



BASERUNNING 101

The Lingo:

Baseline: the lines between the bases on the diamond (imaginary guide). Used to set up the diamond layout.

Basepath: The basepath is the path a runner establishes when running between bases. When a fielder is attempting to tag a runner, the runner is not allowed to deviate more than 3 feet from their direct line to the next base to avoid the tag — this established line at that moment is considered their basepath.

Safe base: A double bag, with a white side in fair territory and an orange side in foul territory.

Running lane: a 3ft. marked or imaginary lane parallel to the foul line that starts about halfway between home plate and first base. This lane leads toward the orange bag and is used to help avoid obstruction or interference between the batter-runner and 1st base.

Here's the rundown!

When a batter hits the ball and begins their journey to first base, the batter-runner must stay within the running lane for the last half of the distance to avoid being called out for interference. The running lane leads to the orange side of the bag. It is designed to provide a clear path for the batter-runner to reach first base safely, while also allowing the first baseman to field the ball without obstruction.

**** (Correction)** A batter-runner can over-run 1st base and return to the bag (turning in either direction) so long as, in the umpire's opinion, the batter-runner is not making an attempt to run towards 2nd base. If the batter-runner appears to be running towards 2nd, they could be tagged out when returning back to 1st base.

Can a batter-runner run to the white bag?

Yes, but only if they intend on advancing to second base.

If the play is close, and the batter runs to the white bag, they could risk:

Getting hit with the ball

Getting tagged out (as they can't overrun the white bag)

Being called out for interference or obstructing 1st base from making the play

So, unless you plan to round first base and go to second. Stick to the orange for everyone's safety.

If the play is out into the field, and there is no play at first. The defender on 1st base should avoid blocking the bag or interfering with the runner.

Can a runner break the basepath?

Under certain scenarios, YES!

Deviation for Fielding - The batter-runner may run outside of the basepath to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to catch a batted ball.

Deviation for Tag – If the runner is trying to avoid a tag, they may deviate up to 3ft. From their basepath. If they run more than 3 ft. (or are perceived to have) they can be called out for avoiding a tag illegally.

Note: Whether the runner goes too far is a judgment call by the Umpire. Of course, you'll never see an umpire with a tape measure, so eyeballing that three-foot allowance takes experience and judgment. One giveaway is if the fielder attempting to tag the runner makes a large step and a reach, and is still unable to tag the runner who is trying to pass, then there's a good chance the runner has deviated greater than 3ft. and the Umpire may call them out!

Umpires ARE human — they call what they see . So err on the side of caution and eliminate all doubt by:

If the play is close at 1st, stick to the orange!

If no one is blocking the basepath, stay as close to it as possible.

If avoiding a tag, try to "suck it in" and swerve as little as possible off the basepath; otherwise, you can be called OUT!