



2026 Local Softball Rules

The Zionsville Little League is governed by the official regulations and playing rules for all divisions of Little League baseball or softball (www.littleleague.org). Rules described in the official regulations will always apply unless a specific local rule described in this document modifies the rule.

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Teams

1. Roster size per team is determined by the number of players registered.
2. Number of teams in each division is determined by the number of players registered.
3. Division format determined by ZLL.
4. Additional players may be added to rosters until all rosters are full or the first games are played.
5. ZLL may discontinue receiving registrations after the deadline.
6. Players registering after rosters are filled shall be placed on a waiting list.
7. Player evaluation and team selections, either league assignment or manager draft, are determined by ZLL.

Softball Divisions

1. Tee Ball - Ages 4-5
2. Rookies - Ages 6-7
3. Rookies 8U- Age 8
4. Minors - Ages 9-10
5. Majors - Ages 11-14

*Divisions are subject to change based on the number of registered players.



Uniforms & Equipment

1. Any player not in a uniform shirt matching the team color shall not be allowed to play (except if a player is added after the season begins or the uniform has not arrived by the first game of the season). Sub players are allowed during regular season play if sub protocols were followed.
2. All uniform shirts must always be tucked in.
3. Black pants, black socks, and cleats are recommended for gameplay.
4. Protective face masks are recommended for all defensive players, infield and outfield. Tee ball is excluded.
5. Pitcher's Helper/Pitcher must wear a defensive facemask provided by either the league or the individual player.
6. All bats need to be USA softball certified.
7. Helmets with a facemask are required for all batters and baserunners. Helmet facemasks optional for tee ball.
8. Balls provided by the league will be official balls for each game.
 - a. Tee ball will use a 10" softball.
 - b. Rookies and Minors will use an 11" softball. Minors will pitch from 35'.
 - c. Majors will use a 12" softball and pitch from 40'

Safety

1. If lightning is observed, play shall be stopped immediately, and all players removed from the field and dugouts until 20 minutes after the last sight of lightning. DO NOT FINISH THE BATTER OR INNING.
 - a. Officer of the Day is responsible for declaring the stoppage of games due to lightning and determining when play can be resumed following a delay.
 - b. Games started and postponed due to weather will resume at the point the game was interrupted.
2. If a manager/coach feels an injury during play is significant please notify the Officer of the Day.

Team Responsibilities

1. Home team is responsible for preparing the field before each game.
2. Visiting team is responsible for field maintenance after the game (Make sure the mound and batter's boxes are filled and tamped down so they are level and flat).
3. Home team will provide a responsible person to operate the scoreboard (if appropriate).
4. Home team scorebook is the official record and the visiting team should compare scorebooks after each inning (if appropriate).
5. Both teams are responsible for trash pick-up around dugouts and bleachers after every game.
6. Managers and coaches shall not attempt to influence or intimidate umpires. Any of this activity should be brought to the immediate attention of the Officer of the Day or Umpire Officer.
7. Managers are responsible for the conduct of their team's parent's behavior toward the umpire and opposing team. If inappropriate conduct continues during the game, play is expected to stop, and behavior should be addressed before play is resumed.



Tee Ball Division Rules

General Rules

1. Practices and games will be played during the allotted 90 minute time on the schedule. Practice 30-45 minutes and a game for the remaining time. Both teams will share the field for practice time. Coaches need to communicate about how to share the space effectively.
2. Game times will be set at the time of schedule releases, and any team not on the field and ready to play at their scheduled time will forfeit the game.
3. Rescheduling forfeited, incomplete, or canceled games is determined by ZLL.
4. Each team is to play with only players on their roster without prior approval from the Division Commissioner or VP of Softball.
5. Games started and postponed due to weather will resume at the point the game was interrupted.

