

July 2007

Rule Book Clarification – Rule 8, Section 7 K

Several umpires have indicated that the language in Rule 8, Section 7 K with respect to **THE RUNNER IS OUT** is confusing. The intent of the sentence is to indicate that a runner should be declared out when they are struck by a fair, untouched batted ball while not in contact with a base and before the ball passes an *INFIELDER* – replace “another fielder” – excluding the pitcher, or it passes an infielder and another *FIELDER* – replace “infielder” – has an opportunity to make an out.

The Rule and the intent of the Rule have not changed; however, the present wording is written incorrectly and therefore has triggered some confusion.

Corrections to the Umpire Manual

Several misprints / errors in the Umpire Manual have been recently reported. Two of these misprints / errors should be corrected immediately to avoid confusion as we begin the National Championship Season.

SLOW PITCH STRIKE ZONE: The Slow Pitch strike zone information that appears on Page 224 of the Umpire Manual under the heading of “Slow Pitch Plate Mechanics” contains a misprint. In the fourth sentence of that paragraph, beginning with, “In the Slow Pitch game.....”, the strike zone is described incorrectly. The description of the strike zone in that sentence should be the same as in the Strike Zone definition in Rule 1, “Back shoulder to front knee.”

HEEL – TOE STANCE: The information regarding the Heel-Toe Stance on Page 226 of the Umpire Manual, under the heading of “Fast Pitch and Modified Plate Mechanics, Set Position” requires rephrasing. The beginning of the second paragraph should read, “Your feet should be placed **at least** shoulder width apart *with the foot closest to the batter* slightly forward.” The re-wording of this sentence brings the heel-toe stance information in this part of the manual in line with heel-toe stance information contained on Page 224 of the Umpire Manual under “Slow Pitch Plate Mechanics” and becomes consistent with the Heel-Toe Stance definition on Page 199 of the Umpire Manual.

Your contributions to finding and correcting errors in the Official Rules of Softball – Rule Book – and the Umpire Manual are much appreciated. Please continue to submit this information.

Batting Out of Order

Several questions regarding batting out of order situations arose during the 2007 Advanced Umpire School – Fast Pitch Camp – that was hosted by Georgia ASA in Cumming, Georgia last month. One situation in particular, dealing with “correct” and “incorrect” batters, spurred a lively and extended discussion. The situation, in three parts, along with the rulings follows:

SITUATION 1: Top of the third inning, B1 scheduled to lead off the inning but B2 steps into the batter’s box and flies out to F7. B1, not wanting to lose a time at bat, steps into the batter’s box but before a pitch is made the defense properly appeals that B2 batted out of order.

RULING: B2 – incorrect batter - batted out of order and that out stands. The correct batter, B1, is also out on the batting out of order appeal. There are now two outs and the next batter is B3. (Rule 7, Section 2 C and Section 2 D 2)

SITUATION 2: Same as Situation 1 except that a pitch is made to B1 which is called a strike, then the defense properly appeals batting out of order.

RULING: The pitch to B1 – incorrect batter – made B2’s time at bat legal and re-established the batting order making B3 the next batter – correct batter. B2’s out stands; however, since B1 had not completed the time at bat, B1 is simply replaced in the batter’s box by B3 who assumes B1’s count of one strike and B1’s turn at bat is skipped. (Rule 7, Section 2 C and Section D 3)

SITUATION 3: Same as Situation 1 except that on the pitch B1 flies out to F9 and then the defense appeals the batting out of order.

RULING: The pitch to B1 made B2’s time at bat legal and re-established the batting order making B3 the correct batter. The outs made by B2 and B1 – incorrect batter – stand and B3 – correct batter – is out for the batting out of order infraction. B4 leads off the top of the fourth inning. (Rule 7, Section 2 C and Section D 3)

Pitcher Infractions

Questions have been received regarding pitchers being permitted to lick the fingers of their pitching hand prior to delivering a pitch. The questions concerned pitchers going to their mouth with their pitching hand while in the 16-foot circle, while out of the 16-foot circle, and even while on the pitcher’s plate.

