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BILLY EVANS.

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# HOW TO UMPIRE

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"KNOTTY PROBLEMS"

*W. Evans* BY  
BILLY EVANS

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*“Keep up Sport”*



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be attributed the love of  
fair play and self-reliance  
that caused our Amer-  
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so nobly and unselfishly  
when duty called.

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## Publishers' Note

When the publishers asked Mr. Evans to write a book on Umpiring, they did not expect an encyclopedia, but that is what it might well be called. Mr. Evans has gone into the matter of "How to Umpire" most conscientiously, explaining every point, and his instructions, if carefully followed, will enable the reader not only to become familiar with the duties of the most arduous and thankless position on the ball field but at the same time earn for the one who *knows*—and knows he knows—the respect of even the most rabid partisan.

Mr. Evans' ability as an arbiter and executive is familiar to every follower of base ball, and now this book, which will be a standard authority for years to come, furnishes another interesting sidelight on his versatility.

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The editor of Spalding's Official Base Ball Guide, Mr. John B. Foster, secretary of the New York National League baseball club, each year, in the Guide, offers to answer by mail questions relating to interpretations of the playing rules. All fans who submit questions should enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for reply, and address the inquiry to Mr. John B. Foster, Editor Spalding's Official Base Ball Guide, 45 Rose Street, New York City.

## Preface

Umpiring is a mixture of good eyesight, to which you must add plenty of common sense, an abundance of nerve, a dash of aggressiveness and a thorough knowledge of the rules. Good eyesight is, of course, most essential. To make the proper use of superior sight, the umpire must figure on being in the proper place when the play is completed. In order to do this he must draw on his source of common sense and good judgment, and figure out the correct angle at which to judge the plays. He must be the boss of the game. He must impress this feature on the players in a manner peculiar to himself. Few umpires would handle a complex situation in exactly the same manner. A thorough knowledge of the rules is most necessary, because a lack of the same will quickly destroy confidence. One is never so wise at the game but he can learn something new. I am constantly getting new views and opinions because of my close association with the game's leading umpires. Many of the chapters herein have been inspired by discussions with the game's best authorities. The book aims to give the beginner every bit of knowledge he needs; it aims to perhaps give the veteran a new angle to some intricate situations. The player who reads it is certain to get many new views and facts. The fan who reads it will get a new angle to which he perhaps never gave much consideration, the difficulties that beset the umpire.

BILLY EVANS.

## The Single Umpire System

Umpiring a ball game alone is a most difficult proposition. The major leagues as well as some of the faster minor leagues are of the belief that it is too arduous a task for one man and are using the double umpire system. In most of the minor leagues of a smaller classification, the double umpire system, because of the extra expense, is too great a luxury. Hence, in perhaps a big majority of the games played annually only one official is used. Such being the case, I will give my impressions of the best methods to pursue when umpiring a ball game alone.

The system of working entirely alone from back of the pitcher is now practically obsolete, although in amateur games where the umpire has no paraphernalia to protect him, he is really forced to assume such a position. My observation will be based on the theory that the umpire in charge has the proper equipment.

At the start of the game the umpire should assume a position back of the catcher. The style of position varies with the different major league umpires, so that it is a hard matter to state an exact position. I favor working about a foot or a foot and a half directly back of the catcher. The height of my position depends entirely on the attitude of the catcher. I make it a point to try and be just a trifle taller than the catcher, as he sets himself to receive each pitch. Such a style necessitates

that you continually shift positions to suit the actions of the catcher. I favor such a system because it enables one to constantly keep the ball in sight, a very essential feature. It also affords the umpire considerable protection, since to a large extent he fortifies himself behind the catcher. I am also of the opinion that in crouching with the catcher on each delivery, the umpire is in a much better position to correctly judge the low ball, admittedly one of the most difficult tasks that confront the umpire. When I first came to the majors, I worked from an upright position at all times, and never shifted at all. That is a system some of the leading umpires still pursue, but I have been won over to the system I have just described. I feel that it is vastly superior.

Umpires small of stature, who have trouble working directly behind the catcher, are often forced to work just outside or inside of the position assumed by the back-stop, particularly if he is a big fellow. There are some umpires who prefer working not over six inches back of the catcher, while I favor from twelve to eighteen inches away. I like such a scheme, because there is small likelihood of ever coming into contact with the receiver and offering an alibi for something that didn't turn out all right.

Getting over the plays is a most valuable asset to an umpire. It enables him to be excused for what often appears to be a mistake, because he has made it apparent that he is trying. Thus from a position back of the catcher, taken at the start of the game, the umpire should make it a point to follow closely each hit. If the batter



hits the ball to the infield, the umpire should move into the diamond perhaps half the way down the line and assume a position about midway between the foul line and the pitcher's box, so that he may view the play from the proper angle. Also, in the case of an overthrow, should the runner try for second, the umpire is in a position to get right over the play, almost in advance of the runner.

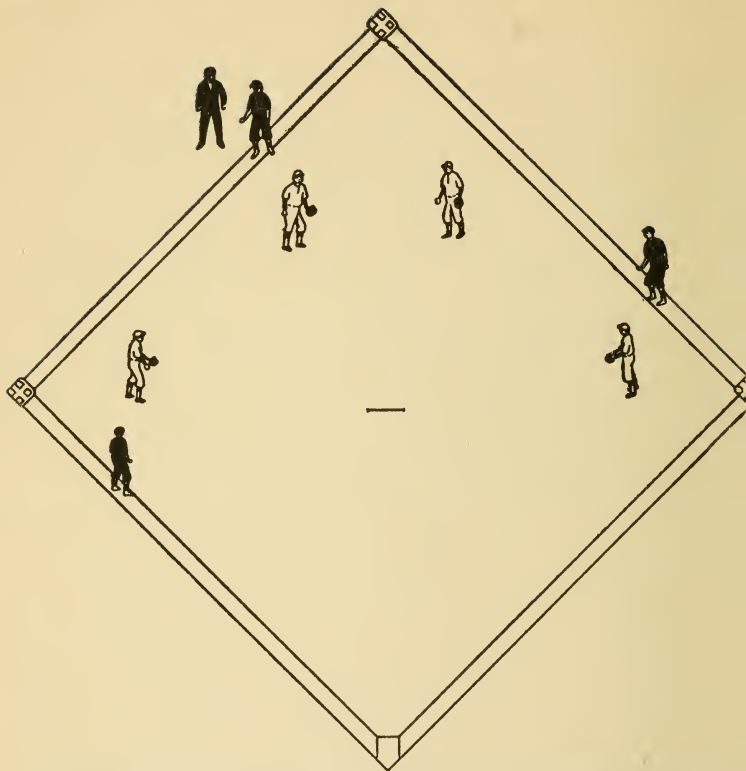
In case of a base-hit it is usually wise for the umpire to cut into the infield much after the manner of an infield hit, only that he should go farther into the infield. First, because he should shift back of the pitcher the moment a runner gets on first, and, secondly, because he will be right in line for a decision at second if the batter should try for two bases.

With a runner on first only, the umpire remains back of the pitcher. There are various reasons for his so doing. With a runner on first, the pitcher frequently makes snap throws to that bag in an effort to catch him. An umpire would be almost helpless in trying to decide that play from back of the catcher. In case the runner tries to steal, once again he is in a perfect position to get right over the play. Should there be a force at second, a try for a double play, or a decision at first, he is correctly positioned.

The moment a runner reaches second or third; that is, with men on first and second; first, second and third; second and third, or on either one of the two last named bases only, the umpire should work from back of the catcher. In such cases with a run or runs in sight, a

play is very apt to come up at the plate, which enables him to be in the best possible position to judge it.

On sharply hit balls down the first or third base line, the umpire when working back of the pitcher is at a great disadvantage. His only hope is to move over toward the foul line as quickly as possible. In fact, I believe that the umpire should be up and doing, in action on every play. It is just about as easy to move around as stand still and is always far more satisfactory. At all times, but when working alone in particular, the umpire should never lose sight of the ball. If, with the double umpire system one official falls from grace, the other one is almost certain to come to the rescue.



### SHOWING POSITION OF FIELD UMPIRE WITH THREE ON BASES

Very often in base ball the umpire finds the following situation confronting him: the bases are filled, and the score is such that the team in the field figures it must make an effort to get the runner at the plate. Such an action calls for the playing in close by the infield. The question that now arises is what is the best position for the umpire to assume, in order to be in the best possible situation to see any play that may arise. Since the infield is in close, I have always believed it a wise move to shift back of the infield. Since the desire is to make a hurried play, the umpire can in no way interfere if he is back of the line of defense. Otherwise it is always possible to use the umpire as an alibi, in case the defense fails, by saying his presence interfered with the play. I have always believed a position almost directly back of the shortstop and runner as the best. Such a position gives the umpire an excellent view of second and third, should any play be made on a runner at either base, through the medium of a snap throw from catcher or a throw from the pitcher. His view of plays at first will not be quite so good, but by anticipating such plays and moving in the direction of the play as made, the umpire can get an excellent view.

## The Double Umpire System

The double umpire system has done much to solve the problem of running a ball game. One official admittedly cannot always care for the situations that can arise in a ball game. It would be necessary for said official to have eyes in the back of his head, when two situations arise in directly opposite directions. For instance, we will say a play is being made at first, and at the same time the fielder at third interferes with the runner rounding that base. It is impossible for one man to be looking two places at the same time.

With the double umpire system, the man calling balls and strikes is regarded as umpire-in-chief. He shall have full charge of the game and be responsible for its proper conduct. The American League is perhaps the only organization which pays little or no attention to the umpire-in-chief theory. President Johnson places the two officials on the same equality, expects them to work together, and follow a certain line of given instructions, which I will detail under another chapter, entitled, "The Double Umpire System in the American League."

It shall be the duty of the so-called umpire-in-chief to call the balls and strikes. He must decide whether a batted ball is fair or foul. He shall call the balks on the pitcher. He shall rule on all batting-out-of-order plays. He shall determine all interferences at the plate, whether on the part of the catcher or batsman. He shall deter-

mine whether or not a batsman in running to first, stays within the confines of his lines, or interferes with a play being made upon him. He shall determine all ground rules that are necessary, and consult with the opposing managers as to what rules shall cover the various technicalities. If unable to have the managers agree, he shall make an arbitrary rule.

The field umpire shall take up his position at first base. His primary duty will be to pass judgment on all plays that come up at first base. Just what is the best position to assume is a matter that is hard to agree upon, as few of the leading umpires have exactly the same style. The principal thing for the field umpire to keep in mind is that he always should be in a position where he will have the ball constantly in sight. This eliminates any chance for him to miss a play in which the ball is juggled or dropped and almost instantly regained. When acting as field umpire I always take up a position about fifteen or twenty feet back of first base, and about three feet in foul territory. I assume such a position simply to have a working basis. A great many umpires work much closer to the base. On balls hit to the second baseman I change my position but slightly, because I am in a good position to keep my eyes constantly on the ball. On balls hit to third or short, I move up at the start of the play until my position is perhaps six feet from first base, but toward the home plate this time. This enables me to always keep the play in front of me. If one stays behind the first baseman on throws from third or short, he allows the fielder to get between the runner and the ball, thereby

causing him to lose sight of it, a condition one always should avoid.

Tommy Connolly, one of the game's greatest umpires, always goes in on the diamond on all the plays that come up at first. He is always in fair territory when giving his rulings, while most umpires make their decision from foul ground. Moving in on fair territory has the distinct advantage of always having the play directly in front of you. The only disadvantage is that one is more likely to be hit by a badly thrown ball, although during his long career such a thing has never happened to Mr. Connolly.

The plate and the field umpire should always work in perfect harmony to get the best results. They should always make it a point to see that every possible chance for a play is covered.

(1) With a runner on first, the plate umpire should always run down to third, ready for a play on a ball hit fair, whether a bunted ball, a tap to the infield, or a base-hit. Very often on such plays the runner on first attempts to advance to third. With a runner on third, and more than one base occupied, the plate umpire shall decide whether the runner on third leaves that base before a fly ball is caught. With only third base occupied, it is the duty of the field umpire to handle such a play.

(2) When a runner is caught between third and home, when more than one base is occupied, it is the duty of the plate umpire to follow the play nearest the plate, and render a decision, even though the out is finally made at third base.

(3) With more than one runner on the bases, and a play comes up which causes one of the said runners to round third for home, it is advisable for the plate umpire to observe the runner rounding third and see that he is not interfered with.

(4) Very often on fly balls hit to the outfield, which turn out to be difficult chances, it is hard for the plate umpire in a great many cases to decide whether the ball was legally caught or trapped. With the double umpire system, the field umpire, who is much closer to the play, should run out into the outfield if necessary, and by a wave of the hand notify the plate umpire as to the legality of the catch. The plate umpire in the meantime should watch the base-runners, since the field umpire is in no position to observe them.

(5) It shall be the duty of the plate umpire to rule on all infield flies. It is up to him to determine whether or not he believes they can be handled.





1, William G. Evans; 2, Frank O'Loughlin; 3, George Hildebrand; 4, William Dineen; 5, C. B. Owens; 6, Thomas Connolly; 7, B. McCormick; 8, R. F. Nallin; 9, George Moriarty.

AMERICAN LEAGUE UMPIRES.



1, Ernest C. Quigley; 2, William J. Klem; 3, A. L. Orth; 4, Charles Rigler; 5, Henry O'Day; 6, William J. Byron; 7, Robert D. Emslie.

NATIONAL LEAGUE UMPIRES.

## The Double Umpire System in the American League

There is no umpire-in-chief in the American League with two officials in charge of a game. The authority of the two umpires is equal. According to the playing code, only the umpire-in-chief has the right to forfeit the game. In the American League either official has the right and would be upheld by Mr. Johnson, although the American League President dislikes the idea of forfeiture and wants his men to refrain from so doing, if it is possible to get around the situation in any other way.

The double umpire system was inaugurated to do away with many of the mistakes that occur with only one man in charge of the game. It became apparent several years ago that plays would get away from a single official, but that such a thing would not likely occur with two men officiating. It is still possible for an umpire to slip up on a play that comes under his particular jurisdiction, but usually the other umpire in charge has seen the happening. In relation to such particular happenings the system used in the American League differs greatly from that followed in most other organizations.

American League umpires when in doubt as to any play that involves something other than a mere question of judgment are instructed to request information from their partner as to the point in dispute. In fact, the

instruction is even more to the point, for Mr. Johnson favors immediate assistance on such plays from the umpire who realizes the other umpire is in error. I refer particularly to plays that involve the dropping of a ball or an interference. Very often an umpire will call a runner out and then immediately turn his back on the play. The ruling would have been the correct one had the ball been held, but it so happens the fielder drops the ball just as the official turns his back and is able to recover same before the umpire can be apprised of the error. Invariably the other official has seen the dropping of the ball. In most leagues the umpire under whom the play comes for a ruling stands pat on his first decision, because he failed to see that the ball was dropped. The other umpire, because it is not his play, does not interfere, even though he knows the ruling was absolutely wrong. In the American League President Johnson favors immediate assistance from the umpire who did see the play and gives him the right to simply overrule the original decision, or, if not, to inform the official who made the ruling that the ball was dropped. The same holds good on an interference play that is missed by the umpire under whose jurisdiction such a play comes.

The American League executive favors coöperation at all times between the two officials, when in doubt on plays that involve conditions other than mere judgment. On such plays he wants the umpire making the ruling to stand pat. But when an outside condition enters into the affair he wants the men to coöperate.

## Methods of Conducting a Ball Game

The successful umpire must be the master of every situation. He must rule firmly, but not necessarily with an iron hand. He must instill confidence in the players over whom he is presiding. That confidence can only be won by demonstrating beyond a doubt that he has the proper qualifications to umpire, nerve, good judgment, a knowledge of the rules, and plenty of good common sense. Once the player is firmly convinced that the official is calling them without fear or favor, he will have won a certain amount of respect that greatly tends to make his work much easier.

The modern umpire is clothed with unlimited authority, which is as it should be. However, it is a sad mistake to make improper use of his best weapon. Some officials go on the field seeking to immediately put into action the wheels of authority which they control. Their manner and style is aggressive, their conduct such as to show they are almost inviting trouble. Literally they have a chip on their shoulder. To my mind that is entirely the wrong system to pursue. One will find enough trouble on the ball field without looking for it. It will just naturally come. The longer one avoids trouble by a display of diplomacy that in no way reflects on his dignity, the more fortunate he can count himself.

There are some umpires who go on the ball field looking as though they were on trial for their life. Every

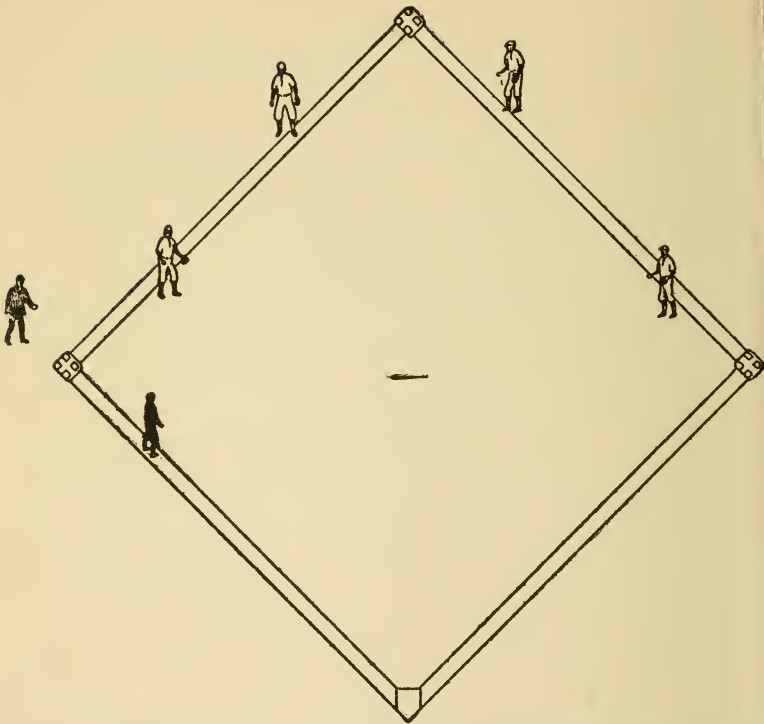


feature is set, it is a serious proposition, they can see no humor in any situation that may arise. Of some umpires they do say that no one has ever seen them smile. I regard the smile with much favor. I believe a smile and a word of warning will go much farther with the average player than a scowl coupled with a threat, provided there is any gray matter lurking in said player's head. Occasionally the umpire runs into an athlete who must always hear the crack of the whip to be kept in line.

The successful umpire demands the respect of the player, and in turn he should show proper respect to the player, just so long as the conduct of the player merits it. The umpire, because of his unlimited authority, should not address a player in terms which would cause the player to be ejected from the game if he so addressed the umpire. That is taking an unfair advantage. In some cases, instead of putting a player out of the game, I have slipped him a line of talk flavored with tabasco and let him remain, because I believed the offense was equal. That is not the desired system, nor the proper system, but occasionally it affords the umpire more satisfaction than the mere ejection of the player from the game. The proper way to meet such situations is never to place yourself on the same basis as the player. Instead of replying in like terms, let him do the raving, and you remain silent. It is the ideal system, but as I have said, every now and then it is impossible to follow it, as the umpire is only human after all.

Every umpire has his strenuous afternoons when everything goes wrong. It is best to try to forget them.

If you constantly worry, you had better quit. Try to start every game with a clean slate. When the day is over leave the troubles of the afternoon in the dressing room. One cannot be vindictive and be a good umpire, as it is bound to seriously affect his work. Work on the theory that every player is a gentleman, accord him the treatment he deserves until he demonstrates to you that he is a rowdy, then in a gentlemanly way, if such a thing is possible, handle him a bit rougher than he is trying to handle you. If you seek respect, you must give a like amount.



### SHOWING POSITION OF FIELD UMPIRE WITH RUNNER ON THIRD

With a runner on third and less than two out, what is the best position for the field umpire? It becomes his duty with only one man on, to see that the runner holds his base, before trying to advance on a fly ball that is caught. In such cases, it is the consensus of opinion of most umpires that the best position is to stand 6 to 8 feet back of third base and about a foot in foul territory. This gives the umpire a perfect view of any play that might be made on the runner at third. The moment a fly ball is hit the umpire should move up to third, and so position himself that he is on a line with the player making the catch and has the runner before him. In case a ball is hit to an infielder and a play is being made at first, all he need do is cut in on the infield and get as close as possible.



## Offenses That Merit Punishment

I am often asked what causes this or that player's ejection from the game. The fans see the disputes but seldom hear what is said, hence the reason for wanting to know just how the umpire reaches a conclusion when he puts a player out of the game. That is indeed a difficult question to answer. The successful umpire must be an excellent judge of human nature, and he must make an even more careful study of the players' disposition than a pitcher does of a batter's weakness. Thus what may mean ejection from the game for a certain player, might merely result in a reprimand for some other athlete.

It is an excellent thing for the umpire not to hear too much on the ball field. By making it appear that he has not heard certain things, he can escape situations in a graceful manner that might otherwise turn out to be serious affairs. The late Jack Sheridan once said to me: "An umpire's success is in a large measure determined by his ability to hear the things he should hear, and see only the things he should see." I have on many occasions found that to be a most valuable bit of advice.

I figure that an umpire must be guided by existing conditions in a great many cases. It is possible for him to overlook an exchange of words with some player, if there is no one within hearing. The same remark, if overheard by a visiting player, would mean that the umpire in order

to maintain discipline, would be forced to put the player out of the game. That is merely an instance of what Sheridan meant, when he said an umpire should hear only those things he should hear.

The umpire does not care to be shown up before the crowd. In no way can a player bring more ridicule on an official than by his actions. It doesn't take much on the part of the player to arouse the wrath of the crowd. A shake of the head, the stepping out of the batter's box, or any one of a score of things, can in an unmistakable way call the attention of the crowd to the fact that the player doesn't look on the ruling with favor. Such actions are seriously objected to by any umpire. No official will resent an argument properly presented, and no official will resent a player's opinion that he has missed a play, if he so complains by word of mouth. It is the player who seeks to alibi by some grand stand play that gets the umpire peevd.

In this connection there are a number of stunts which most umpires regard as sufficient cause to eject the player from the game. The throwing of a glove high in the air after a decision that displeases is almost certain to draw the gate, unless it escaped the umpire's attention. As Umpire Bill Byron once facetiously remarked, the balls were made to be thrown and the gloves worn. The grabbing or shoving of an official after a decision that does not meet with approval, is another stunt not regarded with favor. These are but a few of the many grand stand stunts that do not meet with umpirical favor.

## Looking After the Minor Details

Prior to starting play on any grounds the umpire should carefully survey his field and note any peculiarities of same. If there are any features about the field that might cause a dispute, the umpire should get the two managers together and arrange details which would cover any situation that may arise. In a great many cases the reason for getting a ground rule on a certain feature may seem trivial, yet a game often hinges on such a technicality, and if the official has no definite working basis, he is bound to find himself in serious trouble.

