

Base Running/Coaching

1st Base:

3 options: run-thru, go to 2nd, or (advanced) take a turn towards 2nd and listen.

Keep to the baserunner's side of the safety 1st base.

Silent hand signals from coach preferred because they don't alert the defense.

If you run through 1st, turn back toward the dugout, not the field & go straight back to the base.

If you run to 2nd "round" the corner instead of making a 90 degree turn.

Pick up 3rd base coach halfway between 1st & 2nd.

3rd Base:

3 options: hold, make a turn, or go home.

Coach has to coach 2nd & 3rd bases.

3rd base coach may be preoccupied with what's going on at 3rd. If so, runner at 2nd makes the choice and coach only sends him back if he can get back safely.

Slides are not encouraged but preferable to trying to knock down a defensive player. Do not encourage head-first slides even though they are legal.

If you have a runner on 3rd, "cheat" down the line towards home so you can be in his/her face if they take off on a fly ball. Always anticipate.

Home Plate:

There are no longer any tag-outs at home plate. As long as the runner has passed the commit line, it becomes just like a force play. The runner must go to the safety plate and if the catcher gets the ball on home plate first then the runner is out.

Pop fly - if ball is caught, runner can tag up and run, so it's usually best for the runner to stay on the base. This is true even if the ball is caught in foul territory.

Base Coaching:

Coaches know your runners and know the other team.

Coach more conservatively with a slower runner; take more chances with speedy runners.

Base coaches should be aware of number of outs, where runners are, & where the batter is likely to hit the ball. Your scorekeeper can assist with this.

Just like the defense, base coaches should be aware of the game situation and what should happen depending on where the ball is hit.

If a runner is impeded, ask the ump for an interference call. The runner must go around and not through an infielder.

Be aware of potential infield fly call and think ahead.

Infield Fly Rule:

Intended to prevent infielders from intentionally dropping pop-ups in order to turn double plays. Only possible when:

- fewer than 2 outs

- force play at 3rd

- fly ball to infield catchable with "ordinary effort"

Umpire's discretion to call

Variation: "Infield Fly if Fair"

When called, batter is out regardless of catch or miss. **THIS REMOVES ALL FORCES!**

Runners proceed at their own risk.

It is not necessary for base runners to be aware of infield fly rule, but coaches should know when there's a potential for the call and be listening to the ump so they can properly coach the runners.

Common running mistakes:

Not watching and listening to base coach.

Running on a fly ball when coach says to stay.

Passing another runner.

Running into a tag.

Going to wrong home plate.

Slowing down before reaching 1st base.

Coaches need to anticipate these mistakes and head them off with training and reminders.

Advanced:

A lone runner on 2nd base should fake running to 3rd or take a few steps toward 3rd when the ball is hit to the infield on that side. This can distract the player from throwing to 1st base so that both runners are safe.

A runner, even on a force play, should not run into a tag out. Stopping midway between bases and making the infielder take time running to the player to tag them can foil a double play.

Fast and game-aware runners should be given more leeway and encouraged to tempt infielders to throw the ball. Every throw results in a possible miss and an extra base or two.