Offensive Team

1. Coaches tee up the ball; batters are allowed three attempts to hit the ball on his/her own before the coach must assist the batter (if you have an advanced player, the coach can pitch 3 pitches to the player before using the tee).
2. The batter and all base runners must wear helmets at all times.
3. Two coaches can be used while the team is at bat: one to assist the batter and one to line up the children in the batting order and assist the next batter in getting ready. Two offensive coaches are also allowed to coach at 1st and 3rd base.
4. All players present at the game must bat in the lineup and in order.
5. All players will bat every inning even if 3 outs are reached before reaching the end of the lineup. Reverse the batting order each inning so that the same child does not bat at the bottom of the order each time up. This will ensure all players have the opportunity to run bases.
6. Runners will remain on the base even if they are ruled out during the play to learn base running skills during gameplay.
7. Runners will advance 1 base on every hit. No advancement on overthrows.
8. When the last batter in the lineup hits, the bases are cleared with all baserunners advancing to home plate.
9. No strikeouts, bunts, walks, stealing.
10. Score will not be kept during games.

Defensive Team

1. Use no more than three coaches on the field at one time, one for each side of the infield and one in the outfield. Infield coaches should stand behind the infielders and not obstruct the view of the outfielders.
2. No catcher will be used.
3. Rotate players to different positions every inning giving everyone a chance to play infield and outfield.
4. All of the players present will play on the field. Teach the players the different positions and try to keep them in their position when the ball is in play. Try not to let them cross the field chasing a ball or bunch up around a base. After the play is over, the closest Coach to the ball should instruct the fielder to throw



the ball to the pitcher who should then throw it to the Coach on the opposing team who is helping the batter.



Rookies 6/7 Division Rules

General Rules

1. Games will be six (6) innings or one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes long whichever occurs first. The inning in progress at the end of the allotted time will be completed. In this case, the beginning of an inning starts when the third out or the run rule limit is reached in the previous inning. There will be a hard stop at ninety (90) minutes during regular season games and the game will end at that point, regardless of the situation or score.
2. Game times will be set at the time of schedule releases and any team not on the field and ready to play at their scheduled time will forfeit the game.
3. Games may not start with fewer than seven (7) players. If at the game start a team does not have seven (7) players, they forfeit the game.
4. Rescheduling forfeited, incomplete, or canceled games is determined by ZLL.
5. Each team is to play with only players on their roster without prior approval from the Division Commissioner or VP of Softball.
6. Games started and postponed due to weather will resume at the point the game was interrupted.
7. Mercy rule applies after 4 innings (3½ innings if the home team is ahead).
 - a. When one team leads by 10 or more runs, the team with the least runs shall concede victory to the opponent. (Note: If the visiting team leads by 10 or more runs, the home team must bat in its half of the inning.)
8. Games with the score tied after six (6) innings end as a tie unless it is a tournament game.

Offensive Team

1. All players present at the game must bat in the lineup and in order.
2. Each team must bat at least eight (8) batters in their lineup.
 - a. If a team only has seven (7) players, they will be assessed an out each time the eighth position is due up in the batting order.
3. Batting order to be provided at the beginning of the game.
4. Batting order may not change unless:
 - a. Players absent at the start of the game but arriving late become the last batter in the batting order.
 - b. Players removed from the batting order due to illness or injury shall not result in an out unless removal brings the line-up to less than eight (8) players.
5. Maximum of six (6) pitches or three (3) swinging strikes count as an at-bat.
6. An at-bat shall not end on a foul ball.
7. No walks.
8. No bunting or slap-hitting allowed.
9. If the player does not swing at the 6th pitch, the player is ruled out.
10. When a ball is hit to the outfield, the runner can advance bases until the ball reaches the atmosphere of the pitcher's circle. Once the ball enters the atmosphere, the runner can advance to the next base past the halfway mark or return to the previous base if they have not reached the halfway point.



11. Play stops when the advancement of the lead runner, by any fielder, is stopped. If a runner(s) has not advanced to the halfway mark, then the runner(s) must return to the previous base(s). Time out or stoppage of play is up to the umpire and is not automatic.
12. Runners may not advance bases on overthrown balls.
13. No stealing or lead-offs. Runners may not leave base before the ball is hit.
14. Dropped third-strike rule is not in effect.
15. Infield fly rule is not in effect.

