



AUSTRALIAN BASEBALL

UMPIRE'S MANUAL

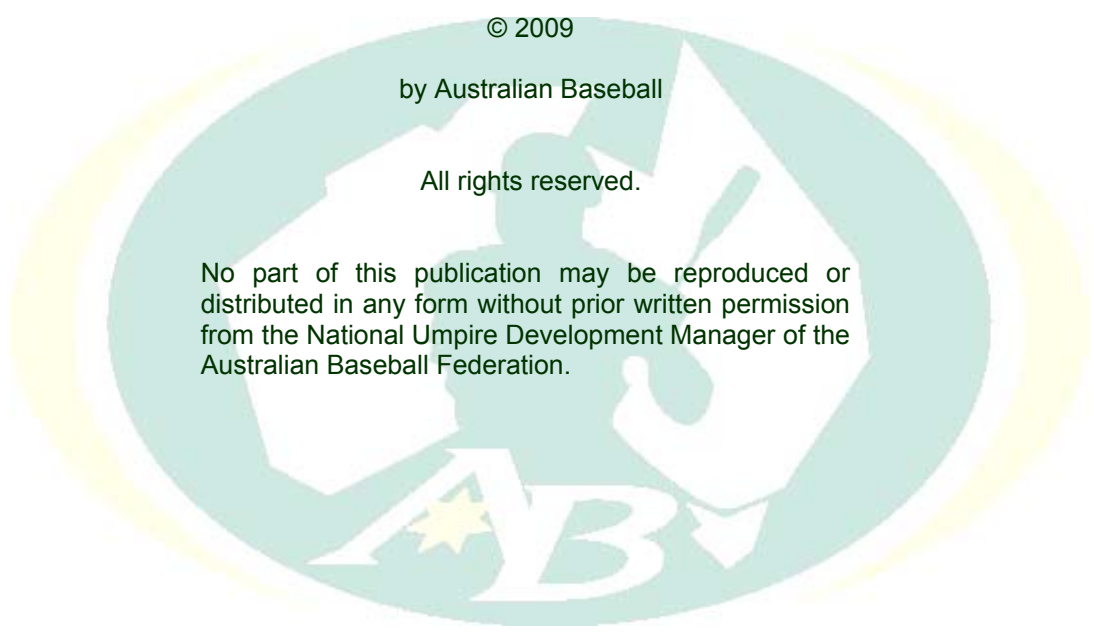
UMPIRE POSITIONS AND SIGNALS

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UMPIRE POSITIONS AND SIGNALS

1. SET POSITION (Photo 1)

- ☛ Set feet shoulder width apart with a slight heel-to-toe stagger.
- ☛ Place hands on knees, bend in the legs and lower the seat.
- ☛ Head up, weight on the balls of the feet.

This stance should be used when setting up to take any play.

The Set Position will assure that you are completely set and not moving in order to see the play correctly.

The umpire will also be able to move more efficiently and quickly when reacting to the ball and plays from the Set Position.

The base umpire will assume the Set Position on every pitch, starting from when the pitcher starts his / her wind-up until after the pitch passes the batter. After the pitch, the base umpire may stand up and relax.



2. OUT SIGNAL (Photo 2)

- ☛ Start in Set Position (above).
- ☛ Stand up with feet shoulder width apart while raising the right arm and clenching the right fist, extending the elbow to the right side at shoulder level, forming a 90 degree angle with the arm at the elbow. During this action the umpire will say in a firm, loud voice "He's Out!"
- ☛ Fold the left arm at a 90 degree angle at the belt.

Care must be taken to keep the right arm approximately at a 90 degree angle as if it drops the signal becomes less visible.



Concentrate on crisp, firm, visible mechanics with firm voice with tone, emphasis, loudness, authority, and assertiveness.

During drill the umpire will return to the Set Position after the call. During games the umpire will turn and jog to position.

3. SAFE SIGNAL

- Start in Set Position (1. above).
- Stand up with feet shoulder width apart while extending both arms straight out in front of the body, approximately chest high (Photo 3). Then fully extend both arms to each side (Photo 4), holding the signal for a moment, then returning to Set Position. This will be done in one fluid motion.



During this action the umpire will say in a firm, loud voice, "He's safe!"

During the drills the umpire will return to Set Position.

In a game after the signal the umpire will turn and jog back to position without returning to Set Position.

4. SAFE OFF THE BAG SIGNAL

- Start in Set Position (1. above).
- Use the same mechanics as for the Safe Signal (3. above), then use a swiping motion with both arms off to one side of the body to signal that indeed the first baseman was off the bag.

