

Umpire Basics for the Little League Umpire



California District 4 Umpire Association

Revised: February 10, 2019

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this booklet is to provide useful information about the art and skill of umpiring. It is mostly about umpire mechanics on 60' diamonds. It provides some information on mechanics for larger diamonds, rules, umpire gear, handling conflicts and other topics such as umpire philosophy. Little League™ baseball and softball rules are covered in the Official Regulations and Playing Rules book.

Umpire mechanics define how umpires move on the field. Proper mechanics is a skill that all umpires should try to learn from trained instructors as early as possible and throughout their career. To learn it requires training, practice, thoughtfulness, discipline and time. The information provided in this booklet is only a reference that supplements the mechanics taught at umpire training clinics by properly trained instructors.

Acknowledgment

California District 4 Umpire Association thanks Scott Nelson of California District 57 for allowing the use of the contents of his Umpire Basics Manual last updated in 2010.

Thanks to many in the Little League Baseball and Softball community for assistance in producing this booklet.

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Principles of Umpiring

Pause, Read and React

Read the position of the fielders to help determine the next play.

Pivot

Enables you to get into position and change direction on the field

Watch the ball, glance at the runners

Must know when to take your eyes off the ball; head is always on a swivel.

Chest to Ball

Always face the ball at all times.

Angle/Distance

Angle first! Get as much distance as play will allow but don't be close.

Be Set

You must be set to see the play. You must see the play to make the call.

Timing

Proper use of eyes – wait until you see the play before you call it.

Adjust

Constantly make changes as the play dictates.

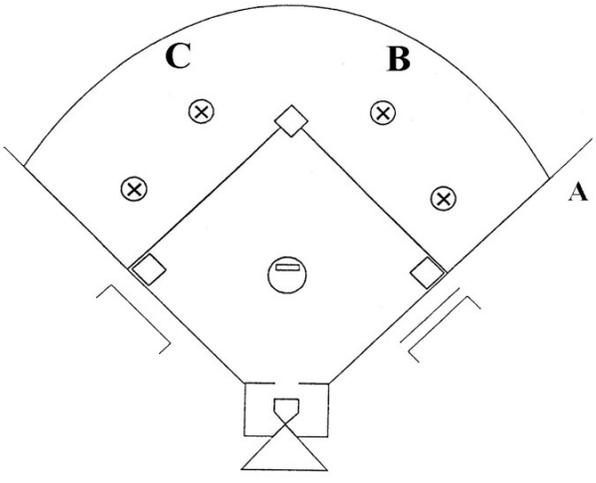
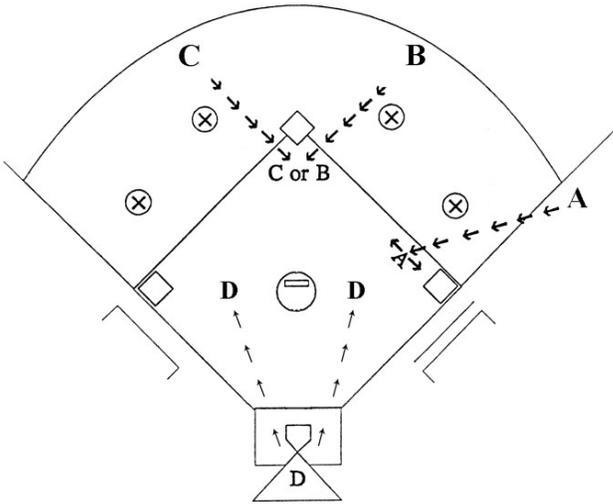
Open the Gate

Know when to do it to stay away from fielders. Let the fielder take you to the play.

Echo your partner

Knowing responsibilities for fair/foul, balks, overthrows, and time out means less confusion on the field.

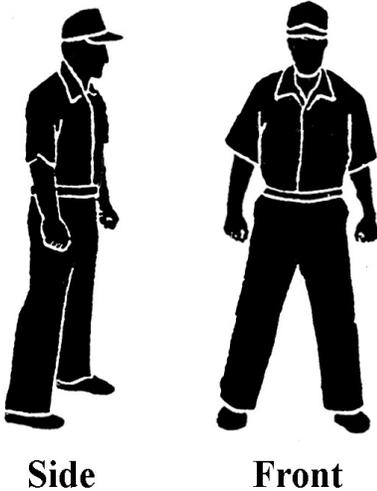
Field Positions

	<p><i>Position of Base Umpire When...</i></p> <p>60 foot diamond</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Bases empty B. Runner on 1st base C. Runner on 2nd base C. Runner on 3rd base C. Runners on 1st and 2nd C. Runners on 2nd and 3rd C. Runners on 1st and 3rd C. Runners on all bases
	<p>Position of Umpire when ball is hit to the outfield</p> <p>60 foot diamond</p> <p>Base umpire moves into the infield and watches the runners tag bases and pivots to stay ahead of the runner, not behind.</p> <p>Plate umpire moves into the infield, in the direction of the ball, only if the base umpire goes out.</p>

Set Positions



Hands on Knees Set Position



Standing Set Position

Slot Position

The purpose of the Slot Position is to give the Plate Umpire the best possible view of the strike zone while maintaining the correct head position.

Three things control the proper head position:

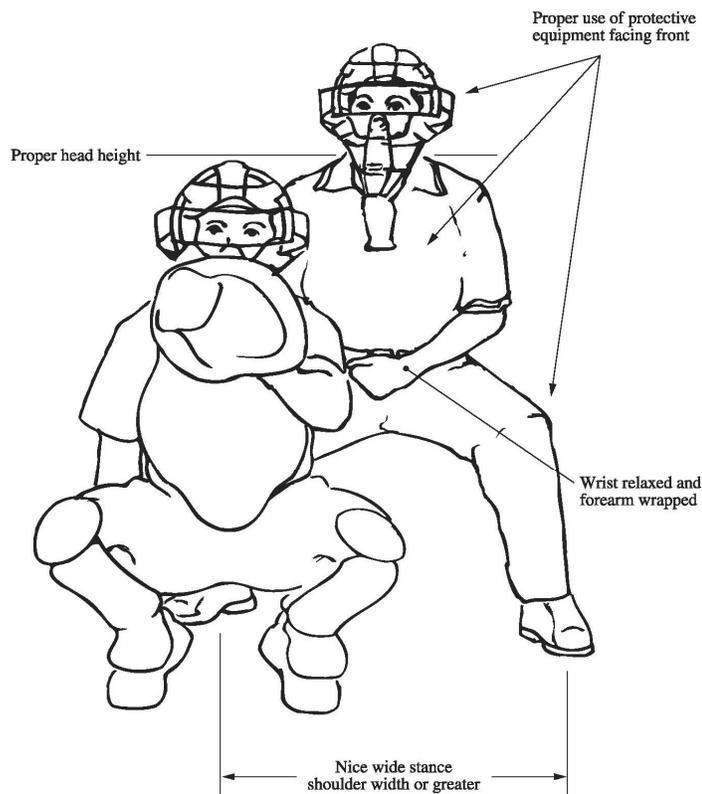
1. **The width of the stance.**
2. **The amount of squat.**
3. **Forward body lean/tilt.**

