

A.R. 12-60. With a runner on first base, the batter hits a ground ball to the second baseman. She fields the ball cleanly and tosses it to the shortstop for the first out of the inning. As the runner is in the baseline between first and second, the shortstop attempts to throw the ball to first base to complete a double play, however, her throw hits the runner or her attached equipment or the actions of the runner cause the fielder to have to alter her throw. The batter-runner reaches first base safely.

RULING: The benefit of the doubt goes to the defense who must be allowed the opportunity to make or complete a play since retired runners are not afforded the same protection as live runners. The base runner closest to home would be declared out if a retired runner interfered with a defender's opportunity to make a play. The umpires must consider these factors: 1) does the retired runner make a legitimate attempt not to interfere with the throw (e.g. slides if she's close enough to the bag, veer to get out of the throwing lane or drop/duck to avoid the thrown ball)? 2) does the defensive player intentionally try to throw at the retired runner whose actions would otherwise not impact the throw? 3) is it simply an errant throw? In these three situations, the retired runner would not be charged with interference and the ball would remain alive.

(Rules 12.17.3.1)