

Training Meeting # 3, February 2, 2026
Location: West Valley HS Library

Working the Bases Part 2

1. Umpire Classroom Video: B&C Positioning (10:41)
2. Umpire Classroom Video: Steals & Double Plays (5:04)
3. Position & Timing:
 - a. Chest to Ball
 - b. Angle over Distance
 - c. Coming Set
 - d. Proper use of eyes/complete the play/Slow to show

Rules

1. Slide Rule Double Play: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwjlzX9TIAg> (4:09)
2. Balks: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntV_aueeg2c (16:28)
3. Rundowns: Obstruction, Interference, Malicious Contact Review
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLgDxY90WXk> (12:18)

NOTES:

SBU Training Session # 3 Handout Notes/Quiz

Rule 2-32 SLIDE

Art. 1A legal slide can be either feet first or head first. If a runner slides feet first, at least one leg and buttock shall be on the ground. If a runner slides, the runner must slide within reach of the base with either a hand or a foot. A runner may slide or run in a direction away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder.

Art. 2....A slide is illegal if:

- a. The runner uses a rolling cross-body or pop-up slide into the fielder; or
- b. The runner's raised leg is higher than the fielder's knee when the fielder is in a standing position; or
- c. Except at home plate, the runner goes beyond the base and then makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder. At home plate, it is permissible for the runner's momentum to carry through the plate in a straight line (baseline extended); or
- d. The runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg; or e. The runner tries to injure the fielder; or
- f. The runner, on a force play, does not slide on the ground and in a direct line between the two bases.

NOTE: There is no requirement for players to slide. If a player slides, however, it must be a legal slide. On a potential double play at second base, the runner must either peel away from the base so as to not interfere with the throw, or slide legally, including sliding away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder. Enforcement of the force-play slide rule is triggered even if the fielder does not make or attempt to make a throw to complete the double play.

Here is how to handle the play:

1. See the violation
2. Emphatically signal and call "Time."
3. Point to the play and announce "That's Interference."
4. Point to the runner who committed the interference and say, "You are out."
5. Point to the batter-runner at first base and say, "You are out."

Rule 2-3 BALK

A balk is an illegal act committed by the pitcher with a runner(s) on base which entitles each runner to advance one base.

In NFHS, a balk is an immediate dead ball. In OBR, a balk is a delayed dead ball.

When a pitcher takes the rubber, determine if they are in the windup, or set position. Then watch to see whether the pitcher steps off the rubber, at which point they become an infielder, and not a pitcher. The pitcher must step off the rubber with their **pivot** foot, otherwise, it is a balk. If they move their non-pivot foot first and then step off, that is a balk.

Illegal actions that should be called balks:

1. Extra movements once the pitcher comes to the set position:
 - a. Shoulders turn towards a base to check the runner (head turn OK)
 - b. Flinches of the knee or arm
 - c. Can't put fingers to the mouth and then wipe off
 - d. Can't start the delivery of the pitch and then stop. i.e., failing to pitch to the batter in a continuous motion immediately after any movement of any part of the body.
2. Feints
 - a. Can't feint to 1st, must make a throw
 - b. Can't feint to an unoccupied base
 - c. Legal to feint to 2nd if occupied
 - d. In NFHS. Legal to feint to 3rd and then throw to first. In OBR this is not legal
3. Throws
 - a. When attempting a pickoff, the non-pivot foot must be directed to the base being thrown to. Cannot have non-pivot foot pointing towards home plate.
 - b. In a pickoff move, the pivot must move first, if the non-pivot foot moves first, that is a balk.
 - c. If the pitcher "steps off" he/she becomes an infielder and is no longer acting as a pitcher. The step off must be done with the pivot foot first.
4. Quick Pitch/Discernible Stop
 - a. After coming to the set position, the pitcher must come to a discernible stop before making a pitch. "Rolling through" is a balk.
 - b. A "Quick Pitch" i.e., pitching to the batter before the batter is set to receive the pitch is an illegal pitch. It is a balk with runners on base, and a ball with no runners on. Pitchers are required to simulate receiving a sign from the catcher prior to coming to the set position.
5. Infrequently seen balks:
 - a. Dropping the ball (that doesn't cross the foul line.)
 - b. Being within 5 feet of the rubber without the ball (sometimes seen with a "hidden ball" trick.

