



BASEBALL RULE MYTHS

Fun facts! Here are some often mis-quoted baseball rules that players and coaches (and parents) should know about.

The hands are part of the bat.

If a batter is hit on the hands while swinging at a pitch or while his hands are in the strike zone, it is a strike. Otherwise, it is a hit batter. Batter is awarded first base. In **all** cases the ball is dead and no runners may advance. Rule 2.00 BALL, PERSON, STRIKE (e), (f), TOUCH, also Rule 6.08(b).

He held the ball for two seconds before he dropped it. That's a catch.

The length of time the ball is held has nothing to do with the determination of a catch. The release of the ball must be **voluntary** and **intentional**. See Rule 2.00 CATCH. The fielder must prove that he had complete control of the ball before releasing it.

The catch was made on the outfield grass. That's not an infield fly.

Infield fly is a judgment call. It is based on whether the ball can be caught with **ordinary** effort. Rule 2.00 INFIELD FLY.

He gets the base he's going to plus 1 on a throw out of play.

There is no such rule. In most overthrow situations, the award is 2 bases. If the throw is the first play from an infielder, the award is 2 bases for all runners from the base occupied at the time of the pitch. For throws that are the second play from an infielder, or any play from the outfield, the award is 2 bases from the base occupied at the time of the throw. If a pitcher throws the ball out of play "from the mound" without first becoming a fielder, the award is 1 base from the base occupied at the time of the pitch or throw. Rule 7.10(c).

The batter turned to the left after crossing first, so he's out when tagged.

The runner is out only if the umpire judges that he made an **attempt** to go to second. No place in the rules does it say that a runner must turn to the right. Rule 7.08(c) EXCEPTION and Rule 7.10(c).

The ball is dead on a foul tip.

A foul-tip is a ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's glove, and is caught. If it is not caught it is a foul ball and the ball is dead. If it is caught, it is a strike and the ball is live. Rule 2.00 FOUL TIP.

The ball is dead when an illegal pitch occurs.

When an illegal pitch is called, if the pitcher does not pitch, the umpire will call *illegal pitch*. If the pitch is thrown, it is a delayed dead ball. This means the ball is alive until any play is completed. Rule 8.05 PENALTY.

The batter who batted out of order is out.

After the incorrect batter completes his at-bat, and a proper appeal is made, the **proper** batter is out, (the one who would have batted). The improper batter (the one who did bat) is removed

from base and any advance made by runners because of his batted ball, is nullified. The next batter due up is the one who follows the proper batter. Rule 6.07.

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

The batter's box is not a safety zone. A batter could be called out for interference if the umpire judges that interference could or should have been avoided. Rules: 2.00 INTERFERENCE, 6.06(c) Official Baseball Rules.

The batter backed out of the box as the pitch was coming to the plate. That's an automatic strike.

If the offense is stalling and the batter refuses to get in the box after the umpire tells him to do so, then the umpire will tell the pitcher to pitch and call each pitch a strike. However, if he is in the box and then steps out during the wind-up or the pitch, the umpire will call the pitch as he sees it. Rule 6.02(b).

The pitch hit the ground before the batter hit it. The ball is dead.

If a pitch touches the ground before entering the strike zone and is not swung at, it is a ball. If it bounces up and hits the batter, the batter is awarded first. If it is hit, it is ruled like a normal pitch. Rule 2.00 IN FLIGHT.

The base coach touched the runner. The runner is out.

This is a judgment call by the umpire. If the coach obviously and intentionally physically stops a runner or helps him up after falling, the runner is out. Merely touching him as he goes by or making an incidental touch as the runner is stopping is not grounds for an out call. Rule 7.09(l).

Half of the batter's foot was outside the box when he hit the ball. He's out.

A batter is out when he makes contact with the pitch when his foot is entirely outside the lines of the batter's box. He is out on either a fair or foul ball. The ball is dead. He is not out if he swings and misses or if he does not swing. He may also not be out if his foot touches home plate when making contact with the ball – if part of that foot remains in the batter's box. Rule 2.00 ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL and Rule 6.06(a).

The batted ball hit the plate first, that's a foul ball.

Home plate is in fair territory. Therefore, a ball that comes to rest upon it, is a fair ball. Any batted ball that hits home plate is a live ball and is judged as any other batted ball. Rule 2.00 FAIR BALL and FAIR TERRITORY.

If the batter breaks his wrists when swinging, its a strike.

