RuleGraphics™

Professional Baseball | First Edition

Dennis Goodman

Illustrated by Sean Perdue
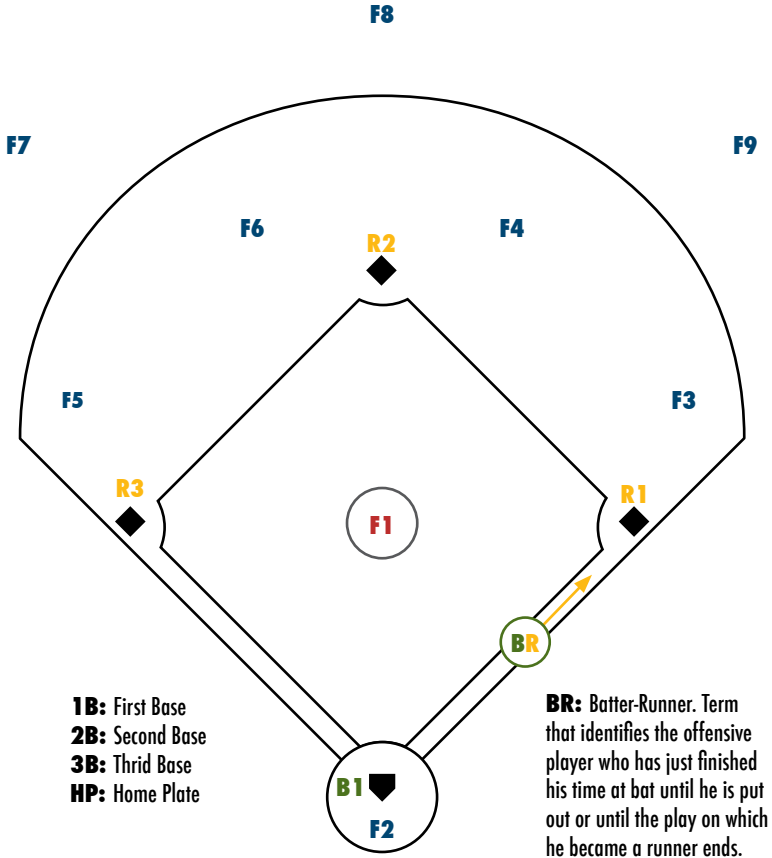
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Professional Baseball | **First Edition**

Dennis Goodman
Illustrated by Sean Perdue
and Designed by Alan Knight

F8

F7

F9

F6

R2

F4

F5

F3

R3

F1

R1

BR

1B: First Base
2B: Second Base
3B: Thrid Base
HP: Home Plate

BR: Batter-Runner. Term that identifies the offensive player who has just finished his time at bat until he is put out or until the play on which he became a runner ends.

B1

F2

To save space, shorthand is used to describe action in key points and sample plays. The above graphic serves as a key. Similar notation is used in other umpire manuals.

An example is as follows:

Sample Play Written in Shorthand:

R1, R2, 1 out. B1 hits a ground ball to F6 that will be an easy double play. R2 slows up and lets the ball hit him.

If judged to be willful and deliberate interference, the umpire will call R2 and the BR out and return R1 to 1B.

Sample Play Written Normally:

Runners on first and second with one out. The batter hits a ground ball to the shortstop that will be an easy double play. The runner from second slows up and lets the ball hit him.

If judged to be willful and deliberate interference, the umpire will call the runner from second and the batter-runner out and return the runner from first to first base.

Contents

◆ General   ◆ Pitcher   ◆ Defense   ◆ Batter   ◆ Runner

Introduction

Hall of Fame manager Leo Durocher once famously said "Baseball is like church. Many attend, few understand". He probably wasn't discussing the rules of the game, but the adage certainly applies to them.

Baseball has hundreds of rule myths and misunderstandings. The number is surprisingly large in light of baseball's revered status as the national pastime.

Fans in any ballpark can be heard spouting "wisdom" passed down through the ages:

- Hands are part of the bat
- That runner touched first base and turned left, so he is out if tagged
- The ball bounced before it hit the batter so he won't be awarded first base
- Batter hit the ball off home plate so it is a foul ball
- Coach high-fived the player so the player is out

None of these are true. So why are these myths so hard to kill?

