

2022

Make the Right Call

THE CASEBOOK OF LITTLE LEAGUE®
BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL



Little League

UMPIRE



Little League

Make the Right Call

This case book is prepared for use in Little League® Baseball and Softball as a supplement to, and in practical application of, the official playing rules.

It is designed to help umpires, managers, coaches, and other Little League volunteers better understand and interpret the rules most often applied during local league play.

In other words, these are guidelines for the volunteer umpire who occupies a very important role in Little League Baseball and Softball. Some of the rules have been abbreviated or paraphrased for this book. Always refer to the current Official Regulations, Playing Rules, and Operating Polices.

Umpiring is a demanding but rewarding responsibility. The Little League Volunteer assumes self-training and provides a service without which there could not be Little League. Over the years, the umpire has earned respect for integrity and devotion to the program. No game is better than its umpire.

It is hoped that this case book will improve the basic understanding, conduct and enjoyment of Little League games.

Note: While many of these situations apply to any game, this guide is intended for **regular season** use.

This publication should be used in conjunction with The Official Rulebooks of Little League (Baseball, Softball, and Challenger) and in no way should it be viewed as an Official Rulebook.

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RULE 1.00

OBJECTIVES OF THE GAME

RULE 1.01 SITUATION: The manager of the home team informs the plate umpire that he/she has three rostered coaches present and in the dugout for the game.

RULING: This is illegal. Each team shall have only one manager and two rostered coaches (a total of three) present during the game. Inform the coach that one of those coaches must leave the dugout and not participate in the game before the game can begin.

RULE 1.06 SITUATION: In going from 1st to 2nd base, R1 dislodges the base from its anchor plate. A following runner touches the base anchor plate on his/her way to 3rd base. Defense appeals the second runner failed to touch the base.

RULING: Appeal is denied if the umpire judges that the second runner touched either the dislodged base or the original location of the dislodged base.

RULE 1.08 SITUATION: Local Little League (Majors and below) informs the umpires at the plate conference that since they have fenced in areas adjacent to the dugouts that they will be allowing an “on-deck” batter to warm up in this protected area.

RULING: The umpires will disallow this as there is no on-deck position permitted in Little League (Majors and below).

RULE 1.10 SITUATION A: In a Little League baseball game (Majors and below), a batter steps to the plate with a non-wooden bat that is 30 inches in length and has a diameter of 21/4 inches but does not have a USA Baseball label. It does have a BPF mark stating 1.15 or less. Defense appeals that the bat is illegal because of the missing USA Baseball label indication.

RULING: The bat is illegal at the Majors level and below, all non-wood bats used at these levels must have the USA Baseball marking affixed. At the Intermediate (50-70) and Junior Divisions all non-wood bats used at the Juniors level and below must bear either the USA Baseball Marking or the Batted Ball Coefficient of Restitution (BBCOR) marking.

RULE 1.10 SITUATION A (SOFTBALL): In a Little League Softball game, a batter steps to the plate with non-wood bat that is 32 inches in length and has a diameter of 21/4 inches but does not have a USA Baseball label. Defense appeals that the bat is illegal because of the missing USA Baseball indication.

RULING: The bat is legal if it is a softball bat meeting the dimension limits of Rule 1.10 and has a BPF = 1.20 marking. Softball bats do not need the USA Baseball certification marks.

RULE 1.10 SITUATION B: In a Senior League Baseball game, a non-wood bat is discovered with no legible Batted Ball Coefficient of Restitution (BBCOR) markings.

RULING: This bat should be judged as illegal and removed from play.

RULE 1.11 SITUATION A: The starting pitcher takes the mound/pitcher's plate wearing a long-sleeved white undershirt beneath his/her uniform jersey.

RULING: BASEBALL – This is illegal. The pitcher's sleeves may not be white or gray. The umpire will instruct the manager to have his/her pitcher either remove or change the color of his/her undershirt.

RULING: SOFTBALL – This is legal. Any part of the pitcher's undershirt or t-shirt exposed to view shall be of a solid color.

RULE 1.11 SITUATION B: A pitcher takes the pitcher's mound/pitcher's plate for his/her preliminary warm up pitches. The umpire notices that he is wearing an exposed neoprene/compression sleeve.

RULING: BASEBALL - This is illegal. The pitcher must either remove the sleeve or cover it up completely with a properly colored undershirt.

RULING: SOFTBALL - This is legal, there is no restriction on neoprene/compression sleeves (although it should be of a solid color). A pitcher may not wear any items on his/her hand, wrist or arms which may be distracting to the batter. The umpire shall be the sole determining judge of what is distracting.

RULE 1.11 SITUATION C: In a Little League Majors game, a player is discovered wearing shoes with metal cleats.

RULING: This is illegal, metal spikes or cleats are not permitted at the levels of Majors and below.

NOTE: Shoes with metal spikes or cleats are permitted in the Intermediate Division (50-70), Junior and Senior Baseball divisions. Softball: shoes with metal cleats are permitted at the Junior and Senior League divisions.

RULE 1.11 SITUATION D: A player comes to bat wearing a wristwatch.

RULING: This is illegal. Players must not wear jewelry of any kind, unless it is for the purpose of alerting emergency medical personnel to a specific condition. The material making up any decorative item is irrelevant, it will all be deemed jewelry and must be removed.

RULE 1.11 SITUATION E: The Manager of the visiting team informs the umpires that one of his/her players has a cast on his/her arm. The manager wishes to use this player as his/her 1st base coach on offense.

RULING: This is not allowed. Any person wearing a cast, whether it is a coach or a player, must remain in the dugout during the game.

NOTE: Umpires may not participate in the game if wearing a cast.

RULE 1.12 SITUATION: The catcher for the home team comes out to receive warm up pitches wearing a fielder's glove.

RULING: BASEBALL - This is illegal. The catcher must use a catcher's mitt that is consistent with protecting his/her hand.

RULING: SOFTBALL - This is legal. The catcher may wear a catcher's mitt, first baseman's mitt or fielder's glove.

RULE 1.13 SITUATION: A first baseman takes the field wearing a regular fielder's glove.

RULING: This is legal. The first baseman may wear either a first baseman's mitt or a regular glove, provided it meets the specifications of Rule 1.13 a through c.

RULE 1.14 SITUATION: In the 4th inning it is discovered that the substitute right fielder is wearing a catcher's mitt in the field

RULING: This is illegal. All defensive players (other than the catcher and the first baseman), must wear a glove that meets the specifications of Rule 1.13.

NOTE: This is not grounds for a protest, just exchange the glove for one of regulation size.

RULE 1.15 SITUATION A: The pitcher is wearing a combination colored glove (black and brown).

RULING: BASEBALL - This is legal. A pitcher's glove may not be white or gray in total. As long as the umpire determines the glove is not distracting multicolored gloves on the pitcher are permissible.

RULING: SOFTBALL - The pitcher's glove may not be the color of the ball being used in the game.

RULE 1.15 SITUATION B: The pitcher is wearing a batting glove under his/ her fielder's glove.

RULING: BASEBALL - This is legal, provided the batting glove is not white or light gray.

RULING: SOFTBALL - This is legal, provided the batting glove is not the color of the ball being used in the game.

RULE 1.16 SITUATION A: The Newtown Little League Tigers come to the game with seven highly polished chrome colored batting helmets.

RULING: This is illegal, batting helmets must have a non-glare surface and not be mirror like in appearance.

RULE 1.16 SITUATION B: During pre-game equipment inspection the NOCSAE stamp on several of the home team's batting helmets cannot be located.

RULING: Remove these helmets from play.

RULE 1.16 SITUATION C: The Cubs have had their batting helmets spray painted a royal blue (over the original black) by one of the parents.

RULING: Remove these helmets from play. Altering the helmets in any way may void the helmet's warranty and cause a safety concern.

RULE 1.16 SITUATION D: A baserunner purposely removes his/her batting helmet during live ball play. The defense informs the umpire that he/she should be called out for that action.

RULING: The runner is not called out but shall be warned that if he/she continues to remove his/her helmet he/she may be removed from the game (ejected) for unsportsmanlike conduct.

RULE 1.17 SITUATION A: The home team's catcher comes out to start the game wearing a hockey style catcher's mask without a "dangling" throat protector. His/her coach states that the helmet is legal.

RULING: All catcher's masks must have the additional "dangling" throat protector attached. Either have the throat protector attached or replace the helmet.

RULE 1.17 SITUATION B: Upon arriving at the field, the umpires observe one of the teams taking infield practice. The player acting as a catcher for the manager is not wearing a catcher's helmet and mask with a dangling throat protector.

RULING: The umpires shall notify the manager that the player must wear a helmet and mask with a dangling throat protector during this practice session.

RULE 1.17 SITUATION C: During a Senior League game the visiting team's catcher comes to warm up the pitcher while wearing a mask and a skull cap.

RULING: This is illegal. All catchers must wear a NOCSAE approved helmet connected to a mask with the "dangling" throat protector. Instruct the catcher or his/her manager to replace this equipment with a helmet and mask that meet the specifications of this rule.

RULE 2.00

DEFINITION OF TERMS

APPEAL SITUATION: After the batter hits a clean double and is standing on second base, the defensive manager requests, and is, granted time. The manager confers with his/her pitcher and tells him/her to appeal that the runner missed first base. The pitcher throws to first and the first baseman steps on the bag and announces the appeal.

RULING: This is an improper appeal. The ball must be live and in play to execute a proper appeal.

BALK SITUATION A: (BASEBALL INTERMEDIATE 50-70, JUNIOR, AND SENIOR LEAGUES) With a runner on first base in a Junior League game, the pitcher, from the wind up position throws to first base in an attempt to pick off the runner. The offensive coach tells the umpire that this is a balk.

RULING: This is legal. The pitcher from the wind up may: (1) Pitch to the batter; (2) Legally disengage the pitcher's plate; or (3) throw to a base in an attempt to retire a runner.

BALK SITUATION B: (BASEBALL INTERMEDIATE 50-70, JUNIOR AND SENIOR LEAGUES) With a runner on third base the pitcher balks and delivers the pitch. The batter hits a ground ball to the third baseman who checks the runner at third, he/she throws to first but not in time to retire the batter who reaches first safely.

RULING: This is a balk and must be enforced. Not all runners including the batter advanced safely one base. Award the runner on third base home and bring the batter back to the batter's box with the same count as before the balk.

BALK SITUATION C: (BASEBALL INTERMEDIATE 50-70, JUNIOR AND SENIOR LEAGUES) With a runner on first base, the third base coach loudly yells "Time" causing the pitcher to stop in mid delivery. The offense wants a balk enforced and their runner advanced.

RULING: This is not a balk. The offense may not perform any intentional act which causes the pitcher to balk. The umpire should warn the coach that a repeat of this behavior may result in an ejection for unsportsmanlike behavior.

BALK NOTE – There is no balk in softball or in the Little League Majors division and below baseball. (See Illegal Pitch)

BUNT SITUATION: As the pitcher delivers, the batter squares and puts his/her bat over the plate. The pitch is well outside of the strike zone and the batter never

moves his/her bat. The defense wants a strike called due to the bat being held in the strike zone.

RULING: BASEBALL This is not a strike or an attempted bunt in any division of Little League baseball. In order to be considered an attempted bunt, the batter must offer at, or attempt to hit the ball. Call the pitch either a ball or strike depending on its location. The position of the bat is irrelevant unless the batter attempts to hit the ball.

