



United Kingdom Youth Baseball Association

Baseball Coaching Excellence Course

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This is **Module 3** of the UKYBA Baseball Coaching Excellence Course.

This Module has 3 Sections. Please complete the EXAM at the end of each section and email it to:

Tony@YouthBaseballAssociationUK.co.uk



United Kingdom Youth Baseball Association

Module 3 – Baseball Structure

Section 1

Field and Players

Test

Baseball is played between two teams of **nine players** each *on a baseball field*, under the authority of 1 or more officials, called **umpires**.

There is a minimum of one umpire per game, but can be as many as six, depending on the league and importance of the game.



There are **four bases**, numbered counter-clockwise; **first**, **second**, and **third** bases, which are cushions (informally referred to as **bags**).

Together with **home plate**, (commonly known as; the Plate), they form a square with sides of 90 ft. (27.4m) for adults, and 60 ft. (18.2m) for children up to 12 years old, called; the **“diamond.”**

*Home plate is flanked by a chalk box on either side, known as the **“batter’s box.”***
Each batter must stand within this boundary while hitting. If he or she steps outside this boundary, *while hitting*, he may be called “out.”



The **pitcher’s mound** is located in the centre of the infield. Near the centre of the mound is the **pitching rubber**, a rubber slab positioned 60 ft. 6 inches (18.4 m) for adults, and 46 ft. (14.02 m) for children up to 12 years old, from home plate. The pitcher must have one foot on the rubber at the start of every pitch to a batter, but may leave the mound area once the ball is released. The pitch may take his foot off the rubber at any time *prior to starting his wind up* to pitch a ball.





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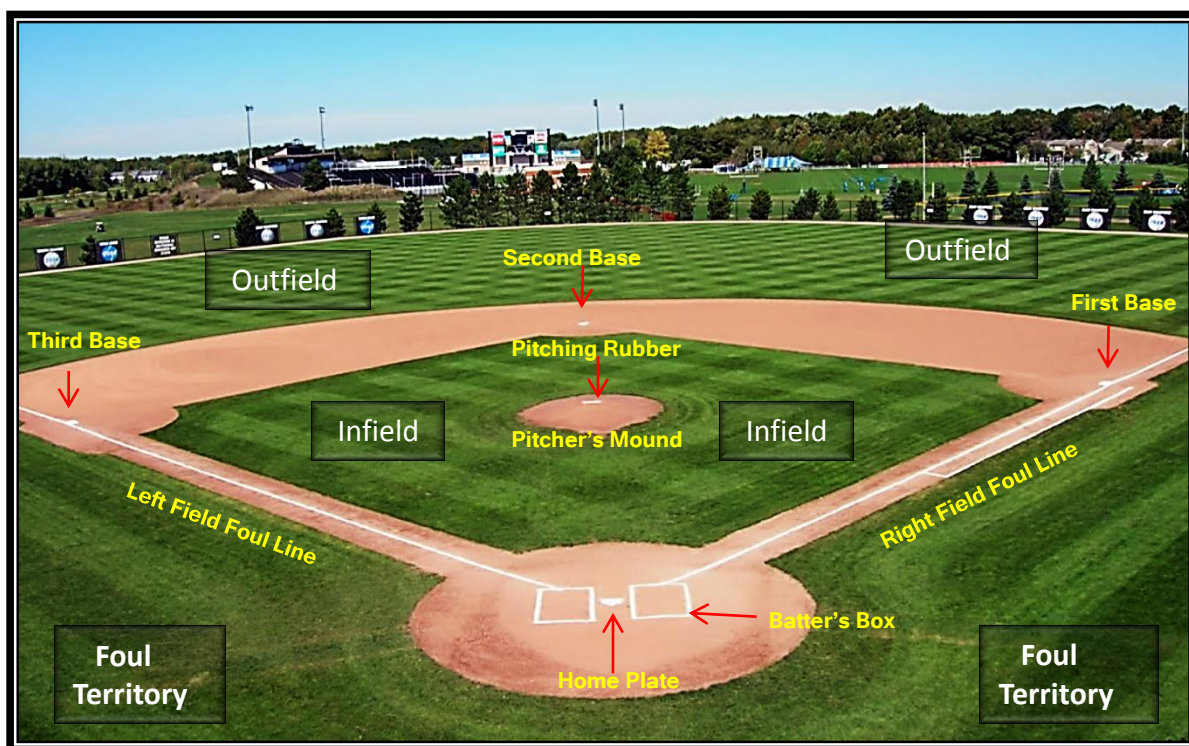
Module 3 – Baseball Structure

