LITTLE LEAGUE CANADA

UMPIRES CLINIC 2026

2026 LITTLE LEAGUE RULEBOOK SIGNIFICANT UPDATES

Regulation IV(i) – Note 5 – Mandatory Play: Clarifies that during tournament play and anytime the continuous batting order is used, a courtesy runner may be used for the pitcher and/or catcher of record before that pitcher and/or catcher of record completes the requirements of mandatory play.

In addition to the above clarification, the following regulations also have minor edits and clarifications as noted in Little League's Official Regulations, Playing Rules, and Operating Policies:

- Regulation I – The League (c)(5)
- Regulation V – Selection of Players (b)
- Regulation IX – Special Games (4)
- Regulation XIII – Commercialization (b)

2026 LITTLE LEAGUE RULES CHANGES

Baseball and Softball – **Rule 1.10 – Note 2 – Use of Pine Tar:** Permits the use of pine tar or any other similar adhesive substance at all levels of Little League Baseball and Softball.

Baseball and Softball – **Rule 1.10 – A.R. 2** – Products to Assist the Batter: Updates wording to permit the use of thumb protectors and clarifies that products such as, but not limited to, choke-knobs and choke-up assists are not permitted.

2026 LITTLE LEAGUE RULES CHANGES

Baseball – **Rule 1.11(a)(3)** – Sleeves Worn by the Pitcher: Removed the "neoprene" sleeve distinction in the rule to now include all sleeves.

Baseball and Softball **– Rule 3.04, 7.14(b), T-3(d)** – Courtesy Runner: Clarifies the placement of runners when a team courtesy runs for the pitcher and/or catcher of record with 2 outs at the same time

Baseball and Softball – Rule 3.17 – Malfunctioning One-Way Communication Device: Clarifies that a reasonable amount of time must be provided to a team to correct a malfunctioning one-way communication device.

2026 LITTLE LEAGUE RULES CHANGES

Baseball and Softball **– Rule 4.04 – Note 2** – When a Player is Injured, Becomes Ill, or Must Leave the Game Site: Provides guidance for situations when a player is unable to complete a plate appearance or run after reaching base safely due to injury, illness, or ejection while using the continuous batting order during the regular season

Baseball and Softball **– Rule 4.18** – Forfeited Games: Removed the requirement for the scorebook to be signed by the Umpire-in-Chief for forfeited games.

2026 LITTLE LEAGUE RULES CHANGES

Baseball and Softball **- Rule 6.06(d)** – Illegal Bats: Reworded to provide consistency with Tournament Rule 3(b)

Baseball and Softball **– Rule 7.15(g)** – Procedures for Use of a Double First Base: Clarifies that on an uncaught third strike, the fielder and the runner can use either part of the base.

2026 LITTLE LEAGUE RULES CHANGES

Baseball – **Rule 8.06(b) Note – Visits to the Pitcher and Returning as Pitcher (INT/JL/SL)**: Clarifies that in the Intermediate (50/70), Junior League, and Senior League Divisions, the number of visits remaining does not prevent a pitcher once removed from the mound as pitcher from returning as pitcher

Softball **– Rule 8.06(b) Note – Visits to the Pitcher and Returning as Pitcher:** Clarifies that the number of visits remaining does not prevent a pitcher once removed from the pitcher's plate as pitcher from returning as pitcher.

2026 TOURNAMENT RULES

Baseball and Softball – **Tournament Rule 3(b) – Illegal Bats:** Reworded to provide consistency with Rule 6.06(d).

In addition to the above clarification, the following Tournament Rules also have minor edits and clarifications as noted in Little League's Official Regulations, Playing Rules, and Operating Policies:

- Tournament Organization – Tournament Eligibility Affidavit
- Tournament Organization – Player Eligibility
- Guidelines for Conduct of Tournament: Expenses

NAVIGATION THE RULEBOOK (PAPER COPY)

- **Sections**
  - Organization/General Information
  - Regulations
  - Rules
  - Tournaments
  - Appendix/Policies

NAVIGATION THE RULEBOOK (PAPER COPY)

- Significant Updates for Current Year
- Little League International Structure
  - Regional Offices
- General Information
  - Local League Structure
  - Divisions of Play
  - Volunteer Eligibility
  - FAQ's
- Player Eligibility

NAVIGATION THE RULEBOOK (PAPER COPY)

- Regulations – What can I find in this section of the rule book?
  - Local League Regulations
  - League Boundaries
  - League and Team Structure
  - Player Regulations
    - Age Requirements
    - Pitching Eligibility and Pitch Count/Days Rest
    - Draft
    - Schedule
  - Other Regulations

NAVIGATION THE RULEBOOK (PAPER COPY)

- Official Playing Rules
  - Rule 1.00 – Objectives of the Game
  - Rule 2.00 – Definition of Term
  - Rule 3.00 – Game preliminaries
  - Rule 4.00 – Starting and Ending the Game
  - Rule 5.00 – Putting the Ball in Play
  - Rule 6.00 – The Batter
  - Rule 7.00 – The Runner
  - Rule 8.00 – The Pitcher
  - Rule 9.00 – The Umpire

WHAT CAN I FIND IN THE RULES SECTION OF THE RULE BOOK?

