

New York State Softball Officials Organization

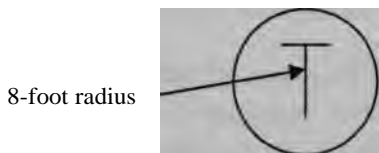
LOOK BACK / CIRCLE RULE

"The **Look Back Rule** will be in effect for all runners when the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched 1st base or has been declared out, and the pitcher has possession and control of the ball within the pitcher's circle. The pitcher is considered to be in the pitcher's circle when both feet are on or within the lines."

(ASA Official Rules of Softball — 2007: Rule 8 Section 7T (p. 118); Rules Supplement 34 (p.147-149))

The Look Back Rule does not go into effect until the batter-runner touches first base or has been declared out, and the pitcher has control of the ball within the circle.

I. **The Circle** — The pitching circle is marked by a 16-foot circle, 8 feet in radius, drawn from the center of the pitcher's plate. The lines drawn around the pitcher's plate are considered inside the circle. (Being in the "8 foot circle" is defined as both feet within or partially within the lines. The pitcher is not considered "in the circle" if either foot is completely outside the lines.)



II. **The Runner** - When a runner is legitimately off a base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing a turn at bat, and while the pitcher has control of the ball within the 8 ft radius of the pitcher's plate, the runner may stop once, but then must immediately return to the base or attempt to advance to the next base. *Once the runner stops at a base for any reason, the runner will be declared out if she leaves the base. The responsibility of the batter runner after touching 1st base, (this includes a base on balls, or dropped third strike) and while the pitcher has control of the ball within the 8 foot radius of the pitcher's plate the following rules apply:*

A. A batter-runner who **rounds** 1st base toward 2nd base **may stop**, but then **must immediately without stopping** return to 1st base **or attempt to advance non-stop to** 2nd base.

B. A batter-runner who **over-runs** 1st base toward **right field, turns left and immediately stops, must then return non-stop to** 1st base **or attempt to advance non-stop to** 2nd base.

C. A batter-runner who **over-runs** 1st base **toward right field, turns left and moves** directly toward 2nd base and **stops is committed to** 2nd base and **must attempt to advance non-stop to** 2nd.

D. A batter-runner who **over-runs** 1st base **toward right field, turns left and moves back toward the infield in any direction** except directly toward 2nd base **is committed to** 1st and **must return to** 1st base.

E. A batter-runner who **over-runs** 1st base toward **right field, and turns right is committed to** 1st base and **must return to** 1st.

III. **Umpires responsibility for a Batter-Runner, and a Base Runner**

A. The batter-runner must comply with the above listed rules or the **umpire will declare the ball dead, ("No pitch" will be declared when applicable) and the runner will be**

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called out. If multiple runners are off base and more than one umpire calls a runner out, the umpires must determine which runner was called out first and return the others to the base they left. When a runner is called out in this situation, the ball is dead. ***It is impossible to call two outs on the "Look Back Rule." Only one runner may be called out** (RS 34 D p. 148)**

B. A base on balls or a dropped third strike is treated as a batted ball if the batter-runner continues past 1st base without stopping, or stops only once and then immediately moves one way or the other. **If the runner stops at 1st base and then steps off the base after the pitcher has the ball in the circle, the runner is out. (RS 34 F p. 148)**

C. Batter-runners overrunning 1st base, **can not start back to the base, and before reaching 1st, advance to 2nd base.** If a batter-runner commits to 1st base (moving towards first) the runner **must** return to that base. **The batter-runner may not change her mind and advance to 2nd base once they have started moving directly to 1st following the overrun.** If they do so, **the runner is out.** Umpire's judgment determines what is committing toward a base. (RS 34 G p.148)

D. If a runner is moving toward a base, other than 1st base when the pitcher receives the **ball in the circle**, that runner may stop once then immediately advance to the next base or return to the previous base. If, after the pitcher has the **ball in the circle** the runner starts back to their **original base** or **forward to another base and then stops or reverses direction, the runner is out, unless the pitcher makes a play on her or another runner.** When a **play is made** on any runner, other runners **may** also stop or reverse their direction. (RS 34 H p. 150)

E. A runner is **out when standing off the base** if they do not immediately attempt to advance or return after the pitcher has the **ball within the circle.** (RS 34 I p.149)

***** While in the circle and in possession of the ball, any act by the pitcher that, in the umpire's judgment, causes the runner to react is considered making a play. The pitcher must have control of the ball within the circle. *** (RS 34 J, K p.149)**

IV. The Pitcher and the Look Back / Circle Rule

Runners may legally leave their bases if the pitcher:

1. Leaves the circle
2. Drops the ball while in the circle.
3. Holds the ball between the legs or under the arm. *The ball is not considered to be controlled if not held in the hand or the glove.*
4. Places the ball on the ground.
5. Flips the ball in the air.
6. Releases a pitch to the batter.
7. Tosses the ball or hands it to another player who is either in or out of the circle.
8. Makes a "play" on a runner in the judgment of the umpire.