The proper slot stance (or view) is achieved by locating yourself comfortably between the batter and the catcher. The heels of the batter and the catcher's **heel** control the feet position of the umpire. The umpires' **toe**, forward foot, (**slot foot, closest to the batter**) is placed in line with the batter's **heel**, and just behind and parallel with the catcher's heel. The **toe** of the umpires' trail foot should not be further back than the **heel** of his **forward** foot. **HEEL TOE-HEEL---TOE---HEEL---TOE**

THE SLOT (FRONT VIEW)

Proper head position is controlled by

1. Width of stance
2. Amount of squat
3. Forward body tilt



THE SLOT POSITION DISCRPTION

The Plate Umpire's Slot Position is comprised of three elements;
WIDTH OF STANCE, SQUAT AND LEAN.

WIDTH OF STANCE (Heel Toe -Heel-Toe-Heel-Toe)

For a right-handed batter the left foot is the slot foot and the reverse is true for a left-handed batter.

The width of the stance should be wider than shoulder width apart, the wider the stance the less you will have to squat.

The amount of the squat should not be more than the thigh's parallel to the ground. Any more squat than this will hinder mobility.

SQUAT

When first setting up for the slot position the umpire should remember that the slot foot goes into position first, and the trail foot sets up second. The umpire should take this position when the pitcher has the ball and is standing on the pitcher's plate.

When going into the squat posture the umpire should move in one crisp movement bending at the knees keeping the back straight. Constant eye contact with the pitcher during this movement is imperative. The umpire should assume this position when the pitcher begins his pitching motion.

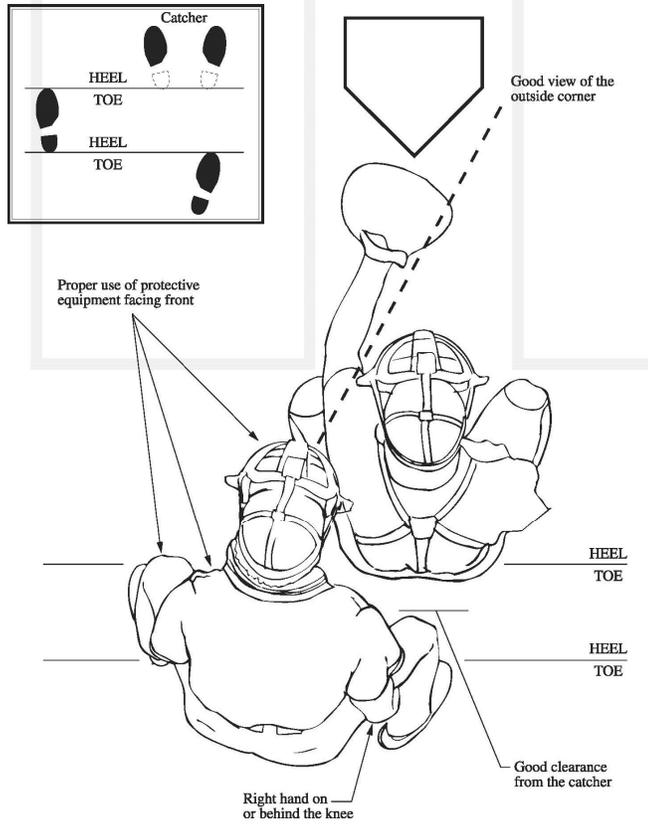
The correct location of the head is to not have the chin of the umpire below the top of the catcher's head. Head position should allow for the eyes to look straight ahead through the strike zone at the plate.

The arm closest to the batter should be wrapped in front of the body, relaxed, with the elbow tucked into the side. The free arm should grasp the upper thigh, locked into position for a firm stance.

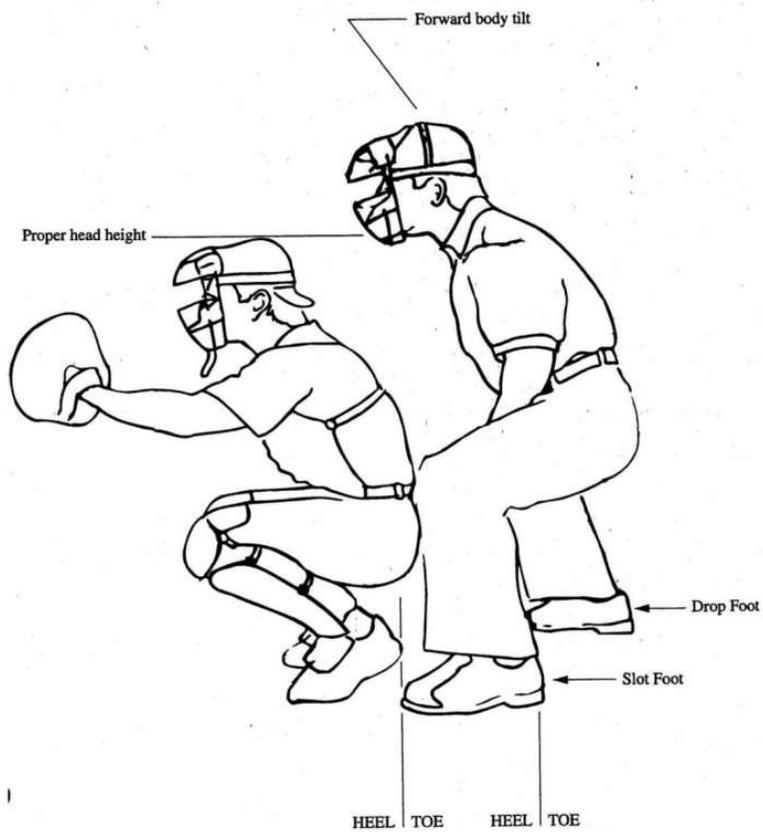
LEAN

The forward body LEAN should be very slight to correct head height and to reduce fatigue and instability. Too much LEAN and you will put strain on your shoulders and neck. You must maintain stability of the upper body.

