

Umpire Fundamentals

Home Field Instruction

Umpiring

The only profession where you have to be perfect the first day and get better from there.

Fellow Umpire,

Thank you for choosing to provide your umpire skills to your community. Your knowledge of the rules, game day demeanor and interpersonal skills are the key to making each officiated game a success.

I expect both rookie and veteran umpires to sharpen their umpiring skills each year. Studying and appropriately applying the rules will help earn the respect of coaches and parents alike. Players and coaches must see consistency in your officiating of the game, especially as a collective umpire group, in order for them to stay focused on playing this great game. Support your fellow umpire at all times and learn from each other.

In summary, you are charged with governing each game in a manner that generates respect for you and for the game of baseball. Your local organization needs your professional talent to have successful seasons year after year.

Thank you again for your efforts and dedication.
Have Fun and "Let's Play Ball"!

Best Regards,

Doug Schaaf

Home Field Instruction Umpire Academy

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Answers to Worksheet Questions –
available at HomeFieldInstruction.com

under
construction
online

Preparation: the personal priority

Umpire Dress Code

As an umpire, you are expected to follow this dress code at all times.

CLASS 1 YOUTH UMPIRE UNIFORM

- Hat with Umpire logo
- Issued Shirt with Umpire logo
- Black or khaki pants/shorts
- Closed toe shoes (cleats not necessary)
- Pants **MUST** be worn behind the plate

CLASS 2 NFHAA CERTIFIED UMPIRE UNIFORM

- OHSAA required uniform or
- ASA required uniform

UMPIRE EQUIPMENT

- Athletic supporter and cup
- Ball Bag
- Black shoes (plate shoes recommended when working the plate)
- Chest Protector (must be worn under uniform shirt)
- Counter
- Facemask (hockey style is acceptable)
- Leg guards (must be worn **under** pants)
- Pen
- Plate-brush
- Small towel to dry/clean muddy balls
- Watch
- Water bottle on very hot days

NEVER

- Jewelry (except wristwatch.)
- Piercings
- Ungroomed hair
- Sloppy, wrinkled clothing

ALWAYS

- Leave your cell phone in your bag. Do not use it for a clock. **EVER.**

**Professionalism and respect go hand-in-hand,
so keep your uniforms and equipment in clean, working order at all times.**

Expectations of an Umpire: Do's & Don'ts

1. When you arrive at the park

- Arrive 15 minutes, or more, prior to game time.
- Get into uniform ASAP.
- Introduce yourself to your partner.
- Discuss the field and signals with your partner.
 - This enables the proper umpire to right a wrong decision when convinced he has made an error.
 - If you are sure that you ruled correctly on the play, do not be persuaded by players' or coaches' appeals to "ask the other man."
 - If you are not sure, ask your other umpire. Do not carry this to extremes. Be alert and get your own plays.
 - But remember! The first requirement is to get decisions correctly.
 - If in doubt, don't hesitate to consult your fellow umpire.
 - Umpire dignity is important but never as important as "getting the call right."
- If possible, get the game balls prior to the plate meeting.

2. The Do's

- Show up to the field on time and in full uniform, **ready to serve**.
- At the plate meeting always introduce your umpires by their first names and refer to each other and the managers in conversations at the plate by their first name.
- Treat all participants impartially, courteously, and with respect.
 - Make all decisions as you see them and forget which is the home or visiting team.
 - This demeanor will compel respect from all.
- Act professionally while in uniform regardless of where you are, **including the restroom and snack stand**.
- Work hard on every pitch; be active and alert, communicating vocally and clearly.
 - Stay mobile. A plate umpire who remains behind the plate at all times will sooner or later place his partner in jeopardy.
- BE IN POSITION TO SEE EVERY PLAY.
- Always keep your voice under control.
- Even though your decision may be 100% right, players still question it if they feel you were not in a spot to see the play clearly and definitely.
- Leave immediately following the game.

3. The Don'ts

- Do not be late.
- Do not act arrogantly.
- Do not even up bad calls.
- Do not come running with your arm up or down, denoting "out" or "safe." Wait until the play is completed before making any arm motion.
- Do not wear sunglasses.
- Do not put your hands in your pockets while on the field.
- Never engage a coach, player, or spectator in argument or conversation during a game.
- Do not allow criticism to keep you from studying out bad situations that may lead to protested games. Carry your rule book. It is better to consult the rules and hold up the game ten minutes to decide a serious problem than to have a game thrown out on protest and replayed.
- Never comment negatively about another umpire!

