

Community Umpires Manual

Including Little League 60' Diamond





Community Umpires Manual



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FOREWORD

The thing that I have noticed most about a game of Baseball is that when we ask people to umpire the standard reply has always been, "I can't do what you do", or "I don't know enough about the game". These types of answers always seem to outweigh, "Yes I'll do it".

When I first started umpiring all I wanted to do was to learn more about the game so as when I watched my son play, I could understand the various situations and enjoy it more. It has become apparent that since the inception of Little League into Australia and the need for the community level umpire to know more about the rules and the game that the existing manuals were very daunting for the beginner umpire thus invariably chasing them away before they got started.

My intention with this Manual is to stimulate an interest in umpiring junior games by players, parents, and any interested member of the sport and when used with the current rules of Baseball or the Current Little League rule books, and other training materials will ultimately make the job of umpiring easier and eventually an enjoyable experience.

*Barry Foat
Qld State Director Community / Little League Umpires*

INTRODUCTION

The runner and ball arrive at 1st base simultaneously, we have a split second to make a call – safe or out. We do not have the luxury of TV replays to help, and we must get the call right. This is where a knowledge of the rules will help you get the call right.

Baseball is a game of throwing, hitting, catching, and running and I guess any player that can master these aims will be able to play the game of Baseball on any level. But as important as it is to do these things you the umpire must know the rules of the game. Anyone who has tried to plough through official rule books of any sport sometimes you are left wondering if you have started on the right venture.




With this manual we hope to help the Community / Little League Umpires solve problems that will crop up from time to time and we also hope to provide guidelines and a reference book to serve as a basic text for umpires working these games.

I hope the information contained in this manual will be a useful tool in assisting you with your umpiring endeavours.

SIGNALLING



Putting the Ball in Play

 <p>Step 1</p> <p>Once the pitcher is touching the pitching plate with the ball in his possession, go into the standing set position (Heel-toe/heel-toe slot position).</p> <p>Do not put the ball into play until the pitcher is touching the pitcher's plate (rubber).</p>	 <p>Step 2</p> <p>Draw your hand back, as pictured</p>
 <p>Step 3</p> <p>Point aggressively to the pitcher with the index finger of the right hand. Verbalize "Play!"</p>	<p>TIPS</p> <p>Putting The Ball in Play</p> <p>Any time the ball is not in play (dead ball) and at the beginning of the game, the plate umpire (only) must put the ball in play. This is one of the most under used signals for amateur baseball but should be used every time the ball is put back into play. This signal is particularly important at the Junior, Senior and Big-League levels. Prior to the ball being put back in play, no action may be taken. Remember that anytime a foul ball occurs, the ball is dead and must be put back into play. The ball is not put back into play until the pitcher is touching the pitching rubber and be sure the batter is ready to go.</p>

Ball

Step 1








When the pitcher is on the pitching plate (rubber) you should go to the ready position (heel-toe)

Step 2





Once you have judged the pitch a ball, you should verbalize "Ball". This verbal call is made while still in the set position as depicted here

Strike

	<p>Step 1</p> <p>When the pitcher is on the pitching plate (rubber) you should go to the ready position (heel-toe)</p>		<p>Step 2</p> <p>Go into the set position when the pitcher starts his motion.</p>
	<p>Step 3</p> <p>After judging a pitch, a strike, the plate umpire should raise up as indicated here and stretch your right hand out as if "shaking someone's hand."</p>		<p>Step 4</p> <p>With your upper arm parallel to the ground, swing your right hand to the side of your head.</p> <p>(Steps 3 & 4 are done in a continuous half-moon motion with the hand)</p>
	<p>Step 5</p> <p>Complete the strike call by closing your fist and swinging your lower arm to a 45-degree angle while maintaining your upper arm parallel to the ground. If the call is a swinging strike, do not verbalize anything. If the strike was a non-swinging strike, then verbalize "STRIKE". Note that the umpire's eyes do not leave the ball during this process.</p>		

Foul

 <p>Step 1</p> <p>From this starting position. Once you have arrived at the position where you will make the judgment call on a fair/foul ball, be sure to be stopped and you are straddled the line (head/eyes are still)</p>	 <p>Step 2</p> <p>Once you have decided on the foul call, raise both arms, as indicated in the picture (same as time mechanic), at the same time - verbalize "FOUL".</p> <p>(not "foul ball")</p>
	<p>Tips</p> <p>Remember, you are verbalizing "FOUL" (not "time") while giving the time mechanic.</p> <p>You should already be stopped before the ball lands fair/foul to assure your "camera" (head/eyes) are still.</p>

Out

Step 1



Once you have arrived at the position where you will make the judgment call at a base, you can return to the hands-to-knees set position as indicated in this picture. This helps steady your head and eyes

Step 2



Upon judging the runner out, rise as indicated here and stretch your right hand out as if "shaking someone's hand."

Step 3



With your upper arm parallel to the ground, swing your right hand to the side of your head.

(Steps 1,2 & 3 are done in a continuous half - moon motion with the hand)

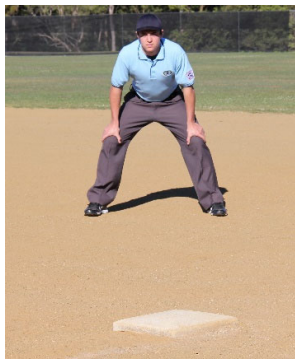



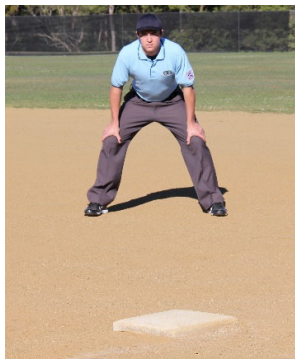
Step 4



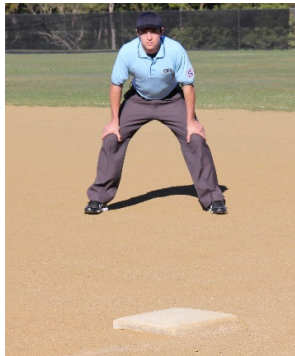





Complete the out signal by closing your fist and swinging your forearm to a 45-degree angle while maintaining your upper arm parallel to the ground.

When moving your forearm forward, you will verbalize, "He's Out"



Safe

 <p>Step 1</p> <p>Once you have arrived at the position where you will make the judgment call at a base, you can return to the hands-to-knees set position as indicated in this picture</p>	 <p>Step 2</p> <p>Upon judging the runner safe, raise both arms straight out and parallel to the ground, as pictured.</p>
 <p>Step 3</p> <p>Indicate the safe signal, as indicated in picture 3 and verbalize "Safe".</p> <p>The proper verbalization is not "He's safe", it is simply, "Safe".</p>	 <p>Step 4</p> <p>With your upper arm parallel to the ground, swing your right hand to the side of your head.</p> <p>(Steps 3 & 4 are done in a continuous half-moon motion with the hand)</p>
 <p>Step 5</p> <p>Return to the hands-to-knees set position if the situation does not dictate you need to go elsewhere. Maintain this until the ball is thrown elsewhere, intentionally. Until the ball is thrown elsewhere, there is always potential for more action, such as a runner stepping off the base and being tagged, etc.</p>	

Safe – Off the Bag

 <p>Step 1</p> <p>Once you have arrived at the position where you will make the judgment call at a base, you should be in the set/ ready position as indicated in this picture.</p>	 <p>Step 2</p> <p>Upon judging the runner safe, raise both arms straight out and parallel to the ground, as pictured.</p>
 <p>Step 3</p> <p>Indicate the safe signal, and verbalize "Safe".</p>	 <p>Step 4</p> <p>After the normal safe signal (Step 1 - 3), indicate, with both hands, a sweeping motion across your body as indicated in step 4 & 5.</p> <p>Verbalize "Off the Bag" while doing step 4 & 5</p>
 <p>Step 5</p>	 <p>Step 6</p> <p>Repeat the safe signal while verbalizing "Safe" again.</p> <p>Tips: Verbalization - Step 3 "Safe" Step 4 & 5 "Off the Bag" Step 6 "Safe" This is a call that needs to be "sold" to everyone because most of the time no others but you and possibly your fellow blue will detect the fact that the fielder pulled his/her foot off the base.</p>

Runner Leaving Early

<p>Step 1</p> <p>Once you have arrived at the position where you will make the judgment call at a base, you can return to the hands-to-knees set position as indicated in this picture</p> 	<p>Step 2</p> <p>When seeing the violation, immediately point at the base of the offending runner, with the right arm, identical mechanic as "Obstruction, (with no play on the runner)".</p> <p>Verbally call "Left Early" or "Runner Left Early", while pointing.</p> <p>Let the play continue, see if there are any put outs made, or other factors come into play</p> <p>Note: This mechanic shall be done IMMEDIATELY, do not trust this to memory; it is tough to sell that a runner left early if there was no visible verification.</p>
<p>Step 3</p> <p>At the end of the play, call "Time" and enforce any penalties that are required</p> 	



