

Common Umpire Rule Myths

Myth #1

A pitch that bounces to the plate cannot be hit.

A pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. It doesn't matter how it gets to the batter. The batter may hit any pitch that is thrown.

Rule: 2.00 PITCH. (If the ball does not cross the foul line, it is not a pitch.)

Myth #2

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

A pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. It doesn't matter how it gets to the batter. If the batter is hit by a pitch while attempting to avoid it, he is awarded first base.

Rules: 2.00 PITCH,
6.08(b).

Myth #3

The hands are considered part of the bat.

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

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

Myth #4

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

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

Rule: 2.00 STRIKE
Official Baseball Rules

Myth #5

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

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Myth #6

The ball is dead on a foul-tip.

There is nothing "FOUL" about a foul-tip. It is a strike and the ball is alive. A foul-tip is the same as a swing and a miss. To be a foul-tip, by rule, the ball must go sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's hand or glove AND BE CAUGHT.

Confusion arises on this because people commonly call any ball that is tipped or nicked a foul-tip. It is not a foul-tip, by rule, unless the nicked or tipped ball is caught. If it is not caught, it is simply a foul-ball. A foul-ball is a dead ball. A foul-tip (a legally caught nick) is a live ball strike, just like a swing and a miss.

Myth #7

If a batted ball hits the plate first its a foul ball.

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

Myth #8

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 the runner attempts 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.

A batter who does not realize his situation on a third strike not caught, and who is not in the process of running to first base, shall be declared out once he leaves the dirt circle surrounding home plate

Rule 6.09(b) Official
Baseball Rules

Myth #9

The batter is out if his foot touches the plate.

To be out the batter's foot must be ENTIRELY outside the box when he contacts the pitch. There is no statement about touching the plate. The toe could be on the plate and the heel could be touching the line of the box, which means the foot is not entirely outside the box.

Rule: 6.06(a) Official Baseball
Rules

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Myth #10

The batter cannot be called out for interference if he is in the batters 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.

Myth #11

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

Myth #12

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

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

Rules: 2.00

INTERFERENCE, 6.05(k), 7.09(k) Official Baseball Rules

Myth #13

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

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

Rule: 6.07(b, 1)

Official Baseball Rules

Myth #14

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

Rule 7.08(c and j) simply state that a batter-runner must immediately return after overrunning first base. It doesn't state any exceptions as to how the player became a runner. It could be a hit, walk, error or dropped third strike.

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Myth #15

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

The batter-runner may turn left or right, provided that if he turns left he does not make an attempt to advance. An attempt is a judgment made by the umpire. The requirement is that the runner must immediately return to first after overrunning or over-sliding it.

Rule: 7.08(c and j)
Official Baseball Rules

Myth #16

A runner may not steal on a foul tip.

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

Rules: 2.00 FOUL-TIP, STRIKE
Official Baseball Rules

Myth #17

Tie goes to the runner.

There is no such thing in the world of umpiring. The runner is either out or safe.

Myth 18

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 two choices; slide OR attempt to get around the fielder. He may NOT deliberately or maliciously contact the fielder, but he is NOT required to slide.

Rule: 7.08(a, 3)

Myth #19

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

A runner is out for running out of the baseline, only when running more than three feet away from his base path in an attempting to avoid a tag or to avoid interference with a fielder fielding a batted ball.

A runner's base path is established when the tag attempt occurs and is a straight line from the runner to the base he is attempting to reach.

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Myth #20

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

The runner is out if the coach PHYSICALLY ASSISTS the runner. Hand slaps, back pats or simple touches are not physical assists.

Rule: 7.09(l)

Official Baseball Rules

Myth #21

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

Myth #22

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

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

Rule: 7.05(g)

Official Baseball Rules

Myth #23

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

Myth #24

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

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Myth #25

If a fielder holds a fly ball for 2 seconds its a catch.

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

Rule: 2.00 CATCH
Official Baseball Rules

Myth #26

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

Myth #27

The ball is always immediately dead on a balk.

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

Rule: 8.05 PENALTY
Official Baseball Rules

Myth #28

If a players 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

Myth #29

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.

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Myth #30

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

Myth #31

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

Myth #32

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. If the fielder remains on his feet in dead ball territory after the catch, the ball is alive and he may make a play.

Rules: 2.00 CATCH,

6.05(a), 7.04(c) Official Baseball Rules

Myth #33

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

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

Rules: 2.00

INTERFERENCE, 5.09(b), 5.09(f) Official Baseball Rules

Myth #34

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