PROGRESS OF GAME RULES

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PROGRESS OF GAME RULES

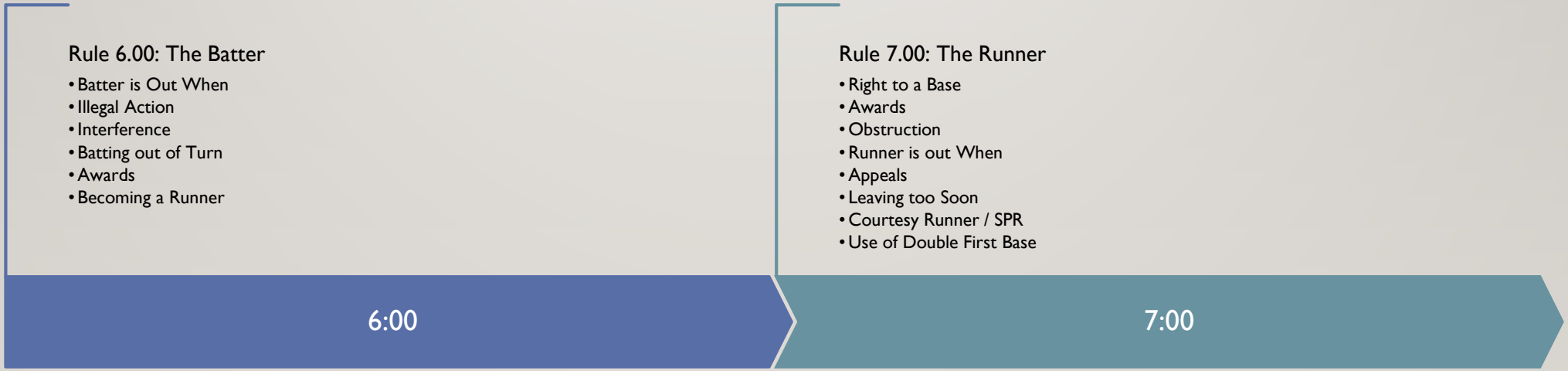
Rule 9.00: The Umpire

- Authority & Positions
- Equipment & Reporting

9:00

WHAT CAN I FIND IN THE RULES SECTION OF THE RULE BOOK?

PLAYING RULES

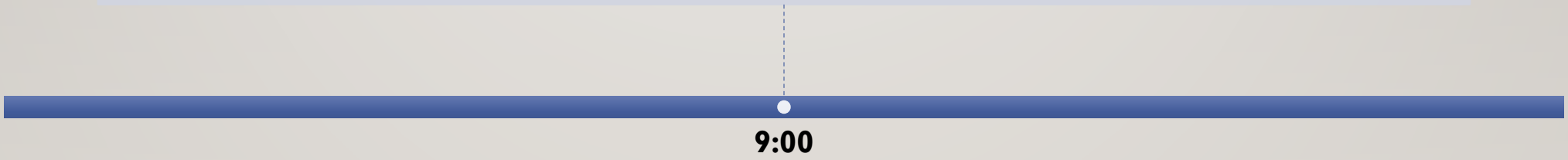


WHAT CAN I FIND IN THE RULES SECTION OF THE RULE BOOK?

PLAYING RULES

Rule 8.00: The Pitcher

- Legal Deliveries
- Balks
- Visits



WHAT CAN I FIND IN THE RULES SECTION OF THE RULE BOOK?

