

EABSA Umpire Clinic



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Introduction (cont'd)

- Overview of Presentation
 - “Basic Training” class intended to familiarize new umpires with common situations, rules and “how to’s”
 - Helps the new umpire know what to do on the field
 - Refreshes rules/mechanics for experienced umpires

Introduction (cont'd)

- YOU WILL NEED TO READ THROUGH THE RULES LISTED FOR EACH DIVISION ON OUR WEBSITE
 - www.eabsa.com
- EABSA is run by volunteers whom have full time jobs. Hence, we will be less tolerant of missed shifts and irresponsible behaviour.

Expectations of EABSA Umpires

- Maintain positive attitude and professionalism at all times
 - Project the example of the attitude we expect from everyone else
- Keep tempers in check
 - Umpires expected to have “thick skin”
 - Don’t have “quick triggers” for ejections
(more on ejections later)
- Be out there for the league and players
 - Not solely to demonstrate that we’re “in control”
....**But** ... know how and be able to maintain or regain control

Expectations of Umpires

- Understand and implement the rules as best we can
 - Always strive to get better and learn more about the game
 - Understand that everyone makes mistakes – don't dwell on them but learn from them for next time
 - Dwelling on a mistake will cause you to “daydream” and lose focus for the next few plays and possibly miss calls
- Take this job as seriously as you would any other in terms of your etiquette

Equipment Needed

- Umpire uniform (dark navy or light blue)
- Grey pants
- Black Shoes
- Counter
- Hat
- Will will supply home plate equipment if needed.

Ejections

(Part 1 of 2)

- Players – Reasonable causes for ejection
 - Threats or cursing either verbally or via body language
 - Repeated complaints about calls (again, try to have thick skin)
 - Reserve ejections to those who really deserve it But don't permit anyone to continually demonstrate disrespect to either the umpire crew or anyone else involved in the game
 - Gross unsportsmanlike behavior
 - Flagrant malicious behavior
 - Example: "Plowing" the catcher while attempting to score



Ejections

(Part 2 of 2)

- Managers/coaches – Reasonable causes for ejection
 - Same as for players
 - Encouraging or “egging-on” spectators to complain about umpires calls
 - Arguing a call and not giving up on it

Handling Difficult Fans or Coaches (part 1)



- Umpires are expected to have “thick skin”
 - Expect complaints and criticism – it’s natural for fans to think you made a bad call when it didn’t go their way
 - Learn to brush it off (almost as though you didn’t hear it – tune out the “fan chatter”)
 - For the “common complaints and comments” ... don’t react to fan criticism
 - Reacting acknowledges that you heard the comment and will encourage repeat behavior
 - Many times a complaining fan will stop complaining if it doesn’t get them anywhere (they make a spectacle of themselves)
 - **NEVER react by engaging spectators in arguments or debates about behavior or a call**

**However, there are times when umpires need to react ...
... *IN THE CORRECT WAY* (see next slide)**

Handling Difficult Fans or Coaches (part 2)



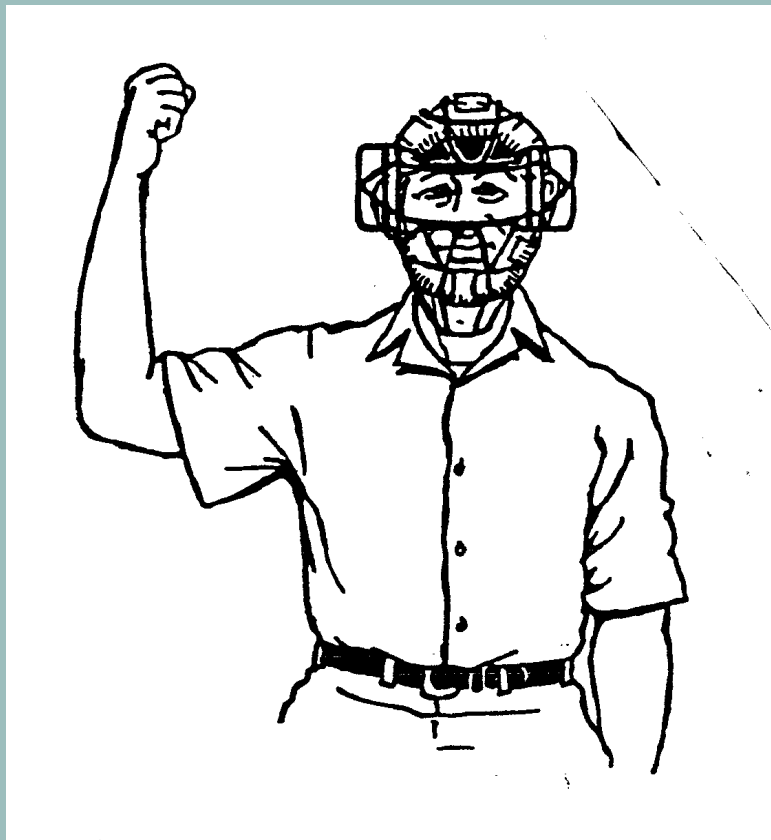
- Out-of-Control Fans
 - Ask coach to help control and get a Board Member to help you
- Don'ts
 - Don't engage spectators in arguments or debates
 - Don't eject a manager as a way to punish a team whose fans are complaining or out of control, or in an attempt to regain control
 - Official rules do not provide this course of action and do not imply that it is the coach's responsibility to control the spectators
- Do's
 - Call time and contact a league official (board member) to gain control
 - If required, clear the field until control is regained
 - If control is not regained, consider postponing conclusion of game until a later date.

Signaling Mechanics

Slideshow Created By:

Hayes A. Davis

Plate Umpire – Strike Call



Strike Call: Wait for the pitch to hit the catcher's glove (proper timing technique). Stand erect out of your crouch. Made with a raised right arm and clinched fist and then "pound the door" with the fist. Different styles, like open hand (or a point) out to the side are also used. NEVER take your eye off the ball when making this signal as you may miss a play in progress. Verbalized as "Strike!"

Never call a "swinging strike" unless it is strike three which could lead to the batter-runner attempting an advance to first on a "third strike not caught."

Called third strikes require a little more vocalization.

NOTE: On a "third strike not legally caught" where the batter is NOT entitled to advance to first base, the plate umpire should follow the strike three call with "Batter is out!, Batter is out!" to warn both the defense and the offense that the batter cannot legally attempt an advance to first base.