THE SLOT (TOP VIEW)



The Slot (Side View)



Once in the squat position, minor head adjustments may be made by adjusting with the catcher by moving left, right or back and above. Once in position, lock yourself in and get ready for the pitch.

With proper feet placement and correct head height the proper use of the equipment is insured. The upper body will be facing the strike zone.

Proper use of the eyes will develop a good tracking of the ball. Every pitch should be followed completely from the pitcher's hand through the strike zone and into the catcher's glove before making a call. This is called "Tracking."

When working the slot, the plate umpire will have the best stance for "Opening the Gate" on passed balls. The consistency of the umpire will improve by repeating this movement and holding a steady head position.

Things to remember about The Slot Position

1. Proper Head Position is controlled by:
 - The width of the stance
 - The amount of the squat
 - Forward body lean
2. Proper foot location: From the catcher – Heel Toe--Heel – Toe – Heel – Toe
3. Track the ball to the glove with your eyes: Don't move your head.
4. When calling a Ball: Stay down in the squatted position.
5. When calling a Strike: Rise out of the squat position, raise your right hand in front of you, then bring it back to your ear while grabbing air, clench your fist while bringing your arm forward like you are pounding your fist on the wall and at the same time calling "STRIKE!"
6. After each pitch: Step back and relax.

Umpire Check List

1. Proper Uniform:

- Clean, Shined Black Shoes
- Black Socks
- Charcoal Gray Pants
- Black Belt
- Undershirt, matches your partner
- Umpire Jersey with Little League patch on left shoulder, matches your partner
- Umpire Cap, black
- **Plate umpire**
 - Protective Gear (shoes, leg guards inside pants, chest protector, mask, throat guard, cup)
 - Ball Bag - If you are base umpire do not wear
 - Indicator
 - Line Up Card Holder and Pen
 - Plate Brush
- **Base umpire**
 - Red Flag - 60 foot diamond only

2. Be at field 30 minutes before game time. Find your partner!

3. Hold a Pre-game umpire to umpire conference:

- Introductions
- Local ground rules, fences and trouble areas.
- Fair/Foul coverage
- Catch/No catch responsibility
- Tag-ups/Touches
- Fly balls to outfield and outfield coverage
- Coverage at 1st and 3rd bases
- Live ball (put back in play after all dead ball situations)
- Umpire positioning
- Runners lane violation
- Overthrows and awarding bases
- Infield fly

- Timing plays
- Umpire hand signals
- Inspect equipment in dugouts (safety check)
- Uncaught 3rd strike mechanics

4. Pre-Game Conference with managers at home plate:

- Introduce everyone
- Collect, review and confirm line-ups
- Review playing field ground rules
- Insure that all players are properly equipped
- Start game on time

To Players:

- Good sportsmanship and hustle on and off the field
- Helmets must be worn at all times for all offensive players on the field
- No jewelry (except for Medical Alert)
- Have fun!

To Manager/Coaches:

- Are all players properly equipped? Must say “Yes”.
- Confirm proper way to ask a clarification about rule calls and get help
- Do not leave the dugout until a proper time-out is granted
- Stay in dugout between innings (except for 1st batter up in the inning)

5. Post-Game

- Talk with your partners and critique after every game
- Be positive (do not criticize)
- Be open minded to your partners input
- Review important plays
- Assist with ejection report

Communication during a game

It is very important that umpires communicate clearly with everyone, including each other, throughout the game. They do this with calls and hand gestures called signals.

Calls

These communicate what is happening during a game and are intended for everyone to see. Some calls are voice only, some are signal only with no voice, and some are both voice and signal combined.

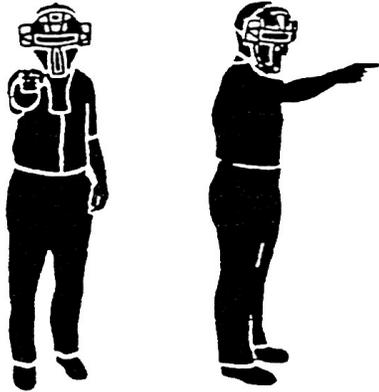
- Play
- Balls
- Strike
- Time
- Safe
- Safe, off the bag
- Out
- Out on the tag
- Fair
- Foul
- Foul tip
- No catch
- Catch
- Infield fly
- Interference
- Obstruction
- Obstruction with time
- Runner leaves base early
- Home run

Hand Signals

Umpires communicate with each other by talking and via non-verbal hand signals. This should be done often to avoid confusion and missed calls. Always echo a signal back to your partner to acknowledge you have received their signal and to confirm you agree. Contact between umpires between innings, should be minimized.

- Infield fly situation
- Number of outs
- Timing play situation
- What is the count?
- The count is
- Plate umpire will cover 3rd
- Plate umpire will stay at Home
- Check swing
- Umpire clap

Calls

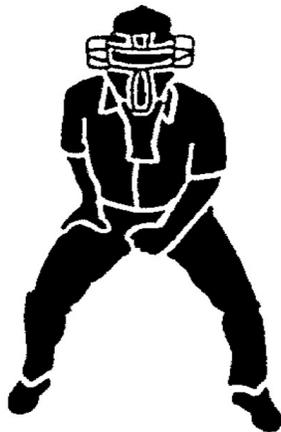


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“Play”

Called by the plate umpire only.

Starts the game or resumes the game when time is out.



“Ball”

Called while down with no arm signal.

Called without using the number. “Ball”

Not as loud as strikes.

There should be no vertical or lateral body movement to indicate location.



“Strike”

Called after rising up from the squat position.

Strikes are called loud enough to be heard in the stands.