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MECHANICS

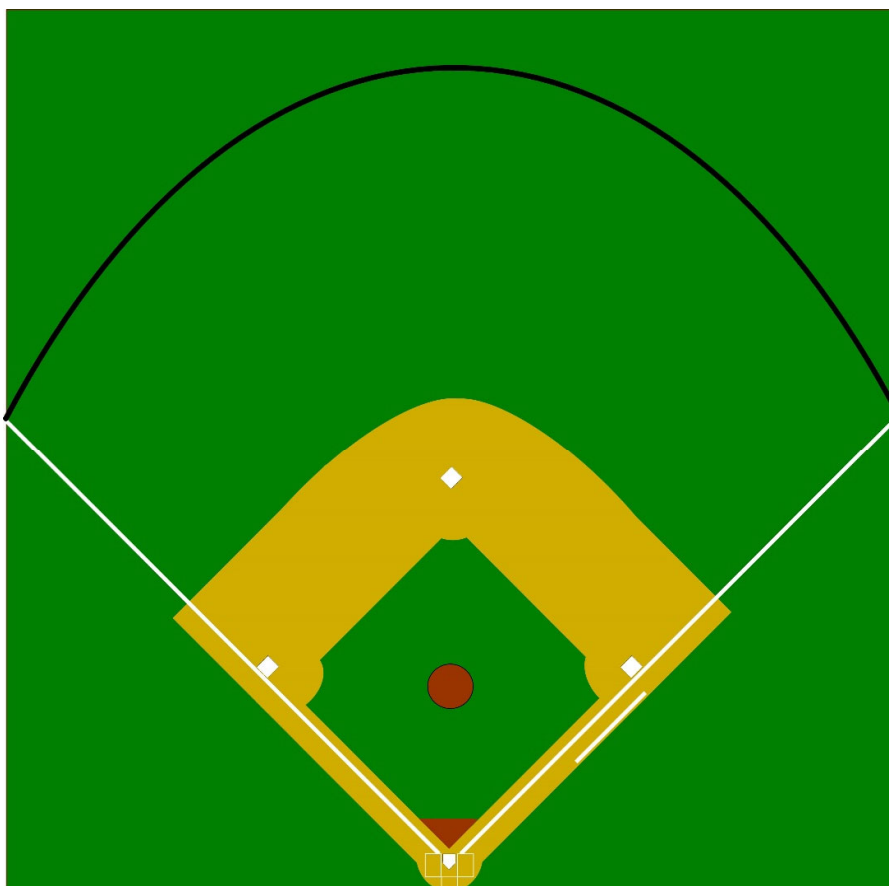
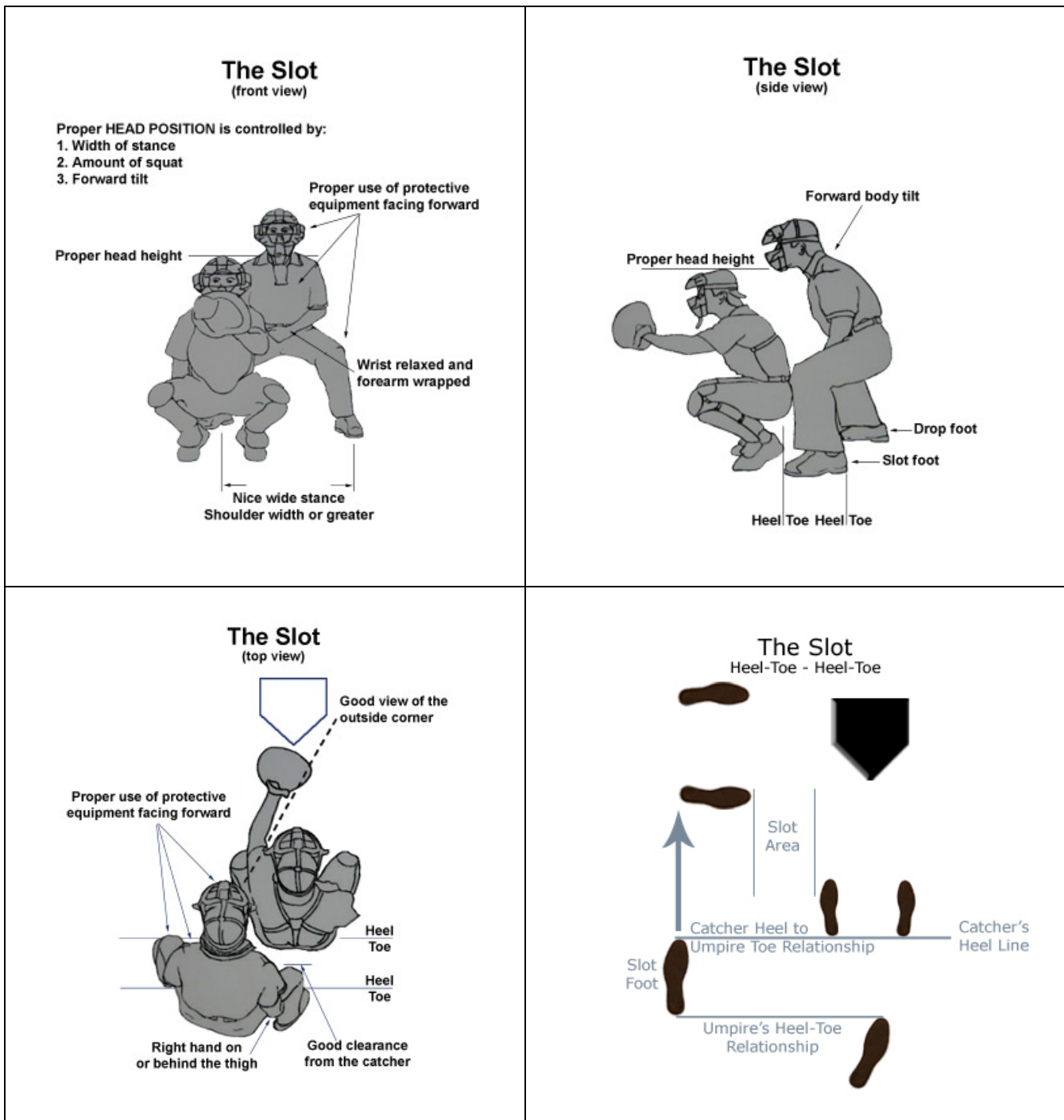


Plate Stance



“A” Position No Runners On



With no runners on base, the base umpire shall position themselves approximately 10-12 feet behind the 1st baseman with both feet in foul territory. The base umpire's right foot should be just off the foul line, and their body should be squared to home plate. Legs should be spread just over shoulder width apart. The base umpire should be in a "ready" set position with both hands on their knees as the pitcher is preparing to deliver the ball to the batter.

Should the 1st baseman position themselves deeper than normal, the base umpire will similarly back up onto the outfield grass a bit, although the 10–12-foot distance may be cut back somewhat so that a proper pivot is still possible on a ball hit to the outfield. Likewise, should the 1st baseman be playing in (shallow), the base umpire will also move up with the 1st baseman, never coming closer than 10-12 feet from the 1st base bag.

The idea in each of these positions is to have the base umpire in a good position for help on the catch no catch and fair/foul decisions involving the 1st baseman, while at the same time allowing the fielder adequate room should they dive for a ball in the direction of the umpire. This positioning also gives the base umpire room to "recover" and get into position for a play at 1st base should the 1st baseman dive towards the umpire while fielding the ball with a play then following at 1st base. The base umpire must be conscious about these positions so that they are never too close, nor too far back from the 1st baseman when no one is on base.

When the pitcher is in possession of the ball, the base umpire must keep their eyes on the pitcher for any violations of the pitching rules that the pitcher may commit. Then, when the pitcher is into their windup and is about ready to deliver the ball, the umpire's head should turn towards the plate, and they should then focus on the plate area, being ready to help the home plate umpire with any check swing possibilities, helping with the possibility of the batter being struck by a batted ball and to help the plate umpire with any balls that go out of play that the umpire may have trouble locating or tracking.

Know the play possibilities before the ball is pitched, this will help with reaction time,

“B” Position Runner at 1st Base Only

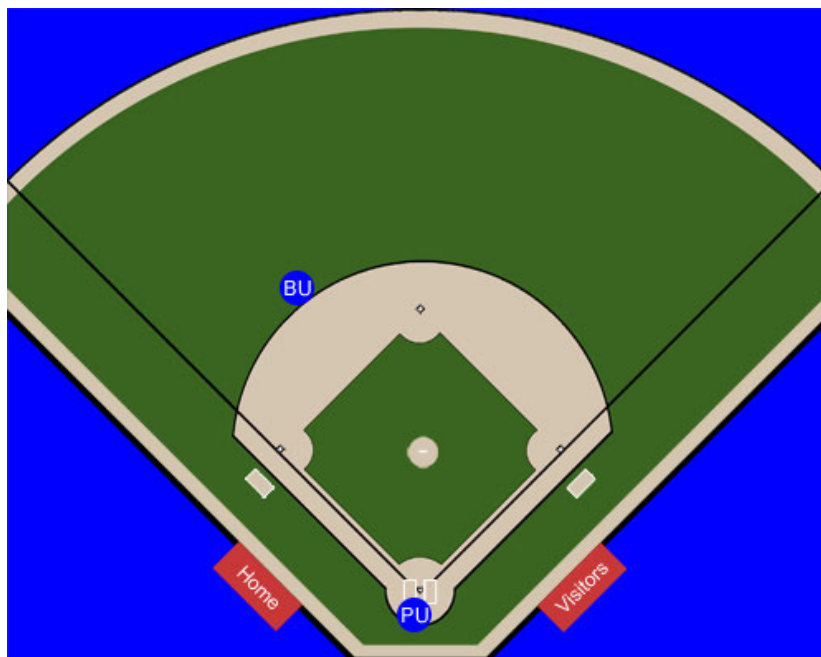


With a runner on 1st base, the base umpire will position themselves approximately halfway (30 - 40 feet) between 1st and 2nd bases and outside the infield/baseline. The umpires' body should be square to the front edge of home plate and in the "set" position (hands locked lightly on the knees). The base umpire should key this position off the second baseman and be two to three steps to the side and behind the 2nd baseman's left shoulder. If the 2nd baseman is shaded to their left towards 1st base, the base umpire must adjust their position to being off the 2nd baseman's right shoulder.

NOTE: As described above, there are various possibilities on where to set up in the 'B' position. Remember the critical points on where to set up and adjust as necessary. Being in a good position for ANGLE and DISTANCE is the most important point for plays at 2nd and 1st bases. From this position, the base umpire will be in a good position to watch the pitcher for any violations. Also, to help the plate umpire on check swings or batted balls that strike the batter; to be able to observe if the runner leaves early and if there could possibly be any obstruction on the runner stealing. It is also a very good starting position from which the base umpire can get into the proper position for any plays. With a few steps or minimal movement, they should be able to cover steals at 2nd base, double plays, plays at 1st base only and any possible pick offs at 1st base. It is very important that the base umpire not setup too deep into the outfield or too far towards 1st or 2nd bases that could put the base umpire in a poor position or angle that would make it difficult to properly cover and make the calls on the plays at 1st and 2nd bases. It is important to be very careful not to take a position that will be in the line of sight of the right fielder to home plate. If the right fielder asks the umpire to move, **DO IT**.

Know the play possibilities before the ball is pitched, this will help with reaction time.