Plate Umpire – Ball Call



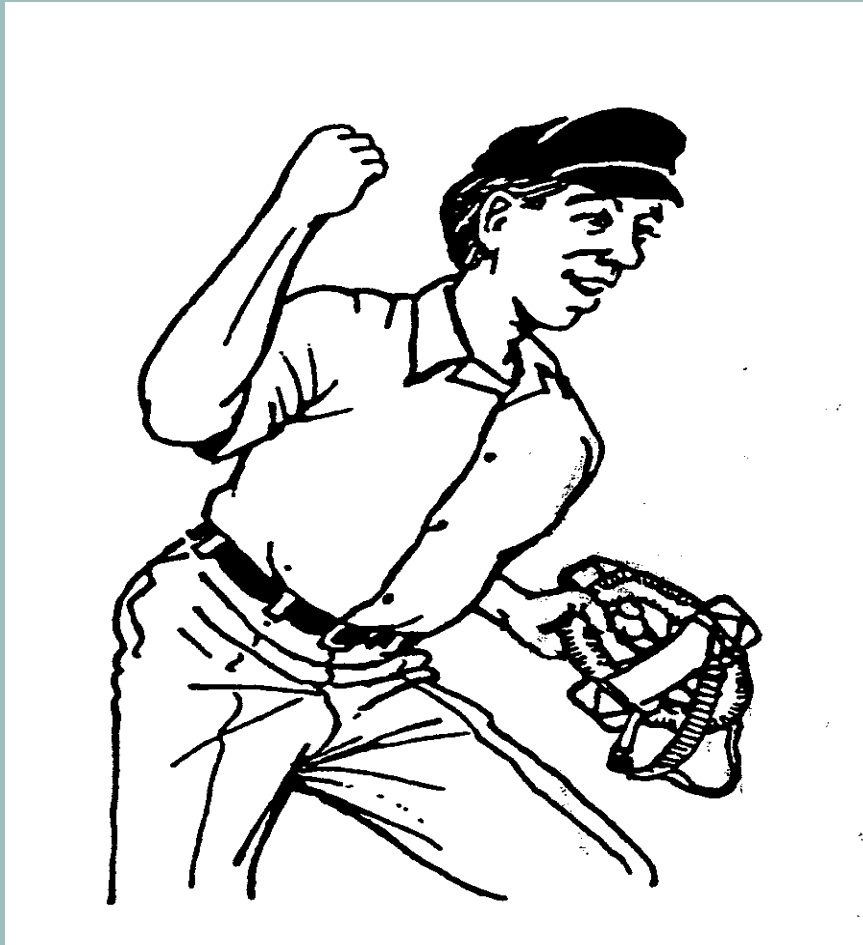
Ball Call: Always stay down in your set position. There is no hand signal. Loudly and clearly call "Ball!"

After the call is made then rise up out of the set position to relax between pitches.

The only time the ball number is indicated is on "Ball Four!"

Never point to first base with either hand on ball four as it might confuse the defense as an out signal.

Plate Umpire – Out Call

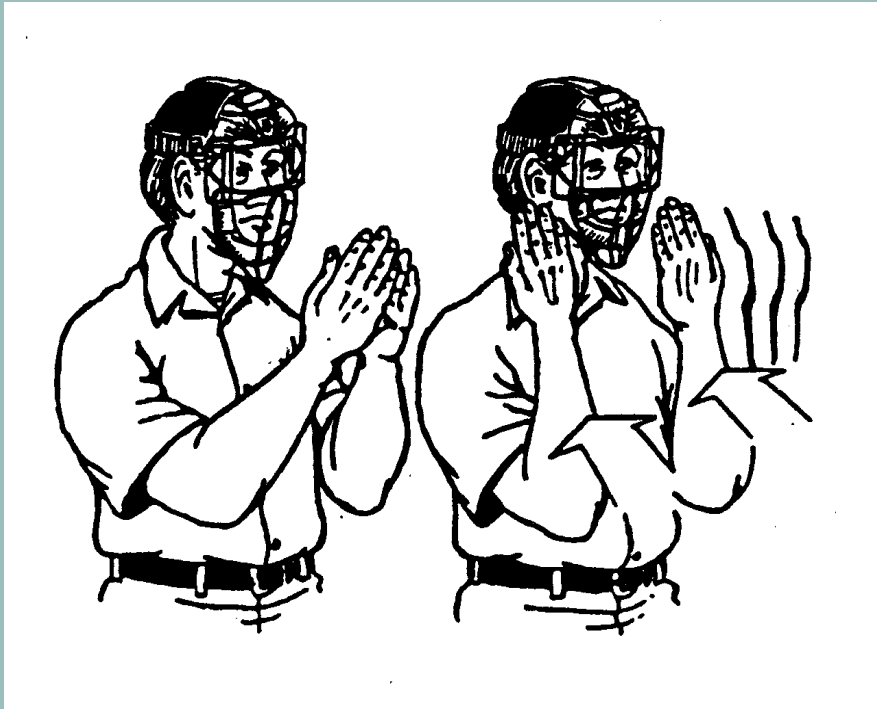


Out Call: The signal is similar to the strike signal. Mask is ALWAYS held in left hand so it doesn't go flying when making the call. It is possible that on rapidly developing plays at home (i.e. squeeze plays) that the mask cannot be removed in time since these plays occur so quickly. The right arm creates a right angle, fist is clinched. Verbalized as "He's out!" Be emphatic on close calls which will "sell the call."

Plate Umpire – Putting Ball in Play



Putting Ball in Play: The rules require that a verbalized “play” be called anytime the ball is made live again after becoming dead. First raise your right hand up forming a right angle and then point at the pitcher. Unless the ball is live no bases can be run, runs scored (except on dead ball awards), appeals made or any runner be put out. The verbalization of “play” is also important in letting your partner(s) know when the ball is alive versus dead.



An alternative way to signal “play” is to put both hands up in front of your body with the palms in and then making a “come here” motion.

Plate Umpire – Fair/Foul Call



Fair/foul point
with mask

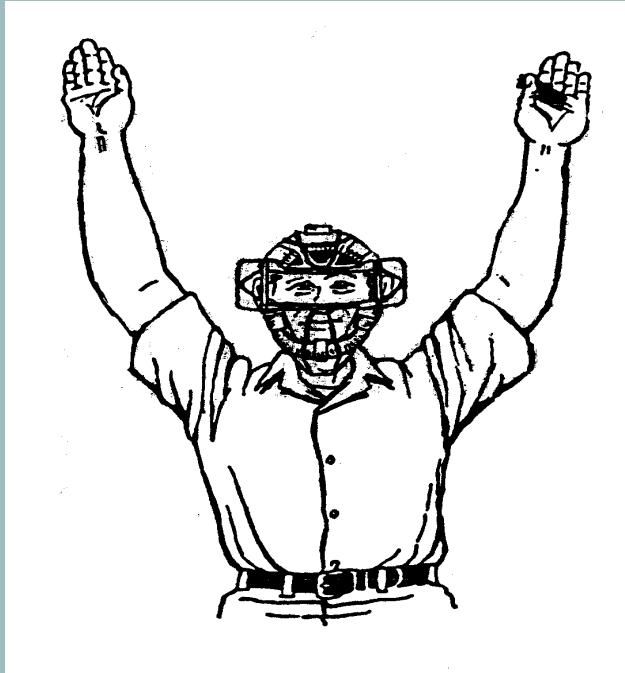
Fair and Foul Call: The Fair Call is NEVER verbalized! Any sound associated with indicating a fair ball could be construed as "foul" and stop play. Merely point into fair territory and say nothing. If necessary, emphatically point into fair territory if it appears that players are not reacting to the batted ball.



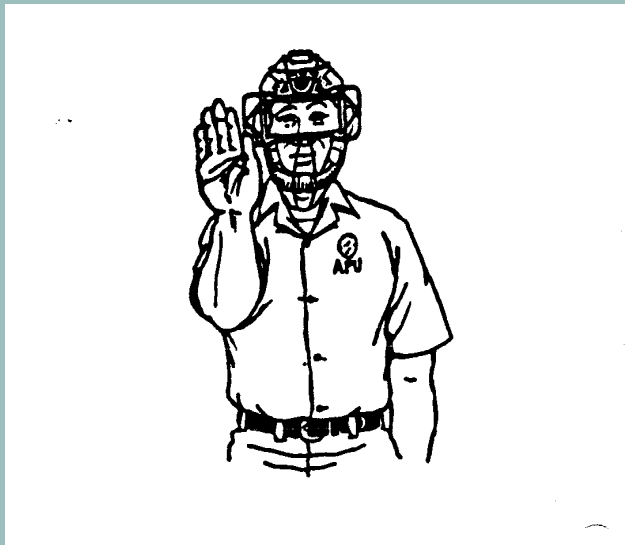
Fair/foul point
with finger

The Foul Call is always preceded by the Time signal which kills all play and alerts the runners and coaches. The umpire then points toward foul territory. The arm and hand signals are accompanied by emphatic voicing of "Foul!" or "Foul Ball!" Once the foul call is made all action is immediately suspended. You can never change a foul ball into a fair ball and will have to live with the call.

