2024 September Plays and Clarifications

We want to remind those umpires who are considering attending the Advanced Fast Pitch Camp in October to get signed up before registration fills up or closes.  It is a great opportunity to get some individualized instruction and be evaluated umpiring live games by members of the National Umpire Staff.  Moreover, the committee is working on plans for the 2025 UIC clinic which will be held just prior to the National Council Meeting in October of 2025.  Save the date, October 23-25th, and make plans to attend.

As the Championship season gets a bit closer to completion for 2024, we want to Thank all the umpires across the country for working their local championships and would like to congratulate those umpires for working National Championships.  We appreciate the time and effort during those hot days!  We know the difficulty of giving your best each game when the temperatures are high.  Evaluations will start coming out near the end of the month, so be sure to reach out to your local UIC or commissioner to see if they received it from the national office.  Once received, take time to review them and develop a plan with your local UIC to work on the suggestions made by Championship UICs into your game.  Below are a few plays which occurred over the summer that we thought would be good to cover.  What are your thoughts on these plays? (Find the answers at the very bottom)

Play #1:  Two outs, R1 on 2B, line drive to the outfield.  R1 is significantly obstructed rounding third base by F5.  Although knocked off stride, they are able to keep from falling to the ground and continue towards home.  The PU signals and verbalizes Obstruction.  The batter-runner, thinking they can get a double, heads towards second base and is thrown out before R1 takes another stride to touch home plate.  The base umpire calls/signals the out just milliseconds before R1 touches home plate.  Does the run count?  Why or why not?

Play #2:  No outs, R1 on 3B, and the batter pop-ups to the infield.  F5 calls it, F6 calls it, and the ball drifts towards third base.  R1 goes back and stands on the bag.  The ball comes down and F5, who is standing in foul territory, reaches up over R1’s head and attempts to catch the ball over fair territory, but the ball hits off their glove and hits R1 in the head, bounces off, and is caught by F6 just before hitting the ground in fair territory.  What’s the call?

Play #3:  In Fast Pitch, a right-handed batter is in the box and ready when the pitch is delivered.  The pitch is high and inside somewhat when the PU umpire loses sight of the ball.  They hear sounds, and see what could be a possible attempt to swing at the pitch, but believe it’s been checked.  The pitched ball goes back to the fence.  The batter drops their bat and shakes their hand indicating the pitched ball hit them. Immediately, the PU asks their BU if there was an attempted swing.  The BU indicates, “YES” and gives the hammer signal.   The batter hears the BUs call and says, “No, it hit me!”  The PU, hearing this and seeing the batter shaking their hand, emphasizes “dead ball” and announces the pitch is a “dead ball, strike.”  Is this the correct ruling?  Why or Why not?

Answers:

Play #1) Rule 8, Sec 5 B 4  The run counts.  Even though the third out occurred prior to R1 touching home plate, if in the umpire’s judgment, the obstructed runner would have reached home prior to the out, then the rule says the umpire may award the base and thus count the run.

Play #2) Rule 1 - Fair Ball, Rule 1 - No Catch - B 2.   Because the ball was first touched by a defensive player over fair territory the ball is fair.  When the ball goes off the glove and hits the runner in the head, it is the same as if it struck the ground, and there is no interference because the runner is not forced to vacate the base, and may legally occupy the base, so long as they do not intentionally interfere.  Even though F6 prevents the ball from hitting the ground, it is not a catch, and the umpire should indicate the ball is fair and follow it up with the No Catch Signal.

Play #3) Rule 7, Sec 4 H  Once the PU went for help, and the BU ruled the batter had swung at the pitch, the correct ruling is a strike on the batter.  Because the ball hit the batter, the ball is dead, and once the batter swings and misses the ball, it’s ruled a strike on the batter.  If this is the third strike, the batter would also be out.