

**Subject:** Fwd: Huff-N-Puffers Umpires -- "View From Behind The Plate" Issue 21

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**Date:** 8/2/2023, 21:32

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to all Umps

FYI

----- Forwarded Message -----

**Subject:**Huff-N-Puffers Umpires -- "View From Behind The Plate" Issue 21

**Date:**Wed, 2 Aug 2023 21:28:24 -0400

**From:**Peter E. Toomey

We have the best view of the game.

Here are a couple thoughts to make it even better? Hopefully this helps:

### **RUNNER-FOR-BATTER -- RULE 8.2**

Remember, only ONE player gets a RFB.

If the RFB safely reaches 1B, can he have a Courtesy Runner?

The Rules Committee last winter specifically did NOT prohibit that substitution.

The RFB is considered the Batter-Runner and therefore CAN be substituted. At 1B (where he must stop). Before the next pitch.

Highlight reel: last Monday, a RFB went to 2B. An alert pitcher 1) APPEALED, 2) called his infielder to tag the Runner, 3) got the OUT.

### **INTERFERENCE AT SECOND BASE**

Last Monday, as Base Ump, I was unable to make a call at 2B. On the attempted double play, I had already pivoted with the throw to make the call at 1B.

Unfortunately, the Runner into 2B collided with the Fielder who had forced him.

The Plate Umpire had not observed and was unable to back me up.

Therefore, a no-call.

In my 7/11 message, I didn't list this -- so let's do that now. (Bold is the new text.)

At the Plate, we DO:

**Observe Runners into 2d and 3d for possible Interference if they do not give up/slide**

Call Catch or No Catch

Call Foul

(but not Fair, because all the Fielders have their back to us  
and they easily mis-hear, so we remain silent,  
arm horizontal toward the infield)

Call plays at 3d

(after moving out front)

Announce the count before each pitch

(loudly enough for Infielders to hear  
using that 3 balls/2 strikes/1 foul format

Call Illegal or Infield Fly as the ball **reaches its highest point** in flight

AND IN CLOSING:

a thought from Chief Instructor Michael Blades -- that he had shared with an ump several weeks ago,  
but was *ironically* the next up in my queue to share with you:

**Interference:** By rule a Fielder catching the ball or attempting to catch the ball cannot be interfered with intentionally or unintentionally. This includes verbally as well as physically. Because a defensive player is so vulnerable with his attention focused entirely on catching the ball, the Runner is responsible in almost all cases for avoiding contact or interference.

Sometimes a throw will pull the defender into the path of the Runner at the last second resulting in unavoidable contact. This is just what we call a "wreck".

A hard and fast rule is that the Fielder is ALWAYS allowed to catch the ball without any interference.

Additionally, if the umpire thinks contact was intentional, the Runner is automatically ejected. The Runner at our level of play must slide or give up -- period. Injuries at our age can be career ending or worse.

This is primarily the Base Umpire's call but should be called if seen by the Plate.

Interference at 2B on possible double plays is a very difficult call to make from Home -- no angle and distance are factors. I am usually into the diamond on every play but I am reluctant to make that call unless I am certain.

Interference does not have to be intentional.

The result is always a double play and in some cases the second out would be the runner closest to home.

With respect and appreciation, Peter

Huff-N-Puffers Umpire-In-Chief

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The USA Softball rulebook can be downloaded as a PDF from [www.usasoftball.com/official-rulebook/](http://www.usasoftball.com/official-rulebook/)  
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