

Top 40 Baseball Rule Myths

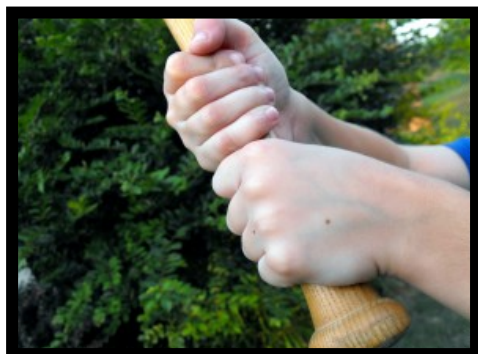
All of the following statements are **FALSE**.

Read the explanations and rule references to fully understand why.

NOTE: The rule references are based on the 2011 Edition of the Official Baseball Rules and the 2009 Edition of the Little League Playing Rules. Where the rule references differ between the Official Baseball Rules and the Little League Playing Rules, the references reflect that difference; otherwise the references are the same in both the Official Baseball Rules and the Little League Playing Rules. The Premier, Cadet, and Junior League play under the Official Baseball Rules while the Juvenile and Minor League play under the Little League Playing Rules.



1. The hands are considered part of the bat.



HANDS RULE MYTH

The hands are part of a person's body. We do not know of a manufacturer that makes bats with hands on them. 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 1st base.

Rules:

2.00 PERSON, TOUCH, STRIKE (e)

Official Baseball Rules, Rule 6.05 (f)

Little League Playing Rules, Rule 6.05 (e)

2. The runner must always slide when the play is close.

MUST SLIDE RULE MYTH

With one very limited exception as discussed below, **there is no "must slide" rule.** When the fielder has the ball in his possession, the runner has a few choices: slide, stop, retreat, avoid, OR attempt to get around the fielder without going outside of his baseline. He may NOT make contact with the fielder, but he is NOT required to slide. If he deliberately or maliciously makes contact with the fielder, he is not only out but he may also be ejected.

However, under Cadet and Junior League Playing Rule 13.07.19, a runner must slide when the runner is stealing home from 3rd base.

Rules:

Little League Playing Rule 7.08 (a) (3)

Minor League Playing Rule 11.07.14

Juvenile League Playing Rule 12.07.14

Young Cadet and Cadet League Playing Rule 13.07.14

Premier League Playing Rule 14.07.14

Young Cadet and Cadet League Playing Rule 13.07.19



3. If the batter breaks his wrists when swinging, it is a strike.

BREAKING WRISTS RULE MYTH

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.

Rule: 2.00 STRIKE



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

HIT PLATE RULE MYTH

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.

Rule: 1.04

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

BATTER BOX INTERFERENCE RULE MYTH

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 or obstruct apply to this situation.

An 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. The ball is dead on a “foul tip”.

FOUL TIP RULE MYTH

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. The batter may not switch batter's boxes after 2 strikes.

SWITCH BOX RULE MYTH

The batter can switch boxes at any time, *provided* he does not do it after the pitcher is ready to pitch.

Rule: 6.06 (b)

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

OUT OF ORDER RULE MYTH

The PROPER batter is the one called out. Any hit or advance made by the batter or runners due to the hit, walk, error or other reason is nullified. The next batter is the one who follows the proper batter who was called out.

Rule: 6.07 (b)



9. The batter may not overrun 1st base when he gets a base on balls.

OVERRUN FIRST BASE RULE MYTH

Rule 7.08 (c) and (j) simply state that a batter-runner must immediately return after overrunning 1st base. It doesn't state any exceptions as to how the player became a runner. It could be a hit, walk, error or dropped 3rd strike.

To overrun means 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.

Rule: 7.08 (c) and (j)

10. The batter is out if he starts for the dugout before going to 1st base after a dropped 3rd strike.

DROPPED THIRD STRIKE RULE MYTH

The batter may attempt 1st base anytime before "he leaves the dirt circle surrounding home plate".

Official Baseball Rules, Rule 1.04 says the dirt circle surrounding home plate is "26 feet" in diameter. For those Cadet and Junior League fields where a dirt circle has not been carved out from a surrounding grassed area, the umpire should use his judgment to determine when a batter has left the area where Rule 1.04 says the dirt circle should be.

The batter becomes a runner when the 3rd strike is not caught. Therefore, if there are 2 outs and there is a runner at 1st base, 1st and 2nd bases, 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 plate or throw to 3rd base, 2nd base, or 1st base.

However, Little League Rule 6.05 (b) which applies to the IAB's Juvenile and Minor League is different than the Official Baseball Rules. Under Little League Rule 6.05 (b), the batter is out when "a third strike is caught or not caught by the catcher."

Rules:

Official Baseball Rules, 6.05 (c) and 6.09 (b)
Little League Playing Rule 6.05 (b)

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

BUNTING STRIKE RULE MYTH

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 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. 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.

SECOND BAT HIT RULE MYTH

The rule says the BAT cannot hit the ball a second time. When the BALL hits the bat, it is not an out. Also, when the batter is still in the box when this happens, it's treated as simply a foul ball. If the batter is out of the box and the bat is over fair territory when the second hit occurs, the batter would be out.