RULING: SOFTBALL This is a strike or an attempted bunt in all divisions of Little League Softball. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered an attempted bunt. In order to take a pitch, the batter must withdraw the bat backwards away from the ball. Call the pitch a strike.

CATCH SITUATION A: The batter hits a fly ball to the center fielder who gets the ball in his/her glove, takes four steps and falls to the ground. During the fall the ball comes out of the fielder's glove.

RULING: This is not a catch. The fielder must demonstrate complete control of the ball and his/her body and the release is voluntary and intentional.

CATCH SITUATION B: The batter hits a foul ball down the right-field line. The ball is in flight over dead ball territory when the right fielder gets control of it. The fielder is still in live ball territory.

RULING: This is a legal catch provided the fielder demonstrates complete control of the ball and the release of the ball is voluntary and intentional.

DROPPED BALL SITUATION: SOFTBALL: A pitcher while standing on the pitcher's plate or during the delivery in the pitching motion, the pitcher drops the ball straight to the ground.

RULING: This is a ball to the batter and the ball is live and in play. A drop is distinguished from a pitch in that a pitch has lift and carry past the release of the hip, and a drop slips from the hand and/or goes directly to the ground.

FAIR BALL SITUATION: Batter hits a slow rolling ground ball down the first- base line. The ball is wavering back and forth across the line. At the last moment, the ball strikes the front edge of the base.

RULING: This is a fair ball based on the fact that the ball touched first base.

All parts of all bases are located entirely over fair territory.

FORCE PLAY SITUATION A: With a runner on first base, the batter hits a ground ball to the first baseman who fields the ball and steps on first base, he/she then throws to the shortstop who steps on second base in an attempt to retire the runner by force as he/she approaches second.

RULING: The second attempted out of this play is not a force out. The force on this runner was removed once the batter was retired at first base. In all cases the force is removed from other runners once the batter-runner is retired.

FORCE PLAY SITUATION B: In a Senior League baseball/softball game, runners on first base and third base with one out. Batter hits a fly ball to right field. The right fielder catches the ball for the second out. The runner on third “tags up” and starts for home. The runner on first was running on the pitch and is now retreating to re-touch first base. The runner from third touches home plate prior to the first baseman stepping on first base before the runner retouches. The defense claims that the run does not score due to the “force out” at first base.

RULING: This is not a force out, it is a time play; the batter-runner was retired when the fly ball was caught and the force on all other runners was removed. Since the runner from third base touched home plate before the play at first base, score the run.

NOTE: Base runners may only be forced forward, never in reverse.

FOUL BALL SITUATION: Batter hits a bounding ball toward third base. The third baseman touches the ball which is outside of the foul line. Both of the fielder’s feet were in fair territory when he/she touched the ball. The offensive coach states that this is a fair ball since the fielder was in fair territory when he touched the ball.

RULING: This is a foul ball. The status of the ball fair or foul is adjudged by the position of the ball relative to the foul line, not the position of the fielder.

FOUL TIP SITUATION: Batter swings at the pitch and makes contact with the ball. The ball goes sharp and direct to the catcher’s mitt, where it is legally caught.

RULING: This is a foul tip and the ball remains live and in play, any runners on base may attempt to advance at their own risk.

ILLEGAL PITCH SITUATION (BASEBALL) A: With a runner on first base in a Little League Major division game, the pitcher is in the set position. He/she delivers the pitch to the batter without coming to a complete stop. The offense wants an illegal pitch declared and a ball awarded to the batter.

RULING: This is not an illegal pitch. At the Major division and below a pitcher is not required to come to a complete stop before delivering the pitch.

ILLEGAL PITCH SITUATION B: In a Major division game with a runner on third base, the pitcher delivers a pitch while not in contact with the pitcher’s plate. The batter swings and misses the pitch.

RULING: (BASEBALL) This is an illegal pitch, void the strike and award a ball to the batter. In the Intermediate 50-70, Junior and Senior League divisions, this would be a balk.

RULING: (SOFTBALL) This is an illegal pitch, void the strike and award a ball to the batter in all levels of softball. **NOTE:** In the Junior Division and Senior Leagues, all base runners will be awarded one base, unless that batter reaches first safely and all other runners advance at least one base safely, in which case, the play stands and the illegal pitch is nullified.

SITUATION C (SOFTBALL): In a softball game, the pitcher in the act of delivering the ball, hops off the pitcher's plate, establishing a second starting point and completes the delivery. The offensive manager claims that this is illegal.

RULING: This is an illegal pitch called a CROW HOP. The penalty, in the Softball Major division and below is no-pitch and a ball to the batter, and no base runners may advance. In Junior/Senior Softball it is a ball to the batter and any runners on base will be advanced one base without liability to be put out. In all Softball Divisions, if the ball is put into play, the Manager has an option to accept the play instead of the Illegal Pitch penalty. If the ball is put into play and the batter and all runners advance safely at least one base, the play proceeds without reference to the Illegal Pitch in accordance with Rule 8.05.

SITUATION D (SOFTBALL): In a softball game, the pitcher in the act of delivering the ball, has both feet lose contact with the ground. The offensive manager claims that this is illegal.

RULING: This is an illegal pitch referred to as a LEAP. The penalty, in the Softball Major division and below is no-pitch and a ball to the batter, and no base runners may advance, in Junior/Senior Softball it is a ball to the batter and any runners on base will be advanced one base without liability to be put out. In all Softball Divisions, if the ball is put into play, the Manager has an option to accept the play instead of the Illegal Pitch penalty. If the ball is put into play and the batter and all runners advance safely at least one base, the play proceeds without reference to the Illegal Pitch in accordance with Rule 8.05.

INFIELD FLY SITUATION A: With runners on first base and second base and one out, the batter lifts a fly ball in the direction of the shortstop. The shortstop takes four steps backward into the outfield to the field the ball. The umpire declares "Infield Fly, the batter is out." Just before the ball reaches the shortstop he/she is called off by the left fielder who makes the catch. The offense claims that this cannot be an infield fly since an outfielder caught the ball in the outfield grass.

RULING: This is an infield fly, as it met all of the criteria of an infield fly outlined by the definition.

INFIELD FLY SITUATION B: Runners on first base and second base with no outs. Batter hits a line drive back to the pitcher. Pitcher knocks the ball down but does not catch it. By the time he/she recovers the ball, all of the runners, including the batter, have reached base safely. The defense feels that this should have been declared an Infield Fly.

RULING: This is not an Infield Fly. An Infield Fly can never be a line drive or an attempted bunt.

INTERFERENCE SITUATION A: With a runner on first base, the batter hits a ground ball towards the second baseman. The batted ball strikes the runner from first before it reaches the second baseman.

RULING: This is interference, the ball is immediately dead, the runner is declared out and the batter is awarded first base. If there had been other runners on base, they would return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch unless they are forced forward by the batter being awarded first.

INTERFERENCE SITUATION B: Runner on second base, batter hits a soft line drive toward the shortstop, runner breaks for third base on contact. The ball strikes the runner and bounces off him/her. The shortstop catches the ball before it strikes the ground and throws to second base to double off the runner.

RULING: This is interference. The ball became dead the moment it touched the runner. Declare the runner out and award the batter first base.

INTERFERENCE SITUATION C: In a Senior Division baseball game with a runner on second base, the batter hits a sharp ground ball which strikes the umpire before it reaches an infielder.

RULING: This is interference by the umpire. The ball is dead, award the batter first base and other runners return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch unless they are forced to advance by the batter's award.

INTERFERENCE SITUATION D: In a Junior Division baseball game, the runner on first base is attempting to steal second base. As the catcher attempts to throw to second base he/she makes contact with the plate umpire, altering his/ her throw.

RULING: This is interference by the umpire. If the throw retires the runner, the out will stand. If the runner is not retired he/she will be returned to the base he/she occupied at the time of the pitch.

LEAPING SITUATION: (SOFTBALL): On the pitcher's step forward the umpire determines that the pitcher has both feet in the air during the delivery.

RULING: This is an illegal pitch referred to as a leap. **PENALTY:** In Little League Major division softball and below it is ruled No Pitch and a ball is awarded to the batter. In Junior and Senior Division Softball, it shall be called a ball and any runners on base will be advanced one base without liability to be put out.

OBSTRUCTION SITUATION A: After a clean hit to the outfield, the batter runner is trying to stretch it to a double. The shortstop fakes a tag without possession of the ball.

RULING: A fake tag is obstruction and the umpire should award whatever bases will nullify the obstruction.

OBSTRUCTION SITUATION B: Batter hits a ball to the outfield, while rounding first base he/she bumps into the first baseman. He/she is thrown out on a close play at second base.

RULING: The runner was obstructed by the first baseman which altered his/her progress. The umpire should announce the obstruction when it occurs and award bases as necessary at the end of the play which would nullify the obstruction.

RULE 3.00 GAME PRELIMINARIES

RULE 3.01(b) SITUATION: The umpire arrives at the field and discovers that there are no lines marking fair and foul territories and the batter's boxes are not correctly laid out.

RULING: The umpire should insist that the foul lines be put down and that the batter's boxes be corrected before starting the game. Having the field correctly marked may alleviate issues later in the game.

RULE 3.02 SITUATION: In the third inning, the umpire observes the pitcher placing dirt into the pocket of his/her glove and then rubbing the baseball/softball with the dirt before delivering a pitch.

RULING: The umpire should demand the ball and remove the player from the pitching position. If the pitcher delivers the discolored or damaged ball to the batter he should be removed from the pitcher's position immediately. (NOTE: This need not be an ejection from the game, just removal from the mound or the pitcher's plate. However, if the umpire feels that these acts were intentional the pitcher should be ejected.)

RULE 3.03(a) SITUATION: The coach of the Major division Cubs wishes to re-enter his/her starter to hit for his/her substitute in a critical situation. The substitute has not yet had a legal turn at bat.

RULING: The umpire should not permit this as the substitute has not yet met mandatory play obligations. Allowing this to occur may cause the discovery of an illegal substitution by the opposition.

RULE 3.03(b) SITUATION: The Major division Giants, who substituted for their starting center fielder in the third inning attempt to re-enter the starter with two outs in the fourth inning.

RULING: The umpire should not allow this. The substitute for the center fielder has not played six consecutive defensive outs and may not have batted.

RULE 3.03(c) SITUATION: In a Little League Major division game, the defensive manager moves his/her pitcher to first base and brings the first baseman to pitch to the current batter, feeling that this is a better match up. Following that at-bat, the manager wishes to return the original pitcher.

RULING: BASEBALL This is illegal at the Major division level and below. Once a pitcher has been removed from the mound he/she may not return as a pitcher.

NOTE: At the Intermediate 50-70, Junior and Senior Divisions, a pitcher who is removed from the mound, but remains in the game at another defensive position, may return as the pitcher, but only once per game.

RULING: SOFTBALL This is legal, a pitcher who has been removed

from the circle may return as a pitcher once per inning, provided they remain in the game.

NOTE: In Junior Division and above a pitcher may be removed offensively or defensively and return as pitcher once per inning provided the return does not violate any substitution, mandatory play, or pitching restrictions.

RULE 3.03(d) SITUATION: The game has gone into extra innings. The offensive manager wants to re-enter a player who was a substitute in the third through the fifth innings and met his/her mandatory play requirements.

RULING: This is legal. Once Mandatory Play has been met, a starter and a substitute can enter/re-enter for each other, but they must remain in the same position in the batting order.