A swinging strike is a judgment by the umpire as to whether the batter attempted to hit the ball. Breaking the wrists, or the barrel of the bat crossing the plate, are simply guides to making the judgment of an attempt, these are not rules. Rule: 2.00 STRIKE Official Baseball Rules

The batter may not switch batters boxes after two strikes.

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

Tie goes to the runner.

There is no such thing in the world of umpiring. The runner is either out or safe. Actually, the rules state that the runner must beat the throw to the base in order to be safe. So, if the ball and runner arrive simultaneously, the runner is out.

The batter may overrun first base when he gets a base-on-balls.

A base-on-balls is considered a live-ball base award and therefore the runner is protected to the base awarded and no further. If they run through first base, they are at-risk once they've touched the awarded base.

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

When a third strike is called, or is swung at and missed and the catcher does not make a legal catch, the batter may attempt to reach first base if it is unoccupied when there are less than 2 outs, or even when it is occupied when there are 2 outs. Occupied means it was occupied at the time of the pitch. The fact that a runner attempted to steal does not make the base unoccupied. Time of pitch is defined as the moment the pitcher starts his windup or commits to a pitch to the plate.

The batter may run to first anytime before he enters the dugout. He is not out simply because he walks off toward the dugout. If the bases are loaded with 2 out and the catcher does not make a legal catch of a third strike, a force play goes into effect because the batter has now become a runner. The catcher may step on home plate to force out the runner from third or tag the batter or throw to any other base. Rule 6.09(b) Official Baseball Rules

If the batter does not pull the bat out of the strike zone while in the bunting position, its an automatic strike.

A strike is an attempt to hit the ball. Simply holding the bat over the plate is not an attempt. This is umpire judgment. Rule 2.00 STRIKE Official Baseball Rules

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

The rule says the BAT cannot hit the ball a second time. When the BALL hits the bat, it is not an out. Good luck with that one! Rules: 6.05(h) and 7.09(b) Official Baseball Rules

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

The runner must be to the left of the running lane AND cause interference. He is not out simply for being outside the lane. He could be called for interference even while in the lane if he interferes with the first baseman's attempt to make a play on the thrown ball. This is a judgment call. Rules: 2.00 INTERFERENCE, 6.05(k), 7.09(k) Official Baseball Rules

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

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

Runners may never run the bases in reverse order.

In order to correct a base running mistake, the runner MUST retrace his steps and retouch the bases in reverse order. The only time a runner is out for running in reverse, is when he is making

a travesty of the game or tries to confuse the defense. Rules: 7.08(l), 7.10(b) Official Baseball Rules

The runner must always slide when the play is close.

There is no "must slide" rule. When the fielder has the ball in possession, the runner has three choices; slide, give up, or attempt to get around the fielder. He may NOT deliberately or maliciously contact the fielder, but he is NOT required to slide. Rule: 7.08(a, 3)

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

The bases are in fair territory. A runner is out when hit by a fair batted ball, except an infield-fly. Rules: 5.09(f), 7.08(f) Official Baseball Rules

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

A force play is when a runner is forced to advance because the batter became a runner. When the batter is out on a caught fly, all forces are removed. An out on a failure to tag-up properly, is NOT a force out. If this is the 3rd out of the inning, any runs that cross the plate before this out will count. Rules: 2.00 FORCE PLAY, 4.09 Official Baseball Rules

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

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

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

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

Runners may not advance when an infield fly is called.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The position of the player's feet or any other part of the body is irrelevant. A ball is judged fair or foul based on the relationship between the ball and the ground at the time the ball is touched.

Rule: 2.00 FAIR, FOUL Official Baseball Rules

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

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

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

A pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. If the ball is not delivered, it is not a pitch. If this happens with runners on base it is a balk. Rule: 2.00 PITCH.

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

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

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

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

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

As long as the fielder is not touching the ground in dead ball territory when he catches the ball, it is a legal catch if he holds onto the ball and meets the definition of a catch. If the catch is not the third out and the fielder falls down in dead ball territory, all runners are awarded one base.

Rules: 2.00 CATCH, 6.05(a), 7.04(c) Official Baseball Rules

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

If an umpire is hit by a batted ball before it passes a fielder, the ball is dead. The batter is placed on first base, and all runners that are forced are moved up one base. On any other batted or thrown ball, the ball is alive when the umpire is hit with the ball. Umpire interference also occurs when the plate umpire interferes with the catcher's attempt to prevent a stolen base. Rules: 2.00 INTERFERENCE, 5.09(b), 5.09(f) Official Baseball Rules

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

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