

Commonly Misunderstood Baseball Rules (9-13-22)

Fair / foul ball determination -

The determination depends on where the ball is contacted, not where the player is located. Home plate is in **fair territory**. There is a line from **home plate to first and third base**, that is what determines fair or foul.

- Where the ball **stops or is first touched** is the determination, not where it is when it's moving. *Unless it flies out of the park.*

Little League Rulebook – Rule 2.0 Definition of Terms

<https://baseball-rules.com/fairfoul.htm>

Interference/Obstruction

A fielder who is making a play on a batted ball is "protected" from interference by a base runner. In other words, the fielder gets the right-of-way in cases where a base runner converges on a fielder who is making a play on a batted ball. The fielder's protection begins the moment the ball is put in play and the fielder goes in motion to make a play on the ball. The protection continues until the fielder makes a play or makes a throw after fielding the ball. From beginning to end of this sequence, the fielder has the right of way and runners must avoid impeding the fielder.

Interference.

- Offensive - The team at bat impedes a fielder from making a play on the ball; contact or intentional interference with the fielder. *Waving arms, moving with them to block them, yelling, etc.*
- Defensive - An act by the team in the field blocking the offensive team from making contact with the ball. *Bat strikes catchers glove, etc.*

Obstruction.

An act by a fielder that **does not** have possession of the ball, which impedes the progress of a runner. *Stepping in the baseline, blocking the base / plate, fake tags, running into them, etc*

Ball hits bat twice (after a bunt or hit). Foul ball if the batter is in the box, batter is out if they are outside the box. If the bat was dropped and unintentionally hits the bat, play continues.

Little League Rulebook – Rule 2.0 Definition of Terms

<https://www.umpirebible.com/index.php/rules-interference/offensive-interference>

Out of the Baseline

Baseline -

- Regarding **home to first and third to home**, the baseline is the foul line.
- Regarding **first to second and second to third**, the baseline is an imaginary line from where the runner leaves the base to the next base.
- Three foot rule, if a runner attempts to avoid a tag by moving side to side, they have three feet to do so before they are out of the baseline.

Little League Rulebook – Rule 7.08 The Runner

Infield Fly Rule (AA and Above)

Infield fly -

- Infield fly rule only occurs under these conditions,
 - Less than two outs.
 - Runner on **first and second or bases loaded**.
 - The batted ball is a fair fly ball which can be reasonably caught by any infielder with average effort.

Little League Rulebook – Rule 2.0 Definition of Terms

Uncaught Third Strike (Majors and Above)

Uncaught third strike -

- After an uncaught third strike or a ball that hits the ground before the catcher catches it, the ball is still live unless first is occupied. If first base is unoccupied, the defensive team must throw out the base runner at first base or tag the runner before he gets to first base. If there are two outs, the uncaught third strike rule is in effect even if first base is occupied. The baserunner is eligible to run to first base until they enter the dugout or a dead ball zone.
- A foul tip, which occurs when the ball goes directly from the bat to being caught by the catcher, is a live ball and is treated like a swing and miss strike. If the foul tip results in strike three, it is live ball but not a dropped third strike and the batter is out without having to be tagged out or thrown out at first base.

Little League Rulebook – Rule 6.05 (b)(2) The Batter

Hit by Pitch

Examples when a batter is hit by pitch, but not awarded first base:

- If the ball touches the batter as the batter swings at the ball. This basically means that if the batter is swinging at the ball and the act of swinging has caused the ball to hit the batter,

then the ball is a strike. Example: Batter swings and the ball hits him on the forearm as he's swinging. The ball is dead and it is a strike. If the hitter has two strikes, it is strike 3 not a foul ball. This isn't called often as most of the time the player will stop the swing and be hit by the ball. In that case most umpires will determine that the player is attempting to get out of the way by not continuing the swing. So, even though the act of swinging has caused the ball to hit the batter, the umpire may determine that player attempted to get out of the way and award the batter first base.