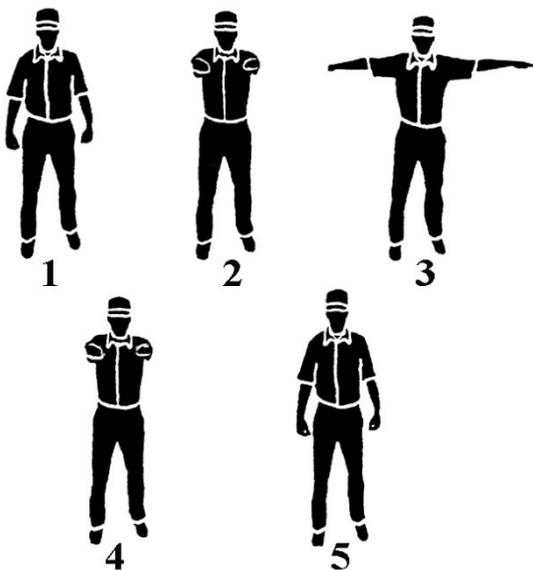
Base Umpire

Plate Umpire

“Time”

Called by plate or base umpire.

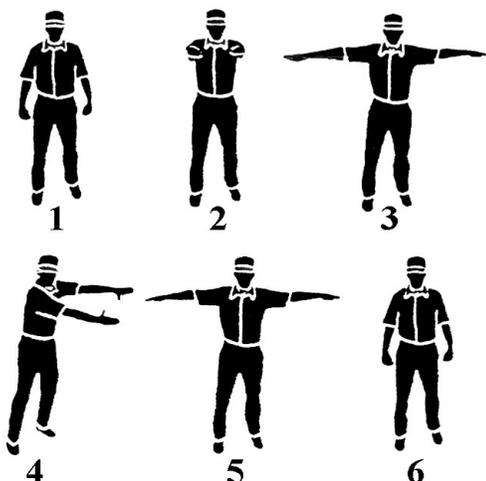
Called loud and clear.



“Safe”

Safe calls originate from the hands-on-knees set, or standing set position and may end with a return to a hands-on-knees set position after the safe call.

After making this call remain set with eyes on ball in case there is an immediate play following the safe call.



“Safe...off the bag”

Called on a play that pulls the fielder off the base.

Accompanied by a sweeping motion to indicate the call.

After making this call remain set with eyes on ball in case there is an immediate play following the safe call.



Front

Side

“He’s Out!” or “She’s Out”

Out calls originate from the hands-on-knees set, or standing set position. Make the call in a standing position.



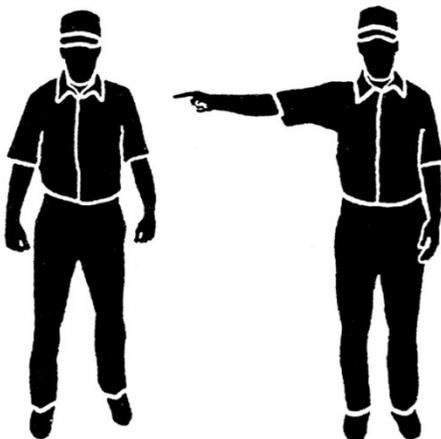
1

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3

“On the tag, He’s out!”

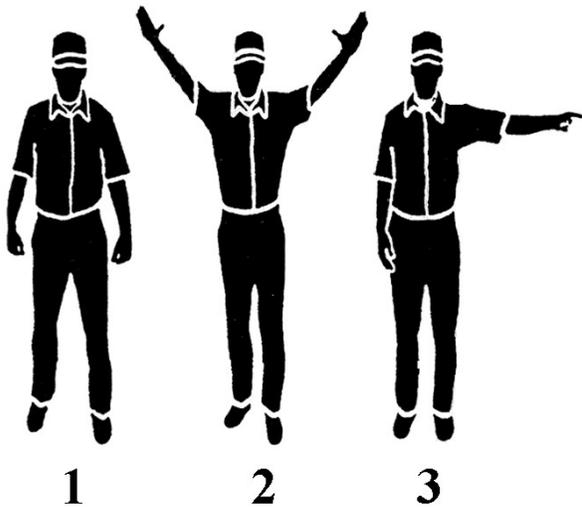
On close plays when the first baseman tags the batter runner, point to the spot of the tag and aggressively signal this call.



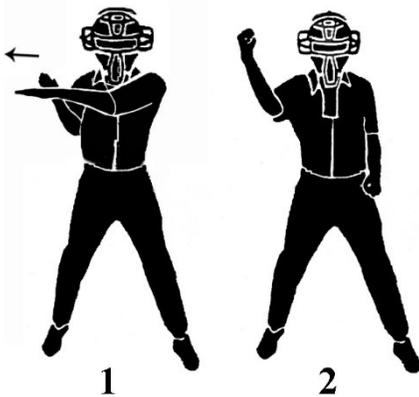
Fair Ball

No voice is used to indicate a fair ball. Indicated by pointing onto the field of play. Emphatically “pump” the signal on close calls. The call is made from the standing set position.

“Foul”

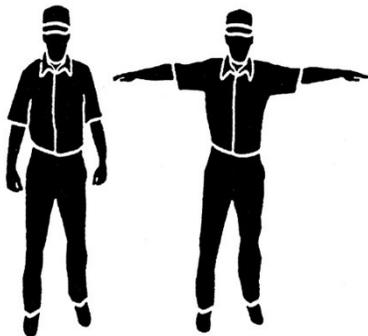


Raising both arms above the head and make the call. The closer it is the more emphatic the voice and motion. When a hit ball is caught on the fly by a fielder outside of fair territory do NOT say anything and complete the foul signal and catch signal.



Foul Tip

This is a non-verbal call used with a “strike” hand motion.



“No Catch”

Called loud and clear by the umpire that has the responsibility to make the call.



Front

Side

“That’s a catch”

Called by plate or base umpire.

Call loud and clear.



“Infield Fly” or “Infield Fly, if Fair”

Called by plate or base umpire.

Call when the ball reaches peak height.
Echo you partner if they call it.



“Time; That’s Interference”

Called by plate or base umpire.

Called immediately when it happens. Follow up verbally with any base award(s)

	<p><i>“That’s Obstruction”</i> 7.06 B</p> <p>Called by plate or base umpire when a play is not being made on a runner.</p> <p>Call loud and clear. Point at offender and let play continue. Any base awards are done after play concludes and time is called.</p>
	<p><i>“Time! That’s obstruction”</i> 7.06A</p> <p>Called by plate or base umpire when a play is being made on a runner.</p> <p>Call loud and clear. Stop all play immediately.</p> <p>Base awards are done immediately.</p>



Runner Leaves Base Early

Called by base umpire only.

