

such a glove and ball is considered in possession of the ball and may legally tag a runner or a base with it (NFHS 8-3-3c, 5.1.1Q; NCAA 8-5i Note; pro interp.).

For the two-base awards in these situations, the umpire's task is to determine the base from which to make the award. There are two possibilities: the time of the pitch or the time of the throw. Please note the time of the throw is when the ball is released by the fielder and not the time at which the ball becomes dead.

The award is made from the time of the pitch when two conditions are met: the throw was the first play by an infielder *and* at least one runner, including the batter-runner, did *not* advance at least one base at the

time of the throw. If both of those things don't happen, the award is from the position of the runners at the time of the throw. Those include pickoff attempts, steals, throws by outfielders and second or subsequent plays by infielders (NFHS 8-3-5; NCAA 8-3o Note 1; pro 5.06b4G).

### Batted balls

Everyone is familiar with the misnamed "ground-rule double," which appears as a standard rule in all codes. It is a two-base award when a fair batted ball bounces and passes over, through or under a fence or into the stands or other dead-ball area or sticks in the fence, even if the ball is in flight when it becomes lodged. Awards on batted balls are almost always made from the time of the pitch; other runners advance to the bases they are forced.

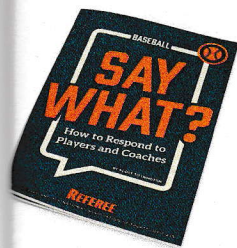
With that provision in mind, it stands to reason a ball that becomes lodged in a player's or umpire's uniform or equipment would be treated the same. And it is, but only in NFHS and NCAA play (NFHS 8-3-3c; NCAA 8-3o1). Under pro rules, umpires may award bases at their discretion for a lodged ball involving a fielder (PBUC 6.10). If an umpire is involved, umpire interference rules may take precedence.

If a fair ball touches an umpire after having passed an infielder other than the pitcher, or after having touched an infielder, including the pitcher, the ball remains live and in play. However, if the ball becomes lodged in that situation, the umpires can place all runners in such a manner that will nullify the action of the ball going out of play. However, if a fair ball becomes lodged when it touches an umpire in fair territory before touching an infielder, it is interference and the batter is awarded first base. The ball is dead and other runners advance only if forced. That is based on the premise the touching preceded the lodging, causing the ball to become dead before it was lodged (pro 5.05b4, 5.06c6).

So in summary, the visit to the "lodge" can be very pleasant for umpires. Once they ascertain the ball isn't going any further, the base award is straightforward and based solely on whether it was a pitch, a throw or a batted ball. The rulebooks have it covered and no ground rules are necessary unless there is an unusual man-made structure in or above fair territory. Catwalks, etc., are not likely to be found in amateur venues.

*George Demetriou, Colorado Springs, Colo., is the state's rules interpreter. □*

## How to Handle the Arguers



Editor's note: The following is an excerpt from *Say What? How to Respond to Players and Coaches*. It is available at store.referee.com for \$4.95.

By Scott Tittrington

**Y**ou can usually identify four different types of arguers at any game. Each combative type requires a different approach to defuse them:

### The Chipper

That is a player or coach who won't confront you directly, but who will make constant little sniping remarks throughout the game, trying to goad you into a confrontation. In baseball, it's often a coach who delivers barbs or jabs from the relative safety of the dugout. Don't let such a gnat-like annoyance enflame your desire to unload on that person. Instead, early in the game, firmly inform the chipper that you've heard his or her comments and you don't expect to keep hearing them. If the problem continues, use

your proper officiating tools (official written warning, restriction to the dugout) to defuse the problem more decisively.

### The Intimidator

That is a player or coach who thinks any argument can be won just by being louder or more "in-your-face" than anyone else. When an intimidator comes at you, yelling and animated, assume an opposite demeanor. Quickly put a plug in your gut reaction by focusing on being calm. Place your arms behind your back and speak in soft tones,



# CASEPLAYS

## No Slide

**Play:** With the bases loaded and one out, B3 grounds sharply to F4, who flips to F6 covering second for the force on R1. F6's relay to first hits R1's shoulder as R1 goes into the base standing up. **Ruling:** In NFHS and NCAA, this is interference and a double play. If the runner goes into the base standing up, he must avoid contact and cannot alter the play (NFHS 8-4-2b; NCAA 8-4a). In pro, a runner can go into the base standing up provided he does not make contact for the purpose of breaking up a double play (pro 6.01j).