DEFINITION OF TERMS

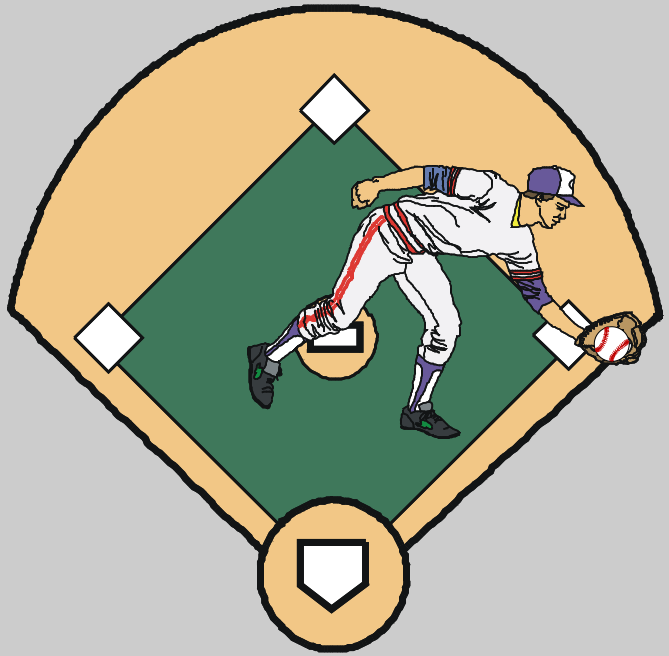
Rule 2.00: Definition of Terms

- Found completely in Rule 2.00
- Intended to be a vocabulary list of terms
- Not intended to be stand-alone rules to be followed
- Explaining what is meant by the use of the specific term later in the rulebook

FAIR / FOUL BALL

RULE 2.00

FAIR / FOUL BALL



Batted ball that:

(A) Settles

(B) Is Touched

(C) Judged by the <u>position</u> of the ball

- There are no foreign objects in fair territory, only in foul.

Fair or Foul?

- Is Touched
- Judged by the <u>position</u> of the ball.

Fair or Foul?

.....

- Is Touched
- Judged by the <u>position</u> of the ball.

CATCH

RULE 2.00

CATCH - 2.00

CATCH - 2.00

SECURE POSSESSION (in hand or glove)

COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE BALL

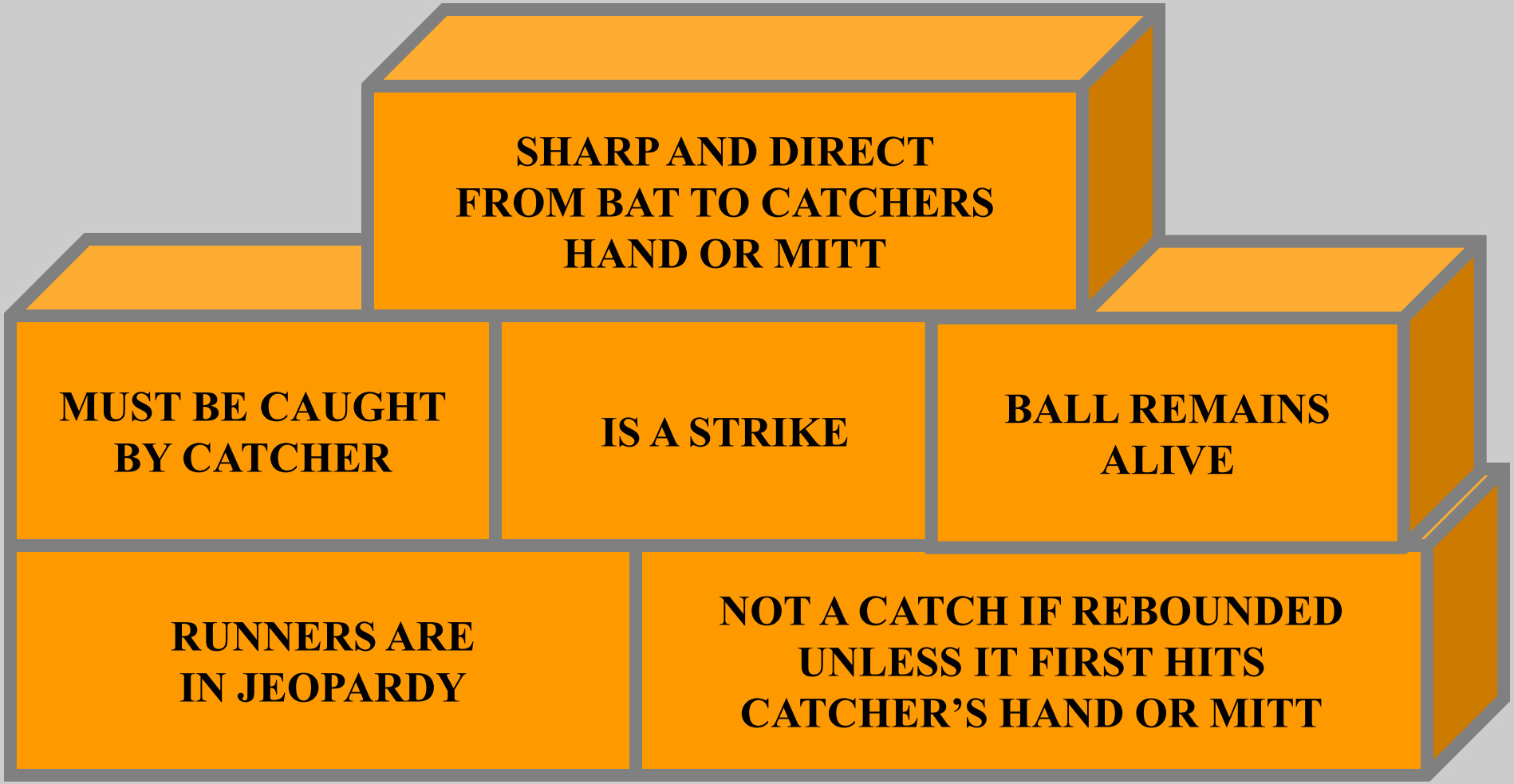
VOLUNTARY RELEASE

CATCH IF FIELDER DROPS BALL IN THE ACT OF THROWING

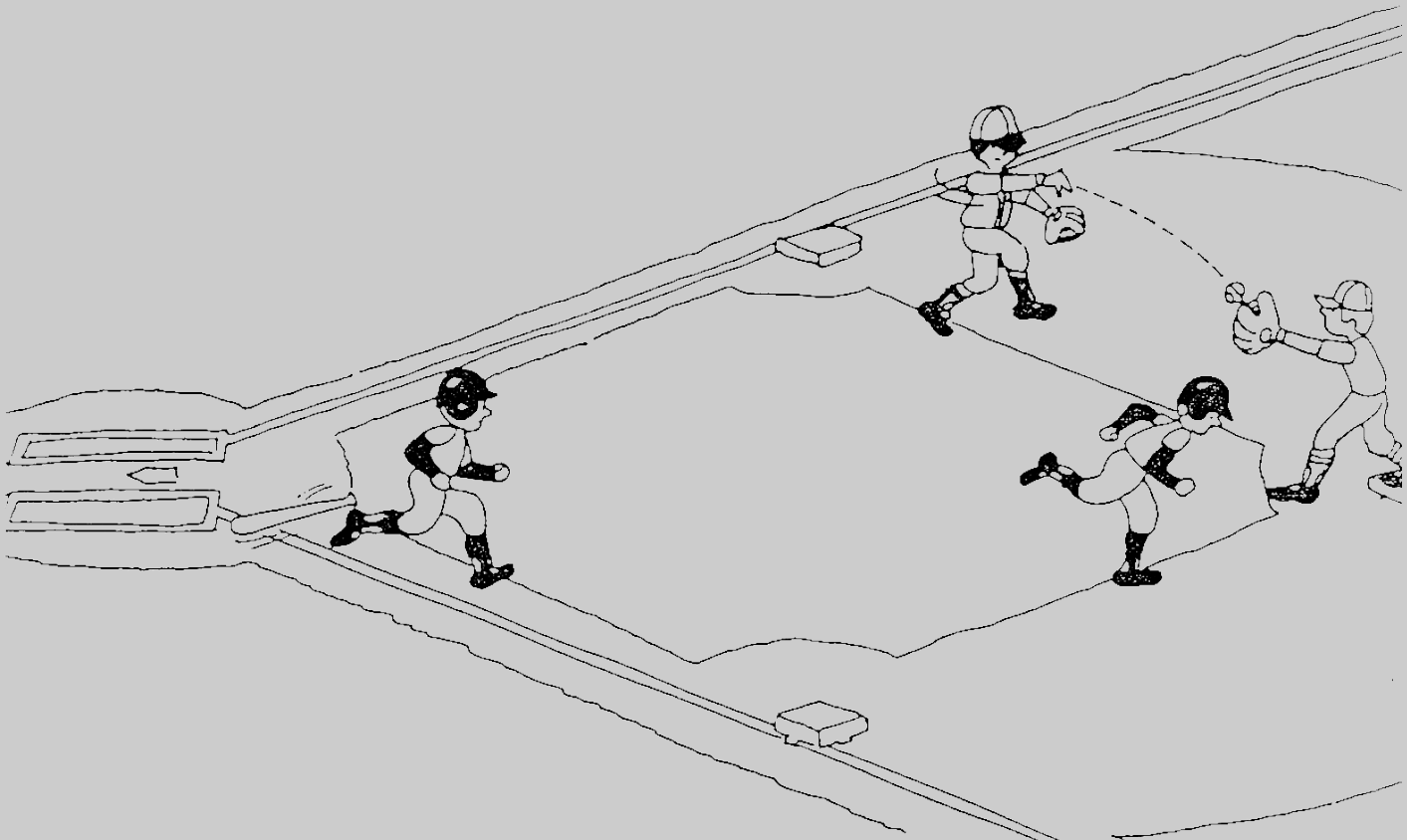
NO CATCH IF FIELDER DROPS BALL AS A RESULT OF COLLISION OR FALLING

