Force-Play Slide Rule Altered

The defensive player will no longer be able to stand on the base in an attempt to draw interference via the force-play slide rule in what is the most significant of the NCAA baseball rule changes for the 2007 season.

With the change, the runner will now be allowed to slide directly into and past the base on a force play, which means defensive players will no longer be able to stand on or behind the bag to make a throw and remain protected.

Runners will still be required to slide before the base in a direct line between the two bases, but they will no longer be required to stop on the bag. Contact with the fielder will be legal (and interference shall not be called) if a runner makes a legal slide into the base and contacts the fielder.

The fielder can no longer stand on or behind the bag in an attempt to draw an interference call via the force-play slide rule. As long as his slide is legal, the runner can slide directly into and through the bag on a force play without penalty.

Dropped Third Strike Procedure Clarified

The batter-runner’s actions following a dropped third strike are now more limited.

According to 7-11-u, the batter-runner shall now be declared out on a dropped third strike when he leaves the dirt circle heading toward his dugout.

The change brings the rule in line with the professional baseball rule change from 2006. Previously, the batter was called out only when he reached the dugout.

Play: With no runners on and one out, B4 has a 1-2 count. He swings and misses the next pitch, which the catcher fields on one bounce. B4’s team occupies the first-base dugout. The change brings the rule in line with the professional baseball rule change from 2006. Previously, the batter was called out only when he reached the dugout.

Play 2: If a college baseball game is played on a field with an all-dirt infield, how does the new rule come into play? Ruling 2: Umpires will have to use their best judgment to determine when a batter-runner would be outside of the traditional dirt circle, which by rule measures 26 feet in diameter. If there is doubt, the runner should not forfeit his opportunity to advance to first base.

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PUBLISHED BY REFEREE ENTERPRISES, INC.
Dear NCAA Umpires,

I want to thank you for your attendance at the NCAA umpire clinic and/or for viewing the 2007 rules clinic video. I want to again thank the staff at Referee magazine for its work on the preseason guide. I greatly appreciate their help in getting this valuable tool produced and out to umpires and coaches everywhere. We hope it will be another way to communicate rule changes and information about the Umpire Improvement Program (UIP) to umpires, coaches and administrators across the country.

It is imperative that all umpires work to develop a complete understanding of the rules, as written by the NCAA. There is a section of this newsletter that goes over the major differences between NCAA rules and those from high school and professional baseball (pages 8-9). The college rules are different because the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee correctly feels the game is not the same as that played at those other levels. Successful umpires will know the college rules and enforce them consistently in all of their NCAA games.

We had an outstanding 2006 championship season and I am certain we will have just as good of a 2007 season with all of the umpires who are taking the necessary steps to become better umpires.

The UIP continues to grow, as we conducted our third year of development camps in the fall of 2006. I want to thank the attendees and their coordinators for support of this initiative. Umpires should contact their conference coordinators if they are interested in being a part of these camps. More details will be distributed to the conference coordinators during the summer meeting.

We are entering our third year of the online testing initiative. The reaction to last year’s test indicated very positive feedback, even with the 80 percent requirement. That will once again be the standard. Also, there will be several 10-question quizzes posted during the season. While not required by the NCAA, the quizzes serve as good rule refreshers and should be taken by all umpires.

The NCAA background check program will continue for 2007, and the details of how the program worked and will work in the future will be discussed during the regional clinics. I want to take this opportunity to thank all the college umpires for their dedication to the sport and let them know that the NCAA’s Division I Baseball Committee, the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee and I greatly appreciate the sacrifices that you make to work a full schedule.

If you have not done so already, please be sure to use the order forms within this publication to purchase both the NCAA baseball rulebook and the CCA umpire mechanics manual. Complete knowledge of those two publications is essential to an umpire’s advancement and are indispensable tools for all of us.

I hope that you have a great 2007 season. Please contact me (dyeast@earthlink.net) with any questions or suggestions in regard to mechanics or other improvements to the UIP. Rule change recommendations should be forwarded to Jim Paronto, secretary-editor of the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee (paronto25@aol.com).

Work hard and have a great season!

Dave Yeast
NCAA National Coordinator of Umpires

Rule 1-13, which covers the requirements for all gloves or mitts was changed, but only in reference to the glove worn by a pitcher.

Previously, the rule stated that a pitcher’s glove could not contain white or gray.

The rule has been further clarified to say that a pitcher’s glove is also not allowed to have any white or gray lettering.

The glove shown in the PlayPic 1 is illegal because it has white lettering on the manufacturer’s logo.

While it is illegal to alter gloves that are in play, it would be approved for pitchers who have gloves with white or gray lettering to use a permanent marker to darken the illegal areas prior to using such glove in a game. The glove shown in PlayPic 2 would be considered legal.
‘Last Time By’ Defined for Purpose of Appeals

A common interpretation for when a runner has legally touched the base is now part of Rule 2 as a definition for “Last Time By” has been added.

The new definition reads: “If the runner retouches a bases or bases in advancing to the awarded base, or in returning to the original base at the time of the pitch, his failure to touch a base in returning is corrected under the theory that touching the base the last time by corrects any previous error.”

With the change, a runner who touches the base on his last time by a base is considered to have touched the base for purposes of appealing a missed base.

Although unlikely to happen, a runner could miss a base several times while passing it. As long as he touches it on his last time by, he is protected from being called out on appeal.

