



Collision Rules

The following is a summary of how the Collision Rule is to be enforced at each level of play. Please review closely and ensure you have a thorough understanding of the rule at all level(s) you will work.

American Legion Baseball:

The intent of this rule is to encourage base runners and defensive players to avoid collisions whenever possible.

1. When there is a collision between a runner and a fielder who clearly is in possession of the ball, the umpire shall judge:
 - a. Whether the collision by the runner was avoidable (the runner could have reached the base without colliding) or unavoidable (the runner's path to the base was blocked), or
 - b. Whether the runner was actually attempting to reach the base (plate) or attempting to dislodge the ball from the fielder.

PENALTY – If the runner:

- a. could have avoided the collision and reached the base or
 - b. attempted to dislodge the ball,
- the runner shall be declared out, even if the fielder loses possession of the ball. The ball is dead and all base runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.

Ruling 1 – If the fielder blocks the path of the base runner to the base (plate), the runner may make contact, slide into, or collide with a fielder as long as the runner is making a legitimate attempt to reach the base or plate.

Ruling 2 – If the collision by the runner was flagrant, the runner shall be declared out and ejected from the contest. The ball shall be declared dead.

2. If the defensive player blocks the base (plate) or base line without the ball, obstruction shall be called. The runner is safe and a delayed dead ball shall be called.

Ruling – If the runner collides flagrantly, he shall be declared safe on the obstruction but will be ejected from the contest. The ball is dead.

3. Collisions at home plate. A runner attempting to score may not deviate from his direct pathway to the plate in order to initiate contact with the catcher (or other player covering home plate), or otherwise initiate an avoidable collision. If, in the judgement of the umpire, a runner attempting to score initiates contact with the catcher (or other player covering home plate) in such a manner, the umpire shall declare the runner out (regardless of whether the player covering home plate maintains possession of the ball). In such circumstances, the umpire shall call the ball dead, and all other base runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the collision. If the runner slides into the plate in an appropriate manner, he shall not be adjudged to have violated the Collision Rule.

POINT OF EMPHASIS

Any player who, in the judgement of the umpire, maliciously contacts another player is automatically ejected and, if the offender is a runner, is declared out. The American Legion is concerned that some coaches may not explain to their players that malicious contact is illegal. The majority of intentional collisions occur at home plate, where the catcher is blocking the plate. Runners should be instructed to slide directly to the plate or away from the catcher to avoid making contact with the catcher, especially when the defender is in possession of the ball. Umpires have been instructed that if there is any intentional and excessive force, or if there is any intent to injure another player, the offending player shall be ejected from the game. The malicious contact penalty will be enforced whether committed by an offensive or defensive player. Any player ejected by an umpire is automatically removed from the tournament, unless the tournament director reinstates that player.

Bottom Line:

- If there is a collision is it avoidable or unavoidable?
 - If avoidable, the runner is out, and all other runners return to last touched base.
 - If unavoidable:
 - Contact is legal (if not flagrant or malicious)
 - The fielder can be called for obstruction.
 - If collision is flagrant and/or malicious, rule if it was avoidable/unavoidable, then eject the player.
- The runner can't change direction to initiate contact.
- The defensive player can also initiate contact. If he does and it is flagrant and/or malicious, he is ejected.

South Dakota Amateur Baseball:

See American Legion Baseball Collision Rule.

South Dakota High School Baseball:

Rule 2-21-1b: Offensive Interference is an act by the team at bat when a runner creates malicious contact with any fielder, with or without the ball, in or out of the baseline.

Rule 3-3-1m: A coach, player, or substitute, attendant, or other bench personnel shall not initiate malicious contact on offense or defense.

PENALTY: The Umpire shall eject the offender from the game. Failure to comply shall result in game being forfeited. The ball is immediately dead, if on offense, the player is ejected and declared out, unless he has already scored. If the defense commits the malicious contact, the player is ejected; the umpire shall rule either safe or out on the play and awarded the runner(s) the appropriate base(s) he felt they would have obtained if the malicious contact had not occurred.

Rule 5-1-1m: The ball becomes dead immediately when malicious contact (offensive or defensive) occurs.

Rule 8-4-2e: A runner is out when he initiates malicious contact. Malicious contact always supersedes obstruction. Runner(s) will be awarded appropriate base(s) per umpire's judgement.

Bottom Line:

- The definition of "malicious" is: having or showing a desire to harm someone.
- Collisions are legal if not malicious and if offensive player did not commit interference or the defense did not commit obstruction.
- The High School rules are worded differently from the American Legion rule, but both rules are similar in intent and enforcement.

South Dakota A Baseball:

See American Legion Baseball Collision Rule.

VFW Baseball:

There is no specific rule for collisions. The SDUA suggests the Legion Collision Rule be used for VFW games.