“C” Position



With a runner or runners on 2nd base only, the base umpire will position themselves two to three steps behind and two to three steps to the left of the shortstop when the shortstop is in his normal position. If the shortstop is crowding towards or playing exceptionally close to the 2nd base bag the base umpire should take a position to the right of the shortstop but no further than halfway between 2nd and 3rd base. When taking this alternate position, the base umpire must be able to have an unobstructed view of home plate and must be careful that they are not in the view of the left fielder's sight to home plate.

The umpire's body should be squared to the front edge of home plate, the umpire should be in a good set position watching the pitcher for any violations.

This is the same positioning that will be used with a runner on 3rd base only, runners on 1st and 2nd, 2nd, and 3rd bases or when bases are loaded.

This initial positioning with a runner on 2nd base is very important. The umpire should make sure that they are not too deep or shaded too far towards either base. Being either way could place the umpire at a poor angle or distance to react and make a good call.

Know the play possibilities before the ball is pitched, this will help with reaction time.

Two Umpire System 60' Diamond Responsibilities and Mechanics

Base Umpire

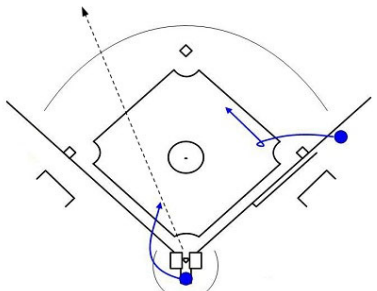
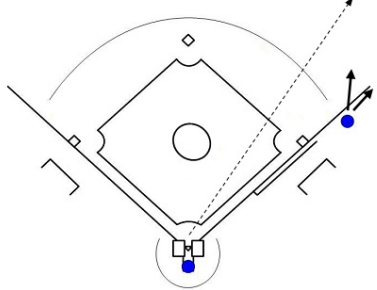
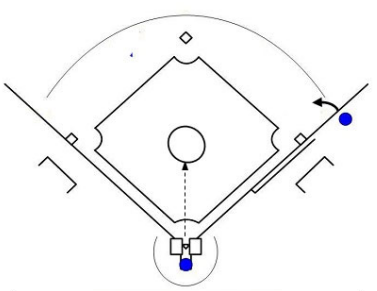
- The initial starting positions of the BASE UMPIRE are based on the highest percentage and probability of plays on the bases for having the base umpire in the best position for any plays that may develop.
- The understanding of fly ball responsibilities and field mechanics of the BASE UMPIRE are critical to having the umpire in the correct position for any plays that may develop.
- The base umpire has no responsibilities on a fly ball either to the infield or outfield unless he deems it to be a trouble ball.
- Creating an angle is more important than gaining distance on any play.

Plate Umpire

- The PLATE UMPIRE - has **ALL FLY BALL** responsibilities, infield, and outfield. (Exception: base umpire covering **TROUBLE BALLS**).
- Trouble Ball is any ball hit close to the RF fair/foul line or any hit that you decide may go close to a boundary line
- Should the base umpire go out on a trouble ball the plate umpire has responsibilities for all **PLAYS** at bases and the responsibilities for **TOUCHING** of bases by any runner.

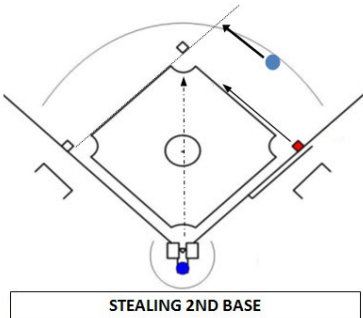
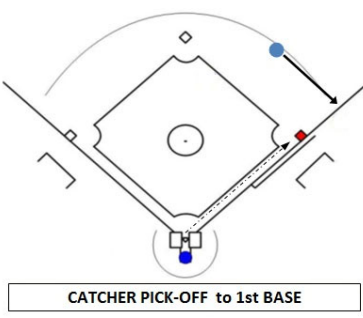
Base Umpire – “A” Position

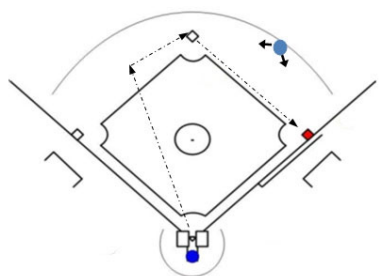
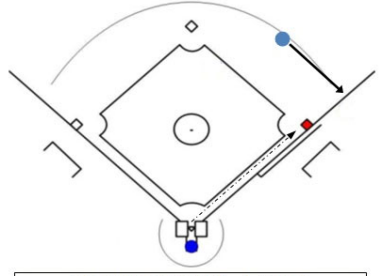
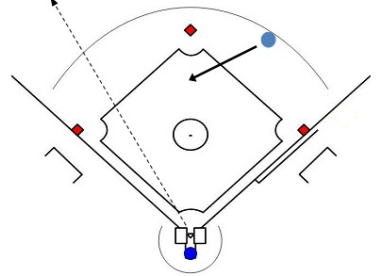
Fundamentals of Base Umpiring on a 60' Diamond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim is to always have the ball and the runners in front of the base umpire. • Ball goes outside, base umpire goes inside. • Ball stays inside, base umpire stays outside
Position “A” Responsibilities No Runners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fly Balls and Line Drives to the outfield are the responsibility of the Plate umpire unless a trouble ball. Pause, Read, React (Pg.29) • Fair/ Foul • Check Swing • Any Plays at 1st Base • If ball goes out of the infield, umpire hustles and pivots infield. • If ball is overthrown past the base, umpire hustles and pivots infield.
Possible Situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base Hit to the outfield – Base umpire comes in and takes responsibility for the runner. • Rundowns • Fly Balls to the infield – Plate umpires' responsibility for the call • Swipe Tag at 1st Base • Interference / Obstruction

 <p>Ball Hit to Outfield</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ball goes to the outfield • Hustle in and pivot • Pick up the Batter -Runner and observes the touch at 1st Base
 <p>Ball Hit to Outfield - TROUBLE BALL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a Trouble Ball situation? • Possible FAIR / FOUL • Two or more fielders converging (possible collision) • Centre Fielder or Right Fielder running hard in (shoe lacer) or hard back (to the fence) • Right Fielder going hard to their left
 <p>Ball Hit Inside the Infield</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ball stays on the infield • Umpire stays outside • Moves to position themselves for the play • Have proper angle and distance • 15' - 18' from the base • 90 degrees to the throw • Overthrow - hustle inside

Base Umpire – “B” Position

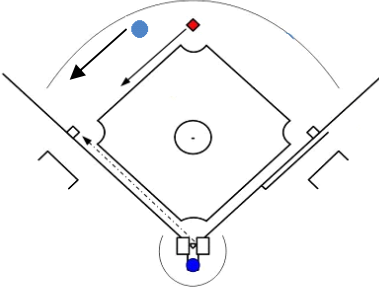
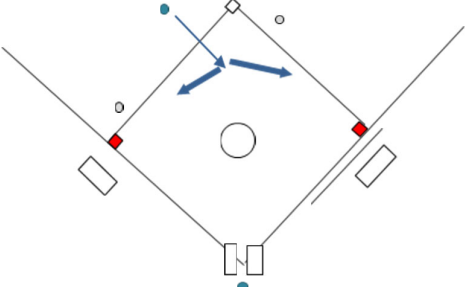
Position “B”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always based on the normal fielding position of the second baseman. Halfway between first base and second base, no closer than 25 feet towards first base. 6 feet behind the second baseman at normal fielding depth, approx. 20-25 feet from 1st-2nd base line extended. NOTE: If the little league diamond (60 foot) is set up on a 90-foot diamond, and the base umpire is on the dirt area of the diamond, then the umpire would be positioned to deep and should move onto the grass area. Second baseman playing in: Maintain normal starting position. Second baseman playing back: Adjust not to be in front of second baseman. Second baseman playing left or right - halfway between first base and second base.
One or more runners on base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observing runners on all bases in relation to (Runners Leaving Early Pg.39,40) All responsibilities as per UDP (A Position)
Catcher Pick Off catcher to 1 st base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move parallel to the 1st -2nd base line toward the 1st base foul line.
Runner at 1 st base stealing 2 nd base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move parallel to the 1st -2nd base line toward the 3rd -2nd base line extended.
Play at 1 st base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drop step backward with the left foot.
Double Play Double through 2 nd base to 1 st base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two moves in the one position to see both plays. (No movement toward any base) Drop step backward with right foot - play at 2nd base. Drop step backward with left foot - play at 1st base. NOTE: While drop stepping towards 1st base; continue observing 2nd base for any drop ball or interference.
Double Play Reverse double 1 st base to 2 nd base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two moves in the one position to see both plays. (No movement toward any base) Drop step backward with left foot - play at 1st base. Drop step backward with right foot - play at 2nd base
Fly Balls to the Outfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hustle into working area between the mound and 2nd base. Do not interfere with or obstruct runner from 1st base. If required, cross well in front of R1 going to 2nd, or wait until R1 has passed. Base umpire has normal TAG-UP responsibilities; this may change the initial working area in the infield.
Fly Balls Infield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold position and wait for any plays to develop.

