

# HEY BLUE...

Babe Ruth League, Inc.



**Diamond Digs**

Excellence in Umpiring

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With the baseball season officially starting, many umpires are getting ready to call "balls and strikes".

When umpiring the game, you must envision yourself as knowing the interpretation of all of the Official Baseball Rules. Rules can be *studied*, *discussed* and *reviewed*, but *actual enforcement* on the field requires a special skill. Let's get you ready for the 2008 season with the following interpretations:

## ATTEMPTED PLAYS:

Runners on first and second, ground ball to the shortstop, who makes a swipe at the runner from second but misses, and then throws beyond first base into the stand. The swipe by the shortstop is an attempted play; thus the throw to first is not the first play by an infielder (even though it is the first throw), and the proper awarding of bases would be from the time of the throw.

Runner on first and ground ball to second baseman, who flips ball to short to get runner from first, but who is safe. Shortstop throws beyond first into the stands. The flip by the second baseman to the shortstop is an attempted play, even though unsuccessful. The throw to first is not the first play by an infielder and thus runner should be placed from the time of the throw. Runner who was on first would score and batter-runner would be placed at second.

Runners on first and third, runner on first stealing as ground ball is hit to shortstop. The shortstop feints a throw home but does not throw – instead throws to first and into the stand; during this the runner from first has rounded second base. The feint by the shortstop toward home is not considered a play or attempted play; thus his throw beyond first is the first play by an infielder and awards should be made from the time of the pitch.

## NULLIFYING APPEAL PLAYS:

The pitcher balks. The fact a balk constitutes a play nullifies the appeal.

The defensive team errs on its first appeal. Err is construed to mean the ball went into dead territory. This is considered an attempted play, and no other appeals can be made.

Remember, an appeal attempt is not considered a play or attempted play. Therefore, more than one appeal may be made. If, however, the ball was thrown out of play on an appeal, a second appeal would not be allowed. The error is considered a play.

## **AWARDING BASES:**

If a throw is a first play by the infielder, and the batter-runner has not reached first base when the play was made, award all runners from the time of pitch. If the throw was the first play by an infielder and all runners, including the batter-runner, have advanced a base when the throw was made, award all runners from time of throw. This means the batter-runner has actually touched first base prior to the infielder making the throw. If the throw was not the first play by an infielder or the throw was made by an outfielder, award all runners from the time of the throw by the fielder.

If a pitched ball deflects off the catcher and goes directly out of play, the award is one base from the time of the pitch.

If a thrown ball by the pitcher while in contact with the rubber deflects off a fielder and goes directly out of play, the award is one base from the time of the throw.

If a pitched ball goes through or by the catcher and remains on the playing field and is subsequently kicked or deflected out of play, the award is two bases from the time of the pitch.

If a ball thrown by the pitcher while in contact with the rubber goes through or by a fielder and remains on the playing field and is subsequently kicked or deflected out of play, the award is two bases from the time of the throw.

A fair fly ball is deflected in flight by a fielder and then goes out of the playing field in flight over fair territory. This is a home run.

If a fair fly ball is deflected in flight by a fielder and then goes out of play outside the foul lines, the award is two bases from the time of the pitch.

If a fair ball not in flight is deflected by a fielder and then goes out of play, the award is two bases from time of pitch.

## **OFFICIAL BASEBALL RULE 7.09 (h):**

This rule means that should the batter-runner deliberately interfere with a batted ball or fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball with the obvious intent to break up a double play, the batter-runner is declared out and the runner closest to home plate is out. As a result of the interference, the ball is dead and no bases may be run.

## **INTERFERENCE BY THE RUNNER:**

Should a base runner intentionally deflect the course of a foul ball in any manner, he shall be declared out, the ball be declared dead, and no runners may advance.

A runner cannot interfere with a fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball. The runner should be immediately called out for interference. In fact, if such action was with the obvious intent to break up a double play, the runner shall be declared out and the batter-runner also called out for the action of his teammate.

## **CALLING THE INFIELD FLY:**

On the infield fly, the umpire is to rule whether the ball could ordinarily have been handled by an infielder – not by some arbitrary limitation such as the grass or the base lines.

The umpire must rule also that the ball is an infield fly even if handled by an outfielder.

It becomes the umpire's judgment; the ball could have been easily handled by an infielder. The infield fly in no sense should be considered an appeal play.

The umpire's judgment must govern and the decision should be made immediately.

When an infield fly rule is called, runners may advance at their own risk.

If on an infield fly rule the infielder intentionally drops a fair ball, the ball remains in play despite the provisions of Rule 6.05(l).

The infield fly rule takes precedence.

Remember, the infield fly does not apply on a bunted ball.

When an infield fly has been declared, the batter is always out and the runners may advance without tagging up if the ball is not caught.

In summary, a good umpire must be ready and able to accept all assignments. There is no substitution for actual game experience, regardless of the level of competition. Remember, the game is important to the managers, coaches and players. If you feel any assignment is not important, do not accept the assignment.

Wear the proper uniform.

Hustle, which means be active and alert on the field. When I say hustle, this is what keeps the game moving.

Keep your eye on the ball. It is more important to know where a fly ball fell or a thrown ball finished up rather than whether or not a runner missed the base.

Do not call your plays too quickly or turn away too fast when a fielder is throwing to complete a double play.

Above all, do not engage in conversation with players, coaches and fans.

Always be an umpire's umpire!