Rundowns: Keys to Remember

1. **Out of the Baseline:** if there is a tag attempt, the runner's evasive movements cannot go more than three feet to the left or right of a line directly to the base to which the runner is headed.
2. **Multiple runners on one base:** In a rundown there is a chance that two runners will end up on the same base. The lead runner is the one entitled to the base. If both runners are tagged, the following runner is out. But also be prepared for the defense to tag both runners, then watch to see if the lead runner leaves the base and can then be put out with a tag. If the lead runner leaves the base after being tagged first and is tagged again, then there is no force and the following runner can be considered to have achieved the base.
Watch to see who gets tagged first.
3. On a rundown between 2nd and 3rd base, the plate umpire should only move slightly towards 3rd in foul territory and be prepared to make a call at home on an overthrow at 3rd.

Training Session # 3 Quiz Section 1: Force-Play, Slide Rule Violations

2.32.1 Situation: With R1 at first base, a ground ball is hit to F6, who throws to f4 covering second. R1 slides late at second, stays in the baseline, but R1 makes contact with F4 who is in front of the base, causing F4 to overthrow first base.

___ True or False? Providing the slide is legal and the contact is not malicious, there is no violation.

2.32.2 Situation C: Bases loaded. A ground ball to F1 is thrown to F2. R3 slides directly into and past home plate. On F2's throw to another base, F2 is contacted by R3 in the baseline extended.

___ This is legal if R3 slid directly into home plate in the baseline extended and the contact was not malicious.

___ This is illegal because R3 impeded the f2's throw to another base.

2.32.2 Situation D: Bases loaded. A ground ball to F1 is thrown to F2. R3 slides on the ground not in a direct line to the plate, but reaching out with the hand to touch the plate. The contact hinders F2's attempted throw to another base.

___ This is legal since R3 was sliding within a hand's reach of the plate.

___ This is force-play, slide rule interference. The ball is immediately dead. R3 is out, as well as the other runner

___ This is force-play, slide rule interference. Umpire call's interference, but allows play to continue. R3 is called out. Other runners are returned to the last occupied base prior to the interference.

Training Session # 3 Quiz Section 2: Balks/Time of pitch

For the following situations identify when the “time of pitch” occurs for the “Windup” or “Set” positions:

W or S: After stepping on the pitcher’s plate, with both hands in front of the body first starts any movement of the arm(s) or leg(s) prior to delivering the pitch

W or S: With both hands at the side, the pitcher first starts any movement with both arms or the non-pivot foot prior to delivering the pitch.

W or S: The instant the pitcher, after coming to a complete and discernible stop, starts any movement with arm(s) or legs(s) that commits the pitcher to pitch.

2.28.3 Situation: R3 is on third and R1 on first with no outs. F1 contacts the pitcher’s plate and assumes the set position. As F1 begins the stretch, R1 advances toward second base attempting to steal. F1 realizes R1 is stealing, but does not throw to second, fearing the R3 will break for home and score. F1 completes the stretch, coming to a pause with both hands in front of the body. R1 reaches second and rounds it after which F1 delivers the ball to B3, who fouls the pitch into the stands. What is the correct ruling?

___ Since it was a foul ball, R1 is sent back to first base.

___ R1 is allowed to remain on second because the runner obtained that base prior to the time of the pitch.

Training Session # 3 Quiz Section 3: Rundowns

Which of the following rule violations are most likely to occur in a rundown situation? Which are less likely to occur, but are still possible?

___ M or L: Running out of the basepath

___ M or L: Malicious contact

___ M or L: Interference

___ M or L: Obstruction

In a rundown situation between 1st and 2nd (with no other runners on base) which umpire should be positioned to rule on a tag at first?

___ Plate or base

In a rundown situation between 2nd and 3rd , where should the plate umpire ideally be positioned?

___ Close to the dirt circle near 3rd.

___ Near 3rd in foul territory

___ Slightly up the baseline towards 3rd

True or False? Contact is required for obstruction to occur. _____

During a rundown between 1st and 2nd base, obstruction occurs while the runner is heading back to first. Which is the correct base award?

