

SBMSA Baseball Rules

One-Base Limit on Infield Hits in the Rookie League

In February 2017, SBMSA got rid of the (complicated) overthrow rule in the Rookie league and replaced it with a (simpler) formulation that has the same goal of making sure the Rookie game does not turn into a track meet. The new Rookie rule is a one base limit on balls hit in the infield but no baserunning limits on balls hit to the outfield. Here is the rule:

- **Rule 5.11: One-Base Limit on Infield Hits in the Rookie League.** In the Rookie league there is a 15-foot line that separates infielders from outfielders. On balls hit into the infield (on or in front of the 15-foot line), baserunners and the batter-runner are limited to advancing one base from where they were at the time the ball was pitched. The purpose of this rule is to (i) prevent the Rookie game from turning into a track meet on routine infield hits just because offensive players are more capable than defensive players at this age, and (ii) encourage infielders to throw the ball to the correct base in an attempt to make an out without fear of making errant throws that lead to extra bases. On balls hit into the outfield (beyond the 15-foot line), there are no baserunning limits. Baserunners and the batter-runner are allowed to keep advancing until the defense is able to stop play by freezing the lead runner or by getting the ball to the pitcher in the pitching circle in accordance with Rule 5.04.
 - (a) If a batted ball settles in the infield or is controlled by a player when the ball is on or in front of the 15-foot line, the ball is considered an infield hit for the purpose of this rule, and so all baserunners and the batter-runner are limited to one base. After a baserunner reaches the one base to which he is limited under this rule he is still liable to be put out for any baserunning error that he commits up to the point that the umpire declares the play dead. *EXAMPLE 1:* Runner on first base, batter hits ball to shortstop who bobbles the ball and then runs over to second base. The runner from first base reaches second safely but then over-slides the base and is tagged out by the shortstop. *RULING 1:* Runner is out. *EXAMPLE 2:* Runner on first base, batter hits ball to shortstop who holds the ball rather than making a throw to second or first base. The runner from first base reaches second safely but then tries to take third. The shortstop tags the runner out between second and third. *RULING 2:* Runner is out. *EXAMPLE 3:* Runner on first base, batter hits ball to shortstop who holds the ball rather than making a throw to second or first base. The runner from first base reaches second safely and then is somehow able to take third as well. Shortstop trails runner to third and then tags runner as runner is standing safely on third base. *RULING 3:* Runner is not out, but runner must return to second base because that is his one-base limit on the infield hit. *NOTE:* Over-running or over-sliding first base is a special situation which is governed by Rule 7.05.
 - (b) If a batted ball makes it beyond the 15-foot line before being controlled by a fielder, the ball is considered an outfield hit for the purpose of this rule, and so there are no baserunning restrictions. *EXAMPLE:* Bases empty, batter hits rocket grounder that hits shortstop in the leg before bounding into the outfield where an outfielder finally picks up the ball. Batter-runner advances safely to third base.

RULING: Batter-runner is entitled to third base because his batted ball was not controlled by the infielder whose leg it hit; it was controlled for the first time by the outfielder. Therefore, the hit is considered an outfield hit and so the batter-runner is not subject to a one-base limit.

- (c) If a fly ball or line drive is legally caught on or in front of the 15-foot line in fair territory, or on or in front of the 15-foot line extended in foul territory, any baserunner who tags up is subject to a one-base limit. If a fly ball or line drive is legally caught beyond the 15-foot line in fair territory, or beyond the 15-foot line extended in foul territory, any baserunner who tags up is free to advance as many bases as he can until the defense is able to stop play in accordance with Rule 5.04.
- (d) On infield hits, the one-base limit supersedes Rule 7.09 on wild throws. For example, if the shortstop fields a batted ball and makes a wild throw to the first baseman that goes over the fence, the batter-runner is limited to taking first base. He is not awarded second base as per Rule 7.09 on wild throws. On outfield hits, Rule 7.09 on wild throws is fully applicable.
- (e) **RULE CLARIFICATION:** On an infield hit, if a runner takes an extra base or bases and in doing so reaches home plate, once the runner touches home plate, the play is dead as to that runner and so he is no longer liable to be put out. Once the play is declared dead as to all runners, the runner who touched home plate will be returned to the one base to which he is limited. *EXAMPLE 1:* Runner on second base, infield hit, play is made to first base, runner on second runs through third and then home and then into his dugout. First baseman goes into dugout and tags runner. *RULING 1:* Runner is not out since play was dead as to him as soon as he touched home plate. The runner is returned to third base because that is his one-base limit on the infield hit. *EXAMPLE 2:* Runner on second base, infield hit, play is made to first base, runner on second runs through third and then home with first baseman in pursuit. After touching home, runner realizes he should have stopped at third base and when he tries to run back to third, he is tagged by the first baseman between home and third. *RULING 2:* Runner is not out since play was dead as to him as soon as he touched home plate. The runner is returned to third base because that is his one-base limit on the infield hit.