

# ***SOME RULES AND DEFINITIONS OF TEE BALL***



## **In The Field - Defensive Play**

### ***What is the "time rule"?***

The 'time rule' is one of the few rules that is peculiar to T-Ball. That is to say, that whilst an umpire in Baseball can call "TIME" at any time, the rule does not have the same meaning in T-Ball. The rule is in place to try and teach the players the skills necessary to play baseball in the way a play normally ends. In Baseball runners do not advance when an outfielder has the ball or is about to field the ball, because it is likely that they will be thrown out at the next base. The 'time rule' is designed to stop runners advancing just because of the inexperience and lack of skills of the fielders. At the same time runners often do not have the experience or skills to realise a play that if they ran they would likely get out.

The umpires are taught to prevent plays where the runners put their head down and run and keep on running with out paying any attention to the risk they are taking in getting out but for the throwing, catching and tagging skills of the fielders.

In practice TIME is to be called when the fielder is or is about to be in possession of the ball close to the infield (within say 80 feet of the next base for any runner). Time is also supposed to be called if the coach is encouraging the runner to run when in a game of baseball, to run would result in a certain OUT at the next base; the runner is not looking at the ball before advancing; and when a fielder is faking a throw to the next base in an attempt to prevent the runner advancing, when the advance would be a certain OUT in baseball.

### ***Is 'Time' to be called when a ball is overthrown?***

Yes. Again the situation is supposed to be that teams do not take advantage of the inexperience of the other fielders, and the situation that should exist if an errorless play were made. So in a situation where the batter hits a ground ball to the second base fielder, this is fielded by the second baseman correctly and the ball thrown to and caught correctly by the first base fielder, the result would be an out at first. If however the 2<sup>nd</sup> base fielder fielded correctly and threw to the first base player and the ball goes sailing over his head into foul territory, the runner would make first base. Time should then be called so the batter does not turn and run to 2<sup>nd</sup> base whilst the ball is found. All runners in this situation should only advance one base.

### ***When is it necessary to tag the runner with the ball?***

Any base runner, including the batter/runner, can be put out by tagging the runner with the ball in hand or glove. It is not necessary for the ball to actually touch the runner, just the hand or glove in which the ball is held. A runner can only be put out by a fielder by touching the base that a runner is running towards, *IF* that runner is a forced runner. Touching the base can be done with any part of their body, provided the ball is in their hand under control, or with the ball.

A runner becomes forced if they have to leave the base they occupy because of an advancing runner (this includes home plate in the case of batter/runner leaving because the ball has been put into play off the bat). For example, if the bases are loaded and the ball has been put into play, all the runners, including the batter/runner are forced and the runners can be put out by either method. If however, second base was vacant and there were runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> only, the runner on 1<sup>st</sup> is forced but the runner on third is not forced and can only be put out by a tag.

### ***What is the best play on a 'last batter' or when there are already two out?***

The best play is on any forced runner, as this will prevent the runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base from scoring. See more detail in batting section under 'When does a runner score on the last out?'

### ***What is obstruction?***

Obstruction 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. This is the rule that stops fielders standing on the base lines. It is why we tell you to stand away from the lines, and even when the foot is on the bag waiting for the ball to be thrown to you.

The ruling is if the runner still makes the base safely there will be no call. If however the runner is out and the umpire rules that the obstruction prevented them from making the base, then the runner will be awarded the base. This is different from interference, which usually refers to a runner interfering with a ball after it is in fair.

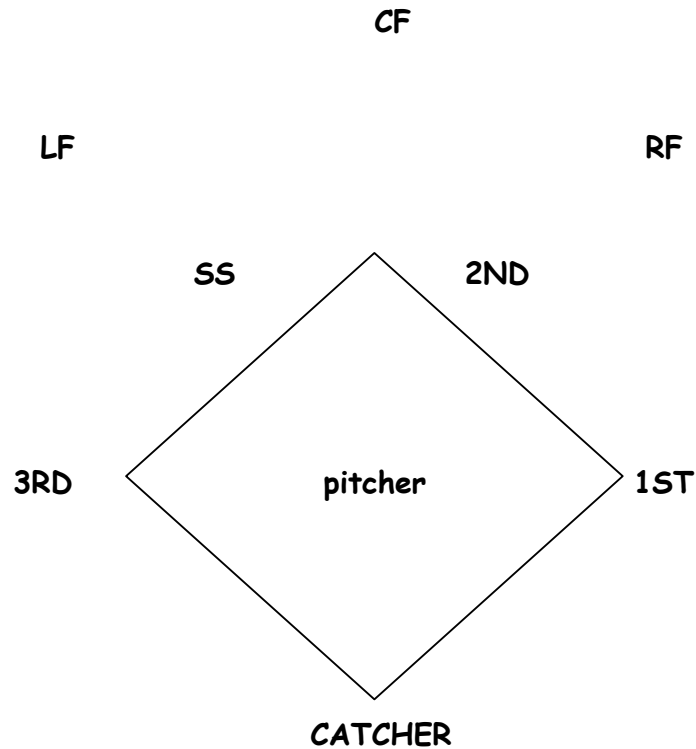
### ***What is meant by a 'double play' or 'triple play'?***

More than one offensive player can be put out on each play. If a batter is caught or put out before reaching 1<sup>st</sup> base, or a runner on first base is put out before reaching second, other runners can be put out as well. For example, a ground ball is hit and fielded by the 3<sup>rd</sup> baseman, can result in a tag on the runner who just left 2<sup>nd</sup>. A throw to the 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman who is standing on the base as the ball is caught, puts out the runner coming from 1<sup>st</sup> and another quick throw to 1<sup>st</sup> beating the batter/runner there, will result in a triple play.

