

Slide Rules

Question: Is a Runner required to slide on tag/force plays at a base?

Answer: No, but s/he must slide or seek to avoid contact with the fielder. Additionally, a runner cannot interfere with a fielder's ability to retire another runner.

Rule:

USSSA Rule 7.04 C: "Whenever a tag play is evident, a runner must slide or seek to avoid contact with the fielder and / or catcher. Malicious contact shall supersede all obstruction penalties. Malicious contact is solely up to the discretion of the Umpire. **Rule 7.04.C Penalty:** The runner shall be called out and may be ejected from the game at the discretion of the Umpires.

USSSA Rule 7.04.D: A runner who jumps over a player will be called out whether or not contact is made with the defensive player.

Discussion:

There is no "Must Slide" rule at any level of baseball, including High School (NFHS). See NFHS.org and 2020 Points of Emphasis ("Runners are never required to slide, but if a runner elects to slide at any base, it must be legal. Little League uses similar language to USSSA, saying that runners must either "slide or attempt to avoid" a fielder with the ball attempting to make a tag, but also [emphasizes](#) there is no "must slide" rule.

USSSA does not define exactly what "seek to avoid contact" means, nor is there any approved interpretation or case play available for USSSA rules. Given the language tracking other leagues, however, Warrior Baseball interprets USSSA rule 7.04 C/D in line with NFHS guidance. A runner is not required to slide, but he must avoid interfering/malicious contact with the fielder attempting to make a play. A runner may not leap over an upright (sitting, kneeling, or standing) defender's body to avoid a tag. They may jump over a defender who is laying on the ground or the outstretched arm/glove of a defender who is not standing.

A runner who does not make a bona fide slide attempt at a base with a defender waiting to make a tag loses the benefit of any doubt regarding interfering contact. As this is a judgment call, the umpire may determine that the contact was illegal/interfering. In the event of malicious contact, the runner would also be ejected.

Plays:

Runner at 3rd, 0 outs. B hits a ground ball to F5, who throws home to retire the runner. R3 dodges the tag while remaining in the baseline. LEGAL

Runner at 3rd, 0 outs, B hits a ground ball to F5, who throws home to retire the runner. R3 runs by the catcher while touching home plate. LEGAL

Runner at 3rd, 0 outs, B hits a ground ball to F5, who throws home to retire the runner. R3 does not slide, attempts to avoid the catcher, but runs into the body of the catcher who has the ball waiting at home plate. Likely INTERFERENCE

Runner at 3rd, 0 outs, B hits a ground ball to F5, who throws home to retire the runner. R3 does not slide, attempts to avoid the catcher, but makes contact with the outstretched glove of the catcher as R3 touches home plate, dislodging the ball. Likely LEGAL (Unless the runner deliberately attempted to dislodge the ball such as by swiping at the glove).

Runner at 3rd, 0 outs, B hits a ground ball to F5, who throws home. The throw is off-line, and R3 and F2 both run towards home plate. R3 does not slide and reaches home just before F2. LEGAL unless there is malicious contact by either R3 or F2.

Additional Comments:

On a force play at 2nd base (or any other base), runners are not required to slide but must not interfere with the fielder's ability to throw. Failing to slide and remaining in the way of the fielder's throw results in the batter-runner being called out. A runner may "peel off" before the bag as long as they do not interfere with a throw or attempted throw. ***A runner who is not in the vicinity of the fielder/base*** (i.e. only halfway between 1st and 2nd base) ***will not be deemed to interfere with a throw unless the action is deliberate*** (e.g. deliberately reaching out to deflect the throw). For younger ages, in the absence of contact, there should be a reasonable ability for the throw to have retired a subsequent runner. For older ages (11 and up), interference may be called regardless of whether a throw is made or attempted and regardless of whether there is a reasonable chance to retire the batter-runner.

Rolling of the Baseball

Question: For ages where fielders are not allowed to roll the ball to obtain an out, what constitutes a “rolled” ball

Answer: A ball is rolled when the fielder did not make a legitimate, bona fide attempt to throw the ball to the base. The judgment of whether or not a ball was rolled is based on the umpire’s judgment. To be called, the ball must have been rolling or functionally rolling at the time it reached the fielder/base and have one or more other indicia of having not been a legitimate attempt to throw the ball. Indicia of the ball being rolled include:

- A ball that is rolled the entire distance
- A ball that is thrown directly into the ground in front of the thrower
- An underhanded throw that reaches the receiving fielder while rolling
- A throw which travels clearly less than half-way in the air and reaches the receiving fielder while rolling.
- Note: This should not be called in the extremely rare situation where a high school or higher-level player would be expected to roll the ball).

Rule: WBA Local Rules

Injuries

Question: How should injuries be handled during play

Answer: Injuries are handled according to the appropriate rules. Obstruction/Interference plays are handled according to the USSSA/MLB rules. For batted balls in coach pitch, the award is 1 base for an infielder and 2 bases for an outfielder. The umpire must evaluate the situation and potential injury to determine whether it is appropriate to stop play and where to place the runners as a result of the stoppage. Play should be stopped when the injury is serious enough to cause the fielder to be unable to continue the play as well as situations where there is concern regarding a potential head injury/concussion. Umpires are to err on the side of player safety and stop play if in doubt, but play need not be stopped if the fielder is clearly able to and does continue with the play.

Plays:

6u game...B-R hits a ball which strikes F6 in the shin. F6 falls down and is unable to continue. Time is called and B-R is awarded first base (1 base on injury to infielder).

8u game...B-R hits a line drive to the outfield, which strikes F9 in the chest. F9 immediately screams in pain and falls down while F8 and F7 go to retrieve the ball. B-R rounds 2nd base and F8 throws out B-R at 3rd base on the attempted triple. Ruling: Time should have been called on the injury and the B-R is placed at 2nd base (2 base award due to injury to outfielder).

7u game...B-R at bat, R1 at first, R2 at second. B-R hits ground ball to F6, who throws to F4. All runners run appropriately given the force out situation. The throw from F6 hits F4 in the face, caroms into the outfield past F9, and F4 immediately is unable to continue. Ruling: Umpire should call time immediately due to the head injury. R2 awarded home as he was certainly going to score on the ball thrown into the outfield. B-R and R1 placed at the base they would have reached in the judgment of the umpire, which is likely third and home, or potentially both being awarded home, based on where the ball ended up following F6's throw which caused the injury. *Had the throw from F6 hit F4 not in the head*, the umpire should evaluate the extent of the injury and determine if time should be called. Runner placements would be the same in the event time was called.

11u game...B-R at bat, no one on base. B-R hits ball which strikes pitcher's leg. Pitcher falls down briefly, then gets up, runs to ball, throws to F3 in time to retire the runner before again falling down in pain. Ruling: B-R is out on the force at first. As the pitcher was able to continue with the play, time should not be called until after the play at which point the injury can be addressed.

Note: Runner placements due to injuries such as throws or same-team collisions should be based on the umpire's judgment of what an ordinary fielding/running outcome would be for that age in the absence of the injury. Balls remaining in the infield are likely to result in an award of 0 or 1 base (A ball which ends up right next to the injured infielder may result in no bases, for example), while a ball ending up in the outfield may result in an award of 2 or more bases.