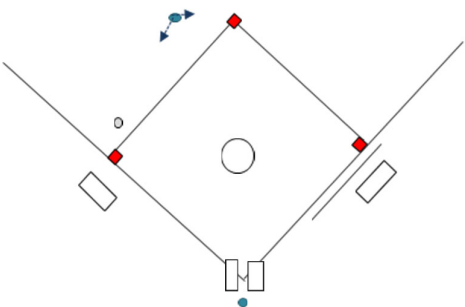
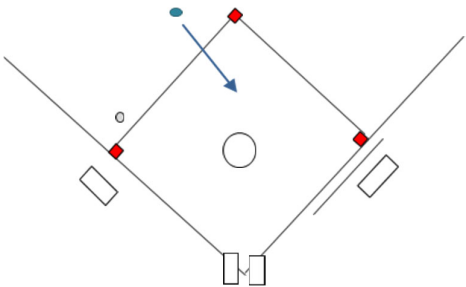
Infield Fly Calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The base umpire can call infield fly calls that are not the sole responsibility of the plate umpire. Because the infield fly call is not a part of the fly ball responsibility, the base does not adjudicate on the validity of the catch/no catch play.
Possible situations you may also need to cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st to 3rd Responsibility Swipe Tags Rundowns Interference / Obstruction
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Base Umpire has no responsibilities for fly ball calls (exception - Trouble Ball). Base umpire must see the initial contact with a fly ball and fielder to adjudicate on runners tagging legally. Ball goes outside, umpire goes inside. Ball stays inside, umpire stays outside. Initial starting position is very important. Double plays, drop steps.
 <p>STEALING 2ND BASE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move parallel to the 1st to 2nd base line Move toward the 3rd to 2nd base line extended Controlled stop for the play at the base Overthrow - hustle inside
 <p>CATCHER PICK-OFF to 1st BASE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move parallel to the 1st to 2nd base line Move toward the 1st base foul line Controlled stop for the play at the base Overthrow - hustle inside

 <p>PLAYS at 2nd and 1st BASES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays at 2nd and/or at 1st base • Double play through 2ND to 1ST • Drop step with right leg then drop step with left leg • move lower body first, observe release of ball and possible interference with eyes • Single plays at bases - • Drop step as required
 <p>CATCHER PICK-OFF to 1st BASE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move toward Home Plate to increase angle • Controlled stop for play at the base
 <p>BALL HIT to the OUTFIELD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ball goes outside • Umpire goes inside • Hustle into working area and pick up Runner's • Fly ball - Base Umpire is NOT RESPONSIBLE for Catch / No Catch • Must pivot and pick up ball for 1st touch by a fielder for responsibilities with seeing runner's tag-up if play.

Base Umpire – “C” Position

Position “C”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always based on the normal fielding position of the shortstop. Two to three steps behind and two to three steps to the left of the shortstop. If shortstop is crowding 2nd base position yourself to the right but no more than halfway between 2nd and 3rd. Seeing the plate from over the left shoulder of the shortstop, squared to home plate. Shortstop playing in: Maintain normal starting position. Shortstop playing back: Adjust but do not be in front of the second baseman. Shortstop playing left or right adjust accordingly.
Runners on Bases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observing runners on all bases in relation to (Runners Leaving Early Pg.39,40) All responsibilities as per UDP (A & B Position)
Catchers Pick Off to 2 nd or 3 rd Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move parallel to the 2nd -3rd Base line toward the throw
Runner at 2 nd base stealing 3 rd base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move towards the 3rd Base line at a slight angle. NOT directly to the base, this would give you a bad angle, one that is looking at the rear end of the play.
Play at 2 nd base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drop step to read the play.
Ground Balls to the Infield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold position and wait for the play to develop. Move to the base keeping a good angle on the play.
Position with Runners at 3 rd Base, 1 st -3 rd Base or 1 st 2 nd 3 rd Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always based on the normal fielding position of the shortstop. Two to three steps behind and two to three steps to the left of the shortstop. If shortstop is crowding 2nd base position yourself to the right but no more than halfway between 2nd and 3rd. Seeing the plate from over the left shoulder of the shortstop, squared to home plate. Shortstop playing in: Maintain normal starting position. Shortstop playing back: Adjust but do not be in front of the second baseman. Shortstop playing left or right adjust accordingly.
Fly Balls to the Outfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hustle into working area behind the mound and in front of 2nd base. Do not interfere with or obstruct any runners. If possible cross well in front or wait until they have passed. Base umpire has normal TAG-UP responsibilities; this may change the initial working area in the infield.

Fly Balls Infield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold position and wait for any plays to develop.
Infield Fly Calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The base umpire can call infield fly calls they are not the sole responsibility of the plate umpire.
Possible situations you may also need to cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pick Offs at 2nd and 3rd by the catcher Time Plays Swipe Tags Rundowns Interference / Obstruction
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Base Umpire has no responsibilities for fly ball calls (exception - Trouble Ball). Base umpire must see the initial contact with a fly ball and fielder to adjudicate on runners tagging legally. Ball goes outside, umpire goes inside Ball stays inside, umpire stays outside. Initial starting position is very important. Double plays, drop steps.
 <p>STEALING 3RD BASE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move parallel to the 2nd 3rd base line Move toward the 3rd base line Controlled stop for the play at the base Overthrow - hustle inside and await further play
 <p>Ground Ball to the outfield</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hustle infield - observe Watch the runner's glance at ball Step to base as required for a play

 <p>Plays at 2nd or 3rd Base & Pick Offs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays at 3rd, or at 2nd base • Possible ball to the infield. • Drop step if play at 2nd base • Move towards 3rd base may only get a drop step in • Move lower body first, observe release of ball and possible interference with eyes • Single plays at bases - Drop step as required
 <p>Ball hit to the Outfield</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ball goes outside • Umpire goes inside • Hustle into working area and pick up Runner's • Fly ball - Base Umpire is NOT RESPONSIBLE for Catch / No Catch Must pivot and pick up ball for 1st touch by a fielder for responsibilities with seeing runner's tag-up if play. • Plate umpire will observe and wait for any possible plays at home.

GOOD TIMING WILL KEEP YOU OUT OF TROUBLE

BAD TIMING WILL GET YOU INTO TROUBLE

The PAUSE READ REACT Technique

When a fly ball or line drive is hit to the outfield, that could possibly be a "trouble ball," the base umpire must determine whether he/she should go out on the ball. To make this decision, the base umpire should use a procedure called the pause read-react technique. In this technique, after the ball has been batted the base umpire will hesitate momentarily ("pause"), take his/her eye off the ball, and focus his/her attention on the reactions of the outfielder ("read"). The outfielder's reactions will then tell the base umpire whether he/she should go out on the ball ("react"). In other words, by the base umpire hesitating momentarily and taking his/her eye off the ball so as to "key" off the outfielders, he/she will be able to tell if the play looks like "trouble," indicating that he/she should go out on the ball. (By "trouble" we mean balls such as fair/foul decisions down the right field line, home runs, balls off the outfield wall, diving catches by the outfielder, catches at the warning track or at the wall, catches made by the outfielder with his/her back towards the infield, catches made by the outfielder below his/her waist on a full run, three players converging on a fly ball, etc.) Again, by the base umpire watching for the outfielder's reactions, he/she will be able to tell if there is a possibility of "trouble" on a particular fly ball or line drive, thereby indicating that he/she should go out on the ball.

Specifically, the base umpire should be looking for any of the following four reactions from the outfielders, anyone of which would indicate that he/she should go out on the ball:

- (1) The outfielder is running hard in towards the infield as though he/she is going to make the catch on a dead run (or as though he/she will dive to make the catch). (In addition to this, the infielders will usually be yelling "in, in, in!" on such a play.) This would be an indication that the base umpire should go out on the ball.
- (2) The outfielder has turned his/her back to the infield and is running towards the outfield wall with his/her back to the infield. This is another indication that the base umpire should immediately go out on the ball.
- (3) Three fielders (for example, the centre fielder, right fielder, and 2nd baseman) are all converging on the ball, and it appears that anyone of the three might catch the ball. This again is another indication that the base umpire should go out.
- (4) The right fielder is running towards the right field line (i.e., towards his/her left), and it appears that a fair/foul decision may have to be made on the line. (Note that a fair/foul decision should be made any time the ball drops, or is initially touched, within approximately 20 feet of the foul line.) Again, this would be another indication that the base umpire should go out (only when the base umpire is in the A position).

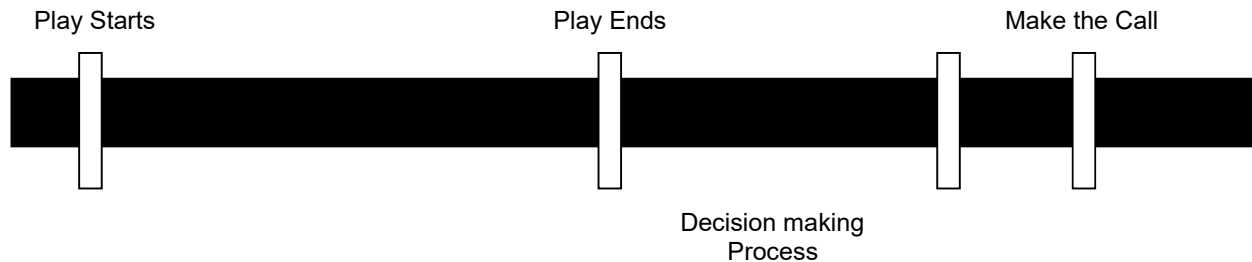
By the base umpire hesitating momentarily, taking his/her eye off the ball, zeroing in on the reactions of the outfielders, and watching for the movements described above, he/she will gain a very good indication of whether he/she should go out on a ball with no one on.

Should the base umpire observe anyone of the four preceding keys which would indicate he/she should go out on a ball, he/she would communicate to the plate umpire that he/she is going out by shouting at his/her partner, "Going out" or "I'm going out!" He/she would then run to the outfield, getting the best possible distance and angle for the play. The base umpire should slow his/her run down to a virtual stop as he/she feels the play is about to occur. Moreover, should the ball require a Fair/foul decision down the right field line, the base umpire must make sure he/she is completely stopped and set for this particular call. (The same would be true for a home run decision, particularly if it were a home run call close to the right field foul pole.) In other words, if the decision is a fair/foul decision down the right field line (or a fair/foul home run decision), the base umpire must be certain he/she comes to a complete stop and set while straddling the foul line when observing the play.

On a fly ball or line drive which will be fielded near the foul line the base umpire should indicate fair or foul by pointing in the appropriate direction the moment the ball is touched by the fielder. Then, after the fair/foul indication has been made, the umpire will wait for the catch or no catch to occur and signal that (when needed). Umpires should remember-; **Fair/foul first, then catch/no catch.**

Timing – How it can get you into trouble or keep you out of it

- Q. At what point in time during a play, does the Umpire make the call?
- Q. At what point in time during a play, does the Umpire make the decision regarding that play?



