

Collisions at Home Plate and Sliding to Bases on Double Play Attempts

The rule has evolved since these four videos below, but it they still have some valid points worth hearing and seeing. The four links below should not be considered rule interpretations but rather used for guidance and philosophy.

Click the links below:

[Joe Torre Discusses the intent of the Home Plate Collision Rule](#)

[Some recommendations on catcher position](#)

(Pay attention to the catcher mechanics here, not the piece about runs counting or not counting)

[Mike Scioscia offers some tips for catchers](#)

[Recommendations on sliding into home plate](#)

New: 6.01i, Old: 7.13

(7.13) Collisions at Home Plate

(1) A runner attempting to score may not deviate from his direct pathway to the plate in order to initiate contact with the catcher (or other player covering home plate), or otherwise initiate an avoidable collision. If, in the judgment of the umpire, a runner attempting to score initiates contact with the catcher (or other player covering home plate) in such a manner, the umpire shall declare the runner out (regardless of whether the player covering home plate maintains possession of the ball). In such circumstances, the umpire shall call the ball dead, and all other base runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the collision. If the runner slides into the plate in an appropriate manner, he shall not be adjudged to have violated Rule 6.01(i) (Rule 7.13).

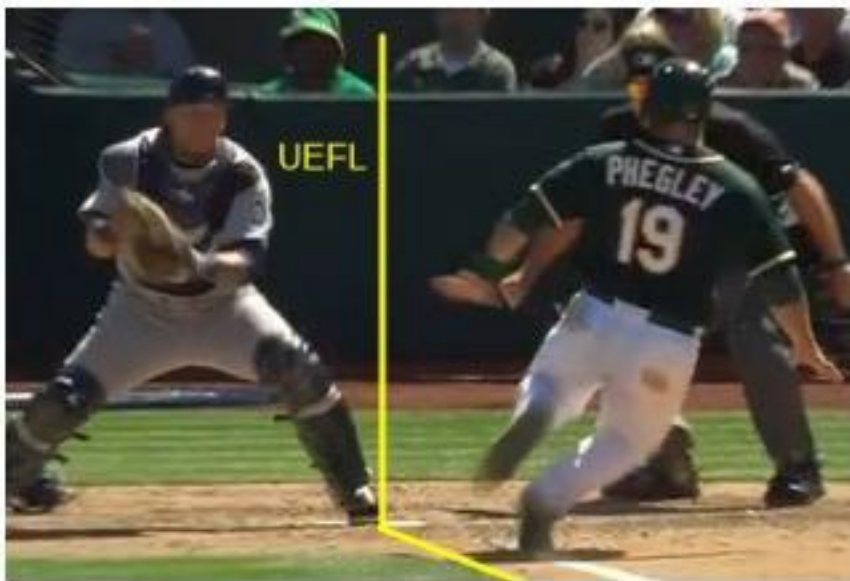
Rule 6.01(i)(1) Comment (Rule 7.13(1) Comment): The failure by the runner to make an effort to touch the plate, the runner's lowering of the shoulder, or the runner's pushing through with his hands, elbows or arms, would support a determination that the runner deviated from the pathway in order to initiate contact with the catcher in violation of Rule 6.01(i) (Rule 7.13), or otherwise initiated a collision that could have been avoided. A slide shall be deemed appropriate, in the case of a feet first slide, if the runner's buttocks and legs should hit the ground before contact with the catcher. In the case of a head first slide, a runner shall be deemed to have slid appropriately if his body should hit the ground before contact with the catcher. If a catcher blocks the pathway of the runner, the umpire shall not find that the runner initiated an avoidable collision in violation of this Rule 6.01(i)(1) (Rule 7.13(1)).

(2) Unless the catcher is in possession of the ball, the catcher cannot block the pathway of the runner as he is attempting to score. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the catcher without possession of the ball blocks the pathway of the runner, the umpire shall call or signal the runner safe. Notwithstanding the above, Rule 6.01(i) to 6.01(j) it shall not be considered a violation of this Rule 6.01(i)(2) (Rule 7.13(2)) if the catcher blocks the pathway of the runner in a legitimate attempt to field the throw (e.g., in reaction to the direction, trajectory or the hop of the incoming throw, or in reaction to a throw that originates from a pitcher or drawn-in infielder). In addition, a catcher without possession of the ball shall not be adjudged to violate this Rule 6.01(i)(2) (Rule 7.13(2)) if the runner could have avoided the collision with the catcher (or other player covering home plate) by sliding.

Rule 6.01(i)(2) Comment (Rule 7.13(2) Comment): A catcher shall not be deemed to have violated Rule 6.01(i)(2) (Rule 7.13(2)) unless he has both blocked the plate without possession the ball (or when not in a legitimate attempt to field the throw), and also hindered or impeded the progress of the runner attempting to score. A catcher shall not be deemed to have hindered or impeded the progress of the runner if, in the judgment of the umpire, the runner would have been called out notwithstanding the catcher having blocked the plate. In addition, a catcher should use best efforts to avoid unnecessary and forcible contact while tagging a runner attempting to slide. Catchers who routinely make unnecessary and forcible contact with a runner attempting to slide (e.g., by initiating contact using a knee, shin guard, elbow or forearm) may be subject to discipline by the League President.