Rule 6, Section 6 A permits a pitcher to lick their fingers at any time as long as the fingers are wiped off before bringing them in contact with the ball. Therefore, this rule allows a pitcher to lick their fingers anywhere on the playing field, including the pitcher's plate, as long as the fingers are wiped off before contacting the ball. The intent of the rule is to prohibit a pitcher from applying a foreign substance to the ball. When the pitcher wipes off their fingers prior to contacting the ball, the foreign substance is no longer present. The intent of the rule has been satisfied.

Infield Fly Rule

The definition of an Infield Fly in the 2005 Official Rules of Softball included the sentence, "The runners can tag up once the batted ball is touched (prior to catching) the same as on any fly ball." When the 2006 Official Rules of Softball was reorganized for publication, the above mentioned sentence was removed because fly balls, as they pertain to when runners may attempt to advance, are all treated the same.

When a fly ball is also an infield fly, runners have the same restrictions as on a non-infield fly batted ball hit in the air. If the infield fly is caught, runners must tag up and MAY attempt to advance with liability to be put out after the ball is touched by a fielder. If the infield fly is not caught, runners MAY advance with liability to be put out the same as with any other fly ball that is not caught. Additionally, on an infield fly that is not caught runners do NOT have to advance because the batter is out, therefore removing the force out. To be declared out in this situation advancing runners must be tagged with a live ball while off a base.

2007 National Exam Answers and References

Question	Answer	Rule Book References
1	F	Rule 1 - Base Path and Base Line
2	F	Rule 1 - Force Out
3	T	Rule 2, Section 1 – Official Distance Table
4	T	Rule 3, Section 4
5	T	Rule 3, Section 1 C, D and E
6	F	Rule 4, Section 4 D 2a
7	F	Rule 4, Section 6 G 4b
8SP	F	Rule 5, Section 8 A
9SP	F	Rule 6SP, Section 1 D
10	T	Rule 6, Section 9
11SP	F	Rule 7, Section 5 B
12	T	Rule 7, Section 6 B

13	F	Rule 7, Section 6 S
14	F	Rule 7, Section 4 L
15	F	Rule 8, Section 4 C
16	F	Rule 8, Section 1 D 3
17	T	Rule 8, Section 5 B 1
18	F	Rule 8, Section 2 M 3
19	T	Rule 8, Section 5 F, EFFECT 1
20	T	Rule 8, Section 7 L, NOTE and EXCEPTION
21	C	Rule 1, Foul Ball / Foul Tip
22	A	Rule 7, Section 5 C
23	A	Rule 4, Section 6 C 4
24	C	Rule 1, Illegally Batted Ball
25	B	Rule 7, Section 6 C, EFFECT and NOTE
26SP	C	Rule 5, Section 8 A
27SP	C	Rule 2, Section 1
28	D	Rule 8, Section 1 D 2
29	D	Rule 4, Section 6 B
30SP	D	Rule 6SP, Section 3 G
31	D	Rule 8, Section 5 F 7
32	C	Rule 7, Section 6 A
33	B	Rule 3, Section 2 B
34SP	D	Rule 2, Section 3 C
35	D	Rule 8, Section 6 H 1
36SP	D	Rule 8, Section 9 B 2
37	A	Rule 8, Section 2 F 6
38	B	Rule 7, Section 2 D 2
39	B	Rule 3, Section 7
40	D	Rule t, Section 5 B 2
41SP	F	Umpire Mechanics Manual
42	F	Umpire Mechanics Manual
43	T	Umpire Mechanics Manual
44	F	Umpire Mechanics Manual
45	F	Umpire Mechanics Manual
46	D	Umpire Mechanics Manual
47	A	Umpire Mechanics Manual
48	B	Umpire Mechanics Manual
49	D	Umpire Mechanics Manual
50	D	Umpire Mechanics Manual
8FP	T	Rule 5, Section 11 A
9FP	F	Rule 6SP, Section 3 G
11FP	T	Rule 8, Section 2 A
15FP	F	Rule 8, Section 7 T
21SP	A	Rule 6SP, Section 1 D
22FP	C	Rule 3, Section 4
26FP	B	Rule 5, Section 11

27FP	C	Rule 4, Section 6 G 4
30FP	A	Rule 8, Section 4 G 3
36FP	C	Rule 4, Section 6; Rule 8, Section 9, Section 10 A 2, and Section 10 F
41FP	T	Umpire Manual