- The Umpire must wait until the play is completed, before he can start to evaluate what has transpired during the play, and then he can make his decision.
- In evaluating the result of the play, the Umpire has to ensure that all of the necessary criteria have been met (by the respective players.)
- E.g.: Did the runner reach the base, before the fielder received the ball?
- E.g.: Did the fielder have firm and secure possession of the ball, before the runner reached the base?
- E.g.: Did the hitter check his swing, or not?
- E.g.: Could the runner still reach the base from where he broke up the double play?
- Proper timing comes from allowing the play to be completed before the Umpire begins to evaluate all the aspects of that play. Then, when he has processed what he has seen, and or heard, he can make his decision, and then effect the signal.

The play must be completed, before the umpire can commence deciding the outcome of the play.

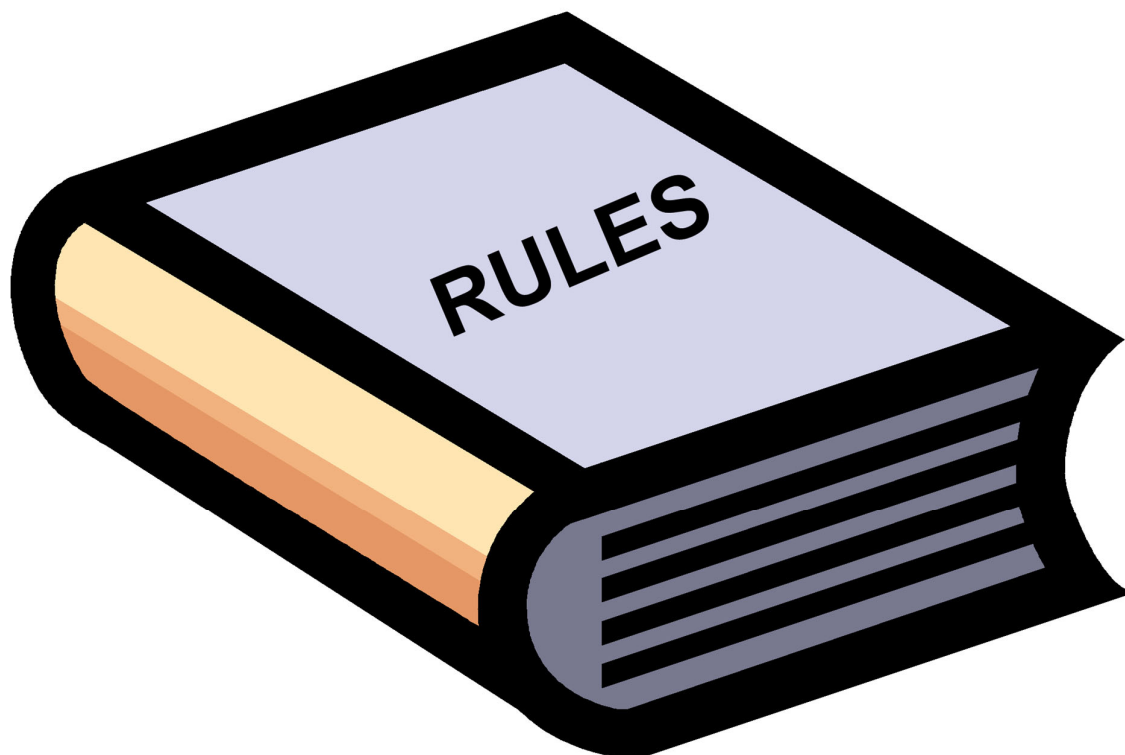


Community Umpires Manual



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RULES



Award of Bases Rule 7.05

When the ball is over-thrown it mostly goes out of play, this is an award of bases.

Over-throw or ball into dead territory can be divided into two categories:

(1) Pitcher		
Wild pitch	Ball out of play	One Base
Pass ball	Ball out of play	One Base
Wild throw	Ball out of play	One Base

A pitcher, whilst not in contact with the rubber, is considered an infielder.

(2) Fielder

Infielder: First play to retire a runner- ball thrown out of play - two bases from time of pitch.

Infielder: Second play to retire a runner - ball thrown out of play – two bases from time of throw.

The first play must be an attempted play not a feint.

Outfielder: Throws or knocks bounding ball out of play - two bases from time of throw or play.

Deflects fair fly ball over home run fence into foul territory - two bases: fair territory - four bases.

Catcher: to field a wild pitch or pass ball subsequently knocks the ball into dead territory - two bases from time of pitch; uses his mask to field such ball - one base from time of pitch.

Thrown Glove: Hitting fair ball thrown ball - two bases; batted ball-three bases.

The award of bases will be from the base last legally touched.

Catch – No Catch Rule 2.0

When a fielder makes a difficult play on a fly ball, there frequently is a question about whether the fielder catches that ball. There are a few simple rules to follow on the catch - no catch call.

Some people think that a player has caught the ball as soon as he grabs it. This is not the case.

The fielder must have secure possession and complete control of the ball for the umpire to rule that the ball was caught. This includes a thrown ball as well as batted ball for the completion of an out.

If a fielder drops the ball as the result of a collision or fall, he has not caught the ball. The fielder also cannot catch the ball after it touches the fence, umpire, or an offensive player.

If the fielder drops the ball while in the process of throwing, it's still a catch because the player was starting his next action after the catch.

Release of the ball is to be voluntary and intentional.

Fair Foul - Rule 2.0

After "strike-ball" calls, decisions on fair-foul can be the most important calls to be made because no plays can be made until it is confirmed that the batted ball is fair -if it is foul, the ball becomes dead.

The rulebook is quite explicit on Fair and Foul. Under Rule 2.00 (Definitions) we find descriptions, firstly of fair and foul territory, and then of fair and foul balls consider the definitions:

Fair Territory - Rule 2.0

Note that the foul lines and first and third bases are in fair territory, also included is the base of the home run fence and upwards e.g., foul poles.

Foul Territory – Rule 2.0

Simply that part of the ground not in fair territory - the important thing therefore is to know what Fair Territory is - everything else is foul.

Fair Ball – Rule 2.0

- Batted ball
- Settles on fair territory
- Is on or over fair ground when it bounces through the infield to the outfield
- Hits a base
- First falls on fair ground in the outfield on or beyond first or third base.
- Touches a player or umpire on or over fair ground
- Goes out of playing field in flight whilst over fair territory i.e. home run.

Foul Ball – Rule 2.0

- Batted ball
- Ball settles on foul territory between home and first or third base
- Bounding ball past first or third bases in foul territory
- Ball first falls on foul territory in the outfield beyond first or third base.
- Ball touches a fielder or umpire on or over foul territory
- Ball touches a foreign object on or over foul territory.

NOTE: Foreign objects are specifically mentioned in relation to foul territory thus a ball hitting any object which is foreign to the ground immediately becomes foul. This does not apply to fair territory between first and third bases, therefore a ball hitting a foreign object between first and third bases on or over fair territory and subsequently rolling into foul territory is a foul ball.

Force / Tag Plays – Rule 2.0

On occasions players fail to understand the difference between force and tag plays (particularly in junior grades). If an umpire does not know the difference, confusion and arguments may arise, detracting from the umpire's performance. Therefore, we need to have the relevant rules and potential situations clear in our minds.

Refer to Rule 2.00 - Definitions for Force Play and Tag.

FORCE PLAY

The essential point is that the batter becoming a runner creates a force play. There is always a force play at first base and at bases to which runners are forced to advance due to the batter becoming a runner.

TAG PLAY

Note that the term as defined can have two meanings:

- (1) Tag the base (i.e., touches the base with any part of the body whilst holding the ball securely in hand or glove). This is the method of obtaining an out on a force play.
- (2) Touch the runner (je, touch (tag) the runner with the ball) with the hand holding the ball or with the glove containing the ball securely.

NOTE: The base can be tagged with the bare hand whilst the ball is in the glove, but the runner must be tagged with the hand or glove which contains the ball.

By understanding these definitions, we can now apply the relevant rules to various situations which arise. For e.g., Rule 4.09(a) A run is not to score when the third out is batter who is adjudged to be out before touching first base or before any runner is out.

Example: Runners on third and first bases (one out) - Batter hits to third baseman who fumbles the ball, then throws to second baseman (runner forced out at second base) and second baseman relays to first baseman (batter out at first). In the meantime, the runner from third base has crossed plate well before the third out. Run does not score.

General rules:

- (1) When a following runner is put out, the force on a preceding runner is removed.
- (2) When the batter or runner is put out, the force on all other runners is removed.

Reference can be made to the notes following Rule 4.09 for further examples.

5.09: Ball becomes dead, and in some circumstances, runners 'if forced' advance (e.g., batter hit by pitched ball) batted ball touching umpire.

6.05(j): After a third strike (is not caught), or after hitting a fair ball, a batter is out when he, she or first base is tagged before touching first base.

7.01: Runner is entitled to occupy a base until forced to vacate it by another runner legally entitled to that base.

7.03: Two runners occupying a base - the following runner is out when tagged.

7.04(b): Each runner advances without liability to be put out when the batter's advance without liability to be put out forces runners to vacate their bases.

NOTE: A runner advances past the base at his / her peril and can be tagged. If runner misses the base, he / she or the missed base may be tagged.

7.08(c): Runner is out when tagged whilst off the base.

7.08(e): Runner out when fails to reach the next base before a fielder tags him / her or the base after being forced by the batter becoming a runner.

NOTE: If a following runner is put out by a force play the preceding runner must be tagged. Note that the force is removed when the runner touches the base to which he / she is forced (i.e., if runner over-runs second or third base on a force, he / she can be tagged. The rule states that if a runner reaches and passes a base to which he/she is forced and then retreats past the base, the force is reinstated.

Example: Runner on first base steals 2nd base, but batter hits high fly to short left field. Runner reaches second base and realises that left field may catch the ball, so runner goes back over second base and heads towards first base. Left field drops the ball in a diving attempt but recovers and throws to second base where the base is tagged before the runner can retouch. Decision is 'out' because the force situation was reinstated.

7.08(j): After over-running first base, a runner can be tagged if attempting to go to second base.

7.10: Appeal plays require the defensive team to generally either tag the runner off his/her base or tag the base. Appeal plays are not force plays, but rule 7.12 gives guidance on whether runs score or not when appeal plays results in the third out. If a preceding runner is the third out, runs scored by following runners do not count. If the third out was a force play, then no runners can score.