RULE 3.03(e) SITUATION: Sam is the starting second baseman for the Cubs and he is replaced for a substitute Johnny after the top of the first inning. In the third inning, the manager inserts Sam for his/her shortstop, Tony who is another starting player. In the fourth inning the manager wants to reinsert Tony and move Sam back to second base.

RULING: This is illegal. Sam can be removed from the game before meeting mandatory play requirements but he can ONLY re-enter in the same position in the batting order, (that is for Johnny) and only after Johnny has completed mandatory play. During regular season play under Rule 3.03, mandatory play for starting players is one at bat and six defensive outs (which do not have to be consecutive). Mandatory play for non-starting players (substitutes) is one at bat and six CONSECUTIVE defensive outs.

NOTE: Umpires must remain vigilant regarding the substitution rule so that improper or illegal substitutions are not made.

RULE 3.03 NOTE 3 SITUATION: During the fifth inning of a game, the Yankees third baseman gets hit with a line drive and cannot continue play. The Yankees have used all of their legal substitutes and have no one remaining to enter the game.

RULING: The opposing manager shall select one of the previously used substitutes to enter the game. Any player who has been ejected or injured is not eligible to re-enter the game.

RULE 3.03 DESIGNATED HITTER [SENIOR LEAGUE]

SITUATION A: In a Senior League game, the Giants want to use a designated hitter for the pitcher in the fifth inning. The designated hitter was not listed on the line-up card at the start of the game.

RULING: This is illegal. The designated hitter must be listed in the starting lineup at the beginning of the game.

RULE 3.03 DESIGNATED HITTER [SENIOR LEAGUE]

SITUATION B: The Dodgers want to use their starting right fielder as a designated hitter and list him/her twice in the batting order (in the first position and again in the sixth spot in the order).

RULING: This is illegal. Only a player not already listed in the batting order may be used as a designated hitter.

RULE 3.03 DESIGNATED HITTER [SENIOR LEAGUE]

SITUATION C: Rodgers is listed as the designated hitter for the catcher. In the third inning, the manager enters Rodgers defensively at third base.

RULING: This is legal, provided that the starting player (in this case the catcher) is removed from the game. The starting defensive player may re-enter the game, but only in the batting order spot occupied by the original designated hitter. In this scenario, Rodgers would have to be removed from the game.

RULE 3.04 SITUATION: After the pitcher hits a clean double, his/her manager wants to enter the center fielder as a “courtesy runner” for the pitcher in order to speed the game up.

RULING: Beginning in 2021 the local league may allow for the use of a Courtesy runner under certain conditions. A courtesy runner may be used for either the catcher and/or pitcher of record when there are two (2) outs. Exception: If the continuous batting order is used, the “courtesy runner” may be in the team’s batting order and must be the player in the batting order who made the last out. See 7.14(b).

RULE 3.05 SITUATION A: The Diamondbacks are the visiting team and have their best pitcher scheduled to pitch their game against the Red Sox. After the top of the first inning, the Diamondbacks are leading, 7-0. The manager of the Diamondbacks wants to change starting pitchers in order to save their ace for a later game.

RULING: This is illegal. The pitcher listed in the starting lineup must pitch to the first batter or his/her substitute, unless in the umpire’s judgment an injury or an illness prevents that pitcher from any further play as a pitcher. Do not allow this pitcher to feign an illness or an injury only to magically appear healthy in the fourth inning.

RULE 3.05 SITUATION B: In the fifth inning, the defensive team replaces their pitcher due to his/her reaching his/her (baseball) pitch count limit or (softball) innings pitched limit. The offense then substitutes for its batter. Upon seeing this, the defense wants to switch to another pitcher.

RULING: This is illegal. The substitute pitcher must pitch to the player at bat or his substitute, barring any injury or illness to the substitute pitcher.

RULE 3.06 SITUATION: In the fourth inning, the manager replaces his/her starting left fielder with a player from the bench. The manager fails to notify the Umpire-in-Chief of this substitution.

RULING: This is legal, provided the substitute has eligibility to enter the game.
It is merely an unannounced substitution.

RULE 3.07 SITUATION: After being notified that “number 6” will bat for “number 32,” the Umpire-in-Chief fails to have the substitute announced.

RULING: This is a legal substitution provided neither “number 6” nor “number 32” have violated any eligibility rules such as mandatory play.

RULE 3.08(a)(1) SITUATION: As the defense takes the field in the top of the fifth inning; the shortstop (Number 18), picks up the ball, steps on

the pitcher's plate and delivers a pitch to the catcher*. The pitcher of record is still in the dugout talking with his/her manager.

RULING (BASEBALL): Number 18 is now the pitcher assuming he/she is eligible to pitch and must pitch to at least one batter. Either way, the original pitcher of record may not return to pitch. At the Intermediate 50-70, Junior, and Senior League Divisions, if the player replaced as pitcher remains in the game defensively, they may return to pitch once per game, but only after the current pitcher meets the requirement of Rule 3.05(b).

RULING (SOFTBALL): The original pitcher may return at any time during the game, but only once per inning provided he/she was not removed from the lineup.

NOTE: Umpires need to remain alert to avoid this situation. The warm-up pitch may be delivered to the catcher or a player acting as catcher.

RULE 3.08(a)(2) SITUATION: In the fifth inning, number 10 enters the batter's box, the lineup card reflects that number 16 should be at bat. The defense appeals that number 10 is an improper batter.

RULING: After checking with the manager and the official scorekeeper it is determined that number 10 is a substitute. This is an unannounced substitution, number 10 is to be considered as in the game when he/she entered the batter's box.

RULE 3.08(a)(3) SITUATION: In the fourth inning, the offensive team calls the umpire's attention to number 9 who is now playing second base when it should be number 7 who was listed as the starter. The offense claims that number 9 is an illegal substitute and should be removed the game. The defensive manager states that number 9 is substituting for number 7.

RULING: Provided neither player has violated an eligibility rule, number 9 became legal when he/she assumed the position of second base and play commenced. If number 9 had made any defensive play that play would be legal.

RULE 3.08(a)(4) SITUATION: The offense requests time for a pinch runner for their runner on third base.

RULING: The pinch runner is considered to have entered the game when he/she takes the place of the runner being replaced.

RULE 3.09 SITUATION A: During a Little League Major Division game, the adult manager comes out to warm up the pitcher while his/her catcher is getting ready.

RULING: This is illegal. The umpire should inform the manager that coaches and managers may not warm up the pitcher. This includes any designated bullpen area or practice.

RULE 3.09 SITUATION B: During the game one of the umpires notices that one of the players has left the dugout and is seated with the spectators.

RULING: The umpire will instruct the manager to have his/her player return to the dugout area.

RULE 3.10(b) SITUATION: In the third inning of a game a thunderstorm envelopes the field.

RULING: The umpire should call “Time” and clear the field as quickly as possible. The game should remain in a suspended state for a minimum of thirty (30) minutes [SEE APPENDIX A]. The Umpire-in-Chief is the sole judge of the suspension due to weather conditions or the unsuitable conditions of the field.

RULE 3.12 SITUATION: The plate umpire calls “Time” at the request of the batter.

RULING: Only the umpires may call and grant “Time” to suspend play. Coaches and players may only request “Time” be granted. Furthermore, the umpire must put the ball back into play before the game can legally continue.

RULE 3.13 SITUATION: A local league has established a ground rule which grants a “Ground Rule Triple” for any batted ball that goes into a hedge row in right field.

RULING: This is illegal. No league or team may establish a ground rule which supersedes a playing rule. (Base awards are covered under Rule 7.00)

RULE 3.14 SITUATION: As the defense leaves the field at the end of the half inning, the left fielder leaves his/her glove at the warning track in foul territory.

RULING: This is illegal. No equipment should be left on the field in either fair or foul territory. Should the ball touch this abandoned equipment a call of interference may be made which could lead to either bases being awarded, or an out being called dependent on the team at fault.

RULE 3.15 SITUATION A: A newspaper photographer who has authorization from the local league enters the field of play.

RULING: This is legal. The umpire should designate a media area for the photographer and announce that the area is now out of play territory.

RULE 3.15 SITUATION B: During an attempted play, a thrown ball accidentally touches an authorized person on the field.

RULING: The ball is live and in play as this is not considered interference.

RULE 3.16 SITUATION A: A batter hits a foul fly ball along the first base fence. As the first baseman prepares to catch the ball, a fan reaches over the fence and touches the ball. This deflection causes the ball to fall uncaught to the ground.

RULING: This is spectator interference. Spectators are prohibited from reaching over fences or other boundaries marking live ball territory. The umpire should declare the batter out.

RULE 3.16 SITUATION B: Batter hits a long fly ball to center field. As the ball goes over the fence, the fielder reaches his/her glove beyond the fence in an attempt to make the catch. A spectator slaps the fielder’s glove and catches the ball.

RULING: This is not spectator interference. The fielder reached his/her glove beyond the limits of the field. The spectators are permitted to be there and their actions beyond the confines of the field cannot be judged as

interference

RULE 3.17 SITUATION: During the game, the manager of the Dodgers is observed using a cell phone in the dugout.

RULING: This is illegal and the manager should be ejected.

NOTE: It is permissible for a coach to use an electronic device for scorekeeping or pitch count purposes provided it is not used for communication of any sort.

RULE 4.00

STARTING AND ENDING THE GAME

RULE 4.01(d) SITUATION: In a Little League Major division game, the Cubs have a rostered player arrive after the game has begun. The manager of the Cubs wants to enter that player in the third inning of the game as a substitute. The opposing manager claims that this would be an illegal substitution since the player was not present at the start of the game.

RULING: This is a legal substitution. The manager may insert a player into the game who was not present at the start of the game (provided he/she is on the team's roster), if he/she so chooses. It should be noted that the manager does not have to use this player. However, if the player is inserted into the game, he/she must fulfill the Mandatory Play requirements.

RULE 4.03 SITUATION: At the start of the game the left fielder stations himself/herself in foul territory in an attempt to make an easy catch on a foul fly ball.

RULING: This is illegal all fielders except the catcher must be positioned in fair territory when play begins. **NOTE:** There is no penalty for this infraction, the umpire should just have the player move into fair territory.

RULE 4.04 (NOTE 2) SITUATION: A local league has adopted the continuous batting order option. During the second inning, one of the players scheduled to bat informs the manager that he/she is injured and cannot continue. The opposing manager claims that will result in an automatic out for that spot in the batting order.

RULING: This is false, if one of the players cannot continue due to injury or illness that position in the batting order is merely skipped over. Should the player be able to return later in the game he/she is just re-inserted into his/her original place in the batting order. **NOTE:** This ruling only applies to the use of continuous batting orders (all players bat). If a normal batting order is being used the injured/ill player must be replaced with a substitute.

RULE 4.05 SITUATION: The Royals want to use only one base coach (stationed in the third base coaches' box) while on offense.

RULING: This is illegal, the offense shall position a coach in both the first base and third base coaching boxes. The coaches may both be adults or an eligible player in uniform. Players must wear helmets. In order for both base coaches to be adults, there must be a third adult rostered coach or manger remaining in the dugout. It should also be noted that coaches may not alternate between the coaches' boxes once play has begun.

RULE 4.06(a) SITUATION: As the game progresses the manager of the Senators is becoming increasingly upset with the umpire’s strike zone. While his/her team is on offense he attempts to incite his/her fans into a loud demonstration of disapproval regarding this umpire.

RULING: The umpire should stop this immediately. The umpire may warn the manager to stop this behavior immediately or eject him/her for unsportsmanlike conduct.

RULE 4.06(b) SITUATION: The manager of the Mets, who is in the third base coaches’ box continues to belittle the opposing pitcher who is having difficulty throwing strikes.