The umpire will say in a loud, assertive voice "Safe!" whilst making the Safe Signal. While making the swiping motion, the umpire will say "He's off the bag!" All these actions should be coordinated into one fluid motion.



5. FOUL BALL SIGNAL

Base Umpire Facing Infield and Outfield

- Start in Set Position (1. above).

The base umpire will call a foul ball while facing the infield. Note in Photos 7 and 8 that the base umpire is standing in foul territory when facing the infield.

The base umpire will call a foul ball while facing the outfield. Note that the umpire straddles the foul line when facing the outfield.

- Stand up extending both arms overhead about shoulder width apart with palms open, facing forward while yelling "Foul ball!," then point to foul territory with the arm closest to foul territory (this will differ depending on whether you are facing the batter or the outfield).



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10

Plate Umpire

- Start in Set Position (1. above).
- Stand up extending both arms overhead about shoulder width apart with right palm open, (the left hand will and must always be holding the mask) while yelling "Foul ball!". (Photo 11).
- Extend and point to foul territory with the arm closest to foul territory (this will differ according to which foul line you are on; third base uses left arm, first base uses right arm).

Note that the umpire is straddling the foul line when making the call.

With the base umpire positioned at first base, it is the plate umpire's responsibility for fair / foul decisions on balls hit up to and including the bag. Balls passing the bag are the base umpire's responsibility.

With the base umpire in the middle infield, it becomes the plate umpire's responsibility for both foul lines completely.



Photo 11

7. TIME OUT SIGNAL

When making the Time Out Signal the ball is dead and no play can follow.

- Start in Set Position (1. above).

The Time Out Signal is the same mechanic used for a Foul Ball Signal (5. above) except for the point to foul territory which follows the foul ball.

- ☞ Raise up extending both arms overhead about shoulder width apart with palms open and facing forward while yelling "Time out!"

8. FAIR BALL SIGNAL

Plate Umpire

- ☞ Start in Set Position (1. above) straddling the foul line when making your decision.
- ☞ Stand up pointing to fair territory with the arm closest to fair territory.



Photo 12

On first base line use left arm, keep mask in left hand and point, avoid switching the mask to the right hand. The right hand must be free to signal an out, obstruction, interference, etc.

On the third base line point with the right arm.

Remember to keep the arm you are pointing parallel to the ground.

Base Umpire

- ☞ Start in Set Position (1. above).

Note in Photo 13 the umpire is positioned in foul territory with his right foot up against but not in fair territory. Reasons for this are to avoid being hit by a live batted ball in fair territory.

- ☞ Stand up and point to fair territory while facing home plate keeping the arm parallel to the ground.

Fair / foul responsibility for the base umpire when positioned on the line is any ball that completely passes first base.



Photo 13

10. CATCH SIGNAL

The Catch Signal is the same mechanic used for the Out Signal (2. above).

After having made the decision that it is a catch (voluntary release) the umpire will give the Out Signal and yell "That's a catch!"

This signal is used on fly-balls, pop-ups, traps, etc.



Photo 14

11. NO CATCH SIGNAL

The No Catch Signal is the same mechanic used for the Safe Signal (3. above).

While making the Safe Signal the umpire will yell "No catch, no catch!"

This is done on fly balls that are dropped, questionable trapped balls, etc, or any time that a fielder does not have voluntary release and catch / no catch is involved.



12. BALK SIGNAL

- Start in Set Position (1. above).
- Stand up and point literally at the pitcher with the right arm while yelling "That's a balk!" (Photo 16 and 17.)
- After the pitch, if all runners including the batter / runner have not advanced one base, call "Time out!" (7. above) and award each runner one base from the time of that pitch.

The reason for pointing is that the ball is still alive and in play even though the umpire calls a balk.



If the balk is enforced the pitch to the batter is ignored.

13. SPECTATOR INTERFERENCE SIGNAL

The Spectator Interference Signal is given when fans interfere with the ball or a fielder when they are on the playing field (usually reaching from the stands onto the field in an effort to get a baseball).

Time Out is called as the ball is dead immediately at the time of the interference. Then the Spectator Interference Signal is given.

- Grasp the left wrist with the right hand and raise both arms overhead. (Photo 18)

The umpire will award the base runners where in the umpire's judgment they would have advanced had the interference not occurred.

No verbiage is used when making the Spectator Interference Signal.



14. INFIELD FLY SIGNAL

Refer to the Official Rule Book for criteria on infield fly - Rule 2.00.

- ☛ Point straight up in the air while at the same time yelling "Infield fly, the batter is out!"

If the fly ball is close to the foul line the umpire will yell "Infield fly, the batter is out, if fair!"