Plate Umpire – Time Call

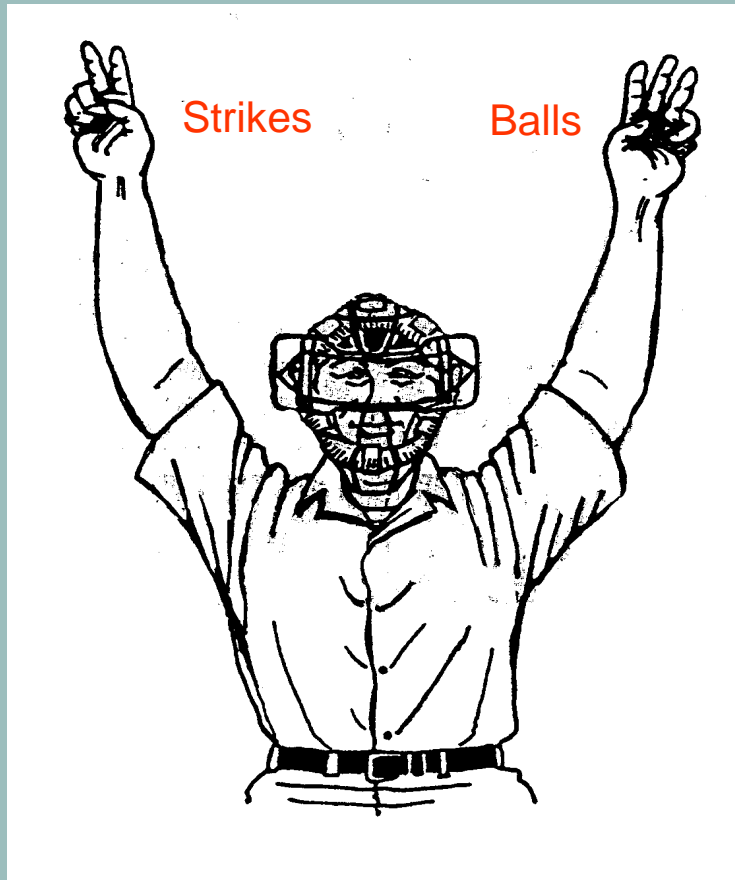


Time Call: It is very important that everyone on the field knows when you have called time. Raise both hands high in the air (palms out) and verbalize "Time!" This signal should be echoed by your partner(s). Once "Time" has been called, **NOTHING** can occur on the field of play.



The "stop" or "do not pitch" signal may be used to allow a batter to get set in the batter's box. It cannot be seen as clearly as both arms raised and should not be routinely substituted for the raised arms signal. This signal has the **SAME** impact as both arms raised high in the air. The ball is not live and no plays can be made.

Plate Umpire – Giving the Pitch Count



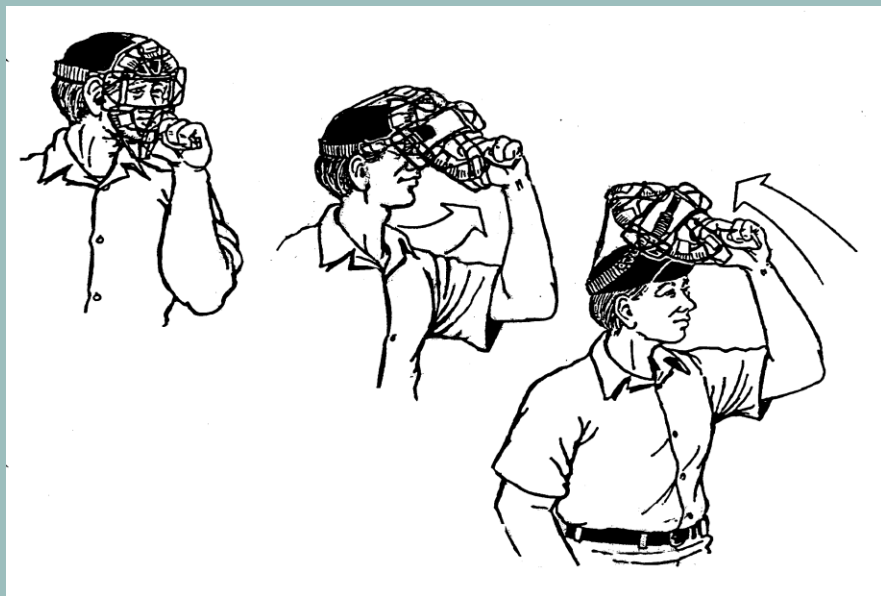
Giving the Pitch Count: The pitch count is signaled by holding up fingers on the left hand to indicate balls while the right hand is used to indicate strikes.

The pitch count is verbalized as, "three balls, two strikes", not "three and two", "thirty-two", "full count" or with closed fists.

Generally, the count isn't verbalized until the second or third pitch to the batter. The pitch count **SHOULD** be given after every "action pitch" (i.e. when batter has two strikes or three balls on the count to him).

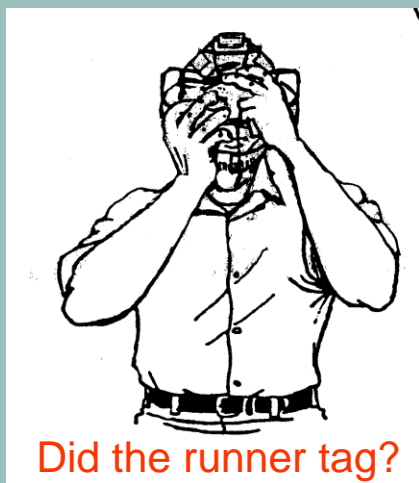
Give the pitch count towards the pitcher and make the verbalization loud enough that the batter and coaches can hear it also. This avoids having to repeat the pitch count to different personnel.

Plate Umpire – Mask Removal



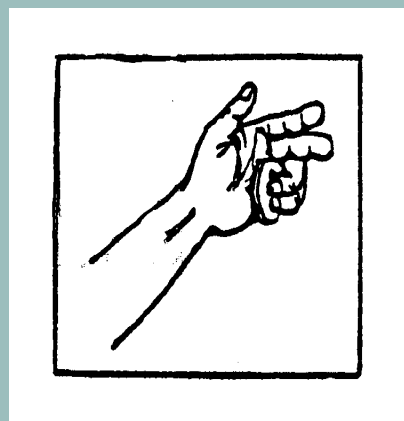
Proper mask removal technique

Mask Removal: The mask should be removed often to provide the best possible view of all action. The key to successfully removing the mask and leaving your hat in place is to make sure that the mask is loose on the head. It should lift away from the face and wiggle fairly easily when your head is tilted forward and down. Always use the left hand to remove the mask. Grasp the mask in the lower left padded area, pull the bottom of the mask STRAIGHT OUT and then push the mask STRAIGHT UP, clearing the brim of the cap. Done properly, the mask removal will allow an 8-stitch cap to be worn under a mask.



Did the runner tag?

Wrong – blocks view



Indicator properly held

Improper technique will lead to your hat flying off or obstructing the view so a play is missed. The indicator is held with the ring and pinky fingers of the left hand and the remaining two fingers and thumb are then free to remove and hold the mask. It takes some practice but becomes second nature for experienced umpires.