**Play 1:** With R1 on first and no outs, B4 hits a fly ball to left-center field that appears to be uncatchable.

R1 misses second base on his way to third when F8 makes a spectacular diving catch. R1 attempts to return to first base, and touches second base on his way back. R1 safely returns to first base. The defense then appeals R1 missing second base on his way to third. **Ruling 1:** The umpire should deny the appeal on R1. He touched the base on his last time by, negating any other time that he might have missed the base.

**Play 2:** With R2 on second and no outs, B8 hits a fly ball to deep right field. R2 touches third and advances one step beyond. F9 makes the catch and R2 retreats toward second, but doesn’t retouch third. R2 safely returns to second. **Ruling 2:** If the defense appeals R2 missing third base, the appeal would be granted and R2 called out. He did not touch the base on his last time by and would be subject to being called out on appeal.

**Tracking Warmups**

One of the plate umpire’s duties is to record substitutions. Depending on how many substitutes the coach is reporting and how quickly the reliever gets to the mound, the pitcher may be warming up well before the umpire is finished with the coach. In that case, the base umpire can count the warmup throws instead. When the reporting process is complete, the plate umpire need only glance at the base umpire to catch up. By flashing fingers, the base umpire can let his partner know how many throws the pitcher has remaining and enable the game to resume at the proper time.
There's no doubt that batting out of order situations can get tricky. The defense has to recognize the offense's mistake and bring it to the umpire's attention at exactly the right time for any penalty to be enforced.

It is a situation that happens very infrequently as well, which means that when it does occur, there is the possibility that the umpire would not have seen it in a while and will need to think the play through in order to get it right.

One of the most important steps in dealing with lineups occurs at the pregame meeting. A thorough review of the lineup card presented by both head coaches can help avoid problems later in the game.

The plate umpire should check for any double names, double defensive positions or double numbers. Only the names of all players and the positions of the starting pitcher and designated hitter are official. If the lineup card is not clear, the plate umpire should clarify any potential errors before moving forward with the rest of the pregame meeting.

Once the game begins, the onus falls to the defensive coach for appealing batting out of order. If he appeals too soon, there is no significant penalty. And if he appeals too late, there is no penalty at all.

The proper time for a BOOO appeal is when the wrong batter has completed his at-bat and before the first pitch to the next batter of either team. If the appeal is done correctly, the penalty is to call the proper batter out and nullify any advances by runners that happened as a result of the improper batter's actions while batting.

Any advance that occurs as a result of the improper batter hitting the ball and putting it into play (base hit, sacrifice fly, defensive error) are nullified. However, if any runners advanced due to stolen bases, passed balls, balks or wild pitches, those advances are legal and are not negated by the BOOO.

Here are several BOOO situations and their proper outcome. For the sake of all plays discussed, the offensive team's batting order is Abel, Baker, Charles, Daniel, Edward, Frank, George, Hooker and Irwin.

**Defense appeals too early**

If the defense appeals before the improper batter completes his time at bat, the only penalty is to bring the proper batter to the plate. The improper batter assumes the count. **Play 1:** George comes to bat when it is Frank's turn. With a 1-2 count, the defensive coach appeals that Frank should be hitting. **Ruling 1:** After confirming that Frank should indeed be the proper batter, the umpire should direct Frank to complete that at bat with a 1-2 count.

**Defense appeals too late**

If the defense waits until after a pitch has been made to the next batter to make its appeal, then the improper batter is considered legal and no appeal shall be granted. The same holds true if the defense makes any play or attempted play (such as a balk or pickoff throw). **Play 2:** After Daniel singles when Charles should have been batting, Edward takes his place in the batter's box and takes the first pitch for a ball. At that time, the defense appeals the BOOO infraction. **Ruling 2:** Once a pitch has been thrown to Edward, Daniel is recognized as a proper batter. There is no penalty for the infraction. Charles' turn in the order is skipped, and Edward, who follows Daniel, is now the correct batter.

If the offense realizes the BOOO infraction and attempts to draw a play, by drawing a pickoff throw for example, the defense has the right to make that play and does not lose the right to appeal the BOOO.

**Proper appeal made**

If the defense appeals at the correct time, the proper batter is the one called out and all offensive advances as a result of the improper batter are erased. **Play 3:** With Irwin on first base, Baker bats instead of Abel and doubles. Irwin scores on the hit. Immediately after
With the changes to the force-play slide rule (FPSR) for 2007, it is also a good time to review the mechanics required for seeing and making the call correctly.

And while most FPSR violations occur at second base on a traditional double-play attempt, the rule applies equally for plays at third base and home plate.

Two umpires

As shown the MechaniGram A, the plate umpire must come out to the left side of the pitcher’s mound when an infield ground ball is hit. The plate umpire will have primary responsibility for the action at the base, while the base umpire must follow the ball once it leaves the fielder’s hand.

The only FPSR violations the base umpire should call are those that occur when the fielder is unable to make a throw. The base umpire must give the following action up and follow the ball in order to make the call at the next base.

The plate umpire is then left to judge the legality of the runner’s actions and make any necessary call.

Making the call

If the runner slides illegally, the covering umpire should immediately call “Time,” and then point to the bag with a call of “That’s interference!”

The runner who interfered is out along with the batter-runner. If there are less than two outs in the inning, all other runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

It does not matter if the batter-runner would have been safe or out. By rule, he is automatically out. Even if he is obviously out, the penalty must be enforced as it affects other runners.

Force Play

continued from p. 1

Additionally, contact with the fielder or altering the play is no longer required if the runner attempts a cross-body or rolling slide. Those slides are now illegal and will result in an interference call. Runners are now allowed to execute a “pop-up” slide on the bag.

The force-play slide rule was created as a safety rule to protect the fielder, but Gary Vaught, the coach at the University of Indianapolis and chair of the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee, said the rule will now also protect the safety of the offensive player.