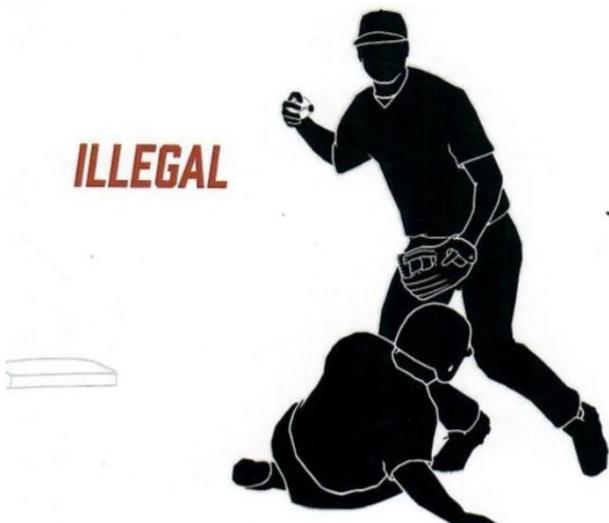
___ 1st base because that was the base the runner was heading towards.

___ 2nd base since by NFHS rules obstruction is always awarded a minimum of one base beyond his or her position on base when the obstruction occurred

NO SLIDE REQUIRED

There is no requirement for players to slide. If a player slides, however, it must be a legal slide. On the potential double play at second base, the runner must either peel off away from the base to not interfere with the throw or slide legally, including sliding away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder. Another important point: Interference on this play is not contingent on if the batter-runner would have been out or safe at first base.

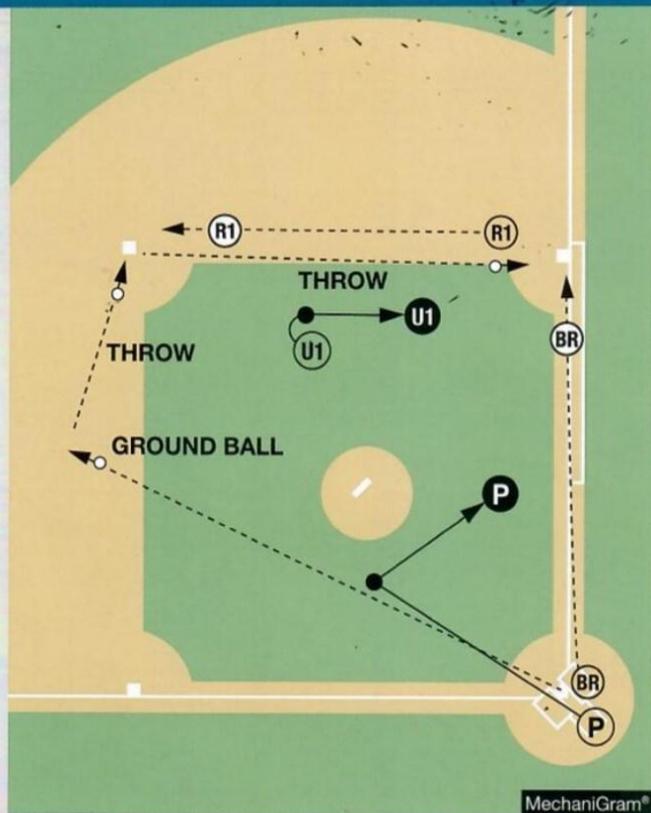
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**ENFORCEMENT OF THE
FORCE-PLAY SLIDE RULE
IS TRIGGERED EVEN IF THE
FIELDER DOES NOT MAKE OR
ATTEMPT TO MAKE A THROW
TO COMPLETE A PLAY.**

THROWBACK

Crusty old Ty Cobb likely rolled over in his grave when he heard that a rule was instituted to reduce contact by runners on force plays. Cobb, the epitome of the player who would do whatever was necessary to win a game, was famous for barreling into second base to upset the pivot on a double play. One can argue that a bit of "good ol' time baseball" died when the NFHS instituted the force-play slide rule in 1998. But the fact that countless injuries are prevented because of the rule more than overcomes any feelings of nostalgia.



