

Collisions at the Plate

Rule Reference 8-4-2

There can still be violent collisions at the plate, and other bases.

As umpires we are asked to determine if the runner was trying to reach home plate and score, or whether he has created illegal contact.

Collision Rule

When there is a collision between a runner and a fielder who is making a play, the umpire shall judge:

- (1) Whether the collision by the runner was avoidable (could the runner have reached the base without colliding) or unavoidable (the runner's path to the base was blocked) or
- (2) Whether the runner actually was attempting to reach the base (plate) or attempting to dislodge the ball from the fielder.

PENALTY—If the runner, a) could have avoided the collision and reached the base, or b) attempted to dislodge the ball, the runner shall be declared out even if the fielder loses possession of the ball. The ball is dead and all other base runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.

If the fielder blocks the path of the base runner to the base (plate), the runner may make contact, slide into, or collide with a fielder as long as the runner is making a legitimate attempt to reach the base or plate.

If the collision by the runner was malicious, the runner shall be declared out and also ejected from the contest. The ball shall be declared dead.

If the defensive player blocks the base (plate) or base line clearly without making a play on the runner, obstruction shall be called. The runner is safe and a delayed dead ball shall be called. If the base runner collides maliciously, the runner shall be declared out and will be ejected from the contest. The ball is dead.

Rule 8-4-2

ART. 8-4 . . . The batter-runner is out when:

8-4-2b. . . he does not legally slide and causes illegal contact and/or illegally alters the actions of a fielder in the immediate act of making a play, or on a force play, does not slide in a direct line between the bases

EXCEPTION: A runner may slide in a direction away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder.

NOTE: Runners are never required to slide, but if a runner elects to slide, the slide must be legal. (2-32-1, 2)

PENALTY: The runner is out, the ball is dead immediately, and interference is called. On a force-play slide with less than two outs, the runner is declared out, as well as the batter-runner. Runners shall return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch. With two outs, the runner is declared out. The batter is credited with a fielder's choice.

8-4-2c. does not legally attempt to avoid a fielder in the immediate act of making a play on him; or

PENALTY: The runner is out, the ball remains alive unless interference is called.

NOTE: Jumping, hurdling, and leaping are all legal attempts to avoid a fielder as long as the fielder is lying on the ground.

8-4-2d. dives over a fielder; or

PENALTY: The runner is out and the ball remains alive unless interference occurs.

NOTE: Diving over a fielder is illegal.

8-4-2e. initiates malicious contact;

NOTE: Malicious contact always supersedes obstruction.

8-4-2f. as a runner or retired runner, fails to execute a legal slide, or attempts to avoid the fielder or the play on a force play at any base; or

CB 8.4.2 T Play: On a play at the plate, F2 is on his knees. R1 decides to hurdle F2 or jump over him feet first.

Ruling: The runner is out immediately and unless he makes contact or alters the play of F2, the ball remains alive. A runner is required to legally slide or legally attempt to avoid a fielder. Going over the top of the fielder who is not lying on the ground, such as hurdling, jumping feet first and diving is dangerous and, therefore, is illegal. The act of obstruction does not negate the runner's responsibility to avoid a fielder legally.

CB 8.4.2 Y Play: The bases are loaded with (a), less than 2 outs, or (b). 2 outs. B4 hits a ground ball to F4, who throws to F2 for the force out at home. The throw pulls F2 off home plate several steps toward the first base side. R1, seeing F2 ready to make a play on B4 at first base, touches home plate and maliciously crashes into F2.

Ruling: (a) Since this is a force play situation, R1 and B4 are declared out and on one scores. R1 will be ejected from the game. In (b), R1 will be declared out and ejected for the contact, and no run will score.

SECTION 32 SLIDE

ART. 2-32-1 . . . A legal slide can be either feet first or head first. If a runner slides feet first, at least one leg and buttock shall be on the ground. If a runner slides, he must slide within reach of the base with either a hand or a foot.

ART. 2-32-2 . . . A slide is illegal if:

- 2-32-2a. the runner uses a rolling, cross-body or pop-up slide into the fielder, or
- 2-32-2b. the runner's raised leg is higher than the fielder's knee when the fielder is in a standing position, or
- 2-32-2c. the runner goes beyond the base and makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder, or
- 2-32-2d. the runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg, or
- 2-32-2e. the runner tries to injure the fielder, or
- 2-32-2f. the runner, on a force play, does not slide on the ground and in a direct line between the two bases.

EXCEPTION: A runner may slide or run in a direction away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder (8-4-2b).

CB 2.32.2 C Play: On a force play slide at the plate, the runner slides over (beyond the plate) and makes contact with F2. Is the runner guilty of violating the force play slide rule?

Ruling: Yes. A runner is expected to stop short of the back edge of home plate, the same as he would at other bases. Had the runner not made contact or altered the play, there would have been no violation. 2-32-1c(f)