

UMP-O-GRAM

Major Rules Differences

Subject	HS Reference	VFW	Legion Ref	Amateur	Pro Ref
Legal Bat	1-3-2,3,4,5	Same as HS	Same as HS	Same as HS	1.10
Intentional Walk	2-4-3 Tell Umpire	Same as Pro	Same as Pro	Same as HS	6.08a
Obstruction/Interference	2-22-1	Same as Pro	1-G-3a,b,c,d; 1-E-2	Same as Legion	7.06
Force Play Slide Rule	2-32		1-G	Same as Legion	6.05(m) 7.08(b)
Re-entry of Starters	3-1-3	No Rule	No Rule	No Rule	No Rule
Designated Hitter	3-1-4	Not Used	Same as Pro	Same as Pro	6.10b
Malicious Contact	3-3-1n Pen	Reg. 8	1-E	Same as Legion	No Rule
Defensive Conferences	3-4-1 Pen	Same as Pro	Same as Pro	Same as Pro	8.06b
Offensive Conferences	3-4-2	No Rule	No Rule	No Rule	No Rule
Finish Game with 8 players	4-4-1f	Reg. 4	Same as Pro	Same as Pro	4.17 Can't
Balk	5-1-1k	Same as Pro	Same as Pro	Same as Pro	8.05 Pen

LEGAL BAT High School, VFW Varsity, Legion, Amateurs

2 5/8" or less at thickest part of bat

36" long or less

...but shall not weigh numerically more than 3 ounces less than the length of the bat

VFW 13-14 ..but shall not weigh numerically more than 8.5 ounces less than the length of the bat

INTENTIONAL WALK

High School and Amateur must tell umpire

VFW and Legion must pitch to the batter

OBSTRUCTION

Pro "... is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding the ball, impedes the progress of any runner."

High School "is an act (intentional or unintentional, as well as physical or verbal) by a fielder, any member of the defensive team or its team personnel that hinders a runner or changes the pattern of play... a fake tag is considered obstruction."

FORCE PLAY/SLIDE RULE

High School a legal slide can be either feet first or head first. If a runner slides feet first, at least one leg and buttock shall be on the ground. If a runner slides, he must slide within reach of the base with either a hand or a foot.

- a. The runner uses a rolling, cross-body, or pop-up slide into the fielder
- b. The runner's leg is higher than the fielder's knee when fielder is in a standing position
- c. The runner goes beyond the base and then makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder
- d. The runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg
- e. The runner tries to injure the fielder
- f. The runner, on a force play, does not slide on the ground and in a direct line between the two bases – EXCEPTION – the runner may run or slide away from the play to avoid contact or altering the play

Legion and Amateur

- a. The runner slides or runs out of the baseline in the direction of the fielder
- b. The runner uses a rolling, cross-body or pop-up slide and either makes contact with or alters the play of a fielder
- c. The runner's raised leg makes contact higher than the fielder's knee when in a standing position
- d. The runner goes beyond the base and either makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder
- e. The runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg
- f. The runner illegally slides toward or contacts the fielder even if the fielder makes no attempt to throw to complete a play

Penalty With less than 2 outs, the batter-runner, as well as the interfering runner, shall be declared out and no other runner shall advance. With 2 outs the interfering runner shall be declared out and no other runner shall advance.

VFW

If the ball is at the base before the runner, the runner must slide.

RE-ENTRY OF STARTERS

High School

Any of the starting players may be withdrawn and re-entered once, including a player who was the designated hitter, provided such player occupies the same batting position whenever he is in the lineup. A substitute who is withdrawn may not re-enter.

VFW, Legion, Amateur Not available

DESIGNATED HITTER

High School

A hitter may be designated for any one starting player (not just pitchers) and all subsequent substitutes for that player in the game. A starting defensive player cannot be listed as the designated hitter in the starting lineup. A designated hitter for said player shall be selected prior to the start of the game...

Pro

A hitter may be designated to bat for the starting pitcher and all subsequent pitchers in any game without otherwise affecting the status of the pitcher(s) in the game. A designated hitter for the pitcher must be selected prior to the start of the game...

VFW, Legion and Amateur Same as Pro

COLLISIONS/MALICIOUS CONTACT

High School

A coach, player, substitute, attendant or other bench personnel shall not:

- n. initiate malicious contact
- q. leave their position on the bench area for the purpose of fighting or physical confrontation

Legion

The intent of this rule is to encourage base runners and defensive players to avoid collisions whenever possible.