4. Game Control

- Start the game on time.
- When you enter a ballgame, your sole duty is to umpire the game as the representative of baseball.
- Keep the game moving.
- Keep your eye always on the ball while it is in play. It is more vital to know just where a fly ball fell, or a thrown ball finished up, than whether or not a runner missed a base. Do not call the plays too quickly, or turn away too fast when a fielder is throwing to complete a double play. Watch out for dropped balls after you have called a man out.
- Your enthusiasm, energetic and earnest work will spread. So will your lack of it.
- Deal with issues quietly before they become a problem that has to be dealt with not-so-quietly.
- Be respectful in discharging of your duties.
- You are the only official representative of baseball on the ball field. It is often a trying position which requires the exercise of much patience and good judgment, but do not forget that the first essential in working out of a bad situation is to keep your own temper and self-control.
- Project your calls loudly. (A quiet umpire will be attacked by those who think they know better.)
- The base umpire must concentrate on the touches and tags at first and second base for all runners and be aware of when the touch and tag at third is his call.
- Angle is your priority, distance is secondary. You can get too close to a tag.
- Focus on what is being tagged. You should see all other action in your peripheral vision.
- The plate umpire must communicate every "Catch" and "No-Catch" situation, since often the base umpire will not be aligned fully with the ball. Ideally the base umpire will achieve an alignment that allows him to see the runners and the touch of the ball by the fielders. This is the ideal for which all base umpires should aim. In the two-umpire system, it does not always happen that way.

5. Ejections

A coach, player, or spectator must be ejected for the following.

- Physical Contact with an umpire.
- Intent to injure, including fighting.
- Foul language directed at an official, fan, player or coach.
- Throwing of Equipment

Your responsibilities don't end with the ejection. You MUST fill out an electronic Incident Report. Do not paraphrase. Write out exactly, word for word, what was said to you and what YOU said.

Lightning and Inclement Weather



• **Evacuation-** If lightning is imminent or a thunderstorm is approaching, all personnel, athletes and spectators shall evacuate to available safe structures or shelters.

• **Thirty-minute rule-** Competition or practice shall be suspended once lightning has been recognized or thunder is heard. It is required to

wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed, or thunder is heard, prior to resuming practice or competition. Given the average rates of thunderstorm travel, the storm should move 10-12 miles away from the area. This significantly reduces the risk of local lightning flashes.

****Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count shall reset the clock, and another count shall begin.**

Concussions, Head Injury and the Law

www.nfhslearn.com In the middle of the home page, click on Concussion Courses on right.

Scroll down and click View Course on “Concussion in Sports” designed for Officials.

It is an Elective Course, and you will need to select OHIO and click “Order Course” to view it. Follow the prompts to Buy the course. It is a FREE course, but you have to click “Buy” to get it. It will take less than an hour to complete.

There are several other FREE beneficial courses available on this website that you should consider viewing.

ORC 3707.511 [Effective 4/26/2013] Concussion awareness, organizations. (excerpts from www.codes.ohio.gov/orc/3707.511)

(C)(1) No individual shall act as a coach or referee for a youth sports organization unless the individual holds a pupil-activity program permit issued under section 3319.303 of the Revised Code for coaching interscholastic athletics or presents evidence that the individual has successfully completed, within the previous three years, a training program in recognizing the symptoms of concussions and head injuries to which the department of health has provided a link on its internet web site under section 3707.52 of the Revised Code.

(2) The youth sports organization for which the individual intends to act as a coach or referee shall inform the individual of the requirement described in division (C)(1) of this section.

(D) If an individual practicing for or competing in an athletic event organized by a youth sports organization exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with having sustained a concussion or head injury while participating in the practice or competition, the individual shall be removed from the practice or competition by one of the following:

- (1) The individual who is serving as the individual's coach during that practice or competition;
- (2) An individual who is serving as a referee during that practice or competition;
- (3) An official of the youth sports organization who is supervising that practice or competition.

(E)(1) If an individual is removed from practice or competition under division (D) of this section, the coach, referee, or official who removed the individual shall not allow the individual, on the same day the individual is removed, to return to that practice or competition or to participate in any other practice or competition for which the coach, referee, or official is responsible. Thereafter, the coach, referee, or official shall not allow the student to return to that practice or competition or to participate in any other practice or competition for which the coach, referee, or official is responsible until both of the following conditions are satisfied:

- (a) The individual's condition is assessed by any of the following who has complied with the requirements in division (E)(4) of this section:
 - (i) A physician;
 - (ii) A licensed health care professional the youth sports organization, pursuant to division (E)(2) of this section, authorizes to assess an individual who has been removed

training and procedures in youth sports

from practice or competition under division (D) of this section;

(iii) A licensed health care professional who meets the minimum education requirements established by rules adopted under section 3707.521 of the Revised Code by the professional's licensing agency.

(b) The individual receives written clearance that it is safe for the individual to return to practice or competition from the physician or licensed health care professional who assessed the individual's condition.