RULING: The umpire should stop this immediately and eject the coach if necessary. Coaches may only speak to players on their own team.

RULE 4.06(c) SITUATION: In a Junior Division game with runners on first and third base, the coach in the third base coaches’ box shouts, “He’s/She’s going!,” every time the pitcher begins his/her motion. (NOTE: In softball the runners may not leave their occupied base until the ball is released). The pitcher then stops his/ her motion in mid-delivery. The coach begins yelling “That’s a balk! My runner from third scores!”

RULING: This is not a balk. The offense may not make any move designed to cause a balk. This includes verbalizations. Ignore the balk and, if the conduct continues, eject the offending coach. This ruling would also hold true at the Little League Major Division level and below regarding the Illegal Pitch.

RULE 4.07 SITUATION: A manager who was ejected from his/her team’s game on Tuesday is present at the field for his/her team’s next game on Thursday. A league official points this out to the umpires.

RULING: The umpires should refuse to start the game until the ejected manager leaves the premises. A part of the penalty for an ejection is that the offender may not be present at the game site for his/her team’s next physically played game, including pre- and post-game activities.

RULE 4.08 SITUATION: After a close play at second base, the bench of the Cardinals erupts in loud disapproval of the umpire’s decision.

RULING: The umpire should immediately warn the bench that this behavior must stop. Should it continue the umpire should eject the offender or offenders from the game, if they can be identified. If the umpire is unsure of the identity of the offender, he/she may clear the bench of all personnel. The offending team’s manager shall then have the right to recall only those players necessary for substitution.

RULE 4.09(a) SITUATION A: Runner on third base, two outs, batter hits a sharp ground ball to the shortstop who bobbles the ball. The runner from third base crosses the plate as the shortstop recovers the ball and throws to first base to retire the batter-runner for the third out.

RULING: Three outs and the run does not score due to the third out being recorded on the batter-runner before he/she touched first base.

RULE 4.09(a) SITUATION B: Runners on first and second, two outs. Batter hits a ball to the left-center field fence. The runner on second base crosses the plate and the runner from first base winds up on third bases, the batter is now at second base. The second baseman calls for the ball and appeals to the umpire that the runner now on third base missed second base. The umpire upholds the appeal and calls the runner on third base out.

RULING: Three outs, no run scores. The appeal at second base is a force out due to the batter becoming a runner and forcing the runner originally on first to second base. Since he/she failed to touch the base, the force is still in effect. The appeal results in the third out being a force out and therefore no runs can score. (NOTE: Even if the defense had requested time and then appealed after the ball is put back in play; the force is still in effect in the above scenario.)

RULE 4.09(a) SITUATION C: Runners on second and third, two outs. Batter hits a ball to the fence in right field. Both runners on base score and the batter-runner is now standing on third base. Second baseman calls for the ball and appeals to the umpire that the batter-runner missed second base on his/her way to third base. The umpire upholds the appeal and calls the runner on third out.

RULING: Three outs and both runs score. The appeal of a missed base in this scenario is a timing play and not a force play. The batter is only required to go to first base as a result of the batted ball and any advance beyond that is voluntary. Since at the time of the appeal both preceding runners had crossed the plate, their runs will count.

RULE 4.09(b) SITUATION: Tie game in the bottom of the sixth-inning, two outs. Batter receives ball four and all runners begin to advance. The runner from third base touches home plate. The batter rushes to join in the endgame celebration without having touched first base. The batter then enters the dugout with the rest of his/her team.

RULING: Umpire will call the batter out for abandoning his/her effort to advance. In this instance, the third out is a result of the batter being called out before touching first base, therefore it is a force out. No run scores and the game continues with the score still tied. (NOTE: The player must enter dead ball territory before he/ she can be called for abandonment.)

RULE 4.10(c) SITUATION: In a Little League Major division game, the home team is ahead by a score of 5 to 3 in the bottom of the third inning, when a sudden downpour renders the field unplayable. Umpire rules that the game is over with the home team winning.

RULING: This is incorrect. In order for a game to be called a regulation game the visiting team must have finished its complete turn at-bat in the fourth inning. Since this did not occur in the above scenario this is a suspended game and should be resumed at a later date.

RULE 4.10(d) SITUATION: Bottom of the first inning, two outs; a sudden thunderstorm causes the game to be halted. After a 30-minute delay the umpire rules a suspended game [SEE APPENDIX A].

RULING: This is correct. After the first pitch of the game, if any situation requires a game to be stopped before becoming Regulation, the Umpire in Chief should suspend the game and the game will be completed at a later date.

RULE 4.10(e) SITUATION A: In the top of the fifth inning, the Braves score four runs to establish a 10-run lead over the home team Yankees. The umpire rules the game over due to the 10-run rule.

RULING: This is incorrect. Whenever the visiting team scores enough runs in their half of an inning (after the third inning), to go ahead by 10 or more runs, the home team must bat before the 10-run rule can be enforced.

RULE 4.10(e) SITUATION B: In a Majors Division game the Giants lead the Cardinals, 18-2, after three complete innings. The umpire rules the game is over due to the League adoption of the 15-run rule. The Cardinal's manager protests that the game is not regulation, so it should not be called by the umpire.

RULING: The umpire is correct. When one team leads another by 15 or more runs after three innings (four innings for Intermediate/Junior/Senior), the game is considered to be a complete game, even though regulation innings were not completed.

NOTE: Local leagues may choose NOT to adopt the 10 and/or 15-run rule for the regular season.

RULE 4.11 SITUATION A: In the top of the fifth inning, the visiting Giants score five runs to go ahead 7-3. A sudden rainstorm causes the field to become unplayable. The umpire rules that the game is regulation with the Giants winning.

RULING: This is incorrect. Any time after a game becomes a regulation game (4 innings for Majors and below; 5 innings for Intermediate 50-70 Division and above), and the home team does not complete its turn at bat, the game reverts to the last completed inning, in this case the home wins. Officials must bear in mind, if a winner cannot be determined by this method the game shall be suspended at the point the umpire halted play.

RULE 4.11(d) SITUATION B: Going into the top of the fifth inning in a Majors Division game, the visiting Pirates are ahead of the Braves by a score of 7-3. A sudden rainstorm causes the field to become flooded without the fifth inning being completed. After a 30-minute delay, the umpire rules that the game is regulation with the Pirates winning 7-3.

RULING: This is correct. For the Majors, the game became Regulation at the end of the completed fourth inning with the Pirates leading 7-3. The EXCEPTION to Rule 4.11(d), does not apply here. Even though the fifth inning started, and the visiting Pirates got to start their at-bat, they gained no advantage in the top of the fifth inning which would require the home team Braves to be allowed to bat.

RULE 4.11(d) SITUATION C: At the end of four innings in a Majors Division game, the home team Cardinals lead 4-3. In the top of the fifth inning, the visiting Giants score three runs to take the lead 6-4. A sudden rainstorm causes the field to become unplayable without the home team Cardinals completing their turn at bat in the bottom of the fifth inning. The umpire rules that since the game is regulation, the Giants win 6-4.

RULING: This is incorrect. The EXCEPTION to this rule requires that after a game becomes regulation (four innings for Majors Division and below, and five innings for Intermediate and above), if the visiting team scores in their half of an inning to tie or take the lead, the home team must be allowed to complete their turn at bat. This game should be suspended.

RULE 4.12 SITUATION: The Cubs had a game halted due to darkness in the 4th inning with the score tied 6-6. The game is scheduled to be finished the following day. The Cubs had three rostered players who were not available due to a school function on the original game day however, they will be present the day the game resumes. The opposing manager argues that they will be ineligible to play since they were not present at the start of the game.

RULING: Any rostered player would be eligible to participate in the resumed game whether they were present at the suspended game or not. If the manager chooses to enter these players in the resumed game substitution rule 3.03 would apply to these players. All other aspects of the game shall resume exactly where they were when suspended. This would include; outs, runners on base, and the count on the batter.

RULE 4.14 SITUATION: In the bottom of the 4th inning, the umpire directs that the field lights be turned on. The manager of the visiting team protests that since his/her team had not batted with the lights on the umpire should not permit the lights to be turned on until the top of the next inning.

RULING: The umpire should have the lights turned on whenever he/she feels that darkness will make any further play dangerous, without regard to which team is batting.

RULE 4.16 SITUATION: The Diamondbacks arrive at the field with only seven players. Their manager tells the umpire his/her other players are on vacation, but that the opposing team has agreed to “loan” him/her two players for the game.

RULING: The umpire should not start this game under these circumstances. Officials shall never allow one team to “borrow” players from the other team, nor should they allow a game to begin with the understanding that “automatic outs” will be called for empty spots in the batting order. Each team must be able to place at least eight players on the field in order to start or continue a game. Umpires should bear in mind that this is not a reason to forfeit the game. This situation should be referred to the league’s Board of Directors for any further action. **NOTE:** Beginning in 2021 the local league may adopt a local league option to play a game with only eight players. It shall also be left to the local league to determine what should occur due to a batter missing in the line-up. Under this local league option if either team drops below eight players the game must be suspended.

RULE 4.17 SITUATION: The Red Sox have substituted all of their bench personnel and have re-entered their starters. Their center fielder twists his/her ankle and can no longer continue to play. The Red Sox manager wants to re-enter one of his/her substitute players that he chooses.

RULING: This is incorrect. The opposing manager will select which player will re-enter the game.

RULE 4.19 SITUATION A: The Yankees manager feels that the umpire is not correctly calling balls and strikes and he/she wishes to protest the game.

RULING: Legitimate protests shall be considered only when there is a violation of a playing rule or use of an ineligible player or pitcher. Although a manager may want to protest over judgment calls, mandatory play violations, and the use of illegal equipment, these are not issues that can be legally protested. However, rather than get into a protracted discussion over what is and is not protestable on the field, umpires are advised to accept such protests and refer them to the Board of Directors and keep the game moving.

RULE 4.19 SITUATION B: The Orioles’ manager discovers that the Cubs used an ineligible pitcher in their game on the previous night and he/she wishes to protest this.

RULING: A protest of an ineligible pitcher must be made before the umpires leave the field. Since the infraction occurred the previous night and was not brought to the umpires’ attention then, this protest is invalid. Even though the protest is not timely, violations such as this should be forwarded by the umpire to the Board of Directors for consideration.

RULE 5.00 PUTTING THE BALL IN PLAY – LIVE BALL

RULE 5.02 SITUATION: (BASEBALL - INTERMEDIATE (50/70), JUNIOR, AND SENIOR DIVISIONS) With a runner on third base, the umpire begins to clean the plate, the runner on third base breaks for home and slides under the catcher's tag. The umpire sends the runner back to third by stating there was an implied time out.

RULING: This is incorrect, there is no such thing as an implied timeout. The ball is live until the umpire calls "Time." Umpires should get into the habit of clearly calling and signaling a time out when necessary.

RULE 5.08 SITUATION: A runner from second base is heading toward third base as the center fielder throws the ball toward third base. The throw accidentally touches the third base coach who is standing in his/her coach's box, the runner continues toward home and scores. The opposing coach claims that the ball is dead and that the runner should be returned to third base.

RULING: Since the coach did not intentionally interfere with the throw, the ball is live and in play. The runner in this case can legally score.

RULE 5.09(a) SITUATION: The pitcher throws an inside pitch which strikes the batter's hands (outside of the strike zone). The ball rolls back to the pitcher who fields it and throws to first base. The defensive manager claims that the batter is out at first since this was a fair batted ball; claiming that, "The hands are part of the bat."

