

Top 40 Baseball Rule Myths – (each statement is a Myth)

1. The hands are considered part of the bat.
2. The batter-runner must turn to his right after over-running first base.
3. If the batter breaks his wrists when swinging, it's a strike.
4. If a batted ball hits the plate first it's a foul ball.
5. The batter cannot be called out for interference if he is in the batter's box.
6. The ball is dead on a foul-tip.
7. The batter may not switch batter's boxes after two strikes.
8. The batter who batted out of order is the person declared out.
9. The batter may not overrun first base when he gets a base-on-balls.
10. The batter is out if he starts for the dugout before going to first after a dropped third strike.
11. If the batter doesn't pull the bat out of the strike zone while in the bunting position, it's an automatic strike.
12. The batter is out if a bunted ball hits the ground, bounces back up, and hits the bat while the batter still holds the bat.
13. The batter is out if his foot touches the plate.
14. The batter-runner is always out if he runs outside the running lane after a bunted ball.
15. A runner is out if, after a homerun is hit over the fence, he slaps hands or high-fives other players.
16. Tie goes to the runner.
17. The runner gets the base he's going to, plus one on a ball thrown out-of-play.
18. Anytime a coach touches a runner, the runner is out.
19. Runners may never run the bases in reverse order.
20. The runner must always slide when the play is close.
21. The runner is always safe when hit by a batted ball while touching a base.
22. A runner may not steal on a foul-tip.
23. It is a force out when a runner is called out for not tagging up on a fly ball.
24. An appeal on a runner who missed a base cannot be a force out.
25. A runner is out if he runs out of the baseline to avoid a fielder who is fielding a batted ball.
26. Runners may not advance when an infield fly is called.
27. No run can score when a runner is called out for the third out for not tagging up.
28. A pitch that bounces to the plate cannot be hit.
29. The batter does not get first base if hit by a pitch after it bounces.
30. If a fielder holds a fly ball for 2 seconds it's a catch.
31. You must tag the base with your foot on a force out or appeal.
32. The ball is always immediately dead on a balk.
33. If a player's feet are in fair territory when the ball is touched, it is a fair ball.
34. The ball must always be returned to the pitcher before an appeal can be made.
35. With no runners on base, it is a ball if the pitcher starts his windup and then stops.
36. The pitcher must come to a set position before a pick-off throw.
37. The pitcher must step off the rubber before a pick-off throw.
38. If a fielder catches a fly ball and then falls over the fence it is a homerun.
39. The ball is dead anytime an umpire is hit by the ball.
40. The home plate umpire can overrule the other umps at anytime.

1. MYTH: The hands are considered part of the bat.

FACT: 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)

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

FACT: 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 oversliding it. RULES: 7.08(c and j)

3. MYTH: If the batter breaks his wrists when swinging, it's a strike.

FACT: 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. RULES: 2.00 STRIKE

4. MYTH: If a batted ball hits the plate first it's a foul ball.

FACT: 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.

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

FACT: 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.

The batter is protected while in the box for a short period of time. After he has had time to react to the play he could be called for interference if he does not move out of the box and interferes with a play.

Many people believe the batter's box is a safety zone for the batter. It is not. The batter MAY be called out for interference although he is within the box. The key words, *impede, hinder, confuse* and *obstruct* apply to this situation.

Of course, the umpire must use good judgment. The batter cannot be expected to disappear. If he has a chance to avoid interference after he has had time to react to the situation and does not, he is guilty. If he just swung at a pitch, or had to duck a pitch and is off-balance, he can't reasonably be expected to then immediately avoid a play at the plate. However, after some time passes, if a play develops at the plate, the batter must get out of the box and avoid interference. The batter should always be called out when he makes contact and is outside the box.

RULES: 2.00 INTERFERENCE, 6.06(c)

6. MYTH: The ball is dead on a foul-tip.

FACT: There is nothing foul about a foul-tip. If the ball nicks the bat and goes sharp and direct to the catcher's hand or 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. If the nicked pitch first hits the catcher somewhere other than the hand or glove, it is not a foul-tip, it is a foul ball.

