

Pro Rules Differences

The following represent the most significant rule differences between Professional Baseball Rules and Federation/NCAA. For clarity, the **Pro rule interpretation is cited.**

1.10 The bat may have a wrapping which makes the handle flush with the knob.

1.12-1.14 Specifications for the glove, first baseman's mitt, and catcher's mitt.

2.00 The Strike Zone. Area over home plate from the midpoint between top of shoulders and the top of the uniform pants to the hollow beneath the kneecap. To be called a strike without the batter offering at the pitch, some part of the pitched ball in flight must pass through this area. A pitch that hits the ground and then bounces up and through some part of the strike zone is in play, but can not be called a strike as it is no longer in flight.

3.03. There is no reentry of starters following substitution.

4.09(b) In a game ending situation with runners forced by an award, only the runner on 3rd base and the batter runner must advance and touch the next base.

6.2 © There is no charged strike for batter stepping out of the batter's box.

6.05(b) Only the catcher may catch a foul tip; if caught by any other player, it is a foul ball and the ball is dead.

6.05(e) Interpretation. Regardless of whether or not an infield fly is declared by the umpire(s), the batter is out if the batted ball meets the definition of an infield fly.

6.05(k) and 7.09(k) Interpretation. To be able to call offensive interference on a batter-runner running outside of the three-foot running lane marked the last 45 feet to 1st base, a throw must be made. The UIC must judge the quality of this throw before making a call. Interference should not be called if the throw has no realistic chance of retiring the batter-runner. An allowance must be made for the batter-runner to step inside the foul line as he reaches the immediate vicinity of 1st base because 1st base is not readily accessible for the batter-runner to touch since the three-foot lane runs adjacent and past the base in foul territory. NOTE, however, that this allowance is not extended to the batter-runner who has run the entire distance to 1st base inside or outside the lane—that batter-runner is wrong and most probably has interfered. ALSO, the batter-runner must have a foot on the ground outside of the three-foot running lane (including chalk lines) to have committed interference. EXAMPLES: bunt down the first base line, batter-runner stays inside the foul line all the way to 1st and is hit by the catcher's throw 10 feet short of 1st base—Interference; same play but catcher attempts not to hit the batter-runner and throws the ball 5 feet over the first baseman's head into right field—No Interference as the throw was not a quality throw.

2nd Interpretation. Situation: 1 out, R3 at 3rd base, squeeze bunt, R3 slides home safely with no play being made on him, but then catcher's throw to 1st base hits batter-runner who is running inside fair territory out of the running lane. Ruling: Offensive interference on the batter-runner and since the throw by the catcher was **the first play off the bat**, disallow the run and send the runner back to 3rd base even though the runner had touched home before the interference. **BUT**, if in same situation the pitcher had fielded the bunt and thrown to the catcher at home in an attempt to retire R3 who scored safely and then the catcher's throw to 1st hit the batter-runner who is running inside fair territory out of the running lane, the run would score since an **intervening play** was made before the interference and on that intervening play R3 scored. If either situation started with two outs, no run would score because the third out of the half inning was made by the batter-runner before he touched 1st base.

3rd Interpretation. Situation: 1 out, R3 at 3rd base, sharply batted ball past 1st base fielded by the 1st baseman who throws home in attempt to retire R3--but the throw hits the batter-runner who is running to 1st base inside fair territory in the last 45 feet to the base. Ruling: no interference and play continues **UNLESS** umpire judges that the batter-runner intentionally interfered with the throw; note that the batter-runner is restricted in creating his basepath only when a throw is being made to 1st base.

6.06(c) Unintentional "Weak" Interference. R1 on 1st stealing on the play, count 1-1 on B1; B1 swings so hard his bat unintentionally comes around and hits the catcher, the catcher's glove, or the ball preventing the catcher from making a play on the stealing R1. Ruling: On unintentional interference, the ball is dead but no one is called out--R1 returns, count on B1 now 1-2. **HOWEVER**, if F2 had possession of the ball and was preparing to throw to retire stealing R1 when B1 interfered with F2—or if UIC judges that the interference was intentional, B1 is out on the interference and R1 returns, unless the throw retired R1—in which case the play would continue without reference to the interference and B1 would remain at bat with a 1-2 count. If the count on B1 had been 1-2 before the pitch and B1 interfered with F2 trying to throw out stealing R1, then R1 is also out on the play under rule 7.09(f).

6.10(b) The DH must bat at least once before being substituted for unless the opposing team changes pitchers.

7.01(a) (b) Defensive team must properly appeal a runner missing a base or failing to retouch after a fly ball is caught to get an out. Note an appeal is canceled only when the defense throws the ball into dead ball territory or either team initiates a play.

7.04(c) and 5.10(f) Fielder after making a catch enters dead ball territory, the ball remains alive unless the fielder falls down.

7.06(a) and (b) Obstruction of runner **if a play is being made on him** or if the **batter-runner** is obstructed before reaching 1st base, the ball is immediately dead; award is at least 1 base beyond the base last legally touched—umpire may award more bases than

one if in the umpire's judgment the player would have reached if not obstructed. Obstruction of runner with no play being made on him, delayed dead ball; play continues until no further action possible, then umpire calls "TIME" and imposes penalties—could be no base, a single base, or multiple bases.