NO CATCH IF BALL TOUCHES OFFENSIVE PLAYER, OR GROUND, FENCE OR UMPIRES

FOUL TIP
2.00


SHARP AND DIRECT
FROM BAT TO CATCHERS
HAND OR MITT
MUST BE CAUGHT
BY CATCHER
IS A STRIKE
BALL REMAINS
ALIVE
RUNNERS ARE
IN JEOPARDY
NOT A CATCH IF REBOUNDED
UNLESS IT FIRST HITS
CATCHER'S HAND OR MITT

FORCE PLAY - 2.00



A FORCE PLAY OCCURS WHEN A RUNNER LEGALLY LOSES THE RIGHT TO OCCUPY A BASE BY REASON OF THE BATTER BECOMING A RUNNER.

PROCEDURES FOR USE OF DOUBLE FIRST BASE

RULE 7.15

USE OF DOUBLE FIRST BASE

- The double first base is designed to:
  - Enhance player safety
  - Reduce collisions at 1B

RULE 7.15
(A) FAIR / FOUL

- A batted ball that hits the white section of the double base shall be declared fair.
- A batted ball that hits the orange section without first touching or bounding over the white section shall be declared foul.

RULE 7.15
(B) PLAY BEING MADE ON THE BATTER RUNNER

- Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner, the defense must use the white section of the base.

RULE 7.15
(C) PLAY BEING MADE ON THE BATTER RUNNER

- Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner, the batter-runner must use the orange part of the base on his/her first attempt to touch first base.
- If there is a play on the batter-runner, and the batter-runner touches only the white part and the defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to first base, it is treated the same as missing the base (appeal play).
- Once reaching first base, the batter-runner may only return to the white section of the base.

RULE 7.15 (G) UNCAUGHT THIRD STRIKE

When the batter becomes a runner on a third strike not caught by the catcher, the batter-runner **and** the defensive player may use either the white or orange part of the base

When the defensive player uses the orange part, the batter-runner can run in fair territory when the throw is coming form the foul side of first base.

In such cases, the batter-runner is hit by the thrown ball, it is not interference (unless such an act by the batter-runner is ruled intentional by the umpire).

RULE 7.15 (C) EXTRA-BASE HITS OR NO PLAY ON THE BATTER RUNNER

- On extra-base hits or other balls hit to the outfield where there is no chance for a play to be made at the double first base, the batter-runner may touch either the white or orange part of the base.
- Once reaching first base, the batter-runner **must return** to the **white portion** of the base only.

RULE 7.15
RETURNING TO FIRST BASE

- Once the batter-runner reaches and goes beyond first base, he/she may only return to the white section of the base.
- (f) on attempted pick-off play, the runner must return to the white section of the base only.
- This includes a throw from the pitcher, catcher, or any other player, in the attempt to retire the runner at the double first base.

RULE 7.15
TAGGING UP & LEAVING THE BASE

(D) WHEN TAGGING UP ON A FLY-BALL, THE WHITE PART OF THE BASE MUST BE USED BY THE RUNNER

- One foot is permitted to extend behind or on the base into foul territory, as long as the front foot is touching the white part of the base.
- If properly appealed, the runner may be called out for leaving too soon.

(E) WHEN LEAVING THE BASE ON A PITCHED BALL, THE RUNNER MUST MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THE WHITE SECTION OF THE BASE.

- Runners may extend a foot behind the white part of the base but must maintain contact with the white section.
- Penalty: runner left too soon
  - Baseball – LLBB – see Rule 7.13
  - Softball – Dead ball. Runner is out.

INTERFERENCE & OBSTRUCTION WITH THE DOUBLE FIRST BASE

7.15(h) – use of the double first base does not change any other rule concerning interference or obstruction at first base.