Section 1

Field and Players

Test

➤ The Field



The playing field is divided into three main sections;

- **Infield** – containing the four bases, and is for general defensive purposes – bounded by the *foul lines*, and within the grass line (if a grass and dirt field is available).
- **Outfield** – the grassed area beyond the infield grass line, between the foul lines, and bounded by a wall or fence.
- **Foul Territory** – is the entire area outside the *foul lines*.

You can see the “**diamond**” which consists of: *grass*, *dirt* (some fields have all dirt or all grass), a *pitcher's mound*, and *four bases*. The area between each base is commonly known as; the “*base path*.”

The **foul lines** extend from **home plate**, past both **first** and **third** bases, and are marked all the way to the *outfield barrier* (fence or wall).

A ball that is hit to the “infield” side of the foul line, is considered a **fair ball**, unless it rolls foul before it crosses either **first** or **third base**. Once a batter hits a ball into *fair territory*, he or she must attempt to advance to at least first base. If a batter hits a ball into *foul territory*, the ball is considered; a **foul ball**, and neither the batter nor runners may advance to a base.

A ball is considered **foul**, if it bounces or rolls into foul territory before crossing either first or third base in *fair territory*. If a fly ball is hit that crosses first or third base while in the air in fair territory, but *first* bounces in foul territory, it will be considered a **foul ball**.



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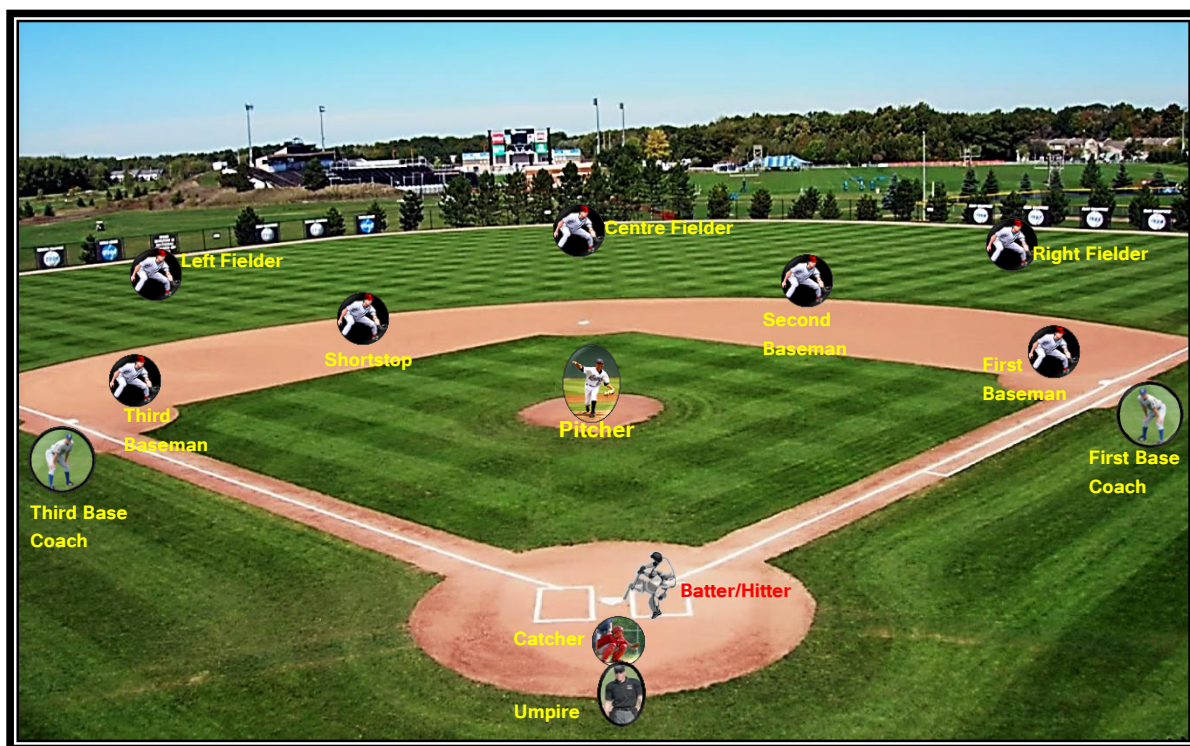
Module 3 – Baseball Structure