RULING: This is incorrect. The ball became dead the moment it touched the batter (or any part of his/her equipment or uniform other than the bat). Since the batter's hands were outside of the strike zone, "Time" should be called, and the batter awarded first base.

RULE 5.09(b) SITUATION: In a baseball game, Intermediate (50/70) division and above; a runner on first base attempts a straight steal of second base. As the catcher attempts to throw the ball he/she makes contact with the plate umpire causing his/her throw to go into the outfield and the runner reaches second safely.

RULING: This is umpire's interference. "Time" should be called, the interference identified, and the runner returned to first base. If the runner had been put out at second base, the out would stand, and the interference would be ignored. Please note the following: The catcher does not have to make the throw; the umpire only needs to hinder his/her attempt. This

ruling would also hold true at the Little League Majors Division and below [on a “delayed steal.”] In softball, a straight steal may not begin until the pitcher releases the ball at the Little League Major Division and above, the “delayed steal” applies to the Minor divisions. If the catcher failed to handle the pitch cleanly, or the pitcher throws a wild-pitch, umpire interference cannot happen on the above play.

RULE 5.09(f) SITUATION: With a runner on first base, the batter hits a sharp ground ball up the middle. The ball strikes the umpire before it reaches an infielder. The defensive manager loudly proclaims that the umpire cost his/her team an easy double play and as a result he/she should rule both runners out.

RULING: The defensive coach is wrong. This is umpire’s interference. The ball became dead the instant it touched the umpire. The umpire should call “Time,” identify the interference, and award the batter first base. In this case, the runner originally on first base would be awarded second base due to the batter being awarded first base.

RULE 5.10(d) SITUATION: The offensive manager requests “Time” to confer with his/her batter. The manager had already had a conference two batters earlier.

RULING: The umpire should refuse the manager’s request. The offensive team is limited to one conference per half inning.

RULE 5.10(f) SITUATION: Runner on third base, one out. Batter hits a fly ball near the line marking dead ball territory. The fielder catches the ball with both feet in live ball territory and his/her momentum carries him/her across the line. Runner tags up on first touch and breaks for home. The right fielder throws home from “out of play” territory and the catcher applies the tag before the runner touches home plate. The umpire declares the runner out. The offensive manager claims that his/her runner should score since the ball entered dead ball territory.

RULING: The umpire is incorrect. The fielder made a legal catch and then stepped into dead ball territory. The ball is dead and the umpire should award one base to all runners from their Time of Pitch base.

RULE 5.11 SITUATION: (BASEBALL – INTERMEDIATE (50/70), JUNIOR, AND SENIOR DIVISIONS). Runner on first base, the batter requests and is granted time. As the batter steps back into the batter’s box, the pitcher turns and throws to the first baseman, who tags the runner that is standing off first base. The defense claims that the runner is out.

RULING: The runner is not out in this case. The plate umpire had not made the ball live and no outs can be recorded when time is out. (NOTE: Umpires should make it a habit to always put the ball back in play after a time out for the benefit of their partners and the players.)

RULE 6.00 THE BATTER

RULE 6.02(b) SITUATION: The batter steps out of the batter's box without having "Time" granted after the pitcher has started his/her delivery. The pitcher delivers the ball and the umpire declares "No pitch."

RULING: This is incorrect. The pitch should be called either a ball or a strike but never "No Pitch."

RULE 6.02(c) SITUATION: During a Senior Division game, the batter is not happy with the plate umpire's strike zone. To show his/her displeasure, he/she steps out of the batter's box without requesting "Time." The umpire directs him/her back into the box and the batter delays moving. The umpire then ejects the player.

RULING: This is incorrect. If the batter refuses to take his/her position in the batter's box, the umpire shall call a strike on the batter. The pitch does not need to be thrown. Additionally, the ball is dead, and no runners may advance. Any strikes called in this scenario will not be counted against the pitcher's pitch count.

RULE 6.03 SITUATION: The batter takes his/her position with one foot touching the line of the batter's box.

RULING: For the purposes of Rule 6.03, the lines marking the batter's box are considered within the batter's box.

RULE 6.05(b)(2) SITUATION: (In the Little League Major Division and above) One out, two strikes on the batter, and a runner on first base. The batter swings and misses a pitch that bounced in front of the plate. The batter starts running to first base. The umpire allows this happen since the pitch was not cleanly caught.

RULING: This is incorrect. Since 1st base was occupied with less than two outs, the batter was out on strike three, regardless of the uncaught third strike. The umpire should have loudly announced, "The batter's out! The batter's out!"

RULE 6.05(g) SITUATION: The batter lays down a bunt between the Pitcher's plate and the first base line. As the batter starts toward first base he/she flips his/her bat into fair territory where it strikes the ball (a second time).

RULING: Since the bat struck the ball a second time in fair territory, this would be ruled as interference by the batter whether it was intentional or not. If the ball had struck the bat it would remain live and in play. The umpire must judge what initiated the contact; the bat to the ball – Interference or the ball to the bat – Live Ball.

RULE 6.05(h) SITUATION: With a runner on third base, the batter for the Braves attempts to bunt down the first base line in an attempt to have the run score. After contacting the ball and starting toward 1st base the batter deliberately kicks the ball into foul territory to avoid being put out too quickly.

RULING: This is interference. Call the batter out for his/her intentional act, the ball is dead, and no other runners may advance as a result of the play.

RULE 6.05(j) SITUATION: Batter hits a swinging bunt, with the ball landing two feet in front of home plate. The catcher retrieves the ball and is preparing to throw to first base. The runner is more than halfway to 1st base and running completely in fair territory. The catcher does not throw to first base for fear of hitting the runner. The umpire rules the batter/runner out for interference.

RULING: This is incorrect. In order for the runner to be called out for interference (Running Lane Violation), the ball must be thrown with some accuracy and quality toward a defensive player at 1st base. What the runner is interfering with is the fielder's attempt to catch the ball, NOT the act of throwing the ball. This is the plate umpire's judgment.

RULE 6.05(k) SITUATION: With runners on 1st and 2nd base with one out, the batter hits a pop up to the shortstop (the umpires DO NOT rule Infield Fly), who intentionally lets it fall to the ground after it hits his/her glove in an attempt to turn an easy double play. The defense retrieves the ball and completes the double play. The umpire nullifies the results of the play; calls the batter out; and returns the runners to the bases they occupied at the time of the pitch and the ball is dead.

RULING: This is correct. The defense may not intentionally drop a fly ball in the infield with runners on base in an attempt to gain an advantage. Intentionally dropping a fly ball should not be confused with the fielder's inability or decision not to catch it. The umpire must judge whether the fielder did anything to ensure that the ball dropped to the ground, such as guiding with his/her glove. This is a judgment call by the umpires and is not protestable or arguable.

RULE 6.05(l) SITUATION: Runner on 1st base, one out. Batter hits a ground ball to the 2nd baseman who throws to shortstop to start the double play. Runner from 1st base begins to jump up and down and wildly wave his/her arms while still in the base path. Umpire judges that this is an intentional attempt to interfere with the potential double play. Umpire immediately calls time and rules both the runner and the batter out.

RULING: This is correct. If the umpire judges that the actions of a retired runner are a willful and deliberate attempt to interfere with the defensive play, both the runner and the batter will be declared out, the ball is dead, and no other runners (if any) may advance.

RULE 6.05(m) SITUATION: (BASEBALL – INTERMEDIATE (50/70), JUNIOR, AND SENIOR DIVISIONS) In a tied ball game the Giants have their best base stealer on 3rd base with two outs. With a 2-2 count on the batter, the runner from 3rd base breaks for home on the pitch in an attempt to steal the winning run. The pitch hits the runner as he/she enters the area of the batter’s strike zone. The umpire rules “dead ball” and returns the runner to 3rd base with no change on the batter’s count.

RULING: This is incorrect. If the pitch struck the runner while he/she was in the batter’s strike zone, it is a strike. In this scenario since the batter already had two strikes this is strike three and since there were already two outs, this is the third out and the run does not score. Had there been zero or one out when this occurred, it is still strike three but the run would score. This not interference by either the batter or the runner. Further, the ball is dead and the batter may not attempt to advance to first base due to an uncaught third strike.

RULE 6.06(a) SITUATION: In a Majors Division level game the batter is striding toward the pitcher as he/she attempts to hit the ball. On the third pitch, he/ she singles to right field. The defensive manager claims that he/she should be called out for illegally batting the ball because his/her foot was out of the batter’s box at the time he/she hit the ball.

RULING: In order for a batter to be called out for an illegal action in this scenario his/her foot must be entirely out of the batter’s box and on the ground when he/she makes contact with the ball. It is important to note that both parts of the rule must be present (1. Entirely out of the box and 2. On the ground) to call a batter out for an illegal action.

RULE 6.06(b) SITUATION: With a 2-2 count on a right-handed batter and the pitcher on the pitcher’s plate taking his/her sign, the batter decides to hit left handed and steps across the plate into the opposite batter’s box. The defense argues that he/ she cannot switch batter’s boxes with two strikes and that he/she should be called out.

RULING: The batter may change batter’s boxes as often as he/she likes; provided the pitcher is not in position ready to pitch. Since the pitcher in this scenario was not ready to pitch the batter’s actions are legal.

RULE 6.06(c) SITUATION: The Phillies have a runner on 2nd base when the right-handed batter swings and misses the pitch. The catcher fails to catch the pitch and the runner breaks for 3rd base. As the catcher retrieves the ball and prepares to throw to 3rd base, the batter steps backward out of the box to get out of everyone’s way. As he/she steps out, he/she accidentally gets into the catcher’s throwing lane and the catcher does not throw to 3rd base.

RULING: Even though there was no deliberate attempt to alter the play the batter is guilty of interference and should be called out. (Notice the difference between this

play and the case of the running lane violation where a throw is required before interference can be ruled.)

RULE 6.06(d) SITUATION: (BASEBALL) In a Junior League game the batter enters the batter’s box with a 33 inch bat. The bat does not have the USA Baseball label on it. The umpire rules the batter out for this violation before a pitch is thrown.

RULING: This is correct. Since the batter entered the batter’s box with an illegal bat (Rule 1.10) and was discovered by the umpire, he/she is ruled out. If the illegal bat is discovered after a batter has completed his/her time at bat and before the next batter enters the batter’s box, the defense has the option of accepting either the penalty or the result of the play.

RULE 6.06(d)(2) NOTE: For the first violation of Rule 6.06(d) the offending team will lose one adult base coach for the duration of the game. This is not an ejection but rather the offense is now limited to one adult base coach occupying the coaching boxes. Subsequent violations of this rule will lead to ejections. (NOTE: No runners may advance unless the defense accepts the outcome of the play.)

RULE 6.07(a) SITUATION: Alice comes to bat for the Astros in the bottom of the 3rd inning, however it should be Kathy who is at bat. After three pitches result in a 2-1 count, the defense states that Alice should be called out for batting out of turn.

RULING: Since Alice did not complete this time at bat by becoming a runner or being put out, Kathy just comes into the batter’s box and assumes the 2-1 count. It is important to remember that if the improper batter does not complete the time at bat the only action required is to have the proper batter come to the plate. No other action is necessary on the part of the umpire. Umpires must be aware of a potential mandatory play violation since Kathy did not come to bat with an 0-0 count.