Example: With two out, runners on second and third bases, batter hits safely to deep centre field and stands up on second base, but he / she missed first base and is called out on appeal for third out. No runs score because third out was a force play.

Infield Fly – Rule 2.0

An INFIELD FLY - is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive nor an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied, before two are out. The pitcher, catcher and any outfielder who station themselves in the infield on the play shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule.

When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an Infield Fly, the umpire shall immediately declare "Infield Fly" for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near the baselines, the umpire shall declare "Infield Fly, if Fair." The ball is alive, and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on any fly ball. If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul. If a declared Infield Fly is allowed to fall untouched to the ground, and bounces foul before passing first or third base, it is a foul ball. If a declared Infield Fly falls untouched to the ground outside the baseline, and bounces fair before passing first or third base, it is an Infield Fly

On the Infield Fly rule, the umpire is to rule whether the ball could ordinarily have been handled by an infielder - not by some arbitrary limitation such as the grass, or the baselines. The umpire must rule also that a ball is an Infield Fly, even if handled by an outfielder, if, in the umpire's judgment, the ball could have been as easily handled by an infielder. The Infield Fly is in no sense to be considered an appeal play. The umpire's judgment must govern, and the decision should be made immediately. When an Infield Fly rule is called, runners may advance at their own risk. If on an Infield Fly rule, the infielder intentionally drops a fair ball the ball remains in play despite the provisions of Rule 6.05 (L). The Infield Fly rule takes precedence.

A STRIKE - is a legal pitch when so called by the umpire, which-

- (a) Is struck at by the batter and missed.
- (b) Is not struck at, if any part of the ball passes through any part of the strike zone.
- (c) Is fouled by the batter when the batter has less than two strikes.
- (d) Is bunted foul.
- (e) Touches the batter as the batter strikes at it.
- (f) Touches the batter in flight in the strike zone; or
- (g) Becomes a foul tip.

Interference – Rule 2.0

What is interference?

To OBSTRUCT, IMPEDE, HINDER or CONFUSE. There does not have to be contact.

There are three types of interference that you may have to rule on:

- 1. Offensive
- 2. Defensive
- 3. Umpires

1 Offensive interference is an act by the team at bat which OBSTRUCTS, IMPEDES, HINDERS, CONFUSES any fielder attempting to make a play.

If a batter or runner is declared out for interference, all other runners return to last legally touched base unless otherwise stated. (Rule 7.09)

2 Defensive interference is an act by a fielder which hinders or prevents a batter from hitting a pitch. (Rules 6.08(c), 7.04(d) and 7.07)

3 Umpires' interference

- (a) Plate umpire interferes with a catcher's throw (UNLESS the catcher achieved what he set out to do - in which case the interference is ignored). (Rule 5.09(b))
- (b) A fair ball touches an umpire on fair territory before passing an infielder. (Pitcher excepted). (Rule 5.09(f), 6.08(d))

Penalty?

On any interference the ball is dead

The ball is dead if you are going to invoke the penalty. BUT there are interferences which do not immediately make the ball dead, (In some cases the ball will be a delayed dead ball). e.g., catcher interferes with the batter, but if the batter and all runners advance at least one base - interference is nullified. Interference need not be intentional.

Who can cause interference	With	When
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Batter • Catcher • Coach • Bat boy • Fielders • Runners • Spectators • Umpires • Groundsmen • Officials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Batted ball (Fair or Foul) • Thrown ball • Fielder attempting to field • Fielder attempting to catch • Fielder attempting to throw • Batter • Catcher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any time when the ball is in play

1. Unless otherwise stated the ball is dead immediately.
2. Unless the Rule states, the interference need not be intentional.
3. Unless the Rule states fair batted ball, it may occur on a fair or foul ball.
4. If a runner is hit by a fair batted ball, the runner is out unless it first was touched by a fielder or passes an infielder other than the pitcher.
5. If the ball hits an umpire, it is dead unless -
 - (a) Passes a fielder (other than pitcher)
 - (b) Touched by a fielder (including pitcher)

NOTE: Thrown ball touching an umpire is not interference and the ball remains in play.
6. Contact is not necessary to constitute interference - important words are, "If in the judgment of the umpire"
7. If a fielder is hindered or impeded in making a play - that is sufficient.
8. Players and coaches must vacate all space needed by a fielder to make a play on a batted or thrown ball. (This includes dug-outs - benches).
9. When a play is being made at the home plate, the batter must move out of the batter's box so as not to interfere with a play.
10. Thrown ball touching a runner - no interference UNLESS intentional.
11. Runner fails to avoid fielder - runner out, intention not needed.
12. Batters' interference with catcher - if the catcher achieves what he set out to do (e.g., runner put out,) it is not interference and ball remains in play. Other runners may advance.
13. No runners advance on any interference unless forced by batter's advance to first base.

Obstruction – Rule 2.0

Definition

Obstruction is the act of a fielder who, whilst not in possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding the ball, impedes the progress of any runner.

Does not have to be intentional.

If a fielder is not in the act of fielding the ball, either batted or thrown, he cannot impede the progress of any runner.

Obstruction is an act committed by any member of the defensive team on the offensive team's runners. It is entirely up to the judgment of the umpire if obstruction has occurred. The umpire must decide if a fielder is in the act of fielding a ball or if a fielder has obstructed the progress of a runner.

Penalties imposed?

1.(Rule 7.06a) If a play is being made on an obstructed runner, the umpire calls "Time" and awards the obstructed runner the next base, and all other runners the bases they would have reached (in his judgment) if there had been no obstruction.

If the batter-runner is obstructed before he reaches first base, the ball is dead and he is awarded first base unless his hit is a fly catch in which case the B/R is OUT on the fly catch.'(The obstruction has no effect on the catch, as he was always out on the catch.)

Any preceding runners forced to advance by the award of bases as the penalty for obstruction, shall advance without liability to be put out.

If the ball is in flight when an obstruction occurs, and the ball is thrown out of play (e.g., trapped runner plays) then all runners are awarded the penalty for wild throw (two bases) from the base last legally touched at the time of the obstruction, and the obstruction is ignored.

2. (Rule 7.06b) if no play is being made on the obstructed runner, then play shall proceed until no further action is possible. The umpire shall call "Time" and impose penalties to nullify the obstruction.

The ball is not dead and if the runner advances beyond the base which the umpire would have awarded, he does so at his own risk and is liable to be tagged out.

Play or Attempted Play – Rule 2.0

A play or attempted play [Official Rules 7.05(g) and 7.10] shall be interpreted as a legitimate effort by a defensive player who has possession of the ball to retire a runner.

This may include an actual attempt to tag a runner, a fielder running toward a base with the ball to force or tag a runner, or throwing to another defensive player in an attempt to retire a runner. A fake or a feint to throw shall not be deemed a play or an attempted play. (The fact that the runner is not out is not relevant.)

A Play or Attempted Play

1. Runners on 1st and 2nd ground ball to the shortstop who makes a swipe at the runner from 2nd but misses and then throws beyond 1st base into the stands. The swipe by the shortstop is an attempted play; thus the throw to first is not the first play by an infielder (even though it is the first throw), and the proper award of bases would be from the time of the throw.

2. Runner on 1st and ground ball to 2nd baseman who flips ball to short to get runner from 1st but who is safe. Shortstop throws beyond 1st into the stands. The flip by the 2nd baseman to the shortstop is an attempted play, even though unsuccessful. The throw to 1st is not the first play by an infielder and thus runner should be placed from the time of the throw. Runner who was on 1st would score and batter-runner would be placed at second.

Not a Play or Attempted Play

1. A fake or a feint to a base but not actually throwing, even though the fielder draws his arm back to feint a throw.
2. A pitcher feinting a throw toward a base to hold or check a runner's progress to complete an appeal play at another base.
3. Runner on 1st, ground ball to the shortstop, who starts to flip the ball to the 2nd baseman but doesn't and throws the ball beyond 1st and out of play. The feint to the 2nd baseman is not considered a play or attempted play and award of bases is from the time of the pitch.
4. Runners on 1st and 3rd, runner on 1st stealing as ground ball is hit to shortstop. The short stop feints a throw home but does not throw - instead throws to 1st and into the stands; during this the runner from 1st has rounded 2nd base. The feint by the shortstop toward home is not considered a play or attempted play; thus, his throw beyond 1st is the first play by an infielder and awards should be made from the time of the pitch.

Runners Leaving Early – Rule 7.13

Understanding the rule, interpretations, and the fundamentals of “Runners Leaving Early” are important.

Fundamentals of Rule 7.13:

“Runner left early” is a term used by umpires, managers, and players to indicate that the runner was not in contact with the base before the pitched ball reached the batter.

- The catcher is “ready to receive delivery” of the pitch when they have their mask on and are facing the pitcher. It is not necessary for them to be in a squat position, they may be standing.
- “Reached the batter”, is defined as the closest side of the batter to the pitcher.
- Until the pitcher and catcher have satisfied the above comments of this rule, the runners are free to advance without violation.
- When a runner is legitimately off their base, the pitcher cannot stop the runner by taking the ball back to the pitcher's plate.
- If, in the umpire's judgement, the manager is instructing their players to leave early intentionally, the manager may be warned and/or ejected from the game for deliberately violating the rules.
- A runner who has their initial set-up with the back foot behind the base and the front foot in contact with the base is not considered as a “running start” if their contact with the base is legally in accordance with the rule.
- The umpire must be positive that the runner left early to make the “Left Early” call.
- The violation by one base runner shall affect all other base runners.

Definition Rule 7.13:

Little League (Majors) and Minors League Baseball: When a pitcher is in contact with the pitcher's plate and in possession of the ball and the catcher is in the catcher's box ready to receive delivery of the ball, base runners shall not leave their bases until the ball has been delivered and has reached the batter.

Rule 7.13 Has three (3) sections; each section determines which penalty the umpire shall apply.

- Pitched ball not hit.
- Pitched ball hit to the outfield.
- Ball hit or Play staying in the infield.

Rule 7.13 (a):

When a base runner leaves the base before the pitched ball reached the batter and the batter does not hit the ball, the runner is permitted to continue. If a play is made on the runner and the runner is out, the out stands. If said runner reaches safely the base to which the runner is advancing, that runner must be returned to the base occupied before the pitch was made, and no out results.