(2) A youth sports organization may authorize a licensed health care professional to make an assessment or grant a clearance for purposes of division (E)(1) of this section only if the professional is acting in accordance with one of the following, as applicable to the professional's authority to practice in this state:

- (a) In consultation with a physician;
- (b) Pursuant to the referral of a physician;
- (c) In collaboration with a physician;
- (d) Under the supervision of a physician.

(3) A physician or licensed health care professional who makes an assessment or grants a clearance for purposes of division (E)(1) of this section may be a volunteer.

(4) Beginning one year after the effective date of this amendment, all physicians and licensed health care professionals who conduct assessments and clearances under division (E)(1) of this section must meet the minimum education requirements established by rules adopted under section 3707.521 of the Revised Code by their respective licensing agencies.

(F)(1) A youth sports organization or official, employee, or volunteer of a youth sports organization, including a coach or referee, is not liable in damages in a civil action for injury, death, or loss to person or property allegedly arising from providing services or performing duties under this section, unless the act or omission constitutes willful or wanton misconduct.

(2) This section does not eliminate, limit, or reduce any other immunity or defense that a public entity, public official, or public employee may be entitled to under Chapter 2744. or any other provision of the Revised Code or under the common law of this state.

Amended by 130th General Assembly File No. TBD, HB 487, §1, eff. 9/17/2014.

Amended by 130th General Assembly File No. 25, HB 59, §101.01 (Vetoed), eff. 9/29/2013.

Added by 129th General Assembly File No.192, HB 143, §1, eff. 4/26/2013.

Definitions and Descriptions

Appeal: The act of the defense in claiming the offense has missed a base or batted out of order.

Ruling: If you agree and proper procedure is followed, the runner that missed his base shall be declared out.
See Batting Out of Order.

General Principles

- MUST be made while the ball is alive or dead.
- Must be an unmistakable verbal request.
- Must be made before the next pitch, play or attempted play.
- Must be made before the defense leaves the field.
- Never draw the attention of the defense to an appeal play.
- If more than one runner crosses a base, the defense must identify on which runner they are appealing.
- A second appeal on the same runner at the same base shall not be allowed.
- May require an umpire to recognize a “fourth out.” If two runners arrive at home at about the same time and the first runner misses home plate, but a second runner legally touches the plate, the first runner is tagged out on his attempt to come back and touch the base, or is called out, on appeal, then he shall be considered as having been put out before the second runner scored and being the third out.
Second runner’s run shall not count;
- Remember appeal outs affect how many runs score.

“**But Ump, he was out,**” is not an appeal; **it’s a whine.**

Defense loses the right to appeal when

- They throw the ball out of play;
- The pitcher Balks during an appeal;
- They make a play prior to the appeal that is not during the continuous action of the runner missing the base.

Balk: See Pitching Rules

Ball: A pitch which does not enter the strike zone in flight and is not struck at by the batter.

Base Awards

Types of Base Awards -

4 base award - over the fence in fair territory - home run;

3 base award - defense touches a batted ball with a thrown piece of equipment;

2 base award - defense touches a thrown ball with a thrown piece of equipment, Overthrows out of play - Time of Pitch verses Time of Throw, Ground Rule Double.

- If the first play by an infielder, ball is thrown out of play
 - All runners are awarded 2 BASES from the time of the PITCH.
- If the second play by an infielder, or any play by an outfielder, i.e. – turning a double play
 - All runners are awarded 2 BASES from the time of the THROW.

1 base award - A walk, a hit by pitch, a fielder falls into the stands (foul) and takes ball out of play, pitcher attempts to pick off a runner while on the rubber and ball goes out of play,

- If the pitcher is determined to be off of the rubber, then he is considered an infielder.

When awarding bases, start with the runner nearest to home plate. This avoids log jams on the bases.

Batter-Runner: Term to identify the offensive player that just finished his time at bat until he is put out or until the play on which he became a runner ends. The term is used to help in interpreting the rule book.

Batter's Box: The area within which the batter shall stand during his time at bat.

Key Points about the Batter's Box


- The batter's legal position shall be with both feet within the batter's box. The lines defining the box are WITHIN the batter's box.
- The batter shall take his position in the batter's box promptly when it is his time at bat.
- If a batter refuses to take his position in the batter's box during his time at bat, the umpire shall order the pitcher to pitch and shall call "Strike" on each pitch. The batter may take his proper position after any such pitch, and the regular ball and strike count shall continue. BUT, if the batter does not take his proper position before three strikes are called, he shall be declared out.
- The batter shall not leave his position in the batter's box after the pitcher comes to set position or starts his wind up.
- Penalty: If the pitcher pitches, the umpire shall call "Ball" or "Strike" as the case may be.
- If, after the pitcher starts his wind up or comes to a set position with a runner on base, he does not go through with his pitch because the batter has stepped out of the box, it shall not be called a balk. Both the pitcher and batter have violated a rule. The umpire shall call time and both the batter and pitcher shall start over "from scratch."