Plate Umpire – Checked Swing Appeal



Checked Swing Appeals

Ball: The plate umpire remains in the set position and calls, "Ball, no he didn't go!" If the catcher asks for an appeal, the plate umpire will point at the appropriate base umpire and loudly ask, "Did he go?" If the base umpire responds with a "no swing" signal the plate umpire will then merely indicate the current pitch count. If the base umpire responds with a "swing" signal the plate umpire will then indicate, "Then it's a strike. The count is now..."

Strike: Checked swing strikes (asked for by the offensive team) are NEVER appealed. After an appropriate warning, any player or coach that persists in requesting appeals on a checked swing strike should be removed from the game.

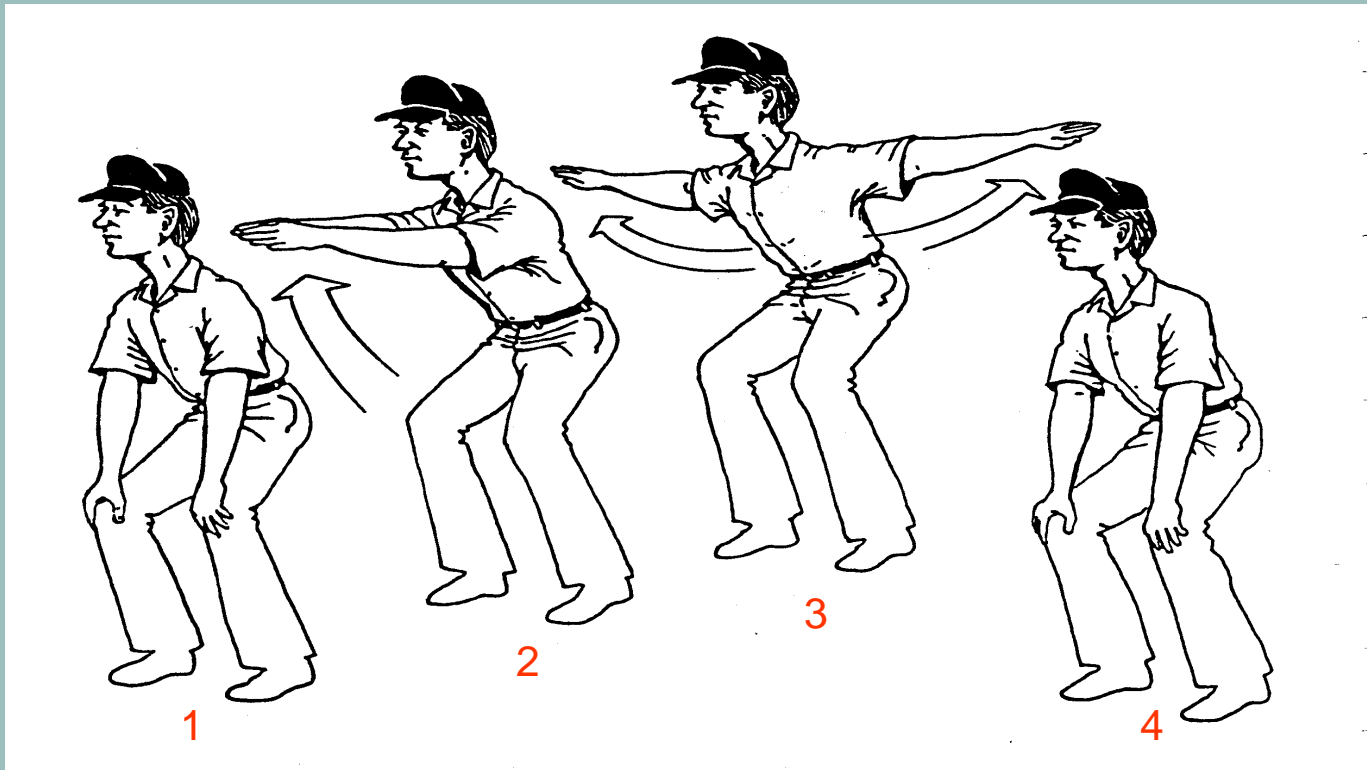
Base Umpire – Set Position



Hands-on-Knees Set Position: The hands-on-knees set position is used by the base umpire before every pitch is delivered. It allows him to quickly respond to the proper positioning for making calls. It is also assumed before calling most plays. (However, there are times when a play develops so quickly that the base umpire must assume a standing set position.)

To assume the set position, lower your seat and don't bend over at the waist. Place the hands on the knees or thighs with only the thumbs on the inside of the legs. Keep the head up and don't lower the chin. Align the elbows with the arms. Relax the shoulders to dissipate the physical tension. Keep your weight forward in your stance which enhances agility. The set position is also assumed after making any call originated from this position before hustling to the next pre-pitch position.

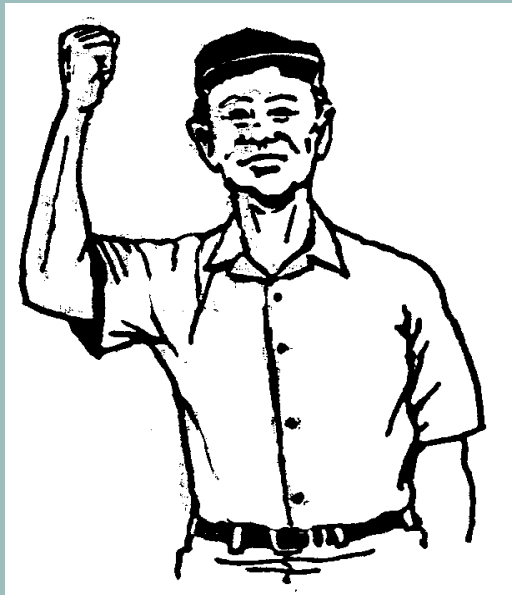
Base Umpire – Safe Call Sequence



Safe Call Sequence:

- 1 - In most instances the safe call is initiated from the "hands-on-knees" set position.
- 2 - The hands are lifted from the knees and fully extended OUT and UP with palms down.
- 3 - When shoulder height is attained, the hands are horizontally split to the sides of the body. The call is verbalized as , "He's safe!" as the hands are split.
- 4 - The hands are then returned to the out-and-up position and then the set position is re-assumed. The sequence gives the impression that the umpire was steady and in a good position to make the call.

Base Umpire – Out Call



Out Call: The out call is normally initiated from the hands-on-knees set position.

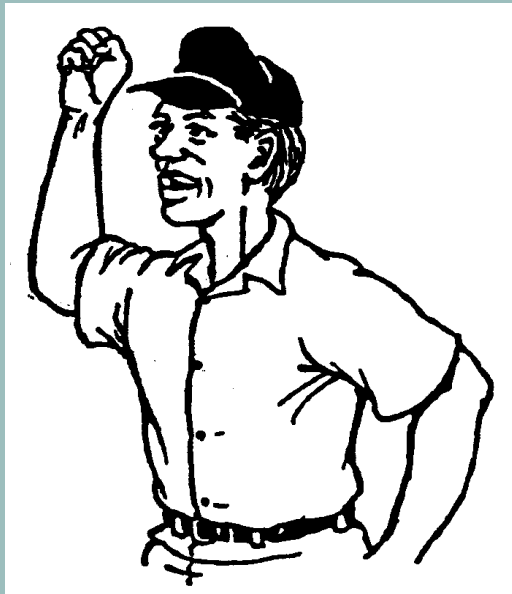
The right arm is brought up high and then bent at the elbow to form a right angle.

The hand is closed into a fist and then slightly pumped forward.

