

▶ **Randy Sprouse**

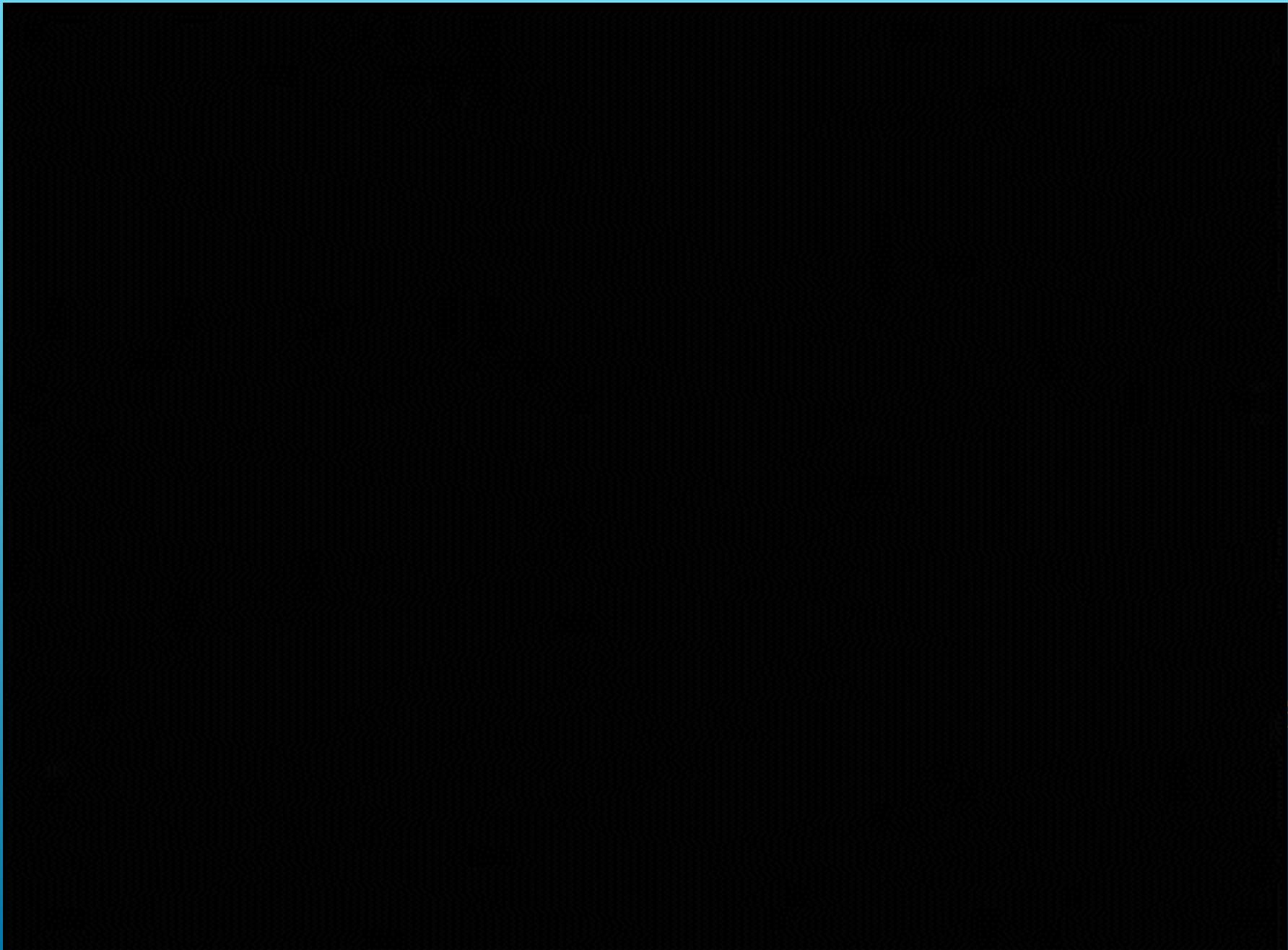
▶ **Diane Carden**

▶ **John Wright**

▶ **Jim Sanderson**

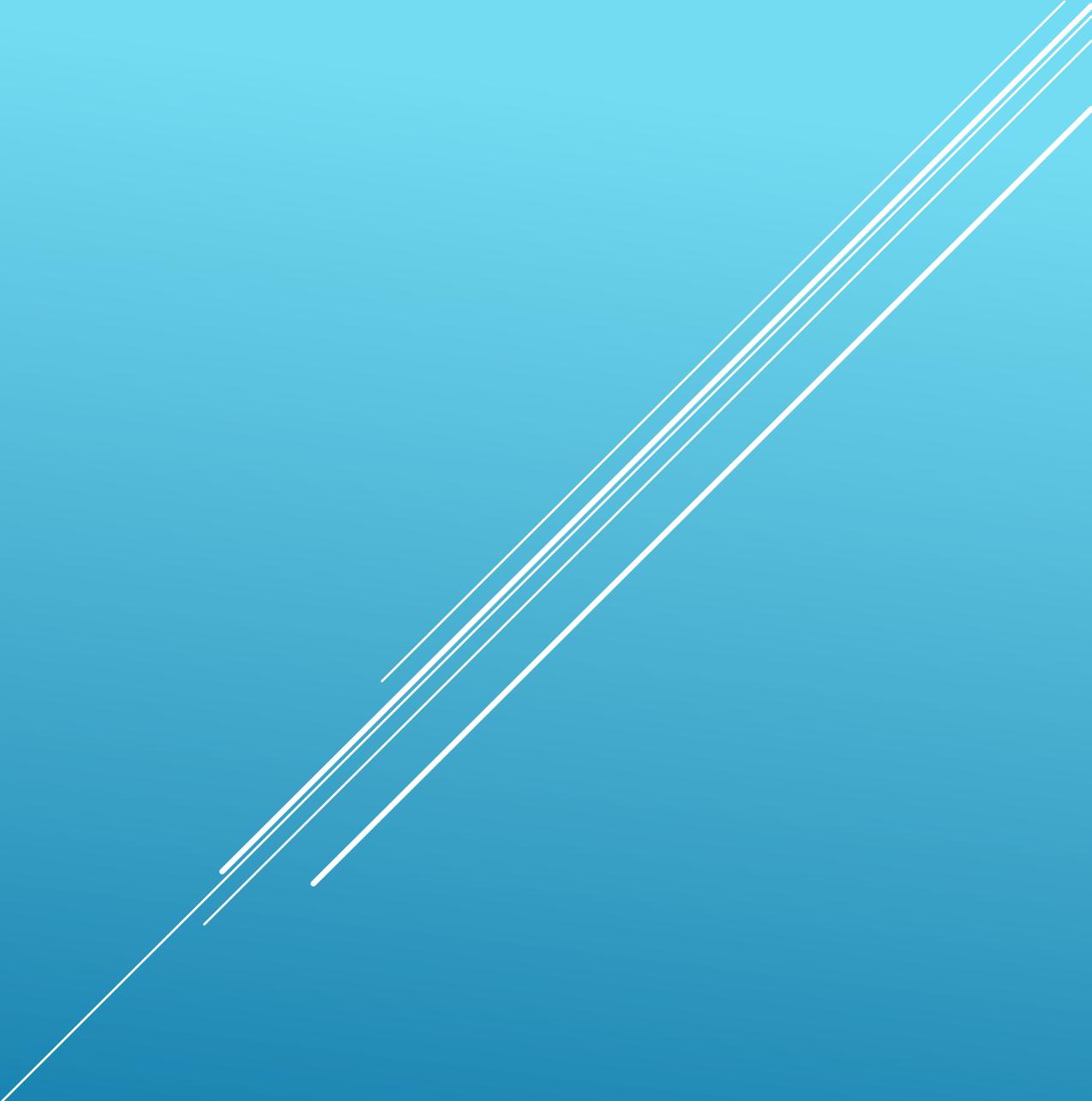
**INTERFERENCE AND OBSTRUCTION**

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# INTERFERENCE OR OBSTRUCTION?

Who has the **right-of-way**?

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom-left towards the top-right, set against a blue gradient background.