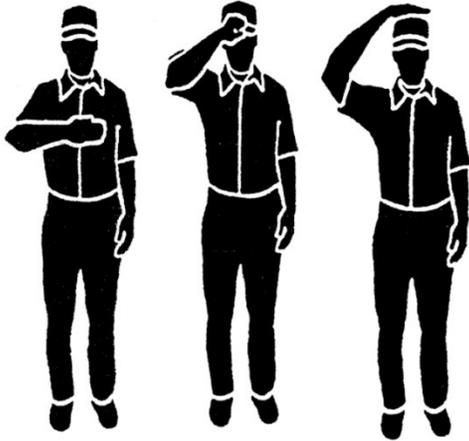
Drop red flag from pocket. This is a non-verbal (no voice) call. Let play continue, when all play has stopped enforce the violation if any.



Home Run

Indicates that the hit ball went over the fence

Signals



Infield Fly Situation

Indicates 3 different ways to signal your partner that all the Infield Fly conditions exist.



Number of Outs

Done with every new batter and only necessary if runners are on base.



Timing Play Situation

Indicates to your partner that you both must be aware the timing between when a runner reaches home plate and when the third out is made.



What is the Count?

Discretely asks your partner to tell you what they have for the current count of balls and strikes.



The Count is

Discretely tells your partner what you have as the current count of balls and strikes.



Plate umpire will cover 3rd

Indicates to the base umpire that the plate umpire will handle any calls at third base.



***Plate umpire will stay
at Home Plate***

Indicates that the plate umpire intends to only cover home plate. Indicate number of outs with number of fingers.



Check Swing

Plate umpire steps out from behind catcher, points to base umpire with left hand, and asks, "Did he go?"



Clap

Tells your partner that you think they did a good job or made a good call.

Key Communication Terminology

Batting:

“Ball. No, he didn’t go”

Plate Umpire: Check swing – not a strike – give count

“Yes, he went”

Plate Umpire: Check swing – strike, with hand signal – give count.

“Did he go?”

Plate Umpire: Left hand pointing to partner, never right hand

“Yes, he did” or “No he didn’t”

Base Umpire: Do hand signal for out or safe at the same time.

Ball hit down right field line: (80 or 90 foot diamond)

“I’m going out”

Base Umpire: Go out on Trouble Ball, Fair/Foul, close Catch/No Catch

“I’ve got the plate” or “I’m at home”

Base Umpire: Gone out and comes back to cover home

Infield Fly:

“Infield fly, the batter is out”

Either Umpire: Echo your partner. Make sure runners hear you.

“Infield fly, if fair”

Either Umpire but in most circumstances the plate umpire: Echo you partner. Make sure runners hear you.

Rundowns:

“I’ve got it all”

Plate Umpire: Rundown with multiple runners between home and 3rd

“I’ve got this half”

Plate Umpire: Rundown with runner on third or first only.

Runner 1st to 3rd

“I’ve got 3rd if he comes”

Plate Umpire: Watch R1 if he turns 2nd – stay in foul territory, repeats twice.

“I’ve got 3rd”

Plate Umpire: As play develops at 3rd – be ready at 3rd

“I’ve got the ball”

Plate Umpire: Going down 3rd base line on a fly ball

“I’m on the line”

Plate Umpire: going down 1st base line on fly ball and will not be at 3rd should the runner advance to 3rd.

“Going Home”

Plate Umpire: As soon as play at 3rd is finished and returning to HP

Runners 1st and 2nd fly ball to outfield: (80/90 foot diamond)

“I’ve got 3rd if he tags”

Plate Umpire: your call only if fly ball is caught

“Going home”

Plate Umpire: As soon as ball not caught.

Timing Plays:

“Run scores. Run scores. Score that run!”

Plate Umpire: Point at home plate to let scorekeeper know

“No run. No run”

Plate Umpire: Wave off – above the head and shoulders, not a safe signal - let scorekeeper know

Close plays on fly balls:

“No catch. No catch”

Proper Umpire: On a close play give safe signal

“That’s a catch”

Proper Umpire: On a close play – really sell it – give out signal

Miscellaneous:

“That’s a balk” (not in Minor or Major Divisions)

Base Umpire: Stand – Point at pitcher – Back to hands on knees set. When all action has stopped stand, call time, say “That’s a Balk” and make the proper awards.

Plate Umpire: Hold position - Do not stand up. When all action has stopped stand, call time, say “That’s a Balk” and make the proper awards.

“On the tag, He’s out!”

Base Umpire: Only on swipe tag, and never on a tag between bases

“Safe, off the bag, SAFE!”

Base umpire: Make the call – with a motion of the direction the fielder was off the bag.

“Safe, no tag, SAFE!”

Base Umpire: Make the call – with a vigorous safe mechanic motion – sell it

“Foul”

Plate Umpire: Hands forward shoulder height, palms forward.

“Time”

Plate/Base Umpire: Hands forward shoulder height, palms forward.

“Play”

Plate Umpire: Right hand point at pitcher with verbal “Play”

Obstruction/Interference:

“That’s obstruction”

“Time, that’s obstruction”

“Time, that’s interference”

Special Terminology:

“Backswing hit the catcher”

“Illegal Pitch”

“That’s a ball! You went to your mouth!” or “Pitcher went to his mouth!”

Handling Conflicts FAQ

What separates the top umpires from other umpires?

Is their ability to handle people well.

What is the one thing that separates umpires from everyone else?

They don't care who wins.

What are the 5 reasons a Manager will come out to discuss a call?

- Thinks you missed a play
- Misinterprets a rule
- To protect or support a player
- Wants the umpire to bail his team out of a mistake
- Wants to impress the crowd

What are the worst things you can do when a Manager does come out?

- Say, "You can't come out here it's a judgment call"
- Say, "I don't know" or, "I did not see it"

What are some things an Umpire can do when a Manager does come out?

- Calm them down. "I'm not going to listen if you are going to YELL at me"
- Listen without interpretation and keep eye contact.
- Don't ask confrontational questions. "What did you say?"
- Ask them, "What is the rule that applies to this situation?"