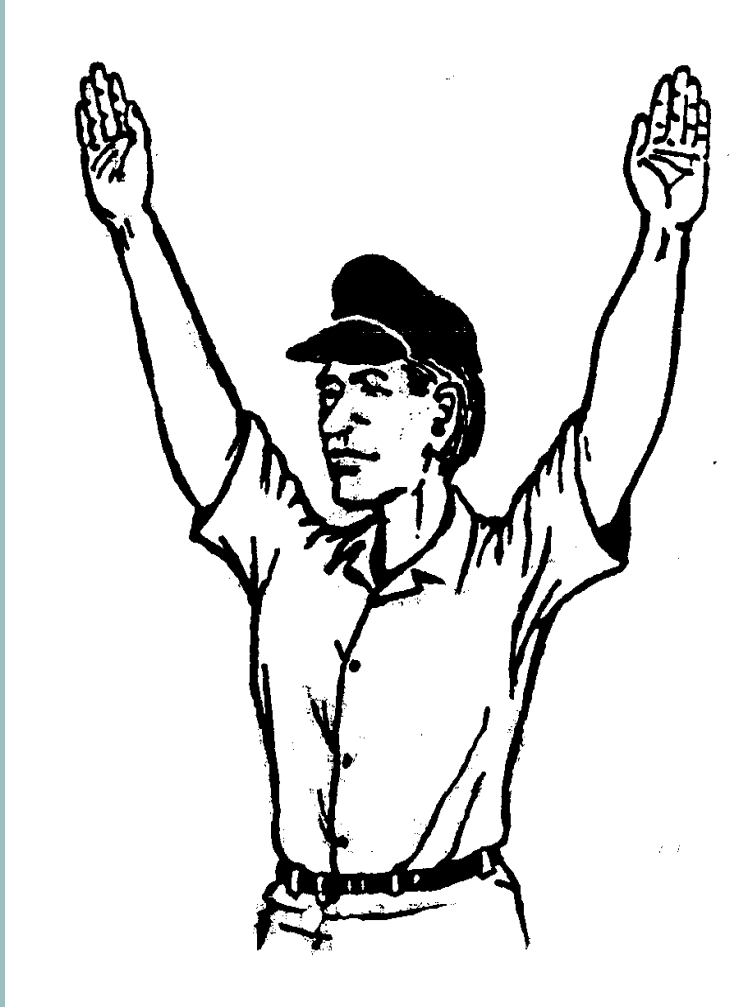
The call is verbalized as, "He's out!" The umpire then returns to the set position.

On any close out call the base umpire should "sell the call"

by making the call louder and more emphatic while being quieter and less demonstrative on routine plays



Base Umpire – Time Call



Time Call: The time call is initiated any time there is a need for a dead ball situation. It is also used to "echo" a partner's Time call. Both arms are fully raised and the palms are facing out. The call is verbalized LOUDLY as, "Time!"

The Time signal and/or call is often used by the base umpire in conjunction with other types of calls such as interference, obstruction, foul balls and ground rule doubles.

Base Umpire – Fair Ball Call



Fair Call: No voice is ever used to indicate a batted ball that is fair. The base umpire merely points into fair territory. On close fair balls or in the event that the players do not respond immediately, the base umpire can emphatically point into fair territory several times.

In cases of close fair/foul balls the base umpire is better off leaving the ball "fair" until additional information can be obtained. Runners can always be put back to their time-of-pitch bases if the ball is later determined to be foul.

Base Umpire – Foul Ball Call



Umpires **MUST** “see”
a foul ball or the
ball is fair

Foul Call: A foul ball is first indicated by raising both arms and signaling Time. This kills all play and alerts the runners and coaches.

The umpire then points toward foul territory.

The arm and hand signals are accompanied by an emphatic call of “Foul!” or “Foul Ball!”

Once a batted ball is declared a foul ball it is forever foul. An umpire who makes the mistake of calling a fair ball “foul” should be ready to take some well-deserved heat.

It’s better to leave a close call Fair and later put runners back than to kill all action by calling the ball Foul.

Base Umpire Infield Fly Signal to Partner



Infield Fly Signal to Partner: This signal is flashed among umpires as a reminder of a potential infield fly situation. Under the proper conditions, a fly ball which an infielder can handle with ordinary effort must be declared an infield fly and the rule invoked. The infield fly situation signal is normally initiated by the plate umpire and then acknowledged by the base umpire. In the event that the plate umpire initiates this signal when the infield fly is not in affect, the base umpire should call Time and then conference with the plate umpire to insure that the infield fly is not improperly applied.

Another infield fly communication signal that is commonly used is the umpires touching the brim of their caps with their right pointing finger.

Base Umpire - Infield Fly Declaration



Infield Fly Declaration: Any umpire may initiate the call of Infield Fly. However, on balls hit near the foul lines the plate umpire is responsible for the initial call which is vocalized as, "Infield fly if fair!"

To protect all runners the Infield Fly call should be echoed by all umpires. The call should be given loudly and clearly so there is no confusion for the runners.

The umpire first points high in the air while calling, "Infield fly!" The umpire then makes the Out signal and calls, "The batter's out!" To avoid confusion for the players the signals and calls may be repeated.

Base Umpire – “Off the Bag” Call



Off the Bag: This signal is an explanatory one used on plays in which the ball “beat the runner” but the fielder came off the bag to make the catch. It is used after the Safe signal and call has been made to indicate the umpire’s reason. It is vocalized as, “He’s off the bag!” The sweeping motion should be made in the direction the fielder moved and pulled himself off the base.

Base Umpire – Home Run Signal



Home Run: This signal indicates the four base award for the home run. Unlike the ground rule double, it is not necessary to indicate that the ball is dead.

The base umpire points his right finger high in the air and then twirls his finger in a tight circle. There is no voice call associated with the home run signal.

The umpire then watches the bases he's responsible for to insure that runners legally touch the bases.

He then hustles to his next starting position and awaits potential appeal plays on missed bases, if appropriate.

Base Umpire Ground Rule Double Signal



Ground Rule Double: On a ground rule double the base umpire should first make the ball dead by initiating the Time signal and call. He then raises two fingers to indicate a two base award.

This same signal is also used for the awarding of two bases for overthrown balls that go out-of-play.

Base Umpire

Checked Swing Appeal Responses



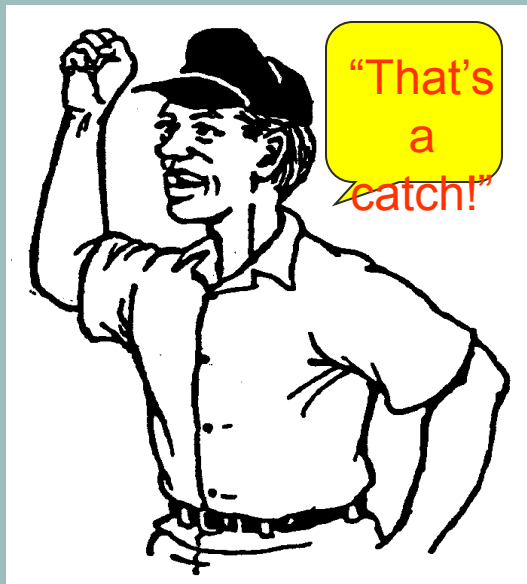
Strike: The base umpire initiates the Out signal while responding, "Yes, he went!"



Ball: The base umpire initiates the Safe signal while responding, "No, he didn't!"

Helpful Hint: The general rule of thumb on making the judgment call is whether or not the barrel of the bat breaks the plane of the foul line.

