

PLAY AT THE PLATE / BASE

Whether it's a play at any base in a tag or force-play situation, an umpire should keep these basic elements in front of him/her, and remain unobstructed as much as possible.

The base runner:

- Is she in the basepath?
- Did she interfere?

The ball:

- Where is it?
- Does the defensive player have possession of it?

The defensive player making the play:

- Is there obstruction?
- Is the defensive player blocking the plate/base with possession of the ball?

STAYING CLEAR OF THE CATCHER

Umpires must strive to never interfere with the ball or any player especially the catcher. The first and perhaps the most important element is taking notice of which way the catcher moves her shoulders which indicates whether she will move to the left or right. Remove the mask and go with the catcher, maintaining a buffer zone distance (about 10 feet.)

- Follow the catcher, keeping enough distance to avoid a thrown helmet or mask.
- Maintain an angle that allows you to see if the ball bounces off or is trapped against the dugout or fence. (If the ball bounces off or is trapped against or bounces off into the catcher's glove it is a dead ball and no play is allowed.)
- The umpire must be alert for a thrown mask and must avoid other players attempting to make the catch.
- If the catcher's feet are touching the line or are in live-ball territory, she is considered in the field of play and legally may field, catch or throw the ball without penalty. If she has one foot in play and the other foot in the air, she may legally catch the ball. If the catcher's entire foot is beyond the line and is touching dead-ball territory at the time of the catch the ball has entered dead-ball territory, the ball is dead and no play is allowed.

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