“Our number-one goal is to protect the athlete,” Vaught said. “We didn’t feel we had done a good enough job to protect the runner. How do you tell a person to stop right at the top of the bag?”

“Momentum will take you through the bag. We’re just letting (the runner) slide through the bag. It clears up the rule.”

Vaught mentioned that several coaches were teaching fielders to hold the bag while turning a double play in order to draw the interference call.

“What (the change) is going to do is make coaches teach the proper way of turning double plays,” Vaught said. “There are coaches teaching (how to draw interference), and that’s not the intent of the rule. It is to protect the players. We’ve given a lane for the runner to slide through.”

The final tweak to the rule was that contact is required or the play must be altered when the runner runs or slides in the direction of the fielder in order for interference to be called.

Vaught also stressed that the changes were not meant to soften the enforcement of the rule. He stated his committee gets several proposals each year to abolish the rule, but said safety of players far outweighs the cry of “old-school” coaches and players who want the game played the way professionals do.

“We still expect the rule to be called,” Vaught said. “We are still 100 percent against illegal slides and the cleat coming up and slides that are made with the intent of going after the fielder.”

As for enforcing the rule, Jim Paronto, the NCAA Baseball Secretary Rules Editor, believes the change will provide more consistency for umpires than in prior years.

“With three-man crews, you have a guy right on top of the play, so it should be called more consistently than the old rule,” Paronto said. “In the past, the decision involved if the player was on top of or past the bag when contact occurred. Umpires don’t have the option of slow-motion replay. Now if the runner goes straight through the bag, it’s perfectly legal.”

The result of a violation of the force-play slide rule remains the same. When interference is called, the affected runner and batter-runner are called out and all other runners must return to the bases they occupied at the time of the pitch.
Two changes were made to the rule that governs on-deck hitters (5-2), each of which serves the same purpose — clearing up live-ball territory.

First, only one batter will be allowed to be on-deck, as opposed to two in prior years. Umpires must be diligent in enforcing the new requirement.

Also, the on-deck batter will not be allowed to be in the triangle area created by extending the first- and third-base foul lines to the backstop (See MechaniGram). The on-deck batter must remain in the vicinity of the dugout or on-deck circle.

Plenty of people still make the mistake of saying that a batter who checked his swing but was charged with a strike “broke his wrists.” As any good umpire knows, the wrists have nothing to do with how a checked swing is called.

According to the NCAA rulebook (Rule 2-Checked swing), “A checked swing shall be called a strike if the barrel head of the bat crosses the front edge of home plate or the batter’s front hip.”

In PlayPic A, the barrel of the bat has not passed either the batter’s body or the front of the plate. Assuming there was no contact between ball and bat, the batter would be charged with a strike only if the pitch were judged to be in the strike zone. The batter in PlayPic B has swung and should be charged with a strike. The barrel of the bat is past his body and beyond the front edge of the plate.

Remember that a base umpire should offer a call only if the plate umpire requests it. A plate umpire is required to ask for help (Rule 3-6-e). Remember also that only the defense may appeal; once a strike is called by the plate umpire, that call stands.
Flashback: Reviewing Changes From 2006

Umpires that are studying the rule book usually will get a grasp on this season’s rules changes. However, it is important to keep last year’s changes in mind. There were several significant changes that still require your due diligence in enforcement.

Ejection/Suspension reports must be filed (5-16-b-4-f). As part of the procedures for enforcing penalties for an ejection, the ejecting umpire must file a suspension report form (available online) with the secretary-rules editor, the offending team’s athletic director and a conference administrator, if applicable.

Postgame ejections (2-Ejection-A.R. 2). Situations that were happening on the last play of the game that would result in an ejection during the game, now result in a postgame ejection. The ejection shall be served in the team’s next contest. If the head coach is ejected, the umpire shall inform the coach and/or the game management administrator on site of the head coach’s ejection. If it is not the head coach, the umpire shall inform the head coach, either personally or through the home team game management administrator on site. In addition, the umpire must contact the supervisor or assignor immediately after the contest to report any postgame ejection.

Regulation games defined (5-7-d). The committee clarified that games are nine innings, and only doubleheaders between the same two teams on the same day within 30 minutes apart may be shortened to seven innings.

Suspension rather than forfeiture (5-12-f). If the a player, coach or other team personnel refuse to leave when removed from the game by an umpire, the umpire should suspend the game until the order of removal is followed.

Pitcher’s glove colors clarified (1-13-c, A.R. 2). The pitcher’s glove may not be white or gray in color. Multi-colored gloves are legal, as long as they are not determined to be distracting by the umpire-in-chief.

Tobacco rule ejections (3-11). Ejections for tobacco rule violations by any team personnel also require the ejection of the head coach. The umpires’ jurisdiction with regard to that rule begins upon their arrival on the field or dugout in uniform.

Illegal bat penalty clarified (1-12 a, b). A bat is considered used once the at-bat has started. If an umpire detects a flattened or altered bat before the first pitch of an at-bat, the bat is removed from the game with no further penalty. Once the at-bat has started, the batter is out and no runner may advance as a result of actions by the batter.

Scouting information prohibited from outside (5-2-f). Nonuniformed team members have always been allowed to sit in the stands to chart pitches or videotape the game. However, no scouting information can be transmitted to the field or team personnel during the game from the stands.

Catcher struck on batter’s follow through (6-2-d-2). If the batter is in the batter’s box and his normal follow through unintentionally strikes the catcher or the ball while the catcher is in the act of making a throw to retire a runner, the umpire shall call “Time” and return runners to their base, unless the catcher’s initial throw retires the runner.

