



April 22, 2026

NFHS Baseball Weekly Rule Interpretations

I hope this weekly interpretation finds you well and probably starting your post season. The Force Play Slide Rule is one that is steeped in player safety similar to last week's malicious contact topic.

The high school rule is different at other levels because we are dealing with a variety of skill levels among children who could range from 15-19 years of age. The high school baseball rule is designed to protect defensive players from dangerous contact during force plays, particularly at second base. Unlike other levels, we do not want the base runner taking out the short stop to break up a double play at first base. Briefly, a runner advancing on a force play must either slide directly into the base or attempt to avoid contact with the defensive player.

The overarching principle is player safety. Umpires are expected to address such actions decisively to maintain a safe and sportsmanlike environment.

We trust this interpretation will be received as helpful, practical, and constructive.

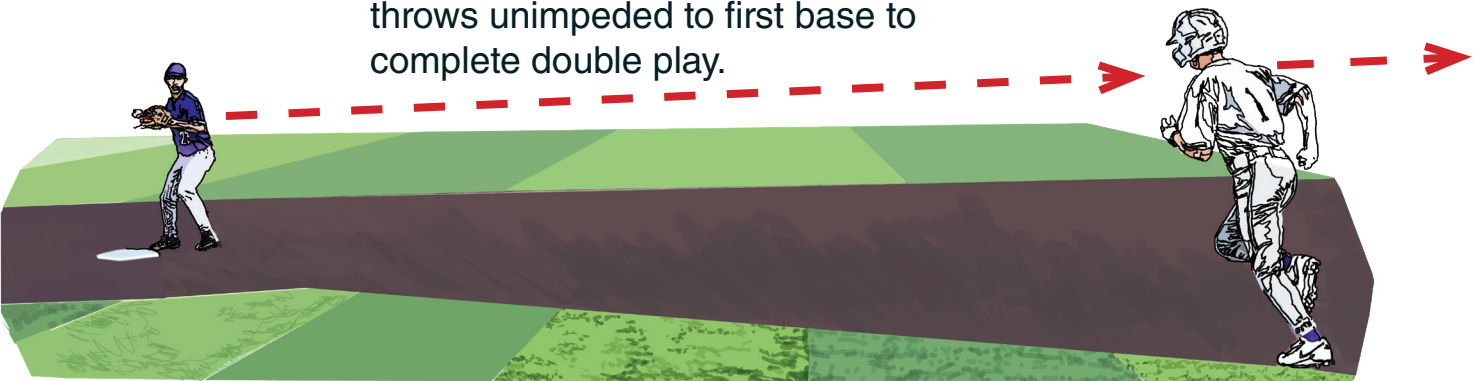
For your convenience, we have attached the illustration as a combined document to support ease of use and distribution. These materials serve as excellent discussion tools for both relatively new and veteran umpires alike.

Thank you for your continued support and professionalism throughout the season, and best wishes for a successful baseball post season.

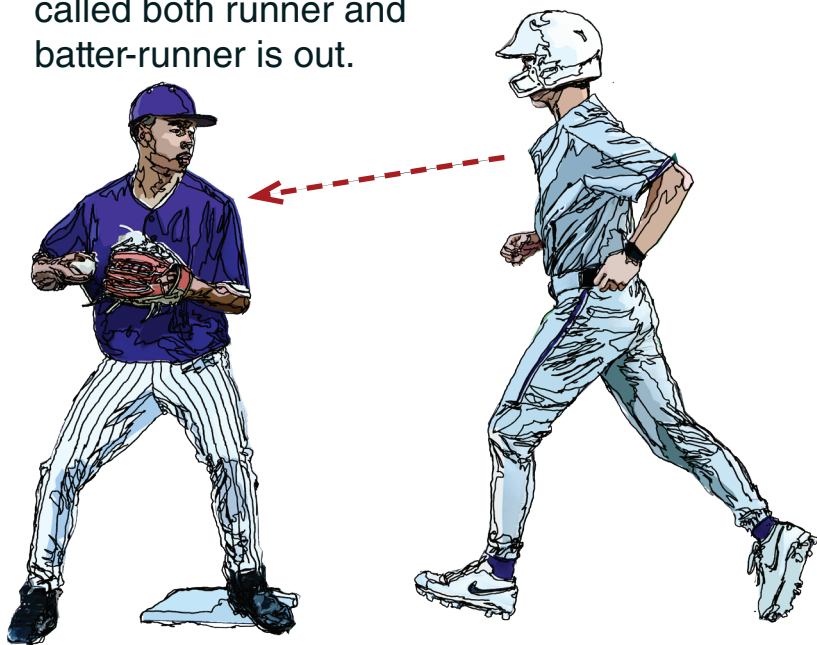
Forced Play Slide Rule (2-32-1; 8-4-2b)

R1 is running to second base but is some distance away. A ground ball is hit to the infield. **F4** has touched second base and is throwing to **F3** for the double play. **R1** is some distance from second base and is running standing up. Is he guilty of a force play slide violation? **Ruling:** No, **R1** has not violated the force play slide requirement because he is too far away to be sliding or turning away. He may run to second base standing up provided he does not move in a way that he might interfere with the throw from **F4**.

1. **F4** steps on second base and throws unimpeded to first base to complete double play.



2. **R-1** must move in direction away from **F4** to avoid contact or being struck by thrown ball. If contact is called both runner and batter-runner is out.



Ruling: In a force play slide situation (**while a runner is never required to slide**), if he chooses **not to slide**, he must “**give himself up**” and run to the side of the base in a direction away from the fielder to **avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder**. If he goes to the **base standing up and makes contact with the fielder; gets hit by the thrown ball; or in any way alters the play, he is out and the batter-runner is also out**. The only time he might be able to go into the base standing up on a force situation is if the fielder is nowhere in the vicinity of the base.
(2-32-1; 8-4-2b)