RULE 6.07(b) SITUATION: In the fifth inning, the Braves have runners on 2nd and 3rd bases with one out. Beverly comes to bat and hits a double to center field scoring both runners. The defensive manager immediately informs the umpire that Stacy should have batted; upon checking his/her line-up card, the umpire agrees.

RULING: Stacy is called out, Beverly is removed from 2nd base and both runners who had scored are returned to 2nd and 3rd bases and the batter that follows Stacy in the batting order will now come to bat. (NOTE: The defense must make the appeal of an improper batter before a pitch is delivered to the next batter of either team or before any play or attempted play).

RULE 6.07(b) NOTE: If any base runner advances on their own such as a wild pitch situation while an improper batter is at bat that advance shall be deemed as legal.

RULE 6.07(c) SITUATION: Beth bats in the 3rd inning and draws a four-pitch walk. Connie comes to the plate and takes a first pitch strike. The defense now appeals that Beth batted out of turn and should be called out.

RULING: Because a pitch was thrown to Connie before the appeal was made whatever Beth did has been made legal and whoever follows Beth in the batting order should be at the plate.

RULE 6.08(a) SITUATION: In the top of the 4th inning, of a Majors Division baseball game, the head coach of the defensive team decides to intentionally walk the best hitter of the opposing team. He/she asks for and is granted “Time” by the umpire. He/she informs the umpire of the team’s wish to intentionally walk the batter before a pitch is thrown. The umpire acknowledges the decision and sends the batter to 1st base.

RULING: The defense elects to “Intentionally Walk” the batter by announcing such decision to the plate umpire. The request may be made prior to or during the at-bat. The appropriate number of “balls” needed based on the count on the batter at the time of the manager’s request to complete the Intentional Walk will be added to the pitch count.

NOTE: The ball is dead and no other runners may advance unless forced by the batter’s award. For the purpose of the pitch count, four pitches will be added to the pitcher’s pitch count.

RULE 6.08(b)(1) SITUATION: Ralph is at bat when an inside pitch strikes his hand which is inside the strike zone. The offense wants Ralph to be awarded 1st base as a result of being hit by the pitch.

RULING: In this instance the batter is not awarded 1st base. The umpire should call “TIME” and announce that the pitch was a strike and that the batter should remain at the plate unless it was strike 3. The ball is dead, and no other runners may advance.

RULE 6.08(b)(2) SITUATION: Harold is at bat with an 0-2 count when the pitcher delivers a breaking ball out of the strike zone which strikes Harold in the thigh. The umpire rules that Harold made no attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch. The ball is dead, the pitch is ruled a ball and Harold remains at the plate with a count of 1-2.

RULING: This is correct provided that the umpire is totally convinced that the batter made no attempt to avoid the pitch. The phrase no attempt leaves plenty of room for umpire judgment.

RULE 6.08(c) SITUATION: Anne is batting for the Mets in the 5th inning. With a 2-1 count she swings at the next pitch and makes contact with both the ball and the catcher’s mitt; the ball rolls toward the 3rd baseman in fair territory. The 3rd baseman fields the ball and throws to 1st to retire Anne.

RULING: The umpire should rule interference on the catcher and award Anne 1st base. Had Anne reached 1st base safely and any other runners advanced at least one base safely the interference should be identified but not enforced. It is also

important to remember that the offense has the ability to refuse the award and accept the outcome the play if it is to their benefit. This is a “delayed dead ball” situation and the umpires should allow all play to continue until no further action is possible before making any award.

RULE 6.09(b) SITUATION: In a Majors Division or above game, Joe is at bat for the Yankees with 2 out, with an 0-2 count, and runners on 1st and 2nd bases. He swings and misses a pitch which bounces before reaching the catcher. The catcher gloves the ball for an apparent strike-out. Joe turns to his dugout and takes three steps away from home plate and the umpire calls him out.

RULING: This is incorrect. The Batter-Runner can still attempt to advance to first base until he/she enters “dead ball” territory or starts walking towards his/her defensive position.

NOTES: There are several points to consider in this scenario:

The pitch was not caught “in-flight,” so it is an uncaught 3rd strike.

The batter could have attempted to advance because there were two outs.

The batter cannot be called out until he/she enters “dead ball” territory.

With two outs the batter abandons his/her right to advance to first base by walking towards his/her defensive position.

This is an example of a play involving several variables which must be recognized and taken into consideration before the umpire rules.

RULE 7.00 THE RUNNER

RULE 7.02 SITUATION: With a runner on first base, the batter hits a long fly ball toward the left-field line which goes out of play over foul territory. The runner was off with the pitch and was approaching third base when the ball left the field. Upon seeing this the runner goes diagonally across the field back to first base without retouching second. The defense claims that the runner should be called out for failing to retouch second base.

RULING: When the ball goes out of play, the runner may directly return to his/her original base without retouching any other base. In this instance the defense is mistaken.

RULE 7.03 SITUATION: Runner on first base no outs; after a clean hit to the outfield, the batter and the runner originally on first base are both occupying second base. The shortstop calls for the ball and tags both runners. The umpire rules the runner originally on first base out and allows the batter-runner to remain on second base.

RULING: This is incorrect. Since the runner originally on first base was not forced to move beyond second base due to the batter's fair batted ball, he/she is legally entitled to second base. In this instance the defense tagged both runners so the batter should have been declared out and the runner originally on first should remain on second. (NOTE: If the runner legally entitled to the base should step off and is tagged again, then he/she is also out.)

RULE 7.04(a) SITUATION: With runners on first and second base, the batter hits a ground ball toward the shortstop. The batted ball strikes the runner attempting to advance to third base. While this is happening, the batter slips and falls while trying to exit the batter's box. The defense feels that they should be awarded a double play since it was a routine ground ball and the batter could have also been easily retired.

RULING: The runner who was struck by the fair batted ball is declared out and the batter is awarded first base without liability to be put out. The ball became dead the moment it contacted the base runner. (NOTE: Baseball Intermediate (50-70) and above levels, had the batted ball touched an umpire in this scenario before touching anything else, all runners including the batter would be awarded one base.)

RULE 7.04(b) SITUATION: With the game tied in the bottom of the sixth inning, the offense has a runner on third base with no one out. The batter hits a high fly ball close to the fence along the first base side of the field. The first baseman leans over the fence to catch the ball and his/her momentum causes him/her to fall over

the fence and onto the ground in dead ball territory while still retaining possession and control of the ball.

RULING: The batter is out and the runner on third base is awarded home and the game is over.

RULE 7.05(b) SITUATION: A fielder wishing to show off for the spectators catches a fair batted ball in his/her cap for the apparent third out of an inning.

RULING: This is not a catch, the batter will be awarded three bases, the ball is live and the batter may try to score at his/her own risk.

RULE 7.05(c) SITUATION: Batter hits a long fly ball to center field. The fielder misjudges the ball and it sails over his/her head. In an attempt to hold the batter to a double, the fielder throws his/her glove at the ball and hits it, thus stopping the ball.

RULING: The batter is awarded three bases and the ball remains live. (NOTE: In order for this penalty to be enforced, the thrown glove must touch the ball.)

RULE 7.05(d) SITUATION: With a runner on second base, the batter hits a clean single to right field. The right fielder throws home in an attempt to stop a run from scoring. The catcher uses his/her mask to stop the ball and keep the runner at third base.

RULING: All runners, including the batter, will be awarded two bases for the use of “detached equipment.” The result of this award is that the runner originally on second base will score and the batter is awarded second base.

RULE 7.05(g) SITUATION: With a runner on first base, the batter hits a sharp ground ball to the shortstop, who fields it and relays the ball to the second baseman to start the double play. The second baseman pivots and throws to first base. His/her throw is over the first baseman’s heads and the ball goes into dead territory, where it strikes the face of the dugout and rebounds into the field.

RULING: The batter is awarded two bases from the time of the throw even though the ball bounced back into “live ball” territory.

RULE 7.05(i) NOTE 1 SITUATION: Charlie is at bat for the Cubs with a count of three balls and one strike. The pitcher’s next pitch is wild and gets past the catcher and through the backstop. The offense argues that Charlie should be awarded second base, since the pitch was both ball four and it went out of play.

RULING: In this scenario, the batter is awarded only first base. Charlie should remain at first base since the ball was thrown out of play by the pitcher when in contact with the pitcher’s plate.

RULE 7.06(a) SITUATION: With a runner on first base, the batter hits a pop- fly between the pitcher’s mound and first base. The first baseman and the pitcher are converging to field the ball. The umpire judges that the pitcher has the better opportunity to make the catch. The batter and the first baseman collide before first base. The umpire identifies the obstruction as the ball falls to the ground uncaught in fair territory. The umpire awards

the batter first base and the runner originally on first base is awarded second base. The defense argues that the batter interfered with the fielder's attempt to field the batted ball.

RULING: Since the umpire had previously judged that the pitcher had the best chance of fielding the ball, his/her actions are protected; therefore, the batter cannot be guilty of interfering with the first baseman. This is a case of the batter being obstructed before reaching first base; so, the ball is immediately dead and the batter is awarded first base. The original runner is forced to second base as a result of the award.

RULE 7.06(b) SITUATION: With no one on base, the batter hits a line drive through the infield which gets past the outfielders and rolls to the fence. As the batter is rounding first base, there is contact with the first baseman, who is watching the ball in the outfield. The umpire identifies the obstruction but allows the play to continue. (As there is no play being made on the obstructed runner this is a delayed award situation). The umpire judges that the batter would have easily reached second base safely if there had been no obstruction at first. At the conclusion of playing action, if the batter had not yet reached second base, the umpire would award that base. (NOTE: It is possible for a runner to “over-run” his/her award. In the above scenario if the runner had tried for third base and is thrown out there, the out would stand. The base to which the obstructed runner will be awarded is strictly judgment and is not protestable.)

RULE 7.08(a)(1) SITUATION: With a runner on second base and no outs the shortstop is playing back (on the edge of the grass). The batter hits a slow rolling ground ball beyond the reach of the pitcher. The shortstop sets up to field the ball, the base runner goes behind the fielder to avoid a collision. The defense claims that the runner should be called out for running out of the baseline.

RULING: This is incorrect, the runner did what he/she should have done to avoid interfering with the fielder. The runner establishes his/her baseline every time he/she moves. He/she can only be called out for leaving the base path if the defensive player has the ball in his/her possession and is preparing to make a play on that runner. Both aspects must be present before a base path infraction can occur.

RULE 7.08(a)(3) SITUATION: As a result of the batter hitting a ground ball to the shortstop, the runner from first base goes into second base standing up. The fielder drops the ball and does not record the out. The defense argues that the runner should be called out for not sliding on an obvious force out.

RULING: There is no “must slide” rule in any division of Little League baseball or softball. A runner is never required to slide at any base.

RULE 7.08(a)(4)[MAJORS & BELOW] SITUATION: A runner on third base breaks for home on a batted ball. The ball is thrown to the catcher and a play is imminent at the plate. In an attempt to avoid the tag, the runner slides headfirst into the plate.

RULING: The umpire shall declare the runner out for the head-first slide, the ball remains live and the defense may record additional outs.

RULE 7.08(f) SITUATION: With the infield playing back, a batted ball strikes a runner who is standing on second base.

RULING: The runner is out for interference, the ball is immediately dead, and the batter-runner is awarded first base, no other runners may advance unless forced. (NOTE: Bases are not a safe haven from being struck with a batted ball except in the case of an Infield Fly. If a runner is struck by an Infield Fly while standing on a base, he/she will not be declared out.)