I am often asked what attention is paid to the coacher. I have always believed that pepper and enthusiasm by the coacher adds much to the life of the game. For that reason I always let the coacher go the limit, just so long as he confines himself to talking to the batter or base-runner and pays no attention to the opposition. The moment he tries to annoy the opposition he is either silenced or sent back to the bench.

The umpire should make it a point to appear on the field in neat attire. The umpire who goes on the field without paying attention to his personal appearance at once creates the impression that his work will not be unlike his appearance. He should avoid getting into arguments whenever possible, either with player or spectator, because someone must lose an argument, and if you avoid them, there is never a chance of getting the wrong end of the decision.

## Don'ts for Umpires

Don't go on the ball field with a chip on your shoulder. You will find plenty of trouble without looking for it.

Umpires hate to lose arguments. Therefore, avoid them whenever possible, and you greatly decrease your chance of losing.

Never enter into debates with the spectators. Unfortunately for the umpire, the base ball fan seems to have the divine right to say what he pleases and the easiest way out is to pay no attention.

No umpire will for a minute stand for a ball player showing him up on the field. Likewise, no umpire, because he has the authority, should hold the player up to ridicule without just cause.

Spectators like to see the regular lineup in action. The ejection of several players from the game usually robs it of much of its interest. Always try to give the spectators a run for their money, if it is possible to do so, and still maintain the dignity of your position.

It is often possible to escape trouble by not seeing some of the things you shouldn't see, and giving the impression that you didn't hear some of the things that you shouldn't have heard.

A smile and a kind word often works to far greater advantage than a frown and sarcasm. A lot of umpires go on the field wearing the look of a man about to go to the electric chair.

Always maintain strict discipline, but don't do it in such a way that you create the impression that you are a slave driver, and all others must dance to the crack of your whip.

Never lose sight of the ball. If you know where it is at all times, you are not going to lose very many plays. It is worse for someone to pull the hidden ball trick and the umpire not to see it, than it is for the player who has been trapped.

Don't turn your head and look the other way after you have given a decision. A lot of things can happen while you are looking in the opposite direction.

Show a little "pepper" in your work. If the umpire is always on the alert, the players invariably get the spirit. If the umpire is content to have the game drag, the players seldom offer any objection.

There are always two ways of doing things on the ball field—the right and wrong way—and invariably the right way proves by far the easiest.

Impress the players that you are the boss, that you intend to run the game with a firm hand, and they will let you run it. Give them the notion that you can be swayed, and they will literally run you out of the game.

A lot of people say umpires are not human. They are wrong. It is human to err, and umpires err. If they made as many mistakes as most fans insist they do, they would indeed be very human.

After having made what appears to be a mistake, and it so happens the next decision favors the team against whom the mistake was made, a lot of foolish fans say,

the umpire is simply evening up things. That is all wrong. No umpire who ever succeeded for a minute adopted such a policy. It is bad enough to have made the first mistake, to even up simply adds another blunder.

All umpires are honest. If you have the slightest doubt about it, make it a point to question the honesty of an official some day after he has been through a strenuous contest.

Don't render your decisions too quickly. Nothing makes an umpire look worse than to render a decision before the play is completed, even though he is right. Often something happens that makes the umpire wish he had not figured the play in advance.

A good appearance always creates a pleasing first impression. Most umpires who are so slovenly in their dress, show a similar inclination in their work.

Never allow a coacher to call plays before you decide them. If you happen to decide his way, the opposition will insist he is getting to you first. Usually a word to the coacher that you will do the umpiring, and that all he is required to do is coach, will end the trouble. If diplomacy fails to settle the case, there is always room on the bench or in the clubhouse for one more.

Make it a point to start your games promptly on time. The public likes it and the public must be pleased. Any time you start late, you are beginning the day with a mistake. The fewer mistakes you make, the better umpire you are supposed to be.

Make it a point to treat every ball player like a gentleman. If you should find certain players don't conform

to that standard, treat them otherwise. If certain players try to make life miserable to you, your only salvation is to make it more miserable for them.

Always make it a point to be on top of a play. If you are right over the play and miss it, you are far more liable to get away with such a decision than if you never moved, and gave the play while standing fifteen or twenty feet away.

An umpire must use consideration and common sense in running a ball game. If he ejected a player every time he had cause, few contests would go the required nine innings. In the heat of battle players often do and say things they do not mean, and often it is possible to overlook some infractions of this sort, without an injurious effect.



## Umpires Are Human After All

Umpires are human, despite all assertions to the contrary. Apparently a great many people believe that the men who give the decisions on the diamond are composed of some strange substance—possibly mineral or vegetable or animal substance, but certainly not a human one. I once met a young lady who, upon hearing that I was an umpire, seemed greatly surprised to learn that I had a father and mother and sisters and brothers; that I lived in a house; ate real food; was married—in short that I was a human being, able to love and hate, and if stuck with a pin would very likely say “ouch!” or something worse.

Each day when the umpire steps on the ball field he has eighteen active athletes arrayed against him, as well as two live managers, and an imposing bunch of bench warmers. There is also the crowd to be considered, for as a rule the majority of those present agree with the umpire only when he renders a decision that is in favor of the home team. Several years ago a very fair minded fan asked me this rather pertinent question:

“When you go on the ball field, who do you try to please, and what effects do the kicks of the players and the ravings of the crowd have on you?”

“When I go on the field I try to satisfy myself,” I replied. “I give the plays just as I see them, without fear or favor. When I satisfy myself I feel that I have



umpired a good game. Often I leave the game anything but pleased with my work, for I often realize too late that I have erred. Frequently I have umpired the very best of ball, and still been severely criticised for rulings which I knew were absolutely correct. If an umpire catered to each player and gave the crowd the slightest consideration in the rendering of decisions, he would be in the madhouse inside of a month. The most pleasant part of a ball game to me is when the last man is retired in the ninth and the crowd files peacefully out and no one blames the umpire for the defeat."

Despite the fact that umpiring is considered a difficult position to fill with satisfaction, it is surprising the number of people who are willing to take a chance. In the winter time, when the stove leagues are in session, is when the umpire crop is most plentiful. When the snow is on the ground, the heads of the majors and minors are flooded with applications from men anxious to prove what a great mistake is being made in keeping them out of the big show. By spring, when the season is ready to start, many lose their desire to try to satisfy fandom and decide to stick to their winter job. By July the heat of the sun and the withering sarcasm of the fan usually has burned up the crop and officials are eagerly sought.

Several years ago an enthusiastic young umpire dropped into my dressing room at the Chicago grounds. He wanted to get a job in a minor league. A few minutes later a well known minor league president dropped in to see me. I introduced the umpire to the president. "I can use a good umpire," said the president, "but I

can't afford to pay much money, as my league is an easy one for the umpires. All you have to do is to satisfy the players, managers, club owners, public and the press, and you won't have any trouble holding your job." Following my suggestions, the young umpire declined the job. It was too easy.

"I wouldn't hold down your job for all the money in the world," is an expression that every umpire hears hundreds of times a year. But most umpires are perfectly content to work for a very small portion of the world's "mazuma." Most people regard them as a necessary evil. However, I think they are very necessary, and if you ever watched an important game that was umpired by a couple of players, you will agree with me. And most umpires are satisfied with their lot. I with mine. I hope to be a big leaguer for many years to come.

## The Fan and the Umpire

"Your job would never suit me," remarked an acquaintance of mine as he stepped into our dressing room one afternoon last summer. The game had been a bitter extra inning battle, which the home team had lost because of a close decision at the plate. Throughout the game all of the close plays seemed to break against the home club, and several peculiar plays came up which created considerable argument. To make matters worse, the fans, not familiar with the facts, roared. "I couldn't stand to be abused when I knew I was right," added the friend. My partner had just explained the reasons for deciding several of the plays as we did. "I am sure there would be less criticism if every fan at some time would be unfortunate enough to have to officiate as umpire in some important game," remarked the fan after he had listened to the explanation. I had to laugh, for it was an opinion I had long entertained.

It is to be regretted that every fan cannot at some time act as umpire in a ball game of some importance. A game in which there would be keen rivalry, and the outcome of great importance to both teams, would be the best to educate the fan in the troubles of the arbitrator. It would be a good thing if every umpire would occasionally attend an important game as a spectator. The experience would prove especially beneficial if the umpire as a spectator, should pull strongly for one of the

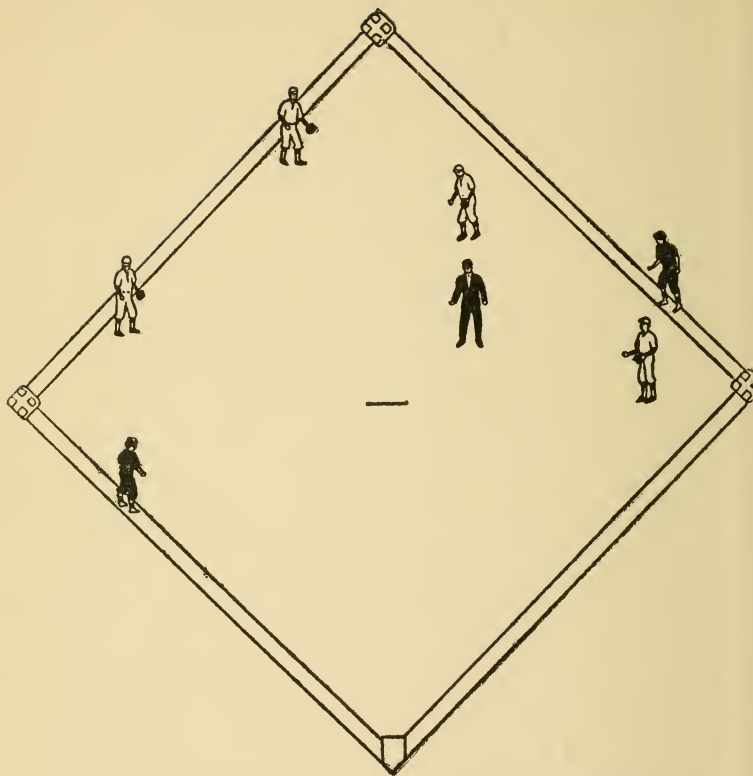
clubs to win and see the chances of his favorites killed time after time because of some adverse decision by the umpire. This would give the fan a chance to get all the thrills that come to an umpire in a big game, and it would give the umpire a chance to understand why the fans rave when one close decision after another is given against the favorite.

I never really appreciated the position of the fan until the fall of 1911 when in the role of writer I saw the world series between the Athletics and the Giants. While I refrained from rooting like a dyed-in-the-wool fan, decision after decision came up that first made the Athletic fans tear their hair and the next moment made the Giant rooters rave like madmen.

Plays look different from a position in the grand stand. One play after another came up in the world series that looked one way from a seat in the grand stand, while the umpire ruled just the opposite. Many of the plays would have figured prominently in the run-getting had they been decided differently. Is it any wonder that fans raved when the official gave decision after decision opposite to the way the play looked to them and against their favorites.

I realized things were taking place on the ball field with which the people in the stands were not familiar. From my experience as an umpire, I knew some little things that could not be discerned from the grand stand were the deciding factors in the rulings. I knew the umpires must be right and the spectators wrong from the attitude assumed by the players. After each game

I went downtown with the umpires and was enlightened on the plays that had looked doubtful to me as a spectator. On a certain play in which the runner appeared to be an easy out the fielder had failed to touch him. On another play, when it seemed as if the base-runner had been successful in stealing a base, it developed he would have been, had he not overslid and been touched out before he could recover the bag. On a third play, where it seemed as if the batter was an easy out at first, it was explained the throw had pulled the first baseman just off the bag. In every case some little factor that was not noticed by the spectators proved to be the deciding point. Unfortunately, the umpires have no way of explaining these things to the fans as they did to me. If there was some way in which the spectators could be informed as to what really happened on the field, much less abuse would be handed the umpire.



### SHOWING POSITION OF FIELD UMPIRE WITH RUNNERS ON FIRST AND THIRD

With runners on first and third and the infield playing half way, assume a position about forty feet back of the pitcher, and about six feet to his left. An attempted theft of second, to draw a throw that may offer a chance for the runner to score from third, is the play the umpire must anticipate. On this play the second baseman cuts in to cut off the throw and make a play at the plate. If he sees the man on third does not intend to try to go home, he lets the throw go through. It then becomes the duty of the shortstop to handle it and try for a play at second. Collins and Barry, when with the Athletics, made this play to perfection. The umpire on this play, at the start of the throw should move up close to the pitcher, so as to in no way interfere with the play.

## Explaining Much Discussed Infield Fly

What is an infield fly? That question is often asked me. In a way it is hard to explain satisfactorily, although on the face it does not appear a problem difficult of solution. Invariably I reply that an infield fly is any fly ball, other than a line drive, which in the judgment of the umpire can be handled by an infielder. That is practically the definition given in the playing code, and it is probably the best way to put it, although it does not mean a great deal in that form, because of the many conditions that can arise.

I am often asked what the umpire would do if he decided a certain fly ball could be handled by an infielder, and immediately so declared himself, only to have an outfielder make an inglorious muff. It might be well to state no matter who handles the ball it is an infield fly the moment the umpire so rules and the ruling stands. To illustrate I will cite a play in a major league game in which I was the official in charge.

With runners on first and second and one man out and the team at bat three runs behind, the batter hit a high fly. The moment the ball was hit I called, "infield fly," as is customary with American League umpires. The shortstop started to make the play on the ball and backed just off the skimmed infield on to the grass and set himself. The batter had the reputation of being a hard hitter and the outfield was playing fairly deep. The

left fielder, a fast man, came tearing in after the ball. He did not hear me call "infield fly," and had made up his mind he could make a play on the ball. Neither did he hear the shortstop shout he could handle the ball. Instead he came thundering on, calling out he would make the play.

The shortstop would have made the easiest kind of a play. Fearing a collision, he stepped aside and let the left fielder go through with the play. It was a difficult chance for the outfielder, a shoestring catch, which he muffed and then turned a couple of somersaults. Regaining his feet, he picked up the ball, and tried to head off the runner, who had started from second to third. He made a bad throw, as did the player who recovered the ball. When the smoke had cleared away, the runners on first and second had scored and the batsman had also made the circuit.

Many home fans as well as players believed the score had been tied. I allowed the first two runs, but there was nothing doing on the batsman. The team at bat contended that since the fly ball was handled by an outfielder, it could not be classed as an infield fly. It was hard to convince some of them that it made no difference who handled the ball, just so long as the umpire believed an infielder could handle it, and immediately so ruled.

There is only one situation where umpires are slow to rule balls infield flies that under ordinary conditions would be immediately so labeled. With runners on first and second and no one out, the sacrifice play is often called for. On such occasion the entire infield is in



motion as the play starts. The first baseman comes tearing in to handle balls down the first base line, and to make a play at any bag that seems best; the second baseman is tearing over toward first to cover that bag; the shortstop shifts to second base; the third baseman moves over to cover third, while the pitcher handles all bunts down the third base line. At such times a batter often bunts a fly ball, that under most conditions would be called an infield fly, but because the entire infield is out of position the umpire usually insists the ball be handled.

## Mixing Common Sense with the Rules

There are many times in base ball where the official in charge must mix some common sense judgment in his interpretation of the playing code. Not a summer passes but what I am queried a score of times on a certain play, which requires the mixing in of a little common sense. The play I refer to involves the failure to touch a base by a runner, and then the touching of that base by a following base-runner, who is ignorant of the fact that the man who preceded him has neglected one of the rules. The query always relates to the status of the following runner or runners.

To illustrate: We will say that in the 1916 world series, with Brooklyn in the lead, Larry Gardner, with two men on, hit a home run. By the way, Gardner did hit two home runs in that series, two runners being on the bases when he came through with one of the wallops. We will assume the runners were on first and second and no one out, when Gardner cracked out his home run. We will also assume the runner originally on second failed to touch third as he raced to the plate. The runner originally on first touched each base in proper order, as did Gardner. The general feeling among the crowd was that Boston had scored three runs and taken the lead. Now for the trouble.

The failure of the first runner to touch third had been noted by the guardian of that base and by the umpire.

As soon as he could attract the attention of the player with the ball, the third sacker called for it and touched third base with the ball in his possession. Since the first runner had failed to touch third, he had erred and made himself liable to be put out. He was so declared by the umpire in charge the moment the fielder touched third base with the ball in his possession.

Now for the point that is a constant source of dispute. We will say the Brooklyn manager raised the contention that not only the first runner was out but that the runner originally on first and Gardner, who hit the ball, also should be declared out, making the situation take on the form of a triple play, retiring the side rather than a home run that scored two men ahead of him. The Brooklyn manager based his contention on the rule that a base-runner is out the moment he passes on the lines a preceding runner. Since the runner originally on second failed to touch third, and the two runners following him did, hence they technically passed him on the line, is the claim.

That sounds like a rather foolish sort of an argument, yet it is surprising the number of authorities who are inclined to that view. Can you imagine the umpire in charge of a world series game declaring all three runners out? Personally, I have never been for that interpretation. I can see no reason why runners who conform to all the rules of the game, should be penalized for an offense committed by the runner ahead of them. It is my belief only the runner who erred should suffer a penalty.

The runner on first and Gardner who hit the ball touched each base, and complied with all the rules relating to the proper scoring of a run. I contend such runs should count, except when the mistake of the runner ahead made the third out in the inning. Undoubtedly such a situation will always cause disputes and protests, until the rule makers see fit to incorporate a new clause in the rules which will definitely state that with one or none out, the failure of a runner to touch a base, shall have no bearing on the runner or runners who follow him.

## Nice for Majors—How About Others?

It is all very nice for the major league to have a certain league ruling of their own to govern an unusual feature of a disputed rule, but what about the thousands of amateur players who have no league president to formulate a satisfactory rule to govern the various freak plays that come up?

A few years ago the rulemakers incorporated in the playing code a section which limited the activities of the coacher at third. It had always been customary up to that time for the coacher to use any means possible to stop a runner, if he believed the runner was sure to be retired in his effort to score. In many instances plays at third resembled scenes from the gridiron. It was not unusual for the coacher to save the day and the runner by pulling off a flying tackle and preventing the runner from trying to score on a hit, where the odds were all against him going over.

The rule states the base-runner is out, if a coacher at third touch or hold a base-runner at third base, or a base-runner who is rounding third base for the home plate. The umpire must immediately call the runner out, the action of the coacher in touching or holding him automatically retiring the runner. The framing of that rule was an excellent bit of progress, for it compelled the runner to think more for himself, also to pay more attention to the advice of the coacher, rather than to run with

his head down, and take a chance that the coacher would use force to stop him if it seemed he was going to his certain doom.

In one of the first games of the season after the new rule had been put into the code, a situation came up that put the acid test to the line of reasoning. In a game at Baltimore in the Federal League, a player hit the ball out of playing territory. It was a long drive well worth being put in the home run class. The drive came when it meant much to the team at bat. The manager was coaching at third. In his enthusiasm over the hit of the player, the manager gave him a pat on the back as he rounded third base at a jog, on his way to the plate.

It is easy to imagine the argument that went up when the umpire called out the runner who had batted the ball over the fence. He based his ruling on that clause which states that the coacher at third must not touch or hold a runner rounding third base. The pat of encouragement was construed as touching the player. That play proved there was a flaw in the rule. The following day American League umpires received a wire from President Johnson, who was quick to see that something was wrong. That wire instructed American League umpires to pay no attention to any action of the coacher when action was done after a chance for a play had ceased. The National League also took a similar view. It is all very nice for the two major leagues to have the play cleared up, but why not clear it up for the amateurs?

## The Toughest Decision I Ever Made

Umpiring is merely a matter of judgment, and opinions of plays naturally differ. Two men sitting side by side in the grand stand may have opposite opinions of a dozen plays. Frequently their opinions are the result of partisan feelings. If the umpire put every play up to the fans for a decision, base ball would be a wild affair. Perhaps what was the toughest decision in my career I put up to the fans and they answered it correctly, although against the team they were rooting for. They did not know what they were doing and imagined they were aiding their favorites by expressing themselves as they did.

The game was at Forbes Field in the fall of 1909, and was a world series contest between Detroit and Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh had taken the first game, and wanted a commanding lead by annexing the second contest. The decision I refer to came up in the opening inning of this game.

A crowd of over 32,000 was on hand. Such a crowd taxed the seating and standing capacity. Temporary stands had been erected along the right field foul line from just back of first base to the stands that stretched from right to left field. It was agreed a hit bouncing into the stands in foul territory should go for two bases. This was to guard against fluke home runs, as it would have been possible for a puny fly to drop safely back of first



base, and by having been given the proper "English," as a billiard player would say, bound into these temporary stands. A hit that bounded into the stands on fair territory—those that skirted the outfield—was to go as a home run.

Bobby Byrne of Pittsburgh was the first to face Bill Donovan in the opening inning and went to first on four straight balls. Tommy Leach doubled to right, scoring Byrne. It looked as if the Pirates would pile up a lead that would cinch the game. Fred Clarke's sacrifice, Donovan to Tom Jones, moved Leach to third. Hans Wagner loomed up big at this moment, but he disappointed the Pirate rooters by striking out. Miller was next and started the trouble. He hit a long drive down the right field foul line that looked for a time as if it might clear the fence. The ball struck just inside the foul line in deep right and then bounded out of view. Leach scored and Miller trotted home after him. The fans went wild, believing it a home run.

I was in doubt as to what decision to render, as it was next to impossible to follow the ball from my position back of the plate. When it hit the ground the fans in the bleachers all stood up and leaned over the railing, practically cutting off my view of the final destination of the ball. I conferred with Bill Klem, who was working the bases, but he was as much in doubt as I, as to whether it was a double or a home run. Fred Clarke of the Pirates was insisting on a home run, while Hughey Jennings of the Tigers claimed the hit was only good for two bases. I wanted to do justice to both clubs, but it

seemed the only thing I could do was to make a guess. Then I had an inspiration and decided to take the long chance it offered. I rushed out into right field with Jennings and Clarke at my heels.

"Was that ball fair or foul?" I asked.

There was none but Pittsburgh rooters in that section, as it was reserved for them alone, and in an instant a hundred voices yelled:

"It was fair by a foot."

It was then up to me to learn into which stand the ball bounded after striking the ground. The fans did not know a ground rule had been agreed upon.

"Well, if it was fair, where did it bounce?" I called back.

"It bounded into this stand," yelled back the fans.

"Yes, and I have the ball and I am going to keep it," said one spectator as he exhibited a brand new ball.

The stand was on foul territory and meant the hit was only good for two bases. Neither Clarke nor Jennings had anything further to say. Miller was sent back to second and the game proceeded. The Pirates did no further scoring, and lost 7 to 2, Donovan being invincible after the first inning. Had the fans not set me right, I would have allowed a home run. It would have probably put the Tigers to rout, and it might have been unnecessary to play seven games to decide the winner of that series.

That decision was also the cause of four umpires being used in the following world series games. Had an umpire been stationed in right field that day it would not have been necessary to have appealed to the fans.