Umpire must point ball back into play (6-5-h). Once the ball has been declared dead, no other playing action shall be allowed until the umpire declares, “Play,” and uses some other signal such as a point toward the pitcher to indicate the ball is live.

Clarified DH rule when pitcher and DH enter on defense simultaneously (7-2-c-A.R. 3). The coach must designate the positions in the batting order of the new pitcher and previous pitcher at the time of substitution.

Infield fly description clarified (2-Infield Fly). Whether declared or not, the ball is live on an infield fly and runners may advance at their own risk.

Ten-run rule added (5-8-b-4). By conference rule or consent of both coaches before a game, a nine-inning game may be stopped after seven innings if one team is ahead by 10 or more runs.

Regulation game ends (5-8-e). When the umpires have left the field of play, the game is over.

Protest rule adjusted (5-13-b, 8-6-b). A team must declare its intent to protest before all fielders (not just infielders) have left the field.

Ball dead when it hits batter who swung (7-4-e). When a pitch hits the batter who has swung and missed the pitch, the ball is dead and a strike is called.

Wild throw added to dead-ball possibilities on pickoffs (8-3-o-4). If a wild pickoff throw is deflected into dead-ball territory, all runners are awarded two bases from the time of the pitch.
Important for Umpires to Know

Umpires who are new to NCAA baseball have often worked games under pro or

From High School (NFHS) to College (NCAA)

Designated hitter
Under NFHS rules, the DH can bat for any of the nine starters, while in NCAA (7-2), a DH must bat for the pitcher.

Also, while the high school rule requires that a DH be listed at the start of the game, NCAA rules automatically default to a pitcher/DH if none is listed. Because of the complexity of the NCAA DH rule, a number of umpires carry laminated copies of the rule on to the field with them.

Balk
Enforcement of penalties for a balk in college baseball (9-3) is virtually identical to official baseball rules. When a balk is called, the ball is not dead immediately. If a pitch or pickoff throw is made, the ball remains live until all continuing action from that pitch or throw is complete.

In high school, all balks are immediate dead balls.

When a Balk is called in a college game and the pitch or throw remains live, the batter and all runners must advance one base safely for the balk penalty to be ignored. If a pitch is batted into play, the batter-runner and all runners must advance one base for the balk penalty to be ignored.

Re-entry
While NFHS rules allow all starters to leave the game once and re-enter in the same position in the batting order, there is no such provision under NCAA rules. Once a starter has been removed from a game, he is no longer eligible to participate in the contest.

Missed-base appeals
The NCAA rule on appeals (8-6) requires the ball be thrown to the base or the player tagged on a legal appeal. There are no dead-ball appeals, as allowed under NFHS rules.

NCAA rules also do not permit multiple appeals at the same base. If there is possibly more than one runner involved in an appeal at a base, the defensive team must declare which runner is being appealed. If the appeal is made on the improper runner, the umpire shall give the safe sign and no further appeal shall be allowed at that base (8-6-b(6)). NFHS rules permit multiple appeals as long as they do not become a travesty of the game.

Checked swings
While NFHS rules discuss the appeal of a checked swing, there is no requirement for the plate umpire to seek help. NCAA rules require the plate umpire to seek help when requested (3-6-e).

In both codes, an appeal may only be granted when the defense is appealing that the batter did not swing. The offense can never appeal once a strike has been called.

Intentional walk
NCAA rules require that four balls be thrown in order for a player to receive an intentional walk (7-5), while NFHS rules permit the head coach or catcher to request the runner be given first base with no pitches thrown.

It is important for umpires to remember that while the four pitches are being thrown that all pitching restrictions remain in effect. Pitchers throwing from the set position must come to a complete and discernable stop and catchers must remain inside the catcher’s box until the pitch is released.

College umpires, such as German Reyna of Long Beach, Calif., must be aware that rules which govern the designated hitter are different from both high school and professional codes.
the Major Rule Differences

NFHS rules. Here are several key rules that are different for the college game.

From Professional (OBR) to College (NCAA)

Collisions by a runner

Highlights of professional games on television often show the dramatic plays at home plate with the catcher receiving the ball and the runner barreling through, trying to reach the plate, dislodge the ball or both. Because there is no rule in the professional book that prohibits such a play, it is considered legal and the catcher is fair game.

The NCAA Baseball Rules Committee has stated in Rule 8-7 that it is concerned about unnecessary and violent collisions with the catcher at home plate, and with infielders at all bases. In college baseball, runners and defensive players alike should avoid such collisions whenever possible.

When there is a collision between a runner and a fielder who clearly is in possession of the ball, the umpire shall judge whether the collision was avoidable (could the runner reach the base without the collision or was the base blocked) and whether the runner actually was attempting to reach the base (plate) or attempting to dislodge the ball from the fielder.

If the runner could have avoided the collision and still reached the base, or attempted to dislodge the ball, the runner should be declared out even if the fielder drops the ball. In that case, the ball is dead and all other base runners shall return to the last base reached at the time of the interference.

Additionally, the catcher (or any fielder) can not block a base without having possession of the ball. In an approved ruling under the definition of obstruction, the college rule makes it clear that a fielder who blocks off a base, baseline or the plate while not in possession of the ball is guilty of obstruction regardless of the result of the play.

Obstruction

All obstruction in the NCAA is a delayed dead-ball situation (6-4-e). Under pro rule, there are situations where the ball is immediately dead.

Both rulebooks separate obstruction into two types — one in which the obstructed runner is being played upon and the other in which he is not.

