



Little League Baseball and Softball

Top 40 baseball rule myths

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

TOP 40 BASEBALL RULES MYTHS

1. The hands are considered part of the bat.

No baby was ever born with a bat in his hands. Therefore, as an umpire you must judge if the ball hit the bat or the batter first.

2. The batter-runner must turn to his right after over-running first base.

The batter-runner must make an attempt to advance toward 2nd base in order for him to be liable to be tagged out. Turning left or right has no bearing on the play.

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

This could be one of the criterion in which you judge if he swung or not. The best statement you can make when asked about a check swing is that he attempted or did not attempt to swing at the pitch. Other criterion might be that the barrel of the bat goes past the middle of the batter's body or not. One other criterion might be that the bat crossed the middle of the plate.

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

To rule it foul it must have come to rest in foul territory or be touched in foul territory.

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

The batter's actions are what causes interference and not necessarily where he is. In the batter's box, if he does nothing out of the ordinary, it is more difficult to commit batter interference but it is possible.



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6. The ball is dead on a foul tip.

The ball is always live on a foul tip. Therefore runners may be put out or advance at their own risk on a foul tip.

7. The batter may not switch batter's boxes after two strikes.

The batter may switch batter's boxes at any time while the ball is dead.

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

The batter that is supposed to bat is the one that is declared out.

9. The batter may not overrun first base when he gets a base-on-balls.

This is true in National Federation Rules but it is not true in NCAA, professional rules or Little League.

10. The batter is out if he starts for the dugout before going to first after a dropped third strike.

The batter is out if he leaves the dirt circle around the plate area after a dropped 3rd strike unless he is making an attempt to reach 1st base.

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

The batter must actually make an attempt to bunt the pitch in your judgment for it to be ruled a strike. Just leaving it in the strike zone is not enough to consider it an attempt.

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.

If the batter is in the batter's box when this occurs, it is simply a foul ball. If he is out of the batter's box at this time, he is ruled out for interference.



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

This is true if the entire foot is out of the batter's box when it touches the plate. Having the foot touch the plate and the batter's box is not considered out of the batter's box.

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

The batter-runner is only out if he is outside the running lane when he causes the fielder at 1st base to have trouble receiving the throw or he is hit with the throw while he is outside of the running lane.

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

In high school and professional baseball this is not true. In NCAA baseball, the 1st time this occurs, it would become a team warning and the next time it occurs it would be an ejection but it is never an out.

16. Tie goes to the runner.

In baseball, there are no ties. The rule does state that if the ball beats the runner, the runner is out. If the runner beats the ball, he is safe. So, if it is a tie, it really goes to the defense and not the offense.

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

The runner gets 2 bases usually from the time of the pitch and other times he would get 2 bases from the time of the throw. There are no one plus one award. There are only 1, 2, 3 & 4 base awards.

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

The coach cannot touch a runner to help him advance or return to a base during a live ball. However, on a home run out of the park, the coach may touch the



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runner.

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

Runners may not run bases in reverse order to make a travesty of the game. There are many times when the runner has to run in reverse order if the fly ball is caught or sometimes they run the bases in reverse order because they are confused to what took place.

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

There is never a time a runner must slide but there are times if he does not slide, he will be called out for interference. He also has the option of giving himself up, trying to avoid the tag by going around it, reversing directions, etc.

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

The base is not a sanctuary. The only time he would be safe would be if with the infield-fly rule in effect.

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

As we found out in #6 above, a foul tip is a live ball and runners may advance at their own risk and are subject to being thrown out or get a stolen base.

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

Since the definition of a force is a runner is forced to advance because the batter-runner hit the ball, once the batter-runner becomes out on the fly ball catch, there is no longer a force in effect. Tagging up on a fly ball is a rule that is not a force out. It is an appeal play and therefore if any other runner advances ahead of the appeal play on not tagging up runner, that advance is allowed. If 2 are out in this situation it becomes a "Time" play.



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

Appeal plays are sometimes force-outs and other times they are not. It all depends on which base was missed. If it is a base a runner is forced to, it is a force out. If the force out becomes the 3rd out, then no runs scored will be counted on that play.

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

On the contrary, the runner would be out for interference if he did not avoid the fielder that is trying to field the batted ball. The runner is out if he runs out of the baseline to avoid a fielder's attempt to tag him.

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

Runners may advance on an infield fly. They must legally tag up and try to advance to the next base if they can do it. Usually, it is impossible to tag up and advance because of the short distances involved.

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

No, these are time plays.

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

Any pitched ball may become a batted ball. That means a batter could hit an out or a base hit or foul it off on a pitch that bounces to the plate.

29. The batter does not get first base if hit by a pitch after it bounces.

This statement makes no sense. The pitcher pitched the ball. If it hits the batter, it is the pitcher's fault and not anyone else's. So, the rule must penalize the correct player. In this instance, the pitcher receives the penalty.



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

To have a catch, the fielder must show firm and secure possession and voluntary release of the baseball. The fielder must bring himself under control before dropping the ball.

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

You may tag the base with any part of the body as long as you have firm and secure possession of the baseball in your hand or glove/mitt.

32. The ball is always immediately dead on a balk. (No Balk in Little League Majors and below. It is an Illegal Pitch)

You are correct in high school baseball but in NCAA, professional rules or Little League the ball is dead sometimes immediately but when the balk is followed immediately by a pitch, the ball is delayed dead and we wait until the end of the play and then either enforce the balk or allow the play to stand. If all base runners, including the batter-runner advance one base or more after the balk, the play stands. The coach or manager does not have an option on this rule.

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

It is the location of the baseball when it is touched or touches the ground that determines it being fair or foul and not the position of the fielder's feet.

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

If the ball is live, you may go directly to the missed base or the runner and tag him for missing the base or leaving it too soon on a fly ball that is caught.

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

For a balk to be awarded, there needs to be runners because the penalty is 1 base awarded. (Nothing in Little League)



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36. The pitcher must come to a set position before pitching in Little League Majors and below.

The pitcher doesn't have to come to a complete stop in Little League Majors and below.

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

In fact, if he does step off first and the ball is thrown away into dead-ball territory, the award is 2 bases. From the rubber, it is only a 1 base award.

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

If the catch occurs before leaving the field of play it is a catch and not a homerun.

39. The ball is dead anytime the ball hits an umpire.

This is only true on a batted ball that the ball is dead. On a thrown or pitched ball, it is unfortunate but the ball remains live. A hit ball that has passed a fielder before it touches an umpire is live and in play.

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

The home plate umpire has no more right to overrule his partner(s) than they have to overrule him. In certain situations the UIC may have to change a call because of more correct information but no umpire has the right to overrule another.