## Interference Rule Should Be Changed

In the ninth inning of a game in which I recently officiated, with the score a tie, two out, a runner on third, a fast man attempted a steal of home. The man on third had figured the play carefully, got away to a big lead, and from my position back of the plate it seemed almost certain he would beat the play. There is no prettier way in which to win a game in the ninth than a steal of home, unless it is a clout for a home run with the bases filled, that sends over the needed four runs.

The fans were on their feet shouting encouragement to the base-runner, the visiting pitcher had shortened his windup and hurried his delivery to the plate, the catcher was yelling madly for the ball. The throw was inside and low, and it would probably have hit the batsman. The catcher, forgetful of everything except the desire to retire the runner, pushed the batsman out of the way and made a lunge after the ball. It escaped him and rolled to the stand, while batsman, catcher and base-runner were all tangled up at the plate. The crowd was wild with enthusiasm, believing the game had been won. Such a situation is never pleasant for the umpire.

Imagine the feelings of the crowd and the kind words that were passed to the umpire, when he sent the batsman to first, and the runner who apparently scored the winning run back to third. Until the rule covering such plays at the plate is changed, there will always be plenty

of argument. The rules on this play state that when the catcher interferes with the batsman, the batsman shall be entitled to first base, but no bases shall be run, unless forced to make room for the batsman. In this case, since only third was occupied, the runner was sent back to third and the batter to first.

That is the literal interpretation of the rule. It is followed in the American League, but not in the National. While the National League version gets away from the letter of the rule, it is the fair interpretation, because it is based on common sense and fair play, the fundamental principles of the game. In the National League the runner is not only allowed to score, but the batter sent to first base. The batter is sent to first base, because the catcher has interfered with him in his attempt to hit the ball. According to the rules play ceases when an interference is committed. But the National League lets the runner come home on the theory that the catcher has left the lines of his position and made a balk. Of course, allowing two such rulings on the same play does not conform with the rules, but it is the proper decision, basing everything on fair play.

It would be easy to end all argument over this play if the rule makers will add a few words to a certain section. If the rule which grants the batsman the right to first because of an interference by the catcher, also permitted all runners to advance a base, whether forced or not, seldom would there be an interference play at the plate. There would be nothing for the catcher to gain.

## The Batsman and the Balk

Can a batter at any time take his base on a balk? Can a base-runner score from third on a balk. These two questions are fired at me a score of times each season, and perhaps an equal number of times during the winter.

Many fans are certain a base-runner can go from first to second on a balk and from second to third, but there always seems to be a doubt if a run can be scored from third, on some illegal movement which the umpire in charge construes as a balk. There also exists doubt as to the status of the batter when a balk is declared, particularly if at the time there happens to be three balls called on the batsman. There is a widespread impression a balk at such a stage, also is classified as a ball, and entitles the batsman to take first.

Now to settle the first question: Can a batter at any time take his base on a balk? No; positively no. A batsman cannot at any time take his base on a balk. There is one particular phase of this situation that can come up. It did in the American League several years ago. It finally resulted in the game being forfeited.

An American League pitcher was delivering the ball illegally. As I have the facts, at no time did he have either foot in contact with the rubber. The umpire, noticing it, warned the pitcher and explained what was wrong with his delivery. The pitcher delivered the

next ball in the same manner. Although it was right over the plate, the umpire ruled it a ball. Rule 32 states that with the bases unoccupied any ball delivered by the pitcher, while no foot is in contact with the rubber, shall be declared a ball. The pitcher delivered four similar balls to the batter. All were over the plate, yet all were declared balls, entitling the runner to his base on four balls.

Now for a peculiar angle of the above trouble. The first batter up, having reached first base, the pitcher continues to deliver the ball in the same improper fashion. What, according to Rule 32, was a ball with the bases unoccupied, now takes a different interpretation. The first ball delivered to the second batter was after the same fashion. Instead of it being a ball on the batter, it becomes a balk on the part of the pitcher. It entitled the runner to advance from first to second. Another similar pitch sent the runner from second to third, while another scored the runner from third. Each such delivery with a runner on constituted a balk. The moment the runner scored and the bases were again unoccupied, the umpire started calling balls. At this stage of the game, it broke up, one team leaving the field and the umpire was compelled to forfeit the game.

Can a runner score from third on a balk? That question was answered in the explanation offered in the preceding paragraph. A runner certainly can score from third when the umpire calls a balk. All base-runners have a right to advance a base when the umpire calls a balk, as clearly defined in Section 3 of Rule 54.

## Play That Always Creates A Dispute

What are the rights of a pitcher when he attempts to get a runner at the plate after once getting on the rubber with the ball in his possession? If a runner takes too great a lead off first to suit the pitcher, he has a right to drive him back by stepping in the direction of the first baseman and then throwing the ball to that player. If a runner on first makes a break for second, and the pitcher's attention is called to the fact, he has a right to wheel around and throw the ball to second base to head off the runner, first stepping in the direction of the base to which he desires to throw. He has the same right to intercept a runner going from second to third.

The trouble comes when a runner makes a dash for the plate from third, after the pitcher gets on the rubber. The contention is raised that since the pitcher has a right to throw to any other base from his position on the rubber, he should have the same right to throw to the plate. The dispute, of course, hinges on the fact that when the pitcher delivers a ball to the plate while standing on the rubber it is regarded as a legal pitch.

Recently a play came up in the Western League which caused a great deal of discussion. The umpire wrote me about the play and asked me what I thought about it. It happened that the identical play came up in the American League eight or nine years ago. It resulted in a protested game and caused President Johnson to issue an



interpretation of the play for his umpires. Here are the conditions: The score is a tie, it is the last half of the ninth, the bases are filled and the count is three and two on the batter. The pitcher with the ball gets on the rubber ready to pitch. He has made no preliminary motions, his arms are at his sides. The moment he gets on the rubber, the runner on third starts for the plate. The pitcher standing on the rubber ready to pitch is slightly bewildered. He hurriedly delivers the ball to the plate. It is a wild pitch, missing the plate by a foot. The catcher gets the ball and touches the runner coming in from third. The Western League umpire and the American League umpire called the runner out.

The American League game was protested, as was the Western League contest. The team at bat insisted the pitcher had made a legal delivery when he threw the ball to the plate, since he was on the rubber ready to pitch. As the delivery was wild, it was insisted that the umpire should have declared it a ball, making the fourth to the batter, entitling him to first base, and forcing the winning run over the plate. The contention of the umpire was that the pitcher had a perfect right to make a play at the plate, just as he has to first, second or third. When making a play at first, the pitcher is forced to step toward that base and then throw the ball to that base, if he is on the rubber. When making a play to second or third, while on the rubber, he must step in the direction of the base, but need not throw it if he deems it unwise.

There is no denying the right of the pitcher to make a play at the plate, but if he is on the rubber some method

for making that play is necessary. If the pitcher, while standing on the rubber, threw the ball to the batter, it is regarded as a legal pitch. Consequently it was necessary that some ruling be made on such a happening. President Johnson ruled that it was necessary for the pitcher to step off the rubber, by taking a step to either side or the rear, when desiring to make a play to the plate to intercept a runner after once getting on the rubber ready to pitch. That is the interpretation in vogue in the American League and makes an easy play for the umpire on what appears to be a very difficult problem at the first glance.

## The Introduction of a Pinch Hitter

Del Gainer with his timely base-hit was the hero of the fourteenth inning game of the 1916 world series. That hit scored McNally from second base and enabled Boston to win the longest game ever played in a world series, 2 to 1.

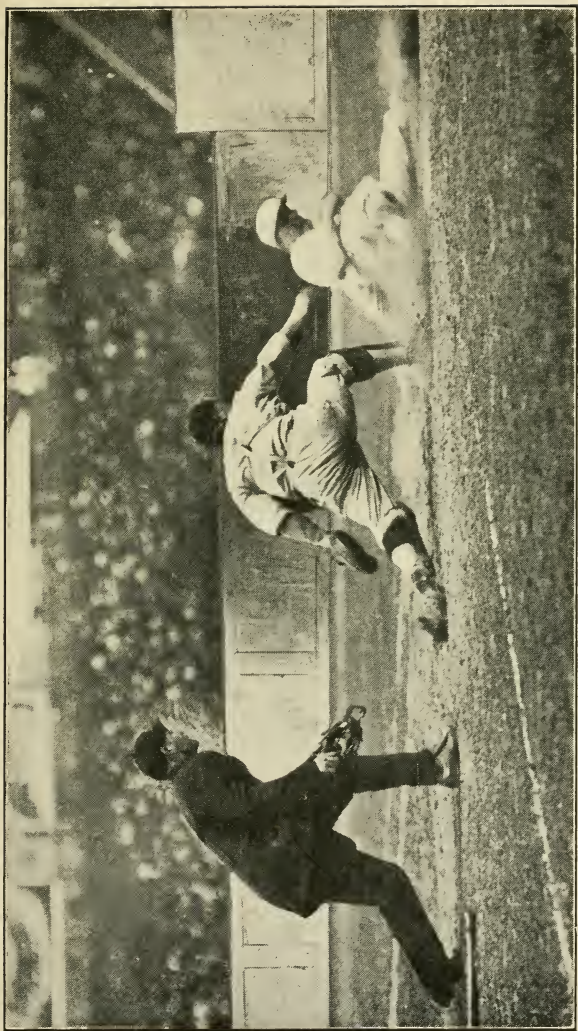
Suppose Del had gone to bat and failed to notify the umpire he was batting in place of Larry Gardner. Such is not unusual. Suppose, after Gainer had made his base-hit and won the game, Manager Robinson of Brooklyn, while the crowd was surging on the field, rushed up to the plate umpire and insisted that since Gainer had not announced himself as a substitute for Gardner, he was not the proper batsman and should be declared out. Can you imagine what a wild finish there would have been to that contest? It would have been worse than the day Merkle failed to touch second.

Hardly a major league season passes without several substitutions being made in the field or at the bat without me being notified. I don't believe my experience is different from any other official. One day a player was overcome by heat between innings. It happened while his club was at the bat. When the team went to the field, another player took his place in the outfield. The first I knew of a change was when the batter hit a terrific drive to the outfield on the first ball pitched. Looking in the direction of the ball I saw a strange figure giving chase,

for the regular player was short and stocky, while the substitute was tall and rangy. I realized a change had been made without me being notified. The player made a brilliant catch of the fly. I then had the announcer make known the change. The manager of the team at the bat might have protested the catch was not legal, since the player had not made known his entry, hence really did not belong in the lineup. Had such a protest been made, I would have paid no attention to it, but would have declared the batsman out.

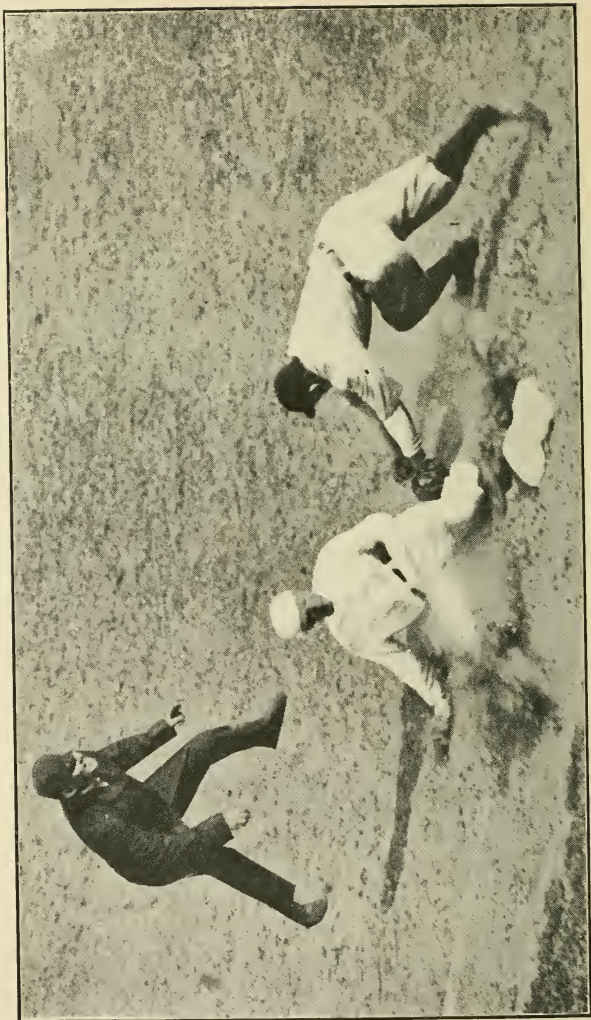
In the play I have cited relative to the outfielder, it could be contended that since the player had not announced his entry into the game to the umpire, that he was not in the game, hence the catch was illegal. In fact, the entire play could be argued illegal, because if that player was not in the game, it made only eight players in the field, which, of course, is contrary to rules, it being specified there must be nine. In the case of Gainer, it might be argued that since he did not make known his entry he was not in the game, hence an improper batsman. The rules governing such substitution, where the substitute neglects to notify the officials, are lax.

The one section that tangles the situation, states that a player shall become actively engaged in the game the moment the captain gives notice of the change to the umpire. The contention is then made that unless a player so reports, he never becomes a regular in the lineup. A few rewritten sections would forever clear up this play which is constantly creating disputes.



SAFE AT THE PLATE.





SAFE AT THIRD.  
SAFE AT THIRD.

## Rules Don't Cover Freak Possibility

It is possible to work out some wonderful freak plays on paper, yet in many cases more peculiar tangles take place on the ball field. Bill Brennan, former National and Federal League umpire, had an unusual one come under his observation in the early days of the Federal League. Brennan's ruling was the common sense interpretation. I believe it will be followed as a precedent, yet the rules do not clearly define what action should be taken.

Until recently, when a manager wanted to make a quick change of pitchers and had no one warmed up, he had a system of jockeying that usually gave him the needed time. It delayed the game and displeased spectators. The manager would hurry the pitcher he intended to use to the "bull-pen" to get warmed up. He would then notify the umpire such a player would pitch. The rules gave that twirler the right to throw five balls. The pitcher would usually consume more time than necessary in doing so. Then the manager would decide he wanted some other pitcher to work and would so announce to the umpire. The new pitcher would take advantage of his rights. Often a manager would send in as many as four or five relief pitchers, who would simply consume as much time as possible in throwing the five warm-up balls allowed. In the meantime the pitcher the manager really intended to use would be taking advantage of his



manager's dilatory tactics by getting into the best shape possible.

This feature was so overdone, the rule makers found it necessary to take some action that would eliminate the practice. A rule was incorporated which made it necessary for any pitcher sent in as a substitute to continue to pitch until the batsman at bat has been put out or has reached first base. That broke up the jockeying practice and made managers more careful about having the proper pitcher ready to send in as relief twirler. Now for the freak happening that was put up to Umpire Brennan for a ruling.

The game was played at Brooklyn. In the first half of the ninth, the visitors filled the bases after two men were down. The Brooklyn pitcher was in distress, and if my memory serves me correctly Jim Bluejacket, the Indian, was sent in as relief pitcher. Before he had had a chance to throw a ball to the man at the plate Bluejacket, by a snap throw to first base, managed to catch the runner at that base napping, retiring the side. Little was thought of the play at the time, but in the last half of the ninth it caused an argument.

Brooklyn needed two runs to win. It happened that with runners on second and third, it was Bluejacket's turn to bat. Pitchers as a rule are not good hitters, so this seemed the logical place for Brooklyn to send in a pinch hitter. A benchwarmer was therefore sent to hit for Bluejacket. When said substitute made known his intention to Umpire Brennan, a lengthy argument ensued. The manager of the team in the field insisted Blue-

jacket had not done what the rules prescribed he should do—pitch to the man at the bat until he was retired or reached first. His snap throw to first had retired the side and eliminated that chance. The manager of the team in the field insisted that since Bluejacket had failed to do so, he must remain in the game; that the team at bat had no right to substitute a hitter for him. Brennan overruled the protest on the ground that the rule was not made to cover such a situation, but simply to prevent jockeying, and that in retiring the side the pitcher had fulfilled his mission. The batter sent in as pinch hitter singled, winning the game.

## Play That Always Starts An Argument

Bill Carrigan is one of the brainiest fellows that ever handled a big league ball club. Not only is Carrigan a great leader of men, but he is a close student of the game. I don't believe Carrigan ever made a foolish kick in his life. Any time Bill sought a conference with the umpire, he invariably had a good reason. Bill never entered a protest on the theory that he was absolutely right, or that the official was absolutely wrong. He made his claims because in his mind there existed a doubt and he sought a reason for the ruling.

During a game at Boston, in 1916, a batting-out-of-order play almost cropped out among the visitors. The manager of the visiting team at the last moment decided to make a change in his batting order. He shifted the catcher who usually batted eighth to sixth, and dropped the infielder who had always batted sixth to eighth. His team had been in a slump, the catcher was hitting the ball, while the infielder for a couple of weeks had almost been helpless, so he figured moving the catcher up in the batting order might tend to make his hitting of more value.

What nearly proved an unfortunate happening was the failure of the manager to notify the two players involved of the change. In the second inning after the fifth batter had singled with one out, the infielder who had always batted sixth, stepped to the plate, when the

change called for the catcher to hit sixth. Evidently the players had the hit-and-run sign on, for the man on first dashed for second on the first pitch. The batter fouled the ball. The same play was tried on the next pitch. Again the batter fouled, making the count two strikes and no balls. In each instance the runner, of course, was forced to return to first base.

At this juncture the visiting manager became aware of the mistake. He rushed to the plate, had the umpire show him the batting order and then called the proper batsman to the plate, the catcher. The rules provide the proper batsman can be substituted the moment the mistake is discovered, and the balls and strikes called are counted on the proper batsman. The proper batsman then struck out on the next ball pitched, so that nothing came of what promised to be a tangled situation.

Several players on the bench later informed me Bill had noticed the mistake the moment the improper batsman stepped into the box, and was all set to dash out to the plate and enter his protest the moment the improper batsman was retired or reached first in safety. In either case, had the protest been immediately made, all acts made possible by the improper batsman would have been nullified and the proper batsman would have been declared out. It was the following day Carrigan brought up what might have been the unusual feature of the situation.

"I am looking for a little information, Bill," is the way Carrigan greeted me. "Say, the improper batsman missed either of those two balls he swung at and fouled,

and on one of them runner on first managed to steal second, would you have allowed the runner to remain on second?"

The point Carrigan was trying to make was apparent. The rule states no bases shall be run or runs scored because of any act of the improper batsman. This brought up the question as to whether the striking at and missing the ball by the improper batsman constituted an act. While I had never given the play any thought, never having had it come up, I told Carrigan I would allow the runner to remain at second. I would certainly have called him out, had he been thrown out, hence should call him safe if he beat the play. I could not figure where any act of the batter would have played any particular part in aiding the base-runner, hence I figured he was advancing at his peril.

## A Freak Batting-Out-of-Order Play

Batting-out-of-order plays are common among amateurs. Every now and then such situations come up in the majors. I have officiated in two big league games, in which players batting out of their order caused considerable confusion.

I believe a game in Washington some years ago about wins the championship for freak happenings. I was umpire-in-chief, but can take no credit for what happened. The situation that developed made every one connected with the game look rather foolish, myself in particular.

Branch Rickey, a bright base ball man, was managing the St. Louis club. Carrying out the rules of the game, Rickey, prior to the start, walked to the plate and gave me his batting order. It seems there had been some doubt in Manager Rickey's mind as to how he would bat Jimmy Austin and Bobby Wallace. The batting order he presented to me as the official one had Austin hitting sixth and Wallace eighth. It was the custom of Rickey to have his trainer keep a detailed score. In repeating his batting order to the trainer, Rickey had Wallace in sixth position and Austin eighth, shifting the two from the official order. That is the way the two players batted until the final inning. Had not Manager Rickey decided to use a substitute batter the mistake would probably have never been discovered. He so elected, the mixup

was disclosed, and one of the most peculiar situations that has ever come up in a major league game was the result.

After one man was retired Wallace came through with a clean hit. Catcher Agnew, seventh batter, was taken out and Clarence Walker was sent to hit in his place. When Walker reached the plate, he informed me that he was hitting for Agnew. It was the first change either manager had made. I took out my batting order to verify it. Then I discovered Wallace had batted out of order all during the game, five times in all. Catcher Henry of the Washington club was standing at my side as I inspected the batting order and he noticed the mistake. He asked for a ruling.

It was an unusual occurrence. Wallace from the first inning had batted out of order, as had Austin. The St. Louis players had followed the batting order on the bench, which differed from that given me by Manager Rickey. The rule on this point is specific. It states that when a batter hits out of his proper position, and the mistake is discovered before a ball is pitched to the succeeding batsman, the proper batsman should be called out.

According to the official batting order Austin should have batted sixth. As Wallace had batted in that position when he hit safely in the ninth inning, I declared out the proper batsman, Austin. That made two out. Walker then batted for Agnew, as had been Rickey's intention. He went out retiring the side. Had Walker hit safely while batting for Agnew, Wallace would have come to bat again in the same inning. The fact that he



had once batted did not affect the situation, other than wasting his hit, since Austin, the proper batsman, was declared out. There are some who contend that as the two men had batted out of order five times prior to the discovery of the mistake such batting order should have been followed throughout. The rules, however, state that the batting order given the umpire is the official one, as there was no big league precedent for such a happening, I played it safe by sticking closely to the playing code.

## Star Players Easy to Handle

“Why is it that star players seldom make any trouble for the umpire?” That is a question that is asked me time and again. The lover of base ball watches carefully every move of the game, and naturally he has observed that the real stars of the game rarely kick so strongly that it becomes necessary to put them out of the game. National League umpires tell me that Alexander and Mathewson never disputed a called ball or strike. No American League umpire can ever recall the time that Walter Johnson questioned a ruling. In fact, I have often heard him tell other members of his team that the umpire was right when the general opinion was that the official had erred in his ruling.

It is the same in any other branch of the sport, the really great catchers, the crack infielders and the brilliant outfielders, as a rule, accept the decisions of the umpires without any protest to speak of. Don't think for a minute that these players are of the same opinion as the umpire in all cases, positively no. They often believe the umpire has erred, in a good many cases they let the official know just what they think about the decision, but they invariably do it in such a way that any umpire with any common sense would have no reason for taking offense. I have often heard people say that Eddie Collins is not aggressive enough. They form this opinion because Collins is not being put out of the game every so often.

It is a fact that Eddie Collins is an aggressive player, but of a type that is not known to the public. Collins can protest as strongly as any player in the business. When he believes the umpire has erred he never fails to register his protest, but there is nothing of the grand stand variety in the protest. He does nothing by word or action that will cause the crowd to believe that the umpire has erred. For that reason Collins is always listened to, and given consideration when he enters a protest, for the umpires know it is the expression of an honest opinion.

