



THE UMPIRE WEEKLY

Volume 2 / Issue 3

April 21, 2018

HIT-A-THON

Don't forget to save the date!

The 1st Annual Battle Ground Little League Hit-a-Thon is Saturday, May 19th right here at our fields.

It's going to be a fun family day at the ball park with games, food and fun!

Remember, this isn't something that you have to fund yourselves... Grandma Jean in Florida or Grandpa Joe in Arizona can sponsor your player online.

So this past week was a short week for baseball and softball. We had some good games on Monday and Tuesday, pictures on Wednesday and Thursday, and then more games on Saturday. Not much came up this week, but we do have a couple of topics to cover.

OBSTRUCTION

The first, which we probably see pretty often but is often not called, is obstruction. Last week we talked about interference, which we defined as "an act by a member of the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders, or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play." Obstruction is similar, but is a defensive infraction and is defined as "the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner."

There are two types of obstruction which are referred to as Obstruction A and Obstruction B. The A & B are derived from Rule 7.06(a) and 7.06(b) that govern obstruction. Obstruction A is when a play is being made on the runner that is obstructed and the result is an immediate dead ball. Obstruction B is when a play is not being made on the obstructed runner and the result is a delayed dead ball, meaning we allow the play to continue until it is complete and then, when no further play is possible, call time and apply the penalty.

In our scenario, which is what we see most often, the batter-runner rounded first base and collided with the first baseman. There was no play being made on the batter-runner and thus we had Obstruction B. We waited for all play to cease and then called the obstruction. The result of the play was the batter-runner was placed on second base.

Obstruction does not have to be intentional. The first baseman has a responsibility to not obstruct the runner. He or she is responsible for making sure he or she is not in the runner's way. Rule 7.06 Note 2 says, "If the defensive player blocks the base (plate) or base line clearly without possession of the ball, obstruction shall be called. The runner is safe and a delayed dead ball shall be called." You should notice that there is no allowance for partially blocking the base or base line. There is nothing that says the runner has to be allowed clear path to at least part of the base or base line... if the fielder, without possession of the ball, impedes the progress of the runner, it's obstruction.



CIRCLE VIOLATIONS

One of the differences between baseball and softball are the rules that govern the actions of base runners in relation to the location of the pitcher. In softball, when a runner is in violation of these rules, we commonly refer to it as a circle violation. This rule really has to do with a runner leaving the base early on a pitch or not returning to the base quickly enough when the pitcher has the ball in the pitcher's circle.

This situation is governed by Rule 7.08 – Rule 7.08(5) says, “Any runner is out when... “(a) Major/Junior/Senior League Divisions: the runner fails to keep contact with the base to which that runner is entitled until the ball has been released by the pitcher on the delivery. (b) Minor League/Tee Ball: the runner fails to keep in contact with the base which that runner is entitled until the ball has been batted or reaches the batter.”¹ Notice that there is a difference between Majors and Minors Softball. In Majors softball, the runner may leave the base when the ball has been released by the pitcher. In Minors softball, the runner must wait until that ball has reached the batter. This is slightly different in baseball, where the runner must wait until the pitch reaches the batter in both the Minors and Majors Divisions.

Note 2 under Rule 7.08 says, “...NOTE 2: If the pitcher has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, and is not making a play (a fake throw is considered a play), runners not in contact with their bases must immediately attempt to advance or return to base.”¹ Immediately is interpreted to mean within a three-second time frame. The interpretation of this is not that the runner is out just for being off the base when the pitcher has the ball back in the pitcher's circle; rather, it says that she must immediately attempt to advance or return. That is not to say that she has three seconds to get back to the base or three seconds to advance, but three seconds to make her decision.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

I want to take this time to say thank you to all of our league volunteers. Thank you for putting in endless hours of your own time and energy. If you are not volunteering, please make it a point to say thank you to those that are. Our team managers and coaches put in an incredible amount of time and effort. They sacrifice personal time and family time and they forego other leisure activities in order to teach, coach and mentor our kids.

A special thank you to those that also step in to umpire games. Without umpires, we don't have games. Often, it is the same managers and coaches that are filling that role as well. As some have already done, if you are able to fill in and take even one or two umpire shifts off the plate of a manager, you would be providing a great deal of help. So thank you to those how have contacted me and those that will.

Again, thank you for reading and for all of your support and as always...

PLAY BALL!

Contact Us

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www.bgll.org