THE MECHANICS

In the two-umpire system, it may not be the base umpire who ultimately makes this call. Once the fielder transfers the ball to throw it, the base umpire will turn his or her attention to first base. The plate umpire, who is positioned more than 100 feet away, assumes responsibility for the interference call.

Once a ground ball is hit, the plate umpire needs to move out toward the left side of the mound (see MechaniGram) in order to observe the action at second base. If there is an illegal slide, the plate umpire should immediately call time and penalize the interference.

Because the plate umpire is focused on second base, he or she usually cannot provide any assistance on the play at first base in case of a pulled foot or swipe tag. The base umpire must be

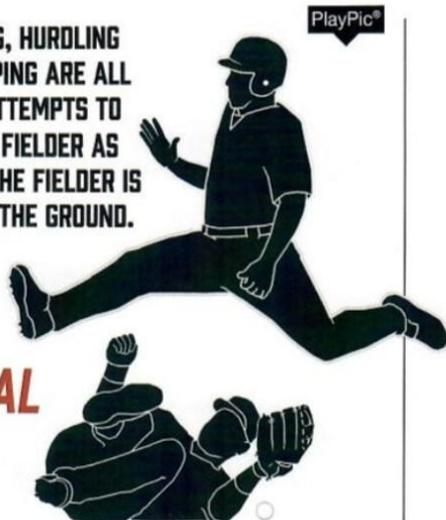
aware of that and get into the best possible position to judge that play. Sometimes, but not often, the action at second base never materializes and the plate umpire can turn and attempt to help.

Offensive interference calls often lead to protests from the offensive team, so it puts a premium on umpires calling the play definitively and explaining it well to coaches.

Here's how to handle the play:

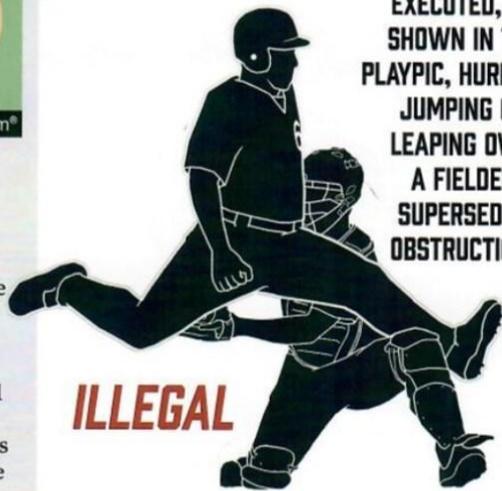
- 1) See the violation.
- 2) Emphatically signal and call, "Time."
- 3) Point to the play and announce, "That's interference."
- 4) Point to the runner who committed the interference and say, "You are out."
- 5) Point to the batter-runner at first base and say, "You are out." ■

JUMPING, HURLING AND LEAPING ARE ALL LEGAL ATTEMPTS TO AVOID A FIELDER AS LONG AS THE FIELDER IS LYING ON THE GROUND.



LEGAL

WHEN ILLEGALLY EXECUTED, AS SHOWN IN THE PLAYPIC, HURLING, JUMPING OR LEAPING OVER A FIELDER SUPERSEDES OBSTRUCTION.



ILLEGAL



ILLEGAL

DIVING OVER A FIELDER IS ALWAYS ILLEGAL. DIVING SUPERSEDES OBSTRUCTION.

Obstruction. As the rundown progresses, more fielders are likely to descend upon the play. Well-coached teams are taught specific procedures involving fielders rotating in and out of the rundown as throws are made and the runner is chased down. It's easy for one of the fielders who just made a throw to fail to get out of the way quickly enough to avoid the runner changing direction.

NFHS rule 2-22 states a fielder without possession of the ball cannot deny access to the base the runner is attempting to achieve. A fielder without the ball who hinders a runner is guilty of obstruction, and the ball becomes dead at the end of playing action. Rule 8-3-2 outlines the obstructed runner will be awarded a minimum of one base beyond his or her position on base when the obstruction occurred. So even if a runner trapped between first and second was headed back to first at the time of the obstruction, the runner will be awarded second base.

It's also important to note that contact is not required for obstruction to occur. If the runner must deviate from his or her intended path because of a fielder without the ball, it is most likely obstruction.

