get first base if hit by a pitch after it bounces.

A pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. It doesn't matter how it gets to the batter. If the batter is hit by a pitch while attempting to avoid it, he is awarded first base. Rules: 2.00 PITCH, 6.08(b).

30. If a fielder holds a fly ball for 2 seconds it's a catch.

A catch is legal when the umpire judges that the fielder has COMPLETE control of the ball. The release of the ball must be voluntary and intentional. Rule: 2.00 CATCH

31. You must tag the base with your foot on a force out or appeal.

You can tag a base with ANY part of the body. Rules: 2.00 FORCE PLAY, PERSON, TAG, 7.08(e)

32. The ball is always immediately dead on a balk.

In Federation rules it is, not in any others. If a throw or pitch is made after the balk call, the ball is delayed dead. At the end of the play the balk may be enforced or not depending on what happened. On a throw; if ALL runners advance on the play, the balk is ignored. If not, the balk award is enforced from the time of pitch. On a pitch; if ALL runners INCLUDING the batter, advance on the play, the balk is ignored. Otherwise, it is no-pitch and the balk award is made from the time of the pitch. Rule: 8.05 PENALTY

33. If a player's feet are in fair territory when the ball is touched, it is a fair ball.

The position of the player's feet or any other part of the body is irrelevant. A ball is judged fair or foul based on the relationship between the ball and the ground at the time the ball is touched by the fielder. Rule: 2.00 FAIR, FOUL

34. The ball must always be returned to the pitcher before an appeal can be made.

An appeal may be made anytime the ball is alive. The only time the ball must go to the pitcher, is when time is out. The ball cannot be made live until the pitcher has the ball while on the rubber and the umpire says "Play." If time is not out, the appeal can be made immediately. Rule: 2.00 APPEAL, 5.11, 7.10

35. With no runners on base, it is a ball if the pitcher starts his windup and then stops.

A pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. If the ball is not delivered, it is not a pitch. Therefore it cannot be a ball. If this happens with runners on base it is a balk. The rule for LL is different. It is an illegal pitch and a ball with or without runners on base. Rule: 2.00 PITCH.

36. The pitcher must come to a set position before a pick-off throw.

The pitcher is required to come to a complete stop in the Set position before delivering the pitch, not before making a throw. Rule: 8.05(m)

37. The pitcher must step off the rubber before a pick-off throw.

If the pitcher steps off the rubber he is no longer the pitcher, he is a fielder. He can throw to a base from the rubber, provided he does not break any of the rules under rule 8.05

38. If a fielder catches a fly ball and then falls over the fence it is a homerun.

As long as the fielder is not touching the ground in dead ball territory when he catches the ball, it is a legal catch if he holds onto the ball and meets the definition of a catch. If the catch is not the third out and the fielder falls down in dead ball territory after catching the ball, all runners are awarded one base. If the fielder remains on his feet in dead ball territory after the catch, the ball is alive and he may make a play. (Except FED in which case the ball is dead and 1 base is awarded.) Rules: 2.00 CATCH, 5.10(f), 6.05(a), 7.04(c)

39. The ball is dead anytime an umpire is hit by the ball.

If an umpire is hit by a batted ball before it passes a fielder, the ball is dead. On any other batted or thrown ball, the ball is alive when the umpire is hit with the ball. Umpire interference also occurs when the plate umpire interferes with the catcher's attempt to prevent a stolen base. Rules: 2.00 INTERFERENCE, 5.09(b), 5.09(f)

40. The home plate umpire can overrule the other umps at anytime.

The umpire who made a call or ruling may ask for help if he wishes. No umpire may overrule another umpire's call. Rules: 9.02(b, c)