But to get back to the opening question, the real reason that star players seldom incur the displeasure of the umpire, is simply that they never find it necessary to seek an alibi in order to cover up either lack of ability, or failure to have properly completed a play. The real good ball player can always make good on natural ability, even if the umpire every now and then gets him into a hole because of a mistake. Umpires make mistakes, so do star ball players, both are human, and the star player, who has some brains, or he wouldn't be a star, is broad minded enough to take all things into consideration.

The fellows who make the most trouble are the players who believe they are stars, yet fall considerably shy of that class. This phase of the question holds good in all branches of the sport, the majors, the minors, the semi-professionals and the amateurs. Another class of players who make trouble for the big league umpire, is the bush leaguer fresh from the small time circuit. A good many of these fellows come up to the majors with the

impression that in order to get in good with their manager they must argue with the umpire, and in all probability get put out of the game. I can recall half dozen such cases of players now rated as stars. Just as soon as they got over the idea, that getting put out of the game a couple of times a week was the proper kind of aggressiveness, they never made any trouble for the officials.

Major league leaders like aggressive players. The minor leaguer who can show pepper and aggressiveness of the right sort, has a much better chance as a rule than the player who accepts every ruling without a word. A player adds no strength to a team when he is chased to the club house, or has to sit out a suspension in the grand stand. The day of that style of aggressiveness is past. It is costly to the owner, club and patrons, for often they are deprived of seeing the player who attracted them to the park. The modern manager wants the player who can be aggressive, yet do it in a way that escapes the wrath of the umpire.

Johnny Evers is one of the few really great players who is in constant hot water with the umpires. Evers has just one thing strongly in his favor in this respect—his kicks are actually from the heart, not actuated by a desire to alibi. Evers is one of the greatest players of all times, reputed to be one of the brainiest infielders in the history of the game. I have never met Evers personally. I am told that he is a mild mannered individual off the field, but on the ball field he is a raging torrent when all the breaks, as well as the umpire's

rulings, appear to be going the wrong way. Evers' kicking has had one good feature, it is not the alibi sort; simply the nature of the man when in the heat of battle.

Of the modern ball players Johnny Evers and Eddie Collins stand out prominently. They are credited with being the two greatest second basemen in the game. Arguments galore have been caused by discussion of the relative merits of the two stars. There is little to choose between the fielding. Collins is the better batsman, and on the bases also shows to advantage. Both have far more than the average amount of gray matter, and clubs on which they play invariably look up to them to direct the play. Evers made a great team out of the Boston Braves, in fact played a big part in turning a second division club into a pennant winner and a world champion. Eddie Collins put an awful crack in the Athletics when Mack sold him to Chicago. He proved just the man needed to round out Comiskey's club, and make it a strong contender.

In most respects these two star players are similar and practically equal, yet in one respect they are entirely different in their attitude toward the umpire. Evers is aggressive; so is Collins, although a great many fans do not regard him as that type of player. Evers, with his fiery temper, can protest only in a way that aggravates the official and results in his ejection. Collins can register an equally strong protest, yet do it in such a way that he gets consideration rather than hasty ejection. In all his career Collins has never been put out of a ball ground, while Johnny has been given the gate in so

many contests that he has probably quit keeping track of his banishment a long time ago. In a good many cases, trouble with the officials means a three-day suspension, often a much longer time. It is almost impossible to compute the great value of such wonderful players as Evers and Collins to a team in the fight for the pennant. They are almost absolutely essential.

In that one feature of play Collins has a decided and distinct advantage over Evers. He is always in the game, giving his club his very best efforts. Evers does the same when in the game, but Johnny is often playing the rôle of spectator, because of his failure to see things as the judge of play did. Taking Collins and Evers from the game is just like taking the leading man from a play, in which much of its success depends on the acting of the star. Unquestionably the Boston club dropped many a game which would have been won had Evers been in the lineup.

Collins comes from the school of Connie Mack. Mack's theory is that no club in the history of the game won a pennant by fighting the umpires. He insists that clubs that spend their energy in fighting the opposition invariably gets much better results. Mack figures that any time a star player gets put out of the game, he does not only himself an injustice but also his team mates, the club owner, his league, and the patrons, many of whom perhaps came out to see him play. The great success Mack has had during his long career makes it appear that he employs the proper methods.

## The Umpire, Base Ball's Greatest Alibi

Base ball is largely a game of alibis. The player can always offer an alibi when things do not break his way. The umpire stands out as the greatest of all alibis for the ball player and the fan. The umpire is not infallible, he makes mistakes, but not nearly as many as fan and player would have you believe. Often the umpire renders a perfectly correct decision that changes the result of the game, yet for so rendering the proper decision he is often mobbed and compelled to suffer any number of other indignities at the hands of the fans, who insist he has robbed their team out of the game.

The umpire is one of the most important cogs in the base ball machine, provided he is moving smoothly. Yet most base ball fans regard the umpire as a necessary evil. Lovers of base ball seldom inquire who will umpire the game. They don't go to the park to see the umpire perform, as they do to see any of the great stars pitch. The umpire will never be a drawing card like Tyrus Cobb, Hans Wagner, Napoleon Lajoie, Tris Speaker, or any of the other celebrities of the diamond. As a matter of fact, the only time the umpire is given the slightest consideration by fan or player is when he renders a decision that fails to meet with their approval. Usually the consideration is of a very uncomplimentary nature. If the time ever comes that the fan and player believe the umpire is infallible (the time will never come), then



base ball will lose one of its strongest points, the blaming of the umpire for every defeat. It is surprising what pleasure it gives a lot of people to leave the ball park, positive that had the umpire rendered the proper ruling on the play at the plate, at second, third or first, the game would have been won instead of lost. The umpire gives them an alibi.

Just so long as the umpire shows up for the game every day and performs his duties in a capable manner, his presence is almost unnoticed. There is never any applause for him, as is the player's portion when he pulls a great play. There is never any encouragement from the crowd, for the umpire is always in hostile territory. He is the common enemy of the base ball fan at large. It would seem then, from the consideration usually meted out to the umpire, that he played a very minor rôle in the game of base ball. When then is the importance of an umpire realized? To illustrate this point, I am going to relate a situation which a veteran umpire created, simply to prove that after all the umpire is a very essential factor. I will quote the umpire as closely as possible.

"It is the deciding game of the world series, each team has won three games. Forty thousand people are packed into the park to see one of the most important games in the history of base ball, a contest which would decide the winner of base ball's classic. To each player alone the winning of the game meant a difference of at least \$1,500. The player of a losing team in the world series is certain of \$2,000 for his share, yet the umpire on whose decisions the outcome of the series hinges gets only

half that amount. A dispute arises just before the final game, the umpires have a grievance that cannot be adjusted, and they refuse to officiate. There is a delay in starting the game. It is impossible to get satisfactory umpires. The game must be played, so there is nothing to do but to agree on two players. When the fans see that two players, not versed in the art of umpiring, are going to officiate, they let out a mighty shout of disapproval. They want so important a game in charge of umpires having a reputation for being impartial and competent. Close decision after close decision comes up early in the game, and the player umpires are in constant trouble. Before the contest is completed the affair has developed into more or less of a farce. A goodly portion of the crowd has left the park disgusted. At such a time as that," concludes the veteran umpire, "the importance of the umpire would be made evident to the fans."

There are infielders in base ball who never fail to touch the base-runner if you take their word for it. There is never a play but what the base-runner is out. On the other hand, there are any number of base-runners who are never touched with the ball if you take their word for it. When they attempt to steal a base or take two bases on a hit, they always manage to elude the infielder, if you would believe them. With two such classes, it is easy to see that the umpire must of necessity find himself in trouble when he renders a decision, for each decision must be against one of the parties concerned. After such a play the base-runner, if he is declared out, goes back to the bench and tells his team mates what a

blind man the umpire is, and usually shows just how far he was missed. If the runner is declared safe, the infielder lets the world know that he had him by a yard. No matter how the verdict is rendered, someone is sure to alibi himself at the expense of the umpire.

Every fan has attended a game in which the pitcher by some show of disapproval would let it be known that he didn't regard the eyesight of the umpire as perfect. The catcher can in various ways, make it apparent to the crowd that he is not concurring with every decision on balls and strikes. Nine times out of ten the umpire has properly called the pitches. In a pinch the pitcher is looking for everything. To many of the twirlers balls that are from three to six inches outside or inside, are right through the middle. If his control is bad, there is nothing in the world easier for him to do, than to alibi himself at the expense of the umpire. There are many things he can do, that just escapes ejection from the game, yet are of such a nature that the base ball fan is soon wise that he is not agreeing with the umpire on balls and strikes. The next day the umpire often discovers that his bad eyesight was responsible for the pitcher's poor control and the loss of the game.

There is one situation in base ball that invariably gets the umpire in trouble, unless the pitch is an extremely wide one, or the batter relieves the situation by taking a swing. Imagine the bases filled, two out and three balls and two strikes on the batter. Have it the ninth inning if you want to have the situation all the more intense, and the score a tie. On the calling of the next

ball really depends the game. If it is a ball, it means the game for the home team; if it is a strike, the score remains a tie, and the visiting club has a chance to win out in extra innings. To the home fan a ball merely a few inches inside or outside, high or low, looks like a strike, if the visiting team is at the bat. If the home team is at the bat, pitches that are just good enough to be called strikes by the umpire are regarded as balls by the fans. Any time the umpire calls the batter out on such a pitch, with the situation I have described above existing, he is bound to find himself in trouble. Even if the ball is right through the middle, the batter who has struck out in a pinch, will invariably alibi himself at the expense of the umpire by declaring that it was a foot outside. In such situations there are some pitchers who never throw anything but strikes, if you would take their word for it. On the other hand, there are many batters who insist that at such times it is impossible for the pitcher to throw other than a ball.

Often when the umpire appears to be most seriously at fault, he is absolutely correct. Such plays are when the ball easily beats the runner to the base, but the fielder fails to touch him. Nearly every base-runner of any merit in the game at present has developed the fallaway slide to such a degree that touching the runner is extremely difficult, unless the infielder is equally clever in handling the ball. A runner like Ty Cobb, the Detroit star, gives the infielder little more than the spikes on his shoes to touch as he slides into a base. In plays where it is up to the fielder to touch the runner to complete

the out, the average base ball fan watches the ball. If the ball reaches the base ahead of the runner, he naturally presumes that the runner is out. Under ordinary conditions the runner should be an easy out, with the fielder waiting with the ball, yet time after time the runner eludes the touch through the fallaway slide, though the ball often beats him a yard or more to the base. Such plays invariably get the umpire in trouble, for the runner is positive that he wasn't touched, while the fielder is equally certain he put the ball all over him.

The umpire is unquestionably the greatest alibi in base ball. When he steps on the field he has eighteen active players, a swarm of substitutes from both sides, two wise managers and a hostile crowd arrayed against him. When mistakes are made the easiest way is to try to place the blame on the umpire. In the future please don't blame the umpire every time you see a player kick, for he isn't always wrong, as some people would have you believe.

## Home Run Rule Needs Revision

Does the rule regulating the hitting of a home run need revision? It is my opinion it does. I regard the present rule a bad one. It is almost obsolete, hence should be changed entirely. The fan construes the home run to mean a mighty drive. In nine cases out of ten it does require some wallop to enable the batsman to make the circuit, yet the provisions for the making of a home run are fairly easy.

The playing code states that any fair batted ball that passes into the stands or goes over the fence shall entitle the batsman to a home run, providing the distance to fence or stand be not less than 235 feet from the home plate. Any one who ever has seen a game at the Philadelphia National League park, the Chicago National field, or the Polo Grounds, knows it doesn't take much of a drive to go for a home run. In Philadelphia and Chicago a high screen on top of the fence makes the hit more difficult. In New York such a thing is impossible because that part of the right field boundary is part of the grand stand.

On all these fields, the Polo Grounds in particular, many a high fly drops into the right field stand for a home run which would be the easiest kind of an out on most other major league parks. The left field bleachers on the Polo Grounds is also none too deep. All these boundary lines are the regulation distance or more from



the plate, yet many a fluke home run is made as a result of the rule.

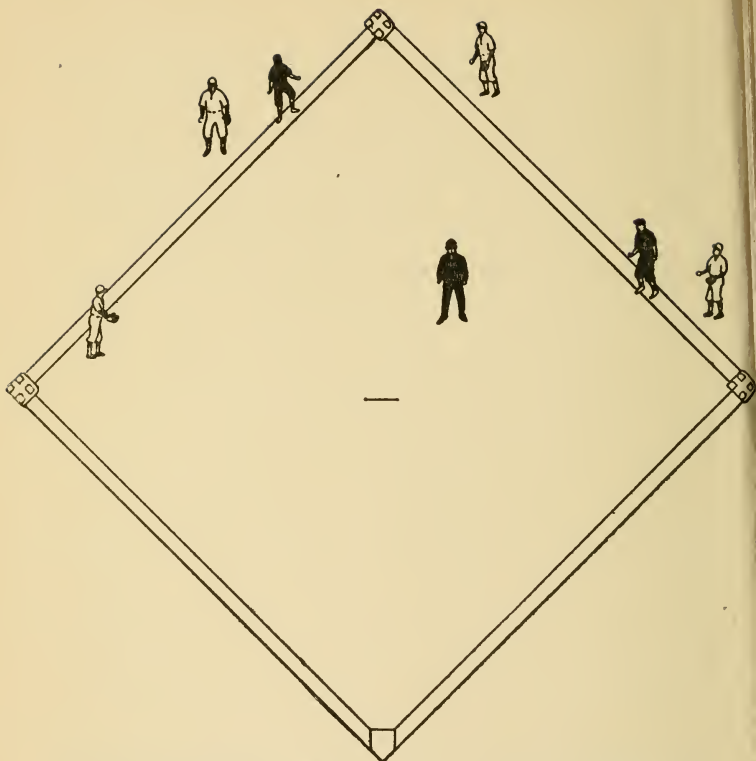
At most of the parks all the fields are much deeper than the regulation distance. Fast outfielders who can cover a world of ground are of little use on a small field, hence the distance from the plate to the fence in various fields is made much greater than regulation. In Philadelphia and Chicago lack of space has prevented a larger right field, and in each instance a street abuts against the right field wall. In New York an effort to provide plenty of seating capacity cut down the space. I understand there is a suggestion to change the distance from 235 to 290 feet from the home plate before the rules committee. I understand it is receiving serious consideration. I believe the distance should be not less than 300 feet. Then a drive that cleared the fence or went into the stands would be well worthy being recorded a home run.

There is another clause in the rule that relates to balls batted outside the grounds that never strongly appealed to me. The opening clause in Rule 48 states that on a batted ball which passes outside the grounds or into a stand, the umpire shall decide it fair or foul according to where it disappears from the umpire's view. That means that the umpire must constantly watch that ball, and if the last glance he gets at it the ball is in foul territory, the drive is rendered void no matter how far it was when it actually passed over the fence.

I have always believed that when the ball passed over the fence, and out of playing territory, jurisdiction over it



should cease. It seems a player able to hit a ball outside of playing territory, which in most cases means a long drive, should receive credit for it, if the ball, when it passed over the fence or into the stands, was fair. I recall a ball that Frank Baker hit over the right field wall at Washington, which seemed at least thirty feet fair when it passed over the wall, and was a mile high, yet was foul by inches when it last disappeared from the umpire's view.



### SHOWING POSITION OF FIELD UMPIRE WITH RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND

With a runner on first, first and second, or first, second and third, and the infield playing out, a good position for the umpire is about forty feet back of the pitcher and five or six feet to his left. Such a position gives you a chance to shift in the direction where the play may be made. With a left handed pitcher working and a left handed batter up such a position often gets you on a direct line with the batter and obscures his vision. If the batter requests you, as is often the case, simply move about six feet to the right of the pitcher in the direction of third.

## Legality of This Run is Questioned

A play came up in the American League some years ago which involves a question that is a constant source of trouble to ball players, from the amateurs to the majors, and to catchers in particular.

There is one man out and a runner on second, when the batter singles sharply to left field. The runner on second, away to a good start, rounded third and headed for the plate. The left fielder made an excellent throw home. The runner slid so wide of the catcher to avoid being touched that he also missed the plate. The batter had gone to second on the throw-in. The catcher, while realizing he had missed the runner, was also pretty certain the runner had missed the plate. Both regained their feet about the same time. Immediately the catcher started after the runner, and the runner realizing he had no chance to get back to the plate without being touched started for the bench. It took the catcher some ten or fifteen steps before he put the ball on the runner. In the meantime the batter who had arrived safely at second, taking in the situation, headed for third, and made that base.

When a player misses first, second or third base there is never any question about how to proceed. Some player instantly gets the ball, and with it in his possession touches the base that has been missed and claims the out. The fact that the home plate is the final goal

is perhaps what confuses all plays at that station. Often a player in sliding into the home plate, misses it, and also is not touched. If such player can scramble back to the plate and reach it before he is touched with the ball he has a right to do so. A play in which the catcher attempts to touch the runner, and then has the runner race to the bench or to any portion of the field, puts a different complexion on the matter. In such cases all the catcher need do is touch the plate with the ball in his possession.

Failure to touch the plate by the runner can create all kinds of trouble. In an important game in which I was umpiring balls and strikes, the home team scored the winning run in the ninth with two down, the batter hitting safely, scoring the runner who was on second. The hit was of such a nature that the runner from second beat the play by at least ten feet. The throw was a trifle short and the catcher was probably six feet in front of the plate receiving it, when the runner crossed the plate. He was in such a position that it was impossible for him to give the runner any attention.

One often wonders why many things happen on the ball field. That player never did touch home plate, although he was not hurried. His last stride carried him over the plate at least six inches. Knowing that run decided the game, the visiting team rushed off the field, as did the catcher, who was in no position to see the runner had failed to touch the plate. I managed to get off the field as hurriedly as the rest, for I wasn't looking for trouble.

I had hardly reached my dressing room before three or four newspaper men came to inquire about the play. From their position in the press box they could see the player had failed to touch the plate. The newspaper men raised the contention that since a runner must touch each base and then the home plate to score a run, that the run was never legally registered. They also raised the question as to the attitude the umpire should assume on such plays. Plays in which a runner fails to touch a base are plays which require that a complaint be registered by the side affected, and that otherwise the umpire shall disregard the error. On such plays if the umpire stood at the plate, after the team had left, he would reveal that something was wrong and instead of being merely a judge of plays, would be acting as adviser to one of the teams.

## Correct Ruling That Was Nearly Fatal

During my career as an umpire I have probably made many decisions which might be regarded as cause for fandom to say unkind things about me, and be the excuse for things coming my way that I didn't ask for. On the other hand, a perfectly correct decision that was in favor of the home club almost proved my undoing. So many fans have that incident confused that I will relate it, because in many ways it was a most unusual happening. The game was played in the fall of 1907 at St. Louis. Detroit was the opposing club and an overflow crowd was in attendance. In those days the double umpire system was not in vogue.

Because of the overflow crowd a hit into the crowd had been agreed on as good for two bases. There was a swinging gate about six feet long out in the left field fence, about ten feet above the ground, about which I knew nothing. It was used to facilitate the delivery of bottled goods into the park.

On the day in question it was extremely hot. Someone in the overflow crowd had discovered the gate, and by opening it found it provided a light breeze. Up to the fifth inning Detroit led by a run. In that inning Harry Howell, who was pitching for St. Louis, hit a ball into left field. As I followed its course I was surprised to see the opening in the fence. A few minutes before I had observed nothing wrong. I afterwards

learned the gate had been opened only a few seconds before Howell hit the ball.

It was my bad luck to have the ball pass squarely through the opening. When Howell made the hit I had run toward third base to follow the ball more closely. When it passed through the opening I was about fifteen feet back of third base. Howell paused at second base and I motioned for him to continue home, with the run that tied up the game. When the St. Louis fans saw I had allowed Howell a home run instead of a two-base-hit they went wild with delight. As he trotted from second to the plate unmolested he was given a great ovation.

The Detroit team set up the claim the hit was good for only two bases—a foolish contention. I was surrounded by Tiger players, all talking at the same time. There is no fairer man in base ball than Hughey Jennings, the famous leader of the Detroit team, and I told that gentleman the easiest way to settle the argument was to get rid of the players, and the two of us would thrash it out, which he proceeded to do.

“A hit into the crowd is only good for two bases,” said Hughey.

“Right you are,” I replied, “but this hit didn’t go into the crowd. It went over the crowd and out of the grounds.”

“But the gate should have been closed,” argued Jennings.

“It wasn’t,” I replied, “the blame for which I will take. When a ball goes out of playing territory, how is it regarded?” I asked.



"A home run, of course," answered Jennings.

In the meantime pop bottles were being thrown from all directions, but few had the force to carry close enough to do any harm.

"Then the argument is settled," I stated. "Let us continue the game. If we don't get away from here some one will be getting killed."

The next thing I remember was when I came to in the hospital and inquired what happened. After the nurse had told me in a few words all she was allowed to say about the case she switched the conversation by asking me who "Kid-So-and-So" was. I told her he was a well-known player.

"You are not very fond of him?" she asked. When I agreed that I was not very fond of him she told me that I had put him out of the game only four times in the past half hour.

## The Base-Runner and His Rights

Can a base-runner steal a base and then steal back to the base originally held by him?

That possibility was brought up by the comedian of the ball field, Herman Schaefer, who, aside from being a wit, has a lot of gray matter. Players have been known to run within a foot or so of a base with a hope of drawing a throw, and, failing to do so, rush back to their original base. There is nothing wrong with such a play. It is all right according to the rules. It remained for Schaefer to create such a situation in a different way under peculiar conditions.

The game was played at Washington, with the Chicago White Sox as the opposing team. Late in the game Milan was on third, Schaefer on first, two men out and an ordinary batter up. Schaefer, hoping to draw a throw that might enable Milan to make a dash for the plate, essayed a steal of second. The catcher made a fake throw to second and then snapped the ball to third, almost getting Milan.

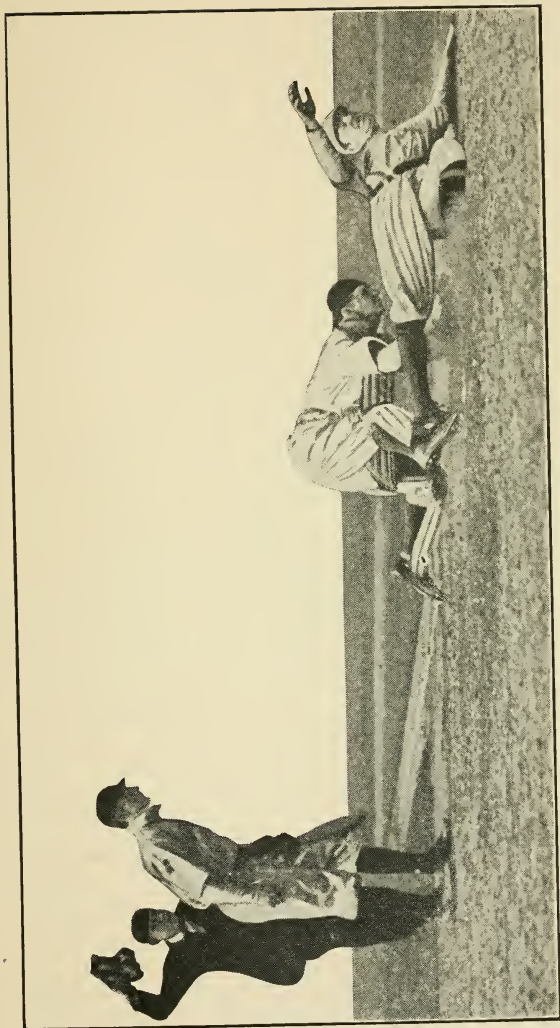
The play had failed to work out as Schaefer had intended. After the pitcher had delivered a ball to the batter, Schaefer created all kinds of commotion by dashing back to first base from second. In a moment the Chicago club was up in the air. The ball was thrown to second base and held by the fielder on that bag. The umpire made no decision. The ball was then thrown to the first baseman. At that moment Schaefer started for

second. The first baseman started to chase Schaefer, when Milan, who had been sneaking up, made a dash for the plate. The fielder threw to the plate, and Milan was declared out on a close play. The fact that Milan was retired saved the umpires a lot of argument.