### ***Should I cover my base or field the ball?***

It is important to remember in fielding that the first priority is to field the ball. If the ball is not hit to you and is fielded by someone else, then you cover the base nearest you, by placing your foot on the side of the bag, (being careful not to impede the runner, as mentioned above.) and be ready to receive a catch. If you are the fielder who has fielded the ball, throw to the nearest base. Don't throw to a base that is unattended and remember the play is not over when the ball is caught, or at any time until the umpire calls time. Until then any runner can be put out.

Following is a sketch of positional play and which position is responsible for covering bases when the fielder has to leave his position to field a ball.



All fielders should be able to see the ball on the tee.

If **1<sup>st</sup> base** moves away to field the ball, **pitcher** moves to 1<sup>st</sup> base ready to make the out. If **2<sup>nd</sup> base** has to move away to field the ball or moves out for a relay throw from CF/RF then **short stop** covers 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

**Outfield:** your job is to get the ball back into the infield.

**LF**- Left Field, **CF** - centre field, **RF**- right field: always watch the ball. Always expect the ball to come to you. Catch/field the ball and throw to 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base or the infield as fast and carefully as you can. Use a relay thrower if possible. Watch the ball as you pick it up, steady yourself, step and throw. Don't Panic!!!

**Infield:** your job is to stop the ball getting to the out field then try to make the out.

1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Pitcher, catcher, Short Stop: always watch the ball. Always expect the ball to come to you, even from the outfield. Know where the base runners are and try to make the right play - look for the double or triple play. Throw accurately - accuracy comes by throwing with your parents every day, as does good catching....so practice!!

## ***What are appeal plays?***

These are plays where the umpire does not call the play even if seen by him or her, until the fielding team appeals in the right way. The following appeal plays are possible in tee ball:

1. The runner fails to 'tag up' after a fly ball before the runner or the base is tagged.
2. the runner while advancing fails to touch each base in order before the runner or the missed base is tagged ( here tagged means the act of standing on the base with ball in hand)
3. the runner fails to touch home plate and makes no attempt to return and the fielder stands on the base with the ball.
4. a batter bats out of turn.

In each case the appeal can only be made by the player (not the coach or a spectator) with the ball in hand and standing on the base or having applied the tag. This is done by holding the ball in the air in the glove and asking the umpire for a ruling on the incident claimed to have occurred.

## ***Can a forced runner become a non-forced runner during play?***

Yes.

There are many instances where the force will be removed on a runner but I will go through one for you that we went through on the double play question.

When we talked about a ground ball being hit by the batter/runner and a runner is on first base. The first base runner is forced to move to second base because the batter has become a runner. The fielder can get the runner out who is moving from first to second by standing on the base with the ball in his hand and then throwing to the first baseman who is doing the same thing. If however the ground ball was hit to first base and the first baseman fielded the ball and stood on the base, the batter is out. At that moment the force is removed from the runner moving to second base and he has to be tagged to be put out. Standing on the base with the ball in hand is not enough.

## **Batting and Base Running - Offensive Play**

### ***What is a foul ball?***

A foul ball is a batted ball that comes to rest in foul territory over the line between home and first base or home and third base. A ball is also called foul if it first hits the ground in foul territory beyond the first or third bases. Or if it hits an umpire, player or other objects that is not part of the natural ground whilst on or over



foul territory. A batted ball that hits first or third base is a fair ball. A ball is also fair if it first lands in fair territory and bounces over the foul line, if when it crosses the foul line it is past first or third base. A batter can still be caught out if they pop a ball into the air in foul territory. A ball is fair if any part of it touches the line between home and first base and home and third base.

### ***Can a batter move his back foot once play has been called?***

No. This rule has 2 main purposes:

Firstly, it is intended to prevent the batter shaping to hit in one direction and moving so as to hit in another. The more advanced batters can achieve the same result without moving their foot by altering the position of their body when the bat hits the ball, so as to either pull the ball or hit to the opposite field.

Secondly, batters need to learn to drive from their back foot when swinging the bat. In baseball a habit of moving the back foot is a bad habit because it will produce poor hitting. Batting off the back foot is OK in cricket when the ball is bounced off the pitch, but in a baseball swing it is where the power comes from.

If the back foot is raised off the ground or slid to a new position BEFORE the ball is struck, the call is STRIKE.