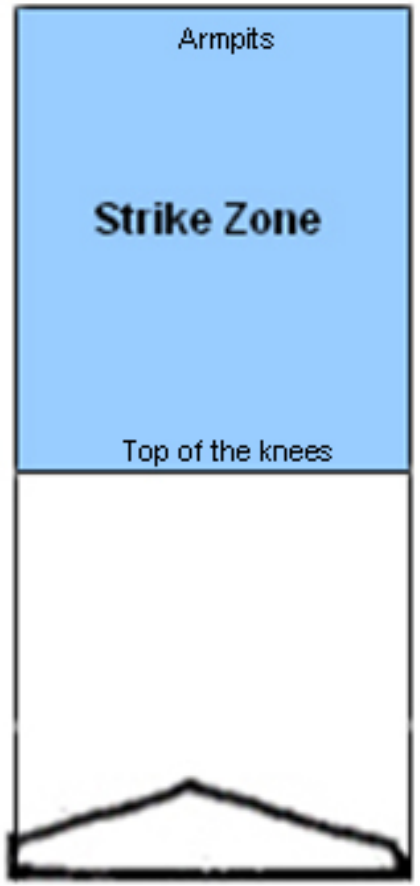
An errant throw into the three-foot running lane could still result in an obstruction call.

The batter-runner must still avoid interference with the fielder attempting to field **a batted ball.**

STRIKE ZONE

RULE 2.00

Little League Strike Zone



Reg. 2.00 – Strike Zone

The Strike Zone is that space over home plate which is between the batter's armpits and the top of the knees when the batter assumes a natural stance. The umpire shall determine the strike zone according to the batter's usual stance when that batter swings at a pitch.

A Strike is a legal pitch which meets any of the following conditions -

(a) is struck at by the batter and missed;

(b) is not struck at, if any part of the ball passes through any part of the strike zone;

(c) is fouled by the batter when there is less than two strikes;

(d) is bunted foul (batter is out and ball is dead, if the batter bunts foul on the third strike);

(e) touches the batter's person as the batter strikes at it (dead ball);

(f) touches the batter in flight in the strike zone; or

(g) becomes a foul tip (ball is live and in play).

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT APPEALS:

- What is an appeal?
- What can be appealed?
- How and when do appeals need to be made?
- What are the penalties involved?

APPEALS

WHAT IS AN APPEAL?

- Rule 2.00 – the act of a fielder claiming a violation of the rules by the offensive team.
- NOTE: a team asking an umpire to "get help" on a potentially missed call **is not** an appeal.

WHAT CAN BE APPEALED?

- A runner misses a base or failed to touch each base in order
- A runner fails to tag-up (retouch)
- The use of illegal equipment (bat)
- Batting out of Turn

GUIDE TO APPEALS
RUNNER MISSES A BASE

Timing

Before the next pitch is thrown

How

Ball must be live & in-play

Tag the runner/missed base

Penalty

The runner shall be called out.

GUIDE TO APPEALS
RUNNER FAILS TO RETOUCH

Timing

Before the next pitch is thrown

How

Ball must be live & in-play

Tag the runner or the base

Penalty

The runner shall be called out.

GUIDE TO APPEALS
BATTING OUT OF TURN

Timing

Before first pitch to the next batter of either team.

How

Approach the Umpire-in-Chief to check the line-up

Penalty

Proper batter is out.

Nullify any advance or score

GUIDE TO APPEALS
ILLEGAL BAT

Timing

Prior to the next batter entering the batter's box.

How

Approach the Umpire-in-Chief to check the bat in question.

"When an illegal bat is discovered, it MUST be removed from the game at that point.

Penalty

Option: accept the play or the out.

Offending manager is ejected.

Offending player is ejected.

Offending team loses an adult base coach.

BASE AWARDS MADE EASY
ONE (1) BASE

- Balk
- Base on balls
- Hit by pitch
- Pitch / throw from the pitcher's plate goes into or is deflected into Dead Ball Territory
- Pitched ball gets lodged in Catcher or Umpire's equipment
- Pitched ball is touched with detached equipment
- Catch & Carry – fielder falls into Dead Ball Territory
- Catcher's Interference

BASE AWARDS MADE EASY
TWO (2) BASE

- Fair ball bounces over or flies through the fence
- Thrown ball into dead ball territory.**
- Fair ball is deflected into dead ball territory
- Fielder deflects pitch into dead ball territory trying to retrieve the ball
- Fielder deliberately touches a thrown ball with detached equipment

BASE AWARDS MADE EASY
THREE (3) BASE

- Fielder deliberately touches a fair batted ball with detached equipment

BASE AWARDS MADE EASY
FOUR (4) BASE

- Fair batted ball that leaves the field in-flight over fair territory
- Deflected in-flight out of playing field over fair territory.