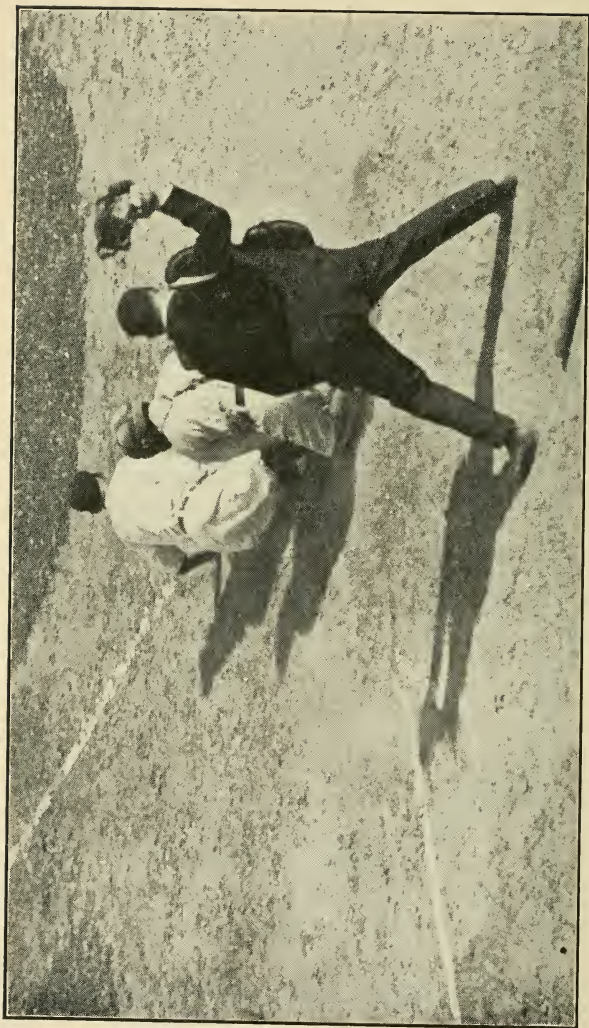
The moment Schaefer touched second base on his steal he became the occupant of the bag. First base no longer offered him any protection.

It would have been possible for him to have been touched out while standing on that base. The moment he touched second base he became the occupant of that bag, it causing him immediately to forfeit his rights to first base. The main point centers around the right of a base-runner to run bases contrary to the rules. There are those who contend that the moment the runner started back to first, after having become the occupant of second, he should be declared out for running out of line. There is difference of opinion on that point. Others contend he should not be ruled out until he comes back and touches first.

Then there are others who contend a base-runner has the right to take any chances he sees fit. That if he cares to jeopardize himself by running from second to first, there is nothing to stop him, and that to retire him, the team in the field must make a play on him and touch him between the bases or while he is standing on first base. The play has many peculiar features. I have heard it discussed many times by leading authorities, and I have yet to get a unanimous verdict on the situations that can arise, because the base-runner decided to pull a freak stunt.



A CLOSE DECISION BY BILLY EVANS.



OUT AT THE PLATE



## The Majors Differ On This Play

Prior to every city or world series a meeting is called to discuss differences in rules. Though the playing code is supposed to be the last word governing all base ball situations, it is a well known fact that the two major leagues lack uniformity on a half dozen or more possibilities that can arise on the ball field.

At one of the meetings I brought up a play on which the two leagues differ, which, on the face, appears like a trivial happening, yet has many possibilities. We know that with runners on first and second, or first, second and third and less than one out, the base-runner is protected by the infield fly rule. The situation I brought up related to a runner being on first base, less than two out, and the batter sends up a little fly to one of the infielders. Now if the infield fly rule applied to this situation, a runner on first and none or one out, the chance for any argument would have been ended for all time. Rather unfortunately, I think, the infield fly fails to cover the situation.

The purpose of the infield fly was to afford the base-runner protection. Before the adoption of the rule many double plays were made by the intentional dropping of the ball by the infielder, such action offering him a force play. The runner, realizing he would be an easy victim for a double play if he took any lead, providing the ball was caught, was forced to stick closely to his base. It

was evident the infielder had an unfair advantage. The infield fly rule retiring the batter, whether the ball was caught or not, was the result. It was a good rule.

The rule makers failed to incorporate in the section that the batter was out, with a runner on first only, because they knew there was no chance for a double play, provided the batter ran out his hit, and it is a generally accepted theory that one thing a player should do is run out every hit. Hence the rule makers figured the runner on first needed no protection other than the running out of a hit by the batter. If there is a loophole in any part of the playing code some wise player is sure to discover it and immediately everyone is trying to take advantage of it. It is always desirable to get a fast man off the bases, and by taking advantage of the above play it is possible to make the substitution of a slow runner for the speed merchant. I will illustrate.

One man is out, Max Carey of Pittsburgh up, he singles sharply to the outfield, reaching first in safety. We will presume the next man in the Pirate lineup is a much slower runner. The next batter hits a high fly to the second baseman. Carey dares not take any lead for fear of being doubled up; as a matter of fact, he holds his base. The second baseman gets the ball squarely in his hands, then pulls them apart. The man who hit the ball is almost to first when the fielder makes the miss. The second baseman picks up the ball and tosses to the shortstop, who touches second base. The umpire declares Carey out. He is forced at second. By his intentional dropping of the ball, after having prac-



tically made the catch, the fielder forces the fast man at second, and leaves the slow runner on first base. That play is regarded as perfectly proper in the National League and is made often during the season. In the American League if the infielder will take a chance on trapping the ball, that is, allowing the ball to strike the ground first, the play is allowed. However, if he gets the ball squarely in his hands, and then in a manner that is apparent to any spectator at the game, pulls his hands apart and allows the ball to strike the ground, the batter, under the American League code, is called out, on the theory that the ball has been held long enough by the fielder to complete the catch and out. I have discussed this point with a great many National League managers, and all seem to like the American League ruling, yet the two leagues continue to differ, even in the world series. A definite rule explicitly covering the play would do away with all such arguments.

## Balk Rule is a Trouble Maker

The balk rule, perhaps least understood of all the rules by fandom, is one of the most important sections of the playing code. During the winter I have heard the constant cry from managers and authorities for a stricter interpretation of the balk rule. I favor that. I have always been a strict disciplinarian on the enforcement of the balk rule, as I am sure many American League pitchers will testify.

On the face it may not seem that the balk rule and base-running have anything in common. As a matter of fact no two features of the national pastime are so closely related. During the past four or five years base-running, one of the game's prettiest features, has been on the decline. I feel safe in saying the deceptive moves practised by many pitchers has more seriously affected base-running than any other thing.

The successful base-runner must be able to get away to a good lead. A foot or two on the getaway means everything when many decisions are based on a matter of a few inches. Ability to get the break by getting away with the start of the delivery is a wonderful advantage. It is usually the difference between out and safe. The brainy base-runner is the player who studies the delivery of the pitcher closely and is usually able to decide when the pitcher is going through with his delivery or when he is going to throw to first.

Of late years pitchers have so tried to circumvent the balk rule that every trick of the trade has been brought into play to deceive the base-runner, yet pass the muster of the umpire. Many pitchers have developed moves to first that so closely resemble their pitching delivery that the runner is almost at sea trying to pick the proper spot to start his steal. Of course this is all wrong. The pitcher's style of delivery and move to first must differ. Some do, but it would be almost necessary to get a strong microscope to note the exact difference.

Usually the left-handers give more trouble on the balk rule than right-handers. While the major league umpires may be lax, the minors are even more so, and it is a caution the moves some of the recruits bring up to the majors. A left-handed pitcher joined an American League club one year who had a movement that was fatal to a base-runner if he took a lead of more than two or three steps. It is unfortunate for such recruits, because it makes them start a new style and often retards their natural ability. If all managers would just get over praising moves that are balks nine times out of ten pitchers would not be so fussy and base-running would be increased. It is possible to develop a good move that will hold runners on closely but won't catch many napping. Such moves are praiseworthy, but most pitchers are not content with that; they want to catch them off.

## Three Similar Plays—Different Rulings

Here are three plays that puzzle. I am often asked to give an explanation of the difference that exists from the penalty standpoint. In appearance each play is the same, yet three different rulings are possible.

*Play No. 1.*—A runner is on first and he tries to steal second. He succeeds, but the batter jostles the catcher as he is about to make the throw. In this play the batter is called out for interference, while the runner is sent back to first, since no bases can be run on such an interference.

*Play No. 2.*—A runner is on third, one man is out, the runner attempts to steal home. It is evident the play is going to be close. The batter decides to pull a bit of wise stuff and interferes with the catcher so that he is unable to put the ball on the runner before he reaches the plate. The interference was similar to that in Play No. 1. In this play the penalty is shifted from the batsman to the runner, for the runner is declared out and the batsman allowed to continue his time at bat.

*Play No. 3.*—A runner is on third, two are out, the runner on third attempts to steal home. The batsman creates an interference similar to Plays 1 and 2. He so hinders the catcher that he is unable to touch the runner. In this case, the penalty is placed on the batsman, he being declared out for interference.

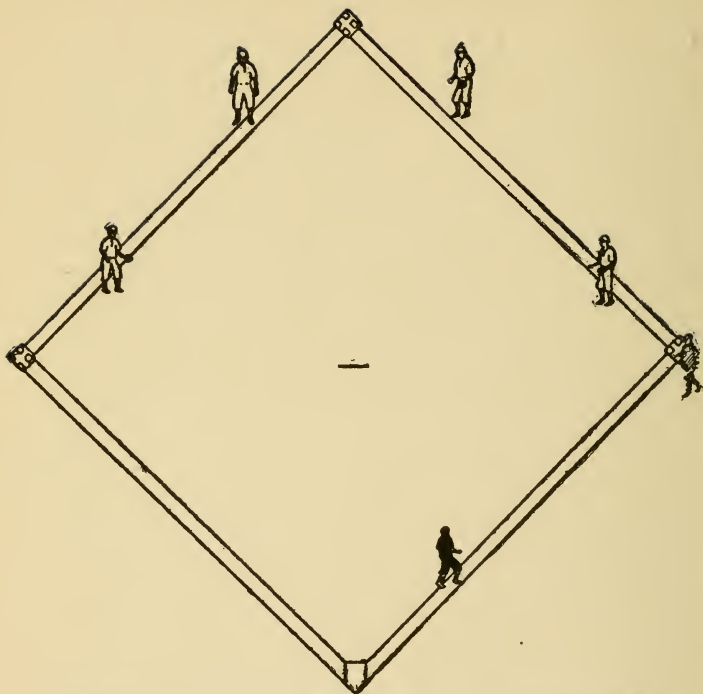
While in some respects these plays are very definite, and are specifically covered in a roundabout way, I seri-

ously doubt if any series of plays, in which the action is similar, creates more confusion. Other than simply quoting the rules which cover the plays, I shall attempt to explain why the rule makers have shifted the penalty in these three plays.

In Play No. 1, it is the batsman who has grievously erred. His interference has killed any chance the catcher might have had of getting the runner. It is obvious he should suffer the penalty by being called out. Since it would be unfair to allow the runner to advance on a play in which the fielder making the play had been interfered with, the runner is sent back to his original base.

In the second case, there being one out at the time, the runner on third attempts a steal of home. A similar interference enables the runner to score. A good many people figure the penalty should be to send the runner back to third and declare out the batsman. Such a penalty would enable a wise batter to nullify the play any time he believed the runner was sure to be retired. To do away with such methods the rule makers, with one or none out, have made the penalty all the more severe by ruling the runner out.

With two men down, a similar interference results in the batter being called out. You ask why not continue the ruling as in Play No. 2 and still call the runner out. With two down and such a play, some one must be called out for the interference. Since no run can score, regardless of who is called out, the penalty is shifted back on the batter. It has been the purpose of the rule makers in inflicting the penalty to make it as severe as possible in each case.



### SHOWING POSITION OF FIELD UMPIRE WITH NO ONE ON BASES

With no one on bases, a good position for the umpire to stand is about fifteen feet back of first and about three feet in foul territory. On balls hit to the second baseman he need not change his position, for he is in an excellent place to see whether or not the ball is dropped or juggled. On balls hit to the shortstop or third baseman, it is best to move up about five or six feet in front of first base, that is toward the plate and about two or three feet in foul territory. This enables the umpire to always have the ball in sight and the play in front of him.

## Knotty Problems

For the past several years Spalding's Official Base Ball Guide has made a specialty of printing some of the questions that the editor had received by mail during the season. These had been collected and answered and published in Spalding's Athletic Library No. 231, but will be hereafter incorporated instead in Mr. Evans' book. In addition, Mr. Evans has contributed a number of problems that have been submitted to him (which are printed in larger type than those from the Guide).—PUBLISHERS.

### Knotty Problems Relative to Batting

#### On stepping out of the batter's box.

How strictly do major league umpires enforce the rule that the batsman shall not step out of the box while in the act of hitting the ball? I refer to Rule 50, which states that an illegally batted ball is a ball batted by the batsman when either or both of his feet are upon the ground outside the lines of the batsman's position. For this offense, as I understand it, the batsman should be declared out.

Major league umpires do not enforce the rule to the letter. I have studied the batting positions closely and know that nine out of every ten batters have one foot or part of it outside of the lines when they connect with the ball. The batter's stride invariably drives him over the boundary lines. When it is merely a matter of inches it is overlooked. When the batter advances so



far out of position that both feet overstep the limit, he is always declared out. In the first case, the force of the swing is the reason; in the second case, it is invariably done to gain an undue advantage.

### **Ball seems to be fair but is foul.**

Batter hits ball back at the pitcher. It is a low liner that strikes the pitcher's rubber and rebounds back over the foul line midway between home and the plate, rolling into the players' bench. Runners were on second and third at the time and both scored, while the batsman went to second. Was that the proper ruling?

Strange as it may seem to some, the drive which rebounded off the rubber and into the players' bench was nothing more than an ordinary foul. The runners should have been sent back to their respective bases and the batter made to hit over. The definition of a fair hit ball says it must settle in fair territory between home and first, or home and third, or that is on fair ground when bounding to the outfield past first or third base. This particular ball settled on foul territory after bounding over the foul line and out of fair territory midway between home and first base.

### **Infield fly that strikes a runner.**

Runners are on first and second, one out, when the batter hits a high fly to the infield. The umpire ruled it an infield fly, which retired the batsman. A high wind was blowing, making it difficult to judge fly balls. In its descent the ball hit the base-runner, who was standing on second base. The umpire ruled him out for being

hit by a batted ball, which retired the side. Were the two rulings on the same hit correct?

The umpire in rendering two such rulings brought about conflicting situations. If he desired to call the batter out on the infield fly, he was perfectly within his rights. On such a play the base-runner, in order to avoid being doubled up, had a right to hold his base. If the umpire was of the opinion that the base-runner hit by the batted ball should be declared out, then he should not have enforced the infield fly rule, for when a base-runner is declared out for being hit by a batted ball, the batsman is entitled to first base. The umpire could have advanced a good reason for declaring either of the two out, but had no right to declare both out on the play.

### Once again the catcher interferes.

With the bases filled and two out, the batsman swings hard and sends up a pop foul fly to the third baseman for what appeared to be the third out. It so happened that the catcher tipped the bat of the batsman as he was about to hit the ball. What is the proper ruling on such a play?

Despite the fact that the batsman's effort was merely a foul fly that was caught did not change the situation. Since the catcher tipped the batter's bat, he created an interference, and such an act permits the batter to go to first, and allows all others to advance when forced. Since the bases were filled at the time, the runner on third scored and the other two runners moved up a base on a foul fly that was caught.

**The batsman and a base on balls.**

In the last half of the ninth, with two men out, and the score one to nothing against the home team, the batter hits for three bases. With the count three to two on the next batter, the pitcher uncorks a wild pitch for the fourth ball, which gets away from the catcher. The runner on third scores easily, while the batter scampered to first on four balls. In going from the plate to second, he failed to touch first in rounding that bag. The first baseman noticed the error, called for the ball and touched the bag. The umpire ruled the batter out, retiring the side. Does the run count?

Common sense would allow the run. It should count. It is impossible to make a force third out of the play at first, because the base on balls really entitled the batsman to first base. It is impossible to force a man at a base to which the rules state he is legally entitled.

**Failure to touch base spoils chances.**

In the last half of the ninth with the home team one run behind, things begin to happen. With two down the home team managed to get runners on first and third. The batsman hits safely to left. The runner on third jogged home with what appeared to be the tying run. In going from first to third, the runner originally on first failed to touch second. Both umpire and players had noticed the mistake. The shortstop, after calling for the ball, touched second, and the umpire ruled out the runner standing on third. Does the run count?

The run does not count. The failure to touch second made a force play at that base for the third out. The runner who went to third never legally touched second,

and the throwing of the ball to that base simply made a force play out of the situation, the ball beating the runner to the bag. Rule 59 states no run can be scored in which the third out is a force play.

### **Bonehead work on the coacher's part.**

Runner is on third, no one out, batter hits a ball to the left of the shortstop, who is forced to go nearly to second to get the grounder. Knowing proper base ball called for the runner on third to hold his base, he gave him little thought. He figured only on making a play at first. Just as he fielded the ball the shouts of his team mates caused him to look toward the plate, and he saw a visiting player running from third at full speed. He made a good throw to the plate, and the catcher touched out the visitor as he slid into the plate, the umpire rendering such a ruling. It then developed that the runner who had been thrown out at the plate was none other than the coacher from third. What about such a play?

The umpire should have declared out the runner originally on third. The rule governing this play states: if, while third base is occupied, the coacher stationed near the base shall run in the direction of home base, or near the base line, while the fielder is making or trying to make a play on a batted ball not caught on the fly, or a thrown ball, and thereby draws a throw to the home base, the base-runner shall be declared out for the coacher's interference,

### **Being hit by a slow pitched ball.**

If the batsman is hit by a slow pitched ball, which he plainly attempts to avoid, is he entitled to first base?

It is argued that on a slow pitched ball, the batsman is not entitled to first, even though it is impossible for him to get out of the way.

At one time failure of the batsman to get out of the way of a slow pitched ball did not entitle him to first. It was left to the umpire to determine whether or not the ball was a fast one or slow one. Under the present rules the batsman is entitled to first base if he is hit by any pitched ball at which he did not strike, unless in the opinion of the umpire he plainly made no effort to get out of the way of the pitched ball.

#### **To award first on fly that is caught.**

Batsman strikes at a pitched ball, his effort being a foul fly to the first baseman, which was caught by that player. In striking at the ball the catcher's glove came into contact with the player's bat, thereby interfering with him in getting his proper swing at the ball. What would have been the proper ruling?

The batsman is entitled to first base any time the catcher interferes with him in, or preventing him from striking at a pitched ball. The fact that the ball was a foul, also that it was caught, had no bearing upon the case. The batsman is entitled to first.

#### **Where ball first hits makes no difference on this play.**

Ball hits a yard foul about midway between first and home, and then slowly rolls onto fair territory, and is

picked up by the pitcher on fair territory about ten feet from the first base. Is the ball fair or foul?

The ball is fair. It makes no difference where the ball first strikes. It depends on the final resting place of the ball, provided it does not pass first or third base, and if it does, it depends in what territory it happened to be when it passed either base. Rule 44 clearly defines the happening.

### **Coacher pulls a bad piece of work.**

Two out, runner on first, last half of the ninth. Batter hit a short fly to right, which looked like an easy chance. Runner on first reached third and was rounding the bag for home when the coacher informed him the ball had fallen foul. The runner started to cut across the diamond to go back to first. His team mates finally made him understand the ball was fair. In the meantime the ball had been thrown to the third baseman. The runner originally on first realized there was no chance for him to reach third in safety, neither could he get to first, as the man who hit the ball was standing on that bag. He made a wild dash for second and reached it before being touched with the ball. He was later touched with the ball in the hands of the shortstop, while he was standing on the bag. Was the runner safe or out?

The runner was out, even though he was standing on second base when touched with the ball. Under Rule 52, the base-runner the moment he touched third base became the occupant of that bag. Getting back to second did not exempt him from being put out, third base alone insured him safety. It was a prize "bone" on the part of the coacher.



**Four interesting queries and the answers.**

Here are four queries from one fan, and as they are often asked, I will answer them all under one head.

1. With man on first and no one out, the batter strikes out, but ball gets away from the catcher. Catcher recovers ball and throws to second ahead of runner, who advances from first to second on the play. Fielder receiving ball touches base in advance of runner and then throws to first ahead of the batter who had struck out and run to first. How many are out?

2. Runner on first, batter hits ball to first baseman, who fields it and touches first, retiring the runner. He then throws the ball to the second baseman, who touches the base ahead of the runner. Is that sufficient, or must the runner be touched out on such a play?

3. Runner on third. Umpire calls a balk on pitcher. Can runner score from third?

4. Why does not the infield fly rule apply with a runner on first base only?

In Query 1, the runner is safe at second. It is not a force play. The batter is the only man out. Under the rules the batter is automatically out when he strikes out with first base occupied, and less than two out, whether the catcher holds the third strike or not.

In Query 2, the runner is also safe at second. The moment the first baseman touched first and retired the batter, he removed the force at second, making it necessary to touch out the runner.

In Query 3, the runner on third has a right to score. On a balk all base-runners are entitled to advance.



In Query 4, I would say no infield fly is declared with a runner on first for the reason that there is never a chance for a double play, if the batsman runs out his hit.

### **Batting out of turn.**

When it came time for the sixth batter in the list to go to the plate the seventh man went to bat in his place and made a hit; then No. 6 discovered the mistake and went to bat, whereupon the umpire called him out for batting out of turn. Should not No. 7 come back to bat, since No. 6 was out, or should he stay on first as a result of his hit?

Batsman No. 6 was out for not batting in his turn. If this is the third man out the proper batsman in the next inning is the player who would have come to bat had the players been put out by ordinary play in the preceding inning; No. 7 would thus come up again, to bat in his regular turn. If not the third man out, the game stands as it is being played, with No. 6 out and No. 7 is the next batter.

