

Obstruction

36 – OBSTRUCTION

Rules Definition USA Softball 2025

OBSTRUCTION: The act of a defensive team member:

- A. Who hinders or impedes a batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball.
- B. Who impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running the bases unless the fielder is:
 - 1. in possession of the ball.
 - 2. in the act of fielding a batted ball.

Note: Contact is not necessary to impede the progress of the batter-runner or a runner.

Obstruction mechanic

Extend your left arm while saying “That’s obstruction”. You can use your right hand to point to the area where the obstruction occurred if there might be confusion of which player caused the obstruction.

Obstruction awards

The runner is awarded the base they would have reached had there be no obstruction.

Contact is not required for obstruction of be called.

Obstruction situations

1. Runner from 1st has to avoid the 2nd baseman who is in the baseline without the ball. Award: Would the runner have made 3rd? If not, you award the runner 2nd base.
2. Runner from 1st is tripped by the 2nd baseman (unintentionally) as they are trying to make it to 3rd. The runner continues and is thrown out at 3rd by a step. Award: Runner is awarded 3rd.
3. Runner from 1st is going to 2nd. The 1st baseman yells foul ball and the runner returns to 1st base where the runner is tagged out. Award: Runner is awarded 2nd. Warn 1st baseman not to do this. Next time is an ejection.

What are the guidelines for awards?

We award bases to nullify the obstruction. Are we punishing a defensive player for the obstruction. No.

We are not "punishing" anyone, we are just nullifying the obstruction. You could put a runner back to a base if you thought they could not have reached the next base.

For example, the runner from 1st is trying to return to the base because a fly ball is caught. The 1st baseman does not have the ball and is blocking the base. The award is 1st base.