Base Umpire – Catch/No Catch



Catch and No Catch Call: On questionable plays in the outfield or infield, the umpire should always indicate whether or not the ball was legally caught. This is the only way runners, fielders and coaches are made aware of the status of the ball. These calls are not usually initiated for routine situations, but the Out signal is used on routine fly balls that are caught.

On close catches the umpire should loudly verbalize, "That's a catch, that's a catch!"

The signals for these calls are the same for the Out and Safe signal. The Out signal indicates that the catch was legally made and the Safe signal indicates that the catch was not legally made. The Catch call is, "That's a catch!" while the No Catch call is, "No catch! No catch!" On close plays either way the signal and call should be made more than once.



On close non-catches, such as trapped balls, the umpire should loudly verbalize, "No catch, no catch!" This allows his partner and all players to know that the ball is still in play and avoids confusion.

Base Umpire - Pointing Balk-Interference-Obstruction



Balk/Interference/Obstruction Point:

The base umpire will always point at the situation and call, "That's a balk!", "Illegal Pitch!", "That's Interference!" or "That's obstruction!" as the case may be. On a delayed dead ball situation, it let's everyone know that you saw an incident occur although penalization may not take place until a later time.

Depending on the circumstances, the point and call may be preceded by or followed by the Time signal and call.

Base Umpire – Enforcement/Ejection



Enforcement: This signal always follows a Time signal/call, then the Pointing signal. It is the act of awarding a runner additional bases predicated upon a violation by the defensive team. The call is made as follows. Point at the runner and call, "You!" Then make the Enforcement signal towards the base you're awarding and call, "Third base!" (Or whichever base you're awarding to the runner.)

Ejection: This signal is NEVER used in conjunction with the Pointing signal. Make sure you do not contact anyone or come exceptionally close to anyone with your gesture. Be positive, strong and aggressive but DO NOT "showboat". Keep your words simple; nothing cute like "Hit the road!", "To the showers!" or "See ya' later!" The call is merely, "You're gone!" Maintain your composure and professionalism. REMEMBER, the most vicious and damaging arguments often occur AFTER the ejection.

Call It, Blue!



The End

Base Umpiring



Things the base umpire needs to know

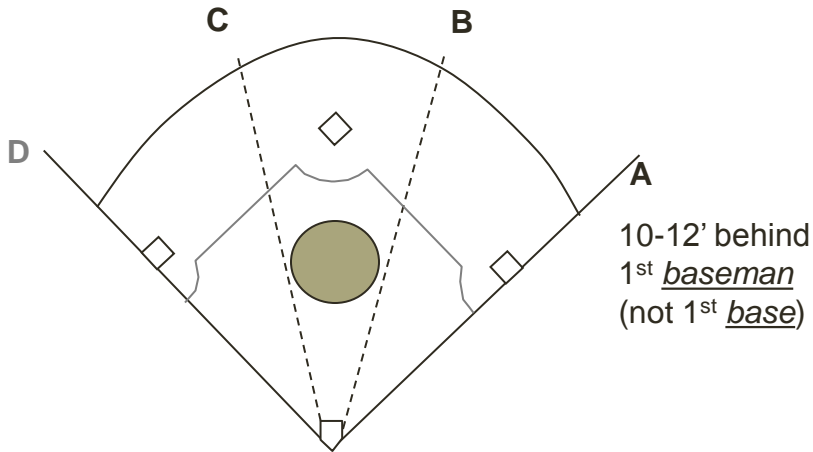
- Before the ball is hit
 - Where to be at the start of the play
- Responsibilities as pitch is delivered
 - Base umpire has certain responsibilities on the pitch
- After the ball is hit
 - Where to go and how to move into position as play develops
- Other basics
 - How to observe a play and get the call right
 - **PAUSING BEFORE MAKING YOUR CALL**
 - Knowing what calls are the BU's and what calls are the PU's
 - Basic rules (we'll cover the basics)
 - Basic responsibilities of plate versus base

Base Umpire Positions

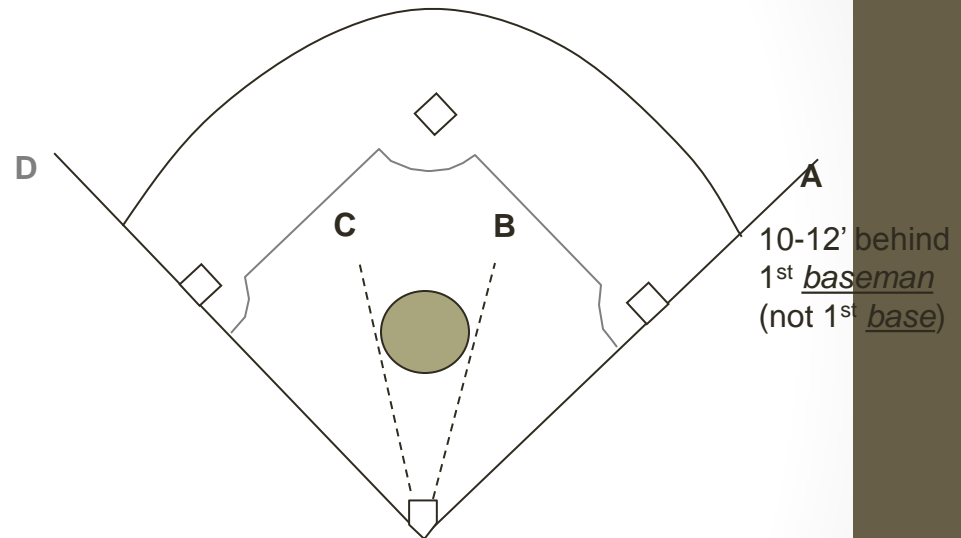


Minors and Majors

Juniors, Seniors, Big League



60' Diamond



90' Diamond

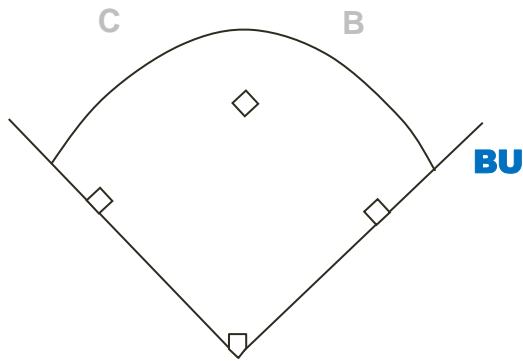
Note: The "D" position is only used when there are 2 or more base umpires (i.e., 3 and 4 umpire crews). It won't likely be used in regular season games since most games will use 2-umpire crews.

Position at Start of Play

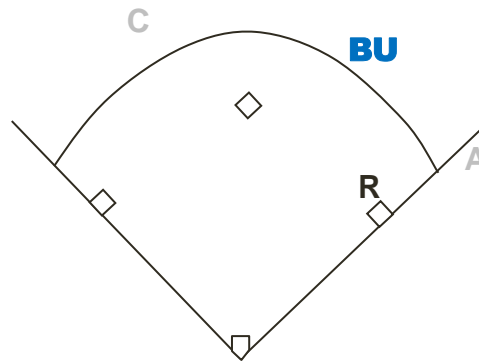
(aka Rotation)



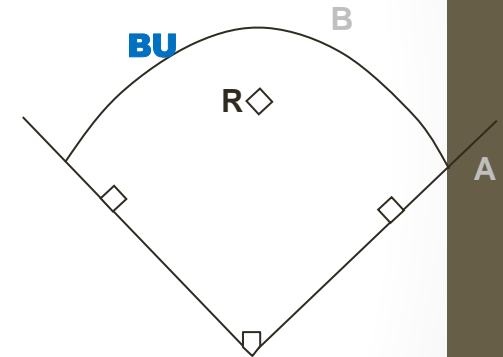
60' Diamond



Bases empty



Runner on 1st



Any other combination
(2nd only, 2nd and 3rd,
1st and 3rd, 3rd only,
bases loaded)

