

Runner Tag Up Appeals

What is the ruling when a runner fails to tag-up on a fly ball properly?

Rule 8-Section 4 RUNNERS ARE ENTITLED TO ADVANCE WITH LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT
D. When a legally caught fly ball is **first touched** by a defensive player.

This means the runner can legally advance (leave the base) when the ball is first TOUCHED by a defensive player.

This is an “appeal” play. For the runner to be out for leaving early, an appeal must be made by the defense (see the **Appeals** presentation).

What are the tag-up responsibilities of the umpires?

The plate umpire has all touches and tag-ups of 3rd and all touches of home.

The base umpire has all touches and tag-ups of 1st and 2nd base.

The most asked question from the base umpires is “How can I see the tag up, I am behind the runners”.

Yours is the hardest to get correct. So, the best mechanic is a series of steps.

1. When the ball is about to be caught, look at the runners on the bases.
2. Watch the fielder “touch” the ball (catch is irrelevant...the plate umpire is responsible for the catch/no-catch) and then quickly look at the runner(s). If they are a step or so off the base, the best assumption is they were on the base at the time of the catch.

Some times due to a runner that leaves quickly, it may seem they have left early.

So a defensive player will, usually, loudly say “Hey blue, the runner at 1st left early”.

Do we think the runner was more than a couple of steps off the base? Well, if you believe this, they are out on appeal.

What if they are not more than a step off the base?

We are going to answer this question using this language

The answer is “The runner was on the base when I last looked”.

Given the positioning of the base umpire, this is best that can be expected for a fly ball.