Defensive Team

1. Every player on a team roster will participate defensively each game for a minimum of six (6) outs, regardless of whether the game is shortened by a mercy rule.
2. Each player must play a total of two (2) different defensive positions and one of the positions must be in the infield (exception: if a player is "playing up" from a lower division, they are not required to play the infield).
3. Players may not play the same position more than two (2) innings.
4. Each team can field a total of ten (10) players – six (6) infielders and four (4) outfielders – and outfielders must start with both feet in the grass until the ball is hit.
5. Defensive players in Pitcher's Helper position must have one (1) foot inside and one (1) foot outside Pitching Circle and must be even with or behind the pitching rubber before the ball is pitched and may not advance forward until the ball is hit. The player playing pitcher's helper must wear a defensive facemask provided by either the league or the individual player.
6. In any event a coach is pitching, they must avoid all contact with the ball and players and must leave the playing field while the ball is alive. If, in the umpire's judgment, interference by the pitching coach was intentional, the lead runner is out. If interference is unintentional, it shall be ruled as a dead ball and the batter is awarded first base.
7. Pitching coach shall not direct the batter/runner in any way.
8. Coaches pitch to their own team from within the pitching circle. The pitch must begin and end from within the circle. **THE PITCHING COACH MUST LEAVE THE FIELD WHEN A BALL IS HIT IN PLAY AND CANNOT RETURN TO THE CIRCLE UNTIL THE PITCHER'S HELPER HAS THE BALL IN THE CIRCLE.**
9. Inning ends when three (3) outs are completed or five (5) run limit is reached. There are NO UNLIMITED RUN INNINGS. EVER.
10. Infield fly rule is not in effect.



Rookies 8U Division Rules

General Rules

1. Games will be six (6) innings or one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes long whichever occurs first. The inning in progress at the end of the allotted time will be completed. In this case, the beginning of an inning starts when the third out or the run rule limit is reached in the previous inning. There will be a hard stop at ninety (90) minutes during regular season games and the game will end at that point, regardless of the situation or score.
2. Game times will be set at the time of schedule releases and any team not on the field and ready to play at their scheduled time will forfeit the game.
3. Games may not start with fewer than seven (7) players. If at the game start a team does not have seven (7) players, they forfeit the game.
4. Rescheduling forfeited, incomplete, or canceled games is determined by ZLL.
5. Each team is to play with only players on their roster without prior approval from the Division Commissioner or VP of Softball.
6. Games started and postponed due to weather will resume at the point the game was interrupted.
7. Mercy rule applies after 4 innings (3½ innings if the home team is ahead).
 - a. When one team leads by 10 or more runs, the team with the least runs shall concede victory to the opponent. (Note: If the visiting team leads by 10 or more runs, the home team must bat in its half of the inning.)
8. Games with the score tied after six (6) innings end as a tie unless it is a tournament game.

Offensive Team

1. All players present at the game must bat in the lineup and in order.
2. Each team must bat at least eight (8) batters in their lineup.
 - a. If a team only has seven (7) players, they will be assessed an out each time the eighth position is due up in the batting order.
3. Batting order to be provided at the beginning of the game.
4. Batting order may not change unless:
 - a. Players absent at the start of the game but arriving late become the last batter in the batting order.
 - b. Players removed from the batting order due to illness or injury shall not result in an out unless removal brings the line-up to less than eight (8) players.
5. Maximum of five (6) pitches or three (3) swinging strikes count as an at-bat.
6. An at-bat shall not end on a foul ball.
7. No walks.
8. No bunting or slap-hitting allowed.
9. If the player does not swing at the 6th pitch, the player is ruled out.
10. When a ball is hit to the outfield, the runner can advance bases until the ball reaches the atmosphere of the pitcher's circle. Once the ball enters the atmosphere, the runner can advance to the next base past the halfway mark or return to the previous base if they have not reached the halfway point.
11. Runners may not advance bases on overthrown balls.



12. On balls hit in the infield, baserunners advance 1 base. On balls hit to the outfield, all baserunners can advance until the ball reaches the atmosphere of the pitcher's circle.
13. No stealing or lead-offs. Runners may not leave base before the ball is hit.
14. Dropped third-strike rule is not in effect.
15. Infield fly rule is not in effect.