1. When there is a collision between a runner and a fielder who clearly is in possession of the ball, the umpire shall judge:
 - a. Whether the collision by the runner was avoidable (could the runner have reached the base without colliding) or unavoidable (the runner's path to the base was blocked) or
 - b. Whether the runner was actually attempting to reach the base (plate) or was he attempting to dislodge the ball from the fielder.

PENALTY – If the runner, a) could have avoided the collision and reached the base, or b) attempted to dislodge the ball, the runner shall be declared out, even if the fielder loses possession of the ball. The ball is dead and all base runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.

Ruling 1: - If the fielder blocks the path of the base runner to the base (plate), the runner may make contact, slide into, or collide with a fielder as long as the runner is making a legitimate attempt to reach the base or plate.

Ruling 2: - If the collision by the runner was flagrant, the runner shall be declared out and ejected from the contest. The ball shall be declared dead.

2. If the defensive player blocks the base (plate) or base line without the ball, obstruction shall be called. The runner is safe and a delayed dead ball shall be called.

Ruling: - If the runner collides flagrantly, he shall be declared safe on the obstruction, but will be ejected from the contest. The ball is dead.

Clarification

Malicious Contact. Any player who, in the judgment of the umpire, maliciously runs into another player is automatically ejected and is declared out. The American Legion is concerned that some coaches may not have explained to their players that malicious contact is illegal. The majority of intentional collisions occur at home plate where the catcher is blocking the plate. Runners should be instructed to slide directly to the plate, or away from the catcher, to avoid making contact with the catcher, especially when the defender is in possession of the ball. Umpires have been instructed that, if there is any intentional and excessive force or if there is any intent to injure another player, the offending player shall be ejected from the game. The malicious contact penalty will be enforced whether committed by an offensive or defensive player. Any player ejected by an umpire is automatically removed from the tournament, unless the tournament director reinstates that player.

VFW

If a fielder has the ball before the runner arrives at second, third or home base, the runner shall be called out if he does not slide. Any player may be ejected from a game for flagrant conduct, which in the umpire's judgment either injures or is intended to injure another player.

Amateur

Same as legion rule.

DEFENSIVE CONFERENCES

High School

Each team may have three charged conferences during a seven inning game. Extra innings allow one per inning. An incapacitated player shall not constitute a charged conference. A conference is not charged if the pitcher is removed. Penalty: for excess conferences, the pitcher is removed for the duration of the game.

Pro, Amateur, VFW

A second trip to the same pitcher in the same inning will cause this pitcher's automatic removal. The manager or coach is prohibited from making a second visit to the mound while the same batter is at bat, but if a pinch-hitter is substituted for this batter, the manager or coach may make a second visit to the mound, but must remove the pitcher.

A manager or coach is considered to have concluded his visit to the mound when he leaves the 18 foot circle surrounding the pitcher's rubber.

OFFENSIVE CONFERENCES

High School

Each team shall be granted one charged conference per inning to permit the coach or any of the team's personnel to confer with base runners, the batter, the on deck batter or offensive personnel. The umpire shall deny any extra offensive team requests for charged conferences.

Pro, Amateur, VFW

No specific rule applies

FINISH GAME WITH 8 PLAYERS

High School

You must start with nine but in the event someone cannot finish, you may use eight players taking an out each time the missing player should have batted.

VFW

In event of serious injury and there are no players on the bench who have not played, the last player taken out may be placed back in the game in place of the injured player or players. In the alternative, in a serious injury situation, a team may continue to play with eight players and the team shall receive an automatic out at such player's turn at bat. The applicability of this rule shall be determined by the head umpire.

Pro, Legion, Amateur

A game shall be forfeited to the opposing team when a team is unable or refuses to place nine players on the field.

BALK

High School

If there is a runner or runners, any of the following acts by a pitcher while he is touching the pitcher's plate is a balk:

- a. Any feinting toward the batter or first base, or any dropping of the ball (even though accidental) and the ball does not cross a foul line;
- b. Failing to step with the non-pivot foot directly toward a base (occupied or unoccupied) when throwing or feinting there in an attempt to put out, or drive back a runner; or throwing or feinting to any unoccupied base when it is not an attempt to put out or drive back a runner;
- c. Making an illegal pitch from any position
- d. Failing to pitch to the batter in a continuous motion immediately after any movement of any part of the body such as he habitually uses in his delivery;
Note: If the pitcher, with a runner on base, stops or hesitates in his delivery because the batter steps out of the box (a) with one foot or (b) with both feet or (c) holds up his hand to request "time," it shall not be a balk. In (a) and (c), there is no penalty on either the batter or the pitcher. The umpire shall call "time" and begin play anew. In (b), a strike shall be called on the batter for violation of 7-3-1. In (a), (b) and (c), if the pitcher legally delivers the ball, it shall be called a strike and the ball remains alive. Thus, two strikes are called on the batter in (b). If the umpire judges the batter's action to be a deliberate attempt to create a balk, he will penalize according to 3-3-1o.
- e. Taking a hand off the ball while in the set position (6-1-3), unless he pitches to the batter or throws to a base or he steps toward and feints a throw to second or third bases as in (b); or
- f. Failing to pitch to the batter when the entire non-pivot foot passes behind the perpendicular plane of the back edge of the pitcher's plate, except when feinting or throwing to second base in an attempt to put out a runner.