## Outta My Way

**Play:** With runners on first and second and no outs, B3 bunts the ball directly in front of the plate. F2 quickly fields the ball, tags B3 and starts to throw to third. B3 intentionally pushes F2 and the throw goes into left field. R2 scores while R1 advances to third. **Ruling:** The ball is dead at the time of the interference. B3 is out on the tag. R2 is out for his teammate's interference and R1 returns to first (NFHS 7-3-5c, 7-3-5 Pen., 8.4.2E; NCAA 5-3, 8-5p; pro 6.01a5).

## Legal Swap

**Play:** Larry is the DH, batting for Kevin, the pitcher. In the top of the seventh, Kevin is moved to left field and the left fielder comes in to pitch. The leadoff batter in the bottom of the inning is Larry. **Ruling:** In NFHS, it is a legal move. Larry is now the DH for the left fielder as he and Kevin are in the same spot in the batting order. In NCAA and pro, once the pitcher takes a different defensive position, the DH is terminated. The original pitcher (or a pinch hitter) must now bat in that spot (NFHS 3-1-4a; NCAA 7-2d-7; pro 5.11a8).

## Delayed Impact

**Play:** With two outs and a runner on second, B4 hits an apparent double into the right-field corner. B4 is obstructed by F1 before reaching first base and is thrown out at second base. R2 is about six feet short of home plate when B1 is tagged out. **Ruling:** The umpire should rule the obstruction impacted the play at second. R2 scores and B1 is awarded second base (NFHS 8-3-2; NCAA 2-55, 8-3e; pro 6.01h1).

repeating the intimidator's argument back to him or her. If that doesn't work and the intimidator crosses the line, take appropriate action. This could range from restricting the coach to the dugout with the warning that any additional onfield interaction will lead to an immediate ejection, to said immediate ejection if the behavior warrants it.

## The Clasher

That is the player or coach who just doesn't like you. Never has. You've officiated many contests for the person, but no matter what you do, the clasher is confrontational with you at all times. Prepare yourself mentally during your pregame any time you know you're going to run across the clasher. Accept that you're not going to be liked by everyone. Confrontations with the clasher may feel more like personal attacks than with other arguers, so you must be even more vigilant to keep your emotions under control. Your best tools against the clasher are professionalism and courtesy. If all else fails, don't take game assignments involving a clasher.

## The Legitimate Arguer

That is the player or coach who actually has a legitimate argument. Understand that the legitimate arguer likely will give you the benefit of the doubt many times throughout a game. The legitimate arguer will usually only become argumentative if he or she truly believes there's a case to be made, and when that happens the legitimate arguer will usually be more respectful and professional in voicing his or her displeasure. Do yourself a favor and listen to the legitimate arguer. This is a person whom you should "give a little more rope," as he or she is not trying to be chippy or intimidating but is trying to make a legitimate case for why you may have erred. The absolute worst thing you can do is escalate a confrontation with a legitimate arguer.

## How to Manage the Conversation

Use these tools to help manage your conversations with coaches and players and achieve an outcome that works for all parties:

Pause before responding — let the other person get more words in if he or she wants. Don't cut him or her off; that only exacerbates the situation. In responding, avoid using words like "but" and "however" because they usually cancel out the first part of a sentence, lessening the message. "I understand the situation but we're going to have to ..." is an example of how the word "but" lessened the effect of the initial positive statement "I understand."

If a coach or player is pleading, listen to that person. If a reply is necessary, reply with an even tone. Be brief. Do not use sarcasm or put-downs. Acknowledge that you've heard and understood the complaint. That's not an admission of guilt or error on your part; it merely shows the person you are listening. Many times, all the person wants is to be heard.

You may be able to smile or use humor to defuse a potentially volatile situation. Be careful; what you think might be funny may not be to the other person, thus adding to the problem. However, smiles and a deflective word can work in the heat of battle. An umpire who can chuckle or smile is in control. An umpire who can't see the humor in a situation may be perceived as uptight. However, umpires shouldn't get into joke-telling. It's simply too dangerous because people differ in what amuses them. What you might think is a great joke might offend the listener. Try humor sparingly and make it as light as possible.

Don't ever utter the phrase, "It's just a game." Few phrases turn participants to rage quicker than that one. Remember, they've worked all week, all season and all their careers for that game. It is critically important to them, no matter what the sport or level. That phrase is often interpreted by coaches and players as a flippant "I don't care" response. Basically, it is demeaning.

Follow these tips when dealing with players and coaches and the relationships developed will be positive for the game.

*Scott Tittrington is an associate editor at Referee. He umpires college and high school baseball, and also officiates high school basketball and football.* □