RULES: 2.00 FOUL-TIP, STRIKE

7. **MYTH: The batter may not switch batter's boxes after two strikes.**

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

8. **MYTH: The batter who batted out of order is the person declared out.**

FACT: The PROPER batter is the one called out. And this is one of the most complex and confusing situations in all of baseball. Here are some guidelines:

1. If anybody points out that the wrong batter is batting while s/he is still at bat, the proper batter replaces him/her and inherits the current balls and strikes. There is no penalty.
2. If the batter who hits out of order completes the at bat either by making an out or getting on base, and the defensive team notices that s/he batted out of order and complains to the umpire before the first pitch to the next batter, then the batter who should have been at bat is called out and the proper batter bats.
 - a. Any advance or score made because of a ball batted by the improper batter or because of the improper batter's advance to 1st base on a hit, error, a base on balls or a hit batter is nullified.
 - b. This means that if the #3 batter accidentally bats before the #2 batter, and the #3 batter gets a hit, and the defensive team complains that s/he batted out of order, the #2 batter is called out, and the #3 batter is removed from the bases and bats again.
3. If no one notices that the wrong batter batted, then the player who was skipped has missed his turn and cannot bat again until next time around the order. Should s/he go to the plate out of turn (say, after the original out-of-order hitter has completed his/her at bat), then the same rules apply about batting out of order. RULES: 6.07(b, 1)

9. **MYTH: The batter may not overrun first base when he gets a base-on-balls.**

FACT: 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.

To overrun means that the runner's momentum carried him straight beyond the base after touching it. It does not mean to turn and attempt to advance. Nor does it mean that he stepped over it or stopped on it and then got off of it.

RULES: 7.08(c and j)

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

FACT: The batter may attempt to reach first base anytime prior to entering the dugout or a dead ball area.

The batter becomes a runner when the third strike is not caught. Therefore, if there are 2 outs and there is a runner at first, first and second, or bases loaded, the batter creates a force by becoming a runner. These runners are all forced to advance and an out may be obtained by making a play on any one of them. If the bases are loaded the catcher may step on home or throw to third, second or first. RULES: 6.05(c), 6.09(b) Casebook interpretation

NOTE: In Little League, above rule only applies to Juniors and above. For Majors and below, "A batter is out on a third strike regardless of whether the catcher catches the ball."

11. **MYTH: If the batter does not pull the bat out of the strike zone while in the bunting position, it's an automatic strike.**

FACT: 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

RULE: 2.00: "A BUNT is a batted ball not swung at, but INTENTIONALLY met with the bat." The key words are "intentionally met." If no attempt is made to make contact with a ball outside the strike zone, it should be called a ball. An effort must be made to intentionally meet the ball with the bat.

12. **MYTH: 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.**

FACT: It depends.

One issue is that it matters whether the ball hits the bat or the bat hits the ball. The rule says the bat cannot hit the ball a second time. But when the ball hits the bat, as in a quick rebound off the plate, with the batter still in the batter's box, it is not an out, and is treated as a foul ball. If, however, the player has had time to leave the batter's box before the bat and ball come in contact a second time, it is considered that the bat has struck the ball, and the following rules apply.

If the batter is out of the box and the bat is over fair territory when the second hit occurs, the batter is out, whether or not the second hit was intentional.

If the batter is out of the box, drops the bat, and the ball rolls against the bat, and the umpire rules that there was no intention by the batter to change the course of the ball, the ball is alive and in play, and the batter is not out.

If a batter intentionally deflects the course of a foul ball in any manner, he is out. If a batter unintentionally deflects the course of a foul ball, the ball is dead, the play is over, no runners may advance, and the batter is not out. RULES: 6.05(g, h) and 7.09(b, c)

13. **MYTH: The batter is out if his foot touches the plate.**

FACT: To be out, the batter's foot must be ENTIRELY outside the box when he contacts the pitch and the ball goes fair or foul. He is not out if he does not contact 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)

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

FACT: The runner must be out of the 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. This is a judgment call.

