

## 2007 Baseball Rules Interpretations

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**SITUATION 1:** In the top of the seventh inning, the home team leads 3-2. With a runner on third base, the visiting coach puts on a squeeze play. R1 breaks for home on the pitcher's motion. The first baseman, aware of the situation, races toward home plate, and catches the pitch in front of the plate and tags the sliding runner before he can reach the plate. **RULING:** This is obstruction on the batter by the first baseman. The ball will be declared dead, R1 will be awarded home and the batter will be awarded first base. (8-1-1e-1)

**SITUATION 2:** With R1 on first base, B2 hits a ground ball to F4. While running to second base, R1's batting helmet falls off (a) and makes contact with the batted ball, deflecting it away from F4, or (b) in front of F4, which distracts him and results in his misplaying the ball. **RULING:** If R1's helmet accidentally fell off, there would be no penalty in either (a) or (b). Had the helmet been deliberately removed, and interference occurred, then R1 would have declared out for interference. The umpire could also rule out B2 if he judged the interference prevented a double play. (8-4-2g, 8-4-1h)

**SITUATION 3:** With no outs and R1 on first base, B2 hits a hard ground ball to F6. F6 fields the ball and steps on second base and then throws to first base in an attempt to double up B2. R1 is running standing up in a straight line to second and is hit by F6's throw. R1 was not even half way to second base and did not intentionally interfere with the throw. The defensive coach states that B2 should also be out since R1 violated the force-play slide rule. **RULING:** This is not a violation of the force play slide rule. R1 cannot be expected to slide at that point in the base path. The play stands. R1 would be out only if he intentionally interfered. (8-4-2b penalty)

**SITUATION 4:** In the fifth inning, having had one defensive charged conference, the defensive head coach requests time and goes to the pitching mound to talk with his pitcher. While he is at the mound, the assistant coach runs over and talks with F3. Is this considered one conference, two separate conferences, or should the umpire not allow the assistant coach on the field while his head coach is having a charged conference? **RULING:** It is legal for the assistant coach to be having a conference with another defensive player while the head coach is also having a charged conference. This would be considered to be one charged conference. When the head coach's charged conference is completed, the assistant coach must end his meeting with F3. If the assistant coach delays the game by not ending his conference, the team could be assessed another charged conference. (3-4-1)

SITUATION 5: With (a) one out or (b) two outs, the visiting team has a runner on third in the top of the seventh. The game is tied 2-2. R1, on third, gets a great jump and easily scores on a suicide bunt. After R1 has scored, F2 picks up the ball and throws to first in an attempt to get B3 out. B3 is out of the running lane and is hit by F2's throw. Does the run by R1 count? RULING: B3 is out for interference. In (a), R1's run counts because he scored prior to the interference by B3. Had the interference by B3 occurred before R1 crossed the plate, R1 would be returned to third base, the base he occupied at the time of the interference. In (b), R1's run would not count as the third out occurred by B3 before he touched first base. (8-4-1g, 9-1-1a)

SITUATION 6: In the top of the seventh in the last game of the season, the visiting team's shortstop is one stolen base short of the record for stolen bases. With one out, he is hit by a pitch and is awarded first base. The pitcher, trying to keep him close to first base, throws over several times. On the last attempted pick-off, the pitcher throws the ball into the dugout. The umpire properly awards the runner second base on the dead ball. The runner and his coach tell the umpire that they will decline the award since they believe he will have a better chance of stealing second base vs. stealing third base. Is the award to a runner optional? RULING: The runner must advance. The award of a base is not optional and cannot be declined by the offense. (8-3-3d)

SITUATION 7: While off the pitching plate, F1 goes to his mouth with his pitching hand. He distinctly wipes it off on his pants and then assumes a pitching position on the pitching plate. RULING: This is legal. There has been no violation by the pitcher. (6-2-1e)

SITUATION 8: While off the pitching plate, F1 goes to his mouth with his pitching hand. Without wiping his pitching hand, he gets on the pitching plate and assumes the windup position with his hands together in front of his body. RULING: A ball shall be called and added to the batter's count. (6-2-1e penalty)

SITUATION 9: While on the pitching plate in the windup position, the pitcher has both hands at his side. He brings his pitching hand to his mouth and then distinctly wipes it. RULING: This is legal and there has been no violation by the pitcher. (6-2-1e)

