

## Rule 7

- The Rules Book covers this subject in only 3 1/2 pages.
- And it takes 1 1/2 pages to cover Batting Out of Order.
- We will get to that shortly...
- So, there are only 2 pages remaining...how much trouble can we get into?

### 1.0 When a batter comes to bat, what must we know?:

#### 1.1 **Do we have to know if he is the proper batter?**

Ans: No, that is up to the teams to keep straight. It becomes our job when they screw it up and need our help...then we must know the rules. More on that later...

#### 1.2 **When does a player become the batter?**

Ans: When he enters the batter's box and the ball is live.

**1.3 How do we know if his bat is legal?**

Hopefully we were diligent and conducted a thorough bat check before the game. If we didn't...bad things can happen.

IF and illegal bat is used by the batter, what do we do?

Ans: If the batter is detected using an illegal bat, he shall be called OUT.

If the infraction is discovered BEFORE the next pitch following his turn at bat, the defense may take the penalty or the result of the play. (Rule 7-4-1a)

**1.4 We should size him up for his strike zone. And what does the Rules Book define as "Strike Zone"?**

Ans: It is the area over home plate where the upper limit is halfway between the batter's shoulders and waistline. The lower limit is his knees. And these limits are established when the batter assumes his natural batting stance.

(Rule 2-35)

**1.5 And where must he stand?**

Ans: In either batter's box. Both feet MUST be entirely within the batter's box when he takes his stance. The lines are considered part of the batter's box. The batter's box is 4 feet wide by 6 feet long, and is centered on the mid-point of home plate. The batter shall be called OUT if he strikes the ball with either foot (or knee) touching the ground completely outside the lines or touching home plate.

(Rule 7-3-2)

**1.6 Can the batter change from one batter's box to the other during the same at bat?**

Ans: The batter is not permitted to move from one batter's box to the other WHEN the pitcher is in position ready to pitch. We shall call TIME and call the batter OUT for violation in this case.

(Rule 7-3-3)

**1.7 Can the batter dilly-dally between pitches... or continually step out of the batter's box after a pitch?**

Ans: Here we must use our game management skills. The batter has 20 seconds, by rule, to be ready for the next pitch. No, we do not use a stop watch...so help him out. If we must cite a violation, the penalty is a called strike...without the need of the pitcher to deliver the pitch.

The batter can (by rule) leave the box ONLY for the following situations:

- the batter swings at a pitch,
- the batter is forced out of the box by a pitch,
- the batter attempts a drag bunt,
- the pitcher or catcher feints or attempts a play at any base,
- the pitcher leaves the dirt area of the mound (18 ft circle),
- the pitcher with the ball moves more than 5 feet from the pitcher's plate,
- the catcher leaves the catcher's box,
- the catcher does not catch the pitched ball,
- a member of either team is granted TIME.

(Rule 7-3-1)

Note: And how many offensive conferences is a team allowed?

Ans: One per inning. (see Rule 3-4-2)

## 2.0 WISDOM:

- 2.1 Know the rules.
- 2.2 Apply good game management and preventative officiating skills as a prerequisite to a pending violation.
- 2.3 Some situations are guided by the age level of the teams. Decide if you wish to use a game situation as a teaching moment rather than immediately imposing a penalty.
- 2.4 As PIAA officials, we are tasked to uphold the honor and dignity of our profession in all interaction with the coaches, players, school officials, and the public.
- 2.5 Always be aware that our reputation as PIAA sports officials (individual and collective) is built on how we manage a contest and handle game situations.
- 2.6 And I will pass along what my mentor tells me all the time: "USE COMMON SENSE".

### 3.0 Situations that can develop while batting:

- 3.1 **A pitched ball bounces and then hits the batter.** What do we do?

Ans: We call Time, and award the batter first base. (Rule 8-1-1d)

- 3.2 **A pitched ball hits the batter while he is attempting to swing at the pitch.** What do we do?

Ans: We call Time, and charge the batter a STRIKE. No runners can advance on this pitch. (Rule 7-2-1b)

- 3.3 **The batter swings at the pitch and it goes directly to the catcher's glove, bounces to his chest protector, and then back to his glove without touching the ground or another player.** What is our call?