This Rule 6.01(i)(2) (Rule 7.13(2)) shall not apply to force plays at home plate.

In this photo, if the catcher has the ball, he may block the entire plate. If he is in the act of receiving the baseball, he must allow access to the plate, but not necessarily access that is most desirable to the offense until he has possession of the baseball, unless the trajectory of the throw, and his legitimate act of fielding the throw, takes him into the pathway of the runner and necessitates that he occupy that space which he moves into for the explicit purpose of fielding the throw. *(for reference, see the 35 & 42-second mark of the compilation video.)*



To summarize, a runner must attempt to touch home plate rather than initiate contact with the defensive player while the defensive player must concede a path to home plate unless he is in possession of the baseball. Nowhere in the rule does interference and/or obstruction come into play as the umpire shall simply signal the runner safe if the catcher violates while penalties *similar* to interference (declared out, other runners back to bases) but not explicitly termed interference will result if the runner violates.

Consider the following case plays offered by the Wendelstedt Umpire School:

Play 1

R3, one out, 1-1 count. The batter hits a sharp ground ball to the shortstop who throws to the plate. The catcher receives the ball well before R3 reaches the plate. R3 (a) slides into the plate and the ball is knocked loose from the catcher. (b) lowers his shoulder into the catcher and knocks the ball to the ground. (c) lowers his shoulder into the catcher but the catcher still holds onto the ball.

Ruling: In (a), there is no violation and R3's run scores. In (b) and (c), the umpire should call time immediately and call out R3.

Play 2

R3, one out, 2-1 count. The batter hits a sharp ground ball to the shortstop who throws to the plate. The catcher receives the ball before R3 reaches the plate area. R3 makes a hard slide as the catcher attempts to make a tag, and the ball falls to the ground. When R3 slides, he (a) initially makes contact with the ground before sliding into the catcher. (b) first contacts the catcher's legs in flight before touching the ground.

Ruling: In (a) there is no violation and R3 is safe. In (b), the umpire should call time immediately and call out R3.

Play 3

R2, one out, no count. The batter knocks a base hit to centerfield. R2 rounds third and heads to the plate as the throw comes into the infield. The catcher is standing with his foot at the front of the plate, but leaves an area where R2 can reach. He receives the throw as R2 slides and tags him before reaching the plate.

Ruling: This is a legal play and R2 is out.

Play 4

R2, two outs, no count. The batter knocks a base hit to centerfield. R2 rounds third as heads home to the plate. The catcher drops his leg across the plate as the throw has almost reached him. Just before the catcher receives the throw, R2 slides (a) and makes contact with the catcher's leg before he is tagged out. (b) but does not make contact with the catcher's leg before he is tagged out.

Ruling: In (a) and (b), the umpire should immediately call R2 safe.

Play 5

R3, one out, no count. The batter hits a fly ball to right field. After the catch is made R3 tags up and attempts to advance to the plate. The throw pulls the catcher up the third base foul line where he and R3 collide (a) just before the ball reaches the catcher (b) immediately after the ball passes the catcher.

Ruling: In (a), there is no violation and the ball is alive and in play. In (b), the umpire should call and signal the obstruction and allow the play to continue. If R3 does not reach the base he would have reached had the obstruction not occurred, the umpire should award him to that base.

Play 6

Bases loaded, one out, no count. The batter hits a ball back to the pitcher, who throws it to the catcher covering the plate. As R3 approaches the plate area, the catcher's foot is blocking access to the runner as he takes the force play at the plate.

Ruling: There is no violation for blocking the plate while tagging it in order to complete a force play.

Play 7

R2, one out. The batter knocks a base hit to centerfield. The centerfielder comes up with a strong throw to the plate as R2 attempts to score. The catcher receives the throw while already blocking the home plate. R2, however, was only about half way down the line and is easily thrown out.

Ruling: There is no violation because the runner was not actually hindered in any way.

Please view the video below and compare it to the reference key below to see how the rule is to be applied at home plate.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3HFC9Mks-I>

Answer Key from UEFL - Yellow represents legal play / Red signifies runner's violation / Green = fielder violated