Should you ever admit you missed a call?

- Be careful (know who you are talking to/as a general rule)
- DO NOT admit you missed a call or did not see it
- Here are some possible answers: "Right or wrong that's the call and I am not going to change it", "From where I had to make the call that's what I saw", "It was a tough call, I did the best I could with it" or "In my judgment that is the right call"

NOTE: If a Manager gets angry you might say; "OK, you had your say, now please go back to the dugout so we can continue the game" and walk away. If he follows; warn him back to the dugout, if necessary, eject him. Remember that Managers that disagree with a rule call can file a protest and continue play without delay. No arguing or protesting of judgment calls is allowed per the rules.

What should you do about sniper fire from the dugout?

- First time, look at dugout, mask on, maintain position
- Next time, remove mask, look at dugout, maintain position
- Next time, remove mask, a couple of steps, “I’ve heard enough”. Do not threaten.
- If it is from a player don’t eject anyone unless you know for sure that they are the guilty one. Ask the Manager to deal with his players. Sit them down on the bench a warn to be quiet

When should you go for help?

- If everyone starts going nuts after a call.
 - Example: Play at the Plate. Dropped ball. Plate umpire did not see drop. Manager comes out. If you (base umpire) saw what happened, stop the Manager. Get together with partner and tell what you saw. Not changing his call, just providing information he may not have. If the call is changed DO NOT let the other Manager get involved because you did not allow the first Manager to come out. You can say, “what are you doing out here?”
 - Example: If Manager does come out and you go for help. Say, “I’m going to ask my partner if he saw it differently. If he did, I will change the call, but if he didn’t then we are done and you going back to the dugout.”
- Go for help if you are totally screened out of the play.
- Don’t let your partner die with an obvious wrong call such as dropped ball on a tag or pulled foot at 1st base.

What should you do about Zoo Situations?

- Umpire should not make a call putting a runner into jeopardy. Example: runner at first, catch/no catch, no one makes a call, now two runners at 1st, runners hung up!
 - Call time, get umpires together and reconstruct the play around what could have been expected to happen if umpires would have made the catch/no catch call immediately. Then get both coaches together and tell them what the ruling is (right or wrong – no discussion that’s what we have). Try to give them each a “piece of the pie”

- Eject a player for language and Manger asks what he said.

“I will tell you, but if you repeat it or you act in a manner that you agree with him you are going with him. Now do you still want me to tell you what he said?”

What should you do about a pitcher showing emotion?

- Call time, brush the plate and quietly send a message through the catcher
- Get the Manager and pitcher together between innings
- Last resort – Warning next incident ejection

What should you do about a batter drawing lines or other displeasure?

- Don't embarrass yourself – warn him so both benches can hear.
- Resolve right away

What should you do about a catcher holding pitches and other displeasure?

- Stop it immediately. Tell him to get the ball back to the pitcher.
- Don't let him turn around on you
- If Manger asks, "where was that pitch catcher?" – Inform catcher you are going to tell him what to say
- Let the catcher talk to the Manager, he has more credibility

When you get together with the other umpire, between innings, after a close play you are signally everyone:

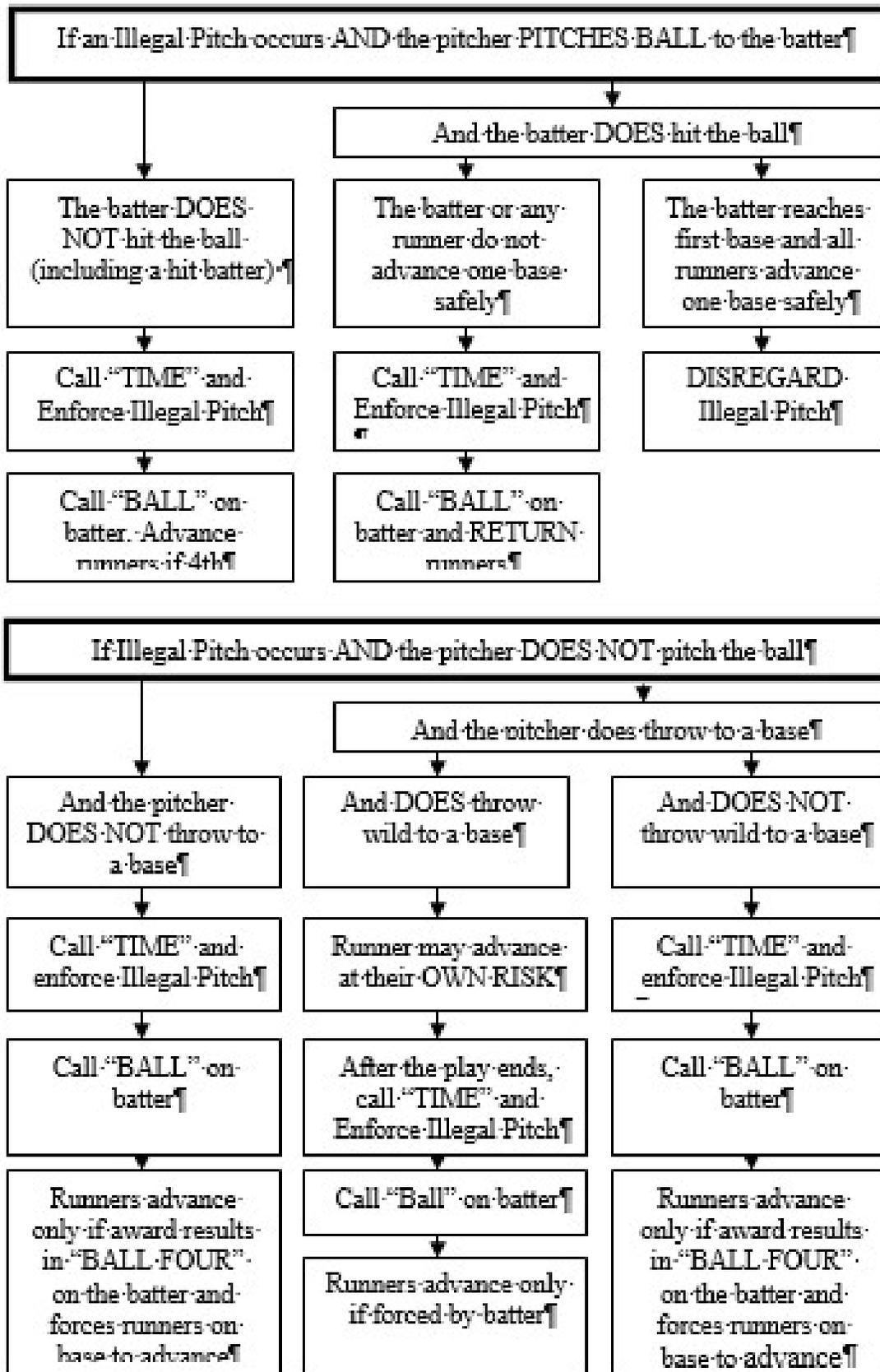
- You don't know what happened or you're not sure.
- You're not sure you made the right call.