### **Another version of alleged force-out.**

Runner on first base when batter hits for three bases; batter being faster than the other man, he reaches third base before man ahead gets home; ball is thrown to catcher, who touches home base before runner gets there and umpire calls runner out, claiming a force; this decision was disputed and broke up the game; give correct decision.

The umpire's ruling was absurd. Very frequently a slow runner is ahead of two speedy ones. There is no reason why a force can exist because one man can run faster than another. As repeatedly stated, there is no force play in Base Ball except it begins by the batter pushing the next runner, the next two runners or the next three runners ahead of him.

### **This rule seems to vex almost all young players.**

A base-runner running from second to home on a two-base hit goes more than three feet outside of the base line between third base and home. Should he not be called out?

The runner is never out on such a play for running out of line unless he runs out of line to avoid a fielder who stands on the baseline waiting to touch him with the ball. When a man is going at top speed from second base to home it is simply impossible for him to remain within a three-foot line. What seems to mislead almost all in regard to this rule (Rule 56, Section 7) is that they overlook this clause: "He runs more than three feet from a direct line between a base and the next one in regular or reverse order to avoid being touched by a ball in the hands of a fielder." If it is not done to avoid a fielder, the runner can gallop as hard as he likes in a wide circle to try to get his run over the plate. As a matter of fact—and it is a point young base-runners should bear in mind—the greater the detour the runner makes, the more he is handicapping himself. The closer he can adhere to the circuit of the bases, the less ground he has to cover.

### **When the infield fly rule is applied.**

One out; man on first base and man on third base; batter hits infield fly which by ordinary playing could be caught. Is it compulsory for the batter to run to first base and the man on first to try for second?

The infield fly rule does not apply under the conditions outlined. First and second, or first, second and third must be occupied before the rule can apply. In case the batsman did not run out the hit, or the runner on first held that base, the fielder had the opportunity to drop the ball, throw it to second and so to first for a double play.

### **Foul strike or foul ball.**

Batsman in dodging pitched ball, accidentally lets it hit his bat, and ball falls on foul territory. Is it a foul strike or a ball?

Foul strike, if first or second strike; foul otherwise.

### **The infield fly.**

If the bases are full and the batter hits an infield fly, is the batter forced out, or can the runners advance if the infielder drops the fly?

The batter is not "forced" out, but is out automatically, if the umpire calls an infield fly. The situation as regards the runners differs according to whether the American or National rule is being observed. In the American the runners must hold bases until the ball is either caught or dropped—until the play on the ball is completed—then they can advance. In the National they can advance and, if the ball is dropped, keep going, but if caught must return to bases and then advance if they can, same as on any fly catch.

### **Rule 53, section 4, covers what should be done.**

Batter has two strikes and three balls. The next pitched ball strikes batsman on the arm. Umpire called it "dead ball" and brought the batsman to bat over, calling it neither ball nor strike, on the grounds that he tried purposely to get hit. Was umpire right or wrong in his ruling, and is there any specific rule in the book covering this particular play?

See Rule 30 and Rule 31. For every fairly delivered ball the umpire must call a strike; if unfairly delivered he must call a ball. If the ball was fairly delivered and the player purposely got in the way of it, the umpire should have called him out on three strikes. If it was unfairly delivered, he must have his base on balls. All balls that hit batsman are dead balls.

### **If he had hit the ball he would have been out, because he was not within the lines of his position.**

Batter runs toward the pitcher out of the batter's box and strikes at the ball but misses it. Is he out?

He is not, if he failed to bat the ball.

**Note the words in italic.**

If a batsman *in his box* hits a ball, which struck fair, and the ball bounces up and hits him while he is still in his box, is the batsman out?

No; foul ball.

**Catcher should remain in his position.**

Three on bases and two out; two strikes and three balls on the batter; man on third starts home with the pitch and batter steps back out of the box; catcher steps ahead of the plate and tags runner out. Does not the catcher have a right to step ahead of the plate and catch the ball after the batter steps out of the box? Would the runner be out or safe?

The pitch was a legal delivery and as such the catcher must take it within his lines; technically he has interfered with the batter, whatever the latter may have done. In the American League the batter would go to first and the runner would have to score on the grounds of catcher's interference with batter; in the National they would call it a "catcher's balk" and move everybody up, presumably sending the batter to first also because of interference. While the National League's interpretation does not strictly conform with the rules, it is the best solution based on fair play.

**Batter can be removed any time.**

Sixth inning; batter has taken two strikes, when team captain halts game, takes batter out and sends in substitute, who takes third strike and is out. Is this in accordance with rules?

Yes, batter can be removed at any time.

**It is not too late.**

If, when a batter has two strikes and two balls charged against him, it is found that he is batting out of turn, is he out, or does the rule mean that the right batter shall be substituted immediately if the mistake is discovered?

The rule says the right batter shall be substituted at once.

**Depends on where it stops before reaching first or third bases.**

Batter bunts the ball on fair ground; it rolls foul and then back inside the diamond before reaching third base. He hits another ball to foul ground, and it rolls on fair ground before reaching third base and remains there. What are these two hits?

Both hits are fair.

**Must show exactly where rule was violated.**

After a baseman has called the attention of the umpire to the fact that he should watch all of the bases when a batter seems to have made a three-base hit or a home run, should the umpire call the batter out if he fails, for instance, to touch second base?

Not unless the fielding side makes a play on second base showing that someone knows the batter forgot to touch second on his way around the bases.

### **Umpire certainly did not understand "infield fly" rule.**

With men on first and second and one out, batsman hits a foul fly between third and home and the shortstop tries to catch the ball but drops it. The umpire rules the batsman out, under the infield fly rule. Was he right?

Rule 51, Section 8, says: "The batsman is out if, before two hands are out, while first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied, he hit a fly ball, other than a line drive, that can be handled by an infielder. In such case the umpire shall, as soon as the ball be hit, declare it an infield or outfield fly." It is very evident that this rule is intended to apply where there is a possibility of a double play. As there could be no double play on a trapped foul fly, the umpire was wrong.

### **When batter can change from right to left, or vice versa.**

Batter after having one strike called on him changed to opposite side of plate, while pitcher had ball but was not in box ready to pitch. Was batter out? Also, batter turned his back to pitcher and refused to swing at ball, but did not leave batter's box; umpire called him out. Was umpire's decision correct? While batter is standing with his back to the plate, pitcher delivers ball which hits him, though he tried to get out of the way of it. Is batter out or is he entitled to his base?

Batter can change to opposite side of plate if he does it before pitcher is in position to pitch. Fact that batter turns his back to plate or pitcher does not penalize him. Umpire should call ball or strike, as the case may be, and if he attempted to get out of the way of a pitched ball and still was hit he should be given his base, but it hardly seems reasonable that a batter acting in such a manner made a real try to avoid being hit. It would be for the umpire to say. In either case, however, the umpire has no authority to call the batsman out.

### **A play often misunderstood.**

In running the last half of the distance from home plate to first base, while the ball is being fielded to first base, can the runner step outside the three-foot limit line?

Yes; as long as his doing so does not interfere with the play at first base.

### **Batter hitting ball intended to catch base-runner.**

Pitcher standing in his box with ball in his possession; batter in position and runner on third; runner on third starts for home, pitcher throws ball to catcher to retire runner, but batters hits ball. Who is out, providing batter makes safe hit? In order to call batter out for interference must pitcher step out of his box to throw home? Is it a balk to step into pitcher's box without ball in possession, providing no motion is made to pitch?

No one out. Yes. No, but not good base ball. The balk rule is lax on this point. When pitcher gets on rubber he is supposed to be ready to pitch, yet he can't pitch without the ball, which is surely deception. The rule should be changed.

**Batter cannot change while pitcher is in act of delivery.**

With three balls and two strikes against the batter, the latter, who is hitting from the right side of the plate, goes over to the left as the pitcher delivers the ball. The batter thinks it will be the fourth ball and keeps on toward first base. Is he not out under the rule which forbids the batter to go from one box to the other while the pitcher is in the act of delivering the ball?

He certainly is. He has no right to change his position on the theory that the pitcher is delivering a bad ball. He must wait until the umpire says it is a bad ball.

**Steal is allowed on a foul tip.**

If the batter makes a foul tip and the base-runner on first has stolen second at the same time is the steal allowed?

It is. A foul tip caught by a catcher is the equivalent of a strike.

**Batter must become a base-runner to start a force play.**

A runner is on third base and a runner on second base. The runner on second base leads too far off the base and the runner from third tries to score. The second baseman throws the ball to the catcher, who stands on home plate, but does not try to touch the runner from third, who succeeds in returning to that base. Is not the runner from third base out, because he is forced, and is it not true that the catcher does not have to touch him?

The runner from third base is not forced, and if he is to be put out he must be touched by the ball in the hand of the catcher. If he succeeds in returning to third base without being touched, and if the runner from second base returns to that base without being touched, neither of them is out. No force play can result in base ball except that it begins by the batter becoming a base-runner.

**The batter receives credit for a safe hit nevertheless.**

If two hands are out and a runner from first base to second base is hit by a batted ball, is the batter credited with a base hit, even though it is the third out?

The batter always receives a base hit, no matter what the status of the game may be, if a runner is hit by a batted ball.

**Look out for the infield fly.**

Three men on bases; one man out; the squeeze play is attempted, but the batter hits a pop fly which is caught by the pitcher; the umpire rules the batter out on an infield fly; the pitcher, after catching the ball, throws it to third base before the runner who was formerly on that base could return.

The ruling has always been that runners must retouch their bases on an infield fly, same as on any other fly-ball catch. Therefore the runner would be out if, after the catch, the ball be thrown to the base before the runner could return.

**Walking into a pitched ball.**

Batter is hit by pitched ball; opposing side claims he intentionally walked into ball and umpire calls it a strike. Should it be called a ball or should batter be called out or allowed to take his base?

If batter swung at it or if it was over the plate and a fair pitch it would be a strike; otherwise a ball. Batter is not out for allowing ball to hit him, unless he does so in a manner to interfere with catcher making a play.

**Batter had already reached first safely, but was ambitious.**

With two hands out and a runner on second base the batter hits safely to right field. He is put out trying for a two-base hit, but the runner scores. Does the run count?

It does, if the runner crossed home before the runner from first base to second base was put out.

**Base runner is entitled to the next base.**

If there should be a runner on first base who started to steal second as the fourth ball was about to be pitched and who was touched by the second baseman before he could touch second base after the umpire had announced "ball four," would the base-runner be out?

No; when the fourth ball is announced it entitles the runner on first to second base.

**If there had been already two out the batter would get credit for a base hit, but not for a home run.**

If a runner is on second base and the batter hits for a home run, does the runner on second score if the umpire decides that he failed to touch third base on his way home?

He does not.

**Runner must actually touch the plate.**

If in sliding to home plate the base-runner should not be touched out by the catcher and at the same time should roll over the catcher's body, which is over home plate, is the runner out if the catcher can tag him before he can get his foot or some part of his body on home plate?

He is.

**Carelessness of base-runner robs batter of credit for a hit.**

Runner on first base, batter triples, man on first scores, but is called out for cutting second. Does batter get credit for a hit?

If there were two out when batter tripled, he cannot be credited with the hit. Base-runner's failure to touch second was same as though he had been forced out at that base. In case no one, or but one, was out, then credit would be given for the hit, as only a man who was on base could be declared out for his failure to touch second.



### **When a foul tip is not a foul tip.**

Batter had two strikes and two balls, the next ball delivered was fouled off, going on a direct line to the catcher, who could not get his hands up in time to stop it. Ball went down between the breast protector and the catcher's body. Umpire said batter was entitled to another strike, as the ball was not legally caught. Was he right?

Batsman was not out and was entitled to another chance to hit the ball. It was not a foul tip as defined by Rule 46, because it was not "legally caught." Section 3 of Rule 51, defining "When Batsman is Out," specifically states under what conditions a batsman is out on a foul, but also makes the following exception: "Provided it be not caught in a fielder's cap, protector, pocket or other part of his uniform," etc.

### **The umpire had read his rule book.**

Runner on third; man at bat tries to squeeze the runner home; he strikes at the ball and misses it; the ball hits the batsman and the runner on the way home is touched by the catcher. The umpire sends the runner back to third and calls a strike on the batter. Is this right?

Sure.

### **Catch finished it, as far as play from batter was concerned.**

Runners on first and third; with one out, batsman hits outfield fly, which is caught; man on third scores after catch, but man on first is caught before he gets back, making third out on the play. Does run count?

Run certainly counts if man from third crosses plate before play at first retiring the side is completed.

### **Penalty goes, if there was contact between glove and ball.**

Infielder threw glove at batted ball; umpire gave runner three bases; game protested, claiming Section 6, Rule 54, does not apply, as glove did not stop ball.

Rule is in force if glove touched the ball, regardless of whether it stopped ball or not.

### **A strike is a strike, even if it is a foul tip.**

Can a base-runner steal second base when a foul tip is made which is also the second strike?

He can, if the ball is caught, as a foul tip is a strike under the ruling laid down by the Rules Committee.

### **The rule is not interpreted literally under these circumstances.**

With two strikes against him the batter strikes at the next ball. Thinking it is caught, he takes two steps toward the bench; then discovering that the catcher missed the ball, runs in safety to first base. Can he be called out for running out of the line?

No; he was safe.



### **Where the umpire was in error; batter was out.**

Batter hits line drive to pitcher, who stops the ball with one hand and it rolls a short distance and touches the umpire. The pitcher picks up the ball and throws the batter out at first, but the umpire calls the runner safe. Is that ruling correct?

No. Read Rule 54, Section 1, as follows: "The base-runner shall be entitled without liability to be put out to advance a base if a fair hit ball strike the person or clothing of the umpire or a base-runner on fair ground before touching a fielder." The ball first touched a fielder and was at once in play and could be fielded upon recovery to any portion of the diamond. This rule has often been incorrectly interpreted.

### **Plays hinging on the infield fly.**

Runners were on first, second and third bases, with one out; batter knocked infield fly, which umpire called while the ball was in the air; second baseman caught fly and tagged the runner at second, who was off the bag. Should this runner be called out, or was the play completed when umpire called "infield fly, batter out"? With a runner on first and second bases, the batter missed the last strike, which the catcher dropped, umpire calling batter out. Can a double play be made in such a case, that is, catcher to third to first, after missing last strike?

Runner was out at second, the play being the same as on any other fly ball, except that batter is automatically out. Batsman is out (see Rule 51, Section 6); if the man on second base attempted to steal third on third strike and was touched out a double play could not be made on the theory that the runner on second is forced at third. The batsman is automatically out, removing the force.

### **Umpire was not up on the rules.**

With runner on third, batter swings at ball but the catcher's glove was in the way of the bat and the bat hit the ball and the glove together, the ball rolling foul. The umpire allowed the runner to score from third. Was he right?

No. If the catcher interfered, the batter was allowed to take first base, but unless a force play followed, because runners were on third, second and first, the runner on third could not be allowed to advance.

## Knotty Problems Relative to the Base-Runner

### Failure to touch first causes trouble.

The score is five to four against the home team, it is the last half of the ninth and a runner is on second and two men out. With three balls and two strikes on the batter, the pitcher threw a low spit ball at which the batter swung and missed. The ball got away from the catcher and rolled a considerable distance. The coacher at first noticed this and urged the batter to try for second. On recovering the ball the catcher threw badly to second. During the mixup, the runner originally on second scored, while the batsman continued on to third and eventually scored, when a bad peg was made to that base. At this stage the first baseman, who had been frantically yelling for the ball, made it known that the batsman who had struck out had missed first base in making the circuit. Getting the ball he touched first base. The umpire declared the batter out. Does the run scored by the man originally on second stand?

The run does not score. The failure of the batsman who had struck out to touch first base made the play at that base a force third out, and on such plays no runs can score.

### Man apparently scored but didn't.

Two are out in the last half of the ninth, and the score is 9 to 1 against the home team. The batter singles. He steals second and third unmolested on the first two balls pitched. Since his run had no direct bearing on the

result, no attention was paid to his efforts. Some wag in the bleachers suggested he steal home. Acting on the suggestion he dashed for the plate as the pitcher started his windup. The pitcher decided to let him complete the theft and purposely continued to wind up, until the runner slid across the plate in safety. Before he actually delivered the ball to the batter, the runner who had stolen home was half way to the bench. The batsman hit the ball when it was finally delivered and went out on a fly to left field, which retired the side and ended the game. Does the run count?

The run does not count. The play is based on Rule 59, which relates to the scoring of runs. A clause in this rule states, a run shall not be scored, if after touching the first three bases, the runner comes home from third on a play in which the third man is forced out, or is put out before reaching first. The start of the play was when the pitcher started the windup, the completion was the fly to the outfield, which was caught, thus making the batter out before he reached first base.

### **Advancing bases on fly that is juggled.**

Runners are on second and third, one man is out, batter hits fly to deep left field. Runner on third believes fly will be caught and holds his base, runner on second does not think ball will be caught and starts for third as soon as it is hit. The moment the ball strikes the fielder's hands, the runner on third starts for home. The ball bounds out of the fielder's hands, but he recovers it before it falls to the ground. By a swift accurate throw he manages to get the ball to second before the original occupant of that bag can get back, thereby retiring him

for the second out. The ball was then thrown to the third baseman and a triple play claimed, since the runner originally on that base had left the bag before the ball was actually caught. Was a triple play made, or did the run scored from third count?

It was not a triple play, and the run scored from third counted. The moment a fly ball strikes the hands of a fielder, the base-runner has a right to advance, if he has held his base. Otherwise a fielder could juggle a ball as long as he desired, and all the time be rushing in to the infield.

### **This play was not a force third out.**

The bases are filled, two are out, batter hits a short fly to left field on which each runner advances a base. The runner who advanced from first to second on the hit was in an excellent position to see the catch. Evidently he thought the left fielder had made a legal catch that made the third out, for he left second and started for first base, his position on the team. In the meantime the batsman had reached first, the runner on second had gone to third, while the man on third had gone home. The umpire ruled that the fielder had trapped the ball, not caught it. The players on the team at bat finally made the runner who had left second, realize the decision, but before he could get back he was tagged out. Did the run count?

The run counted. The third out made at second base was not a force out, as the team in the field contended. The runner having once touched second base became the occupant of that base, thereby eliminating any possibility of a force play. He left the base at his own peril after having become the possessor of it.

**Runner was entitled to score.**

In the ninth inning, with the score a tie, two men out and a runner on second, the batsman singled sharply to left field. The runner on second, away to a good start, decided to try and score on the hit. The left fielder made a perfect throw to the plate, which had the runner beaten a considerable distance. The runner slid into the plate at full speed. It so happened that the ball took a last bad bound and hopped over the catcher's head. The pitcher of the team in the field was backing up the play. The catcher decided the one thing to do was to keep the runner from touching the plate. He set himself squarely in front of the plate to carry out that idea. Runner and catcher became tangled up and due to the rough actions of the catcher, the runner was tagged out by the pitcher before he was able to touch the plate. Was the runner out or should the score have been allowed?

The runner should have been allowed to score. Under Section 5 of Rule 54, the runner is entitled to advance a base when the obstruction of a fielder prevents him from making a base, unless latter has ball in his hand ready to touch runner.

**The run certainly did count.**

With the score a tie, team at bat fills bases with two down. With the count three balls and two strikes on the batter, the runners very properly started to advance at top speed, as the pitcher began his windup. The pitch was wide, making the fourth ball. The runner coming home from third seeing the pitch was a ball, slowed up and merely walked toward the plate. The runner originally on second slightly overran third on reaching that bag. A snap throw from the catcher retired him, making the third out. The third out was made before the runner

from third had actually crossed the plate. Does the run count?

The run counts. The base on balls to the batter with the bases filled, entitled the runner on third to score. It made no difference whether he had actually crossed the plate or not before the third out was made.

**Once again runner must be touched.**

One out, runners on first and second, batsman strikes out, but ball gets away from catcher. Catcher recovers ball and throws to third ahead of runner, who advanced from second, but fielder does not touch runner with the ball. Is the runner out, and are runners forced to advance on such a play?

According to Section 6 of Rule 51, unless two men are already out, the batsman is out if a third strike is called on him when first base is occupied by a runner. Thus, in the above case, the batsman was automatically out when the third strike was called, regardless of the fact that it was not held by the catcher. In such a case runners are not forced to advance; they did so at their own peril. The fact that the ball arrived at third ahead of the runner was not enough to retire him; it was necessary to touch him out.

**Fielder had a chance to make play.**

Runner is on second, batter hits a ball to the shortstop. It is a hard hit ball. One is out at the time. The runner on second starts for third, believing the fielder will not get the ball. The ball gets away from the fielder after he gets it squarely in his hands, and rolls about ten

feet away. The shortstop starts after it and the runner collides with him. The decision was that the runner was out because of interference with the shortstop in fielding the ball. Was that proper?

Once the fielder had a chance to make a play on the ball, it killed any chance for an interference play, when the shortstop collided with him as he pursued the ball. If such interference plays were allowed, infielders after making an error on a ball would always purposely try to collide with a runner in order to atone for the mis-play.

#### **Fielder always has right of way.**

Batsman hits foul fly that comes down near the bench of his team mates. First baseman makes a play on the ball. Just as the player is about to complete the catch, one of the players tosses out a bat, which strikes the feet of the first baseman with considerable force. He gets the ball squarely in his hands, but drops it, due no doubt to the action of one of the players, who hit him with the bat. The umpire ruled the batsman out. Was he right?

The umpire was perfectly correct in his ruling. The fielder always has the right of way. The action of a player on the bench in striking the fielder with his bat while about to make the catch, certainly constituted an interference.

#### **Fielder touched the wrong man.**

With runners on second and third and one out, the batsman hit to the shortstop, who threw home to head off the runner from third. The runner from second went to third and the batsman to second in the runup. It



so happened that the runner originally on third managed to get back to that base in safety, which created the familiar situation of two runners standing on the same bag at the same time. The third baseman, last to handle the ball, touched with the ball the original occupant of the bag. He then tossed the ball to the pitcher. The moment he did, the runner at third dashed for the plate. He reached it in safety. Was he out or entitled to score?

With two men standing on third, at the same time, the original occupant was the only one exempt from being put out. The third baseman erred in touching the original occupant, he should have touched the runner who advanced from second. No one was out, and the runner who had been touched had a perfect right to score.

### Scores on a freak squeeze play.

One out, runner on third, squeeze play is called for. Runner dashes for plate on the pitch, while batter bunts a pop fly in the direction of third. Almost before the ball had met the bat, the runner from third slid safely across the plate. The shortstop made the play on the ball. The coacher believed he would get it and double up runner originally on third. The runner who had crossed the plate, started back to third. The shortstop failed to catch the ball, but got it on the first bound. He tossed it to the third sacker, who touched out the runner, who had once reached the plate, as he slid back into third. What about the play?