SITUATION 10: While on the pitching plate in the windup position, the pitcher has his glove hand in front of his body. He brings his pitching hand to his mouth and, without wiping it, brings his pitching hand to the ball, which is in the glove. RULING: This is a violation by the pitcher and a ball shall be called and added to the batter's count. (6-2-1e penalty)

SITUATION 11: While on the pitching plate in the windup position, the pitcher has his hands together in front of his body. He then brings his pitching hand to his mouth and returns it to his glove. RULING: This is an illegal pitch by the pitcher. A balk will be called if there are runners on base. If the bases are empty, a ball will be added to the batter's count. (6-1-2 penalty)

SITUATION 12: While on the pitching plate in the stretch position, the pitcher has the ball in his glove hand and his pitching hand is at his side. He brings his pitching hand to his mouth, distinctly wipes it and returns it to his side. RULING: This is legal and there has been no violation by the pitcher. (6-2-1e)

SITUATION 13: While on the pitching plate in the stretch position, the pitcher has the ball in his glove and his pitching hand at his side. He brings his pitching hand to his side and then becomes set with both hands together. RULING: This is a violation as the pitcher did not distinctly wipe his pitching hand after going with it to his mouth. A ball shall be added to the batter's count. (6-2-1e penalty)

SITUATION 14: While on the pitching plate in the stretch position, the pitcher becomes legally set with his hands together in front of his body. He then brings his hand to his mouth and returns it to his gloved hand. RULING: This is an illegal pitch by the pitcher. A balk will be called if there are runners on base. If the bases are empty, a ball will be added to the batter's count. (6-1-3 penalty)

SITUATION 15: With no substitutes available, the center fielder collides with the wall and cannot continue playing. An inning later, another player arrives. Can the coach enter the player? RULING: Once the game has begun, a team may continue to play if it loses a player and has only eight players. It is legal for the coach to enter the arriving player in the vacated spot in the lineup, substitute the player for another player still in the game, or to continue to play with eight players. (4-41f, note 2)

SITUATION 16: The shortstop, trying to stop a ground ball, scrapes his elbow which, despite the trainer's best effort, continues to bleed. The team has no available substitutes. Two innings later, the trainer has the bleeding stopped and the elbow properly bandaged. RULING: It is legal for a team to continue play with only eight players. The shortstop may now re-enter the game in his vacated spot in the lineup provided he has re-entry eligibility left as a starting player. (4-4-1f, note 2)

SITUATION 17: With only nine players, the second baseman twists his ankle jumping for a line drive and cannot continue to play. An inning later, a player who had been taking a test arrives at the game. The coach decides to continue the game with only eight players and hold the newly arrived player as insurance in case another player is injured. RULING: This is legal. It is not mandatory for a coach to return to playing with nine players when another player becomes available. (4-4-1f, note 2)

SITUATION 18: R1 at first base is off and running as the pitcher delivers the pitch. B2 hits a fly ball to deep center field. R1 misses second base and is between second and third when F8 catches the ball at the fence. R1 sees the catch, touches second base returning and beats the throw back to first base. The defense is granted "time" and verbally appeals that R1 missed second as he attempted to advance on the fly ball. RULING: When R1 touched second base as he returned to first, he corrected his baserunning infraction because he touched the base the last time he went by it. The appeal is denied. (8-2-2, 8-2-6)

SITUATION 19: With R1 on first and no outs in a close game, the first baseman is playing about 20 feet in front of first base in case of a bunt attempt by B2. The pitcher, in the stretch position, throws to F3 in a pick-off attempt on R1. RULING: This is a balk. The first baseman is not in proximity of first base and is not close enough to legitimately make a play on the runner. The ball is dead and R1 is awarded second base. (6-2-4b)

RULING 20: With R1 on first base, the right-handed batter B2 swings hard and misses the pitch. The catcher, seeing R1 slow in returning to first, attempts to pick him off. B2's follow-through by the bat hits the catcher and causes his throw to sail into right field. RULING: The ball is dead and the B2 is declared out for batter interference. R1 is returned to first base. A batter is responsible for the follow-through of a bat when he swings. (7-3-5c)