If the runner is being played upon when he is obstructed, he shall be awarded at least one base beyond the base he had last legally touched before the obstruction. Under pro rules, the ball would be dead immediately when this type of obstruction occurs. In college baseball, the ball remains live until no further playing action is possible.

The rules treat the second type of obstruction — where the runner is not being played upon — identically. Under both rules codes, play shall proceed until no further action is possible. At that point, the umpire should call “Time” and impose such penalties, if any, that would nullify the act of obstruction, in the umpire’s opinion.

Force plays

Since it is covered in detail on Page 1 of this guide, this article won’t go into detail on the force-play slide rule, but it is important to note what is required of a runner at a base where a force play is being made.

Pro rules allow a runner to “take out” a fielder, as long as the runner is able to touch the base with any part of his body while making his slide. The college rule (8-4) requires that a runner slide directly into the bag on a force play. In either code, if the runner slides away from the base, interference should not be called unless the runner makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder.

The penalty in the college rule mandates that the runner who interferes and the batter-runner are out and all other runners return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch. Under pro rules, the interference must be “willful and deliberate” in order for the batter-runner to be called out.

Designated hitter

Under pro rules, the DH can bat only for the starting and all subsequent pitchers, but must be listed at the start of the game. It is not mandatory that a team use a DH, but failure to do so prior to the start of the game precludes the use of a DH for the game.

NCAA rules (7-2) on the DH agree that a DH can only bat for the pitcher (both starting and all subsequent pitchers). However, if no DH is listed on the lineup card, the lineup automatically reverts to a 9-player lineup with the pitcher taking on the dual role of a pitcher/DH.

Visits to the mound

In professional baseball, a manager’s or coach’s visit to the mound is concluded when he leaves the mound (8.06).

In college baseball (9-4d), the coach’s visit is concluded when he crosses the foul line on the way back to his dugout. As a result, the
Test Your Rules Knowledge

For each of the following questions, select the answer that is correct according to the 2007 NCAA baseball rules.

1. With a runner on first, BR grounds to the shortstop, who flips to second for the force out. R1 slides directly at the base with one leg in contact with the ground. The upper leg is waist-high to the pivot man and contacts the pivot man’s glove, but not maliciously. The relay throw, slowed by the contact, is too late to retire B1.
   a. Legal play.
   b. Interference, BR is also out.
   c. Interference, BR is safe.
   d. Obstruction, BR is also out.

2. Runner on first. F1 is in the windup position with the ball in his glove and his other hand at his side. After taking the sign, he reaches into his glove and pauses while he grasps the ball.
   a. Legal move.
   b. Balk.
   c. Balk only if F1 immediately attempts a pickoff.

3. From the windup position, F1 begins to bring his hands up, as if to begin his windup, then steps back off the rubber with his pivot foot. He then throws to third in an attempt to pick off R3.
   a. Legal play.
   b. Balk.

4. In the fourth inning of a tie game, B4 bats with the bases loaded. B4 hits deep into the left-center gap, clearing the bases. His teammates empty the dugout and gather in the dirt circle around home plate to congratulate the three scoring runners.
   a. Legal.
   b. B4 is declared out.
   c. A team warning is given.
   d. All players who left the dugout are restricted to the dugout.
   e. The umpire should clear the dugout.

5. B1 lines a pitch right back at the pitcher’s feet. The pitcher instinctively jumps to avoid being hit by the ball. The ball misses the pitcher and hits the front edge of the rubber, then rebounds toward the dugout and across the first-base line.
   a. Fair ball.
   b. Foul ball.
   c. The ruling depends on local ground rules.

6. With R1 on first who is breaking on the pitch and a 2-2 count, B3 squares to bunt and F5 charges. B3 then straightens up and swings. The tipped ball deflects off the catcher’s mitt, high into the air and into F5’s glove for a catch. R1 advances to second as F5 fires to first base.
   a. Foul ball, no catch, the ball is dead and R1 returns to first.
   b. Strike three; B3 is out, R1 remains at second.
   c. B3 is out on the caught fly ball, R1 is out when F3 makes a legal appeal.

7. Right-handed B1 lifts his left foot as the pitch is delivered and steps into an outside pitch. B1’s left foot comes down with his toe on the plate and his heel on the chalk of the batter’s box. He hits the pitch and the ball rolls foul.
   a. Foul ball, B1 would have been out if the ball were hit fair.
   b. B1 is out whether the ball is fair or foul.
   c. Foul ball, no violation.

8. In a close game between archrivals, both teams have been warned about their pitchers throwing too close to batters. In the top of the last inning, F1 beans B1 and is ejected by the plate umpire.
   a. F1’s head coach must also be ejected.
   b. F1’s head coach may also be ejected.
   c. F1’s head coach is not subject to any penalties.

9. After being called out on strikes, B2 turns to the plate umpire and curses him as he is walking away. The plate umpire ejects B2, who continues to walk away. There is no further incident.
   a. All ejections must be reported to the conference coordinator and NCAA rules editor.
   b. This was a routine ejection with no further incident. There is no report required.
   c. Only ejections that merit a suspension must be reported to the NCAA rules editor.

10. With a runner on second base only, the plate umpire notices F1’s glove has white stitching in the manufacturer’s logo.
    a. F1 must remove the glove; there is no further penalty.
    b. F1 is ejected.
    c. F1 is charged with a ball and must remove the glove.
    d. F1 is charged with a balk and must remove the glove.

11. With a runner on second and one out, B1 hits a towering fly ball and F6, standing in the baseline, settles under the ball to make the catch. The base umpire yells, “Infield fly, batter is out.” F6 turns to look at the umpire and allows the ball to drop. B1 is safe at first and R2 remains at second.
    a. B1 is out.
    b. The play stands; no catch, no out.

