**Obstruction**

**Question**

Can a runner run into the catcher at home while the catcher is about to catch the ball- a runner ran into our catcher, hitting her in the face with both of her hands, knocking her to the ground before the catcher caught the ball

**Answer**

In the situation that you have described, “catcher about to catch the ball”, we know that the catcher did not have possession of the ball. So at this point, the umpire must determine if the catcher impeded the progress of the runner attempting to reach home. If so, then the catcher would be guilty of Obstruction.

Under LL Rule 2.0, by definition; Obstruction is the act of a fielder **while not in possession of the ball** that impedes the progress of any runner. While **contact is not required for the fielder to be charged w/ obstruction**; contact may occur in such cases.

So what about the fact that we had contact between the runner and the fielder? During the course of action on the field there are times when contact will occur between the fielders and runners. In many cases the contact is incidental and is not considered to be unsportsmanlike on the part of either player. In the situation that you have described, the umpire would have made a decision as to whether or not the contact was unsportsmanlike. If not, the play would continue without further reference to the contact. If so, the guilty player would be subject to a warning or possibly ejection for an unsportsmanlike act based on LL Rule 9.01.

So, we might ask ourselves; why would the runner not be required to slide or attempt to avoid the fielder in this situation? Because by rule, LL 7.08, the runner is only required to slide or attempt to avoid the fielder when the fielder has possession of the ball and is waiting to make the tag.

In summary, we know that we may have had Obstruction, that there was no requirement for the runner to slide, and that we did have contact between the players. Since the umpire made no call of obstruction and made no further reference to the contact, in his/her judgment there was no violation of any rules.

**LL Rule 2.0**

***OBSTRUCTION*** *is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. A fake tag is considered obstruction. (****NOTE:*** *Obstruction shall be called on a defensive player who blocks off a base, base line or home plate from a base runner while not in possession of the ball.)*

**LL Rule 7.08**

Any runner is out when - (a)(3) the runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag;

**LL Umpire School Rules and Instruction Manual**

***INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS:***

**Rule 7.08(a-3)***is easily the most misunderstood rule in the book. It is easily broken down as follows:*

*(1) The fielder must have the ball in his/her possession;* **AND**

*(2) The fielder must be WAITING to make the tag;*

*If* **BOTH** *of those two criteria are satisfied, then the runner must* **EITHER***:*

*(1) Slide; OR*

*(2)* **ATTEMPT** *to get around the fielder.*

*Notice that the rule says,* ***“attempt to get around”, not “avoid”. Contact may occur with no penalty assessed.***

***There is no “Must Slide” rule and no league may create one.*** *No league may modify Rule 7.08(a-3).*