



NCAA BASEBALL PLAYING RULES INTERPRETATIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS 2024 – 2025

January 28, 2025

With the decision of the NCAA Division I Baseball Committee to use the double first base during the 2025 postseason, more conferences and institutions are planning to use the rule during the regular-season and therefore more attention is being paid to the various play situations that can develop when using the rule. There were some excellent questions posed and feedback provided. Additional language has been added to clarify the questions and align the double first base rule with other existing rules and accepted procedures. The major questions raised were as follows:

- 1) What if there is no initial play made on the batter-runner on a ball hit within the infield? For example, a ground ball is misplayed, rolls away from the infielder and no initial play at first base is made or a play is made on another runner at a different base and no initial play is made at first base. Is the batter-runner still required to only touch the white part of the base? Solution: An interpretation was added to #4 to allow the batter-runner to touch either base in this situation. In these situations, the batter-runner often rounds the base to assess the situation similar to when the ball is hit to the outfield.
- 2) On a close play at first base, the batter-runner beats the throw but clearly touches only the white portion of the double base. Some suggested that the batter-runner should be called safe and then the defense could appeal the call. This is not how the play would be administered if the batter-runner had missed the base by stepping just short of the base, to the side of the base, or overstepping the base. The batter-runner is required to touch the colored portion of the base in order to be safe. For consistency with existing rules, this situation should be handled in the same way. In any situation, the umpire is only going to rule that a runner missed touching a base if they clearly saw the entire runner's foot miss the base. Procedures to correct the call using the guidelines in the "Getting the Call Right" section in Appendix E could still be used to make sure that the correct call is made. An umpire should never make a call incorrectly (in this case, calling the runner safe when they clearly saw that the proper base was not touched) and then relying on an appeal to correct it. The procedure for making no call and waiting for an appeal when a batter-runner oversteps the base and has both feet on the ground beyond the base is consistent with other rules and was the original intent of the initial language of the rule.

Updated Guidelines for Double Base at First Base – Rule 1-7-b

Interpretation: When using the double first base the following guidelines shall be followed to properly administer the playing rules.

b. The double first base may be used during regular-season and postseason competition.

- 1) A batted ball hitting or bounding over the white portion of the bag is a fair ball. A batted ball hitting or bounding over the colored (orange or green) bag without first touching or bounding over the white section is foul.
- 2) When an initial play is being made on the batter-runner at first base, the defense must use the white section of the double base and the batter-runner must use the colored base with the following exceptions.

Exception 1—On a dropped third strike, the fielder and batter-runner may touch either the white or colored base. After a dropped third strike, if the fielder is drawn to a position in foul territory on the side of the colored base to receive a throw, the runner may touch the white base in order to avoid a collision. Normal running lane restrictions still apply.

Exception 2—When the defense fields a fair batted ball or throws from foul territory near first base to make a play on the batter-runner, or when an errant throw pulls the defense off the white portion of the base into foul ground, the batter-runner may use either portion of the double base and can run the last few steps to the base in fair territory in an effort to avoid a collision. In this situation, normal running lane violation rules do not apply; however, if intentional interference is ruled, the batter runner would be out. If the intentional interference is deemed to be flagrant, the runner will also be ejected. In this exception, the defense is still required to touch the white base to complete the force play.

- 3) If there is a play on the batter-runner and the batter-runner clearly touches only the white portion of the double base, it is treated the same as missing the base. If this failure to touch the proper base occurs during a close play and the batter-runner has not passed the base with both feet, the batter-runner should be called out. If the batter-runner clearly beats the throw to first base but misses the base and has both feet on the ground beyond the back edge of the base, the batter-runner would be called out if the defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to first base. The proper mechanic is for the umpire to make no call on this play as the batter-runner has not yet touched first base.
- 4) On extra-base hits or other balls hit to the outfield when there is no chance for a play to be made at the double base or other plays within the infield when there is no initial play made on the batter-runner, the batter-runner may touch either the white or colored section of the base. Should, however, the batter-runner reach and go beyond first base, they may only return to the white section of the base.
- 5) Once the batter-runner reaches first base, they shall then use only the white base.

Rationale:

The guidelines above will provide guidance to umpires, players and coaches regarding the proper application and mechanics when games are played with a double base at first base.