Pitching machine usage:

1. Pitching machine distance and speed: TBD
 - a. Once set, coaches cannot alter the distance or speed of pitch during the game unless the machine is malfunctioning and needs to be reset.
2. The coach running the machine can stay on the field when the ball is hit to help make sure the pitcher's helper does not collide with the machine. The pitcher's helper **MUST END THE PLAY** and return the ball to the coach. The coach cannot field a ball thrown in to the pitcher's circle.
3. If a hit ball hits the pitching machine, it is a **DEAD BALL**. All runners return to the base they were on at the beginning of the pitch, and the batter resumes their at bat as if that pitch did not occur (does not count as a pitch in any way).
4. Pitching machines are to be used during official team practices and games only. Not available for individual use.
5. If you are the last game of the night, please lock up the pitching machine in its storage area.

Machine malfunction results in reverting to coach pitch rules:

- In any event a coach is pitching, they must avoid all contact with the ball and players and must leave the playing field while the ball is alive. If, in the umpire's judgment, interference by the pitching coach was intentional, the lead runner is out. If interference is unintentional, it shall be ruled as a dead ball and the batter is awarded first base.
- Coaches pitch to their own team and must have one foot on the pitching rubber when the pitch is released. **THE PITCHING COACH MUST LEAVE THE FIELD WHEN A BALL IS HIT IN PLAY AND CANNOT RETURN TO THE CIRCLE UNTIL THE PITCHER'S HELPER HAS THE BALL IN THE CIRCLE.**

Defensive Team

1. Every player on a team roster will participate defensively each game for a minimum of six (6) outs, regardless of whether the game is shortened by a mercy rule.
2. Each player must play a total of two (2) different defensive positions and one of the positions must be in the infield.
3. Players may not play the same position more than two (2) innings.
4. Each team can field a total of ten (10) players – six (6) infielders and four (4) outfielders – and outfielders must start with both feet in the grass until the ball is hit.
5. Defensive players in Pitcher's Helper position must have one (1) foot inside and one (1) foot outside Pitching Circle and must be even with or behind the pitching machine before the ball is pitched and may not advance forward until the ball is hit. The player playing pitcher's helper must wear a defensive facemask provided by either the league or the individual player.
6. Play is stopped when the ball is in the atmosphere of the pitcher's circle.



7. Inning ends when three (3) outs are completed or five (5) run limit is reached.
8. There are NO UNLIMITED RUN INNINGS. EVER.
9. Infield fly rule is not in effect.



Minors Division Rules

General Rules

1. Games will be six (6) innings or one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes long whichever occurs first. The inning in progress at the end of the allotted time will be completed. In this case, the beginning of an inning starts when the third out or the run rule limit is reached in the previous inning. There will be a hard stop at ninety (90) minutes and the game will end at that point, regardless of the situation or score.
2. Game times will be set at the time of schedule releases and any team not on the field and ready to play at their scheduled time will forfeit the game.
3. Games may not start with fewer than seven (7) players. If at the game start a team does not have seven (7) players, they forfeit the game.
4. Rescheduling forfeited, incomplete, or canceled games is determined by ZLL.
5. Each team is to play with only players on their roster without prior approval from the Division Commissioner or VP of Softball.
6. Games started and postponed due to weather will resume at the point the game was interrupted.
7. Mercy rule applies after 4 innings (3½ innings if the home team is ahead).
 - a. When one team leads by 10 or more runs, the team with the least runs shall concede victory to the opponent. (Note: If the visiting team leads by 10 or more runs, the home team must bat in its half of the inning.)
 - b. Games with the score tied after six (6) innings end as a tie unless it is a tournament game.
8. The game will be played with two innings of pitching machine play followed by player pitch innings until time expires. Adjustments to this may be made throughout the season and/or for the tournament.