The answer is the rulebook itself. It is a dense, word heavy slog of a read – a necessity due to the unique nuances of the game. Although it's organized as well as it can be, looking up a specific rule often leads to frustration.

Definitions, situations, penalties and awards for the same play often appear in different sections of the book. Knowing where to look and how to cross reference each section takes time and practice.

Data analysis experts faced a similar challenge: organizing large amounts of complex and confusing data into one coherent story. To combat this problem, they developed a new tool – the infographic – which takes the most important insights and presents them in a simple, visually appealing way.

Infographics and data visualization fundamentally changed the way people digest information. If these infographics can solve the problem in data, why can't they be used for baseball rules?

Ultimately, that's the question that inspired this book. Each RuleGraphic contains the verbatim definition of the rule, key points, sample plays

and – where appropriate – a sample picture. The book is organized by topic and the topics are organized by parts of the game.

Situations are easy to find and all the information needed for basic understanding is located in the graphic. Users know exactly where to look in the rule book to gain deeper knowledge.

This book is not a rulebook substitute; it's a quick, user-friendly reference that makes learning the rules easier. For everyone from aspiring umpires to casual fans, the graphics quickly enable a solid knowledge base.

Reading this won't completely prepare fans to be umpires, but it will make them more informed than the vast majority of other fans. That alone makes the game more fun to watch.

Notes

The book is a primer and reference for Major League Baseball Rules (aka Official Baseball Rules or OBR).

It is not designed to be a substitute for the actual rulebook. The rules are freely available online and used with permission of the Office of the Commissioner of Major League Baseball. The author is not affiliated with Major League Baseball or its umpires.

Many amateur organizations use the OBR as their base rule set. Those organizations also make modifications to the rules when applicable. Always check the specific organization rulebook for final rulings and interpretations.

Local leagues and tournaments will also modify rules as they see fit. In general, when different, local rulings will supersede the interpretations discussed in this book. Check your local listings.

As in the OBR, any reference in this book to "he," "him" or "his" shall be deemed to be a reference to "she," "her" or "hers," as the case may be, when the person is a female.

The 2014 OBR were used while writing this book. All efforts have been made to stay up to date with rule changes. Any updates or modifications can be found at **www.betterrulebook.com**. If you spot something that is off, please email **dennis@betterrulebook.com**.

General
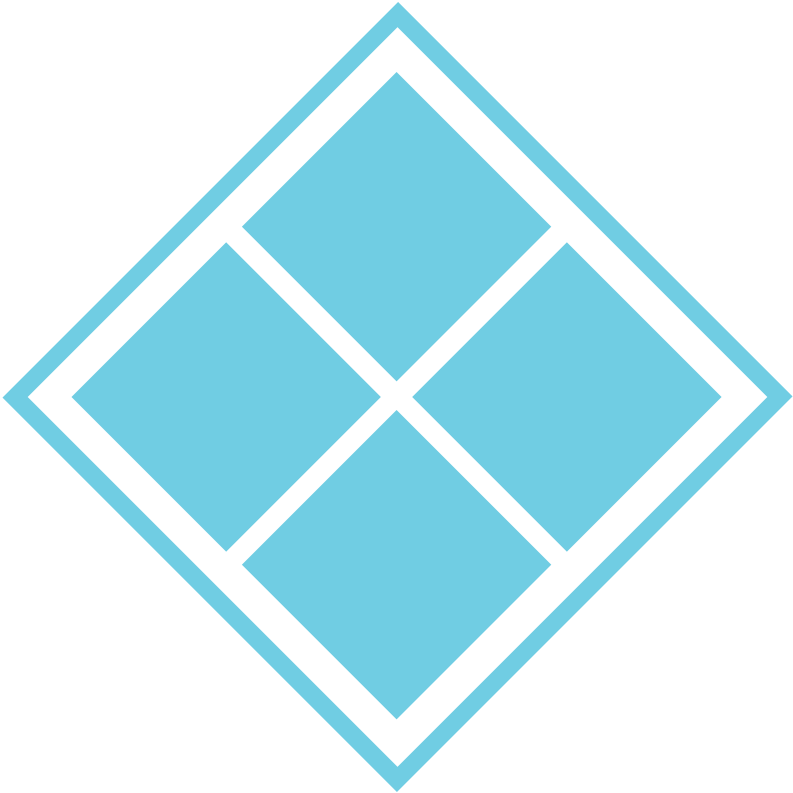
Rule 4.09:
Scoring a Run

(a) One run shall be scored each time a runner legally advances to and touches first, second, third and home base before three men are put out to end the inning.