### ***What is the rule when a T-Ball runner on a base leaves before the ball is batted into play?***

In T-Ball stolen bases are not allowed. This is to even things up because in baseball, when the ball is in the hand of the pitcher before the play, he can throw to first to keep a runner on the base before the play starts. When the ball is stuck on the Tee, where the fielders cannot get it, the runner would have a free go at it. The rule is also in place because of the smaller diamonds used for the younger players.

The rule is that if the runner leaves early the umpire should call it whilst the play progresses, and if that runner gets out, then the play stands. If the runner is safe, he (and any other runners) should return to the base that they have left and there is an additional strike on the batter.

The problem in T-Ball with the younger players is that if something is called by the umpire during the play, even if the intention is for the play to continue, the players will stop in their tracks. Usually, you have to wait till the play ends to make the call and let the players know that you saw the runner leave early and then all players will be called back to the bases they were on and a strike is called. *It is also important to remember that when base running you cannot overtake the runner in front of you.*

### ***Must a runner run the shortest most direct route between bases?***

No. A base runner can run in an arc (which you might do if going to advance more than one base on a good hit and so not to slow down when taking the corner - remembering to touch the base) or in any direction really in attempting to reach the next base

**PROVIDED** that the deviation off the 'runners line' which is the usual course you would have taken, is not more than 3 feet in an attempt to avoid a tag or so to interfere with a fielder fielding the ball.

### ***Is a base runner out if a fair batted ball hits him?***

Usually yes. It is a type of interference that it is deemed that if the ball hits a runner then it usually deflects and affects the chance of the fielder fielding the ball. It follows that if a fielder has had a play at the ball and misses it and then it hits the runner, the runner will not be out. It is best as a runner to try to remember to watch the ball at all times and avoid being hit if at all possible.

### ***What is meant by a runner 'tagging up'?***

As mentioned above a runner cannot leave the base until the ball is hit. Therefore if a ball is hit in the air and is caught, the batter is out and all other runners cannot advance and must return to the base they left. If they are tagged before they get back to the base they are out. From the time the ball is caught, provided the runner is touching the base at the time the ball is caught or re-touches his base he can then advance to the next base if it is free and if they can beat the throw to that base. This is known as "tagging up" as if tagging the base you are leaving after the catch. In advance levels of baseball, by using this method of running you have what is called a "sacrifice fly", where the batter hits the ball intentionally into the air, knowing it will probably mean his out, but advancing the runner in any advent. This however does not apply to the last out of the inning.

### ***When does a runner score on a last out?***

There are 2 situations where you have a last out. The first is when there are already 2 outs and the fielding team makes another out. The second is when the "last batter" call is made. If during the play in either of these situations a runner crosses home plate, does that runner score? The answer is that the run will not score if the runner or the batter/runner that who is put out is forced. This is so even if the runner crosses home plate before the forced out is made.

So in the situation where it is the Last Batter and there is a runner on third when there is a ground ball. This runner, unless thrown out at home plate will be allowed to cross home before "time" is called or runners on second first and even the batter/runner can make it under the 'time rule' which applies. If however the fielders make a successful play at first base or any forced base, then the run does not score.

The best play therefore on a Last Batter or after 2 outs is at first or on any forced runner, so as to prevent the run scoring.

***Do you have to touch the bases if the runner is running in the reverse direction?***

Yes. In a play for example where the runner on first runs on the big fly ball to the outfield and the ball is caught after the runner has touched second base and is heading for third, that runner cannot take a short cut across the diamond. The runner must go back touching second base on the way to first. If they do not and an appeal is made, the runner is out.

***DEFINITIONS OF TEE-BALL TERMS***

**Bunt:** is a batted ball not swung at, but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly within the field. This is illegal in Tee-Ball.

**Batter's Box:** is the area within which the batter shall stand during a time at bat.

**Catcher's Box:** is the area within which a catcher shall stand until the ball is hit off the tee.

**Defensive:** is the team in the field

**Offensive:** is the team that is batting

**A fly Ball:** is a batted ball that goes high in the air in flight.

**Safe:** the declaration by the umpire that a runner is entitled to the base for which he was trying.

**A Live Ball:** a ball that is in play

**Infielder:** is a fielder who occupies a position in the infield. Short stop, pitcher, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> base positions are all 'infield'.

**Outfielder:** is a fielder who occupies a position in the outfield, which is the area of the playing field that is most distant from home plate. Left, centre and Right field are all outfielders.

**"Play":** is the umpires order to start the game or to resume action following any dead ball.

**An Inning:** is that portion of the game within which the teams alternate on offence and defence and in which there are three put-outs (or 9 across the plate) for each team. Each team's at bat is half an inning.

**A Catch:** the act of a fielder getting secure possession in a hand or glove of a ball in flight. It is not a catch if the fielder drops the ball after the ball 'is caught' if they immediately fall or collide with someone or something causing the ball to be dislodged. However if it is dropped in the act of pulling the ball out of the glove to throw it is a catch.