- The ball touches the batter in the strike zone. Example: Batter is fooled by a curve ball and ducks. He is hit in the head, but his head is over the plate and in the strike zone. The correct call is a strike.
- If the batter makes no attempt to get out of the way of the ball. This normally occurs at higher levels of baseball where a player may "take one for the team". Make sure to check your rule book as some leagues will allow this. What is not allowed is for a player to intentionally get in the way of the ball. For example a player cannot turn his shoulder in towards the plate for the purpose of getting hit by the ball.
- If the ball hits the bat in the act of swinging and then touches the batter. The correct ruling is a foul ball and the batter should not be awarded first base.

Little League Rulebook – Rule 6.08(b) The Batter

<https://www.umpirebible.com/index.php/rules-batting/batter-touched-by-live-ball>

Catcher's Interference

Rule 6.08 (c) states that “[t]he batter becomes a runner and is entitled to first base without liability to be put out (provided said runner advances to and touches first base) when the catcher or any other fielder interferes with the batter. If a play follows the interference, the manager of the offense may advise the plate umpire of a decision to decline the interference penalty and accept the play. Such election shall be made immediately at the end of the play. However, if the batter reaches first base on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batsman, or otherwise, and all runners advance at least one base, the play proceeds without reference to the interference.”

Two examples below help illustrate how to enforce catcher's interference

Example 1: With a runner on second base, and no outs, the batter hits ball to right field. The base runner advances to third base and tries to score, but is thrown out at home plate. The batter-runner rounds first base and advances to second base on the throw. This play stands and the offensive manager has no choice to enforce the catcher's interference.

If the ball is put in play and the play is allowed to continue and any runner, or the batter, fails to advance at least one base, the manager of the offense may choose to elect to take the result of the play or enforce the batter's interference rule.

Example 2: With a runner on third base only, no outs, and the catcher interferes with the batter's swing at the pitch but hits a long fly ball to center field where it is caught by the center fielder. The runner at third tags and scores. Because the batter did not reach first base, the offensive manager has two choices:

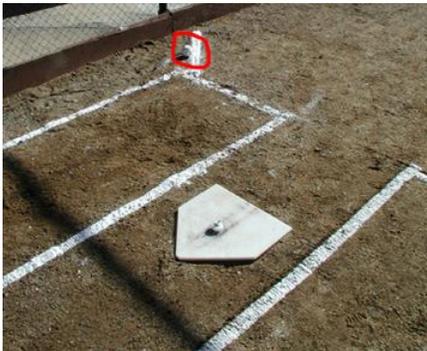
- (1) Enforce the catcher's interference rule, which would place the batter runner on first base, and return the runner who was on third base back to that base with no outs; or
- (2) Accept the result of the play, putting the batter out, and allowing the runner on third base to score.

Little League Rulebook – Rule 6.08(c) The Batter

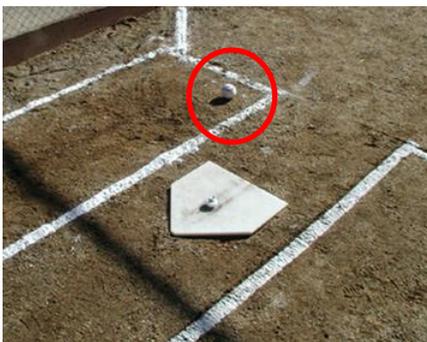
Fair or Foul Examples

See below for examples of fair / foul balls in relation to home plate or the batter's box:

- (1) Ball lands where circled in red below. Fair ball. If any part of the ball is over the chalk line – its fair.



- (2) Ball stops untouched where circled in red below. Fair ball. The batter's box is irrelevant as far as judging a batted ball that does not touch the batter while he is in the box, or any fielder.



One important note: If the batter swings and hits the ball and then the ball hits the batter while s/he is in the batters box, it is a foul ball.

- (3) Ball stops untouched where circled in red below. Fair ball. The plate is in fair territory. The foul lines run from the back point of the plate, toward first and third (illustrated with red dashes below).



Little League Rulebook – Rule 2.0 Definition of Terms