Interference. Although probably less commonly encountered than obstruction in rundown situations, umpires must remain ready for interference. Frustrated runners may intentionally attempt to knock the ball out of the glove of a runner or use part of their body to intentionally interfere with the flight of a throw from one fielder to another. If so, the ball is immediately dead and the runner is out (2-21-1, 8-4-2g, r). ■

1. BASEPATH

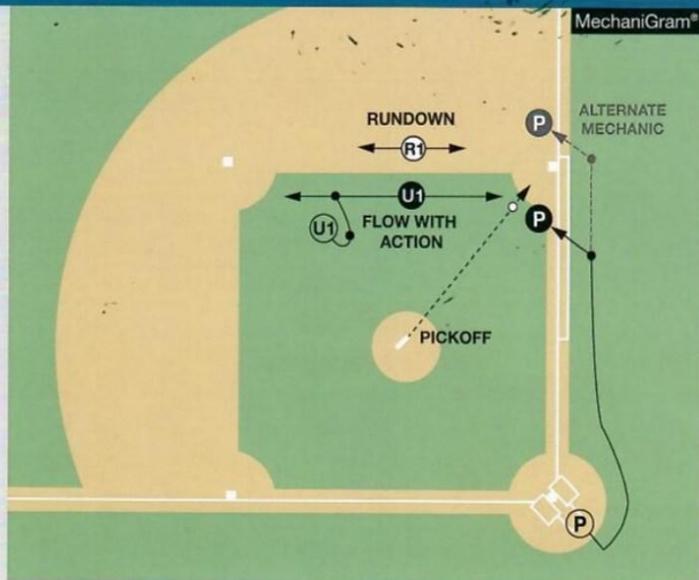


2. OBSTRUCTION



3. INTERFERENCE





THE MECHANICS

In the two umpire system, if there is another runner that may attempt to score, the plate umpire (P) cannot provide assistance. The base umpire (U1) will have to take the play alone.

Regardless, U1 should establish a position with a comfortable distance from the basepath — generally about 10 or more feet away — to allow flowing laterally between the bases to observe the activity. U1 should avoid overworking the play; the focus should be in maintaining an optimal view versus keeping pace with the runner.

If the P is in a position to assist, he or she must properly step into coverage and avoid “running” U1 off the play. P will move toward one end of the action — either toward first-base or third-base, depending on where the rundown is occurring. In the MechaniGram, a rundown emerges after a pickoff attempt on a runner at first; therefore, the plate umpire will move aggressively down the first-base line in foul territory, but stop and hold about 20 feet from first base in foul ground. That prevents a collision with players participating in the rundown and precludes a double call.

Alternate mechanic: P can move to the outfield side of the play, providing coverage of both ends of the rundown and opening up an additional view of tags. Check with supervisors before using this advanced mechanic.

P should wait for the players to move away from him or her, then P should advance to the edge of the first-base cutout and verbally communicate with U1, “I’ve got this end.” U1 should acknowledge hearing the communication, and then conserve his or her movement by flowing toward the second-base cutout, moving a bit closer to the basepath and focusing attention on the runner’s action from a more stationary position.

Once umpires establish shared responsibility, the plate umpire should rule on tag attempts if the runner dives back to first, while U1 is responsible for activity between the bases. U1 also rules on a tag attempt if the runner dives into second. On other tags, such as to the chest, the umpire whom the runner is facing will have a better view and makes the call.

The plate umpire retains responsibility for any subsequent plays at the plate. ■

WITH MULTIPLE RUNNERS ON BASE, A RUNDOWN MIGHT PUSH A RUNNER TO A BASE THAT’S ALREADY OCCUPIED. WHEN THAT HAPPENS, UMPIRES CAN ONLY HOPE THE DEFENSE HAS ENOUGH SENSE TO TAG BOTH RUNNERS. IF THEY DO, THE LEAD RUNNER IS THE ONE ENTITLED TO THE BASE, UNLESS IT WAS A FORCE-PLAY SITUATION.



POINT TO THE PLAY

Since obstruction in NFHS play is always a delayed-dead ball, simply point and verbalize, “That’s obstruction.” That will let everyone know you saw it — and keep coaches off your back until playing action ends and you can make the appropriate base award.