It is also a balk if a runner or runners are on base and the pitcher, while he is not touching the pitcher's plate, makes any movement naturally associated with his pitch, or he places his feet on or astride the pitcher's plate, or positions himself within approximately five feet of the pitcher's plate without having the ball.

Pro, Legion, VFW, Amateur

- 8.01 Preparatory to coming to a Set Position, the pitcher shall have one hand on his side; from this position he shall go to his set position as defined in rule 8.01(b) without interruption and in one continuous motion. The pitcher, following his stretch, must (a) hold the ball in both hands in front of his body and (b) come to a complete stop. This must be enforced. Umpires should watch this closely. Pitchers are constantly attempting to "beat the rule" in their efforts to hold runners on bases and in cases where the pitcher fails to make a complete "stop" called for in the rules, the umpire should immediately call a "Balk".
- 8.05 If there is a runner, or runners, it is a balk when –
 - a. The pitcher, while touching his plate, makes any motion naturally associated with his pitch and fails to make such delivery; COMMENT: *if a lefthanded or righthanded pitcher swings his free foot past the back edge of the pitcher's rubber, he is required to pitch to the batter except to throw to second base on a pick-off play.*

- b. The pitcher, while touching his plate, feints a throw to first base and fails to complete the throw;
- c. The pitcher, while touching his plate, fails to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base; COMMENT: *requires the pitcher, while touching his plate, to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base. If a pitcher turns or spins off of his free foot without actually stepping or if he turns his body and throws before stepping, it is a balk. A pitcher is to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base but does not require him to throw (except to first base only) because he steps. It is possible, with runners on first and third, for the pitcher to step toward third and not throw, merely to bluff the runner back to third; then seeing the runner on first start for second, turn and step toward and throw to first base. This is legal. However, if, with runners on first and third, the pitcher, while in contact with the rubber, steps toward third and then immediately and in practically the same motion “wheels” and throws to first base, it is obviously an attempt to deceive the runner at first base, and in such a move it is practically impossible to step directly toward first base before the throw to first base, and such a move shall be called a balk. Of course, if the pitcher steps off the rubber and then makes such a move, it is not a balk.*
- d. The pitcher, while touching his plate, throws, or feints a throw to an unoccupied base, except for the purpose of making a play;
- e. The pitcher makes an illegal pitch; COMMENT: *A quick pitch is an illegal pitch. Umpires will judge a quick pitch as one delivered before the batter is reasonably set in the batter’s box. With runners on base the penalty is a balk; with no runners on base, it is a ball. The quick pitch is dangerous and should not be permitted.*
- f. The pitcher delivers the ball to the batter while he is not facing the batter;
- g. The pitcher makes any motion naturally associated with his pitch while he is not touching the pitcher’s plate;
- h. The pitcher unnecessarily delays the game;
- i. The pitcher, without having the ball, stands on or astride the pitcher’s plate or while off the plate, feints a pitch;
- j. The pitcher, after coming to a legal pitching position, removes one hand from the ball other than in an actual pitch, or in throwing to a base;
- k. The pitcher, while touching his plate, accidentally or intentionally drops the ball;
- l. The pitcher, while giving an intentional base on balls, pitches when the catcher is not in the catcher’s box;
- m. The pitcher delivers the pitch from Set Position without coming to a stop.
COMMENT: *Umpires should bear in mind that the purpose of the balk rule is to prevent the pitcher from deliberately deceiving the base runner. If there is doubt in the umpire’s mind, the “intent” of the pitcher should govern. However, certain specifics should be borne in mind:*
 - 1. *Straddling the pitcher’s rubber without the ball is to be interpreted as intent to deceive and ruled a balk*
 - 2. *With a runner on first base the pitcher may make a complete turn, without hesitating toward first, and throw to second. This is not to be interpreted as throwing to an unoccupied base.*