

HBUA JUNE RULE REVIEW ANSWERS

A. *Based on the previous video, what action(s) should the umpire(s) take?*

If a runner, in contact with a legally occupied base, is judged by the umpire to have unintentionally interfered with a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball, the ball remains alive and in play. In order for this to be interference, the runner in contact with the base must intentionally hinder the fielder. The runner is under no obligation to maneuver their position on the base in order to avoid the fielder. If the inference is intentional, with less than two out, both the runner and batter shall be declared out. With two out, the batter shall be declared out.

Reference: OBR 6.01(a); MiLB Umpire Manual 6.11 "Runner Interferes With Fielder While In Contact with Base"

B. *R1, 1 Out. R1 is stealing on the pitch. The batter hits a shallow fly ball that is caught by the charging right fielder. Thinking the play occurred with two out, R1 continues to run, touching 2B and continuing to 3B. The right fielder throws to 1B in an attempt to retire R1, however the throw is wild and goes into the dugout. R1 is halfway between 2B and 3B when the ball rolls out of play. 1) When the ball rolls out of play, what base is R1 awarded? 2) After being awarded the appropriate base, R1 advances to and touches 3B, at which point the third base coach directs R1 to go back and re-touch 1B, so as not to be called out on appeal. R1 subsequently returns to 1B before proceeding to their awarded base, re-touching all bases in the proper order. Does re-touching 1B change R1's base award? 3) When play resumes, the defense appeals that R1 did not legally re-touch 1B. What should the umpires rule?*

- 1) When the ball rolls out of play, R1 shall be awarded home, as they were between 2B and 3B when the ball was thrown. Initially awarding R1 3B, because the umpire is aware of R1's need to re-touch 1B, could alert the defense to the fact R1 needs to re-touch 1B and would be in jeopardy of being called out on appeal.
- 2) Returning to touch 1B causes R1's awarded base to change to 3B, as this is the proper base award, given R1's attempt to run the bases properly.
- 3) R1 did not properly re-touch 1B. They shall be called out on appeal. When the ball went out of play, R1 was between 2B and 3B. While the ball was dead, R1 touched 3B - their next base, based on their position at the time the ball went out of play. Touching an advance base during a dead ball situation removes a runner's ability to return and re-touch any earlier missed bases.

Reference: 5.06(b)(4)(I)Comment; MiLB Umpire Manual 5.24 "Award Made From Original Base After Catch," Play 2

C. *No runners on, 2-2 count, 2 out. The batter half-swings on an obvious ball in the dirt. The plate umpire rules 'swing.' The catcher has blocked the ball and it is lying on the ground in the vicinity of home plate. 1) What signal(s) should the plate umpire use throughout the course of the play? 2) The batter does not run, immediately turning to request that the plate umpire appeal the half-swing to the base umpire. Should the plate umpire appeal to the base umpire? 3) As the batter argues with the plate umpire, the catcher runs off the field, taking the ball into the dugout without tagging the batter. Seeing this, the offensive manager sprints out of the dugout and pushes the batter, who is still wanting the plate umpire to appeal the swing, away from the plate*

umpire, to argue that the batter must be awarded 1B since the catcher ran out of play with the ball. What action(s) should the umpire take?

- 1) The plate umpire shall first point at the batter with their slot arm (left for right-handed batters; vice-versa for left-handed batters) and declare, "Yes, he went," with a level of intensity necessary to match the intensity of the moment and closeness of the play. They should then use a pointed-strike signal off to the side with their right arm, holding it out to the side for a moment or two. The plate umpire must NOT signal the strike using a traditional 'hammer' out mechanic, as the batter is not yet out. Furthermore, there is no need to signal 'safe,' indicating the ball was not caught. It is never necessary to signal 'no-catch' on an uncaught third strike, as the 'safe' mechanic will cause too much confusion, particularly when there is most likely going to be a tag attempt very shortly after the ball hits the ground. If there is doubt as to whether or not the ball was caught or trapped on a close play, and the umpire intends to rule the third strike uncaught, the umpire should hold their swinging strike signal while verbally declaring the play is still alive.
- 2) The plate umpire shall not appeal the swing to the base umpire. Half-swings called 'strike' by the plate umpire are not eligible to be appealed to the base umpire.
- 3) When the batter elects to remain at the plate, disputing the call with the plate umpire, although they have not left the dirt circle surrounding home plate, they are forfeiting their opportunity to advance by arguing with the umpire. Therefore, they should be called out for abandoning their effort to run the bases prior to the offensive manager's arrival. Umpires must allow the runner, should they remain in the dirt circle, a reasonable amount of time to realize the ball was not caught before calling them out for abandoning their effort to run. Physical assistance from a coach or offensive teammate should only be called in situations where the assistance directly contributes to a runner advancing or returning to a base.

Reference: OBR 5.05(a)(2)Comment; MiLB Umpire Manual 5.9 "Abandoning Base Path After Third Strike Not Caught;" 9.10 "Dropped Third Strikes"

D. R2, 1 Out. The pitcher comes to a proper set position and holds the ball for a long period of time, while looking back at 2B. Without being granted time, the batter steps out of the batter's box 1) with one foot 2) with two feet. The pitcher then begins to deliver the pitch, but stops upon realizing the batter has left the batter's box. What action(s) should the umpire take?

- 1) No balk is charged to the pitcher.
- 2) No balk is charged to the pitcher. Even though the batter stepped out with both feet, OBR 504(b)(4)(A) applies ONLY to National Association (MiLB) games. Therefore, it is not possible to warn the batter or issue an automatic strike under this rule.

Reference: OBR 5.04(b)(2)Comment

E. R2, R3, 1 Out. R3 is running on the pitch as the batter squares to bunt; R2 is holding at 2B. The catcher jumps forward and in front of home plate to field the pitch, but the ball deflects off his glove and into the dugout. What action(s) should the umpires take?

As soon as the catcher steps on or in front of home plate without possession of the ball, time is called and the ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base and the stealing R3 is awarded home due to the catcher's interference. When catcher's interference occurs during an attempted steal of home, there is an additional penalty of a balk – therefore R2 is awarded 3B.

Reference: OBR 5.05(b)(3), 6.01(g); MiLB Umpire Manual 5.11 "Catcher's Interference"