RULE 7.08(g) SITUATION: With one out, the runner on third base attempts to score on a passed ball. The catcher retrieves the ball and throws to the pitcher who is covering home. The batter interferes with the throw allowing the run to score.

RULING: With less than two outs, the umpire shall declare the runner out for the batter's interference. If there are two out, declare the batter out for the third out of the inning and no run will score in either scenario.

RULE 7.09(b) SITUATION: With a 2-2 count, the batter hits a ground ball along the first-base line. He/she is convinced that if the ball rolls fair he/she will easily be put out, to avoid this he/she intentionally kicks the ball into foul territory.

RULING: The umpire should rule the batter out for intentionally deflecting the batted ball.

RULE 7.09(f) SITUATION: With a runner on first base and no outs, the batter hits a sharp ground ball to the second baseman who fields the ball and throws to the shortstop to start the double play. The runner who was on first base goes into second base waving his/her arms above his/her head and jumping up and down attempting to break up the double play

RULING: The umpire should call the runner out and the batter-runner should also be called out for his/her teammate's interference.

RULE 7.10(a) SITUATION: There is a runner on third base when the batter hits a high fly ball to the right fielder. The runner assuming the ball will be caught, backs off the base trying to get a running start on his/her "tag-up." The fielder catches the ball and the runner tags third base from his/her running start.

RULING: Upon proper appeal by the defense, R3 would be called out for improperly retouching third base.

RULE 7.11 SITUATION: The batter hits a foul fly ball which is coming down in the first base coach's box. As the first baseman moves to field the ball, he/she collides with the coach who is standing in the box looking up at the ball.

RULING: The batter is out due to the coach's interference. There does not have to be intent on the coach's part to have interference occur and he/she must vacate the box to allow the fielder the opportunity to make a play on a batted ball.

RULE 7.13 [SOFTBALL MINORS] SITUATION: With a runner on second base, the pitcher delivers the ball. The runner on second base leaves his/her base before the pitch reaches the batter. The umpire calls "No Pitch" as the batter hits a ground ball to the shortstop.

RULING: The umpire should call "time" because the runner left the base prior to the pitched ball reaching the batter. The ball is dead, the runner from second base is out for leaving early and return the batter to the plate. The ball was dead as soon as the runner from second base left the base while the pitcher was in the eight-foot circle and prior to the pitched ball reaching the batter.

RULE 7.13 [SOFTBALL MAJORS & ABOVE] SITUATION: With a runner on second base, and the pitcher in the motion of delivering the ball, but prior to the pitcher releasing the ball, the runner on second base leaves her base. The umpire calls "time" as the batter hits a ground ball to the shortstop.

RULING: The umpire should call "time" because the runner left the base prior to the pitched ball being released from the pitcher's hand. The ball is dead, and the runner from second base is out for leaving early and the batter is returned to the plate.

RULE 7.13 [BASEBALL MAJORS & BELOW] SITUATION A: With runners on first and second base, with one out there is a one ball and two strike count on the batter. As the pitcher delivers the ball, the runner on second base leaves his/her base before the pitch reaches the batter. The umpire drops his/her signal flag as the batter hits a ground ball to the shortstop. The shortstop fields the ball and throws to second base to retire the runner originally on first base. At the end of this play, there are runners on first and third base with two outs.

RULING: The umpire should call time and return the runner on third base to second base.

RULE 7.13 [BASEBALL MAJORS & BELOW] SITUATION B: With a runner on first base and no outs, the pitcher delivers the ball. The runner on first base leaves before the pitch reaches the batter, and the umpire drops his/her signal flag. The batter hits a long fly ball to the center fielder. The runner who was originally on first base returns to tag up as the center fielder catches the ball. The runner then advances to second base.

RULING: At the end of play the umpire should call time and return the runner on second base to first base. The act of returning to tag-up does not negate the violation of this rule. The result of this play is one out and a runner on first base.

RULE 7.13 [BASEBALL MAJORS & BELOW] SITUATION C: With a runner on second base, with no outs, the pitch is delivered, and the runner leaves his/her base before the pitch reaches the batter. The umpire drops his/her signal flag. The batter hits a clean double and the runner originally on second base scores.

RULING: At the end of the play, the umpire should call time and return the runner who just scored back to third base. (NOTE: In applying the penalty for any runner leaving early, the UIC must determine the value of the hit. The batter is awarded this base provided the batter safely reached it. Now, taking the batter's position into account, all runners are returned as closely as possible to their Time of Pitch base.)

RULE 7.13 [BASEBALL MAJORS & BELOW] SITUATION D: With the bases loaded, two outs, and a no-balls and two-strikes count on the batter, the pitcher delivers the ball. The runner on second base leaves early and the umpire drops his/ her signal flag. The batter swings and misses but the catcher fails to catch the pitch. All the runners, including the batter, advance one base, with the runner originally on third base scoring on the play.

RULING: At the end of the play, the umpire should call "time" and announce that the runner originally on second base left early. The result of this infraction is that no run scores. The ball never left the infield, all runners, including the batter, advanced safely, but the violation of 7.13 must be addressed. The penalty in this situation is that no run may score: the runner from third base is just returned to the dugout, he/she does not score nor is he/she out.

POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN DEALING WITH VIOLATIONS OF 7.13 (BASEBALL):

One runner leaving early effects all runners {Team Penalty}.

Leaving early cannot be undone by returning to tag up or re-touch.

There can never be an automatic out.

If the batter hits the pitch, the UIC will determine the value of the batter's hit. The batter will be limited to this base. Additional bases gained by the batter due to fielding errors or balls thrown out of play are lost as part of the team penalty for leaving early.

There is a situation where a scored run can be nullified without recording an out.

REVIEW ALL THE POTENTIAL OUTCOMES LISTED IN THE CURRENT YEAR'S OFFICIAL RULES, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES UNDER 7.13.

RULE 7.14 SITUATION A: In the fifth inning the manager of the Diamondbacks wants to use a Special Pinch Runner (SPR) for the third time in the game. The Diamondbacks have already used a Special Pinch Runner in the second and fourth innings.

RULING: This is legal in a Regular Season game, an SPR may be used once per inning.

RULE 7.14 SITUATION B: In the third inning of a tie game, the batter for the Cubs leads off with a double. The manager calls time and announces that he/ she wants to use a Special Pinch Runner (SPR). He/she wants to put his/her starting center fielder (who is still in the batting order) in to run.

RULING: In this instance the umpire should not allow this to occur. Although the Cubs may use a Special Pinch Runner that runner may not be currently listed in the batting order.

RULE 7.15(b) SITUATION: A local league has elected to use the double first base for their regular season. During one of their games, a batter hits a sharp ground ball to the third baseman. The throw beats the batter to first base, but the defense touches the colored portion of the base only.

RULING: The batter is safe in this situation as the defense must touch the white portion of the base when making a play on the batter runner.

RULE 7.15(d) SITUATION: With a runner on first base (league using double first base), and one out, the batter hits a fly ball to left field. The runner was off on contact. The left fielder catches the fly ball and throws toward first base in an attempt to double up the runner. The runner is retreating to first base to tag up. As he/she dives into the bag, he/she touches only the colored portion of the base. The first baseman catches the throw from the outfield and steps on the white portion of the base.

RULING: The runner is out on the appeal play. Once the runner has reached first base, he/she may only use the white portion of the base, the colored portion of the base is no longer recognized by the umpire as part of the base.

RULE 7.15(g) SITUATION: League is using a double first base, on an uncaught third strike, (Majors Division and above), the batter runs to first base as the catcher chases the errant pitch. The runner reaches first base prior to the ball but touches only the white portion of the base. The ball arrives immediately afterward, and the defense argues that the runner should be out for failing to touch the colored section of the base.

RULING: At the Majors Division and above, the batter/runner may attempt to touch either portion of the base when attempting to advance on an uncaught third strike. The umpire in this scenario should rule the runner safe.

RULE 8.00 THE PITCHER (BASEBALL)

RULE 8.01 SITUATION: The pitcher is standing behind the pitcher's plate taking signs from the catcher or the dugout. The pitcher then steps onto the plate and immediately delivers a pitch to the batter.

RULING: This is a quick pitch and it is illegal. The resulting penalty is a ball on the batter, regardless of whether there are runners on base or not (Majors Division and below). If there are base runners at the Intermediate (50/70) division and above it is a balk.

RULE 8.01(a)(2) SITUATION: With the bases loaded, the pitcher is in the "wind-up" position. After taking his/her sign from the catcher he/she immediately steps toward and throws to third base in an attempt to pickoff the base runner. The defense argues that since he/she did not disengage the pitcher's plate from his/her starting position prior to the throw that it is a balk.

RULING: From the "wind-up" position the pitcher may do one of three things; 1. Pitch to the batter; 2. Throw to a base to attempt to pickoff a runner; or 3. Legally disengage the pitcher's plate. In Little League Baseball, it is absolutely legal for a pitcher to throw to a base from the "wind-up" position. This is not a balk or illegal.

RULE 8.01(b) SITUATION: In a Little League Major Division game, the pitcher is pitching from the "Set" position. The offense complains that the pitcher is not coming to a complete stop before delivering the pitch. They want the umpire to enforce the Illegal Pitch rule.

RULING: At the Little League Major Division and below the pitcher is not required to come to a complete stop before delivering the pitch whether there are runners on base or not.

RULE 8.01(c) SITUATION: In a Juniors Division game, with a runner on first base, the pitcher makes a quick throw to first base followed by a step in that direction.

RULING: This is a balk. The pitcher must step in the direction of his/her throw before he makes the throw. In this scenario, award the runner second base.

RULE 8.01(e) SITUATION: In a Senior Division game, the pitcher legally disengages the pitcher's plate and throws toward first base in an attempt to pick off the base runner. The ball sails over the first baseman's head and into dead ball territory.

RULING: Since the pitcher legally disengaged the plate before his/her throw, he/she is now treated as an infielder regarding award of bases therefore the runner is awarded two bases; place the runner on third base.

RULE 8.02(a)(4) SITUATION: The pitcher for the Astros is continually rubbing the baseball against his/her pant leg.

RULING: This is illegal; the umpire should award the batter a ball on the count and warn the pitcher to cease this activity.

RULE 8.02(b) SITUATION: With the winning run on third base and one out, the offense has their best hitter coming to the plate. The defense calls “time” and the coach tells the pitcher to walk the batter by dropping the ball four times and never really pitching.

RULING: As soon as the umpire recognizes this, he/she should warn the pitcher that he/she is intentionally delaying the game, and if it is repeated the pitcher may be removed (ejected) from the game.

RULE 8.02(c) SITUATION: In the top of the fifth inning of a Senior Division Baseball Game, the umpire suspects that the pitcher for the Giants is intentionally throwing at batters.

RULING: The umpire should warn both the pitcher and his/her manager that if this action is repeated, the umpire will eject the pitcher from the game.

RULE 8.04 SITUATION: As the game progresses, the pitcher for the Braves is taking longer and longer to deliver a pitch when the bases are empty. By the fourth inning, he/she is waiting almost an entire minute before pitching.

RULING: After 20 seconds the umpire should call “Ball” and adjust the batter’s count accordingly. This rule is in place to avoid unnecessary delays of the game but may only be enforced when there are no runners on base and a pitch will be charged to the pitcher’s pitch count.

RULE 8.05(a) SITUATION: With a runner on third base, the right-handed pitcher steps back off the plate with his/her left foot first and then drops his/her hands.