General explanation that some of the interference and obstruction calls are in the umpire's judgement and not absolute.

There are rules to give you guidelines and a good basis to make your calls.

Must know the elements of the rules in order to apply them and be able to explain them.



# HOW TO TRAIN AS A UIC

**First you must consider the level of umpire.**

**New umpires must be familiar with the rule.**

**Give a pop quiz and discuss.**

**Present some situations in the classroom.**

**More experienced umpires use a short pop quiz.**

**Go outside and present some situations.**

This an example of a training session and only placed into this PPT as a guide.

## HOW TO TEACH BASIC OBSTRUCTION & INTERFERENCE

I. Engage your umpires by asking the definition of obstruction & interference.

\*Use a chalkboard or dry erase to write down bullet points for each

II. Ask for examples of each

III. Show 2 or 3 basic/classic examples (film) of each and discuss the reason for the call. Continue to reiterate: impede, hinder, confuse, contact not necessary.

IV. Discuss the penalties of each.

\*Obstruction → delayed dead ball

\* Interference → immediate dead ball

\* Umpires need to use the correct

terminology when explaining their ruling to the coaches. (Impeded, hindered, confused – and be ready to explain why it was interference even though contact was not made.) Do NOT make up your own definition because you WILL be misquoted!

V. Wrap up by explaining the importance of umpires needing to be ready to adjust as the play develops to put themselves in the best position possible to correctly call obstruction or interference. All the more reason NOT to close in on a play or stand flat-footed. Angle and distance are crucial.

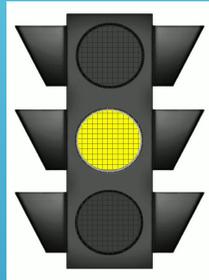


**This video clip is a good example of the umpire recognizing runner interference, making a strong call and enforcing it properly.**

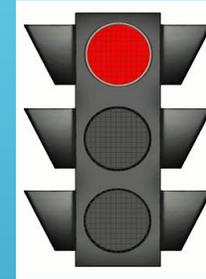
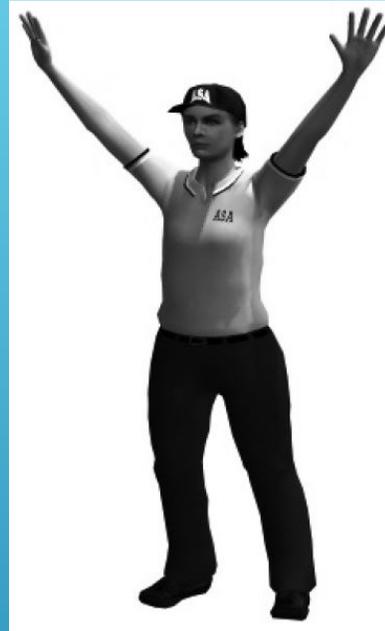
**Called the runner out.**

**Put the runners back on the correct bases.**

# DELAYED DEAD BALL

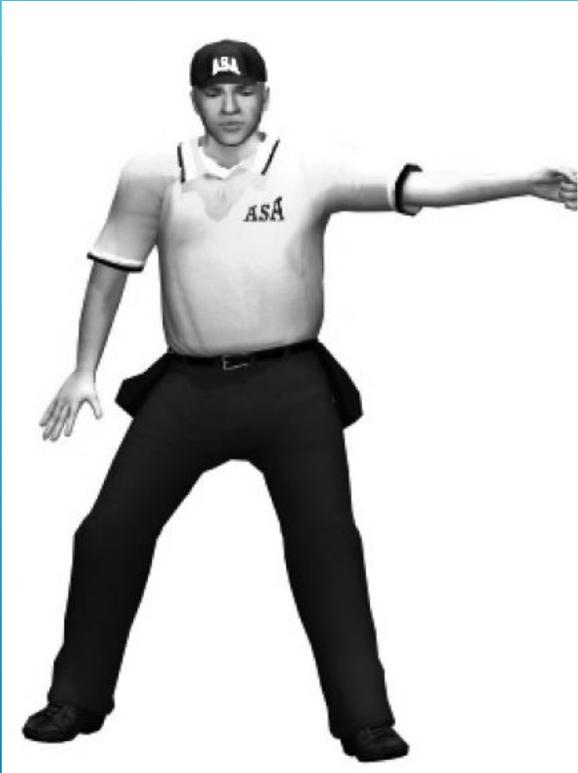
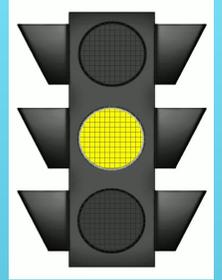