1

First most important tip for the new base umpire

Responsibilities on the pitch



- On every pitch, what are the immediate priorities for a base umpire?
 1. Watching for the illegal pitch (and/or balk in Juniors and above)
 2. Handling pickoff plays to the bases (Juniors and above)
 3. Assisting on the check swing appeal
 4. Handling the "runner leaving early" rules (Minors and Majors)
 5. Watching for pickoff plays from the catcher
 6. Watching for attempted steals, particularly double steals when possible

Where to go when ball is hit

Single most important tip to learn



- Ball is in – You’re out, Ball is out – You’re in
 - If a hit ball stays in the infield and is fielded by an infielder, BU stays outside and makes call from shallow outfield or in the dirt
 - If a hit ball gets through to the outfield (either on a fly ball or ground ball), BU busts inside, turns to watch runner tag first and follows runner and ball to the play. BU should be set ahead of arriving runner.
 - Only way to keep up with the runners and be in position for the play
 - Helps you stay out of the way of the ball coming in
 - *Aside from being the proper mechanic, it makes your life as the BU much easier!*

If you learn ONE thing at this clinic, learn this tip !!!

2

Second most important tip for the new base umpire

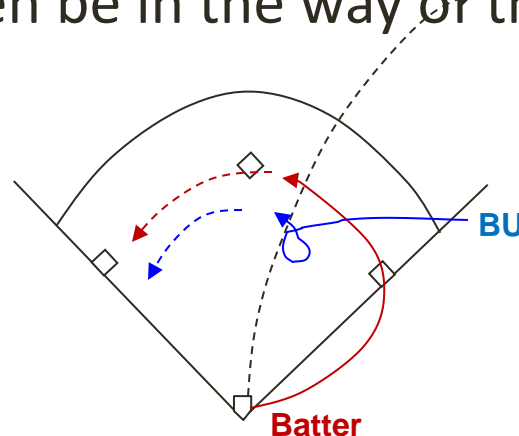
Where to go when ball is hit

Out – You're in In-You're out



- Example Play: Outfield hit with no one on
 - BU breaks into infield, turns left to watch runner touch 1st, then moves with and ahead of runner to be ready for a play at 2nd or 3rd
 - No way to stay out and beat runner to bases as well as watch runner touch 1st and 2nd
 - The runner would be behind you and the ball would be coming in from your back
 - You might even be in the way of the ball coming in

[Example video](#)



Pausing before making the call



- Problem *(Part 1 of 2)*
 - Umpires sometimes feel pressure to make quick calls (nerves, knowing everyone is watching you, the fast pace of a play)
 - In a fast action play, a new umpire will sometimes make a split second decision and make a quick call
 - Quick calls are many times wrong
 - **Examples**
 - Close play at first. What did you really see? Did runner's foot hit the bag first, or was the ball caught first? Are you absolutely sure of your call? Are you sure first baseman didn't pull his foot?
 - Runner stealing 2nd with a close tag. After your quick "out" call, you notice the ball on the ground between the runner and the fielder.

Pausing before making the call *(Part 2 of 2)*

- The Solution
 - Stay calm at all times before, during and after a play
 - Feeling out of control will sometimes cause a knee-jerk fast call
 - Watch the play through to completion And think about what you just saw
 - Force yourself to delay (maybe by counting to 3) before verbalizing your call
 - Think to yourself ... “I’m **sure** he was safe/out” ... then say it for real, and appear confident as you make the call.
 - On tag plays, **find where the ball is after the play is over** and *confirm the out* only after verifying that the fielder had the ball in the tag-hand and had never lost control of it during the play (if the fielder is picking it up off the ground, runner was likely safe)
 - **If you think the tag was good but you aren’t sure where the ball is, ask the fielder to show you the ball, then make the call as needed.**

Afte the play, PAUSE!!! Then make your call.

Coach Appeals vs. Judgment Calls

- Coaches can only argue or appeal a call when they deem a rule was violated or not applied correctly
- Coaches cannot appeal or argue judgment calls
 - Six Common Judgment Calls
 - Ball or Strike (I.e, strike zone)
 - Fair or Foul
 - Safe or Out
 - Other Judgment calls
 - Whether obstruction or Interference has occurred
 - Whether a hit ball is an Infield Fly
 - Check swing calls

Very common for a coach to argue a safe or out call. This is not proper and is not allowed, but they do it anyway.



Handling appeals and arguments

- Coach disagrees with call
 - Must requests time from the dugout
 - Umpire may grant time ... but should do so **only after the play has stopped**
 - Common knee-jerk reaction is to grant time right away. Don't. Hold up your hand to acknowledge the request but wait until play is over.
 - Coach must approach the umpire who made the call
 - Coach can ask for a clarification of the call.
 - Tips for Umpire
 - Realize this situation is common, so get used to it.
 - Be confident in yourself, but not arrogant or argumentative
 - Be respectful You might have been wrong, so don't set yourself up to "eat crow". This will earn their respect for that game and those that follow.
 - Start you're response: "Coach, He was out".
 - Remember: Appeals are not debates.



Coach Appeals & Umpire Conferences

- When can (or should) one umpire help another with a call?
 - **9.02c No umpire can over-rule or seek to reverse the decision of another umpire unless asked to do so by the other umpire.**
 - Coach asks BU to seek “help” from Plate Umpire
 - If question deals with a judgment call, coach shouldn’t be appealing, although sometimes a coach will do so anyway under the “polite” explanation that he thinks “*your view may have been obstructed.*” If your view was not obstructed, simply say “Coach, I had a clear view and I ruled him out”.
 - **BU does not** have to seek opinion of PU if BU is confident in the call or ruling (but if you have any doubt, go ahead and consult).
 - **During “conference”:** Coach returns to dugout. Ruling umpire can ask for “help” ***but this is not to be interpreted as BU asking PU to make the call, nor should PU “take over” in an attempt to “correct the situation.”*** BU simply asks PU “what did you see”, or “did you see him drop the ball” (whatever the situation requires). Once BU is satisfied, turn and make your final call.
 - **After conference:** *Original umpire who made the call reinforces original call or changes call (can provide brief explanation ... such as “Ball was on the ground – Runner is Safe at First”)*



Live Ball – Dead Ball

- Ball is live when plate umpire puts ball into play
 - Plate umpire calls “Play” when pitcher is on mound ready to pitch
 - Sometimes PU forgets to put ball into play – ball is still live upon the pitch
- Ball becomes dead when
 - Any umpire calls time
 - Hit ball leaves the field in either fair or foul territory
 - Foul ball
 - Home run
 - Ground rule double
 - Thrown ball leaves the field
- No one can be put out when ball is dead
 - Reason why appeal plays need to be done when ball is live.



