

Ararat Cal Ripken Baseball League

Sliding Policy

Last Updated: 03/25/2009

Coaches/League Umpires:

We have had two instances recently involving a play at the plate that has caused some confusion on the appropriate action by both the offensive and defensive players as well as the appropriate call to make.

For reference we have included the pertinent rules:

Cal Ripken Rule Book: CONTACT RULE (All Divisions) - If a runner attempting to reach home plate intentionally and maliciously runs into a defensive player in the area of home plate, he will be called out on the play and ejected from the game. The objective of this is to penalize the offensive team for deliberate, unwarranted, unsportsmanlike action by the runner for the obvious purpose of crashing the defensive player, rather than trying to reach home plate. Obviously, this is an umpire's judgment call.

Ararat League Rule as discussed at the Coaches meeting: The player is expected to slide into home plate, or any base when the defensive team is in the act of attempting to put the offensive player out. The ruling as to whether there is a play on the runner is in the judgment of the Umpire. Ararat does not have a rule that a player must slide into home plate.

In the first instance, the catcher has come up the third base line and blocked the offensive player from reaching home plate. This is normal practice by our older Major catchers and in fact is a skill that when executed is very effective in preventing a run from scoring. (Please keep in mind, the catcher is only allowed to do this if the ball is in flight toward home plate and the catcher cannot do this if he/she is not actively making a play on the ball.) However, in doing this and reading the Ararat Rule, the offensive player is expected to slide when the catcher has the plate blocked, this gives the defensive team an unfair advantage.

In the second instance, the catcher came up the line, did not block the plate, was in the act of catching the ball, the runner avoided contact and proceeded to home plate without sliding.

Clarification:

The contact rule should be strictly enforced by our league. In instances where the defensive player has blocked the offensive player from safely reaching the base, the offensive player shall be permitted to "step around" the defensive player in order to reach the base safely. The offensive player must also adhere to the staying inside of the base path, when avoiding contact. The intent of the verbal discussion at the coaches meeting was to agree that in most instances, sliding into a base is the safest way to avoid contact with the defensive player. However, sliding is not mandatory in all instances as long as the contact rule is adhered to.