



INFIELD FLY

Did You Know!?

INFIELD FLY RULE (IFR)

This rule is all about preventing trick plays that would unfairly catch runners off guard.

Here's How it Works:

- When there are runners on first and second (or bases loaded), and
 - There are fewer than two outs and
- The batter hits a pop-up “fly” in fair territory that can easily be caught by an infielder.

When this series of events align, the umpire will call “infield fly-batter out!” and the batter will be automatically out, EVEN if the ball is dropped. This can be frustrating for the offense (team at bat), BUT it is ACTUALLY to the offense's (batting teams) benefit.

This is so the defense (infielders) can't intentionally drop the ball to try for a double or triple play by confusing the runners and forcing them to run after tagging up.

This rule does not apply where 1st is NOT occupied and 2nd and 3rd are. This is because there is no force play. AKA. 2nd and 3rd are not forced to move bases.



DROPPED 3RD STRIKE

What is the 'Drop Ball 3rd Strike Rule'? And why is everyone yelling at me!?!?

Think of it as your lifeboat in a sea of strikes!

When the catcher does not catch the third strike cleanly (the ball is dropped or missed), the batter is allowed to attempt to run to first base, but only under certain conditions:

When first base is unoccupied (at the time of the pitch).

OR

When there are two outs, regardless of whether first base is occupied.

Here are a few scenarios:

Scenario 1: If first base is occupied (meaning there is a runner on the bag) and there is only 1 out, the batter is automatically out, even if the catcher drops the ball.

Scenario 2: If first base is occupied (meaning there is a runner on the bag) but there are 2 outs, then the batter can run, but so must the runner at first base. When this happens, the defense has 2 options.

They can tag the batter or runner at home plate, or throw to first base before the batter reaches it. First base only needs to touch their bag (this would be considered a force).

Scenario 3: the bases are loaded (aka. all occupied) and there are 2 outs. The batter CAN attempt to run to first base, however all runners must advance. This would create a force at all bases, including home which means the catcher could just step on the plate and the runner from third would be out!

Ok, now TRICK QUESTION, what if there is only 1 out but the person steals from first to second at the same time as the 3rd strike drop ball??

The batter would be out! As first base was occupied at the time of the pitch.

Why does this rule exist?

Other than to make us all crazy it's to add that 'je ne sais quoi' to the game and make it more exciting. Nothing says entertainment like watching someone run for their life to 1st base, while the catcher scrambles to get the ball and everyone is screaming. It's pure gold!