Ans: We have a FOUL TIP. The ball remains live. The pitch is counted as a strike. And if it was the batter's third strike, he would be OUT. We should give the signals of FOUL TIP & OUT. (Rule 2-16-2)

- 3.4 **The batter assumes a position to bunt. The pitch misses the strike zone.** What is our call?

Ans: It depends if, in our judgment, the batter attempted to strike at the pitch. If we saw movement of his bat in the direction of the pitch, we shall call a strike even if he does not make contact with the ball. (Case Book 7.2.1 Situation B)

- 3.5 **The batter started to swing at the pitch, but stopped.** This is commonly called a "check swing". When is a check swing a strike?  
Ans: As an aid in deciding, the umpire may note whether the swing carried the barrel of the bat past the body of the batter, but final decision is based on whether the batter struck at the ball.

The UIC reserves the right to make this judgment, or ask his partner for help. He will do this by saying "DID HE GO?"  
(Rule 10-1-4a and Case Book 7.2.1 Situation B)

- 3.6 **The batter permits a pitched ball to hit him.** What do we do?  
Ans: First, we call TIME. Now a judgment is required. If the UIC believes the batter leaned into the pitch on purpose, or if the pitched ball passes through the strike zone and still hit the batter, then the batter is not awarded first base for being hit by the pitch. Call the pitch on its own merit. (Rule 7-3-4 & Rule 8-1-1d1)

## 4.0 BATTER'S INTERFERENCE:

- 4.1 **It is batter's interference with the catcher when he leans over or steps out of the batter's box or makes any movement which hinders the catcher from making a play, or fielding, or throwing the ball.**

If the batter's **backswing hits the catcher** while he is fielding or throwing or making a play on the ball, it is also interference.

The batter is also required to make an **effort to vacate a congested area** when there is a throw to home plate and there is time for the batter to move away.

What do we do if any of these situations occur?

Ans: These are all Delayed Dead Ball Situations...wait until the play is over , and then call "TIME".

And what is the penalty?

Ans: When there are two outs, the batter is out.

When there are NOT two outs, and the runner is advancing to home plate, if the runner is tagged out, the ball remains live and interference is ignored.

Otherwise, the ball is dead and the runner is called out.

When an attempt to put out a runner at any other base is unsuccessful, the BATTER is OUT and all runners must return to bases occupied at the time of the pitch.

If the pitch is a third strike, and in the UMPIRE'S JUDGMENT, interference prevents a possible double play (additional outs), two may be ruled out. If the umpire is uncertain who would have been played on, the runner closest to home shall be called out. (see Rule 7-3-5 & Penalty, and Rule 8-4-2g)

- 4.2 It is batter's interference if **he swings and strikes a THROW** (Not a pitch) from the pitcher who is attempting to make a play on a runner advancing to home plate.  
i.e. With the runner from third base breaking for home, the pitcher legally steps off the pitchers plate, and throws home to the catcher...but the batter swings and hits the throw.  
What do we do?

Ans: **The ball was illegally batted.** This is DEAD BALL SITUATION (because the batter just hit the ball and thwarted the play).  
(Rule 5-1-1b and Line 25 of the Dead Ball Table)

- 4.3 It is batter's interference if his **whole bat is thrown and interferes** with a defensive player attempting a play.  
What do we do?

Ans: We call TIME, as this is a Dead Ball situation. We call the batter OUT and return the runners to their bases at time of pitch.



If, in the UMPIRE'S JUDGMENT, interference prevented a possible double play, two players may be ruled out.

(see Rule 7-3-6 & Penalty and Case Play 7.3.6)

- 4.4 The **batter runs outside the three foot running lane** (last half of the distance from home plate to first base-where either foot is outside either line) while the ball is being fielded or thrown to first base. This infraction is ignored if it is to avoid a fielder who is attempting to field the batted ball or if the act does not interfere with a fielder or a throw.

NOTE: There is NO infraction if the batter-runner has not yet reached the running lane, or is already past first base when the throw is originated.

