

Box 5.1b: Advice column

Dear Dr Science,

Please, please help me settle this argument I am having with my girlfriend. We were watching a baseball game several weeks ago when this guy hit a high pop-up straight over the catcher's head. When it finally came down, the catcher caught it standing on home plate. Well, my girlfriend told me that when the ball stopped in midair just before it started back down, its velocity was zero, but its acceleration was not zero. I said she was wrong. If something isn't moving at all, how could it have any acceleration? Ever since then she has been making a big deal out of this and won't answer my phone calls. I love her, but I don't think we can get back together until we settle this argument. I've checked some physics books, but they weren't very clear. We agreed that I would write to you and let you settle the argument. But, Dr Science, don't just tell us the answer, you've got to explain it so we both understand because my girlfriend is really dogmatic! She said she wouldn't even trust Einstein unless he could explain himself clearly.

Sincerely,
Baseball Blues



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