# DEAD BALL



DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

# OBSTRUCTION



The act of a defensive team member:

Who hinders or impedes a batter...

Who impedes the progress of a runner...

Unless the fielder is:

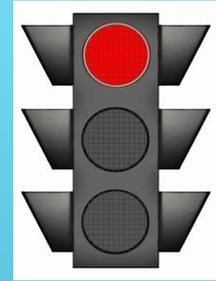
In possession of the ball

In the act of fielding a batted ball

Contact is not necessary.



# INTERFERENCE



The act of an offensive player or team member, umpire or spectator that impedes, hinders or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play.

Contact is not necessary.

## Webster's Definition of impedes

**: to interfere with or slow the progress of**

## Webster's Definition of hinders

**: to make slow or difficult the progress of**

**: to hold back**

**: to delay, impede, or prevent action**

## Webster's Definition of confuses

**: to disturb in mind or purpose**

## USA Softball Rule Book Definition of play

**: An attempt by a defensive player to retire an offensive player**



**THERE IS A LOT TO CONSIDER...**

**Have to see all that is going on around the play.**





## **ANTICIPATE ALL POSSIBILITIES**

**More than just pre-pitching.**

**Priorities change as the play(s) develop.**

**Look past the obvious.**

**Be aware of secondary plays.**

**Be a student of the game:  
strategies and tactics.**

# Ball, ball who has the ball?



Obstruction?

Was the topic of a fake tag discussed?

Rule 1

**FAKE TAG:** A form of obstruction by a fielder who attempts to tag a runner without the ball and thereby impedes a runner advancing or returning to a base.

Rule Supplement #19

### **19 - FAKE TAG**

A fake tag occurs when a fielder without the ball deceives the runner by impeding their progress; for example, causing a runner to slide, slow down or stop running.

**A.** Obstruction is called when a fake tag is made as mentioned above. The umpire should signal delayed dead ball and let the play continue to its completion. The obstructed runner, and each runner affected by the obstruction, should always be awarded the base or bases they would have reached had the obstruction not occurred. Again, each runner is awarded only the base or bases that in the judgment of the umpire they would have reached had there not been obstruction.

**B.** The umpire should rule obstruction on all fake tags. Continued fake tags should result in ejections. In flagrant cases where the sliding player gets hurt, the offending player should be ejected without warning.

**C.** When a fielder fakes a tag but the runner continues on to the next base without sliding or breaking stride, there is no rule violation since the runner's progress was not impeded. However, a warning should be given.



## “COACH...”

**Must know how to tactfully explain the rule using the words in the rule.**

**Interference: impedes, hinders, or confuses**

**Obstruction: impedes the progress of a runner**

**The verbiage needs to be “They hindered the batter by...”  
Or, “They impeded the batter by...”**

**When dealing with a runner, “They impeded the progress of the runner by...”**

**When explaining interference use the proper word, “impeded”, “hindered” or “confused” to explain the action of the offensive player.**

**Batter Runner hit by throw from catcher.**

USA Softball Presents



You Make the Call....

Throw to first base.

USA Softball Presents



You Make the Call....

**Batter Runner rounding first base.**

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You Make the Call....



**Should time be called immediately? Or not? If it was where are the runner placed?**

**Did the batter runner impede, hinder or confuse B3?**

**Did B3 impede the progress of the batter runner?**

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a blue gradient background.



