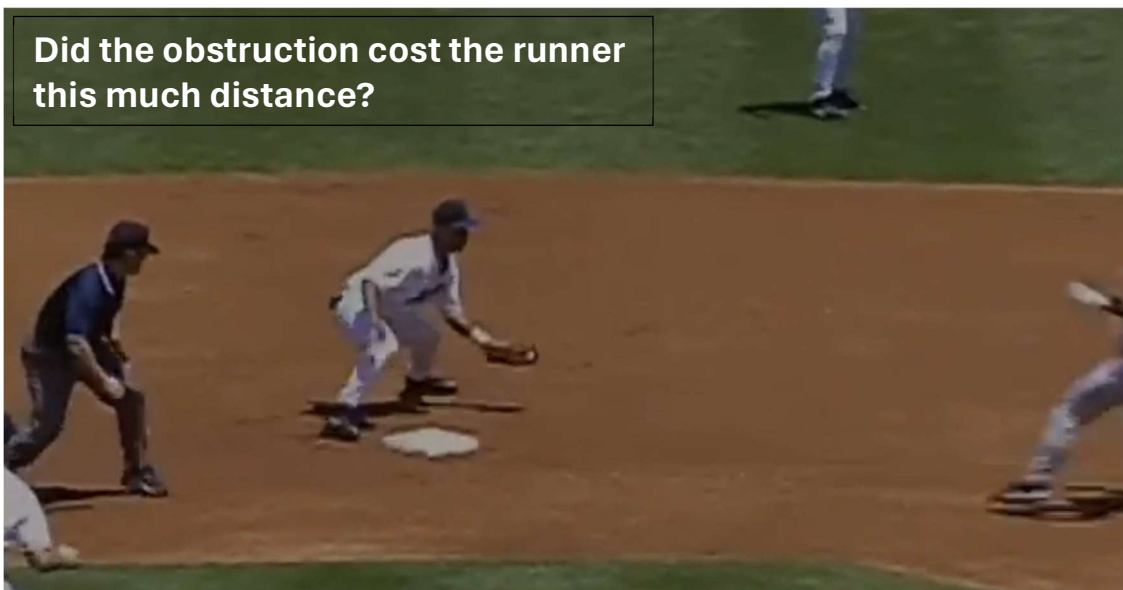


Per the rulebook definitions, obstruction is an act by a defensive player, not in possession of the ball & not in the act of fielding a batted ball, that impedes the progress of a runner. In this video, the first baseman has impeded the batter-runner by being in the runner's basepath without possession of the ball, causing the runner to deviate their path to go around them. There does not need to be contact for the umpire to adjudge obstruction. If the runner is impeded in any way, they have been obstructed.

This is an example of Type B obstruction (the runner is not being played on at the moment of obstruction). The correct mechanic is to point at the infraction & say "That's obstruction" (not too loudly; don't yell it) and leave the ball in play. With Type B obstruction, there is no automatic base award to the obstructed runner (unlike the situation with Type A obstruction). Per Rule 7.06(b), at the end of playing action the umpire shall impose such penalties, if any, to nullify the act of obstruction.

The decision to make in this particular situation is whether the obstruction caused the batter-runner to be retired at 2nd base. In other words, would the batter-runner have reached 2nd base safely if not for the obstruction.

The below picture shows approximately how far the batter-runner was out at 2nd base (admittedly it's definitely easier to appreciate this in a photograph than it is in real time).



If your judgement is that the obstruction cost the batter-runner at least this much distance, award the batter-runner 2nd base (when the batter-runner is tagged out, call "Time" and award them 2nd base. Do not call the batter-runner out and then award them the base).

If your judgement is that the batter-runner would have been out anyway, then the out at 2nd base stands (just call the batter-runner out and leave the ball in play).

If you are unsure whether the obstruction caused the batter-runner to be retired, the philosophy is to err on the side of protecting the offense because the problem was caused by the defense. Note that this is not something that is in the rulebook and should never be offered to a manager to explain your ruling. If a manager requests an explanation, always rely on rulebook terminology.

Using rulebook terminology would be to say something like this:

The runner was obstructed by the first baseman and I'm awarding the runner 2nd base to nullify the act of obstruction.

Obstruction occurs much more frequently than it is called; everyone is encouraged to be alert for and announce obstruction when it occurs during our games.