It is a peculiar case, yet, an exactly similar one came up in the American League. It was held that the runner who once reached the plate actually scored. The moment he touched the plate he scored, and what happened later had no bearing on the case. Rule 59 covers the play.

**Runner from third is out.**

Runner is on third, one man is out, squeeze play is called for. The batsman fails to connect and the runner from third would have easily been retired had not the batsman interfered with the catcher in making the play and prevented him from doing so. What would have been the proper ruling, should the batsman or base-runner be declared out, because of the interference?

In this case the runner from third should have been declared out. Section 15 of Rule 56 specifically states, the base-runner is out if with one or no one out and a base-runner on third, the batsman interferes with the play being made at the plate. The idea is to inflict the penalty that will be the most severe, and the calling out of the base-runner kills the chance of a possible score. With two men out and the same play comes up, the batter is made to suffer and he is the one declared out, retiring the side.

**Was necessary to touch the runner.**

Runner on first, one out, three balls and two strikes on the batter. On the next pitch the runner starts for second. The batter swings and misses the third strike. The catcher makes a perfect throw to second and retires the runner trying to steal. The ball at which the batter swung for the third strike was close and inside. It just grazed his uniform as he struck out. What was the proper ruling? The team in the field claimed a double play.

The batsman is out, if, while attempting a third strike, the ball touch any part of the batsman's person. In all such cases base-runners cannot advance. The umpire

should have declared the batsman out and sent the runner, who had apparently been retired, back to first, the base he occupied when the play started.

### **On passing a preceding runner.**

Runner on first, one out, batter hits a deep drive to right field. Runner believes fly will be caught and stops half way between first and second. Batsman feels certain the ball will go safe and tears around the bases at full speed. He passes runner originally on first, while running from first to second. Batsman who hit the ball was able to complete the circuit on the drive, as the fielder was unable to make the catch. What should have been the ruling?

Even though the batsman apparently made a home run, he was out the moment he passed a preceding runner between first and second. This play is covered in Section 16 of Rule 56.

### **Intent cannot be considered in interference plays.**

The bases are filled, two men are out and the batsman hits the ball to the shortstop. The base-runner very properly runs behind the fielder, in order not to in any way interfere. The shortstop gets set for the ball, just as the runner is in the act of passing him from the rear. The fielder at that very moment decides that if he takes another step backward he will be in a better position to handle the ball. The step is fatal, it results in a collision between fielder and base-runner, both falling to the ground. All three runners score and the batter reaches second. What was the proper ruling on this play?

The umpire should have called the runner going to third out for interference. The fielder always has the right of

way and while he may have directly been the cause of the collision, it was the duty of the base-runner to avoid him. In all plays of interference, the intent cannot be considered.

### **More about the infield fly rule.**

Runners on first and second; batted ball hits umpire and runner from second scores and runner from first goes to third; umpire calls batter safe and calls runners back to bases they started for. Runner on first; batter hits infield fly to second baseman, and runner from first was touched on second base; umpire calls this runner back to first base and batter out under infield fly rule.

In the first instance umpire was right; there can be no advance further than to make room for the batter. In the second question umpire misinterpreted infield fly rule, as is plain enough if rule is read. Batter was out if fly ball was caught and runner from first would be out if he left base before ball was caught.

### **Runner can turn in either direction.**

Runner on third, two out; batter gets a hit and runner from third scores, but batter after reaching first safely turns wrong way and ball is put on him. Does run count?

There is no such thing as runner turning wrong way after overrunning first. He can return to first no matter which way he turns, so long as he does not attempt to advance. In any event, the run would count, presuming it had crossed the plate before batter had been put out after reaching first safely and he could only be put out under circumstances stated.

### **Runner should not be penalized if umpire is hit.**

Runner attempted to steal second base; catcher's throw hits umpire and umpire sends runner back to first. Was decision right? Runner attempts to steal third; catcher's throw hits bat of batter, who is in his box; umpire sends runner back to second. Was this decision right?

Thrown ball that hits umpire is still in play and umpire who sent runner back was wrong. If there was no interference on part of batter would hold this a bad throw on part of catcher, just as if he had hit a runner. If batter interfered and was at fault he would be out and runner would be sent back.

### **What has third strike to do with third base?**

With a base-runner on third base the batter strikes out and the team in the field claims that the runner on third base is out and the batter safe because the third strike is dropped by the catcher.

Nonsense. That is the wrong application of a rule which has nothing to do with third base but with first base.

**Stupid base running causes a lot of trouble.**

Runners on second and third when batter hits a home run. Runner from second failed to touch third base, and when the ball was held on the base the umpire called him out and also called out the player who hit the home run for passing the preceding base-runner. Was umpire right?

No. The player who made the home run had no knowledge that the runner from second had failed to touch third base. The decision at third base could not have been except on appeal. Read Rule 57. The man who failed to touch third base came within the "legally put out" clause the moment that he failed to touch the base. In other words, he was automatically legally put out when he did fail to touch the base. Yet if the opposing side did not claim the put out it could not be made, which protects the man making the home run. Conversely, the side at bat could score because a run could not be decided as not having scored when it was uncertain that the neglect of the runner to touch third base had been observed by either side.

**A foul tip is not a "foul."**

Two strikes on batter and on the next pitch he is out on a foul tip, held by the catcher; runner steals base on the strike-out, but umpire says he cannot advance on foul and sends him back. Was decision correct?

Umpire was wrong; a foul tip is not a foul, but merely continuation of strike, and ball is still in play and bases can be run on it the same as if ball had not been tipped by bat.

**This is a query that is often asked.**

Can the runner turn either side of first base when running from home plate?

Yes, unless he makes a direct turn toward second and gives indication of trying to make that base. In that event he is subject to being put out.

**Once more the force play commands attention.**

Runner on first base and the batter bats the ball to the second baseman, who attempted to touch the runner from first between first and second. The runner stopped on the line, however, and the second baseman then threw the ball to the first baseman, retiring the batter. The first baseman then threw the ball to the shortstop at second base. The ball reached the shortstop ahead of the runner, but the fielder failed to touch the runner. Was the latter out and could he return to first under such a play?

He was not out. He could return to first. The moment that the batter was put out at first there was no longer a force play and the runner who had been at first was at liberty to go where he pleased, so long as he was not touched by some one who had the ball in his hand. There never can be a force play on the field after the batter is first put out. This seems to be the one question which bothers all young players and some old ones. It is argued about constantly, yet it must be evident that when the batter is retired base-runners can move at their will on the base lines.

### **When a runner is out while standing on his base.**

With a runner on third, batter hits a slow bounding ball down third base line. Runner returns to and stands squarely on bag. The third baseman, realizing that he cannot retire the batter at first, allows the ball to roll, thinking it may go foul. The ball rolls to the third-base bag, hits it and, bounding up, strikes the runner, who is declared out under the rule of being hit by a batted ball.

Under the provisions of Section 12 of Rule 56 base-runner was out. The fact that the runner is standing on the base does not alter the rule. For instance, three men might be on bases and two out and the runner standing on first or third might be hit with a fairly batted ball and prevent the fielder from making a play, thus scoring a run, which would certainly be wrong.

### **No possible reason for calling the runners out in this case.**

Runners on first and second when batter hits foul; pitcher gets ball and steps behind plate, then throws over first base; runners, thinking the ball is in play with pitcher in position, advance one base each on his bad throw; first baseman returns ball to pitcher, who steps into position and then throws ball to first and second; one umpire calls runners out and the other umpire sends them back to bases.

The umpire who sent runners back to bases originally held is the one who gave the only sensible decision. Ball was not in play until held by pitcher in position and "play" called by umpire behind plate. Whatever an erratic pitcher may have done with the ball before it is in play does not matter unless the umpire wants to fine him for delaying the game.

### **Base-runner struck by thrown ball while running him down.**

Base-runner is caught between first and second; in running him down, as he nears second base, the ball is thrown to the second baseman, but it strikes the runner on the back of the neck, stunning him, so that he falls over second base, where he is touched by the second baseman, and called out by the umpire; runner maintains he is not out, as time should have been called by the umpire immediately upon his being knocked out.

If he was on the base he was safe; if not, he was out.

### **Runner is out, but it is a base hit for batsman.**

Three men on base, with two out. Batter hits the ball, which hits the base-runner, off third, making three out. Is the batter to be credited with a hit?

Rule is plain on the point, and says: "In all cases where a base-runner is retired by being hit by a batted ball, unless batted by himself, the batsman should be credited with a base hit."

### **Can the coacher make believe to run from third base to home plate?**

No. See Rule 56, Sec. 19.



### **Runner can take the chance.**

Are runners permitted to advance under the following circumstances: while first and second bases are occupied by runners before two men are out, the batter hits an infield fly which is not caught?

In the National League the runners on first and second bases may advance at their own risk. After a batsman has been declared out on the infield fly, the play is just the same as on any other fly ball.

### **The "force rule" explained once more.**

One man out; runner on first base and runner on second base; pitcher throws to shortstop at second base; base-runner at second sees he has no chance to get back, so he starts for third. While he is being run up and down the line the runner on first leaves that base and runs to second base, on which he stands. Center fielder comes in and stands beside him to take part in the play, if necessary. Base-runner who has been on second is returning to second, and ball is thrown to center fielder. As he catches the ball the runner coming back to the base falls. Center fielder touches the base-runner standing on second (the man who had come from first) and then steps off the base and touches the base-runner who had been on second originally, as the latter is picking himself up. Umpire decides a double play. Is he correct?

Under Rule 56, Section 9, runner was not out. He was entitled to second base until forced off by return of base-runner from third. This man could not be called out while standing on the base. If both runners were occupying second base, the runner from first would be the one to be declared out.

### **One runner cannot force the preceding runner off his base.**

Runners on second and third; batter hits to shortstop and runner from second goes to third, forcing runner off there; shortstop throws to plate and catcher, thinking it forced run, does not tag runner, but throws to first to catch batter; runner that had touched third goes back to second; umpire calls runner going from third to home out. Was he correct? Runners on second and third; runner on second forces runner off third base; this runner stops on line on way to plate, and catcher, who gets ball, thinks he has given up and throws ball to first base; runner then comes in and touches plate; umpire calls him out. Was he correct?

To start with, get clear in your head that there has been no "force" of runner off third base in either case. One runner cannot force another off his base except to make room for the batter at first. In your first question the runner from third has legally scored, if he was not tagged, and the fact that he scores makes runner from second legal occupant of third base, provided he held base when runner that left it scored. In that case he has no right to run bases in reverse order and return to second and could be tagged out any place off third base. In the second case, there is no such thing as "giving up" on bases, and if runner coming in from third was not tagged his score counts. Umpire was wrong in both decisions.



**If two were out, it was a force at first.**

First and second bases occupied; batter strikes out and catcher lets third strike get away; batter goes to first base, but neither of other runners left their bases.

The rule is perfectly plain. If less than two were already out the batter is out, whether the catcher held the ball or not.

**Runner certainly was entitled to return to first base.**

Runner on first base and batter hits grounder to pitcher; runner on first runs about two feet off first base. Pitcher throws the ball to first baseman, who touches his base and throws to second. Runner, instead of going to second, returns to first base. Was he entitled to do so?

As soon as the batsman was retired at first base, the force play was lost and therefore the runner could return to first safely.

**Everyone can run, at his own risk, of course.**

Two men on base, second and third; one out. Batter receives four balls, but catcher misses last ball. Is the man on third entitled to score on passed ball or does he remain on third?

Man on third is entitled to score on the passed ball, provided he can do so. If catcher misses fourth ball, runners on bases, as well as batsman who was passed, can go as far as they can.

**This is a puzzler to many, yet perfectly reasonable.**

With a runner on second and one on third, and no one out, runner on third tries to steal home and is caught between home and third, the runner from second goes to third and is touched by the third baseman while standing on the third base. Who is entitled to the base?

As soon as the preceding runner started to steal home, the runner from second secured a tentative right to third base, which protected him until the runner who had the legal right to that base returned to it. Hence, if both runners while on third base were touched with the ball, the runner from second would be out, for the reason that he had lost his tentative right to that base on the return to it of the preceding runner.

**Runner took all the risk.**

With a man on third and second, the runner on second, who had taken a lead toward third, was not given time enough to return to his base when the batter failed to hit the ball fair. He contended that he was entitled to go to third, which, of course, would have forced in a run. The rules state very clearly that a runner shall be entitled to take the succeeding base without being put out in case the pitcher does not give him time to return to the base he had occupied.

This rule regarding runners has been clearly misunderstood in the above instance. The pitcher was foolish not to see that the runner had not returned to second, and if the runner continued to go to third he did so at his own risk. See Sec. 13 of Rule 56.

**There was no force-out at home plate.**

Bases full, no one out and the third strike is called on batter; catcher drops ball and immediately picks up ball and touches home plate, then tags batter and throws to first baseman, who tags first base-runner who is returning to first base; umpire calls batter out (I suppose by Rule 51, Section 6) and man tagged while not in contact with first base out; players in the field claimed three men out, third base-runner also, asserting that third base-runner was forced.

Umpire was right; batsman and man caught off first base are out.

**The rule is inexorable, and it does seem unjust in this particular instance.**

With a runner on second, the batter hits the ball to left field. The coacher at third base touches the runner, but the ball bounds into the bleachers for a home run. Should the umpire call the first runner out because he has been touched by the coacher?

An ironclad decision was agreed upon by those in authority that any runner touched at any time by a coacher at third base must be declared out, but this was later modified (1916) by allowing a coacher at third base to touch or hold a runner, as long as, in the opinion of the umpire, he does not physically assist him in returning to or leaving third base and only after all chance for a play on the runner ceased.

**Umpire should read Rule 59.**

With a runner on second and one on third and one out, a fly ball is batted to the left fielder. Runner on second starts for third. The runner on third holds the base until the ball is caught and runs home. The coacher sends the runner back to second who had started for third. He is caught out at second for the third out. Before this takes place the runner from third has reached home. Does his run count? The umpire said not.

**Yes.**

## Knotty Problems Relative to Pitching

**Majors differ on this happening.**

One out, runner on third, pitcher starts to deliver ball, but in winding up his arm strikes his leg and the ball falls to the ground and rolls a few feet away from the pitcher's box. What would be the proper ruling on such a play?

Strictly interpreting the rules it would be a balk, as any motion made by the pitcher while in a position to deliver the ball to the bat without delivering it, is regarded as a balk. The National League adheres to that interpretation. Such being the case the runner on third would have been allowed to score. In the American League, President Johnson has instructed to treat such a happening in the light of an accident, not to rule it a balk, but to allow runners to advance at their peril.

**A rule that unfortunately is never enforced.**

Can a balk be called for holding the ball too long after a pitcher gets on the rubber in position to deliver the ball to the batter?

The rules give the umpire the right to inflict such a penalty, but I cannot recall an instance where the umpire enforced the right. I have a number of times been on the verge of making such a ruling, but usually just as I made up my mind to so act, the pitcher would come through. It would probably be helpful if the umpires took more advantage of the clause, which gives him the

right to call a balk any time in his belief such action on the part of the pitcher unnecessarily delayed the game.

### **Calling of a balk suspends play.**

Runner on first, pitcher makes a feint to throw to first, but fails to do so, and umpire loudly calls balk. Pitcher then hurriedly throws to plate and batter hits ball over the fence. What should have been the proper ruling?

Such a happening as the above is a very unfortunate one for the umpire. The moment he declared a balk, play ceased. The declaring of the balk entitled the runner on first to advance to second. The fact that the pitcher delivered the ball and the batsman hit it over the fence cannot be given any consideration. The ball was not in play, hence the batsman must hit over again.

### **Here is "catcher's balk" explained.**

Runner on third, pitcher pitches ball and runner starts for home; catcher steps across the plate in front of batter, catches ball, and tags runner out. A contends that the proper decision would be: Batter goes to first and runner back to third. B contends that run is scored. The particular point of the contention is as to whether the runner scores or goes back to third.

Batsman is sent to first base because of interference of the catcher in preventing the batsman striking at the pitched ball and, in addition, the runner from third scores because of the catcher being outside the lines of his position, thus causing a balk according to the National League ruling on this play.

### **In this case it was not a balk, but a catcher can make one under certain circumstances.**

Runner on third base, pitcher delivers ball to the batsman as the runner starts to steal home. The catcher steps outside his box and receives the ball. The batsman makes no attempt to strike at the ball but blocks the catcher as the latter tries to touch the runner. The team at bat claims that the runner scores because the catcher balked. What should the decision be?

If the batsman clearly interfered with the catcher the runner is out under Rule 56, Section 15, which reads: "The base-runner is out if with one or no one out and a base-runner on third base, the batsman inter-

feres with a play being made at home plate." It has erroneously been asserted that the catcher cannot make a balk. He can make a balk, but not on this play. Rule 34, Section 9, reads: "Delivery of the ball to the bat when the catcher is standing outside the lines of the catcher's position as defined in Rule 3." This rule is meant to apply to an instance where the catcher would stand outside of his position in order that a batsman might purposely be given first base on four called balls.

### **Pitcher finishing the game figures as the winner—or loser—as the case may be.**

If a pitcher is taken out of the game with the score a tie and another pitcher finishes the game which is won by his team, does he get credit for the victory?

He does, even if the game lasts but an inning longer. This point has been incorrectly ruled upon, on the theory that because a pitcher is in the game nine innings he should receive credit for the game because he goes out when it is a tie. However, the pitcher who is compelled to take his place is as likely to lose the game in one inning, perhaps, as he is to win it, so that all things being equal he must receive credit for a victory as he would be penalized for a defeat.

### **The most deliberate kind of a balk.**

Runners on second and third; pitcher makes motion to throw to batter, also to throw to third, but does not throw to either; umpire calls runner in from third and scores him. Was he right?

It was a balk and runner scores from third and runner on second advances to third.

### **Some pitchers get away with what clearly resembles a balk.**

Is a pitcher compelled to stand perfectly still while in position to pitch or else be charged with a balk? If not, what movements can he make?

The only restriction is that he shall not make any motions that are part of his delivery. It depends largely upon the peculiarities of each pitcher in his delivery.

### **Plainly an error, and a stupid one.**

With two batters out a grounder is batted to the shortstop. There are runners on second and third bases. The shortstop, forgetting that there is not a runner at first base, picks the ball up and throws it to the home plate. The runner who was going in from third gets back to third safely. The batter also reaches first in safety. Is this what is called a fielder's choice.

"Fielder's choice" has to stand for a great deal, but it doesn't have to stand for that. With two out the shortstop had but one play to make—throw to first base. When he failed to do so he was to be charged with an error, exactly as he would have been if he had thrown the ball over the grand stand.

**It is up to the captain of the opposing team to decide.**

Is it possible for a player to return to the game after another player has run for him?

Yes, if it has been agreed upon by both captains. If the opposing captain will not permit a player to return to the game after a player has run for him, it is impossible for the player again to resume his place on the field.

**A player may "revolve" as long as he has not been out of that particular game.**

Can a player pitch four innings, play right field two innings and then return to the box and pitch to the finish of the game?

Certainly. So long as the player does not leave the team and the field he may play a different position every inning, if there is occasion for him to do so.

**Any motion to deceive a base runner is a balk.**

If the pitcher should make a motion with his knee, which is similar to that which he makes when he is about to pitch the ball, should the umpire call a balk against him?

The umpire certainly should. Any motion which tends to deceive a base-runner should be punished at once by the umpire.

**Pitcher taken out with two balls on batter.**

In fourth inning pitcher becomes wild and after filling bases on passes has two balls on fourth batter, when manager orders him out; umpire refuses to let him leave position, telling manager he must dispose of man at bat before he can be relieved.

Umpire was wrong. Rule says pitcher must dispose of his first batter upon going into game and this pitcher had disposed of three already in this inning.

**Where a pitcher makes a motion to throw to second base.**

Can the pitcher turn toward second and make a motion to throw without a balk being charged against him.

Yes.

**Only the base-runners can advance on a balk.**

Does the batter go to first when the umpire declares a balk?

No. Only the base-runners can advance on a balk.

**The pitcher performed his part and should get credit.**

When batsman reaches first base after catcher drops the third strike is the pitcher credited with a strike out in his record, although the catcher is charged with an error?

The pitcher is credited with a strike-out.

## **Knotty Problems Relative to Umpire**

### **Ball in play even though it hit the umpire.**

One down, runner on first, batsman hits liner back at pitcher, who merely throws up his gloved hand in self protection. The ball struck the glove squarely and rebounded toward the shortstop. As it passed the umpire it just grazed his trousers. The shortstop recovered the ball, tossed to second, forcing the runner there, and the throw to first beat the batsman. The manager of team at bat argued against the double play, which the umpire allowed, claiming since the batted ball struck the umpire, it should give him the right to first and that the runner on first should of course advance to second. What was the proper ruling?

The umpire was right in allowing a double play. Once a fielder has made a play on a ball and touches it, the fact that it later hits the umpire has no bearing on the case.

### **Umpire's duty in case of injury.**

With the score a tie in the last half of the ninth, and two out, the batsman hits a long line drive to right center. Both the right and center fielders make a try for the hit, and either might have made the catch, had it not been for the interference of the other. The right fielder got his hands on the ball, but the moment it struck his hands, the center fielder collided with him and both players dropped to the ground unconscious. The ball continued on its way towards the fence. At the



moment the ball struck the fielder's hands, the batsman was midway between first and second. It was apparent both players were badly hurt. The crowd, as well as the players in the field, insisted that time be called. The left fielder recovered the ball and relayed it to the plate, but the batter made the circuit easily. Was it proper to allow the run?

It did seem wrong to allow play to continue, but the umpire under the rules could not do otherwise. Play can only be suspended when all chance for action ceases. If the umpires called time every time a player was injured, it would only be a short while when all would be feigning injury when it would be to their advantage.

#### **Team should not suffer for umpire's mistake.**

Runner on third, two men out, batter hits a ball which travels down the first base line a yard foul. Runner on third off at the pitch, crosses the plate while the ball is still in foul territory. Umpire believes ball is sure to remain foul and so calls it. The moment he does so, the batsman who is nearing first, stops and hastens back to the plate. The next instant the ball hits something and rolls into fair territory and is a fair ball. First baseman recovers ball, touches first and claims the out. What was the proper ruling?

The umpire was in error, because he ruled too quickly. However, since he declared it a foul ball, he had no recourse other than to stick to his decision. Had he not ruled too quickly, the batsman would have probably continued to first, beaten the play and the runner from third would have scored. In all probability the first

baseman would have fielded the ball in foul territory, had not the call of foul by the umpire caused him to cease pursuit. To have changed from foul to fair, after having caused the runners to stop at the call of foul, would have been grossly unfair to the team at bat.

### **Umpire must use his judgment on this one.**

Runner on second, the batsman hits the ball to the left of the third baseman, which it seems he will have no difficulty in handling. The shortstop, just as the pitcher was delivering the ball, was in the act of driving the runner on second back to that base by running toward it, as if expecting a throw from the pitcher. The moment the ball was pitched he started toward his own position so as to keep the batter from hitting through the spot he had just vacated. Not more than ten feet from second base the runner collided with the shortstop and both fell to the ground. In the meantime the third baseman had allowed the ball hit right at him to trickle through his hands and roll into left field. The runner regained his feet and managed to reach third in safety. The team in the field contended that the runner should have been declared out, because he interfered with the shortstop, who they insisted would probably have made the play. What about the argument of the team in the field?