**The catcher was set up well ahead of the plate, near the front of the batter's boxes.**

**Did the lead runner move to take out the catcher? Was it intentional?**

**If the above does not apply then:**

**Did the lead runner touch home plate?**

**If they didn't touch home plate and the following runner touched home plate what is the call?**

**Rule 8, 7, D: D. When a runner physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been called out. If this was the third out of the inning, any runs scored prior to the out for passing a preceding runner count.**

***Effect:***

***1 The ball remains live.***

***2 The runner who passes the preceding runner is out.***



**You must follow the ball. Did the ball deflect off the third baseman's glove? Or did it just go by them?**

**Rule references: The Runner Is Out Rule 8, 7**

**J. When a runner interferes:**

**1 With a fielder attempting to field a batted fair ball or a foul fly ball,**

**4 Intentionally with any defensive player having the opportunity to make an out with the deflected batted ball.**

***Effect:***

***a The ball is dead.***

***b The runner is out.***

***c The batter-runner is awarded first base.***

***d Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.***

My fellow umpires...

Brother Jim!

The times when the  
umpire prays...



## Interference by Base Umpire: Rule 8, 1, E

**E.** When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of an umpire or a runner:

1 After touching a fielder including the pitcher.

2 After passing a fielder other than the pitcher and no other fielder had an opportunity to make an out.

**Effect - Section 1E [1 & 2]:** *The ball remains live.*

3 Before passing a fielder without being touched.

4 Before passing a fielder, excluding the pitcher and contacts a runner who is off the base.

5 After passing a fielder and another fielder has the opportunity to make an out.

**Effect - Section 1E [3-5]:**

a *The ball is dead.*

b *The runner is out.*

c *The batter-runner is awarded first base.*

d *Runners are advanced one base if forced.*

## **Interference by Plate Umpire: Rule 8, 6, F**

### **F. (Fast Pitch, Slow Pitch with stealing or 16-Inch Slow Pitch)**

**When the plate umpire interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner who is stealing, or an attempted pick off play.**

#### ***Effect:***

***1 Delayed dead ball at the time of the interference. If the runner is ruled out, the ball remains live.***

***2 If the runner is not out, the ball becomes dead. Runners shall be returned to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.***

***Note: It is not umpire interference if, on a passed ball or wild pitch, the umpire gets hit by a thrown ball from the catcher. The ball remains live.***



## Catcher Obstruction

**D. When the catcher obstructs a batter's attempt to hit a pitched ball.**

**Effect: Delayed dead ball.**

**1 If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely or has passed that base and is considered to have reached it, and all other runners have advanced at least one base.**

**Effect:**

**a Obstruction is canceled.**

**b All action as a result of the batted ball stands.**

**c No option is given.**

**2 If all runners, including the batter-runner, do not advance at least one base.**

**Effect:**

**a The manager has the option of taking the result of the play,**

**or**

**b Enforcing obstruction by awarding the batter first base.**

**c Runners are advanced one base if forced.**

**3 The catcher steps on or in front of home plate without the ball and prevents the batter from hitting the ball.**

**Effect:**

**a The ball is dead.**

**b The batter is awarded first base.**

**c Runners are advanced one base if forced.**

**4 (Fast Pitch) On a swing or attempted bunt, the catcher or any other fielder prevents the batter from hitting the ball, touches the batter or their bat with a runner on third base trying to score on a squeeze play or a steal.**

