

What is an Appeal Play? It is an infraction of the rules by the offense that cannot (by rule) be called by an umpire until the defense requests a decision.

There are four, and only four, such infractions: (1) a runner missing a base (while advancing forward or retreating backward, including awarded bases), (2) a runner leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball, (3) attempting to advance to second base after overrunning (or making the turn at) first base, and (4) batting out of order (after the incorrect batter's turn at bat ends).

It is not an appeal play when a runner leaves a base early (before the pitcher delivers the ball). It is not an appeal play when obstruction or interference occurs. It is not an appeal play when a request is made as to whether a check swing is a swinging strike. And, a manager asking an umpire to get help from their partner is not an appeal play. (Managers may call it an appeal, but it is not.)

There are two types of appeals: live ball appeals and dead ball appeals.

A live ball appeal can be used to appeal (1) a runner missing a base or (2) a runner leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. If (A) the runner is tagged or (B) the base is touched while the defender is holding the ball; (the tag or base touch being done prior to the runner returning to touch the required base) then the runner is out.

A live ball appeal is also used for (3) a runner attempting second after overrunning first, but only the tag form of the appeal can be used (the base touch cannot be used).

Example 1: Runner (R1) on first, no outs. R1 is stealing second when a line drive is caught on a fly by the second baseman. She then throws to the first baseman who steps on first prior to R1 returning to first. The batter is out (caught fly ball), R1 is out (live ball appeal - she left first too soon). There are now two outs. The second baseman could have also tagged R1 for the live ball appeal. If R1 returned to first prior to the tag/touch, she would not be out.

Example 2: Runner (R1) is on first, no outs. The batter safely hits a ball to right field and stops at first. R1 proceeds past second (without touching second) to

third base. The ball is thrown to the shortstop who touches second and tells the umpire she is appealing R1 missed the base. The umpire then calls R1 out. The ball remains live. R1 could have also been tagged prior to her returning to touch second, provided the umpire was told the tag was an appeal for missing second.

Example 3: No runners on base, no outs. The batter hits the ball to third and runs to first. She misses first base or touches only the white portion of first. The ball subsequently arrives at first. Since this is an appeal play, the first baseman (or any other defender) can tag the batter-runner or touch the base prior to the batter-runner returning to (either the white or colored portion of) first. Unless obvious, it would also require a verbal notification of the appeal. If the batter-runner returns to first prior to the tag/touch, she would not be out.

A dead ball appeal can be used to appeal (1) a runner missing a base, (2) a runner leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball, or (4) batting out of order. (It cannot be used for (3) advancing toward second.)

Example 4: Runner (R1) is on first, no outs. The batter safely hits a ball to right field and stops at first. R1 proceeds past second (without touching second) to third base. After all play is over, the defense asks for time. The umpire grants time. Any infielder or any (new rule 2018) coach then tells an umpire (appeals) R1 missed second. R1 would then be ruled out.

Some additional information about appeals:

- The resultant out (live or dead ball appeal) occurs at the time the appeal is made, not at the time of the rule violation. Thus, if a run scores prior to the appeal, the run counts.
- If the appeal is on the runner who subsequently scores, that run does not count.
- If the appeal is for a missed base to which the runner is forced, the out is a force out. (No runs can score if the third out of an inning is a force out.)
- If the appealed runner is the third out, any following runners (who subsequently reached home) would also not score.

- It is legal to appeal more than one runner, and it may be the case that a fourth (or fifth out) could nullify a score.
- It is an appeal play when a runner misses an awarded base, even if that award follows an obstruction call.
- If a runner misses home and attempts to return to touch the plate, it is an appeal play. This means the runner can be tagged or the plate touched. If a runner misses home and the defense misses the tag, the umpire is to pause a moment, and, if there is no immediate play, signal safe. Since this is an appeal play, there is to be no further ruling by the umpire unless properly appealed (live ball or dead ball).
- The statute of limitations for an appeal expires (1) with the next pitch (legal or illegal), (2) when the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory, or (3) when the umpires have left the field at the end of the game.

Example 5: Runner (R1) is on first, Runner (R3) on third, two outs. The batter safely hits a ball to right field and stops at first. R1 proceeds past second (without touching second) to third base. R3 comes home and touches the plate. After all play is over, the defense asks for time. The umpire grants time. The shortstop then tells an umpire (appeals) R1 missed second. R1 would then be ruled out. Since R1 was forced to second, this appeal is considered a force out. The third out of the inning is a force out; R3's run would not count.

Example 6: The batter hits the ball over the outfield fence. The next batter comes to the plate and is ready to hit. The pitcher is standing on the pitcher's plate. The ball is live. The pitcher then throws overhand to the catcher to appeal the previous batter missed home plate. Since this is an illegal pitch, the statute of limitations expires and the defense loses its right to appeal. Ball one on the next batter. If you, as the umpire, suspect something like that is about to happen, call time. Bad things don't happen when time is called and the ball is dead.

A runner may not return to touch a missed base when they have left the field of play (entered dead ball territory) or when a trailing runner has scored. They may also not return to touch a missed base once they advance to or pass an awarded

base. This does not mean they would be automatically out since this is still an appeal play: an umpire can only rule when asked to do so!