Pitching machine innings:

1. Pitching machine distance and speed: TBD
 - a. Once set, coaches cannot alter the distance or speed of pitch during the game unless the machine is malfunctioning and needs to be reset.
2. Maximum of five (6) pitches or three (3) swinging strikes count as an at-bat.
3. An at-bat shall not end on a foul ball.
4. No walks.
5. No bunting or slap-hitting allowed.
6. If the player does not swing at the 6th pitch, the player is ruled out.
7. No stealing during machine innings. Players can leave the base for a lead off when the ball crosses the plate.
8. Dropped third-strike rule is not in effect.
9. Infield fly rule is not in effect.
10. The coach running the machine can stay on the field when the ball is hit to help make sure the pitcher's helper does not collide with the machine. The pitcher's helper MUST END THE PLAY and return the ball to the coach. The coach cannot field a ball thrown in to the pitcher's circle.
11. If a hit ball hits the pitching machine, it is a DEAD BALL. All runners return to the base they were on at the beginning of the pitch, and the batter resumes their at bat as if that pitch did not occur (does not count as a pitch in any way).



12. Machine malfunction (machine breaks, raining too hard, etc.) results in reverting to player pitch rules/play.
13. Pitching matches are to be used during official team practices and games only. Not available for individual use.
14. If you are the last game of the night, please lock up the pitching machine in its storage area.

Offensive Team- player pitch innings

1. All players present at the game must bat in the lineup and in order.
2. Each team must bat at least eight (8) batters in their lineup.
 - a. If a team only has seven (7) players, they will be assessed an out each time the eighth position is due up in the batting order.
3. Batting order to be provided at the beginning of the game.
4. Batting order may not change unless:
 - a. Players absent at the start of the game but arriving late become the last batter in the batting order.
 - b. Players removed from the batting order due to illness or injury shall not result in an out unless removal brings the line-up to less than eight (8) players.
5. An at-bat shall not end on a foul ball.
6. No bunting or slap-hitting allowed.
7. Players may lead off/steal the next base when the ball crosses the plate. Players may steal one base per pitch. Players may not advance additional bases on an overthrown ball attempting to get a stealing runner out.
8. If the catcher attempts to "pick off" a runner who has a big lead, the runner can advance one base if the catcher over throws the base on the pick off attempt.
9. Runners may only advance one base if the ball is thrown out of the playing field following a hit.
10. If the fielder's throw to first base is overthrown, then runners may advance one base at their own risk and may be thrown out prior to safely reaching the next base.
11. Play becomes dead after an extra base is achieved following an overthrow, an out is made, or the ball is put to the pitcher's mound. Once the ball reaches the 'atmosphere' of the pitcher's mound, runners must go back if they have not made it more than halfway to the next base. The batting team's manager is the judge of halfway and will enforce this with the utmost respect for the teamwork spirit of the game. Atmosphere is defined as anything passing to the circle without regard for the completion of the catch by the pitcher.
12. Play stops when the advancement of the lead runner, by any fielder, is stopped. If a runner(s) has not advanced to the halfway mark, then the runner(s) must return to the previous base(s). Time out or stoppage of play is up to the umpire and is not automatic.
13. No double overthrows are allowed on the same play.

***Clarification:** An overthrown ball means that the ball was UNCATCHABLE BY THE FIELDER PLAYING THE BASE. If the ball was a catchable ball and the fielder missed or dropped it, the runner must stop at that base and not advance. This is the umpire's discretion.



Pitching Rules

1. Pitchers use 11" ball and pitch from 35'
2. The player playing pitcher must wear a defensive facemask provided by either the league or the individual player.
3. Two different pitchers and catchers must be used during the game. A pitcher may not pitch more than 3 innings in a game.
4. Additional pitching limits may be enforced on pitchers currently playing on teams in the Select program. Managers will be notified of these limits.
5. Pitchers are permitted a total of 4 warm-up pitches between innings.
6. The pitcher has 20 seconds from the time they receive the ball back from the catcher to deliver the next pitch.

Defensive Team

7. Every player on a team roster will participate defensively each game for a minimum of six (6) outs, regardless of whether the game is shortened by a mercy rule.
8. Each player must play a total of two (2) different defensive positions and one of the positions must be in the infield (exception: if the player is "playing up" from a lower division, they are not required to play the infield).
9. Player may not play the same position for more than two (2) innings, except pitcher and catcher (see "pitching rules" for additional information)
10. Each team can field a total of ten (10) players – six (6) infielders and four (4) outfielders – and outfielders must start with both feet in the grass until the ball is hit.
11. Coaches of the defensive team are not allowed on the field.
12. Manager/coach may warm-up the pitcher between innings if the catcher is not ready and available.
13. Inning ends when three (3) outs are completed or five (5) run limit is reached.
14. There are NO UNLIMITED RUN INNINGS. EVER.
15. Infield fly rule is not in effect.
16. Dropped third-strike rule is not in effect.