12. Which of the following is considered a foul ball?
    a. The ball hits the pitcher’s rubber and deflects directly into a dugout.
    b. An umpire declares a ball foul as a fielder is catching a fly ball in fair territory near a foul line.
    c. A fly ball hits the screen next to the foul pole.
    d. The ball hits the ground next to home plate and comes to rest on top of the plate.
    e. All of the above are fair balls.

13. With R1 on first, B2 singles to center. R1 rounds second and heads for third, but changes his mind. F8’s throw to F6 is in time to trap R1 in a rundown. After several exchanges between F5 and F6, R1 makes a desperate attempt to get back to second, where F4 is covering. On his way back to second, R1 is bumped by F6 while F5 still has the ball. F5’s throw to F4 retires R1 as he dives into second.
    a. Obstruction, immediate dead ball, R1 is awarded third.
    b. Balk only if F1 immediately attempts a pickoff.
    c. Interference, BR is also out.
b. Interference, immediate dead ball, R1 is out.
c. Obstruction, delayed dead ball, R1 is awarded second.
d. Obstruction, delayed dead ball, R1 is awarded third.

14. Runner on first base. As F1 prepares to deliver, B1 steps completely out of the batter’s box. F1 stops his delivery.
   a. Balk; R1 is awarded second.
   b. No balk; a strike is called on B1.
   c. No balk; that is a “do-over.”

15. Which is not true regarding the DH rule?
   a. The DH can bat only for the starting pitcher and himself.
   b. The DH can bat for any replaced pitcher.
   c. The DH can bat in any spot in the lineup.
   d. The DH can also be the starting pitcher and stay in the game on offense even after being removed as pitcher.
   e. All of the statements are true.

16. B1 has taken the first pitch for a ball. Prior to the next pitch, the plate umpire observes that B1’s bat a minus-4 weight/length ratio.
   a. B1 must get a different bat, no further penalty is charged.
   b. B1 is charged with a strike and must get a different bat.
   c. B1 is declared out.
   d. B1 is out and ejected.
   e. B1 is out and the head coach is ejected.

17. After hitting a double, BR requests time and time is granted by the base umpire. F6 holds on to the ball in an attempt to pull off the hidden ball trick. After BR returns to second, the pitcher engages the rubber and the umpire puts the ball in play. BR takes one step off the base and F6 tags BR out.
   a. Legal play, the out stands.
   b. A balk should be called for engaging the rubber without the ball.
   c. Despite the umpire’s mistake, the ball can’t become live in this situation. The ball remains dead and BR stays at second base.

Answers

1 - b (8-4c3)  
2 - a (9-1a-1c)  
3 - b (9-1a-2)  
4 - c (5-2d)  
5 - b (2-Foul Ball a)  
6 - a (2-Foul Tip, 7-8)  
7 - b (7-10a Pen)  
8 - a (5-16d-4, 9-2f Pen)  
9 - a (Appendix D)  
10 - a (1-13)  
11 - b (2-Infield Fly)  
12 - a (7-6)  
13 - d (8-3e 2)  
14 - c (9-3g AR)  
15 - a (7-2)  
16 - c (1-12b pen.)  
17 - c (2-live ball, 6-6)

The third baseman is clearly fielding the ball in foul territory. Question 12 presents four different batted ball plays and asks you to decide which (if any) are foul balls.
Approved Ruling Defines Post-Game Ejection Penalty

A new approved ruling was added to penalize a player who gets ejected after having been removed from the game. A player ejected under that circumstance must now serve the penalty for a postgame ejection.

The committee also defined what serving a postgame ejection means. For the next game, the ejected individual is not allowed to be in uniform, communicate with his team or the umpires, take part in any pregame activities or observe the contest at the field. Previously, there was no further penalty for a player ejected during a game who had no eligibility remaining in that game.

**Play:** The coach goes to the mound to remove F1. After S1 begins his warmup throws and has been entered into the lineup by the coach and plate umpire, F1 screams profanity directed at the umpire about his strike zone.

**Ruling:** F1 should be given a postgame ejection. Along with being removed from “sight and sound” of the current game, he must serve the penalties for a postgame ejection in the team’s next game.

BOOO continued from p. 4

the play ends, the defensive coach appeals the BOOO.

**Ruling 3:** Abel (the proper batter) is called out, Irwin is returned to first base, and Baker (who is the batter after Abel in the lineup) is the next batter to hit.

**Proper batter on base**

If a batting out of order situation goes unnoticed or unappealed, there is a chance the proper batter will be on base when it is his time to bat. In that case, his turn is skipped and the offense is not penalized. **Play 4:** Charles and Baker misread the lineup card, and Charles bats first. Charles singles, then Baker steps to the plate. Baker also singles, advancing Charles to third. With a 1-1 count on Daniel, the defense appeals that since Baker just batted, Charles should bat and since he’s on base, the offense should be penalized with an out. **Ruling 4:** The proper time to appeal would have been at the conclusion of each at bat — Charles could have been called out after his base hit, but before Baker took a pitch. Baker could have then been called out before Daniel took a pitch. Once the next batter takes a pitch, the previous batter is legalized. Since Baker was the last proper batter, and Charles is on base, Daniel is the proper batter and no penalty is called for.

**Umpire’s responsibility**

Umpires are not allowed to make either team aware of a potential BOOO situation, but should be aware of the situations where it can occur. It is imperative that umpires record all substitutions, since late game situations involving lineup changes are potential places where BOOO can occur.