A batter is out for illegal action when:

- He hits a ball with one or both feet on the ground entirely outside the batter's box.
- He steps from one batter's box to the other while the pitcher is in position ready to pitch.

Batting Order: Each player of the side at bat shall become a batter in the order that his/her name appears on the line-up card.

Batting Out of Order: Batting out of order is an appeal, which must be made by the manager, coach or player of the defensive team only, before the next pitch, play or attempted play. The defensive team loses its right to appeal when ALL INFIELDERS (pitchers included) have left their normal playing positions (having crossed into foul territory).

 See Appendix for Batting Out of Order Flow Chart and Case Studies.

Situations for Batting Out of Order:

- 1. If the error is discovered while the incorrect batter is at bat, then**
 - a. Proper batter replaces the improper batter.
 - b. Proper batter assumes current ball/strike count.
 - c. Any scoring or advancing of base runners by any action is legal and will stand regardless of actions involving improper batter. (Example: Runner advancing by a stolen base or a balk will stand.)
 - i. Exception: actions resulting from improper batter becoming a base runner, such as being hit by a pitch.
- 2. If the error is discovered after the incorrect batter has completed his turn at bat and before a pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown to another batter, then**
 - a. Proper batter (player who should have batted) is ruled out, not the improper batter.
 - b. Batter due up is the batter who follows the proper batter who was called out.
 - i. Yes, this could be the player who just batted improperly.
 - ii. If the batter declared out under these circumstances is the 3rd out, the correct batter in the next inning shall be the player who would have come to bat had the player been put out by ordinary play.
 - c. The results of the improper batter's time at bat are cancelled.
 - i. Any advance or score made because of a ball batted by the improper batter or because of the improper batter's advance to 1st base on a hit, error, a base on balls or a hit batter shall be nullified.
 - ii. All runners return to the bases they occupied prior to the pitch.
 - d. Advances independent of the improper batter are legal. (stolen base, passed ball)
- 3. If the error is discovered after**
 - a. the first pitch (legal or illegal) to the next batter or

- b. any play or attempted play not in conjunction with, or a continuing action of, the play resulting from the improper batter's time at bat (ex. pick-off to first base) then
 - i. No one is called out for failure to bat.
 - ii. The improper batter has now been legalized. It is too late to appeal any earlier batter. The result of his time at bat stands.
 - iii. Players who have not batted and who have not been called out have lost their turn at bat until reached again in the regular batting order.
4. **No base runner shall be removed from the base she is occupying. (Except the batter-base runner who has been taken off the base by the umpire as in (2) above to bat in her proper place.)**
- a. He merely misses his turn at bat with no penalty and is passed over but not declared out.
 - b. The batter following him in the batting order becomes the eligible batter.

Umpire Action: When ruling on Batting Out of Order, ask yourself

- Who is the proper batter?
- Who, if anyone, is declared out?
- Who bats next?
- Check with official scorekeeper if necessary.

Remember: This is an appeal play. Bring no attention to an improper batter.

- If no appeal is made, the batter now at bat becomes the legal batter. The line-up as presented shall follow the batter now at bat.
- You as the umpire need only know who is at bat, and who preceded him.

Note: The Batting Out of Order situations described above will most often occur with teams who are roster-batting, where everyone in the dugout gets a turn to bat. It is important to realize that a batter can only be out of order if he has a spot in the current line up and bats in a spot other than designated in that batting order. If a batter that is not in the current line up comes to bat, he is a substitute.

- If the substitution is not announced, he is an unannounced, but legal, substitute as he replaces the batter formerly in that batting position.
- Results of his at bat are legal and stand.

Bunt: A batted ball not swung at, but INTENTIONALLY met with the bat and tapped slowly within the infield. A bunt is NEVER ACCIDENTAL.

Call: the **mental process** and checklist an umpire will use to make a decision on whether a runner is safe or out.

Catch /No Catch: A catch is the act of a fielder in getting secure possession of the baseball while it is in flight, and firmly holding on **and / or** is released in a controlled manner. The fielder must use his glove or hand to be considered in possession. He/ she cannot use the cap, protector, pocket or another part of their uniform to secure possession. A catch also refers to a pitched ball caught by the catcher.

3 THINGS NECESSARY TO HAVE A CATCH:

- 1) Secure Possession;
- 2) Complete Control of the ball;
- 3) Voluntary and Intentional Release.