EXCEPTION: A run is not scored if the runner advances to home base during a play in which the third out is made.

(1) by the batter-runner before he touches first base;

(2) by any runner being forced out; or

(3) by a preceding runner who is declared out because he failed to touch one of the bases.

(b) When the winning run is scored in the last half-inning of a regulation game, or in the last half of an extra inning, as the result of a base on balls, hit batter or any other play with the bases full which forces the runner on third to advance, the umpire shall not declare the game ended until the runner forced to advance from third has touched home base and the batter-runner has touched first base.

Key Points:

* To score, any runner has to touch HP before the third out is recorded in the inning.

* Even when the run would end the game, runners have a responsibility to touch all their bases. (If the run scores because of an award, only the BR and R3 need advance to the next base.) Rule 7.08(a)(2)(See Page #49) covers abandoning efforts to advance.

* If an appeal (See Page #34) is upheld that causes a runner who is forced or the BR before first to be out, all runs that scored on the play before the appeal do not count.

* If an appeal (See Page #34) is upheld, then any runners behind the runner who is the third out cannot score.

* Once a runner legally scores, he cannot "undo" his run by retouching the plate and retreating toward third.

Sample Plays:

* R1, R3, 1 out. Fly ball hit to F9. R3 tags and heads home, but R1 thinks there are two outs and rounds 2B. After R3 scores, the ball is thrown to 1B to retire R1 for the third out.
  The run counts. R1's third out is not the result of a force out and R3 scored before the out occurred.

* R3, 2 outs. B1 hits a double but misses 1B. R3 easily scores. The defense successfully appeals the BR's miss.
  The BR's out was the third out and it happened before he (legally) touched 1B. The run will not count.

* Bases loaded, 2 outs, Bottom of the 9th inning. B1 hits a single. R1 seeing the hit mobs the batter but never touches 2B. The defense gets the ball and touches 2B.
  Runner at 2B is the third out on a force out. No runs are allowed to score.
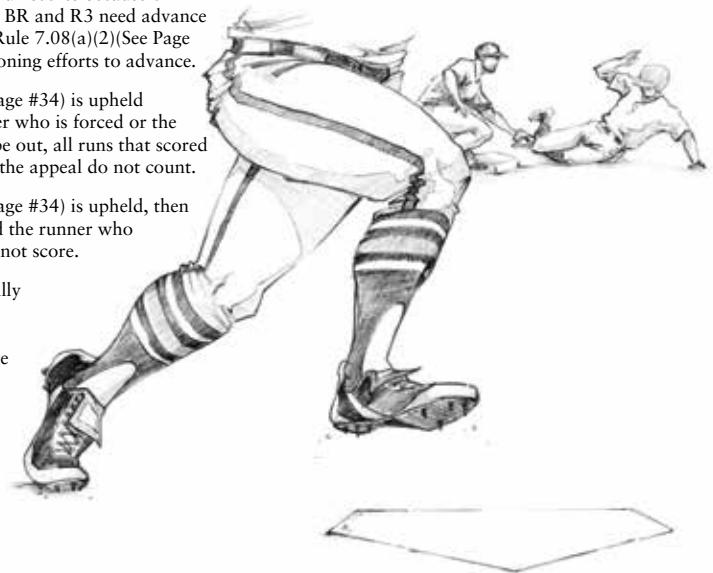
Rules 7.02, 7.05(i) Comment, and 7.10(b):
Advancing and Touching Bases

7.02

In advancing, a runner shall touch first, second, third and home base in order. If forced to return, he shall retouch all bases in reverse order, unless the ball is dead under any provision of Rule 5.09. In such cases, the runner may go directly to his original base.

7.05(i) Comment

The fact a runner is awarded a base or bases without liability to be put out does not relieve him of the responsibility to touch the base he is awarded and all intervening bases. For example: batter hits a ground ball which an infielder throws into the stands but the batter runner missed first base. He may be called out on appeal for missing first base after the ball is put in play even though he was "awarded" second base.

