

The **Infield Fly Rule** in baseball is a special rule designed to prevent the defense from unfairly turning an easy double play. Here's how it works:

When It Applies

There are **fewer than two outs** (0 or 1 out).

There are **runners on first and second base**, or bases loaded.

The batter hits a **fair fly ball** (not a line drive or bunt) that can be caught by an infielder with **ordinary effort**.

What Happens

The **umpire calls "Infield Fly, the batter is out"**—whether or not the ball is actually caught.

Runners may **advance at their own risk**. If the ball is caught, they must tag up before advancing. If it's dropped, they can try to advance without needing to worry about the batter running to first.

The batter is automatically **out**, so the defense can't intentionally let the ball drop to quickly turn a double play.

Why It Exists

Without this rule, infielders could let an easy pop-up fall, then quickly throw to second and first base to force out two runners who had to stay near their bases in case the ball was caught. The rule eliminates that "cheap" double or triple play.

In short: the Infield Fly Rule protects baserunners from being tricked into an unfair double play on an easy pop-up.