

Baseball and Softball Myths

1. The hands are considered a part of the bat.

The hands are and have always been a part of a person's body. If a pitch hits the batter's hands the ball is dead... **period**... end of discussion. If the pitch is swung at and it hits the hands (or any part of the body), a strike is called (NOT a foul) and the ball is dead for striking the batter's person. If the batter was avoiding the pitch, the batter is awarded first base, as long as the batter was not struck while the ball was in the strike zone.
LL Playing Rules: 2.00 Definition of Terms: PERSON, TOUCH, STRIKE (e)

2. The home plate umpire can overrule any other umpire at anytime.

No umpire may overrule another umpire's call! **EVER!!** Once an umpire has made a call, he may ask another umpire for additional information, but it is always up to the umpire that made the original call to reverse his decision, if appropriate.
LL Playing Rules: 9.02 (c)

3. Tie always goes to the runner.

There are NO ties in baseball. The runner is either out or safe, this is a judgment call by the umpire.
LL Playing Rules: *There is no mention of a tie in the Little League Rules*

NOTE: A general rule of thumb here is to "watch" for the ball entering the glove and "listen" for the foot hitting the bag.

4. In baseball, if the batter does not remove the bat from over home plate on a bunt attempt, it's a strike

A strike is an attempt to hit the ball. Simply holding the bat over the plate is not an attempt. A bunt is a batted ball not swung at, but INTENTIONALLY met with the bat and tapped slowly. The key words are "intentionally met with the bat" If no attempt is made to make contact with a ball outside the strike zone while in the bunting stance, it should be called a ball. An effort must be made to intentionally meet the ball with the bat.
LL Playing Rules: 2.00 Definition of Terms: Bunt

NOTE: As of 2010 this is not the case in any level of Softball. In softball, if a batter who does not withdrawal the bat on a bunt attempt, it is a strike.

5. The batter/runner is "in jeopardy" to be put out if he or she turns *left* after overrunning first base.

The batter/runner may not be tagged out after overrunning or over-sliding first base if he or she returns **immediately** to the base. The direction of the turn is not important as long as there is **no intent** to advance.
LL Playing Rules: 7.08 (c) - EXCEPTION

6. The batter can never be called out for interference if he is in the batter's box.

The batter is not protected in any way by being in the batter's box. A batter may be called out for making any movement that hinders the catcher's play at home plate. This **does not** have to be intentional.
LL Playing Rules: 6.06 (c)

7. It is a strike anytime the barrel of the bat crosses the front of the home plate on a checked swing.

This is a judgment call by the umpire! How far the bat traveled or "breaking the wrists" are simply guides to use when making this judgment call. These are **not** rules.
LL Playing Rules: 2.00 Definition of Terms: STRIKE (a)

8. A batter who bats out of order is always the person declared out.

The important concept here is the PROPER batter. The PROPER batter is the one who may be called out, on appeal, for failing to bat in his or her proper order. When an appeal is made (before the next pitch to a batter of either team, or the next play OR attempted play), any advances of base runners because of the actions of the improper batter shall be nullified. Advances made by any runner due to mistakes by the defense (passed ball, wild pitch, balk, etc.) will be allowed.
LL Playing Rules: 6.07 (a, b)

9. The batter is out if he or she hits the ball with their foot touching home plate.

A batter is out if they hit the ball with one or both feet on the ground entirely outside the batter's box. It's possible the toe could be on the plate and the heel could be touching the line of the box, which means the foot is not entirely outside the box.

LL Playing Rules: 6.06 (a)

NOTE: If the ball is hit with a foot entirely outside the batter's box, whether fair OR foul, the batter is out.

10. The batter may not overrun first base when he or she gets a base-on-balls.

Nothing prohibits a batter/runner from overrunning first base on a base on balls, as long as they return immediately to the bag. Again, any "intent" to advance beyond first base would place the batter/runner in jeopardy.

LL Playing Rules: 7.08 (c and j)

11. A runner is out anytime he or she makes contact with a base coach.

The runner is out ONLY if the coach PHYSICALLY ASSISTS the runner, by touching or holding him or her in returning to or leaving the base.