Section 1

Field and Players

Test

➤ The Players on the Field



In Baseball, each team is allowed nine players on the field at one time (slow-pitch softball allows 10). The players who occupy the “**infield**” portion of the field are known as; **infielders** (*first baseman, second baseman, shortstop, third baseman*). The players occupying the “**outfield**” portion of the field are known as; **outfielders** (*left fielder, centre fielder, right fielder*). In addition to the *fielding*, players there are two players known as; the **battery** (*pitcher, catcher*).

All defensive players can occupy any *geographical* position on the field as they desire, *except the pitcher and catcher*. Quite often players will change their position on the field to accommodate the type of batter, present. **For example**; if there is a *left-handed batter* who tends to hit the ball to the right side of the field, the defensive players might move close to that side of the field in order to put themselves in a position to make a play on ball hit in that direction.

To effectively call “balls” and “strikes,” the **home plate umpire** stands directly behind the catcher, so he can clearly see the pitch as it crosses home plate. If an additional umpire is used, he or she will be located somewhere in the infield area.

The offensive team is allowed two coaches who stand in a designated area on the field, which is located in foul territory, next to first base and third base. These coaches communicate with the offensive team, both verbally and through hand signals.



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Module 3 – Baseball Structure

Section 1

Field and Players

EXAM

At this time, please refer to the:

Module 3, Section 1 Field and Players EXAM

When you have completed the test, please email it to:

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Module 3 – Baseball Structure

Section 2

Scoring Runs and Recording Outs

➤ Innings

		AT BAT										BALLS	STRIKES	OUTS
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	R	H	E
Visitor/Away team	REDBIRDS	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	7	1
Home team	BEAVERS	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	6			1	1	0

At the Adult, University and Professional levels, baseball is played in **nine innings** in which each team gets one turn to bat per inning and attempts to score *runs* while the other pitches and defends in the field. *Younger players play six or seven inning games.*

An **inning** is broken up into two halves in which the *visiting (away) team* bats in the top (first) half, and the *home team* bats in the bottom (second) half.

In baseball, the defence always has the ball — a fact that differentiates it from most other team sports. The teams switch every time the defending team gets three players of the batting team *out*. The **winner** is the team with the most runs after nine innings. If the home team is ahead after the top of the ninth, play does not continue into the bottom half. In the case of a tie, additional innings are played until one team comes out ahead at the end of an inning. If the home team takes the lead anytime during the bottom of the *ninth* or of any inning thereafter, play stops and the home team is declared the winner.

➤ The “Contest”

The **Away Team** begins the game playing offense. Its players take turns being the **batter** (or “hitter”), the only offensive player allowed to touch the baseball. And he can touch it only with his **bat**, a wooden stick.

The **Home Team** begins the game with its 9 players on defence. The *basic contest* is between the **pitcher** for the fielding team, and a **batter**. The pitcher throws (*pitches*) the ball towards home plate, where the **catcher** for the fielding team waits (in a crouched stance) to receive it.

Behind the catcher stands the **home plate umpire**. The batter stands in one of the batter’s boxes and tries to hit the ball with a bat.





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Scoring Runs and Recording Outs

➤ The “Contest” (*cont*)



The catcher's job is to receive any pitches that the batter does not hit, and to “call” the game by a series of *hand movements* that signal to the pitcher what pitch to throw and also the desired location of the pitch.

He does this by setting up behind home plate and holding his glove in the desired location as a target, which is usually within the **strike zone** (*an area between the batter's armpits and knees, and over any portion of home plate*).

Each pitch begins a new play, which might consist of nothing more than the pitch itself.

➤ Scoring a “Run”

A team can score runs only when it is on **offense**.

One **run** is scored each time a batter moves completely around a circuit of four **bases**. Sometimes he does so all at once (*homerun*).

Most of the time he proceeds deliberately from one base to the next, where he stops until his team mates, taking their respective turns as the batter, create chances for him to advance around the circuit.