If a runner is forced to return to a base after a catch, he must retouch his original base even though, because of some ground rule or other rule, he is awarded additional bases. He may retouch while the ball is dead and the award is then made from his original base.

7.10

Any runner shall be called out, on appeal, when –

> (b) With the ball in play, while advancing or returning to a base, he fails to touch each base in order before he, or a missed base, is tagged.
>
> *APPROVED RULING: (1) No runner may return to touch a missed base after a following runner has scored. (2) When the ball is dead, no runner may return to touch a missed base or one he has left after he has advanced to and touched a base beyond the missed base.*

Sample Plays:

- R1. B1 hits a ball to deep left field. F7 catches the ball as R1 is on the 3B side of 2B. In returning to 1B, R1 does not retouch 2B.
  R1 would be out on appeal.

- R1. B1 hits a ball to deep left field. F7 catches the ball as R1 is on the 3B side of 2B. In returning to 1B, R1 does not retouch 2B. F7's throw to first goes out of play and R1 is awarded 3B. R1 retouches 1B, touches 2B and proceeds to 3B.
  R1 has corrected his miss of 2B and will not be called out on appeal. This is known as the "last time by" principle.

- B1 hits a homerun but misses 1B. Before he reaches 2B, the coach tells him of his mistake. He turns around and touches 1B.
  This is legal as long as he has not advanced to and touched the base beyond a missed base during the dead ball.

- Bases loaded. B1 hits a ball into the right field gap. R3 misses HP. R2 comes in behind him and touches HP. R3 now goes back and touches the base.
  R3 would be out on appeal. A runner cannot legally return to touch a base after a following runner scores.
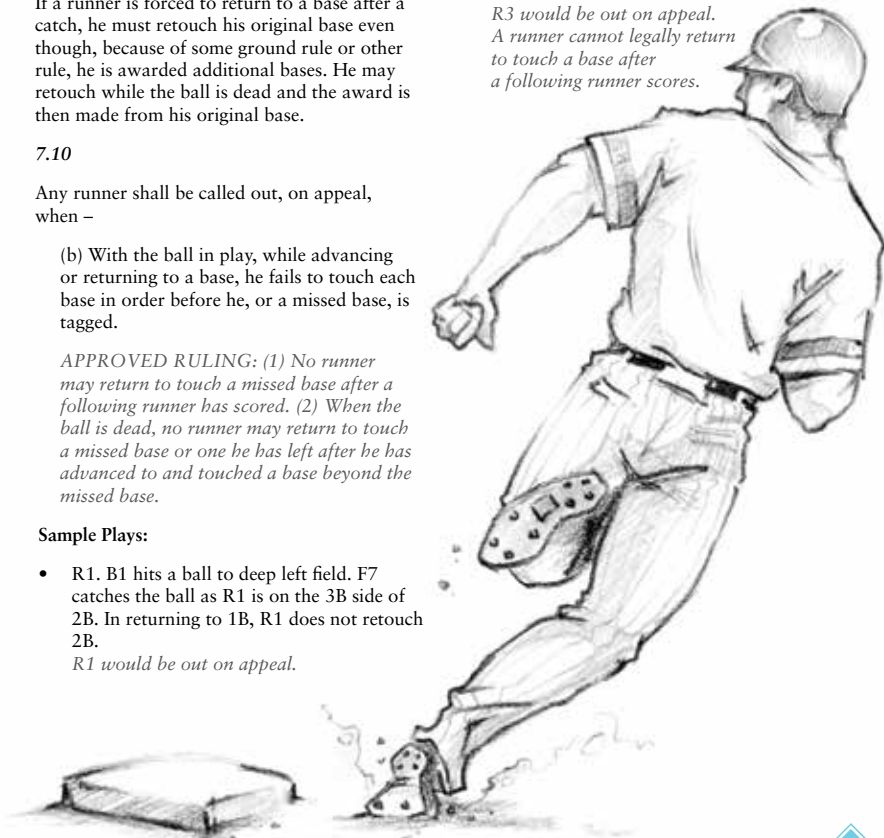
Rule 2.00 FOUL TIP:
Foul Tip

A FOUL TIP is a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught. It is not a foul tip unless caught and any foul tip that is caught is a strike, and the ball is in play. It is not a catch if it is a rebound, unless the ball has first touched the catcher's glove or hand.