15. GROUND RULE DOUBLE SIGNAL

- ☛ As the ball goes out of play signal Time Out (7. above) while yelling "Time out!"
- ☛ Turn back to the infield and raise two fingers into the air yelling "Two bases!"

With no runners on base the base umpire will go out into the outfield to get a better look at the ball going out of play.



16. HOME RUN SIGNAL

- ☛ Raise the right arm pointing the index finger into the air making a clockwise circling motion with the index finger and upper arm while yelling "Home run!"



17. STRIKE SIGNAL

- Use the Out Signal (2. above) while saying "Strike one!" calling the strikes by numbers (1,2,3).



18. BALL CALL

After a pitch which is a ball the umpire will stay down in the Plate Stance (Photo 57 below) and call "Ball one!" by the numbers (1,2,3,4).

After calling the pitch a ball the umpire will stand up and relax between pitches before assuming the Plate Stance again for the next pitch.



19. CHECK SWING APPEAL SIGNAL

Plate and Base Umpires

Upon request of the manager or the catcher, the plate umpire **must** ask his / her partner for help on the check swing - **only** if the plate umpire calls it a no swing. If the plate umpire calls it a swing, the strike shall stand and it cannot be reversed.

Review Rule 9.02 (c) on check swing appeals.

It is up to the plate umpire to make the decision on all check swings. Sometimes the plate umpire is blocked out by the catcher (who stands up to block a ball) from seeing it. In this case and in the case mentioned above, the plate umpire shall appeal to his / her partner on the bases. Other reasons may prevent the plate umpire from seeing check swings, in these cases the manager or catcher should appeal.



Upon appeal from the manager or catcher the plate umpire will point at his / her partner on the bases and yell "Did he go?", usually leaving the plate mask on, however, it is acceptable to take it off when asking.

The base umpire, according to what he / she sees and his / her judgment, will answer by either yelling "Yes, he did!"



while giving the Out Signal (2. above), or yell "No, he didn't!" while making the Safe Signal (3. above).

The No Swing Signal shall be made in one fluid motion.

21. SUBSTITUTION SIGNALS

When making substitutions the proper change is given to the umpire by the field manager. Once the umpire locates this player on the line-up card he / she then waves to the press box to get the scorer's attention. The umpire will then point to the substituted player on the field wherever his / her position may be.



22. GAME TERMINATED SIGNAL



This signal is used to signal to the fans and the press box that the game has been called (ie, because of rain, forfeit, etc).

- ☛ Turn to the press box and signal by using the Time Out Signal (7. above)

23. RUNNER INTERFERENCE SIGNAL

At the time of the interference the umpire shall signal Time Out yelling "Time!", then point to the interference yelling "That's interference!" The umpire will then give the Out Signal (2. above) yelling "He's out!"



24. OBSTRUCTION SIGNAL



When Play Made On Obstructed Runner

With a play being made on the obstructed runner the umpire shall signal Time Out, then point to the obstruction and yell "That's obstruction!". The umpire will then award bases by pointing to the awarded base according to the rule while yelling "You, second base!"

When No Play Is Made On Obstructed Runner

With no play being made on the obstructed runner the umpire shall point at the obstruction and yell "That's obstruction!". After all play has stopped the umpire will then call "Time out!" then either leave the runner where he / she is or award bases by pointing to the awarded base according to the rule while yelling "You, third base!"

25. TIME PLAY SIGNAL

When Run Scores

Used to signal to the press box if a runner has crossed home plate before the third out of the inning is made.

This signal is made to the press box. The umpire will get the attention of the scorer by pointing up to the press box, then while pointing to the plate yell "Score that run, score that run!", then point back to the press box and yell "One run scores!"



When Run Doesn't Score

When the run doesn't score before the third out the umpire will turn and face the press box and give the same signal as the Game Terminated Signal (22. above) while yelling "No run scores, no run scores!"

26. SWIPE TAG SIGNAL

This signal is used when the runner tries to avoid a tag by the fielder who has the ball.

- ☛ Point at the tag with the left arm then give an Out Signal while yelling "He's out on the tag!". The pointing and the Out Signal will be coordinated into one fluid motion.



27. MULTIPLE SUBSTITUTION SIGNAL

The umpire signals to the press box changes in the line-up.

There are various ways to make these signals but these are standard signals used by most umpires.

- ☛ Waves to get the attention of the official scorer.
- ☛ When it is a straight sub (one player for another) the umpire will signal by holding both arms shoulder width apart and move them up and down (Photo 39).
- ☛ When there is a multiple substitution and a switch in the batting order the umpire will signal to the press box by crossing the arms in a folding motion (Photo 40).