SHOULD THE AWARD OF BASES BE MADE FROM THE TIME OF THE PITCH OR THE TIME OF THE THROW?

WHEN SHOULD THE AWARD BE MADE? TIME OF THE PITCH

Balk	Base on balls	Hit by pitch	Pitched ball is touched by detached equipment
Pitched ball gets lodged in catcher or umpire equipment	Fielder deflects a wild pitch into Dead ball territory when retrieving it	First play by an infielder – throw goes into dead ball territory	Fair batted ball deflects into dead ball territory
Fair batted ball bounces over or flies through the fence	Fair batted ball that leaves the field in-flight over fair territory	Deflected in-flight out of playing field over fair territory	Catcher's interference

WHEN SHOULD THE AWARD BE MADE?
TIME OF THE THROW

- Thrown ball goes into Dead Ball Territory (when not the fist play by an infielder)
- Thrown ball by an outfielder goes into Dead Ball Territory
- Thrown ball goes into Dead Ball Territory when the Batter-Runner and all other runners have each advanced one base at the time the ball goes into Dead Ball Territory

INTERFERENCE

RULE 2.00

OFFENSIVE INTERFERENCE

An act by a member of the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders, or confused any fielder attempting to make a play. Likely to be committed by:

- Batter
- Batter Runner
- Base Runner
- Retired Teammate
- Coach

Penalty: Ball is dead. Batter, Batter-Runner, or Runner is out, and all other runners return to last base legally touched at the time of the interference unless otherwise provided.

DEFENSIVE INTERFERENCE

An act by a fielder which hinders or prevents a batter from hitting a pitch

Most likely the Catcher

Allow play to continue

Penalty: Batter is awarded 1B or Defense may decline the penalty and accept the play. If the batter reaches 1B and all other runners advance at lease one base, play proceeds with out reference to the interference.

UMPIRE INTERFERENCE

An umpire hinders, impedes, or prevents a catcher's throw attempting to retire a runner or when a fair batted ball touches an umpire before passing a fielder.

Plate Umpire

Base Umpire

Penalty: Plate Umpire: Ball is dead, runners return

Base Umpire: ball is dead, Batter awarded 1B, runners advance if forced.

SPECTATOR INTERFERENCE

A spectator reaches out of the stands or goes on the playing field and touches a live ball.

Spectator reaching or coming on to the playing field

Penalty: Ball is dead and umpires shall impose such penalties as in the umpire's opinion will nullify the act of interference.

INTERFERENCE – GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- You do **not need contact** to have interference.
- Just because there is contact does not mean there is interference
- Approved Ruling: Interference does **not *always* have to be intentional** for it to be called.
- Don't take the short end of the stick: **USE COMMON SENSE**, especially on the close ones.
- On any interference, the ball is dead. (Exception: Defensive Interference)

OBSTRUCTION

RULE 2.00

THE LITTLE LEAGUE OBSTRUCTION RULE

- Rule 2.00 – the act of a fielder, who, while not in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of the runner.

- 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.

OBSTRUCTION – GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. If the fielder has the ball, he/she can block the base path.
2. If the fielder does not have the ball, he/she cannot block the base path.
3. There is no *"in the act of receiving the throw"* provision in the Little League Obstruction Rule to "protect" the fielder receiving a throw.

7.06 – WHEN THE OBSTRUCTION OCCURS, THE UMPIRE SHALL CALL OR SIGNAL "OBSTRUCTION."

TYPE A

1. A PLAY is being made on the obstructed runner.
2. The ball is dead.
3. The obstructed runner must advance at lease one base beyond the base last legally touched by the runner, before the obstruction.

TYPE B

1. No Play is being made on the obstructed runner.
2. Play continues
3. The obstructed runner is awarded the base that would nullify the act of obstruction. Advancing beyond is done at his/her own risk.

A "PLAY" = BALL + RUNNER + FIELDER. NO BALL = NO PLAY!!!

OBSTRUCTION VS. INTERFERENCE SITUATIONS

CRITERIA FOR OBSTRUCTION

- The act of a fielder, who, while not in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of the runner.
- NOTE: if the defensive player blocks the base or base line clearly without possession of the ball, obstruction shall be called.