When two or more men attempt to field the ball and the base-runner comes into contact with one of them, the umpire shall declare the runner out for coming into contact with a fielder other than the one the umpire determines to be entitled to make the play. From the description, it would seem that it was the third baseman's ball, that the shortstop had no chance of making a play, hence

no attention should have been paid to the collision, and the runner allowed to advance at his peril.

### **The umpire and a thrown ball.**

When the umpire is hit by a thrown ball does it make any difference whether he is on fair or foul territory? Is there any way in which a thrown ball can be ruled dead and no bases advanced by contact with the umpire?

A thrown ball is always in play whether it strikes the umpire on fair or foul territory. Base-runner, or runners, shall be entitled to all the bases they can make. When the umpire is stationed back of the bat, the ball becomes dead and runners return to their original bases, if the person or clothing of the umpire interfere with the catcher in an attempt to throw.

### **Umpire "beaned," but ball was in play.**

Score a tie in the ninth and two out, when batter hits to third baseman, who makes perfect throw to first that would have retired batter, but umpire gets in way of throw and is hit on the head; runner on third goes home and umpire rules run counts, winning the game. Was umpire correct?

Yes, under the rules; if a thrown or pitched ball hits the umpire, it is in play. This is a change from the previous rule and differs from the rule regarding a batted ball hitting the umpire.

### **Umpire hit before or after another player had touched ball.**

When is a ball that is fouled in play again? Does it go into play as soon as the batter gets in his box and the pitcher is in position or does the runner have to retouch the base he left before it is in play? Batter hits through pitcher and the ball hits the umpire; pitcher recovers ball and throws batter out at first; was not the batter entitled to first base?

Under the rules regarding the foul ball not caught, play is not resumed until the umpire has ordered it and the umpire's duty is to see that all players are back in position, the runner on the base he had left and the pitcher in position with the ball. In brief, play is not resumed until the umpire orders it. If ball did not touch pitcher before hitting umpire, then batter is entitled to base; if it first touches pitcher or was touched by him, then ball is in play and batter can be thrown out.

## Miscellaneous Knotty Problems

### **Protector did not help the catcher.**

With two strikes on batter, pitcher delivers ball, which batter fouls. It strikes the catcher squarely on the protector and bounds into the air. The catcher managed to regain possession of the ball before it touched the ground. The umpire ruled the batter out. The manager of the team at bat protested against the decision, claiming the catcher had been aided in making the catch by the protector. Since the ball had struck the catcher's protector squarely and then bounded directly off same into the air and was recovered by the catcher before touching the ground, the umpire ruled correctly. If the ball had caught in the protector, and held momentarily, it would have been different, as in such a case the protector would have aided in making the catch and the batter would not have been out. In all the cases the rebound must be direct.

### **Hitting a batted ball with the glove.**

Batter hits a long drive on a line to left center. Both the left and center fielder started in pursuit of the ball. Neither got within ten feet of the ball as it whizzed by them. The left fielder threw his glove at the ball. It was apparent that the glove had come in contact with the ball. The center fielder recovered the ball, which rolled to the fence. Although he made a fast play on it and a speedy throw to the plate the batsman easily made the

circuit on the drive. The team in the field contended that the batsman was only entitled to three bases. What would have been the proper ruling?

Section 6 of Rule 54 does say that the runner shall be entitled to three bases if the fielder stops a batted ball with his glove while detached from his person. It does not, however, say that the base-runner is entitled to more if he can make it. Several years ago I had an outfielder throw his glove at the ball as it was about to pass over the fence. The glove hit the ball, but the ball cleared the fence. I allowed a home run, although the team in the field contended the batter was entitled to three bases. I have brought the above query up for discussion and the leading umpires are a unit in the belief a home run should be allowed.

### **Ground rules should always be definite.**

An overflow crowd makes a ground rule necessary. A badly thrown ball is apt to go into the crowd. It is agreed that on such throws runners shall be entitled to one base aside from the one to which they are going. There is a runner on first, the pitcher catches him napping off of first base but throws the ball into the crowd. The team in the field contends that the runner was going back to first to avoid being caught, and, as he was going back to first, he was only entitled to one base, which would send him to second. The team at bat contended the moment the runner was caught he started for second and was entitled to go to third. Is this a good rule?

The base to which you are going and one additional base on an overthrow is always a bad rule. It always

causes a dispute as to which way the runner was actually headed. A much better rule is simply two additional bases from the one occupied at the start of the play.

### **Umpire rendered only decision possible.**

Batsman hits ball to shortstop, who makes a bad throw to first. The first baseman in an effort to make the catch went far up the line, colliding with the base-runner. So great was the force of the collision that runner and fielder were rendered unconscious. The runner was thrown beyond and over first base, but, of course, failed to touch it. The ball rolled into the infield and was recovered by the pitcher, who touched first base. The crowd yelled for the umpire to call time, the moment the players collided. What ruling should have been made on the play?

There is nothing in the rules that gives the umpire the right to call time before the completion of a play, consequently when the pitcher recovered the ball and touched first base, there was nothing for the umpire to do other than to declare the batter out. It does seem almost inhuman to let play go on while a player is helpless on the ground. Yet if time was called for an accident, regardless of the completion of a play, it would be greatly to the benefit of a team for players to feign injury any time it would work to their advantage.

### **Can a foul ball be an infield fly?**

One out, runners on first and second, batter hits fly ball, which it appears will be caught by the second baseman. The umpire declares it an infield fly. When he so calls it the ball is about thirty feet in fair territory.

A high wind is blowing, which eventually carries the ball foul. It is muffed by the second baseman in foul territory. Should the batsman be declared out under the infield fly rule since the ball was in fair territory when he made such a ruling?

The infield fly rule relates only to fair balls. Since the wind carried the ball foul there was nothing for the umpire to do, other than to reverse his original ruling, which declared the batter out on an infield fly and let him hit over again.

### **This play nearly came up in world series.**

Overflow crowd in right and left field, while in left field a number of fans sit on top of the fence to get a better view of the game. Agreement is that a ball hit into the crowd shall be good for two bases. Batter hits a ball that would have cleared the left field fence. One of the fans sitting on the fence sets himself and tries to catch the ball. It strikes in his hands, but he fails to hold it, and it falls into the overflow crowd. Team in the field contends that the hit is only good for two bases, while the team at bat claims it should be a home run.

The hit should have been allowed a home run, if in the opinion of the umpire, it would have cleared the fence, had it not been for the spectator's interference, and it seems to me it surely would. Such a happening almost came up in the 1911 world series between New York and Philadelphia at Shibe Park, Philadelphia. The wall at Shibe Park was lined with spectators. One of them almost caught the home run drive which Frank Baker hit off "Rube" Marquard. That hit caused the umpires



to at once confer and make a rule to cover the happening. It was agreed that a home run was the only fair solution of the problem.

### **Fielding balls on restricted territory.**

Overflow crowd causes ropes to be stretched, making a ground rule necessary, that hits into the overflow should go for two bases. At one end of the stretched rope there were no fans. Batsman hits ball to right center. The fielder backs up against the rope. When it becomes apparent that he can make the catch, if he jumps over the rope which is about two feet high, he does so and makes the catch. What should have been the ruling?

Later in the game a batsman hits a ball to the right fielder. Just as he gets the ball into his hands and makes the catch, he crashes against the ropes and falls backward into the overflow crowd. How about this play?

In the first case, the umpire should not have allowed the out, but granted the batsman two bases. The ropes acted as the end of the playing field, and a catch made outside the boundary limitations was not legal.

In the second case, the out should have been allowed, as the completion of the catch was made on the playing field. No consideration should be given to the fact that he later fell over the ropes.

### **Relative to substitution of pinch hitters.**

Pitcher suffers a broken finger in the third inning, but same not being on his pitching hand, he finished out the inning. In the fourth inning, with runners on second and third, and one out, it was the pitcher's turn to bat.

An extra catcher was sent in to bat for the pitcher. At the close of the inning, the manager decided to use an entirely new battery. He put in a pitcher to replace the injured pitcher, for whom the extra catcher had acted as a pinch hitter, and decided to substitute the extra catcher in place of the regular backstop. In the original lineup the catcher had batted seventh and the pitcher ninth. How should the new battery have hit?

Since the extra catcher, who had acted as pinch hitter, was pressed into the game as a regular, it became necessary that during the rest of the game he continue to bat in the same place as the original pitcher, ninth. That of course made it necessary that the substituted pitcher bat in the position of the original catcher, which was seventh.

### **Spectator's interference makes trouble.**

There is an overflow crowd, which makes a ground rule necessary on thrown and batted balls. It was agreed that a throw into the crowd should be good for two bases. Late in the game, with the score a tie, first batter for the home team hits for two bases. The next batter bunted down the first base line. The first baseman rushed in, got the ball, and made a hurried throw to third to get the runner. A perfect throw would have turned the trick, but it was high and got away from the third baseman. It rolled perhaps thirty feet. The third baseman made a rush for the ball, as did a fan sitting in the front row of the overflow crowd. The ball was practically motionless when the fan picked it up and rushed back to cover in the crowd. The runner dashed from second to the plate, likewise the batter scored, while the third sacker attempted to regain the ball. The manager of the team

at bat first contended both runners should score because it was a blocked ball. Later he insisted the runner should score and the batter go to second because the ball went into the crowd. What should have been the ruling?

The umpire should have granted the batsman first and allowed the runner on second to advance to third. Rule 37, Section 3, states if a person not engaged in the game should retain possession of a blocked ball, or throw or kick it beyond the reach of the fielders, the umpire shall call time and require both runners to stop at the base last touched by him.

### **When a ball hits stand not the regulation distance.**

Grandstand is less than ninety feet from the home plate, as prescribed by the rules. It is agreed that on a wild pitch the runner shall be entitled to one base, if the ball comes into contact with the stand. Such a thing happens, but the runner on first at the time tries to go to third on a wild pitch that strikes the stand. The catcher recovers the ball and throws the runner out at third. What is the decision?

The moment the ball strikes the stand, which is less than ninety feet from the plate, it becomes dead. The runner who tried to go from first to third on the play, should not be declared out, but simply sent to second. Such a play can come up at the Polo Grounds in New York, and, strangely enough, the American and National League—both teams play on the Polo Grounds—use a different ruling. In the American League games the ball

is regarded out of play the moment it strikes the stand. In the National League the runners are entitled to advance one base without liability to be put out, but the ball is not declared dead, and if they try to advance any further, they do so at their peril. That is purely a league rule.

### **Can't play ball with only eight men.**

Batter steps into the box and pitcher delivers the ball. Batter hits same over left fielder's head for a clean home run. Then it was discovered that the team in the field had only eight men. The second baseman, who was having an injury attended to, had not yet gone back to his position. Should the home run have been allowed?

The only ruling left to the umpire was to make the batsman hit over again. Rule 16 states no team shall have more or less than nine men on a side.

### **Umpires have been known to ask scorer for the count.**

Are the official balls and strikes, as called by the umpire, kept by the official scorer?

No; unless he likes to do it for amusement.

### **This was a prize "bone" play on part of pitcher.**

Batter hits ball to pitcher, runs towards first base and then stops. The pitcher, forgetting to throw to first base, steps on the rubber, facing the next batter. The runner, seeing this, continues to first base after he has stepped outside of the three-foot limit. Is he out if he reaches first base before the ball is thrown there?

No. He is plainly within the rule and the pitcher is wholly at fault for not making the play correctly.

### **It was a double play.**

Runner on first; batter hits to shortstop, then goes to the bench; ball is played to second and then to first, but runner on first never left that base. Are both men out?

Yes; the man on first is forced to run and the fact that the latter did not run to first would not change the situation.

**But don't score a safe hit, too, for the batter.**

If a fielder fumbles a sure sacrifice hit and the batter reaches first base, is he still credited with a sacrifice?

Yes. If the attempt to sacrifice is palpable, the batter must not be penalized for the mistake of a fielder.

**Tough on the Giants, but the decision was correct.**

When a batted ball goes over the fence, on what ground does the umpire give his decision?

The umpire must decide as to whether the hit is fair or foul accordingly as the ball disappears from his sight. For example: In a game at Boston several years ago a New York National League player batted a fly ball over the fence for a home run. The ball went over fair territory, but the wind carried it to one side, and when it disappeared from the vision of the umpire it was foul. He so decided it and that decision cost New York a game.

**Player benched cannot again enter game.**

If a player was in the game and was taken out and put on the bench, could he run as a substitute runner?

Man taken out of game could not enter game again. See Rule 28, Section 2.

**Passed ball agreement when there is not a backstop.**

In a game where there was no backstop it was agreed that only one base should be allowed on a passed ball. With A on third and B on second, catcher caught B off his base; at same time A started for home plate and B started for third; wild throw made to home and both men scored. B had not touched third base at the time the ball was thrown to home. Is B entitled to a score on this play?

Supposing that second baseman threw wild to home plate, B is entitled to score, as a wild throw is not a passed ball (see Rule 85, Section 10); if one base only was agreed on as the limit on wild throws then B was not entitled to score.

**An intelligent fielder would not make an attempt to catch a foul fly if there was a chance of the base-runner scoring.**

Can a base-runner advance on a foul fly caught by an outfielder?

Yes, but an intelligent fielder would not make an attempt to catch a foul fly if there was a chance of the base-runner scoring.

**See diagram of field in Spalding Base Ball Guide.**

A statement is made that the distance from the pitcher's box to home plate is 60 feet 3 inches. The other side of the argument says it is 60 feet 5 inches. Which is right?

Neither; it is 60 feet 6 inches.

**Catcher gets a passed ball, even though he catches runner.**

Catcher misses third strike, but throws batter out at first; in meantime runner from third scores on the play. Should catcher be charged with passed ball?

Yes, for the advance of the runner from third must be accounted for and under the scoring rules the runner from third also would be credited with a stolen base in case he had started home prior to the catcher letting the ball get away.

**A sacrifice is such, no matter where the advancement of base-runner took place.**

Is a batter entitled to a sacrifice if he purposely advances the runner from second to third?

Yes. The play is exactly the same as when the runner is advanced from first to second.

**Returning to base under ground rules agreement.**

In the third inning with one out, A walked and, on the next pitch, A started for second (with the intention of stealing). B hit this pitch for a clean single to right, on which A kept going to third, and also scored, B going to second on the throw-in. Owing to the ground rule, which was "One base on anything hit into right; you had to make it" (no stipulation about over-running and being put out) A was sent back to third, and on his way back was touched out, umpire ruling play O. K., also putting B back on first. Was the umpire correct in his decision?

Clearly a wrong and unjust decision. It frequently occurs that players go beyond the bases to which they are entitled under a ground rule agreement. In such instances play is automatically suspended and the umpire directs such a player or players to return to the base or bases to which they are entitled under the ground rule agreement, and in returning they run no risk or liability of being put out.

**Shortstop took a losing chance.**

With two out and runners on second and third base, the batter raps the ball to the shortstop. The latter tries to tag the runner between second and third base, but before he succeeds in doing so, the runner on third crosses the plate. Does the run count?

Yes.

**Position of fielder does not make hit fair or foul.**

A ball fairly hit in the direction of first base passes about a foot inside, but curved until it was a foot outside after passing first base. The right fielder in trying to field the ball touched same with his gloved hand, but did not hold it. The ball fell on foul territory and the umpire declared it a fair ball, claiming that as the fielder was on fair ground at the time, that the fact of him touching the ball made it a fair ball irrespective of where it fell.

The hit was a "foul ball," if the outfielder touched it first in foul territory, regardless of the fact that his body was in fair territory. The position of the fielder had nothing whatever to do with this case.



**It was "love's labor lost"; some players never read the rules.**

With the bases filled and no one out, the catcher drops the ball and tries to throw the runner out at second base, but fails to do so, and the second baseman then tries to get the batter at first, but the umpire calls the batter out before leaving home plate. Is the umpire right?

Most assuredly. The rule states explicitly that the batter is out if the catcher drops the ball unless there are two hands out. The catcher was foolish to throw the ball, evincing a lack of knowledge as to the rules, and the second baseman was equally at fault when he tried to retire the batter at first base. The latter was out the moment that he made the third strike, and the umpire was perfectly correct in his ruling.

**This was a tie game.**

In the last half of the ninth inning, after two men were out, the umpire called the game on account of darkness. Before the ninth inning was played the Grays were leading, 8 to 3. During their first half of the ninth they did not score, but during the Blues' half, or until two men were retired, they score 5 runs, tying the game. At this moment the umpire called the game. The Blues claimed that as there were two-thirds of the last half of the ninth played before game was called score remains a tie.

The game in question ended a tie (see Rule 24).

**How records are counted in a forfeited game.**

In the event of a forfeited game that goes beyond five innings, is it the practice to credit the players with what they actually did, in case the forfeit comes in any inning, the first or ninth?

The custom is to treat the forfeited game records the same as any other game—that is, the records are credited only if a legal game (5 or 4½ innings, as the case may be) has been played.

**This is very plain; see Rule 51, Section 1.**

Smith bats in place of Jones and the umpire calls Smith out for batting out of turn and then allows Jones to bat. Is that right?

No. Jones is out for not batting in proper turn. The proper batsman is always the one declared out in a batting-out-of-order play.

**This raised quite a controversy.**

In the first game of double header, when Chicago went to bat in the ninth inning Philadelphia was leading, 3 to 2. Mayer struck out one Chicago player in the ninth, then Schulte singled and Zimmerman doubled. Schulte stopped at third. Alexander was then substituted for Mayer. Under orders, Alexander walked Saier purposely, filling the bases. Then Williams hits to Luderus, who threw to the plate, forcing Schulte. Killifer tried for a double play, but Williams beat his throw to first. Then Luderus threw to third in an attempt to catch Zimmerman off base. The throw was wild and Zimmerman and Saier both scored, winning the game for the Cubs. Phelan fled to Paskert. Who is charged with the defeat?

The loss of the game is charged against Alexander. It was while Alexander was pitching that Saier reached first and eventually scored. The



custom is that when a pitcher retires, leaving runners on bases, and these runners later score off the relieving pitcher, they must be charged up against the first pitcher. It would be manifestly unfair to ask the second pitcher to go in at a trying time and prevent the scoring of runners already on bases. While this was not exactly the position of play presented in this game, nevertheless Alexander's responsibility began with the first batsman he pitched to and it was this batsman that did score the winning run.

### **When an umpire must use his judgment.**

Man on first and one on second, nobody out. The batter bunted a foul fly, just over his head, about two feet at the most, and the catcher caught the ball. Is the batter out and can a double play be made on the ball?

Batsman was out on the foul bunted fly, and the runner or runners could have been also retired on the same play. An umpire must use his judgment when a ball is bunted high with runners on first and second. If it is an easy fly catch for an infielder, it should be called an infield fly, but not a ball that is bunted low and difficult to handle, any play that follows should go.

### **Strikes out six batters in one inning.**

A pitcher can strike out six batters in one inning without allowing a run to score. The simplest way is strike out the first two and the catcher holds each third strike. The next three churn the breeze, but catcher fails to hold each third strike, and they all reach first safely. The sixth batter strikes out and catcher holds the last strike out for the third out, leaving the bases full with base-runners. Result: Six strike-outs for the pitcher, three put-outs and three errors for the catcher. In the sixth inning of the Cleveland-Athletics game of June 11, 1916, Morton of Cleveland fanned four batters—Witt, Pick, Lajoie and McInnis—the first named reaching first by reason of his third strike being a wild pitch.

### **An important decision.**

President Johnson of the American League sustained a decision of Umpire Chill in the Boston-Cleveland game of June 3, 1916, which it is said established a precedent for plays in which an umpire interferes with a base-runner. The decision of Chill, against which Boston protested, was that the runner return to his base. So far as known no similar case has occurred in major league base ball and is not covered by the rules. Turner, after making a hit, rounded first base and collided with Chill twice. He then stopped and walked to second base, where he was touched by the Boston second baseman. He was called out at first by the umpire, but, after a conference with Umpire Dineen, the decision was reversed and Turner was allowed to return to first.

## Umpire's Equipment Very Important

The position of an umpire is a hazardous one from any angle you consider it. Therefore it is a mark of wisdom for the umpire to afford himself every protection possible in going about his work. The judges of play cannot exercise too much care in selecting satisfactory equipment.

A good mask is a most essential thing. It is hard to advise what style of mask is best, each umpire must be his own judge as to that part of his equipment. The stock of masks carried by Spalding is so varied that usually you can get a mask to suit by simply having the clerk in charge show the various styles and, by trying them on, you can reach a decision as to which style fits your face best, and conforms to your vision.

Contrary to most umpires I like a very tight-fitting mask, that is heavily padded, and has a special reinforced padding at the chin. I also like ear protection, but wear stationary pads which are fastened tight to the side of the mask and do not swing. Since I am often in Chicago during the American League season, I simply go out to the Spalding factory and have them make such a mask to suit me. It is possible for anyone to get a similar mask, at only a slight additional expense,

---

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or to have worked out any stunt they care to have put on the mask.

A good protector is always a wise investment. There are two kinds, the rubber inflated and a papier mâché and bamboo arrangement. The inflated protector is worn outside, while the other is worn under the coat. I prefer the rubber protector, simply because I think it affords the better protection. However, that is merely a matter of opinion. The other style has to be made to order.

Great care should be used in the selection of shoes. No umpire should be without a pair of the special umpire shoes now being made by Spalding. I wouldn't care to work back of the bat without a pair of these wonderful shoes. When I think of the injuries I used to suffer because of being hit on the instep or toes by a foul tip, I can hardly understand why no one thought of the present shoe sooner. With its strong box toe and padded tongue, it is absolutely impossible to suffer a foot injury. The shoe is so made that one can run at top speed without any inconvenience. Major league umpires use two pairs, wearing the ordinary shoe on the bases, the special one when working balls and strikes.

A pair of shin guards, which also have a special knee protection, an aluminum protector which fastens around the waist, and an indicator, are a few of the other necessities. Of course, no athlete would think of going on the ball field without wearing a "Bike" suspensory.

With the above equipment, a good pair of eyes and plenty of nerve, umpiring is a nice job, and, as the late Tim Hurst always said, "You can't beat the hours, 3 to 5."

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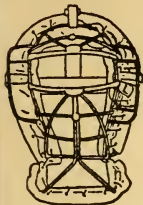
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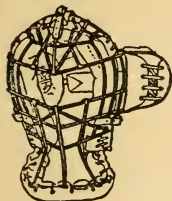
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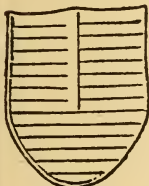
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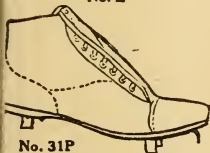
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