Remember:

- NO 3-step rule or 3-second rule;
- If the Ball bounces off anything EXCEPT a defensive player, it is not a catch;
- Runners may leave their bases as soon a ball is touched – TAG UP;
- A catch can be made anywhere on the playing field.

Contact Rule: Runners are expected to attempt to avoid contact with fielders. This rule applies at all four bases. This is a judgment call.

If there is malicious contact, excessive force, or an attempt to injure, in your judgment, the following penalty is

enforced.

Penalty: The ball is dead. The runner is declared out and ejected. On a play at the plate, if a run scores before the contact, count the run and then eject the runner (no out call).

Dead Ball: A situation that occurs when a ball is **out of play** resulting from a legally created suspension of play.

Note: The term “**out of play**” does not necessarily refer to the location of the ball, but its **disposition**. The ball can be physically within the field of play and be out of play. It can also be physically outside the field of play and still be in play.

Remember: Before play can resume the ball has to be legally put back into play and

1. The pitcher, while in contact with the pitcher’s plate must have the ball while facing the batter;
2. The batter must be in his box facing the pitcher;
3. All runners must have retouched their base;
4. All fielders other than the catcher must be in fair territory;
5. The field must be free of distractions.

Some situations in which a ball becomes Dead:

- When the umpire suspends play, he shall call, “Time!” At the umpire’s call of “Play!” the suspension is lifted and play resumes. Between the calls of “Time!” and “Play!” the ball is dead.
- Interference (see Interference definition for details).
- Obstruction (see Obstruction definition for details).
- Balk.
- A pitched ball touches a batter or his clothing.
- Intentionally dropped fly ball.
- A ball is illegally batted: runners return to previously occupied base.
- A foul ball is not caught: runners return.
- A fair ball touches a runner or an umpire in fair territory before it touches an infielder including the pitcher, OR touches an umpire before it has passed an infielder other than the pitcher.
 - Penalty: Runner who is hit by batted ball is declared out.

Delayed Dead Ball: A dead ball situation in which play is allowed to continue until the play is over. Umpire’s rulings are made when play has legally stopped.

- If the plate umpire interferes with the catcher’s throw, runners may not advance.
- The interference shall be disregarded if the catcher’s throw retires the runner.

Dropped Third Strike: If a third strike (not a foul tip) passes the catcher and hits an umpire, the ball is in play. If such ball rebounds and is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground, the batsman is not out on such a catch, but the ball remains in play and the batsman may be retired at first base or touched with the ball for the out.

The proper term for this situation is “**Uncaught Third Strike.**”

Conditions for dropped third strike: First base is not occupied OR there are two outs.

Fair / Foul: Once a ball is batted, Fair/Foul is an umpire’s top priority.

Fair territory – is all areas on the ball field between and including the 1st and 3rd base foul lines and all of home plate extending to and including the outfield from foul pole to foul pole and perpendicularly upward.

Foul territory – standing at home plate facing the pitcher, all areas of the field to the left of, but not including, the third base foul line, continuing behind home plate and all areas to the right of, but not including, the 1st base foul line, continuing behind home plate and perpendicularly upward.

We will break the field into three areas when discussing fair/foul.

- Before the bases
- At the bases
- Beyond the Bases

Before the bases

- Is judged where it is first touched;

- Is judged where it comes to rest, if untouched.

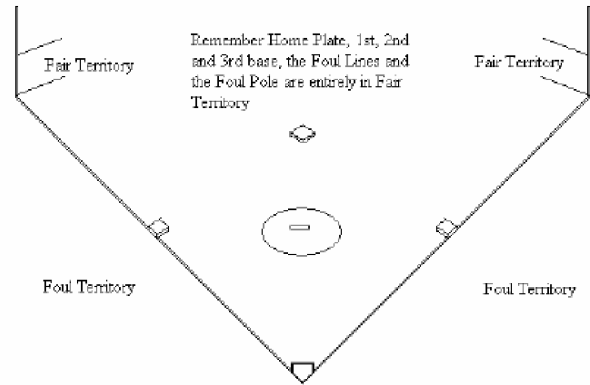
At the Bases

- Is judged where it was when bounding past 1st or 3rd base;
- Is ALWAYS judged FAIR if it touches 1st, 2nd, or 3rd base;
- If it settles on any of the four bases it is ALWAYS fair (unless a bunted ball hits a batter or his bat for a second time while he is still in the batter's box)

Beyond the bases

- Where a fly ball first lands in relation to the foul line;
- Where a fly ball, that is not deflected, leaves the park;
- Where a fly ball is when first touched.

Remember to **wait** until the ball has been touched, comes to a stop or contacts one of the 4 bases before making your call. Until one of these things happen, a ball can still go fair.



Timing, Timing, Timing.

