Ruling Fair or Foul, The "Point of Decision"

A Batted Ball

Right Off The Bat - Any batted ball that makes an immediate contact in the home plate area with: the batter while the batter is still (even partially) in the batter's box, the umpire, or the catcher (other than a FOUL TIP - See Rule 2.00), is a FOUL ball.

Point of Decision

Leaves the Playing Field

Touched or Caught by a Defensive Player

Falls Untouched Beyond First or Third Base

First Touches First or Third Base In-Flight

The position of the ball as it leaves the field of play -- (not where it lands). Any touch of the foul pole is a Fair ball.

The position of the ball when initially touched by the fielder (controlled or not).

The position of the ball when it first touches the ground.

"Fair" ball.

All batted balls begin "In-Flight". If not caught or touched in-flight they become ground balls. (Yes, some become ground balls much sooner than others.) If the batted ball is not resolved "In-flight" (above) it gets resolved as a ground ball (below).

Point of Decision is determined by which of the following occurs first

That Rolls To and Touches First or Third Base - A ball advancing to and making contact with a base removes all doubt; "Fair" ball.

That Bounds Beyond First or Third Base - Point of Decision - the position of the ball as it passes the base.

That Is Touched By a Fielder -- Point of Decision - the position of the ball is as the fielder makes initial contact with it.

That Touches An Offensive Player, Coach or Umpire -- Point of Decision the position of the ball as it is touched/touches the player, coach or umpire.

In Foul Territory Before it Passes First or Third Base that touches an object, foreign to the natural ground, (e.g. equipment, fence, etc.) or any person, is immediately called foul.

That Comes to Rest Untouched -- Point of Decision is where the ball comes to rest.

* Refer to Official Baseball Rules, 2.00 Definition of Terms; Fair Territory.

** This analysis addresses the application of Fair/Foul. Baseball can interject many distracting factors such as interference, ground rules or just unusual baseball moments. The umpire must remember that once the bat makes contact with the pitch, the umpire's top priority is determining Fair/Foul.