The runner may step out of the lane a step or two before the base if he moves from within the lane to out of it. If he is out of the lane the whole distance to the base and is hit with a throw, he should be out.

RULES: 2.00 INTERFERENCE, 6.05(k), 7.09(k)

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

FACT: 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)

16. **MYTH: Tie goes to the runner.**

FACT: Umpires like to go on about how there is no such thing as a tie, and that the umpire must rule "safe" or "out," but that argument misses the point. A better way to understand the rule is to examine the rule closely. Babe Ruth League Rule 7.08(e) says, "Any runner is out when... he fails to reach the next base before the fielder tags him or the base, after he has been forced to advance by reason of the batter becoming a runner." That's right -- it says that the runner has to get to the base BEFORE the fielder tags the runner or the base. A play where the runner and the fielder get to a base

EXACTLY at the same time is highly unlikely, but if it were to occur, the runner would be out for failing to get to the base BEFORE the ball. RULE: 7.08(e)

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

FACT: 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)

18. **MYTH: Anytime a coach touches a runner, the runner is out.**

FACT: Rule 7.09(l) says the runner is out if the coach PHYSICALLY ASSISTS the runner. Hand slaps, back pats or simple touches are not physical assists.

19. **MYTH: Runners may never run the bases in reverse order.**

FACT: 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)

20. **MYTH: The runner must always slide when the play is close.**

FACT: There is no "must slide" rule. When the fielder has the ball in his 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)

21. **MYTH: The runner is always safe when hit by a batted ball while touching a base.**

FACT: The bases are in fair territory. A runner is out when hit by a fair batted ball while touching a base, except when hit by an infield fly or after the ball has passed a fielder and no other fielder had a play on the ball.

If the runner is touching first or third, he is not out unless the ball touches him over fair territory. If one foot is on the base and the other is in foul ground and he is hit on the foul ground foot, he is not out. It is a foul ball (if the ball has not passed beyond first or third.)RULES: 5.09(f), 7.08(f)

22. **MYTH: A runner may not steal on a foul-tip.**

FACT: 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

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

FACT: 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 is NOT a force out. Any runs that cross the plate before this out will count.

RULES: 2.00 FORCE PLAY, 4.09

24. **MYTH: An appeal on a runner who missed a base cannot be a force out.**

FACT: 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)

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

FACT: The runner MUST avoid a fielder who is 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)

26. **MYTH: Runners may not advance when an infield fly is called.**

FACT: An infield fly is no different than any other fly ball in regard to the runners, which means that the runners may, at their own risk, tag up and advance after the ball is caught. 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)

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

FACT: 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 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)

28. **MYTH: A pitch that bounces to the plate cannot be hit.**

FACT: 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. A pitch that bounces before reaching the plate may never be a called strike or a legally caught third strike.

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

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

FACT: 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).

30. **MYTH: If a fielder holds a fly ball for 2 seconds it's a catch.**

FACT: 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

31. **MYTH: You must tag the base with your foot on a force out or appeal.**

FACT: You can tag a base with ANY part of the body.

RULES: 2.00 FORCE PLAY, PERSON, TAG, 7.08(e)

32. **MYTH: The ball is always immediately dead on a balk.**

FACT: Not true. 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

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

FACT: 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 by the fielder.

RULE: 2.00 FAIR, FOUL

34. **MYTH: The ball must always be returned to the pitcher before an appeal can be made.**

FACT: 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

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

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

36. **MYTH: The pitcher must come to a set position before a pick-off throw.**

FACT: 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)

37. **MYTH: The pitcher must step off the rubber before a pick-off throw.**

FACT: 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

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

FACT: 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 after catching the ball, 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, 5.10(f), 6.05(a), 7.04(c)

39. **MYTH: The ball is dead anytime an umpire is hit by the ball.**

FACT: 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) in Softball, 5.09(g), 5.09(e) in Baseball

40. **MYTH: The home plate umpire can overrule the other ump's at anytime.**

FACT: 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)