



THE UNCAUGHT THIRD STRIKE

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Understanding the uncaught third strike ruling involves knowledge of several rules that cover the batter, base runners, the pitcher and the definition of terms.

Let's begin with the proper terminology and definition for this situation. As officials we should refer to this as an uncaught third strike, and NOT a dropped third strike. The basis for this can be found in **Rule 2.00**, under the definition of a catch.

The beginning of the definition states, "A catch is the act of a fielder in getting secure possession in the hand or glove of a ball in flight and firmly holding it before it touches the ground."

There are three points to bear in mind from this portion of the definition: 1. "secure possession" 2. "ball in flight" and 3. "before it touches the ground." One constant is if a pitched ball bounces into the catcher's mitt it can never be caught.

Little League **Rule 6.09(b)** states "The batter becomes a runner when the third strike called by an umpire is not caught, providing (1) first base is unoccupied or (2) first base is occupied with two out." Please bear in mind that if you are working a Minor Division game, **Rule 6.05(b)** (2) states that in Minor League or Tee Ball the batter is out whether the third strike is caught or not caught by the catcher. If your league is using a double first base, **Rule 7.15(g)** explains which portion of the base may be used by the offense and the defense.

Finally, **Rule 6.05(b) Approved Ruling**, states the following, "To put the batter out, the defense must tag the batter or first base before the batter touches first base." Please note that an uncaught third strike does not result in a dead ball or stopped play.

Although this article deals directly with the Uncaught Third Strike, it underscores the connection of the rules and reinforces the necessity for coaches and managers to have a firm grasp on the rules that govern the games.

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