Starting at home plate as a batter, the player must begin his journey around the bases by advancing to **first base**, then **second base**, then **third base**, and finally back to **home plate**. He must do this *before 3 outs* are recorded. A team may score as many runs as possible before recording 3 outs.

Rules are in place in some leagues that prevent one team from scoring too many runs, and thus, tallying up a “slaughter” against their opponent.



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Module 3 – Baseball Structure

Section 2

Scoring Runs and Recording Outs

➤ Recording an “Out”

Sooner or later the **Offensive Team** will accumulate three **outs**. At that point the two teams change postures. The **Defensive Team** will now begin to play offense, and **Offensive Team** will have to play defence. When **Offensive Team** makes three **outs** during this turn *at bat*, the **Defensive Team** gets a fresh chance: it can add **runs** to its total until it makes three **outs** again. Then the teams switch roles again.

There are four basic, ways for the defensive team to record outs against the offensive team.

1. Strikeout

To comprehend a strikeout, one must understand the *strike zone*.

As previously mentioned, the **strike zone is usually the area between the batter's armpits and knees, and crosses any part of home plate.**

IMPORTANT: The **strike zone** may differ from umpire to umpire, and is dependent on the perception of the particular umpire who is calling the game.

If the pitcher throws a ball that **is** in this designated area and the batter does NOT swing the bat, the umpire may call a; **“strike.”** Subsequently, if the batter swings at any pitch (no matter where it is thrown), and misses the ball, the umpire will call a; **“strike.”** In addition, if the batter swings at a pitch and hits it into foul territory (foul ball), it will be considered a **“strike.”**



- The difference is, a batter CANNOT be “struck out,” if he has 2 strikes on him, and he hits a foul ball. Once a batter has 2 strikes on him, he is allowed as many hits into foul territory as possible, without being called out – providing his hits are not caught on the fly. **His count will stay at 2 strikes.**
- A batter will “strikeout” on a hit foul ball, if he has 2 strikes on him and he **attempts to bunt**, but bunts the ball, **foul**.
- A batter will “strikeout” if he has 2 strikes on him and he swings at a pitch, but barely “tips” the ball – and the catcher catches it before it touches the ground.



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Section 2

Scoring Runs and Recording Outs

➤ Recording an “Out”

1. Strikeout (*cont*)

If the pitcher throws a ball that is not in the strike zone, and the batter does NOT swing the bat, the umpire may call a; “**ball.**”

Each batter is allowed; **4 balls**, and **3 strikes**. The process of balls and strikes on a batter is known as; the **count**. (*ex: 2 balls and 1 strike*)

If a batter gets **3 strikes** on him, before he manages to hit the ball into fair territory, or receive **4 balls**, (*a walk*) he will be recorded as a **strikeout**.



2. Force Out

Given that two offensive players can't occupy the same *base* at the same time, when the *batter-runner* is forced to advance to first base or beyond, he forces one or more *runners* in front of him to abandon their respective *bases*.

The only runners forced to move are those who are occupying a base that someone behind them has to occupy. There may be one or two *runners* who are not forced to do anything when a *batter-runner* is forced to go to a *base*, simply because no other *runner* is being forced to occupy the base of those *runners*.

For example, consider that **Runner A** is on *first base*, and **Runner B** is on *third base*. If **Batter C** hits a *fair-ball* on the ground, **C** has to try to gain *first base*. Thus, **A** has to abandon it. But **B** does not have to leave *third base*, because no other *runner* “needs” it.



Most anytime he wishes, runner **B** is free to leave his *base*. He may think it's a good time to try to score a run in this situation, but he is at *risk* of making an out.

When a batter-runner is at *risk* of making an *out*, any runners he forces to move are also at *risk* of making an *out*. So, they should run to the next base as quickly as possible.

Any time a batter-runner attempts to advance to a base (***because he is forced to***), the defensive team needs only to have possession of the ball, while touching the base, before the batter-runner gets there, to record a – **force out**.



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Module 3 – Baseball Structure

Section 2

Scoring Runs and Recording Outs

➤ Recording an “Out” (*cont*)

3. Tag Out



The defence can **always** get a *runner* or *batter-runner* out by *tagging* him with the ball. That is, a defensive player can touch him with the hand (or glove) that is holding the baseball. The players in question don't have to be anywhere in particular on the playing field. A tag out is used when a runner is not forced to advance, or, if a runner *overruns* a base. (the only base a runner can run **straight** past and not be in jeopardy of getting tagged out, is **first base**).