Key Points:

- A batted ball that does meet the criteria of a foul tip and lands foul becomes a foul ball.

- A catcher is the only player who can catch a foul tip.

- A pitch that bounces and is then hit can be caught for a foul tip.

- A batted ball which has any discernible arc to it and is caught is a foul fly and an out – whether or not the ball goes above the batter's head (or any other arbitrary measuring point).

Sample Plays:

- With an 0-2 count, B1 hits a ball that first bounces off F2's chest protector and into his glove.
  This is a foul ball. The ball must hit F2's glove or hand first to be a foul tip.

- With an 0-2 count, B1 hits a ball off F2's glove. The ball pops into the air and is secured by F2.
  This is a foul tip. B1 has struck out.

- R1 is stealing on a ball that B1 foul tips into F2's glove. Hearing the contact, R1 heads back to 1B. F2 throws to F3 who tags R1 before R1 reaches 1B.
  R1 is out. The ball remains alive on a foul tip.
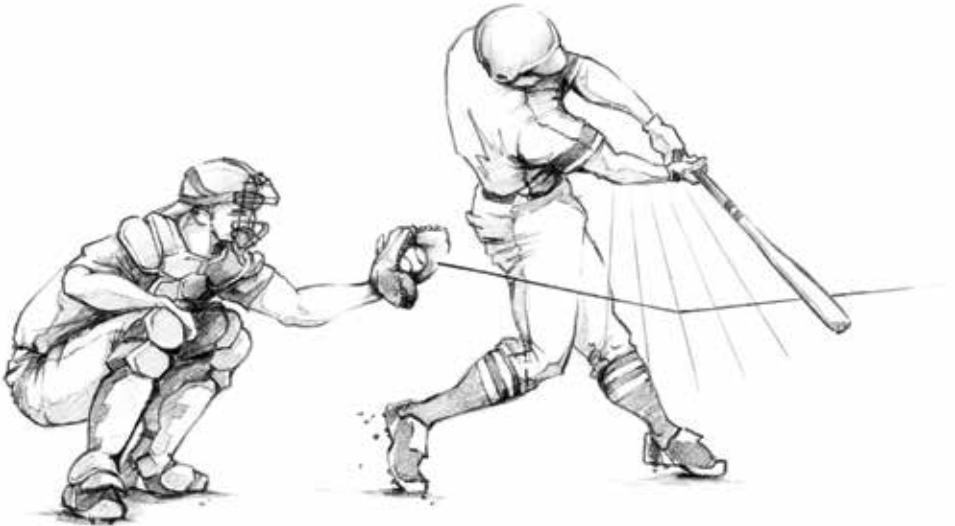
Rules 1.11 and 8.02(b):
Uniforms

Below are listed some of the specifications and provisions as it pertains to uniforms –

* Uniforms for each team should be the same for each player

* Minimal six inch high numbers on the back

* Solid undershirts should be the same color and be free of letters and insignias for the pitcher

* Sleeves must not be frayed. Sleeves for different players don't have to the same length but should be approximately the same length for each individual player

* No tape on the jersey

* No golf or track spikes

* No shiny buttons

* No advertisements on the jersey

* Nothing that looks like a baseball can be on the jersey

* Jewelry can be worn if not "distracting"

8.02

The pitcher shall not –

(b) Have on his person, or in his possession, any foreign substance. For such infraction of this section (b) the penalty shall be immediate ejection from the game. In addition, the pitcher shall be suspended automatically. In National Association Leagues, the automatic suspension shall be for 10 games.

Rule 8.02(b) Comment: The pitcher may not attach anything to either hand, any finger or either wrist (e.g., Band-Aid, tape, Super Glue, bracelet, etc.). The umpire shall determine if such attachment is indeed a foreign substance for the purpose of Rule 8.02(b), but in no case may the pitcher be allowed to pitch with such attachment to his hand, finger or wrist.

Key Points:

* Umpire will require the player to wear the proper uniform. Failure to do so could result in ejection.

* No player whose uniform does not conform shall be permitted to participate.