7.09(l) (m) Interpretation. Situation: R3 on 3rd base, R2 on 2nd base, batter grounds to short who throws home to attempt to retire R3; R3 slides properly and is safe on the play but as F2 attempts to throw to 3rd base to retire R2 advancing on the play, R3 who has scored pops up and deliberately interferes with F2's throw so that the throw sails into left field. Ruling: Offensive interference by R3, Ball is dead immediately, and **R3 is out**—take the run off the board, return R2 to 2nd base. Same logic as if under subpara (m) R3 slid home on the play, scored, but was then hit by an untouched fair batted ball (bunt) while still laying on the ground in fair territory. A runner is not above the interference rule even if he has scored.

8.01(b) Preparatory to coming to a set position, the pitcher **shall** have one hand on his side. In the set position the pitcher must come to a stop holding the ball in both hands in front of his body. There is **no restriction** on where in front of his body both hands must be.

8.01(d) and 8.05 A balk or illegal pitch is a delayed dead ball. If the pitcher delivers the ball, the ball is live and if the batter-runner and all base runners advance at least one base on the ensuing play, play will proceed without reference to the balk; if not, enforce the balk penalty.

8.02(a) (1) The pitcher can not go to his mouth with his pitching hand while in the 18 foot circle of the pitcher's mound. Penalty, immediately award batter a Ball. EXCEPTION: at the plate conference of games played during cold weather both managers and the UIC agree the pitcher may blow on his hand for warmth. Then the pitcher may do so.

8.05(b) A right-handed pitcher is permitted to slightly turn his left shoulder during the stretch or while in the set position and looking at the runner at 1st base as long as the shoulder movement is not judged a feint by the umpires (same applies for left-handed pitcher and 3rd base). The pitcher may also stand in an open position with his non-pivot foot outside the 24 inch width of the pitching rubber (must still be in front of the front edge of the rubber) and stretch—staying open—from that starting position.

8.05(c) The "31" move. R3 on 3rd and R1 on 1st, pitcher in set position. The pitcher feints toward 3rd by stepping toward the base but does not throw (also has no arm motion), disengages the pitching rubber, and then turns, steps toward 1st and throws or feints to 1st. LEGAL, also note a 2 base award on the throw into dead ball territory as the pitcher has disengaged the pitching rubber. Under Pro Rules, this move is ILLEGAL if the pitcher does not disengage the rubber on the feint to 3rd and then spins or wheels off his planted left foot and throws to 1st—this would be ruled a continuing move while the right foot was on the rubber Penalty: BALK.

8.06 Manager/coach may visit any one pitcher once per inning—regular innings or extra innings—without any type of penalty (YES, in a 9 inning game, that could be 9 visits to the same pitcher, one per inning). A second visit to the same pitcher in the same inning is permitted but requires removal of that pitcher from the GAME—VERIFY at the plate conference if a local rule in the league you're umpiring permits the pitcher removed after a second visit to stay in the game. Each substitute pitcher is entitled to the same visits per inning as the starting pitcher.

If the pitcher is removed from the mound during the first visit of an inning but stays in the game at another defensive position, that pitcher may return to pitch one time in that inning. If the manager/coach visits this returned pitcher, this visit is the Second Visit. The second visit in the same inning can not be while the same batter is at bat. NOTE: the next batter is at bat immediately after the previous batter completes his time at bat. EXCEPTION; the manager makes his first visit, a pinch hitter is then substituted for the named batter—the manager/coach may make an immediate second visit to the pitcher, but must remove that pitcher from the game. If under any other circumstance the manager attempts to make a second visit to the same pitcher with the same batter at bat—and after warning by the UIC that the visit is not permitted the manager persists in going to the mound, the UIC SHALL EJECT the manager and require the pitcher to continue to pitch until the current batter completes his time at bat; then the pitcher is removed from the game and a substitute pitcher must be used.

If the Manager/coach visits with another defensive player, not the pitcher, this conference does not count as a visit to the pitcher, unless that defensive player goes to the mound to talk to the pitcher before the next pitch is thrown—if this subsequent meeting happens, the conference with the defensive player is announced by the UIC as a visit to the pitcher.

Managers/Coaches may visit on field with their pitcher during the change over/warmup time between half innings, UNLESS this visiting delays the game (Rule 8.03 limit of 8 pitches OR 1 minute—in reality, almost any visit by a manager/coach to their pitcher during this period of the game WILL result in delay). Following the first delay, the UIC should warn the manager that the next delay will result in a visit being charged for the upcoming half inning.

Managers/Coaches may visit their pitcher in an injury situation with no visit being charged if there is no strategy/coaching discussion—UIC should monitor the conversation.

There are no “offensive conferences” under pro rules, so no need to be concerned with defensive manager/coach visiting pitcher for free during offensive conference. (The offensive team calls TIME OUT not OFFENSIVE CONFERENCE).

No Rule. If a batted ball lodges in a defensive players uniform or equipment, the ball is live.

No Rule. There is no intentional walk of a batter; minimum of 4 pitches must be thrown.

No Rule. A batter is not out if he hits fair or foul while touching the plate unless the batter's foot is completely outside the lines of the batter's box when he touches the plate.