28. FIRST TO THIRD SIGNAL

- ☛ Subtly point to first and third bases with the fingers of each hand (number of outs at the present time) about belt high at the hip.

This reminds the plate umpire that he / she is responsible for the play at third base should the runner on first base go to third on the upcoming play.

The plate umpire will acknowledge in the same manner.

29. INFIELD FLY SIGNAL



This signal is given subtly to remind partners of the number of outs and if it is an infield fly situation.

- ☛ Place the right hand across the chest area while giving the number of outs (at that time) with the left hand around the belt area.

30. PLATE UMPIRE STAYING AT HOME SIGNAL

This signal (usually given with two outs) is given to remind the base umpire that the plate umpire is staying at home on the upcoming play and that the base umpire is responsible for all calls on the bases.

- ☛ The plate umpire will signal by placing the index and middle fingers of the right hand on the left shoulder (Photo 42).



The base umpire will acknowledge the plate umpire with the same signal.

31. HOME PLATE CONFERENCE POSITIONS

The plate umpire will position himself / herself behind home plate with a manager on each side while the base umpire will position himself / herself by facing the plate umpire on the fair side of home plate.

The plate umpire will administer the ground rules unless unaware of that particular park's rules then the home team's manager will administer them.

The positions remain the same for the exchange of line-up cards by the plate umpire.



32. DUSTING OFF HOME PLATE POSITION

- Facing the stands, the plate umpire will straddle home plate and sweep it off (Photo 45). After this action he / she will then swing open toward fair territory opening up to the side opposite the upcoming hitter, then loop to the side of the batter's box putting the mask on preparing to go behind the plate.



33. POINTING THE BALL IN PLAY SIGNAL

- After readying himself / herself on the side of home plate and checking the field one last time, the plate umpire will position himself / herself behind the plate holding up the right arm, extending it straight out laterally, showing your palm to the pitcher (Photo 46). When the plate umpire is ready to start he / she will point at the pitcher with the index finger of the same hand (Photo 47) and yell "Play!" or "Play ball!"



34. HANDLING THE INDICATOR



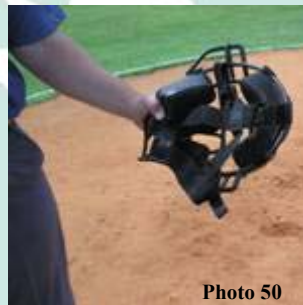
It is mandatory that the plate umpire carries an indicator and that it is used. The indicator serves as a reminder to keep the count on outs straight during the game.

- ☞ Hold the indicator in the left palm with the little finger and ring finger leaving the index, middle finger, and the thumb free to handle the mask.

35. HANDLING THE MASK

The mask is **always** handled with the **left hand**. The right hand must be free to signal out, interference / obstruction, etc.

- ☞ With the indicator in the left hand, the mask is grasped with the thumb, index and middle fingers of the left hand on the padding on the left side of the mask just below the ear bar.



The plate umpire should get accustomed to removing and handling the mask in this fashion as it has been proven most efficient.

36. TAKING THE MASK OFF

- ☞ Grasp the mask as demonstrated in Photo 51.
- ☞ Pull the mask forward (straight out away from your face) (Photo 52).
- ☞ Pull the mask up and away from your head clearing the bill of your cap so that your cap doesn't come off (Photo 53).

The plate cap must fit tight or it will constantly fall off. A sized cap is recommended, adjustable caps will make this skill difficult to perform.

37. APPEAL PROCEDURE SIGNALS

When, in the plate umpire's judgment, the hitter didn't offer at or attempt to swing at the pitch the plate umpire will stay in the plate stance, look at the batter and yell "No, he didn't go!" Once called, the plate umpire may then stand up out of plate stance to relax.

When, in the plate umpire's judgment, the hitter offered at or made an attempt to swing at the pitch, the plate umpire will point at the hitter and say "Yes, he did go!" while making the Out Signal (2. above). This decision shall not be reversed through appeal.

Review section on "Signals" on appealing to base partner for help.



Photo 54



Photo 55



Photo 56

38. PLATE STANCE POSITION



Photo 57 – Right Hand Batter



Photo 58 – Left Hand Batter

The Slot – Right and Left Hand Side

The slot is the area to the left of the catcher's shoulder on a right handed hitter which is marked by the white line.

The area to the catcher's right side is slot for a left handed hitter which is marked by the white line.

Care must be taken so as not to move too far toward the slot. This will force the plate umpire to lose sight of the pitcher as the batter will be in his / her sight. It will also distort the strike zone as the plate umpire will be looking at the pitch at an angle instead of in line with the pitch.

