

**The Batter's Box belongs
to the hitter.**

Fact or Fiction?

There are three ways a batter can commit batter's interference.

1. Backswing Interference
2. Interfere with a play at the plate
3. Interfere with a catcher's throw.

Baseball: Rule 7-3-5

- a) A batter shall not interfere with the catcher's fielding or throwing by leaning over home plate.
- c) A batter shall not interfere with the catcher's fielding or throwing by making any other movement, including follow-through interference, which hinders action at home plate or;
- d) Failing to make a reasonable effort to vacate a congested area when there is a throw to home plate and there is time for the batter to move away.

Softball: Rule 7-4-4

The batter is out if she interferes with the catcher's fielding or throwing by leaning over home plate, by stepping out of the batter's box, by making any movement which hinders action at home after the pitch reaches the catcher or the catcher's attempt to play on a runner, or by failing to make a reasonable effort to vacate congested area when there is a throw to home and there is time for the batter to move away.

What is the difference?

Backswing Interference

- Prior to pitch
- Umpire shall call time and reset

Follow-through Interference

- Bat contacts catcher during swing and interferes with catcher's ability to throw.
- Batter is out; Runners return



**Follow-through
Interference
applies to
baseball and
softball.**

Penalty: When there are two outs, the batter is out. When there are not two outs and an attempt to put a runner out at any base is unsuccessful, the batter is out and all runners must return to bases occupied at the time of pitch.

Interfere with a play at the plate.

When a runner is attempting to score, the batter has to make an effort to get out of the way of the play at the plate.



Get in position and watch like a hawk!

Most common play happens when there is a runner on 3rd and then a pitch gets by the catcher. You have the catcher scrambling for the ball, the pitcher running in to cover the plate and you have the runner barreling toward home.

BASEBALL: When there are two outs, the batter is out. When there are not two outs and the runner is advancing to home plate, if the runner is tagged out, the ball remains live and interference is ignored. Otherwise, the ball is dead, and the runner is called out.

If pitch is a 3rd strike, and the batter interferes, two may be ruled out. In the umpire's judgment, the batter's actions prevented a double play.

SOFTBALL: Ball is dead immediately. Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of interference by the batter.

Interference with the catcher's throw

Most Common

When a base runner is stealing and the catcher comes up quickly with a throw in an attempt to retire the runner, the batter cannot in any way impede the catcher's effort, intentionally or unintentionally.

On a steal of 2nd, you don't often see interference because the catcher has a clear line of sight to second base.

Rarely, does the batter's swing pull him off balance causing him to step on or across the plate. When moving, the batter can easily bump or otherwise impede that catcher's attempt to put out the runner.

THAT IS INTERFERENCE.

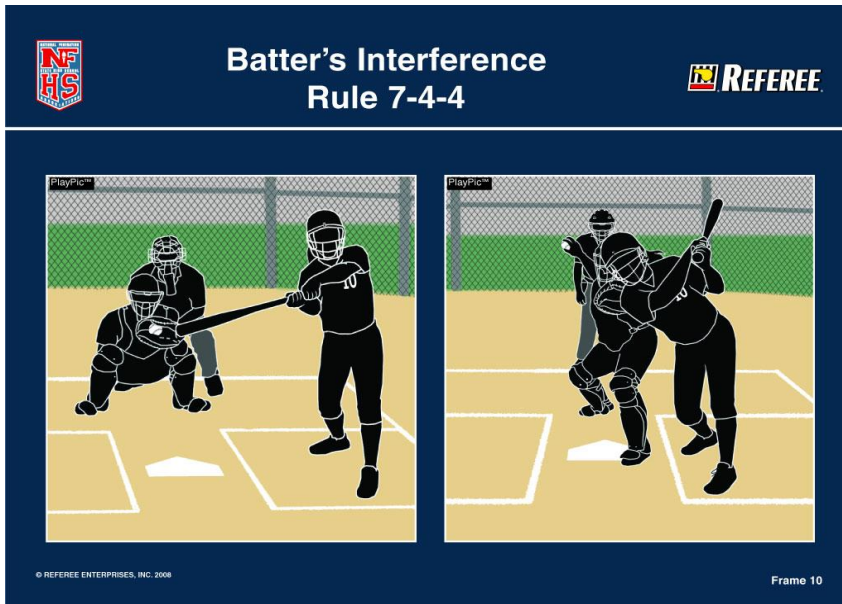
Intent does not matter.



Batter Interference

(7-4-4)

- Clarifies that batter is subject to interference if she makes any movement that hinders the action at home **AFTER** the pitch reaches the catcher
- Previous rule did not include this timeframe



Batter is also out if she fails to make a reasonable effort to vacate congested area when a play develops and there is time for the batter to move away.

When a runner is attempting a steal of 3rd, this is when an umpire needs to concentrate and watch for batter's interference.

The throw to 3rd requires the catcher to throw across the right-handed batter's box.

That's where a right-handed batter is standing and you can't expect the batter to simply disappear.

This is where it becomes a little bit tricky!

There is a common misconception that if a batter remains in the batter's box he cannot be called for interference.

This is not true.

The batter's box is not a safe haven.

But, the batter cannot just disappear.

The play happens so fast that the batter may not even know a play is on until the ball whizzes past the batter's ear.

What's an umpire to do?

Judgment Call

Look for an overt action by the batter.

Sometimes a bad throw is just a bad throw.

But if the catcher's throw is disrupted in any way, regardless of intent, it has to be called.

If the batter remains still, he probably is not interfering, but if it were me, **I'd duck.**

Here's where it gets even tougher.

The most difficult play to judge is not the straight-up steal.

It's when the catcher mishandles a pitch or is handling a pitch in the dirt.

The ball is on the ground and runners are in motion.

The catcher is diving or grabbing for the ball.

At the same time, the batter is dancing out of the way while trying to avoid interfering.

In trying to avoid interference, the batter interferes.

“But, I was trying to get out of the way!”

“What was my player supposed to do? He was trying to get out of the way.”

You are breaking my heart, son. A rule is a rule. You're out.

Know the rule.

Understand the rule.

Apply the rule.

**Don't cop out because you
are not sure.**