CRITERIA FOR INTERFERENCE

- An act by the offense which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders, or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play.
- Right of Way:
  - Thrown Ball – Base-Runner
  - Batted Ball - Fielder

OBSTRUCTION VS. INTERFERENCE SITUATIONS

- 7.09i – the runner fails to avoid a fielder who is attempting to field a batted ball =

Interference

  - If two or more fielders attempt to field a batted ball, and the runner comes in contact with one or more of them, the umpire shall determine which fielder is entitled to the benefit of this rule.
  - The umpire SHALL NOT declare the runner out for coming in contact with a fielder other than the one the umpire determines to be entitled to field such a ball

Obstruction

BATTING OUT OF TURN

RULE 6.07

KEY TERMS: BATTING OUT OF TURN (6.07)

- Proper Batter: the player who should be / should have been at bat
- Improper Batter: Player who batted out of turn
- Legalized: Improper Batter's actions are made legal because of a:
  - pitch,
  - play,
  - or attempted play.

SIMPLIFYING BATTING OUT OF TURN

AT-BAT

IF THE APPEAL IS MADE BEFORE THE IMPROPER BATTER COMPLETES THEIR TIME AT BAT:

- THE PROPER BATTER IS PLACED IN THE BOX AND ASSUMES THE COUNT
- ALL ADVANCES BY THE BASE RUNNER(S) ARE LEGAL.

ON BASE AND BEFORE THE NEXT PITCH

IF THE APPEAL IS MADE AFTER THE IMPROPER BATTER COMPLETES THEIR TIME AT BAT, BUT BEFORE THE NEXT PITCH, OR PLAY:

- THE PROPER BATTER IS CALLED OUT
- ALL ADVANCES BY THE BASE RUNNER(S) DUE TO THE ACTION OF THE IMPROPER BATTER ARE NULIFIED. ALL OTHER ADVANCES ARE LEGAL.
- THE NEXT BATTER IS THE ONE WHOSE NAME FOLLOWS THAT OF THE PROPER BATTER WHO WAS CALLED OUT.

AFTER PITCH

IF THE APPEAL IS MADE AFTER THE NEXT PITCH OR PLAY:

- THE IMPROPER BATTER AND HIS/HER ACTIONS ARE LEGAL.
- ALL ADVANCES BY THE BASE RUNNER(S) ARE LEGAL
- THE BATTING ORDER CONTINUES WITH THE BATTER FOLLOWING THE LEGALIZED PROPER BATTER.

LEAD OFFS
7.13

7.13– Little League (Majors) and Minor League Baseball: When a pitcher is in contact with the pitcher's plate and in possession of the ball and the catcher is in the catcher's box ready to receive delivery of the ball, base runners shall not leave their bases until the ball has been delivered and has reached the batter.

- The violation by one base runner shall affect all other base runners -

(a) when a base runner leaves the base before the pitched ball has reached the batter and the batter does not hit the ball, the runner is permitted to continue. If a play is made on the runner and the runner is out, the out stands. If said runner reaches safely the base to which the runner is advancing, that runner must be returned to the base occupied before the pitch was made, and no out results;

LEAD OFFS 7.13

(b) When a base runner leaves the base before the pitched ball has reached the batter and the batter hits the ball, the base runner or runners are permitted to continue. If a play is made and the runner or runners are put out, the out or outs will stand.

If not put out, the runner or runners must return to the original base or bases or to the unoccupied base nearest the

one that was left; In no event shall the batter advance beyond first base on a single or error, second base on a double or third base on a triple. The umpire-in-chief shall determine the base value of the hit ball.

c) When any base runner leaves the base before the pitched ball has reached the batter and the batter bunts or hits a ball

within the infield, or advances on an uncaught third strike, no run shall be allowed to score. If three runners were on the bases and the batter reaches first base safely, each runner shall advance to the base beyond the one they occupied at the start of the play except the runner who occupied third base, that runner shall be removed from the base without a run being scored.

LEAD OFFS 7.13

EXAMPLES:

1. Runner on first leaves too soon, batter reaches first safely, runner goes to second.

2. Runner on second leaves too soon, batter reaches first safely, runner returns to second.

3. Runner on third leaves too soon, batter reaches first safely, runner returns to third.

4. Runner on first leaves too soon, batter hits clean double, runner goes to third only.

5. Runner on second leaves too soon, batter hits clean double, runner goes to third only.

6. Runner on third leaves too soon, batter hits clean double, runner returns to third.

7. All runners on base will be allowed to score when the batter hits a clean triple or home run, regardless of whether any runner left too soon.

8. Runners on first and second, either leaves too soon, batter reaches first safely, runners go to second and third.

9. Runners on first and second, either leaves too soon, batter hits clean double, runner on first goes to third, runner on second scores.

10. Runners on first and third, either leaves too soon, batter reaches first safely, runner on first goes to second, runner on third remains there.