RULING: Intermediate (50/70) level and above this is a balk as the pitcher did not step off with his/her pivot foot first. The runner on third base will be awarded home. At the Little League Major Division and below, it is an illegal pitch; a ball will be added to the batter’s count and a pitch will be added to the pitcher’s pitch count. NOTE: With no runners on base, if a pitcher steps off the pitcher’s plate with his/ her free foot first or starts or stops his/her pitching motion, a ball should NOT be awarded to the batter in ALL Divisions). This is NOT considered an illegal action when there are no runners on base.

RULE 8.05(a) SITUATION: With runners on first base and second base, in a Junior Division game, the pitcher who is in the “Set” position starts his/her delivery. He/she pauses his/her motion to rest his/her feet.

RULING: This is a balk. Once the pitcher begins his/her motion toward home, he/she must complete the action in one continuous motion. Award both runners one base. (NOTE: At the Little League Major division, this is an illegal pitch, the batter would receive a ball on his/her count, provided there are runners on base.)

RULE 8.05(b) SITUATION: In a Junior Division baseball game, the runner on first base is taking a rather large lead. The pitcher who is working

from the “Set” position feints (fakes) a throw to first base to move the runner back. He/she never throws the ball and his/her pivot foot is still in contact with the pitcher’s plate.

RULING: This is a balk; award any/all runners on base one base.

RULE 8.05(g) and (i) SITUATION: With runners on first base and second base in a Little League Major division game, the pitcher is astride the pitcher’s plate while the first baseman has the ball. From here, the pitcher brings his/her hands together simulating the start of a pitch.

RULING: At the Little League Major Division, and below, this is an illegal pitch; a ball will be awarded to the batter, and a pitch is added to the pitcher’s pitch count. At the Intermediate (50/70) Division and above this is a balk.

RULE 8.05(k) SITUATION: While attempting to issue an intentional walk, the catcher for the Dodgers sets up with his/her feet outside of the catcher’s box well before the pitcher releases the ball.

RULING: At the Intermediate (50/70) Division and above, if there are runners on base, this is a balk; otherwise it is an illegal pitch. (At the Little League Majors division, and below, if there are runners on base, award a ball to the batter and charge a pitch to the pitcher’s pitch count.)

RULE 8.06(a) SITUATION: The manager for the Yankees has been out to visit his/her pitcher once in the third inning. After his/her pitcher loads the bases the manager asks for time to visit him/her again. The manager does not replace his/her pitcher after this visit.

RULING: This is illegal. If the manager or coach comes out to visit two times in the same inning the pitcher must be replaced. (NOTE: The number of visits to a pitcher resets with every pitcher brought to the mound. Visits to remove a pitcher from the game do not count towards trips to visit the pitcher).

RULE 8.06(d) SITUATION: In a Little League Major division game, the manager for the Rockies asks for “time” and calls his/her catcher over to the fence to give him/her instructions on how to pitch to the next batter.

RULING: The umpire should inform the coach that his/her pitcher has just been charged with a visit. This rule is in place to discourage managers from trying to get around the number of visits to the pitcher that they are allowed.

RULE 8.00 THE PITCHER (SOFTBALL)

RULE 8.01(a) SITUATION: Pitcher is standing on the pitcher's plate and delivers the pitch in an overhand motion.

RULING: This is an illegal pitch. Pitches may only be delivered in an underhand motion. The penalty in all divisions of Little League Softball is a ball to the batter.

RULE 8.01(c) SITUATION: The pitcher for the Gators is taking position on the pitcher's plate with his/her hands already together and then beginning the pitching motion.

RULING: This is an illegal pitch. Pitchers must have their hands separated when taking the pitching position. The penalty in all divisions of Little League Softball is a ball to the batter.

RULE 8.01(g) SITUATION: After bringing the hands together and pausing, the pitcher takes a backward step with the non-pivot foot to begin the pitching motion.

RULING: This is an illegal pitch. The penalty in all divisions of Little League Softball is a ball to the batter. Once the pitcher has brought the hands together, they may no longer step backward.

RULE 8.01(g) SITUATION: The pitcher for the Cubs is disengaging the pitcher's plate with her pivot foot first. The offensive coach wants this to be called an illegal pitch.

RULING: Beginning in 2021, this is a legal disengagement for a softball pitcher and is no longer going to result in the award of an illegal pitch.

RULE 8.01(h) SITUATION: In delivering the pitch, the pitcher's non-pivot foot is stepping toward the batter but landing outside of the 24-inch width of the pitcher's plate.

RULING: This is an illegal pitch. The pitcher's non-pivot foot must remain within or partially within the 24-inch width of the pitcher's plate. The penalty in all divisions of Little League Softball is a ball to the batter.

RULE 8.01(o) SITUATION: In delivering the pitch with the windmill delivery, the pitcher is completing two full revolutions of the pitching arm before releasing the ball.

RULING: This is an illegal pitch. The penalty in all divisions of Little League Softball is a ball to the batter.

RULE 8.01(r) SITUATION: In delivering the pitch, the umpire judges that the pitcher is hopping off the pitcher's plate and re-establishing a different "push-off" point. The defensive manager claims that this is legal.

RULING: This is a "crow-hop" as defined in RULE 2.00 and is an illegal pitch. The penalty in all divisions of Little League Softball is a ball to

the batter.

RULE 8.01(v) SITUATION: As the game progresses, the pitcher for the Ducks is taking longer and longer to deliver a pitch. By the fourth inning he/she is waiting almost an entire minute before pitching.

RULING: After 20 seconds the umpire should call “Ball” and adjust the batter’s count accordingly in all levels of play. This rule is in place to avoid unnecessary delays of the game.

RULE 8.02(a)(1) SITUATION: In a Little League Major Division Softball game, the pitcher brings his/her pitching hand in contact with his/her mouth while standing within the 8-foot pitching circle.

RULING: This is legal, provided the pitcher wipes his/her fingers prior to gripping the ball.

RULE 8.05 SITUATION: The pitcher in a Junior League Division Softball game commits an illegal pitch with a runner on second base. The umpire awards a ball to the batter and continues the game. The offensive manager protests that this is an incorrect ruling, and that his runner on second should be advanced to third base.

RULING: The umpire is correct, beginning in 2021, the penalty for an illegal pitch in all divisions of softball is the award of a ball to the batter. BASERUNNERS ARE NO LONGER AWARDED A BASE AS PART OF THE PENALTY.

RULE 8.05(a) SITUATION: The pitcher begins his/her legal pitching motion and as he/she is the process of delivering the pitch he/she pushes off the pitcher’s plate with his/her pivot foot, dragging it forward about two feet prior to his/her front foot touching the ground and releases the pitch to the batter.

RULING: This is a legal. As long as both feet start within the 24-inch length of the Pitcher’s plate and finish within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher’s plate, this pitch would be legal.

RULE 8.05(c) SITUATION: Pitcher is standing behind the pitcher’s plate taking signs from the catcher, or the dugout. The pitcher then steps onto the plate and immediately delivers a pitch to the batter.

RULING: This is a quick pitch and it is illegal. The resulting penalty is a ball on the batter regardless of whether there are runners on base, or not (Majors and below).

RULE 8.06(a) SITUATION: The manager for the Huskies has been out to visit his/her pitcher once in the third inning. After his/her pitcher loads the bases, the manager asks for time to visit him/her again. The manager does not replace his/her pitcher after this visit.

RULING: This is illegal. If the manager or coach comes out to visit two times in the same inning, the pitcher must be replaced. (NOTE 1: The number of allowable for visits at the Minor League level and below is twice in one inning and three total per game for each pitcher. NOTE 2: The number of visits to a pitcher resets with every pitcher brought to the pitcher’s plate.) Visits to remove a pitcher from the game do not count towards trips to visit the pitcher.

RULE 8.06(d) SITUATION: In a Little League Major Division game,

the manager for the Bruins asks for time and calls his/her catcher over to the fence to give him/her instructions on how to pitch to the next batter.

RULING: The umpire should inform the coach that his/her pitcher has just been charged with a visit. This rule is in place to discourage managers from trying to circumvent the number of visits to the pitcher that they are allowed.

RULE 9.00 THE UMPIRE

RULE 9.01(b) SITUATION: The President of a local league instructs his/her umpires to ignore the rule regarding adults warming up a pitcher between innings in order to speed up the games.

RULING: The umpires should refuse to honor this direction, by rule all umpires are required to uphold all of the rules of Little League.

RULE 9.01(c) SITUATION: During a Little League Major Division game, the Cubs attempt to start a game with only eight rostered players and another child pulled from the stands. The umpire allows this to occur under Rule 9.01(c), because he/she is unsure of the rule governing the start of the game.

RULING: This is incorrect on several fronts; first there is a rule that covers the requirements to start a game; second 9.01(c) should only be used on those rare instances that are not specifically covered by the rulebook. Rule 9.01(c) should never be used in place of knowledge of the rulebook.

RULE 9.01(d) SITUATION: (BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL) During a game at any division, the umpire(s) believe that a runner on second base is stealing signs from the catcher and relaying pitch selection information to the batter. The umpire calls “Time” and ejects both the player and the manager of the offensive team for Unsportsmanlike behavior.

RULING: This is correct, see Rule 9.01(d) NOTE 1 for further explanation. It is not necessary for an umpire to issue a warning to the offending team before an ejection.

RULE 9.01(e) SITUATION: (ALL DIVISIONS OF BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL) During a game, a physical altercation begins between two players from opposing teams. Additional players from both teams leave either their bench areas or their defensive positions to become involved in the altercation.

RULING: The umpire shall immediately eject any and all participants involved in the altercation. The only exception would be a coach or manager who leaves their position (in the judgment of the umpire) in an attempt to halt or break up the altercation.

RULE 9.01(f) SITUATION: During a Junior Division game, a local newspaper photographer, who is on the field, begins insulting the field umpire’s judgment. The umpire ejects him/her even though he/she is not a participant in the game.

RULING: This is correct. Any umpire has the authority to eject any individual on the playing field.

RULE 9.01(g) SITUATION: During a very close game one of the parents of a member of the home team becomes excessively belligerent toward the umpires. The plate umpire ejects the parent from the stands.

RULING: This is incorrect. Umpires have no authority over the spectators in the stands. Notice that in the scenario for Rule 9.01(e) the non-participant was on the playing field. What the umpires can do in this situation is put both teams into their dugouts and suspend the game until a league official handles the unruly spectator.

RULE 9.02(a) SITUATION: The manager for the Mariners wants to argue the ball/strike decisions of the plate umpire.

RULING: By rule, matters involving the judgment of an umpire regarding ball/ strike, safe/out, and fair/foul balls may not be argued by any of the participants on the field. Continued violation of this rule may result in the ejection of the individual.

RULE 9.02(c) SITUATION: During a Senior Division game, the base umpire makes an “out” call on a very close play at second base. The offensive coach appeals to the plate umpire to reverse the call since he/she is the senior official. The plate umpire reverses the call without conferencing with his/her partner.

RULING: This is incorrect. No umpire shall reverse or interfere with the call of another umpire unless his/her input is requested by the umpire who made the initial call.

RULE 9.04(c) SITUATION: During a Little League Major Division game, with three umpires on the field, there is a close call at third base and two umpires are covering the play. They render opposite decisions. The Umpire-in-Chief calls for a conference of all the umpires. After the conference, the Umpire-in-Chief calls the runner safe as he/she feels that the umpire who made the safe call is most likely correct. The defense wishes to argue that the Umpire cannot do this.

RULING: This is correct, after the consultation and the decision is announced, the game shall continue as if the final decision was the only one that was made.

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