ENFORCEMENT OF AN APPEAL ON AN OBSTRUCTED RUNNER FOR MISSING A BASE OR LEAVING TOO SOON ON A CAUGHT FLY BALL. RULE 5.10.2 d

Rule 5.10.2 d states:
“An obstructed runner may never be called out between the two bases where they were obstructed, unless:
   i) If the obstructed runner commits an act of interference after the obstruction is ruled, or the runner is legally appealed for
      1) Missing a base, unless the runner has been obstructed at that base and the obstruction prevents them from touching the base;
      2) Leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched........

The subject of the interpretation is when an obstructed runner can be called out for missing a base or leaving to early on a fly ball.

Our interpretation is that a runner, once obstructed, cannot be called out between the bases. Once the runner is put out between the bases, the ball is declared dead and the runner is awarded the base that in the judgement of the umpire they would have reached had they not been obstructed. If the runner is awarded the base that they missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball, they cannot be appealed for missing that base or leaving that base too soon on a caught fly ball. If they are awarded the base ahead of the base they missed, they may return to touch the missed base or base left too soon on a caught fly ball before proceeding to the awarded base. If they do not return to touch the missed base or base left too soon on a caught fly ball, they may be called out on a legal appeal for missing the base or leaving the base too soon on a caught fly ball.

Case plays

5.10.2 Bases Awarded to Runner(s) For Obstruction

Play 1
R1 on 2B when B2 hits a ball between CF and RF. R1 rounds 3B and is running home when RF throws to the plate. R1 seeing this, returns to 3B where they are obstructed. R1 then (a) continues to 3B, or (b) stands off the base and observes the play. The catcher receives the throw and seeing B2 going to 2B, throws to 2B where B2 is thrown out. Then R1 starts for home as well in (a) as (b) and is thrown out.

Ruling: (a) R1 is out as they have returned to the base they were protected to and a subsequent play took place. When R1 leaves 3B, they are on their own. [5.10.2 d) ii] (b) although a subsequent play took place, R1 did not return to 3B, therefore is still protected and when called out at the plate and would be returned to 3B. [5.10.2 d]}

Play 7
With R1 on 3B and R2 on 2B. B4 hits a ground ball directly to the pitcher R1 is caught between 3B and home. With R1 attempting to regain 3B, F5 obstructs R1, and then tags R1 out. R2 is standing on 3B at the time of the obstruction.
Ruling: The umpire should rule on the obstruction and when F5 tags R1 then call a “dead ball.” R1 should be awarded 3B and R2 is returned to 2B. [5.10.2 b)]

New Play R1 on 2B, 1 out. B3 hits a single to RF. R1 takes off for home but misses 3B. The throw from RF arrives at home well before R1, so R1 attempts to return to 3B but is obstructed before getting back to 3B and is tagged out by F5. The 3B umpire had signalled and called obstruction. The Defensive verbally appeal for the missed base at the same time as the ball is declared dead.

Ruling: In this case R1 can’t be called out between the bases they were obstructed. R1 is awarded 3B and the appeal for missing 3B is denied. [5.10.2 c) and d)]

New Play R1 on 2B, 1 out. B3 hits a single to RF. R1 takes off for home but misses 3B. R1 is obstructed after passing 3B. The 3B umpire signals a “delayed dead-ball” for obstruction and allows the play to continue. R1 is tagged out in a close play at home. The Defensive verbally appeal for the missed base after the ball is declared dead. On hearing the Defensive appeal for the missed base the third base coach informs R1 to return and touch 3B before proceeding to home on the award for obstruction.

Ruling: R1 is awarded home on the obstruction. R1 scores and the appeal for missing 3B is denied. [5.10.2 a), c) and d)]

New Play R1 on 2B, 1 out. B3 hits a deep fly-ball to RF were the catch is taken. R1 takes off for home but a) leaves base early before the catch or b) misses 3B. R1 is obstructed after passing 3B. The 3B umpire signals a “delayed dead-ball” for obstruction and allows the play to continue. R1 is tagged out in a close play at home. R1 is awarded home on the obstruction and proceeds to touch home before leaving the field of play. While the ball is still “dead” the defense now appeal for a) leaving base early or b) misses 3B.

Ruling: Even though R1 is awarded home on the obstruction. R1 would be called out on appeal in both case a) and b). [5.10.2 d) 1 and 2; 5.9 a)]