

**Ocee Park Babe Ruth/Cal Ripken
Fall 2007 Rules Clarifications (Softball)
Bulletin #2 – August 5, 2007**

This bulletin contains information regarding certain softball rules in an effort to clarify the rules and note correct rulings. Please see that the bulletin is distributed to all team managers and umpires in all divisions of softball.

Item #1. Runners Leaving the Base Early. (Softball only)

Issue: Clarify the ruling and does the play require an appeal by the defense?

Ruling: A runner leaving the base early is to be called OUT by the umpire that observed the infraction. In all leagues AAA and up (11-13 and older), there is no warning to be given. For AA (9-10), one game-warning will be issued and the next occurrence by either team will result in the runner being called out. This play does NOT require an appeal by the defense (like a missed based or the failure to tag properly on a caught fly-ball). The umpire observing the infraction should call Dead Ball, call the runner out, and return other runners to their original bases. The pitch is ruled a NO PITCH. The call may be made by any umpire. However, if the call is made by the HOME plate umpire, it is recommended that he/she first confer with the base umpire since it is the primary responsibility of the base umpire. If the base umpire rules the runner did not leave early, the crew needs to resolve the disagreement before rendering a final decision. It is permissible for a manager to request timeout and to confer with the base umpire requesting him/her to check with other umpires to see if a runner has left base early. The base umpire may honor or deny the request with no recourse for the team manager (no further appeal). Note that NFHS and NCAA guidelines specify that the runner should be given the benefit of the doubt and that a runner should only be called out when it is obvious and unmistakable.

Item #2. Bunt Attempts – Strike Calls. (Softball only)

Issue: Clarify the ruling on a strike call for a bunt where the bat is in the strike zone, the ball is outside the strike zone (a ball), and no contact with the ball is made?

Ruling: Babe Ruth softball rules closely follow the ASA rule model. As such, the mere location of a bat in the strike zone (in a bunt position) does not constitute a strike unless of course the pitch is a strike. If a batter locates the bat in the strike zone and the pitched ball is outside the zone (a ball), the pitch is only called a strike if the batter OFFERED at the pitch. In other words, the batter must have made an attempt to bunt the ball and not merely left the bat in the strike zone. To some extent, you are being asked to judge the intent of the batter to bunt the ball. However, the strike call is not automatic simply due to the location of the bat in the strike zone.