Also, when the third out is made on the bases during the middle of an at bat, the umpire should note who was batting. That hitter will start the next inning and the count will revert to 0-0 and the wrong batter will sometimes venture to the plate.

Once a BOOO has been properly appealed, it is the umpire’s responsibility to ensure that all penalties are enforced properly. Part of that responsibility is to make certain that when play resumes, the proper batter is at the plate.

Tentative 2008 Clinic Dates Announced

Tentative dates for the 2008 NCAA regional clinics have been announced. Exact dates and hotel information will be announced later this year:

- Philadelphia, Jan. 5-6
- Atlanta, Jan. 12-13
- San Francisco, Jan. 18-19

**Division I**

Randy Bruns, Waverly, Iowa
Joe Burleson, Las Vegas
Perry Costello, Dewitt, Mich.
Paul Guillie, Mandeville, La.
Randy Harvey, Sanford, Fla.
Tony Maners, Orlando, Fla.
Darrel Mason, Ferndale, Wash.

**Division II**

David Brown, Rutherfordton, N.C.
Phil Capozzola, Ronkonkoma, N.Y.
Ruben Chavira, Ontario, Calif.
Rick Denny, Omaha, Neb.
Tracy Roles, Greeley, Colo.
Don Warner, Biglerville, Pa.

**Division III**

Scott Behn, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Brandon Jackson, Maple Grove, Minn.
Kevin Joyce, Standish, Maine
Andre Lanoue, South St. Paul, Minn.
Carmine Perotti, Syracuse, N.Y.
Steve Reinhardt, Milwaukee, Wis.
Eric Thornton, Wellman, Iowa
Mike Walsh, Carmel, Ind.
Develop Concise Answers for a Coach

The throw to second base arrives about a half-step before the runner. The runner slides as the tag goes down. You spread your arms, give a confident “safe” call and turn to see the coach of the defensive team running toward you. “Geez, how could you possibly call him safe?” the coach demands.

As the coach continues his advance, your mind flashes back to a different question, one you were asked in fifth grade American history class: “What was George Washington’s most noteworthy accomplishment?” You remember rattling off a number of contributions. It was Washington who chopped down a cherry tree, crossed the Delaware to win a key battle in the Revolutionary War, kept his troops together during the horrible winter at Valley Forge, etc.

You remember the teacher telling you that you were wrong. “How could I be wrong?” you argued. “I gave you a whole list.”

If you didn’t learn then, you probably learned later that there is a secret to taking a test: Give the most obvious answer and avoid the babble.

Back on the baseball field, as you and the coach are finally face to face, you have had a bit of time to prepare your answer. You have several answers that you could give him.

You could say, “The runner was pretty quick and slid in just before the tag.”

Another option might be, “The fielder must have thought the runner was sliding straight in, went straight down with the ball, then realized the runner was sliding wide. Then he wasn’t fast enough for the tag.”

Here’s a third option: “Coach, we had no tag. The tag went to the inside, the runner slid outside.”

So, which is the best option? Which response is the baseball equivalent of, “George Washington was the first President of the United States?”

The first response provides a plausible explanation, but doesn’t carry a confident tone.

Option number two should also be avoided. What you’ve said may be exactly what happened, but you’ve just told the coach what you think his player is thinking. An assumption often comes off sounding like a dead giveaway that you are guessing. Plus, you’ve just told the coach that his team was slow — an insult that may set off a serious rhubarb. Perhaps most detrimental is the length of the explanation. When you rattle off that many words, you are bound to stumble and sound confused trying to correct yourself. Many coaches will seize upon that and keep firing questions at you, making you look (and feel) like a rookie.

Here’s a vote for the third explanation. Telling the coach there was no tag explains why the runner was safe. If you leave it at that, many coaches will turn and leave. So you want to limit the conversation with a brief explanation, such as describing that the runner went one way and the tag went the other. A brief, concise answer explains exactly what physically happened (and the evidence that determined you ruling). That simple response explains your decision and signals an end to the conversation. Most importantly, it dissuades the coach from asking the same question again; if he does, he’s only going to get the same answer.

Time to think. When it comes to dealing with coaches, umpires probably have it best compared to their officiating brothers and sisters. Baseball games are filled with constant stoppages of play, allowing an umpire a few seconds to gather his thoughts.

‘Flagrant Collision’ Defined

The definition for “flagrant collision” was added to the Rule 2 to better define what types of contact are punishable and which are just “train wrecks.”

A flagrant collision is one “between a baserunner and a fielder in which the runner attempts to maliciously dislodge the ball.” Hard contact can occur without the contact being malicious. In that case, the runner should not be ejected, no matter how violent the contact appears to be.

When a runner is called for a “flagrant collision,” he is ruled out, unless he has already scored, and he is ejected immediately. The ball is dead at the time of the interference and all other runners must return to the base last touched at the time of interference.

Rick Nagy of Houston knows keeping his answers short and to the point will likely resolve this discussion with a coach in a more timely fashion.

(See Concise, Page 14)
Two Umpires: R1, Fly Ball to Right Field

Communication is important in any two-umpire situation, especially with runners on base. With a runner on first, both umpires must react and communicate appropriately in order to ensure that a play at any base is observed by one of the umpires.

When the ball is hit to right field, UIC must let his partner know that he is “staying on the line,” and will not be at third base.

UIC should clear the catcher and proceed up the first base line. Fair/foul becomes the first priority for the UIC, and he should get about halfway up the first-base line.