Guidelines to avoid trouble

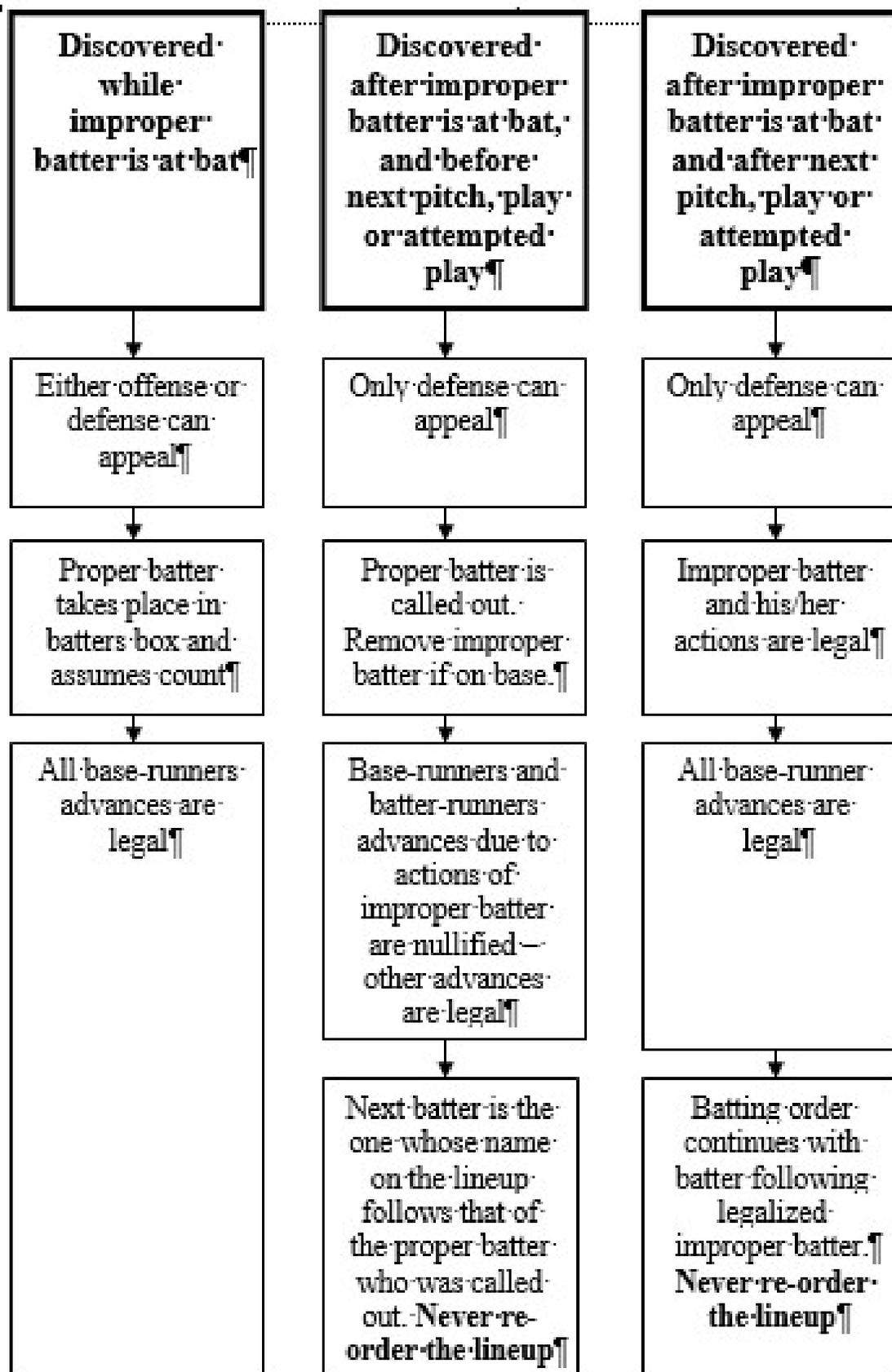
- **Dress and act professionally**. It will make you look right, even if you are not.
- Do a **pre-game meeting** at the plate with the team managers.
- You **must** keep calm even when others are not. If you lose your cool you lose everything!
- Let Managers and coaches have their say – **be approachable**.
- When you are done, **walk away**.
- If you warn someone, **follow through** or you lose credibility. The other dugout and fans are watching you
- Do **not** be a tough guy, wise guy, or smart aleck.

Remember, if you are not having fun find something else to volunteer to do! It's just a game!

Illegal Pitch¶



Batting Out of Order



Terms of the Art of Umpiring

Plate Umpire:

- **Slot Position** – Space between the batter and catcher.
- **Head Height** – Umpire's chin no lower than the top of the catcher's head.
- **Position of Feet** – Umpire's heel toe, heel toe, in relation to catchers' heel.
- **Slot Foot** – The umpires' foot closest to the batter. The umpire should step into the slot with the slot foot first.
- **Tracking** – Watching the ball from the release point of the pitcher's hand through the strike zone and into the catchers' glove. Let your brain develop and determine the value of the pitch that your eyes just saw.
- **Timing** – Keeping your eyes on the catcher's glove looking for possession and control, while standing up and making the signal, (proper use of eyes).
- **Voice** – Coincide your voice with your strike mechanic (stand up on strikes, and stay down on ball calls).
- **Mechanics** – Use one full motion. Stand up all the way, especially if you are not very tall and use a crisp, aggressive signal. Snap it off don't be lazy.
- **Use of Equipment** – Indicator in the left hand with the mask. Slot foot first pointing directly at the pitcher. Shin guards, shoulders and head level with chest protector facing the pitcher.
- **Live Ball** – Always put the ball back in play, every time the ball becomes dead.
- **Judgment/Consistency** – Proper use of eyes. Seeing and calling plays; Relaxing, concentrating, and using maintaining basic mechanics.
- **Aggressiveness** – Hustle but stay in control. Good strong voice, keep, and maintain your composure.
- **Body Language** – Stay aggressive. Stand straight have confidence and remember to not show emotion, don't let your mistakes show, but have fun.
- **Proper use of eyes** – Don't stare, relax your eyes and follow the ball and the play; don't anticipate your calls. Use your eyes and don't move your head or body.