Never declare a fair ball verbally.

WHEN FOUL, CALL FOUL (loudly!). WHEN FAIR, continually POINT FAIR.

Foul Tip: It is a batted ball that is hit sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's hand or glove, and is legally caught. It can rebound into the air or bounce off the catcher and be caught, if first touched by the catcher's hand or glove. If the ball hits the batter, umpire or ground, it is a FOUL BALL, not a foul tip. A foul tip is a LIVE BALL. Runners can advance and can be put out. Treat it as a swinging strike.

First Base-- Over-running/Sliding: A batter-runner is allowed to over-run or over-slide first base when advancing as a runner. In doing so, he must return to the base at once *and may turn either to his left or to his right without consequence*. However, if he shows intent to advance to second base, even if slight or brief, he is out IF tagged before he returns to first base. **Note:** If, instead of returning at once to the base, the batter-runner starts toward his position or dugout, he is out on appeal when he or his base is tagged.

Fly Ball: A batted ball that goes HIGH in the air in flight. **Note:** An Infield Fly Rule can only be called on a fly ball.

Force Play: A play in which a runner legally loses his right to occupy a base because the batter becomes a runner.

Key Points

- There are two kinds of play: Force play and Timing play.
- Each play is evaluated by whether the runner involved is forced to advance by the batter becoming a runner.
- If the third out of an inning is a force play, no run can score.
- If the third out of an inning is a timing play, the umpire must be careful to observe whether or not the runner crossed the plate before the final out was made. If the runner crossed before the out is made, the run(s) count.
- Forced to Advance occurs when the runner is forced to leave the base he legally possesses because the batter becomes a runner. This can only be one base beyond the runner's original base. The force is removed on an individual runner as soon as he achieves the next base. The force for all runners is removed when a trailing runner is declared out.

Note: When a runner is forced to advance and is tagged by a fielder, instead of the fielder touching the base, while in possession of the ball, **it is still a Force Play.**

Hands-- NOT part of the Bat: The batter is awarded first base if a pitch hits the batter's hands as he holds the bat, not in the strike zone and not offering at the pitch. The hands are NOT "part of the bat."

Infield Fly – Rule: A batted fair fly ball that is not a bunt or line drive that can be caught with ordinary effort by an infielder. **Penalty: the batter is automatically out. Runners may advance at their own risk.**

Conditions for Infield Fly

- Less than 2 outs.
- Runners on 1st and 2nd or bases loaded.
- A Fair Fly Ball – not a bunt or line drive.
- Must be able to be caught by an infielder but can be caught by anyone.
- The ball must be playable with REASONABLE EFFORT. A good rule of thumb to use for judging reasonable effort is: if you see a fielder's back, it is not reasonable effort.

Once again, **timing is critical**. Wait until the ball starts on its way back down before deciding if you should call infield fly. If the ball is going to be near the foul lines remember to declare, "Infield fly if fair!"

Signals: Umpire crew should communicate with each other that they are all aware that the conditions for the infield fly rule are in effect.
Note: This should be done by tapping the bill of your hat with your index finger.
Your umpire partner(s) should respond in kind.

Umpire should provide the hand signal for the infield fly by simply pointing up at the ball and keeping that pose (pointing up) until it is no longer needed.

Upon declaring the infield fly, the batter is simply out. It is not considered an automatic catch. Runners advance at their own risk.

Son of the Infield Fly Rule (Intentionally Dropped Fly Ball): When first base is occupied and an infielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball, the ball is dead and runner(s) shall return to their original base(s).

Key Points

- The drop must be intentional.
- First base must be occupied.
- If the Infield Fly Rule is in effect, the Infield Fly Rule takes precedence.
- Batter is not out unless the Infield Fly Rule is in effect.
- This is a judgment call by the umpire.



Interference - Offensive, Defensive, Umpire, Spectator

A) Offensive Interference (Batter, Runner, Coach)

Interference by the **BATTER** occurs when:

- Batter hits a fair ball for a second time with his bat or body. Batter is out.
- Batter has one or both feet entirely outside the batter's box when he makes contact with a pitched ball. Batter is out.
- Batter deliberately interferes with a batted or thrown ball, with the intent to break up a double play. Batter and runner closest to home are out.
- Batter deliberately interferes with the Catcher attempting to field the ball after a 3rd strike. Batter is out.
- Batter interferes with the catcher as he attempts to put out a base runner, the batter is out and runner must return to the last base legally touched.
- Runner is trying to score from 3rd base: when the batter interferes with the catcher, the runner is called out. If there are 2 outs, the batter is out.
- Batter runs outside of the 3-foot lane and interferes with the throw to 1st base. Batter is out.
 - There must be a throw, but the ball does not have to hit the batter.
- Penalty – the minimum penalty is one out.
- Runners cannot advance and the ball is dead. See above notes for who is called out.