**Effect:**

**a The ball is dead.**

**b The runner shall be awarded home plate.**

**c The batter shall be awarded first base.**

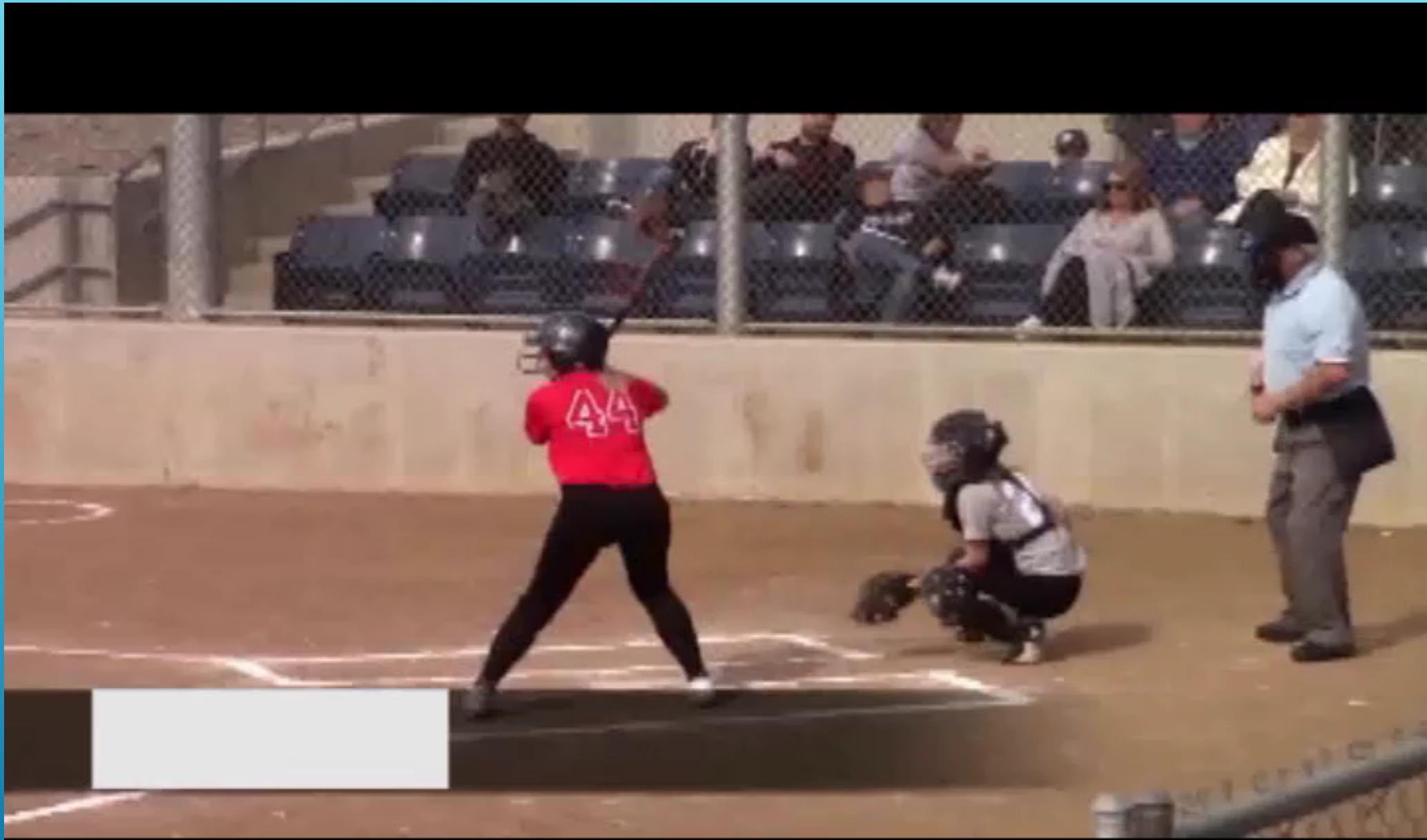
**d Runners are advanced one base if forced.**



**Umpire starts to call dead ball by raising both hands, then calls obstruction and then kills the play. Why?**

**Obstruction and Interference are tough calls to learn and react without thinking about which to call.**

Three parallel white lines of varying lengths and positions, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, serving as a decorative element.



**A good coached team will have the batter runner continue to second base in an effort to get in a run down so the runner on third base can score.**

