

## General Rules Questions

### 1. What type of jewelry is allowed?

Jewelry is allowed if the umpire does not find it to be a distraction or increases the risk to players.

### **Rule 3, “Players, Substitutes, and Coaches,” SECTION 2, “UNIFORMS, PLAYER EQUIPMENT,”**

**Article 12** was amended in 2023 to remove the language prohibiting jewelry.

### 2. What is the running lane rule?

The running lane is a three-foot wide area halfway from home to first base. The batter-runner running to first base must use the running lane when the ball is being fielded or thrown to first base. The batter-runner is considered in the running lane if she both feet consecutively touch inside the running lane. Any part of her foot stepping on the foul line is considered in the running lane.

The National Federation of High Schools rules book states the following:

"A runner is considered outside the running lane if either foot last contacted the ground completely outside the lane."

This means if the player has one foot in the running lane but the foot in the air last touched outside the running lane, she is considered outside of the running lane.

Three things are needed for a running-lane violation. First the batter runner must be out of the running lane. In other words, at least one foot is touching completely outside or, if in the air, last touched completely outside the running lane more than halfway to first base. Second, the catcher **MUST** make a throw. Third, the batter runner outside the running lane must interfere with the first baseman's ability to catch the throw.

A throw over the head of the first baseman would not constitute running lane interference. The reason is the first baseman does not have the ability to catch the throw. Therefore, for a ball thrown over the first baseman's head, the batter runner did not interfere with the ability to catch the throw.

A running-lane violation is interference. The ball is immediately dead, and the batter-runner is out. All other players return to the base last touched at the time of the running-lane violation.

### **Rule 8, “Batter-Runner and Runner,” SECTION 2, BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT,”**

The batter-runner shall be called out when:

**ART 6...**The batter-runner runs outside the three-foot (0.91m) lane and in the judgment of the umpire, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base (there must be a throw); however, the batter-runner may run outside the three-foot (0.91m) lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball. A runner is considered outside the running lane if either foot last contacted the ground completely outside the lane.

More information can be found in the presentation, "Running Lane, What is it and when is it used?" on the "What's the Rule?" page of the website, [www.casoumps.com](http://www.casoumps.com)."

### **3. What is the difference between a force and timing out?**

A force out is in effect when a runner must abandon her current base because she is being forced to run by a player coming to the base she occupied. For example, a player on first base is forced to run on a ground ball.

The force out situation is removed when a fly ball is caught, or an infield fly out is called. If the runner steps back towards the base from which she was forced to run, the force is reinstated. No runs can score on a third out that is a force out.

If the third out is not a force out, then a run can score if it is recorded before the third out is declared. The run scoring is dependent on the timing of the third out. For example, with players on second and third base and one out, a fly is caught. Both girls tag but the player on second base leaves early.

The player on third base scores but then the defense appeals the player on second base leaving early. The player leaving early is declared out for the third out. The run will count because the third out was not a force out and the run was recorded after the out was declared.

More information can be found in the presentation, "Common Rules Misconceptions (drag bunt vs slap hit, foul ball vs foul tip, timing out vs force out)," on the "What's the Rule?" page of the website, [www.casoumps.com](http://www.casoumps.com)."

### **Rule 2, "Definitions," SECTION 24, "FORCE PLAY,"**

**ART 1...** A force play is a play in which a runner (or two or three runners) loses the right to the base occupied and is forced to advance because the batter becomes a batter-runner.

**ART 2...** For a given runner, a force play ends as soon as the runner touches the next base or the following runner is put out.

**ART 3...** If a batter ball is caught before it touches the ground there can be no force play.

**ART 4...** If a forced runner, after touching the next bases, except home, retreats for any reason towards the base first occupied, the force play is reinstated and the runner may again be put out if the defense tags the base to which the runner is forced.

### **Rule 2, SECTION 62, "TIMING PLAY"**

A timing play is a play when the last out of an inning is not the result of a force out and the exact time of the out may or may not allow a run to score. [...]

More information can be found in the presentation, "Common Rules Misconceptions (drag bunt vs slap hit, foul ball vs foul tip, timing out vs force out)," on the "What's the Rule?" page of the website, [www.casoumps.com](http://www.casoumps.com)."

### **4. Is the ball live on an infield fly call?**

The ball is live, and it remains fair unless it goes foul in front of first or third base before it is touched. Whether the fair ball is caught or not, the batter has been declared out because of the infield fly call. Runners may advance at their own risk.

When an infield fly is called, because the batter is out, no runner is forced to run. If a runner does advance on a caught or uncaught infield fly and a play is made at the next base on the runner, the runner must be tagged to record an out. Stepping on the base does not record the out because the force is removed due to the infield fly call. If the ball is caught and runners leave the bases early, they may be put out on appeal.