Rules:

Official Baseball Rules, Rule 6.05 (h)
Little League Playing Rule 6.05 (g)

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

FOOT TOUCHES PLATE RULE MYTH

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

RUNNING LANE RULE MYTH

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

Official Baseball Rules, Rule 6.05 (k)

Little League Playing Rule 6.05 (j)

15. A runner is out if he slaps hands or high-fives other players, after a home run is hit over the fence.

HIGH FIVE RULE MYTH

The ball is dead on a home run over the fence. You cannot be put out while the ball is dead except when you pass another runner or miss a base after a proper appeal.

Rules: 5.02, 7.05 (a)

16. Tie goes to the runner.

THE TIE RULE MYTH

There is no such thing in the world of umpiring. The runner is either out or safe. The umpire must judge out or safe. It is impossible to judge a tie.

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

OUT OF PLAY BALL RULE MYTH

When a fielder, other than the pitcher, throws the ball into dead ball area, the award is two 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 thrower's hand on all other plays.

On a pitched ball that goes out of play or a ball thrown by the pitcher when in contact with the rubber to pick off a runner, all runners are awarded one base.

Rules: 7.05 (g) and (h)

18. Anytime a coach touches a runner, the runner is out.

COACH TOUCH RULE MYTH

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

19. Runners may never run the bases in reverse order.

REVERSE BASE RUNNING RULE MYTH

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 (i), 7.10 (b)

20. The batter-runner must turn to his right after over running 1st base.

RIGHT TURN RULE MYTH

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 1st base after overrunning or oversliding it.

Rules: 7.08 (c) and (j)

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

HIT BY BALL ON BASE RULE MYTH

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 1st or 3rd base, 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 1st or 3rd base.

Rules: 5.09 (f), 7.08 (f)

22. A runner may not steal on a “foul tip”.

NO STEAL ON FOUL TIP RULE MYTH

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

FLY BALL FORCE OUT RULE MYTH

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. This is an appeal play. Any runs that cross the plate before this out will count.

Rule: 2.00 FORCE PLAY, 4.09

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

MISSED BASE APPEAL RULE MYTH

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 3rd 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. A runner is out if he runs out of the baseline to avoid a fielder who is fielding a batted ball.

OUT OF THE BASELINE RULE MYTH

The runner **MUST** avoid a fielder attempting to field a **BATTED** ball. A runner is out for running out of the baseline, only when attempting to avoid a tag.

However, once the fielder fields the ball, the baseline re-establishes itself. The baseline for the runner is from where the runner now is and in a direct line to the base.

Rules: 7.08 (a), 7.09 (j)

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

NO ADVANCE ON INFIELD FLY RULE MYTH

An infield-fly is no different than any other fly ball in regard to the runners. 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

Official Baseball Rules, Rule 6.05 (e)

Little League Playing Rule 6.05 (d)

Official Baseball Rules, Rule 7.10 (a)

Little League Playing Rule 7.10 (a)



27. No run can score when a runner is called out for the 3rd out for not tagging up.

NO RUN ON THIRD OUT RULE MYTH

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. A pitch that bounces to the plate cannot be hit.

NO HIT ON BOUNCED PITCH RULE MYTH

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. The batter does not get 1st base if hit by a pitch after it bounces.

NO FIRST BASE ON BOUNCED PITCH RULE MYTH

A pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. It does not matter how it gets to the batter. If the batter is hit by a pitch while attempting to avoid it, he is awarded 1st base.

Rules: 2.00 PITCH, 6.08 (b).

30. If a fielder holds a fly ball for 2 seconds, it's a catch.

TWO SECOND CATCH RULE MYTH

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. You must tag the base with your foot on a force out or appeal.

FOOT TAG RULE MYTH

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

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

32. The ball is always immediately dead on a balk.

DEAD BALL ON BALK RULE MYTH

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

FAIR FEET, FAIR BALL RULE MYTH

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. The ball must always be returned to the pitcher before an appeal can be made.

APPEAL RULE MYTH

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

FALSE WINDUP RULE MYTH

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.

The rule for Little League is different. It is an illegal pitch and a ball with or without runners on base.



Rule: 2.00 PITCH

Little League Playing Rule 8.05

36. The pitcher must come to a set position before a pick off throw.

MUST SET TO PICK RULE MYTH

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. The pitcher must step off the rubber before a pick-off throw.

MUST STEP OFF RUBBER TO PICK RULE MYTH

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.

Rule 8.01, 8.05



38. If a fielder catches a fly ball and then falls over the fence, it is a home run.

FIELDER OVER THE FENCE HOME RUN RULE MYTH

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.

When a fielder catches a ball in live ball territory and then carries the ball into dead ball territory, this is known as “catch and carry”. Since many fields are not enclosed (i.e., they do not have a fences encircling the playing field), be aware of any local ground rules for “catch and carry”.

Rules:

2.00 CATCH

5.10 (f)

6.05 (a)

Official Baseball Rules, Rule 7.04 (c)

Little League Playing Rule 7.04 (b)

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

DEAD BALL WHEN UMPIRE IS HIT RULE MYTH

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)

40. The home plate umpire can overrule the other umpires at anytime.

HOME PLATE UMPIRE RULE MYTH

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) and (c)