If you cite this infraction, signal TIME. The ball becomes dead, call the batter out, and return all other runners to their base at time of infraction.

(see Rule 8-4-1g)

## 5.0 A BATTER IS OUT WHEN:

- 5.1 He is discovered using an illegal bat...as already discussed in 1.6.
- 5.2 A third strike is caught.
- 5.3 A third strike is not caught, provided first base is occupied with less than two outs.
- 5.4 A foul ball (other than a foul tip not a third strike) is caught.
- 5.5 An attempt to bunt on third strike is a foul.
- 5.6 When any member of the offensive team other than a runner interferes with a fielder who is attempting to field a foul fly ball.
- 5.7\* A team playing with one less than the starting number, and that turn to bat is reached.
- 5.8 He enters the game as an illegal substitute and is discovered.

5.9 He INTENTIONALLY deflects a foul ball which has a chance of becoming fair.

(see Rule 7-4-1)

\*UNIQUE to NFHS Rules

5.10 The INFIELD FLY RULE is declared.

5.11 Batting out of order occurred....SOMETIMES....

## 6.0 BATTING OUT OF ORDER:

This rule strikes fear into the hearts of umpires because it is perceived to be complex and confusing. GOOD NEWS...IT'S NOT!

There are only three possible situations;

6.1 **SITUATION #1: The improper batter HAS NOT completed his time at bat.**

RESULT: When the improper batter's infraction is first discovered (by either team), TIME must be requested. The improper batter can be replaced with the proper batter and he will inherit the ball-strike count.

NOTE: While the improper batter is at bat, if a runner advances because of a stolen base, balk, wild pitch or passed ball, such advance is legal.

6.2 **SITUATION #3: The improper batter completed his time at bat, and was followed by a pitch, play, attempted play, an intentional walk, or all infielders left the diamond (following the third out of the inning).**

RESULT: There is NO PENALTY under this situation. The improper batter becomes LEGAL, and the batting order picks up from there.

6.3 **SITUATION #2: The improper batter has just completed his time at bat, and the next pitch, or play, or attempted play has not yet occurred. Nor when an intentional walk was issued, or before all fielders have left the diamond as a result of the third out.**

RESULT: Only the defensive team may appeal batting out of order after the batter has completed his time at bat.

- Upon appeal, an out on the proper batter shall be declared.
- ***All outs made on the play stand. This rule is unique for NFHS Baseball.***
- All other runners must be returned to the base occupied at the time of pitch.
- The NEXT batter shall be the batter who follows the proper batter who was just called out. It may very well be the same player who just batted.

NOTE: An out for batting out of order supersedes an out by the improper batter on the play.

(see Rules 7-1-1 & 2 and Penalties)

## Questions:

## Review:

We discussed:

- What we must observe and know when the batter takes his position in the batter's box.
- Knowledge and mechanics of check swings and foul tips.
- Rules for batter interference.
- Rules when the batter is OUT.
- Rules for batting out of order.

## TEST for Batting

The following are Case Plays from the 2011 NFHS Case Book:

**7.1.1 Situation A** (Pg 55): With R1 on first, B7 is the next batter in the batting order, but B8 erroneously takes his place. The error is discovered by opposing team personnel (a) after B8 has received two strikes, or (b) after B8 has received a base on balls or is hit by a pitch, or (c) after B8 has hit a foul that is caught or has made a safe hit to advance R1, or (d) after a pitch has been delivered to B9.

**Ruling:** In (a), there is no penalty. B7 takes the place of B8 at the plate with a two-strike, no-ball count. If R1 should have advanced through a steal or wild pitch while the incorrect batter was batting, it is a legal advance. In (b) and (c), B7, the proper batter, is declared out. B8 is removed from base and bats again with no balls or strikes. R1 must return to first. In (d), no correction is made and B7 and B8 do not bat again until their regular times. B9 is now the proper batter.

**7.2.1 Situation B** (Pg 57): B1 starts to swing at the pitch but attempts to hold back on it or it appears he attempts to bunt the ball. In either case, B1 misses the ball. How does the umpire determine what to call the pitch?