Remember: When a runner is on a base and is forced to advance to the next base because the batter-runner behind him needs to advance to the base he is currently occupying, the defensive team needs only to;

- (1) have possession of the ball,
- (2) step on the base (or touch it) where the *forced* runner is advancing to. In this scenario, there is no need to “tag” the runner because he is *forced*.



If a player attempts to steal a base, remember – he is NOT forced. In this scenario, the defensive players must have possession of the ball, while tagging the runner. Simply touching the base is not an option.

EXAMPLE: There is a runner on **second base**, and **no** runner on **first base**. The batter hits a ground ball to the shortstop. The runner on **second base** does NOT have to run because he is **not forced** to run due to the fact that the batter has to attempt to advance to **first base**, before he can attempt to advance to second base. Thus, no one is forcing the runner on **second base** to advance. If the runner on second base decides to attempt to advance to **third base**, the fielding team must **tag him with the ball** in order to record an out.



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Section 2

Scoring Runs and Recording Outs

➤ Recording an “Out”

4. Fly Out



If a runner attempts to advance on a caught fly ball (without tagging up), the fielder who caught the ball must throw to the base where the runner has left. That baseman needs only to touch the base while in possession of the ball (before the runner returns) to record an out.

Whenever a batter hits a ball *in the air*, the defensive team will attempt to catch the ball *before it hits the ground*.

It doesn't matter whether or not the ball is in fair territory or foul territory. If the ball is caught in the air by a defensive player, the batter will be recorded as an out. The ball must be caught *before* hitting a barrier or fence and cannot be caught on the rebound.

Runners can only advance on a fly out, if they keep at least one foot on the base they are occupying until the fly ball is caught. Once caught, the runners may leave their base and attempt to advance to the next base. This is known as: **tagging up**, and may be done at the risk of making an out. The *fielder who caught the ball* must then quickly throw **to the base which a runner is attempting to advance to**, and **that baseman** must **tag** the runner with the ball to record an out.

A batter will get credited with a *sacrifice fly* **ONLY** if there is a runner on **3rd base**, who tags up and scores. In addition, the batter will be credited with a Run Batted In (RBI).

Each half inning, the goal of the defending team is to get three members of the opposing team out, without the other team scoring runs. Once a player is “out,” he must leave the field and wait for his next turn at bat – whether in the same inning or during an inning to come.

Remember: once three outs are recorded via; **strikeout**, **force out**, **tag out**, **fly out**, or *any other way*, the team in the field and the team at bat change places. There is no limit to the number of players that may bat in rotation before three outs are recorded (*unless there is a limit to the amount of runs scored to prevent a slaughter*).

In general, the pitcher attempts to prevent this by pitching the ball in such a way that the batter cannot hit it cleanly, or at all.

The goal of the team at bat is to score more runs than the opposition. A player may do so only by; (1) batting, (2) becoming a base runner, (3) touching all the bases in order via one or more plays, and finally touching home plate.

The goal of each batter is to enable base runners to score or to become a base runner himself, and eventually score a run.



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Module 3 – Baseball Structure

Section 2

Scoring Runs and Recording Outs

➤ Recording an “Out”