KEY Phrase in Rule 7.13 (a).

- The batter does not hit the ball.

Applying Penalty.

Rule 7.13 (a) will be enforced after all play has stopped. If the batter does not hit the ball, umpires will allow the play to continue until all play has been completed.

Any outs on the play will stand.

All other runner's will return to their original base or bases.

Comment:

Refers to an individual runner and any actions that take place with that runner, however, it does not matter which runner leaves early, the violation affects each base runner

Example:

Runners on first and third, runner on first leaves early, runner thrown out at second base, runner at third base runs home on the throw.

Approved Ruling:

"Time" is called, runner from first thrown out at second base, OUT stands, runner from third sent back to third.

Rule 7.13 (b):

When a base runner leaves the base before the pitched ball has reached the batter and the batter hits the ball, the base runner or runners are permitted to continue. If a play is made and the runner or runners are put out, the out or outs will stand. If not put out, the runner or runners must return to the original base or bases or to the unoccupied base nearest the one that was left; In no event shall the batter advance beyond first base on a single or error, second base on a double or third base on a triple. The umpire-in-chief shall determine the base value of the hit ball.

KEY Phrases in Rule 7.13 (b).

- the batter hits the ball
- the runner or runners must return to the original base or bases or to the unoccupied base nearest the one that was left

Note that the umpire determines the base value of the hit ball, not the scorekeeper. This is a judgement decision by the umpire and cannot be protested.

Applying Penalty Rule 7.13 (b):

Umpires will allow the play to continue until all plays have been completed. Any outs on the play will stand. The batter may not advance beyond first base on a single or an error, including two-base errors, obstruction or any other award they may receive. If at the end of the entire play, an open base exists, the runners must return to the original base or to the one nearest to the one that was left early.

Example 1: ("The Right Call" Casebook – Play 7-18) (Example 1 only)

Bases loaded and any one of the runners leaves their base early, batter hits a clean triple, but is thrown out at the plate trying to score after the overthrow at third.

Approved Ruling 1:

"Time" is called, the out stands. Return all runners to first, second and third.

Example 2:

Runners on first and second bases, any one of the runners leaves their base early, batter hits the ball to right field, umpires' judgement (single base hit), right fielder errors and ball goes to fence, Batter Runner advances to third base.

Approved Ruling 2:

"Time" is called, Batter returns to first, runner from first returns to second and runner from second base returns to third.

Rule 7.13 (c):

When any base runner leaves before the pitched ball has reached the batter and the batter bunts or hits a ball within the infield, no run shall be allowed to score. If three runners were on the bases and the batter reaches first base safely, each runner shall advance to the base beyond the one they occupied at the start of the play except the runner who occupied third base, that runner shall be removed from the base without a run being scored.

EXCEPTION: If at the conclusion of the play there is an open base, Rules 7.13 (a) and (b) will apply.

KEY phrases in Rule 7.13 (c):

- **The batter reaches first base safely**
- **The batter bunts or hits a ball within the infield, no run shall be allowed to score.**
- **(a) If three runners were on the bases and the batter reaches first base safely,**
- **(b) each runner shall advance to the base beyond the one they occupied at the start of the play,**
- **(c) except the runner who occupied third base, that runner shall be removed from the base without a run being scored. (Refer Note3 7.13c)**

Note 1: "The Right Call" Casebook – Play 7-19:

Bases loaded and any one of the runners leaves their base early. Ball hit to shortstop that goes through his/her legs onto the outfield grass.

RULING:

All runners advance safely. One run will score because the ball was not valued as an infield hit. Remember, the ball must stay in the infield to use Rule 7.13 (c).

If the batter-runner or any other base runner is put out on a play in which a runner left early, it may result in open base(s), in which case, runners will return.

APPROVED RULING:

"Third strike not caught", rule is included in the criteria of Rule 7.13 (c), as it is considered an infield play.

Note 2: Pitched Ball Thrown Out of Play

APPROVED RULING:

- *If a pitched ball is thrown out of play, in a "third strike not caught" situation.*
- *the batter is award first base.*
- *all runners shall also be award one base, even if, a runner left their base early.*
- *If there was a runner on third base at the time of the pitch, the runner from third shall score.*

The action of the pitched ball being thrown out of play penalizes the Defensive team and the award of bases because of such action, the call of "Runner Leaving Early" is nullified.

Note 3:

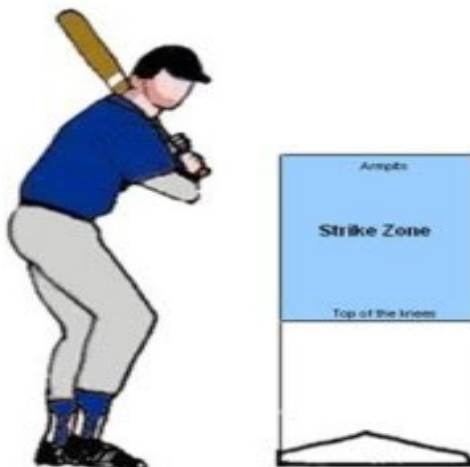
The logic behind Rule 7.13 (c) is as follows:

If the ball makes it to the outfield, all runners would normally be expected to advance one base safely, so in a bases loaded situation, one runner would score. In the same bases loaded situation, however, if the ball stayed within the infield, a runner leaving early may have prevented the defence from executing a force play at one of the bases, so no run will score.

The Little League Strike Zone: Rule 2.0

“The Strike Zone is that space over home plate which is **between the batter’s armpits and the top of the knees when the batter assumes a natural stance**”. The umpire shall determine the strike zone according to the batter’s usual stance when the batter swings at a pitch.

(Little League Baseball Official Regulations, Playing Rules and Policies Rule Book, for all divisions.)



Key factors in determining your strike zone for each game

- You should follow the Little League definition of the strike zone and make discretionary adjustments based on various factors to help keep the game moving and players engaged.

How and when to make strike zone adjustments during a game

- Personally, I don't like to lower or raise my strike zone too much in part because it's easier for others to spot vertical variations over the course of the game. Expanding the strike zone vertically (a bit above the armpits and below the top of knees) works with younger players. But make these adjustments earlier rather than later in a game.
- Conversely, you have much greater flexibility to expand or shrink your strike zone and have more room for error on the outside or inside of the plate where practically nobody can notice the difference. Expanding the strike zone horizontally (a bit further inside or outside of the plate) works great when you need to adjust the strike zone during a game.



Community Umpires Manual



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DUTY OF CARE / RISK ASSESSMENT



Duty of Care

There is a widespread misconception that the umpire is immune from legal liability, but an umpire who is responsible for supervising a sporting event and enforcing the rules could be found responsible for injuries suffered by a player at the hands of another. This could occur where the umpire has failed to penalise violent or dangerous behaviour that is in breach of the law or safety of the sport. The liability of an umpire will vary from sport to sport and will depend on the responsibilities placed on the umpire by the rules of the sport. An umpire has a duty not to inflict injury on a player by negligence, recklessness, or an intentional act.

Situations where an umpire may incur legal liability when injuries are suffered include:

- Failure to remove a participant who persistently breaches the rules or uses excessive violence.
- Failure to strictly enforce the safety rules designed to prevent injuries
- Failure to stop the event in adverse and life-threatening weather conditions.
- Failure to stop the event when safety of participants is threatened by a spectator(s).
- Failure to ensure that only authorised equipment is used.
- Failure to enforce safety guidelines, including blood and infectious diseases' policies.

The younger the participant the greater the responsibility for safety that is placed on the umpire. It is an umpire's duty to:

- enforce the rules.
- warn participants.
- anticipate reasonably foreseeable dangers; and
- control and properly supervise the game.

Infectious Diseases Policy

A. All participants with prior evidence of infectious diseases must first obtain confidential advice and clearance from a doctor prior to their participation in baseball.

B. No players will participate in any baseball game or continue to participate in any game for so long as such players:

- i. is bleeding, or
- ii. have blood on any part of their person or uniform

C. Players shall immediately, upon direction by an umpire, leave the playing field where such umpire is of the opinion that the players are bleeding or have blood on any part of their person or uniform. Upon being directed to leave the playing field, players shall not return or take any further part in any baseball game until and unless:

- i. the cause of any such bleeding has been abated and the bleeding has stopped
- ii. the injury is securely covered to the extent that no blood shall emanate there from
- iii. any blood-stained article of uniform has been removed and replaced
- iv. any blood on any part of a player's person has been thoroughly cleansed and removed

D. Club Responsibility: The following is an extract of the ABF rules pertaining to clubs.

- i. Those handling bleeding players must wear disposable rubber or plastic gloves. Resuscitation bags or disposable mouth-to-mouth devices must be available.
- ii. Spitting or urinating in dugouts or on the field is strictly prohibited.
- iii. All clothing, equipment and surfaces contaminated by blood must be treated as potentially infectious. Household bleach in a 1:10 solution may be used to wash contaminated areas. Clothing should be soaked in a bleach solution or disinfectant, depending on manufacturer's instructions.
- iv. Sharing of towels, razors face washers and drink containers is prohibited.
- v. All personnel working within baseball areas should be vaccinated against Hepatitis B.
- vi. All open cuts and abrasions must be reported to the coach, trainer, or team EO and treated immediately.

SOME NOTES TO HELP YOU



Game Day Preliminaries

So, you have been asked to "VOLUNTEER" to be the umpire for a game. What do you need to do?

- Confirm the age / grade of the game you have been asked to umpire.
- Confirm whether you will be required as a plate or base umpire.
- Confirm the venue / field, date, and time the game is to be played.
- Confirm if anyone will be assisting you.
- Confirm the availability of equipment, copy of rules bylaws that you may require
- Refresh or acquaint yourself with the rule's bylaws specific to the age/grade

Game Day

Arrival at the Field.

- Umpires should arrive at the field no later than 1 hour prior to the scheduled starting time of the game.
- Umpires should dress in a professional manner, Community Umpire shirt, as well all umpires are to wear shoes and socks.
- The umpire should realize that once he has arrived at the field he is there for an official duty and that it is not a time for fraternization with club members or officials.
- Umpires should be completely dressed and ready to take to the field a good 10 minutes prior to the schedule starting time just in case of any changes to the schedule.
- Both umpires should use an indicator during the game, and it is advisable that you carry a watch.