LL Playing Rules: 7.09 (h)

NOTE: Hand slaps, back pats or simple touches are not physical assists.

12. The runner must always slide when the play is close.

There is **NO** "must slide" rule in Little League. The rule states a runner is out when they do not slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag. The key here is "fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag." A fielder *without* the ball should never be blocking a base or home plate!

LL Playing Rules: 7.08 (a)(3)

13. The batter is not awarded first base if he or she gets hit by a pitch after it bounces.

A batter is awarded first base anytime he or she is hit by a pitched ball unless the pitch is swung at, the pitch is in the strike zone when it hits the batter or the batter makes no attempt to avoid the pitch. What happens to the pitch on the way to the plate plays no role in the award.

LL Playing Rules: 6.08 (b)

NOTE: Young players have a tendency to "freeze" when they see a ball heading their way. You should not interpret this as not making an attempt to avoid.

14. The runner is safe if they are hit by a batted ball while standing on a base.

All three bases are in *fair* territory. A runner is out when hit by a fair batted ball before the ball has passed a fielder other than the pitcher. There is nothing special about any base that will protect a runner in this situation. **Exception:** A runner is not out if standing on a base and he or she is touched by an infield-fly.

LL Playing Rules: 7.08 (f)

15. A runner is safe if the fielder tags the base with his or her glove while holding the ball in their bare hand.

A runner is out anytime a fielder "tags" the runner or the base with secure possession of the ball in a hand or glove. This is no different than tagging the base with the foot while the ball is in the glove.

LL Playing Rules: 2.00 TAG; 7.08 (e)

16. The batter-runner is always out if he runs outside the three-foot running lane after a bunted ball.

The batter/runner is out when running the last half of the distance between home plate and first base, while the ball is being fielded if he or she is outside the three-foot lane and interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base. The key point here is that the batter/runner **must** interfere with the fielder taking the throw. If there is no throw, there cannot be a violation. If the throw is not a quality throw or is not catchable; there is no violation.

LL Playing Rules: 6.05 (j)

NOTE: It is possible the batter/runner could be called for interference even while in the three-foot lane, if he or she does something that in the umpire's judgment prevents a fielder from making a play.

17. The batter is out anytime a batted or bunted ball hits the bat a second time.

A batter is out when "after hitting or bunting a fair ball, the bat hits the ball a second time in fair territory." The key point in this rule is whether the bat hits the ball or the ball hits the bat. The batter is out in the first instance. If a batter drops the bat and backspin, or some other action, causes the ball to hit the bat a second time the ball is alive and in play.

LL Playing Rules: 6.05 (g)

18. The batter may not switch the side of the plate he or she is hitting from after two strikes.

The batter is out when "stepping from one batter's box to the other while the pitcher is in position ready to pitch;" otherwise he or she is allowed to switch sides whenever they wish.

LL Playing Rules: 6.06 (b)

19. A batted ball that hits home plate is a foul ball.

Home plate, as well as all of the bases, is all completely in fair territory, however it is treated a little differently than the other three bases when it comes to fair and foul. A batted ball hitting home plate can be foul or fair depending on the path of the ball after it hits home plate. In the event a batted ball should "settle" with any part of the ball touching home plate it is a *fair ball*.

LL Playing Rules: 1.05; 2.00 - FAIR BALL

*NOTE: Anytime a batted ball hits any of the other three bases it is **always** a fair ball!*

20. The ball is always dead on a 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." The ball must be caught to be a foul tip and any foul tip that is caught is a strike and the ball is in play.

LL Playing Rules: 2.00 - FOUL TIP

21. The batter is out if he starts for the dugout before heading to first base after a dropped third strike. (Major League and above)

The batter becomes a runner when a third strike is not caught when first base is unoccupied with less than 2 outs, or with first base occupied if there are 2 outs. The batter does not forfeit his/her opportunity to advance to first base until he/she enters the dugout or other dead ball territory.