Interference by a **RUNNER** occurs when:

- Runner is touched by a fair batted ball which could have been fielded by an infielder other than the pitcher. Runner is out.
- Runner intentionally interferes with a thrown ball or hinders fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball. Runner is out.

- Runner interferes with the intention of deliberately breaking up a double play. Runner and batter are both out.
- Runner who has already been put out, deliberately interferes with the defense attempting to put out another runner. Other runner is called out.

Interference by a COACH occurs when:

- Coach fails to vacate an area to a fielder. He cannot hinder a fielder from fielding a ball. The batter or runner on whom the play is being made shall be declared out.
- Coach physically assists a runner. Runner is out.
- With a runner on third base, the base coach leaves his box and acts in any manner to draw a throw by a fielder. Runner is out.

B) Defensive Interference occurs when the Catcher or any fielder interferes, hinders or impedes the batter while he is attempting to hit a pitch.

- This is a delayed dead ball situation.
- **Umpire Action:** If Defensive Interference is called during the play – allow the play to continue. If the batter does not reach first base and all other runners DO NOT advance at least one base, the interference is enforced.
- **Penalty:** Once the play is over, call time, award the batter first. All runners forced to advance do so; all runners stealing at the time of the interference advance; all other runners return to their base.
- **Note:** If, with a runner on third base trying to score by means of a squeeze play or a steal, the catcher or any other fielder steps on, or in front of home plate without possession of the ball, or touches the batter or his bat, the pitcher shall be charged with a balk, the batter shall be awarded first base on the interference and the ball is dead.

OPTION PLAY - The Manager of the OFFENSIVE team has the right to decline the interference and take the Option play. If the manager asks about his option, explain it to him. *Do not volunteer the option if he does not ask.*

The manager's options are (1) take the interference as enforced or (2) take the play as it developed.

See following example of OPTION PLAY:

Runner on 3rd. The batter hits a lazy fly ball for an out. The runner on 3rd tags and scores. You rule the catcher interfered with the batter's swing. So, you call time send the runner who scored back to third and award the batter first base. Out comes the manager and he asks you what option he has. (1. Take the interference as enforced or 2. Take the play as it developed.)

Remember, if the batter and all other runners advanced at least one base, no interference is declared.

C) Umpire Interference occurs when:

- This is a delayed dead ball situation.
- The plate umpire hinders the catcher's attempt to throw out a base runner who is attempting to steal a base. Runner returns.
- If a fair batted ball hits an umpire before passing an infielder (other than the pitcher) the ball is dead and batter is awarded first base and runners may advance if forced.

D) Spectator Interference occurs when a spectator reaches out of the stands or goes onto the playing field and touches a live ball. The ball is dead. The umpire shall impose such penalties as to nullify the act of the interference.

Leaving Early, Runner from Base: This rule is in place only in younger levels of baseball and at all levels of softball. Once players are using lead-off situations, leaving early is not an issue.

Situations that will come up:

- Pitcher on the rubber with the ball + catcher in the catcher's box + batter ready = runners stay put until pitch has reached the batter.
- Runner leaves early, no hit, play made. If runner is out, he's out; if he's safe, send him back.

- Runner leaves early, batter hits. Batter is restricted to advance to the base he's entitled to, and the runner who left early is restricted to one base beyond the batter if not tagged or forced out.
- Runner leaves early, batter hits. If infielder could have tagged/force runner had he not left early, runner is out. This is the umpire's judgment.
- If more than one runner leaves early and there is no open base, the violator closest to home shall be declared out.

THE VIOLATION OF ONE BASE RUNNER SHALL AFFECT ALL OTHER BASE RUNNERS.

Obstruction: An act committed by a defensive player who is not in possession of the ball or in the act of fielding the ball, that impedes, hinders, or blocks the progress of a runner. **A fielder, including the catcher, must be in the act of fielding the ball or in possession of the ball to block the base path.**

Two Types of Obstruction

(A) Obstruction occurs when there is a play being made on the obstructed runner or if the batter is obstructed before reaching first base - If this occurs, time is called immediately. The ball is dead and the runners are placed where, in the judgment of the umpire, they would have been had the obstruction not occurred. Such award shall be at least one base beyond the base last legally touched before the obstruction.

(B) Obstruction occurs when there is no play being made on the obstructed runner - if no play is being made, just point at the offender and say obstruction, loud enough for the runner to hear. Let the play proceed until no further play is possible. Umpire calls time and imposes whatever penalty, if any, as in his judgment will nullify the act of obstruction.