**During the run down the runner obstructed as the first baseman impeded their progress and did not have the ball.**

**Where do you place the runner? First base as that was the base they were attempting to obtain.**

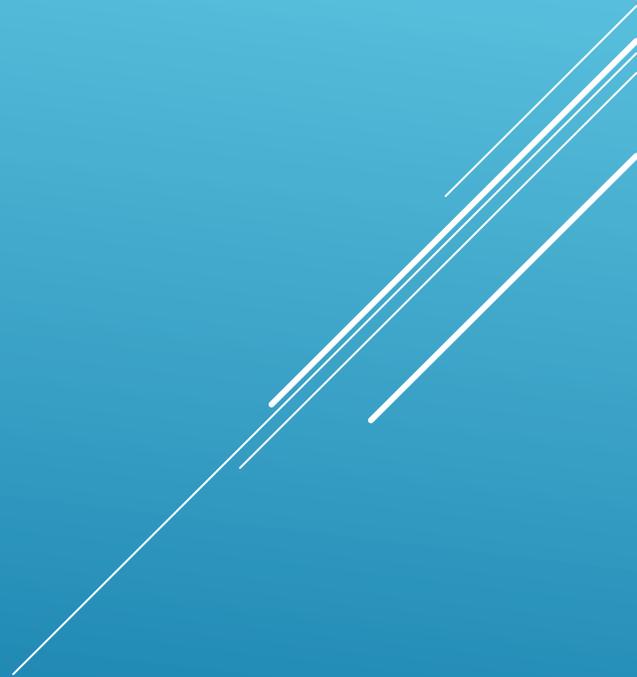
Slow Pitch play at the plate.

**USA**  
**SOFTBALL™**  
**UMPIRE**

USA Softball



**Obstruction? Interference? You make the call.**





## **Rule 8, 2**

**F. When the batter-runner interferes:**

**1 With a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.**

**What action should the umpire(s) take dealing with the batter runner?**



**By coming down the base line did the runner interfere with the third baseman's opportunity to make the catch?**

**Does the ball being fair or foul make a difference?**

**Rule 8, 7, J:**

**J. When a runner interferes:**

**1 With a fielder attempting to field a batted fair ball or a foul fly ball,**

**Was the ball catchable?**

TV-19  
BOT 5TH  
0-0 2 OUT

WOODSTOWN

0

STERLING

8

19

REPLAY



**Did the catcher obstruct the runner?**

**If so, what is the proper call by the plate umpire? Why is this important?**

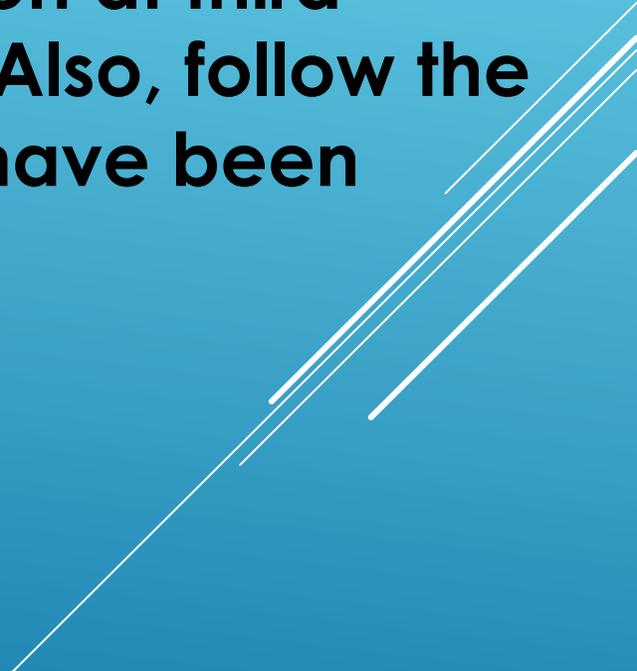
**Field awareness is important. Who was responsible for the runner touching third base?**

**Was there obstruction at third base? Did the third baseman give the runner the inside of the base or force them to use the outside of the base? Umpire judgement.**



**Good example of the crew getting the call correct.**

**But, why didn't the plate umpire see the obstruction at third base? Must always have good field awareness. Also, follow the ball. Had that been done the obstruction would have been seen.**

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**ADDITION OBSTRUCTION/INTERFERENCE  
VIDEOS WITH SCREEN EXPLANATIONS**



**Steal call at second base.**

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You Make the Call....

**Play at second base.**

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You Make the Call....

**Play at the plate.**

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You Make the Call....

Throw down to third base.

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You Make the Call....

**Running going into third base.**

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You Make the Call....

## Batter interference on throw to second base?

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You Make the Call....

## Batter interference?

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You Make the Call....

## Batter interference?

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You Make the Call....