Majors Division Rules

General Rules

1. Games will be six (6) innings or one (1) hour and thirty (30) minutes long whichever occurs first, with a hard stop. If the time limit is reached, any at-bat previously started may be complete and the game ends when the active at-bat is finished.
2. Game times will be set at the time of schedule releases and any team not on the field and ready to play at their scheduled time will forfeit the game.
3. Games may not start with fewer than seven (7) players. If at the game start a team does not have seven (7) players, they forfeit the game.
4. Rescheduling forfeited, incomplete, or canceled games is determined by ZLL.
5. Each team is to play with only players on their roster without prior approval from the Division Commissioner or VP of Softball.
6. Games started and postponed due to weather will resume at the point the game was interrupted.
7. Mercy rule applies after 4 innings (3½ innings if the home team is ahead).
 - a. When one team leads by 10 or more runs, the team with the least runs shall concede victory to the opponent. (Note: If the visiting team leads by 10 or more runs, the home team must bat in its half of the inning.)
8. Games with the score tied after six (6) innings end as a tie unless it is a tournament game.

Offensive Team

1. All players present at the game must bat in the lineup and in order.
2. Each team must bat at least eight (8) batters in their lineup.
 - a. If a team only has seven (7) players, they will be assessed an out each time the eighth position is due up in the batting order.
3. Batting order to be provided at the beginning of the game.
4. Batting order may not change unless:
 - a. Players absent at the start of the game but arriving late become the last batter in the batting order.
 - b. Players removed from the batting order due to illness or injury shall not result in an out unless removal brings the line-up to less than eight (8) players.
5. Players may lead off and/or steal the base when the ball leaves the hand of the pitcher. Players can steal one base per pitch. No advancement on overthrown balls attempting to catch a runner stealing.
6. If the catcher attempts to "pick off" a runner who has a big lead, the runner can advance one base if the catcher over throws the base on the pick off attempt.
7. Base runners have unlimited base advancement on balls thrown out of the playing field following a hit ball.
8. The play is dead when the ball has been returned to the pitching circle. Runners who have not reached the halfway mark will return to the previous base. If runners are past the halfway point, they can finish advancing to the next base.
9. Run limit of five (5) runs per inning for all innings. There are NO UNLIMITED RUN INNINGS. EVER.
10. Offensive coaches' area allowed at first and third base.



Pitching Rules

1. Pitchers use 12" ball and pitch from 40'
2. The player playing pitcher must wear a defensive facemask provided by either the league or the individual player.
3. Two different pitchers and catchers must be used during the game. A pitcher may not pitch more than 3 innings in a game.
1. Additional pitching limits may be enforced on pitchers currently playing on teams in our Select program. Managers will be notified of these limits.
2. Any pitcher hitting three (3) batters in an inning must be removed. Players can return to the game as a pitcher in a different inning, but the inning will also count as one of three (3) innings pitched.
3. Pitchers are permitted a total of 4 warm-up pitches between innings.
4. The pitcher has 20 seconds from the time they receive the ball back from the catcher to begin the next pitch.
5. Manager/coach may warm up the pitcher between innings if the catcher is not ready and available.

Defensive Team

6. Every player on a team roster will participate defensively each game for a minimum of six (6) outs, regardless of whether the game is shortened by a mercy rule.
7. Each player must play a total of two (2) different defensive positions and one of the positions must be in the infield.
8. Players may not play the same position more than two (2) consecutive innings, except pitcher and catcher.
9. Each team can field a total of nine (9) players – six (6) infielders and three (3) outfielders – and outfielders must start in the grass until the ball is hit.
10. The play is dead when the ball has been returned to the pitching circle. Runners who have not reached the halfway mark will return to the previous base. If runners are past the halfway point, they can finish advancing to the next base.
11. Bunting is allowed.
12. Infield fly rule is not in effect.
13. Dropped third-strike rule is not in effect.
14. Coaches of the defensive team are not allowed on the field.



