



Northern Cayuga Little League

Jordan-Elbridge • Montezuma • Port Byron • Skaneateles • Weedsport

Coaches Corner

The Coaches Corner is to help clarify Little League rules. The object is to keep coaches, umpires and parents on the same page. It will not change umpire calls in completed games or allow protest to occur in completed games. If you have questions or would like clarification on rules that seem to occur often, please email us and with will do our best to get Little Leagues intentions on a ruling and publish it for the league to see.

Definition of Terms

FAIR OR FOUL BALL RULE

Home plate is in fair territory and is treated like the ground. There is nothing special about it.

There is nothing special about the pitcher's rubber. It is part of the ground. If a ball hits it and bounces foul before passing first or third it is a foul ball.

Home plate and all the bases are in fair territory. Any batted ball that touches first, second or third is a fair ball. A ball that settles on home plate is a fair ball. A ball that hits home plate first is NOT a FOUL ball.

Two different criteria apply to judging fair or foul balls:
Balls that **FIRST** touch the ground or a player in the **OUTFIELD** and
Balls that **FIRST** touch the ground or a player in the **INFIELD**

A ball that **first touches** the ground, or a player or an umpire in the **outfield**, is judged to be fair or foul based upon the relationship between the ball and the line at the instant the ball touches the ground, player or umpire. The location of the player or umpire's body or feet have nothing to do with the judgment. It's where the ball is in relation to the ground. The outfield is fair and foul territory beyond first or third base.

A ball that **first touches** the ground in the **infield** (in fair or foul territory) before first or third base, is not judged to be fair or foul until it stops or is touched by a player or an umpire or bounds beyond first or third base, or touches first or third base, or passes over first or third base. If it hits the ground on the home plate side of first or third and passes over the base on its way to the outfield; it is a fair ball. It may first touch the ground in foul territory and it is still not judged fair or foul until it stops or is touched or goes beyond first or third base. Example: ball touches the ground behind home plate, does not touch the catcher and spins into fair ground and stops. This is a FAIR ball. A fair or foul ball shall be judged **according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory** at the time he touches the ball. The instant the ball is touched you draw an imaginary vertical line from the ball to the ground. If the imaginary line touches foul territory, it is a foul ball, if fair territory, it is a fair ball. The position of the fielder's feet or body is of no consequence.

The ball may roll back and forth (within the infield) between fair and foul territory an unlimited number of times, and it is not declared fair or foul until it stops or is touched. Where **the ball is** when it is touched determines the judgment, **not** where the fielder is. The infield is both fair and foul territory within first and third base.

A pitch that hits the batter's bat is a batted ball. It doesn't matter whether he was swinging at the pitch or ducking away from it. The ball is judged fair or foul based on what happens to it after it hits the bat, based on the previously stated explanations.

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The Runner

RULE 7.08 (a) "Any runner is out when ... (3) the runner does not slide OR attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball AND is waiting to make the tag"

There is no "must slide" rule. When the fielder has the ball in his possession, the runner has two choices; slide **OR** attempt to get around the fielder. The key phrases here are: "**or attempt to get around**" and "**has the ball waiting to make the tag**." He may **NOT deliberately or maliciously contact the fielder**, but he is **NOT** required to slide. If the fielder does not have possession but, is in the act of fielding, and contact is made, it is a no-call unless the contact was intentional and malicious.

The purpose of the rule is to prohibit the runner from **deliberately** crashing into a defender who has the ball, for the sole purpose of knocking the ball loose, because the runner knows he is going to be out otherwise.

In attempting to get around a fielder who has the ball waiting to make the tag, the runner must not run more than 3 feet to either side of a line that goes between bases. If he does, he is out for violation of rule 7.08 (a) (1)

Rule 7.08 is on page 71 in the 2007 Baseball Rule Book.

INTERFERENCE

Offensive Interference 2a (pg 51) – Offensive interference is an act by a member of the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play. If the umpire declares the batter, batter-runner or a runner out for interference, all other runners shall return to the last base that was, in the judgment of the umpire, legally touch at the time of the interference, unless otherwise provided by these rules.

Clarification

The runner has a right to an unobstructed path while running the bases. The fielder has a right to make a play without interference. The runner has the right to the base path **except** when a fielder is attempting to field a **BATTED BALL** or has possession of the ball.

Sometimes when the runner and fielder collide, no penalty should be applied. The umpire must judge whether someone's rights were violated. This applies mainly to plays where the throw and the runner are arriving at the same time. **There is no such thing as a must slide rule.** When a runner collides with a fielder **attempting to field a batted ball**, he should be called out in almost all cases. If the runner collides with a fielder attempting to **catch a throw**, the umpire must first decide if the collision was intentional, then decide if the act interfered with, impeded, hindered or confused the fielder. If the runner is legally in the base path and simply running the bases when a collision occurs, he is not out. If he deviates from his path and/or intentionally interferes, or makes malicious contact, he is out. In sliding to a base he must be able to reach out and touch the base with his hand. If he slides into a fielder while more than an arms length from the base it is interference if the fielder is attempting a play. If a runner goes into a base standing up **AND** this act hindered the fielder in an attempt to make a play, it is interference. This hindrance would have to be by contacting the fielder while in the act of throwing or attempting to throw. If the fielder makes no attempt to throw simply because the runner is in the base line standing up; this is NOT interference. If he does not slide, he must not touch the fielder while he is



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attempting a play. If the runner has already been put out before he interferes, then the ball is dead and the runner being played upon is also out.

If the throw is almost to the fielder and a collision occurs; it is not interference or obstruction. It is a collision and neither player is penalized. However, intentional, malicious contact is never allowed. If the runner does it, call him out and eject him. If the fielder does it, award the base to the runner and eject the fielder.

The fielder should not be in the base path without possession of the ball. If he is it is obstruction. Anytime a runner deliberately and maliciously crashes into a fielder he should be ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct. However, if a close play occurs and the runner does not slide and makes incidental contact with the defender before he has the ball, no call should be made. If the defender has the ball, the umpire should judge as to whether the runner made an attempt to get around the fielder. If he did, he should not be called out simply because he did not slide or made contact.

In attempting to get around a fielder who has the ball waiting to make the tag, the runner must not run more than 3 feet to either side of a line that goes between bases. If he does, he is out for violation of rule 7.08 (a) (1)

If the defender does not have possession of the ball, and a collision occurs as he steps into the path of the runner as he attempts to catch a thrown ball, there is no penalty, unless the umpire judges the collision to be deliberate and malicious.