

INTERFERENCE CALLS REFERENCE

Interference is the toughest call an umpire has to make.
It is a call based solely on the umpire's judgment.
To make a good judgment call as to whether or not interference occurred,
The umpire must understand the definition rule so it can be recognized when it occurs.
After interference is called, the proper rule must be applied.

The definition as stated in Rule 2.00 is:

(a) Offensive interference

Is an act by the team at bat which interferes with,
obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play.
If the umpire declares the batter, batter-runner, or a runner out for interference,
all other runners shall return to the last base that was in the judgment of the umpire,
legally touched at the time of the interference, unless otherwise provided by these rules.

In the event the batter-runner has not reached first base,
all runners shall return to the base last occupied at the time of the pitch.

(b) Defensive interference

Is an act by a fielder which hinders or prevents a batter from hitting a pitch.
(example: Catchers interference.) Batter unable to hit the ball because catcher touched
the ball while batter was swinging.

It should be noted that (b) above is the only defensive interference.
Defensive interference is only on the batter.
Hindering the runner by the defense is OBSTRUCTION.
(this includes the batter-runner)

How to interpret this rule.

The key phrase is: **interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses.**
After witnessing an act by the offense the umpire must ask himself the following question;
Did the offense interfere with, obstruct, impede, hinder or confuse the fielder attempting
to make a play?
If the answer is yes, interference should be called. The call must be made as soon as possible.

Some interference calls are easy.

Example: If a runner is hit by a batted ball he is out and no judgment of intent is required
unless he is hit by a deflected ball, or the ball has passed on infielder,
in which case the umpire must decide if he intended to be hit to interfere, obstruct impede,
hinder or confuse the defense or if another fielder had a play on the ball. Rule 5.09(f) and 7.08(f).

Example: A runner must avoid a fielder attempting to field a BATTED BALL.
If he does not he is guilty. This is a fairly easy call. Rule 7.09(L) and 7.08(b).

The fielder's protection begins the moment the ball is hit. That protection continues as he
completes his initial play.
His protection ends if he misplay the batted ball and has to move to recover it.