

Official Baseball Rules Rule Changes for 2014

- Amended Rule 3.06 Comment regarding substitutions and double-switches.

Rule 3.06 Comment:

To avoid any confusion, the manager should give the name of the substitute, his position in the batting order and his position on the field. When two or more substitute players of the defensive team enter the game at the same time, the manager shall, immediately before they take their positions as fielders, designate to the umpire-in-chief such players' positions in the team's batting order, and the umpire-in-chief shall so notify the official scorer. If this information is not immediately given to the umpire-in-chief, the umpire-in-chief shall have authority to designate the substitutes' places in the batting order.

If a double-switch is being made, the manager or coach shall first notify the plate umpire. The umpire-in-chief must be informed of the multiple substitutions and interchanged batting order before the manager calls for a new pitcher (regardless of whether the manager or coach announces the double-switch before crossing the foul line). Signaling or motioning to the bullpen is to be considered an official substitution for the new pitcher. It is not permissible for the manager to go to the mound, call for a new pitcher, and then inform the umpire of multiple substitutions with the intention of interchanging the batting order.

- Amended Rule 4.05 Comment regarding base coaches touching runners on base.

Other than exchanging equipment, all base coaches shall refrain from physically touching base runners, especially when signs are being given.

- Amended Rule 6.02(b) Comment to nullify a balk caused by "inadvertent" actions by the batter. (Batter is no longer limited to stepping out of the batter's box in order for the balk to be nullified.)

The following two paragraphs are additional material for Rule 6.02(b) Comment, for Major League play only:

If pitcher delays once the batter is in his box and the umpire feels that the delay is not justified he may allow the batter to step out of the box momentarily.

If after the pitcher starts his windup or comes to a "set position" with a runner on, he does not go through with his pitch because the batter has inadvertently caused the pitcher to interrupt his delivery, it shall not be called a balk. Both the pitcher and batter have violated a rule and the umpire shall call time and both the batter and pitcher start over from "scratch."

- Amended Rule 6.10(b)(10) to allow the game pitcher to pinch run only for the Designated Hitter.

(10) Once the game pitcher bats or runs for the Designated Hitter, such move shall terminate the Designated Hitter role for that club for the remainder of the game. The game pitcher may pinch-hit or pinch-run only for the Designated Hitter.

- Added Experimental Rule 7.13 regarding collisions at home plate.

The Playing Rules Committee has adopted Rule 7.13 as set forth below on an experimental basis for the 2014 season.

7.13 COLLISIONS AT HOME PLATE.

(1) A runner attempting to score may not deviate from his direct pathway to the plate in order to initiate contact with the catcher (or other player covering home plate).

If, in the judgment of the umpire, a runner attempting to score initiates contact with the catcher (or other player covering home plate) in such a manner, the umpire shall declare the runner out (even if the player covering home plate loses possession of the ball). In such circumstances, the umpire shall call the ball dead, and all other base runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the collision.

Rule 7.13(1) Comment: The failure by the runner to make an effort to touch the plate, the runner's lowering of the shoulder, or the runner's pushing through with his hands, elbows or arms, would support a determination that the runner deviated from the pathway in order to initiate contact with the catcher in violation of Rule 7.13. If the runner slides into the plate in an appropriate manner, he shall not be adjudged to have violated Rule 7.13. A slide shall be deemed appropriate, in the case of a feet first slide, if the runner's buttocks and legs should hit the ground before contact with the catcher. In the case of a head first slide, a runner shall be deemed to have slid appropriately if his body should hit the ground before contact with the catcher.

(2) Unless the catcher is in possession of the ball, the catcher cannot block the pathway of the runner as he is attempting to score. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the catcher without possession of the ball blocks the pathway of the runner, the umpire shall call or signal the runner safe. Notwithstanding the above, it shall not be considered a violation of this Rule 7.13 if the catcher blocks the pathway of the runner in order to field a throw, and the umpire determines that the catcher could not have fielded the ball without blocking the pathway of the runner and that contact with the runner was unavoidable.

- Added Rule 8.02(b) Comment prohibiting pitchers from attaching anything to either hand, finger, or wrist.

Rule 8.02(b) Comment: The pitcher may not attach anything to either hand, any finger or either wrist (e.g., Band-Aid, tape, Super Glue, bracelet, etc.). The umpire shall determine if such attachment is indeed a foreign substance for the purpose of Rule 8.02(b), but in no case may the pitcher be allowed to pitch with such attachment to his hand, finger or wrist.

- Added Rule 8.05(d) Comment regarding the pitcher throwing to an unoccupied base when a runner, in the umpire's judgment, creates the impression he is attempting to advance to that base.

Rule 8.05(d) Comment: When determining whether the pitcher throws or feints a throw to an unoccupied base for the purpose of making a play, the umpire should consider whether a runner on the previous base demonstrates or otherwise creates an impression of his intent to advance to such unoccupied base.

- Amended Rule 8.06 Comment to allow the manager or coach to leave the 18-foot circle without terminating a trip when the manager or coach does so temporarily to give the umpire a lineup change.

A manager or coach shall not be considered to have concluded his visit to the mound if he temporarily leaves the 18-foot circle surrounding the pitcher's rubber for purposes of notifying the umpire that a double-switch or substitution is being made.

- Amended Rule 9.02(c) Comment regarding a how long the defense has to request a check-swing appeal, and, in particular, how long on a check-swing appeal that ends a half-inning.

Appeals on a half swing may be made only on the call of ball and when asked to appeal, the home plate umpire must refer to a base umpire for his judgment on the half swing. Should the base umpire call the pitch a strike, the strike call shall prevail. Appeals on a half swing must be made before the next pitch, or any play or attempted play. If the half swing occurs during a play which ends a half-inning, the appeal must be made before all infielders of the defensive team leave fair territory.