U1’s initial move should be back two or three steps toward the pitcher’s mound to “open” the field of view and remain aware of the status of the ball while observing both R1 and B1 advancing to touch bases. Since the UIC is on the line, U1 will have to take R1 into third base.

Concise
continued from p. 13

matter what sort of play sets off a discussion, the key is to answer the question and avoid the babble.

How do you pack your bag of answers? You could do it the hard way and learn from each experience as it happens (too long), or learn from other umpires’ mistakes (very good, but limited).

The best course may be practicing on your own. While you’re reading the rulebook or watching a game on television, ask yourself, “What would I say if a coach said ... ?”

Another learning tool is to listen in on other discussions. When a coach questions your partner, listen to the other umpire’s answer. What did you like about it? What came off sounding negative? How did the coach react? How would you change it? How would you answer it? Answer it over and over. Answer in different ways until it sounds right. Rephrase the coach’s question. Now what’s your answer?

The postgame review is also a great time to learn about handling situations. Umpires should review what the coach said and the response the coach was given and ask for feedback on what else could or should have been said or done. Remember, the best teaching experiences are often derived from situations that didn’t go well for you.

Remember, a coach may not be testing you every time he comes out to talk to you. Many of the questions asked are legitimate: The coach wants to know what happened because you had the better position or angle. Reasonable questions asked in a conversational tone of voice should be answered concisely and in a similar tone of voice.

Avoid the past. That often happens when a coach asks about something that doesn’t pertain to the play in question. It will keep the conversation on point, and make the discussion a much shorter one.

Quick Tip
Let Them Play

One of the best things an umpire can do is let the players play the game. Umpires shouldn’t be looking for technical violations and other minor circumstances to show people how much they know the rules. It seems that every time a new rule is introduced, umpires want to try it out, usually without much regard as to the spirit and intent of the rule. Use common sense when applying the rules. One of the worst raps an umpire can get is that of being a “rulebook umpire.” Certainly, you should know the rules, but just as importantly, you should know how to apply them and under what circumstances.
Ask a player to list the fundamentals of baseball, and he’d likely say pitching, hitting, baserunning, fielding and throwing. But to an umpire, fundamentals mean something different.

A “fundamental” is a basic principle that serves as the groundwork for a system and can aid greatly in understanding the rules. Here are several fundamental statements and the rule references to back them up:

The position of the ball, not the fielder, determines whether it is fair or foul. The NCAA rulebook clearly stated that in its definition of fair ball: “A fair fly ball shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time he touches the ball.”

On batted balls, the fielder has the right of the way. That principle is embodied in the interference rules. A fielder is protected while he is in the act of fielding a batted ball and while he is in the act of making a play after fielding the ball (8-5d). If a runner hinders or impedes a fielder in the act of fielding the ball, he is out for interference; intent is not a factor. Any action by the runner which is palpably designed to interfere should be considered interference. That includes timing his advancement to intentionally confuse or hinder the fielder.

If two or more fielders attempt to field a batted ball and the runner makes contact with either of them, the umpire shall determine which fielder is entitled to protection. The protected fielder cannot initially be guilty of obstruction; other fielders can be guilty (8-5d AR1).

Cases in which the initially protected fielder misplays the ball present a challenge for umpires. Imagine a play on which a fielder has a chance to field a batted ball, but misplays it. While attempting to recover it, if the ball remains within the fielder’s immediate reach and the fielder is contacted by the baserunner attempting to reach a base, interference shall be called. If a fielder has a chance to field a batted ball, but misplays it and must chase after the ball, the fielder must avoid the runner. If contact occurs, obstruction shall be called (2-Interference AR3 and 4).

No run may score if the third out is a force play, or is made by the batter before reaching first base. A force play is a play on which a runner legally loses his right to occupy a base by reason of the batter becoming a runner. Technically, a play on the batter-runner at first base can never be a force play, and although it has all the attributes of a force play and can be thought of as such for practical purposes, it is stated as a separate condition for clarity.

On force plays, there are no ties. With regard to whether a runner is safe or out, the word “tie” does not appear the rulebook. The intent of the rulemakers can, however, be discerned.

On plays at first base, the batter-runner is out if he or the base is tagged before he touches the base (7-11b). If that is translated to mean “a tie goes to the runner,” it’s probably fair. However, the rule regarding when a runner is out when he is forced to advance states he is out when “he fails to reach the next base before a fielder tags him or the base” (8-5j). Does that mean “a tie goes to the defense”? The pitfall is obvious. An umpire should avoid any discussion of ties in those situations. The explanation should simply be the runner was out or safe.

A base is a sanctuary for a runner on an infield fly. A runner is declared out if hit by a batted ball that has not touched any infielder or passed an infielder other than the pitcher (8-2g, 8-5k). If that happens while the runner is touching a base, he is still out. The lone exception is if a runner is hit by an infield fly.

An infield fly is a fair fly ball, excluding a line drive or bunt, that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort. It applies only with less than two out, when the bases are loaded or there are runners on first and second. If a runner on his base is touched by an infield fly, he is not out, but the batter is still out and the ball is dead (8-5k AR1).

Obstruction requires the award of at least one base. Obstruction occurs when a fielder who does not have the ball and is not in the act of fielding impedes the progress of a runner. Obstruction is most likely to occur during a rundown and both umpires must watch for obstruction.

Once the game starts, the umpires are responsible for determining whether conditions are fit for play. For regular-season contests, the home team decides whether a game should be started under adverse weather conditions. The umpire-in-chief is in charge when the lineups are exchanged (4-2). It is also the umpire’s decision as to whether to start the second game of a doubleheader. By rule, there are no ties. “The runner must be either safe or out on this play at first base.”
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