LL Playing Rules: 2.00 - CATCH; 6.09 (b)

NOTE: The definition of a catch requires it be caught "in flight." Any pitch that bounces before reaching home plate is not considered to have been caught in this situation and a batter may advance if permitted anytime this happens on a third strike.

22. All runners get two bases from the time of the throw when a thrown ball goes out-of-play.

When a wild throw is the first play by an infielder, the awarding of bases, shall be governed by the position of the runners at the time the ball was pitched; in all other cases (the second throw by an infielder are a throw or relay from the outfield) the award shall be governed by the position of the runners at the time the wild throw was made.

LL Playing Rules: 7.05 (g)

NOTE: If all runners, including the batter-runner have advanced at least one base when an infielder makes a wild throw on the first play after the pitch, the award shall be governed by the position of the runners when the wild throw was made.

23. A runner is out anytime he or she runs the bases in reverse order.

A runner is out for running the bases in reverse order for the purpose of confusing the defense or making a travesty of the game. A runner may indeed run the bases in reverse order to correct a base running mistake, (a missed base, returning on a tag or in a rundown, etc.). If necessary, the runner **MUST** retrace his steps and retouch each base in reverse order.

LL Playing Rules: 7.08 (j); 7.10 (b)

NOTE: Should the batter/runner get in a rundown between first base and home plate and return and touch home plate, he or she is OUT.

24. A runner may never steal on a foul tip.

As previously mentioned, a Foul Tip is a "batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught." The ball must be caught to be a foul tip and any foul tip that is caught is a strike and the ball is in play. Nothing prevents the runner from attempting to steal on a foul tip.

LL Playing Rules: 2.00 - FOUL TIP

25. An appeal on a runner failing to touch a base can never be a force out.

A runner is out when he or she fails to touch the next base after that runner has been forced to advance by reason of the batter becoming a runner. An appeal that a runner missed second on a single by the batter would indeed be a force play.

LL Playing Rules: 7.08 (e)

NOTE: If the previous situation were to happen with two outs, the appeal would be the third out, and since it was a force play and no runs would be allowed to score.

26. A runner is out anytime he or she runs more than three feet out of the baseline.

A runner is only out when: "running more than three feet away from his/her baseline **to avoid** being tagged." A runner is out for interference who does not avoid a fielder attempting to field a **batted** ball.

LL Playing Rules: 7.08 (a)(1); 7.09(l)

27. No runners may advance when an infield fly is called.

The ball is alive and runners may advance at the risk of being caught or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on any other fly ball. The only difference between an Infield Fly and another fly ball is that the runners are never forced to advance because the batter is out whether the ball is caught or not.

LL Playing Rules: 2.00 - INFIELD FLY

28. A batter may not hit a pitch that bounces before it reaches home plate.

A pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. A batter may always attempt to hit any pitch that is delivered by the pitcher.

LL Playing Rules: 2.00 - PITCH

29. If the pitcher starts his windup and then stops it is always considered a ball on the batter.

Almost all instances (see NOTE, below) of an illegal pitch (Penalty: a ball on the 60 foot field, a balk for Junior League and above) can only occur with a man on base. As above, a pitch is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher. If the ball is not delivered, it is not a pitch and hence can't be called a "Ball." If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand and crosses the foul line it is considered a pitch, and called a "Ball," unless it passes through the strike zone. If no runners are on base and a dropped ball do not cross the foul line it is "No pitch."

LL Playing Rules: 2.00 - PITCH; 8.05 (a - m)

NOTE: A "Quick Pitch" (any pitch delivered before the batter is reasonably set) or if a pitcher makes any motion naturally associated with the pitch while not touching the pitcher's plate should ALWAYS be ruled an illegal pitch, in Junior League and above; a ball with no runners on base or a balk if runners are on base.

30. The pitcher must always come to a set position before attempting to make a pick-off throw.

In Junior League and above, it is an illegal pitch (balk) if the pitcher delivers the pitch from Set Position without coming to a stop. There is nothing that requires a pitcher to stop before attempting a pick-off throw.

LL Playing Rules: 8.05 (m)

31. The batter/runner is out if he high-fives other players before crossing the plate after hitting a homerun over the fence.