Slot – Foot Location



In a square stance the slot foot is positioned just behind a straight line with the catcher's heel.

In a slot stance the slot foot is positioned on a straight line across from the catcher's heel.

NOTE: When setting in any stance the slot foot is set first. The umpire then goes into the stance. This is a gauge to assure the umpire proper placement of the body to see the outside corner.

Width of Stance

The width of the square and slot stances are the same with only the foot placement varying. The width of the feet in the square and slot stances is approximately shoulder width apart



Shoulders Square to the Mound and Parallel to the Ground



The shoulders in both stances should remain square to the mound (facing the mound) and parallel to the ground (not tilting).

Torso

In the square and slot stances, the back should remain relatively straight up and down with a slight lean forward. Leaning too far forward is a common mistake in this stance as initially it is less stressful on the legs to lean forward.

Note how the eyes are parallel with the ground in all photos. If the umpire leans too far forward it forces the eyes to look down taking the eyes away from focusing correctly on the true flight of the pitch making judgment more difficult.

Head Height

Head height in both stances is the same.

NOTE: Proper head height - Umpire's chin on a horizontal line across the top of the catcher's head.



Photo 62

The umpire should set up in the stance placing the eyes at the top of the hitter's strike zone. This most generally turns out to be the umpire's chin on a horizontal line across the top of the catcher's head. If the head sinks too low it causes the umpire to lose sight of the outside corner and low pitches because the catcher gets in his / her sight. It also will cause problems with judgment of the low pitch and check swings. If the head gets too low it will cause problems with seeing check swings as the umpire will have to look up at them making judgment more difficult.

If the head gets too high it will distort the high pitch into looking like a strike and cause problems changing the perspective of the low pitch because of the increased distance from the umpire's eyes to bottom of the strike zone.

Head Depth (In relation to the catcher's head)

Head depth is directly related to the foot positioning and torso lean. If the feet are positioned too far back, the body leans too far forward to compensate, trying to move the head forward to see the outside corner around the catcher's head.

If the head is too far forward, pitches will blow up or seem too close for the umpire to judge comfortably and accurately.

Angle of the Head / Eyes Stability – Eyes Following the Pitch

The angle of the head / eyes is affected by the torso lean. The further the torso leans forward, the more the eyes tilt to the ground. It is ideal to keep the eyes parallel with the ground so as to keep the eyes parallel with the pitch so that focus and judgment are more efficient.

The head should be kept still with the eyes following the pitch to the plate. If the head starts to turn with the pitch at the last second, it can distort the umpire's judgment of the pitch. The muscles of the eyes are smaller, therefore react faster than the muscles of the neck which move the head.

The eyes should follow the pitch to home plate. Turning the head with the pitch can cause problems in judgment because the eyes will not see the pitch the same way each time if the head is moving. The muscles of the eye are smaller therefore move faster and can react to the speed of the pitch where the neck muscles are larger and cannot move with the precision of the eye and its muscles. The umpire should strive to avoid blinking as the pitch comes across the plate. One short blink can cause an umpire to miss a pitch.

NOTE: The eyes in each of the photos are parallel to the ground. This is accomplished by positioning the feet, torso, and head in the desired positions described above.

39. SLOT STANCE POSITION

- ☞ Start by facing the mound, keeping the shoulders square to the mound and parallel to the ground.
- ☞ Place the slot foot so that the outside corner is visible from a point in front of the catcher's head with the slot foot toes on a straight line with the catcher's heel.
- ☞ Set the other foot shoulder width apart from the slot foot with a heel and toe stagger.

As the pitcher is delivering the pitch, squat down low enough so that your chin is level with the top of the catcher's head. Rest the forearms on the thighs for support with the arms inside the legs for safety, balance and comfort. Resting the forearms either higher or lower on the thighs directly affects torso lean. The hands can be tucked into the crotch, joined together or left loose, whatever is most comfortable.

40. POSITIONING FOR PLAYS AT HOME PLATE

Position is approximately 10 to 15 feet from the plate on the left side of home plate (first base line extended). This will put the plate umpire in a position to see the ball and the tag. A greater percentage of plays that happen at home plate occur on the third base side of home plate.

Catchers blocking home plate and tags applied by them usually happen in front of home plate on the third base line. The first base line extended position puts the umpire in position to see the tag, blocking of the runner off home plate and the dropping of the ball by the catcher.

In the event of a bad throw and swipe tag or a hook slide which requires a different position to see these plays, the plate umpire must then use instinct and react to the play as it develops moving either to right or left to get the best look at that particular play.



Photo 63



Photo 64