Rule Book Reminders

1. Clarification of **sliding** into a base. There is no "mandatory" slide rule in Little League.
 - a. **The Runner** (Rule 7.08) -- "Any runner is out when (a)(3) the runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag (b) intentionally interferes with a thrown ball; or hinders a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball (NOTE: a runner who is adjudged to have hindered a fielder who is attempting to make a play on a ball is out whether it was intentional or not.)"
 - b. Umpires are trained to enforce the rule as stated above from the rule book.
 - c. Runner has a choice; meaning "must" or "mandatory" slide is not required.
 - d. Runner may choose not to slide and instead attempt to get around which does not mean the runner must absolutely avoid contact -- contact alone does not make the runner out if in the umpire's judgment, the runner attempted to get around.
 - e. Attempt is a judgment call by the umpire.
 - f. Fielder must have possession of the ball and be waiting to make the tag for either choice to matter -- if NOT, baseline and base belong to the runner.
2. Clarification for interpreting **running out of base path**.
 - a. **The Runner** (Rule 7.08(a)(1)) -- "Any runner is out when - running more than three feet away from his/her baseline to avoid being tagged unless such action is to avoid interference with a fielder fielding a batted ball. A runner's baseline is established when the tag attempt occurs and is a straight line from the runner to the base to which he/she is attempting to reach." By understanding the correct reference point, you can now easily see it is completely permissible for a runner to be more than three feet from the straight line between the two bases.
 - b. A few points of emphasis:
 - i. Runners establish their own base path at the time of the tag attempt.
 - ii. Runner is unlikely to always run in a straight line between two bases
 - iii. Umpire judges if the runner runs more than three feet from their individually established base path - a straight line from where the runner is at the time of tag attempt to base attempting to reach.
 - iv. Baseline applies whether advancing to the next base or returning to the base previously touched.
 - c. Don't forget the umpire is also judging if avoiding interference comes into play during the situation.
 - d. Bounces fair and remains fair before passing first or third base, it is an Infield Fly.
3. Clarification of **obstruction** vs. **interference**. These two sets of rules are some of the most complicated and often lead to situational confusion. There are many different types of possible interference situations - yet, only one type of situation defining obstruction. Often obstruction is called "interference" due to the misunderstanding of the difference.
 - a. **Obstruction** (Rules 7.06 and 2.00) -- "is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. A fake tag is considered obstruction. (NOTE:



Obstruction shall be called on a defensive player who blocks off a base, baseline, or home plate from a base runner while not in possession of the ball.)”

b. A few points of emphasis:

- i. Fielder in possession of the ball cannot obstruct a runner, as the fielder is entitled to make a play on the runner.
- ii. Mere contact between the base runner and the defensive player may not be judged to be a block -- in judgment, the umpire will determine if contact impedes the progress of the runner.
- iii. Obstruction does not have to be intentional for it to be called.
- iv. Obstruction is not an immediate "dead ball", it's considered a delayed dead ball -- with the umpire allowing the play to finish, and when the play is finished the umpire calls time to administer any penalty from obstruction.

c. **Interference** (Rule 2.00) – “(a) Offensive interference is 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. (b) Defensive interference is an act by a fielder which hinders or prevents a batter from hitting a pitch (typically "catcher's" interference.) (c) Umpire interference occurs when (1) umpire hinders, impedes, or prevents the catcher's throw attempting to retire runner, or (2) when fair ball touches an umpire in fair territory before passing a fielder. (d) Spectator interference occurs when a spectator reaches out of the play area or goes on the playing field and touches a live ball. (e) On any interference the ball is dead. A few points of emphasis:

- i. Interference does not have to be intentional.
4. Mere contact alone may be insufficient to determine interference. For example, a close play at a base when the ball and runner arrive near simultaneously and contact ensue may not be a case for the umpire to judge interference by the runner on the fielder making an attempt of a play.