Infield Fly

- Official Definition:
 - Fair fly ball (except line drives and bunts) that can be caught by an infielder with “ordinary” effort, when 1st and 2nd (or 1st, 2nd, and 3rd) are occupied and less than 2 out
(just think: The situation where you have 2 “sitting ducks” on what should be an easy pop-up when defense may want a double-play)
 - **Notes & Clarifications**
 - Any fielder (including pitcher, catcher or outfielders) can catch an infield fly
 - Umpires calls it when the ball is at its *maximum* height (its “apex”)
- Purpose
 - Infield fly is meant to avoid defense taking unfair advantage of offense by obtaining a “cheap” double-play on an intentionally dropped ball
- How to call



Time Plays

- Whenever the 3rd out of an inning is made on a tag play, any runs that crossed the plate before the tag-out count.
 - Sometimes it's a close call as to whether the runner crossed the plate before or after the tag
- Whenever a runner is on second and there are 2 outs, this can commonly turn into a "timing play" situation
 - Outfield hit and batter tries for a double and runner on 2nd tries for home
- **PU will motion to BU with fingers to his wrist**
- BU doesn't really do anything different on this play
 - But be aware that PU will be staying home regardless of whether there may be a play at 3rd.
 - *Don't try to make your safe or out call "faster"*



Obstruction

(How to recognize when it occurs)

- Official definition
 - Any act of a fielder who, while **NOT** in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. Examples: Fake tags, blocking a base, base path or home plate when not in possession of the ball.
- Concepts to understand when determining if obstruction has occurred
 - Fielders have a right to be where needed to field a batted ball. Therefore, even if they do not yet have possession of the ball, but are moving to or in a position to field a batted ball, they have first right of position. The runner needs to move around or avoid the fielder in this case (otherwise they risk being called for interference).
 - The above concept does not apply to fielders who are fielding a thrown ball. A fielder cannot be in a position or moving to a position that impedes a runner or blocks a base, home plate, or the base path, even while a thrown ball is in-flight and the fielder is preparing to make the catch (i.e., the catch is eminent).

The determination of whether obstruction has occurred is a judgment call and is not subject to appeal or argument by managers/coaches.



Obstruction

(What to do when it occurs: two types of obstruction)

- What happens when obstruction occurs (and what penalty is enforced) depends on which of the two types of obstruction has occurred.
- Type A – Immediate Dead Ball ([example](#))
 - Occurs when a play is being made on the obstructed runner or when obstruction occurs on batter who hasn't yet reached 1st
 - Penalty enforcement
 - Immediately call "Time! That's obstruction!" Then award runner one base. Note: even if runner was going back into a base, the award is the next base.
- Type B – Delayed Dead Ball ([example](#))
 - Occurs when no play is being made on obstructed runner
 - Penalty enforcement
 - Call "That's obstruction" (but do not call time). Let the play continue. When play is over, award the runner whichever base the umpire deems the runner would have reached had obstruction not occurred. (Note: the umpire may not award any additional bases beyond where the runner ended up.)
 - After the play: "Time! We had obstruction on the runner! Runner ended up at second, and runner stays at second!"



Interference

(What it is and how to recognize it)

- Official Definitions

- **Offensive Interference**: Any act by the batter or runners that obstructs, hinders, impedes or confuses a fielder attempting to make a play. Examples:

- Runner running into or impeding fielder in act of fielding a batted or thrown ball; batter impeding catcher from throwing out a runner who's stealing, runner from 1st sliding into fielder attempting to turn a double-play, runner who is hit by fair ball before it passes by a fielder.

- **Defensive interference**: Any act by a fielder that hinders or prevents a batter from hitting a pitch.

- **Umpire's interference**: When (1) the plate umpire interferes with the catcher's throw attempting to prevent a stolen base or (2) when a batted ball hits a base umpire in fair territory before passing a fielder

- **Spectator interference**: When a spectator reaches out of the stands or comes onto the field and touches a live ball.

Most common



Interference

(What to do: Enforcing the penalty)

- **Offensive Interference**
 - Immediately call “Time! That’s interference!” (**immediate dead ball**)
 - Member of offense who committed interference is out. Other runners awarded last base legally held or next base if forced (batter-runner awarded first if not yet at 1st).
- **Example situations**
 - **Example 1:** Runner on 1st and 2nd. Batter hits and ball strikes runner leaving 2nd. Umpire calls “Time!, That’s interference!”
 - Runner hit by ball is out, batter awarded 1st base and runner from 1st is forced to 2nd.
 - **Example 2:** Runner on 1st and 2nd. Batter hits and ball strikes runner leaving 1st. Umpire calls “Time!, That’s interference!”
 - Runner hit by ball is out, batter awarded 1st base and runner from 2nd returns to 2nd.
 - **Example 3:** Batter bunts the ball and in leaving for 1st, kicks the ball with his foot when ball was in fair territory.
 - Batter is out; all other runners return to their bases.
 - If ball was in foul territory, batter is out only if kick was intentional



Offensive Interference

- *Additional Comments:*
- *⇒ When a runner is moving toward second base on a double play ball, there is no requirement for the runner to slide. The fielder must expect the runner to be there. As long as the runner is moving toward the base, there would generally be no interference.*
- *⇒ **If sliding into second base, the runner must be able to reach the base with hand or feet.** If the sliding runner is not able to reach the base with his/her hand or feet, and in the umpires judgment the slide caused the second baseman not to complete the double play, call interference and get the out at 1st base also.*
- *⇒ If the batter or a runner continues to advance after he/she has been put out, he/she shall not by that act alone be considered as confusing, hindering or impeding the fielders.*
- *⇒ If contact between the runner and fielder occurs after the ball is released, there would be no interference.*



Foul Balls

- A hit ball becomes foul when
 - It settles to a stop in foul territory between home and 1st or 3rd
 - First touches ground in foul territory past 1st or 3rd
 - Touches an object in foul territory before being caught
 - Bounding ball passes 1st or 3rd in foul territory (i.e., does not cross over ANY PART of 1st or 3rd base)
- Note
 - The foul lines are in fair territory. Any ball that touches ANY PART of the foul line is FAIR
 - **Never call or yell “Fair Ball!” – Just POINT fair**

Whether a ball is Fair or Foul is a JUDGMENT CALL and is not subject to appeal or argument



Who makes the call

- Plate Umpire Typical Calls
 - Catch/no-catch on all fly balls and line drives whether infield or outfield
 - All Fair – foul (unless discussed otherwise in plate meeting)
 - Calls at home plate
 - Sometimes calls at 3rd base for 1st to 3rd situations (explain)
 - Usually will take the Infield Fly call
(but actually either umpire can call)
- Base Umpire Typical Calls
 - Safe – out on all bases (except for 1st to 3rd situations)
 - Obstruction or Interference



Pitched Ball Goes into Dead Ball Territory

- Ball is dead immediately whenever ball goes into dead ball territory
 - Umpires immediately call time
- Base awards (where do the runners go?)
 - One base from the time of the pitch (regardless of whether the runners were going or not)
 - **Special rule for Minor's Field (Jimmy Craig Field)**
 - If a pitched ball becomes lodged in the net behind home plate, or goes under the net, the runners need to be stealing to be given the base award. If in the umpire's judgment the runner(s) were not attempting to advance (i.e., steal), then they will be sent back.



Thrown Ball goes into Dead Ball Territory

- Ball is dead immediately whenever ball goes into dead ball territory
 - Umpires immediately call time
- Base awards (i.e., where do the runners go?)
- First play by infielder
 - Two (2) bases from the time of the pitch
- Outfielder *or* second play by infielder
 - Two bases from the time of the throw

Foul Tip



- A foul tip is not the same as a foul ball
- A foul tip can be considered exactly the same as a swinging strike
 - Ball remains live (so don't call foul ball)!!
 - Runners can steal
 - Can count as strike 3 (batter out)
- Definition
 - Batted ball that goes directly to the catcher's mitt
 - [Example video](#)



Common myths

- Overrunning first – May turn either way but has to go directly back to the base
- Batter gets first base whenever he/she's hit by pitch
 - Called strike on a hit batter
- Ball is dead on a foul tip
 - Unless caught by catcher
- Batter's hands are part of the bat
- It's always a strike if batter doesn't pull bat out of the strike zone on a bunt attempt
- Others



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