- 1 (0:10): R2 is **out**; no violation of Rule 7.13 as runner did not deviate from his direct pathway to plate.
- 2 (0:23): R3 is **out**; legal play; runner does not deviate and catcher has possession of the ball.
- 3 (0:26): R3 is **out**; potential violation of Rule 7.13 as runner had access to home plate.
- 4 (0:28): R3 is **out**; *angle prohibits discussion as to legality (did runner have access/catcher poss)?*
- 5 (0:30): R3 is **out**; legal play; F2 must occupy position in order to field throw, contact unavoidable.
- 6 (0:32): R3 is **safe**; F2 violated, blocking pathway without ball possession.
- 7 (0:35 & 0:42): R3 is **out**; legal play; F2 must occupy in order to field throw, contact unavoidable.
- 8 (0:38): R3 is **out**; illegal because R3 deviates from direct pathway in order to initiate contact with catcher.
- 9 (0:52): R2 is **out**; illegal because R3 deviates from direct pathway (see still frame at 0:35).
- 10 (0:59): R2 is **out**; potentially illegal due to R2's actions; F2 possessed ball, contact unavoidable.
- 11 (1:08): R3 is **out**; illegal because R3 makes no attempt to touch, as in Rule 7.13 comment.
- 12 (1:16): R2 is **out**; illegal because R2 deviated by pushing through with upper body; F2 in poss.
- 13 (1:29): R2 is **safe**; F2 violated by blocking pathway without possession of the baseball.
- 14 (1:40): R1 is **safe**; legal, contact incidental because F2 must occupy position to receive the throw.
- 15 (1:57): Same Play as 6 (0:32) ("Posey play") - Posey violated by not having possession of the ball.
- 16 (2:09): R3 is **safe**; catcher fails to provide runner pathway by blocking plate without the ball.
- 17 (2:16): R1 is **out**; illegal because runner pushes through with upper body; initiates contact; F2 poss.
- 18 (2:30): R2 is **safe**; catcher occupies base path after failing to field throw in violation of 7.13 comment.
- 19 (2:46): R1 is **safe**; contact incidental (runner attempting to score, fielder has possession of ball).
- 20 (2:52): R3 is **out**; illegal because runner pushes through with upper body to initiate contact.
- 21 (3:06): R2 is **out**; illegal, runner deviated from direct pathway to initiate contact with catcher.
- 22 (3:24): R3 is **out**; illegal, runner makes no effort to touch plate; deviates to initiate contact.
- 23 (3:35): R3 is **safe**; contact incidental as catcher must occupy position in order to field throw.
- 24 (3:48): R2 is **out**; contact incidental as catcher occupies pos to receive throw, runner attempts to score.
- 25 (4:02): R3 is **out**; illegal, runner pushes through with upper body to initiate contact on catcher in poss.
- 26 (4:11): R1 is **out**; contact incidental as catcher carried up the line to receive the throw from RF.

Sliding To Bases on Double Play Attempts

6.01(j) (7.14) **Sliding to Bases on Double Play Attempts** If a runner does not engage in a bona fide slide, and initiates (or attempts to make) contact with the fielder for the purpose of breaking up a double play, he should be called for interference under this Rule 6.01. A "bona fide slide" for purposes of Rule 6.01 occurs when the runner:

- (1) begins his slide (i.e., makes contact with the ground) before reaching the base;
- (2) is able and attempts to reach the base with his hand or foot;
- (3) is able and attempts to remain on the base (except home plate) after completion of the slide; and
- (4) slides within reach of the base without changing his pathway for the purpose of initiating contact with a fielder.

A runner who engages in a “bona fide slide” shall not be called for interference under this Rule 6.01, even in cases where the runner makes contact with the fielder as a consequence of a permissible slide. In addition, interference shall not be called where a runner’s contact with the fielder was caused by the fielder being positioned in (or moving into) the runner’s legal pathway to the base.

Notwithstanding the above, a slide shall not be a “bona fide slide” if a runner engages in a “roll block,” or intentionally initiates (or attempts to initiate) contact with the fielder by elevating and kicking his leg above the fielder’s knee or throwing his arm or his upper body.

If the umpire determines that the runner violated this Rule 6.01(j), the umpire shall declare both the runner and batter-runner out. Note, however, that if the runner has already been put out then the runner on whom the defense was attempting to make a play shall be declared out.

Consider the following plays:
Courtesy UEFL

Legal Plays

Play 1:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/3mxEf205z90?autoplay=1>

Legal Play. This is a bona fide slide.

- 1) Slide begins before the base.
- 2) The runner's foot will reach base.
- 3) The runner will remain on the base.
- 4) Runner does not change path.

Play 2:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/EHzyjS-xhHk?autoplay=1>

Legal Play. This is a proper slide.

- 1) Slide begins before second base.
- 2) Runner's foot & hands reach base.
- 3) Runner able to keep hand on base.
- 4) Runner does not change his path.

Play 3:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/nIPAhWETC1k?autoplay=1>

Legal Play. This is a bona fide slide.

- 1) Slide begins prior to the base.
- 2) Runner's hands reach the base.

- 3) Runner stays on the base.
- 4) Runner slides within reach on path.

Illegal Plays

Play 1

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/mhwFWibkRc0?autoplay=1>

Illegal Play. This is not a legal slide.

- 1) Does begin before the base.
- 2) A foot does graze second base.
- 3) No attempt to remain on the base.
- 4) Changes path to initiate contact.

Play 2

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/223PCnEGV1U?autoplay=1>

Illegal Play. This is entirely illegal.

- 1) First contact is even with base.
- 2) Does not touch second base.
- 3) Does not attempt to stay on base.
- 4) Changes path to initiate contact.

Play 3

https://www.youtube.com/embed/y7j_LYSMxcs?autoplay=1

Illegal Play. This is a roll block.

- 1) Begins before the base.
- 2) Foot arrives near second base.
- 3) Unable to remain on second base.
- 4) Slides within previous path.