**Rule 2, “Definitions,” SECTION 30, “INFIELD FLY RULE,”**

Infield fly is, when declared by the umpire, a fair fly (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when runners are on first and second or all three bases are occupied and before there are two outs in the inning. [...] The ball is live, the batter is out, which removes the force, but runners may advance at their own risk. The runners may tag up and advance as soon as the batted ball is touched by a fielder. If a declared infield fly becomes foul, it is treated as a foul ball, not an infield fly.

**5. What is defined as a catch?**

A catch is defined as a player possessing the ball and controlling it with her hand or glove and the ball is not dislodged by the ground or another player. If a player has the ball in her glove, hits the ground or collides with another player, and the ball comes loose, it is not a catch. A ball that is dropped on a transfer from the glove to the throwing hand is a catch.

Trapping the ball is not considered a catch. For example, on a play at first on a batter-runner, if the first baseman covers a ball on the ground with her glove, that is considered a trap. Similarly, if her glove has the fingertips on the ground and the first baseman does not lift the glove with the ball in it, the first baseman has not demonstrated to the umpire she has control. The umpire may call the batter safe at first because the umpire may see it as a trap. Finally, if the ball is squeezed between the first baseman’s arm and body, she does not have control in her hand or glove and if the batter-runner reaches first at that time, the batter-runner is safe because the ball is trapped.

**Rule 2, “Definitions,” SECTION 9, “CATCH,”**

**ART 1...** a catch is the act of a fielder who, with the hand(s) and or glove/mitt securely gains possession of a batter, pitched, or thrown ball.

**ART 2...**In establishing the validity of the catch, the fielder must prove control of the ball and that the release of the ball is voluntary and intentional.

[...]

**ART 5...**A catch shall not be credited if:

- a. A fielder catches...with anything other than the hand(s) or glove/mitt in its proper place.
- b. Immediately following a catch, the fielder collides with another player, umpire or fence or falls to the ground and fails to maintain possession of the ball.

[...]

- f. The fielder traps the ball. A batted fly ball or line drive is considered trapped if it hits the ground or a fence on a short hop before being caught. A thrown ball is considered trapped if it is on the ground and the glove/mitt or hand is over it, and the player does not have control. A pitched ball is considered trapped if it is a strike but touches the ground on a short hop before being caught by the catcher.

**6. Are hands part of the bat?**

No, the hands are not part of the bat. Any time a ball touches a batter it is a dead ball. Because the batter hit the ball with her hands, she did not hit it with the bat. Therefore, the ball is dead, and it is a swinging strike.

This is the case even if she hits the ball to the shortstop and reaches first base safely. In this case, the ball is dead, and it is a swinging strike. She is out if it is the third strike.

**Rule 5, "Dead Ball and Suspension of Play," SECTION 1, "DEAD BALL,"**

**ART 1...**Ball becomes dead immediately when (Table 5-1):

- a. A pitch touches a batter or the batter's clothing (8-1-2b, c)

**NOTE:** (F.P.) The ball becomes dead even though the batter strikes at it.

**Rule 7, "Position and Batting Order," Section 2, "STRIKES, BALLS, AND HITS,"**

**ART 1...**A strike is charged to the batter when:

- f. a batted ball contacts the batter in the batter's box (foul ball)
- g. a pitched ball contacts the batter while swinging at the ball or the batter is hit by the pitch that is in the strike zone (dead-ball strike).

**Rule 8, "Batter-Runner and Runner," SECTION 1, "THE BATTER BECOMES A BATTER-RUNNER,"**

**ART 2...**A batter is awarded first base when:

- c. (F.P.) a pitched ball (not entirely in the batter's box) not swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter's person or clothing. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter. The batter's hands are not to be considered part of the bat. If no attempt is made to avoid being hit, the batter will not be awarded first base unless it is ball four.

More information can be found in the presentations, "Batter hit in the Batter's Box (Hands are not part of the bat!)" and "Common Rules Misconceptions (drag bunt vs slap hit, foul ball vs foul tip, timing out vs force out)," on the "What's the Rule?" page of the website, [www.casoumps.com](http://www.casoumps.com).

**7. What is the difference between a foul ball and foul tip?**

A foul ball is a ball that does not land in fair territory or touches a person or object over foul territory. It is a dead ball and strike if less than two strikes. Runners on base must return to the last base occupied when the foul ball occurred. If a foul ball occurs when a batter bunts with two strikes, the batter is out. The signal for a foul ball is the umpire waving the hands above the head. The words foul ball may or may not be announced.

A foul tip is a hit ball that goes directly to the catcher's mitt or hand, and is legally caught by catcher after it hits mitt or hand first. It is signaled by the umpire waving one hand over fingertips of the other hand. The ball remains live, and runners on base may advance.

An example of a foul tip is a hit ball that goes directly to the catcher's mitt then chest protector and is caught. The ball did not touch anything else, so the catch was legal. An example of a foul ball is a hit ball that first contacts the catcher's chest protector then caught.

More information can be found in the presentation, "Common Rules Misconceptions (drag bunt vs slap hit, foul ball vs foul tip, timing out vs force out)," on the "What's the Rule?" page of the website, [www.casoumps.com](http://www.casoumps.com).