The Plate Meeting

- Start the meeting - Five minutes (5) before the game start time, be on time, better to be early.
- Positioning
Plate umpire stands behind the plate
Base umpire is infield
- Introductions - Introduce yourselves to the Coaches / Managers.
- Line-up Cards
Get home team line-up card- you are now in control of the field
Get the line-up card from the visiting team
Check the line-up cards:
 - Check for obvious errors
 - All positions are filled
 - Pitcher is listed
 - Any duplicate names are identified by an initial
 - Ensure duplicate copies are identical
 - Check that the coach at the plate meeting will be the person to talk too
 - Retain the original copies. This is now the official line-up
 - Give the coaches a copy of the opposition line-up.
- Game Balls
Make sure that you have sufficient supply for the game
- Playing Field
If you do not know the field, ask the home team if there are any issues with the field - resolve all issues before finishing the plate meeting - go over any ground rules – as the plate umpire you have the final decision on any disputed ground rules.
- Finish the meeting
-

Hints on How to Improve Your Game

Listening Skills

When a player or coach comes out to discuss or possibly argue a play; allow him to have his say. Listen calmly and without interruption. He will soon talk himself out if you do not add to the conversation. This will allow you time to collect your thoughts and then explain yourself properly.

Be Consistent

As bad as it may seem, teams would rather have umpires who are consistently bad than those who are inconsistent. Players can adjust to umpires who call strikes on all eye-high pitches, but they cannot adjust to those who call the pitch a strike one time and a ball the next. When an umpire is inconsistent, pitchers don't know how to pitch, and batters don't when to swing.

Hustle

You may misinterpret or misapply a rule you may even be out of position and blow a judgement call, but you should never fail to hustle. To err is human, to not hustle is inexcusable.

Keep Your Cool

When everyone else around you is losing their heads, **YOU MUST REMAIN CALM**, as the stress increases in any situation, your poise must increase accordingly for you to be able to control the game.

Hear Only What Needs to Be Heard

When you have a close play where a runner is called out, or if you call out a batter on strikes and he says something under his breath as he walks away, ignore it unless he uses a profanity that can be heard by others or gets personal in a way that questions your integrity. The umpire who must have the last word, or who has rabbit ears, will not be respected nor accepted. Some things are better off ignored:

Work With the Scorer

Make sure your signals are clear and your verbals loud enough for the scorer to hear so they do not have to continually ask "what was the call"

Use a Strong Voice

A good strong voice is essential in umpiring. The voice tone, pitch, and volume help to make calls more convincing; a voice that is clear, positive, and authoritative is an asset in communicating, talk slowly and use a slightly deeper voice when umpiring than you do in your everyday life.

Make the Signal Match the Type of Play

Use very basic conservative signals when plays are obvious~ to everyone. But, when a play is close and you need to be convincing, use strong, high-energy signals that are convincing and yet not embarrassing to the player involved.

Establish a Consistent Timing and Rhythm

Credibility is important in umpiring. Everything you do with your voice, facial expressions and body movements contributes to your credibility. If you change the timing or rhythm of your voice or offer some change in your signal which is perceived to be different than intended or desired, your call may have been correct, but it will be that much harder to sell. You must practice developing smooth timing and rhythm in your voice and signals, so they are the same on each pitch. A called third strike does, however, require a bigger call than one or two, but the timing must be the same.

Take Your Time and Get It Right

Calling a play quickly does not sell it. Getting good position, waiting for the play to complete itself, using a good voice and signal will sell the play it

Know the Rules and How to Use Them

Study the rules and become as expert as you can on them. Some umpires study the rulebook and then look for ways to put their newfound knowledge to use. They are looking for trouble, a blend of common-sense and rules knowledge makes for a good umpire.

Myths

The hands are part of the bat

A batter gets hit by a pitched ball, right on the hands. It is anatomically impossible for the batter's hands to be part of anything except his body.

If he swings at the pitch and the ball hits him on the hands it is a dead ball and it is a strike. Otherwise, he is awarded first and all other runners advance, if forced.

Tie goes to the runner

There are no ties on the ball field.

Umpires are permitted to call only safe or out, never 'it was a tie.' Either the runner beat the throw, or he didn't. If he did, safe, if not, out. If by some miraculous skill of visual activity, it can be determined that a tie did happen, then the runner did not beat the throw. He's out.

Overthrows

On overthrows, out of play, the runner gets the base he's going for plus one. There is no such award of bases. There are one base awards, two base awards, three base awards, and even four base awards, but not a one plus one. Overthrown balls result in an award of two bases for every runner.

So, if the runner on first takes off on a fly ball that is caught and then the ball is thrown out of play in attempt to retire him back at first. He is awarded third.

The runner who beats the throw to first must turn right

The runner who beats the throw to first must turn right after overrunning the base. Otherwise, he is out or can be put out. The foul line is just that. It is used to adjudicate fair/foul, nothing to do with the runner. Home plate and first are the only bases that a runner can legally overrun without being in jeopardy of being put out. Runners at first can turn any way they like after passing the base, just as there is no attempt made to go to second. **What is an attempt?** Simply put, it is physical movement in that direction, and steps taken with the feet. When this happens, the runner may be in jeopardy.

The batter cannot hit a pitch that bounces

On the contrary, if he hits it over the fence, it's a home run. What can't happen is that the pitch cannot be called anything but a ball if the batter doesn't swing at it. The only way it can be a strike is for the batter to swing and miss or to foul it off.

Fielders must get out of the way of runners

Partially correct. Generally, fielders are entitled to go after batted balls without interference from the base runners. If there is no batted ball in the area, fielders must take care not to obstruct the runners in any way, not by slowing them down, or making them alter direction, or make a wider turn. Fielders do have the right to field the ball, including charging in to get a favourable hop. The runners had better find a way to avoid the fielder, preferably by running behind the fielder. This is not running off the baseline! Runners establish their own baselines; they do not follow an imaginary straight line between the bases.

Runners have the right to run; fielders have the right to field, but, not at the same place at the same time. Otherwise, penalties have to be assessed.

If a ball is held 'long enough', it is a legal catch

How long is long enough? The length of time a ball is held is never a consideration in determining the legality of a catch.

The only factors that matter in determining whether a ball has been caught are that the fielder has control of both the ball and his body, and that the release of the ball is voluntary.

No fielder would deliberately collide with the ground, another fielder, or a fence. He had the collision because he was not in control of his body. If the ball comes out under these circumstances, no matter how long it had been held, there is no catch.

Interference must be intentional

Usually, the opposite is the case. Most interference is the result of undesired, accidental contact between the ball and an offensive player or between an offensive player and a defensive player. A lot of runners are hit by a batted ball while trying their hardest to avoid it.

If there is intent, then the umpire can call another runner out as well.

If a thrown ball hits the umpire, the ball is dead

In all cases, if an umpire is hit with a thrown ball, the play continues, and the ball ends up where it ends up.

A few other misconceptions

- If a batted ball hits the plate first it is foul, or dead.
- The ball is dead on an illegal pitch.
- Runners cannot advance on an infield fly.
- A fielder is never entitled to block the path of a base runner.
- If a base coach touches a runner in any way or at any time, the runner is called out.
- Runners cannot run backwards on the bases.
- A batter who is standing in the batter's box cannot be called out on interference.
- The defence must touch the base with the ball in possession to make an appeal.
- Runners who were stealing must return on the bases if the batter hits a foul tip.

All the above statements are false.

Many of these beliefs are the result of years of inherited misinformation, passed on by word of mouth, or rules have changed, and many involved do not stay current, and are not knowledgeable of the rules as they exist today. This can lead to conflict on the field; time wasted explaining the call, and frustration for everybody, managers, umpires' players, and spectators. Lack of understanding and the erroneous ideas that are held may strain the umpire - manager relationship.

Possible remedy to the problem

- Players, spectators, and managers should not always assume that the umpire is wrong. They may be surprised what they don't know.
- Ask questions, buy, and read the rulebook, attend an umpire rules clinic. Knowledge will defeat misunderstanding.
- Dialogue with all involved in the game. Managers and coaches could teach a great deal to umpires about the game. Likewise, umpires have a lot to share with players and coaches in terms of their specific expertise in the game.

Open communication and sharing of information between groups will bring positive results.



Community Umpires Manual



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BUILDING RELATIONS IN JUNIOR BALL



COMMUNICATION - THE LINE BETWEEN COACHING AND UMPIRING

As umpires we can play a role in the development of junior players especially in the way we handle specific situations and people in junior games. It will have an impact on the positive or negative participation of the player - umpires can be part of the solution.

It is my belief, as umpires, one of our aims in a junior game is to continue the work of the coach. Some may disagree and see your attempts to assist as overstepping the boundaries.

Your ability to communicate effectively takes time and is a function that cannot be rushed. The teaching we leave with a junior player invariably will stay with him for the rest of his playing or coaching career. How many times have we heard, "I didn't know that -- I've been playing this way for years"? The trick is, I guess, to work with the coach and get across to him that you are only trying to assist in the development of the player. Always when discussing a problem with a coach think about the way in which you address him and in the way you handle yourself during a game - talk to him - not down at him and try and use rule book terminology wherever possible.

In most junior games there are common areas that constantly re-occur. You may have a need to only talk with the player - do so in an open and non-confronting manner and where possible keep it as light as you can.

Let's look at some samples and get an idea on how best to handle the situation:

- Batter throws the bat - talk to the coach
- Batter not close enough to the plate - talk to and encourage the batter
- Catcher too close or too far back - talk to and encourage the catcher
- Obstruction on bases - talk with the coach and player together
- Pitcher - talk to the pitcher - coach - and utilise the catcher

Whilst you may have many individual situations remember to be patient, clear and concise with your input and use rule book terminology.

Resources

- BA orientation to Umpiring accreditation Seminars.
- Training Notes from Qld Baseball Umpires Assoc.
- Training Notes from Little League Umpires School, Williamsport USA
- Current Little League Regulations and Playing Rules, and the Official Rules of Baseball
- Infectious Diseases (Blood Rule) taken from BA policy statement.

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