5. Other Ways of Recording an Out

1. **Infield Fly Rule** – is when there are runners on **first base** and **second base** or **bases loaded** and there are **fewer than two outs**. The batter hits a fly ball that stays in the infield portion of the field (perhaps hit to the shortstop or second baseman), and the fielder is about to make the catch. The umpire may call; “**Infield Fly.**” The purpose is to prevent the fielder from purposely dropping the ball, allowing him to recover it quickly and make a double play. If Infield fly rule is called by the umpire, the batter is automatically **out**, and the runners can advance *at their own risk*.
2. **The runner is tagged while standing off the base** – as long as a runner is standing on the base he is suppose to be on, he cannot be tagged out. However, if he steps off the base, or his momentum takes him beyond a base (you are allowed to run beyond first base, only), or if he is leading off a base (in an attempt to steal the next base), he can be tagged out.
3. **The runner runs outside the baseline** – runners must run within an imaginary base path (first baseline and third baseline are marked with a line). If a runner tries to avoid a tag by running more than *3 feet* out of a line/path between bases, the umpire may call him out.
4. **The runner interferes with the fielder** – the fielder has the “right-of-way” to field a ball. If a runner interferes with this right, the runner will be called out. Also, if the runner deliberately tries to knock the ball out of the glove of a fielder, he may be called out. This is the umpire’s judgement.
5. **The runner is hit by a batted ball** – if a batted ball hits a base runner who is off a base, or if it hits the batter who is “out of” the batter’s box, the runner will be called out. (The batter’s box and bases are safe havens against batted balls)
6. **The runner fails to touch a base as he advances to the next base** – as runners advance from base to base, they must touch each base. “If the defensive team notices a missed base,” they can tell the umpire that they would like to “appeal.” If the umpire agrees that a base was missed, the runner will be called out.
7. **The runner fails to “tag up” when a fly ball is caught** – whenever a fly ball is caught, runners on any base are allowed to attempt to advance to the next base. The way to do this is to; keep your foot on the base until the fly ball is caught. Once the ball is caught by the defensive team, a runner can advance AT HIS OWN RISK. **If a runner tries to advance before the fly ball is caught**, the defensive team can appeal it to the umpire, and simply tag the base where the runner began. * NOTE: once a runner decides to tag up, he is at risk of being thrown out by the fielder who caught the fly ball. The fielder must; (1) catch the fly ball, (2) throw the ball to the base where a runner is attempting to advance to. The baseman who receives the throw must “tag” the runner with the ball, or the glove with the ball in it.
8. **There are two runners on the same base** – only one player per base, please. The defensive team can tag either runner for the out.



United Kingdom Youth Baseball Association

Module 3 – Baseball Structure

Section 2

Scoring Runs and Recording Outs

EXAM

At this time, please refer to the:

Module 3, Section 2 Scoring Runs and Recording Outs EXAM

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United Kingdom Youth Baseball Association

Module 3 – Baseball Structure

Section 3

Becoming a Base Runner

➤ Ways to become a Base runner

1. Getting a Hit (**H**)



A **hit** or *base hit* is awarded when a batter hits or *bunts* (a sort of slight tapping of the ball with the bat), the ball in such a way that it allows him to advance safely to a base, without reliance on an *error*, *fielder's choice*, or an *out*.

If a batter hits the ball over the outfielder barrier or fence, it is called; a **homerun** (also a hit).

A player's **batting average** (avg.) increases when he gets hits. Batting average is determined by *dividing* the **hits** (x1000), by the times **at bat**.

EXAMPLE: A player has been to bat **20** times, has NOT reached base on an *error*, nor has he received a *walk*, been *hit by a pitch*, or hit into a Fielder's Choice. He has hit safely **9** times (9 for 20).

At-bats (AB) = 20 Hits (H) = 9

9000 divided by 20 = .450 (batting average)

2. Receiving a Base on Balls (**BB**) (*a walk*)

A Base on Balls (more commonly known as a *walk*) is when a batter receives four pitches that the umpire calls – *balls*. During every at-bat, each batter is allowed **4 balls** and **3 strikes**. The batter is allowed to advance to first base when he receives **4 balls** before he either; hits the ball, is hit by the ball or is struck out (3 strikes). A walk is known as a FREE PASS.

Receiving a base on balls **does not** count as a *hit* or an *at-bat* for a batter but **does** count as a time on base and a plate appearance.





United Kingdom Youth Baseball Association

Module 3 – Baseball Structure

Section 3

Becoming a Base Runner

➤ Ways to become a Base runner (cont)

3. Reaching base on an Error (E)

An **error** is judged by the official scorer when a batter/runner advances a base because of a fielding mistake, and a perfect play would have prevented the advancement. An error will be charged to the defensive player guilty of making the *physical*, mistake.

* An error judgement is made when the defensive player **should have** and **could have** made a clean play.

Reaching base on an error, counts as an *at-bat* for the batter, but is NOT credited as a *hit*. Reaching base on an error helps a players *on-base-percentage*, but not his *batting average*.



4. Being Hit by a Pitch (HBP)



If a batter is HBP with the bases loaded, he is awarded first base, thus forcing each runner to advance.

In this scenario, the batter is NOT credited with an at-bat, or a hit, but is credited with a *run batted in* (RBI).