**Ruling:** A call of that nature is based entirely upon the umpire's judgment. Therefore, the umpire must, in order to be consistent, have criteria to guide him in making the decision. The rule that most umpires

follow is that if the bat is swung so it is in front of the batter's body or ahead of it, it is a strike. In bunting, any movement of the bat toward the ball when the ball is over the plate area, is a strike. The mere holding of the bat in the strike zone is not an attempt to bunt. (10-1-4a)

### **7.3.2 Situation A** (Pg 59): When is a batter's foot considered to be inside the batter's box?

**Ruling:** The batter is considered to be in the batter's box when no part of either foot is touching the ground outside the boundary lines forming the batter's box. It is permissible for the feet to be touching the boundary lines that form the batter's box, since the lines are part of the box. The batter may legally hit the ball with one foot in the box and the other foot in the air and then contact the ground outside the box with the foot that was airborne.

### **7.3.4 Situation B** (Pg 59): B1 is at bat with a three ball, two strike count. He swings at the next pitch and the ball hits his right fist and, without contacting the bat, goes into foul territory. F2 retrieves the ball and throws to F3 who is covering first base and tags B1 with the ball .

**Ruling:** As soon as the ball hit the batter it became dead. B1 is declared out. To have the play ruled a foul ball, the ball would have to have hit the bat of B1 before it touched his hand.

### **7.3.5 Situation A** (Pg 60): With R1 going to third, B2 steps across home plate to hinder F2 who is fielding the ball or throwing to third, or attempting to throw to third.

**Ruling:** If R1 is tagged out despite the hindrance, the interference is ignored, and with less than two outs, the ball remains alive. If R1 is not tagged out, B2 is declared out, and when there are less than two outs, the ball becomes dead immediately and all runners must return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch.

**7.3.5 Situation C** (Pg 60): With R1 on first base, one out and two strikes on B3, R1 attempts to steal second base. B3 swings and misses the pitch and interferes with F2's attempt to throw out R1.

**Ruling:** B3 has struck out. If, in the umpire's judgment, F2 could have put out R1, the umpire can call him out also. If not, R1 is returned to first base.

**7.3.5 Situation E** (Pg 60): With less than two outs, R1 on second and B2 at the plate, R1 attempts to steal third. In the process, B2, who bats right-handed, after swinging at the pitch (a) makes no attempt to get out of the way of F2 throwing to third or (b) is unable to make an attempt to get out of the way of F2 throwing to third. As a result, F2 cannot make a play on the runner. Is B2 out, and must R1 return to second?

**Ruling:** B2 is not guilty of interference in (a) or (b). B2 is entitled to his position in the batter's box and is not subject to being penalized for interference unless he moves or re-establishes his position after F2 has received the pitch, which then prevents F2 from attempting to play on a runner. Failing to move so F2 can make a throw is not batter interference.

**7.3.5 Situation G** (Pg 61): With no outs and F1 in the set position, R1, who is on third base, attempts to steal home. F1 legally steps backward off the pitcher's plate and throws home. B2 hits the ball.

**Ruling:** Typically, batter's interference is a delayed dead ball in order to give the defense an opportunity to make an out on the initial putout attempt. Since the batter hit the ball, the defense was not afforded an opportunity to make a play. Therefore, the ball is declared dead immediately. R1 is out because of B2's interference.

(5-1-2a, 7-3-5, 8-4-2l)

**7.3.5 Situation H** (Pg 61): With no one out and R1 on third and R2 on first, R2 attempts to steal second. B3 interferes with F2. F2's throw is in time to retire R2. On the play, R1 scores.

**Ruling:** Since F2 was able to retire R2, the interference is ignored and the ball remains alive. Therefore, R1's run counts. (7-3-5)

**7.4.1 Situation G** (Pg 63): With R1 on second and R2 on first with one out, B4 hits a high fly to second base which could have been caught by F4. Neither umpire declares "infield fly". F4 unintentionally drops the ball but picks it up and tags R2 who is off the base.

**Ruling:** The half inning is over as R2's out is the third out. The situation determines the out, not the declaration. The umpires should always declare "Infield Fly, If Fair" to lessen any confusion.