"Each runner including the batter-runner may, without liability to be put out, advance to home base...if a fair ball goes out of the playing field in flight." *Keep in mind that many Little Leaguers cannot act like "They've done it before!"*

LL Playing Rules: 7.05 (a)

32. If the third out is called on a runner failing to tag-up on a fly out, no previous runner may score.

Once a fly ball is caught, the batter is out, thus removing any force play on the runners. This now becomes a "timing play." If a runner on third tags and scores BEFORE a trailing runner is called out on appeal for failing to tag up, the run will count.

LL Playing Rules: 4.09 (a) - APPROVED RULING

33. The pitcher must always step off the rubber before attempting a pick-off throw.

When the pitcher is properly touching the pitching plate in either the Windup or Set position, he or she has several options, one of which is "step and throw to a base in an attempt to pick off a runner."

LL Playing Rules: 7.08 (a and c)

NOTE: A pitcher who does step off the rubber properly as detailed in the rest of Rule 7.08 is now considered a fielder, and the penalties for balls thrown into dead ball territory are different than if the pitcher throws the ball into dead ball territory while on the rubber.

34. "Time" is immediately called when a pitcher commits a balk.

Almost all instances of a balk are a delayed dead ball. When a pitcher commits a balk, simply call "Balk" and let the play or pitch proceed. If there is a pitch following a balk and the batter reaches first base AND ALL runners advance at least one base, the play will proceed without reference to the balk. If the batter does not swing at the pitch it will be NEITHER a ball nor a strike UNLESS it is ball four awarding the batter first base and forcing ALL other runners to advance. If a pitcher balks and throws wild to a base, the runner or runners may advance at their own risk, however if put out at a base beyond which they are entitled, the out stands.

LL Playing Rules: 8.05 (a - m)

35. The ball must always be returned to the pitcher before any appeal can be made.

The most important requirement for an appeal is that the ball be "Live." If so, there is no need for the ball to first go to the pitcher. If an appeal is made any time after "Time" has been called, then the ball or a new ball must be returned to the pitcher and the umpire must call "Play" before any appeal could be attempted.

LL Playing Rules: 7.10 (d)

36. If a player touches a ball while his feet are in fair territory, it is always a fair ball.

A ball is always judged fair or foul based on the position of the ball and not the fielder at the time the ball is touched. The position of the player's feet or any other part of the body has no bearing on the ruling of fair or foul.

LL Playing Rules: 2.00 - FAIR (NOTE)

37. If a fielder catches a fly ball in the field of play and then falls over the fence in fair territory, it is a homerun.

As long as the fielder maintains control of the ball in the glove or hand and "voluntarily" releases the ball this is a legal catch. If the fielder remains on his feet in dead ball territory after the catch, the ball is alive, runners may advance and the fielder may make a play.

LL Playing Rules: 2.00 - CATCH; 7.04 (c)

NOTE: If a fielder falls (i.e. no longer on their feet) into dead ball territory after making a catch with less than two outs all runners are entitled to advance one base.

38. If a fielder takes two steps after catching a fly ball it is considered a catch.

The two important factors in determining a catch are first, the fielder must have SECURE possession of the ball in flight in either the hand or glove and second the release of the ball must be voluntary and intentional. Regardless of how many steps or how much time elapses, a fielder who loses control of a ball after falling, diving, making contact with a fence or another player will not be judged to have made a catch.

LL Playing Rules: 2.00 - CATCH

39. The ball is dead anytime an umpire is hit by the ball.

The ball is only dead if an umpire is hit by a batted ball before it passes a fielder, other than the pitcher (this should NEVER happen at the Little League level or below.) If a batted ball hits an umpire after passing a fielder, or a thrown ball hits the umpire, the ball is "Live" and in play.

LL Playing Rules: 5.09 (f)

NOTE: The ball also remains live when an umpire interferes with the catcher's throw attempting to retire a batter. If the catcher is able to complete the throw and retire the runner, the out stands, otherwise all runners return to the base previously occupied