Getting hit by a pitch is something that each batter faces when he steps into the batter's box.

A batter becomes a base runner and is awarded first base when he, his uniform, or equipment (except for his bat): is touched by a pitched ball **outside of the strike zone**, *and* he attempts to avoid it, *and* he did not swing at the pitch.

If all these conditions are met, the ball is dead, and other base runners advance if they are *forced* to vacate their base by the batter taking first base. If a batter swings and the pitch hits him anyway, the ball is dead and a *strike* is called.

Though rarely called, an umpire may rule that the **batter did not attempt to avoid the pitch**, and is thus, not awarded first base. If this is the case, the ball would be ruled *dead*, and the pitch would be called according to its' position in the strike zone.



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Module 3 – Baseball Structure

Section 3

Becoming a Base Runner

➤ Ways to become a Base runner (cont)

5. A Fielder's Choice (FC)

There are several definitions of fielder's choice. The most common (and the only one commonly referred to as FC) involves a fielder fielding a fair ball and, though he has a clear opportunity to throw out the batter-runner at first base in the official scorer's judgment, chooses to try to put out another base runner, thereby allowing the batter-runner to safely reach first base. A **FC** counts as an at-bat against the batter, but does NOT count as a hit.

6. An *uncaught* 3rd strike.



A batter who does not realise that the third strike was not caught, and who is not in the process of running to first base, shall be declared out once he leaves the dirt circle surrounding home plate.

When the catcher fails to cleanly catch a pitch for the **third strike**, the batter is allowed to *try* to advance to first base. A pitch is considered uncaught if the ball touches the ground before being caught, or if the ball is dropped after being caught.

On an uncaught third strike whether it was a *swinging* third strike or a *called* third strike, with *no runner on first base* (or with two outs, regardless of whether there is a runner on first), the batter immediately becomes a runner and is allowed to attempt to advance to first base.

The strike is called, but the umpire does not call the batter out. The batter may then attempt to reach first base, and must be **tagged** or **thrown out at first base**. (First baseman does not need to tag the batter-runner)

In this situation, if the batter manages to advance safely to first base, the pitcher will be credited with a **strike out**, and the catcher with a **passed ball (PB)**. If the uncaught third strike is a result of the pitcher throwing an uncatchable ball, the pitcher will be credited with a **wild pitch (WP)**. The batter receives an at-bat with NO hit.



United Kingdom Youth Baseball Association

Module 3 – Baseball Structure

Section 3

Becoming a Base Runner

➤ Ways to become a Base runner (cont)

7. Catcher's Interference (CI)

Catcher's interference is called when the catcher physically hinders the batter's opportunity to legally swing at a pitched ball. This occurs most often when a catcher squats too close to home plate, so that the batter's bat touches the catcher's glove as the batter swings. This is most likely to happen on attempted *steals* (when a base runner attempts to advance to the next base while the pitcher is delivering the ball to home plate), where the catcher is anxious to catch the ball as soon as possible and may move his entire body or glove slightly, forward.

In the case of catcher's interference, play continues, and after continuous playing action ceases, the umpire will call time. The penalty here is that the batter is **awarded first base**, and all other runners advance **only if forced**. Additionally, the catcher is charged with an error (although the batter is not charged with an at-bat).

The offense may elect to *ignore* the infraction (e.g., if the batter-runner reaches first safely and all other runners advance at least one base, catcher's interference is ignored by rule). If the rule is taken, the batter is not credited with an at-bat.

8. Fielder's Obstruction (OB)

Fielder's Obstruction will be called by the umpire if he or she deems a defensive player has interfered with the batter-runner in his attempt to advance to first base.

Example:

A batter hits a ball that slowly rolls down the first base line. Both the pitcher and first baseman attempt to field the ball. Hearing the first baseman call for the play, the pitcher continues to run past the ball towards the first base line. In doing so, he inadvertently runs into the batter-runner as he is running to first base.

In this scenario, the umpire will judge that the batter-runner was being played upon, and thus call; "**Obstruction.**" The **ball will be ruled dead**, and the batter-runner will be awarded first base.



United Kingdom Youth Baseball Association

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Section 3

Becoming a Base Runner

EXAM

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Module 3, Section 3 Becoming a Base Runner EXAM

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