□ **Half Swing Mechanics** – “Ball, no he didn’t go” or “Yes he went” Never go for help on a strike check swing. Step away from the catcher and point with your left arm.

□ **Foul Tip** – There is no verbal voice command, just a strike signal.

Plate and Base Umpire Responsibilities (60ft. 70 ft., and 90ft. diamonds)

□ **Fair/Foul** – Any batted ball that settles or is touched before reaching first base. All batted balls down the first and third base line with runners on base are Plate Umpire responsibilities.

□ **Catch/No Catch 60’ Diamond** – Plate umpire has all fly balls to the outfield unless with no runners on, the base umpire goes out from the “A” position on trouble balls. Plate Umpire has all fly balls to the infield, except line drives to an infielder coming directly towards the base umpire.

□ **Catch/No Catch 90’ Diamond** - Plate umpire has all fly balls to the outfield unless the base umpire goes out on trouble balls or calls off the plate umpire if he/she is inside. Plate Umpire has all fly balls to the infield, except line drives to an infielder coming directly towards the base umpire.

□ **Trouble Balls** – *A fly that has includes:* Left or right fielders running toward the foul lines. Fly balls or line drives hit to fielders that could be caught below the waist. Any fly ball that a fielder has to turn their back on to field. More than one fielder converging on a fly ball. Any ball hit to the outfield fence or home run.

□ **Touching Bases** – Plate Umpire has touches and tag-ups at third on all runners except the batter-runner, and all runners if base umpire goes out.

□ **Overthrows** – Plate Umpire will move parallel with the ball on overthrows at first base, but not always at third base to determine out of play situations.

□ **30- and 45-Foot Line** – Plate Umpire responsible for all calls down the first base line up to the 30- and 45-foot line and all runner lane violations; helps base umpire by watching for pulled foot, swipe tags, interference and obstruction at first base.

□ **Pick-off and Steals** – The plate umpire has no pick-off responsibility. Is responsible for steal of home only, and can help out on rundowns at first and third if play situation allows.

□ **Covering Bases** – Plate helps on plays at third or first to third situations. Tag-up situations with runners on first and second with less than two outs. Stays home anytime there are runners in scoring position

on hits to the outfield and when there are two outs for timing play situations.

□ **Rundowns** – Plate Umpire is responsible to help on rundowns between first, second, third, and home. The proper terminology is “I’ve got this half” on a rundown between first and second and “I’ve got it all” on a rundown between third and home if there are multiple runners.

General Terminology

□ **Clearing the Catcher** – Plate Umpire will open up a pathway to allow the catcher a clear path to the ball. Usually the catcher will go in the direction of the ball.

□ **Opening the Gate** – Plate Umpire will use the drop foot technique to open himself/herself up to give the catcher a clear path to the ball.

□ **Drop Foot** – The left or right foot of the umpire will use to move back and behind to establish a new direction of travel.

□ **Imaginary Box** – The area in front of home plate which begins at the 30 foot (60’ diamond) 45 foot (90’ diamond) on the right field foul line, extending to the edge of the pitcher’s mound circle 10 feet (60’ diamond) 18 feet (90’ diamond) then extending and ending at the mid-left field foul line.

□ **Working Area** – The rectangle area 10’ X 5” (60’ diamond) 17’ X 8’ (90’ diamond) behind the pitcher’s mound between the pitcher’s mound and second base

□ **Library** – That area in foul territory along the first or third base line where the plate umpire waits and reads the on-going action on the field.

□ **Straight lined** – An umpire is straight lined if a runner or a fielder blocks his/her line of sight on a call.

10 Commandments of Umpiring

1. Keep your eyes on the ball.
2. Keep all personalities out of your work. Forget and forgive.
3. Avoid sarcasm. Don't insist on the last word.
4. Never charge a player, and above all, no pointing your finger and yelling.
5. Hear only the things you should hear – be deaf to others.
6. Keep your temper. A decision made in anger is never sound.
7. Watch your language.
8. Take pride in your work at all times. Respect for an umpire is created both off and on the field.
9. Review your work. You will find that 90% of the trouble is traceable to not hustling or staying focused.
10. No matter what your opinion is of another umpire never make an adverse comment regarding them. To do so is unprofessional.

THE FOUR LEVELS OF UMPIRING

Unconscious- Incompetent (You are lousy but DON'T know it)

You are new to umpiring, maybe you were a player and feel you have a good grasp of the game and its rules. In reality, you are fooling yourself because you do not know how or what to do, even though you think you do. Usually it's a one- or two-time assignment because you are NOT having fun, and don't know why.

Conscious - Incompetent (You are lousy but now you know it)

You've been to some clinics and realize you have a long way to go to be proficient. You now understand that there is more to umpiring than "Balls and Strikes". Umpires often abandon umpiring at this point due to discouragement. Other Umpires and UIC's need to encourage the good prospects to stay with their training.

Conscious – Competent (You MUST think about and focus on your umpiring to be proficient)

Most 'Long Term', good and bad, Umpires are in this range. You've been to enough clinics to know what to do in most situations, but must work hard to stay focused on what's going on in the game. You know you are getting better every day. The Good Umpires want to do better, so they work hard and study to be a SMART UMPIRE on the field. This is the largest group of Intramural Umpires

Unconscious – Competent (You no longer need to think about your umpiring. It is automatic and second nature.)

Very few Umpires ever get to this level. Professional MLB Umpires reach this level after many years of hard, dedicated, work. It's similar to the way we drive our vehicles... we can do several OTHER things and still drive using all the necessary mechanics and most of the 'rules of the road'. ALL good Umpires want to get here, but very few make it. This is the smallest group of Umpires

Leagues of California District 4