Notes about obstruction

If the ball is thrown out of play during the play, **the overthrow takes precedence over the Obstruction.**
If the runner proceeds further than that which he would have been awarded, he does so at his own risk.

Over Throws: A ball that is thrown or pitched out of play (dead-ball-territory) or gets lodged in the fence.
Two key types of defensive players - the pitcher and all other fielders. **See Base Awards.**

Pitching Rules (baseball):

Wind up and Set (or Stretch)

From either pitching position the pitcher can do the following – pitch to plate, step directly towards and throw to base or disengage the rubber by removing his pivot foot off the rubber (must move off the back side of the rubber) and then breaking his hands apart.

Wind Up

Pitcher faces the batter;
May take one step forward and one back;
Once his hands move, he is committed to pitch to the plate.

Set or Stretch

Pitcher glove side faces the batter;
Usually non- pivot foot comes back;
Must come to a discernible pause.

Balk A balk is an illegal act committed by the pitcher for the purpose of deceiving the runner. The pitcher deviates from his natural motion with the intent of deceiving the runner.

Key Points of a Balk

- Ball is dead. (NFHS rule)
- Must be a runner on base.
- All runners advance one base from where they were at the time of the balk.
- Depending on specific level of play, varying levels of enforcement are recommended.
- Common sense should prevail. If there is doubt in the umpire's mind, the "intent" of the pitcher should govern.

Warm Up Pitches – see Mechanics section

Pivot: a term used to describe the umpire school turn mechanic which allows the umpire to keep focused on the ball while glancing quickly to see if the runner has touched a base legally. This is a four-step pivot commenced with the right foot stepping forward.

Play or Attempted Play:

- Act by the defense;
- Must throw the ball or be near enough to attempt to tag and have reasonable chance of tagging the runner.

Scoring: One run shall be scored each time a runner advances to and touches 1st, 2nd, 3rd and home before 3 men are put out.

A run is not scored if:

- 1) The batter-runner is out at first for the third out of the inning;
- 2) Any other runner is forced out for the third out of the inning;
- 3) A preceding runner is called out on appeal for the third out;
- 4) Appealed runner was a forced out for a third out.

Once a run is legally scored, no action by the defense or offense (mistakenly thinking he missed a base) shall nullify that run.

Retouch: the act of a runner who returns to touch a base after a catch.

Set or Stretch: See Pitching Rules.

Signal: the physical process of indicating to the players, coaches and spectators the results of the umpire's call. Usually safe / out, fair/ foul, catch / no-catch, or "that's nothing."

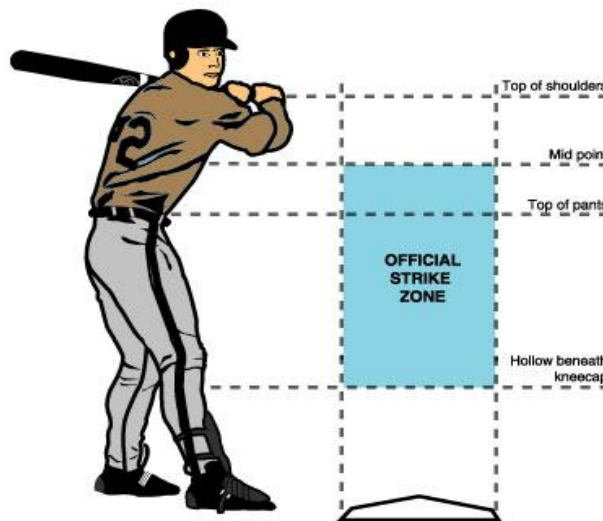
Strike: A legal pitch that is called a strike by the umpire for one of the following reasons:

- Is struck at by the batter and missed;
- Is not struck at but any part of the ball passes through any part of the strike zone;
- Is bunted foul;
- Touches the batter as he strikes at it;
- Touches the batter in flight in the strike zone;
- Becomes a foul tip.

Strike Zone: That area over the plate, from the bottom of the batter's knees to the midpoint between the top of the pants and his shoulders as the batter is prepared to swing at a pitch. The width of the zone is one ball width off either side of the plate.

Umpire Action:

- Have a consistent strike zone.
- Develop a "hit-able" strike zone.
- Call strikes early and often.
- It is better to err and call a ball a strike than call a strike a ball.



TIMING, TIMING, TIMING

Hints to a Consistent Zone –

- Get Comfortable;
- Get into the same, proper slot position every time;
- Track the ball from the pitcher's hand to the catcher's glove;
- Keep your chin no lower than the top of the Catcher's head;
- Develop good timing, slow down, slow down, and slow down.

Never manufacture a strike or an out. Integrity before all else.

Tag: an out resulting from an advancing runner being touched by a fielder who is holding a live ball.

Tag-up: a common phrase. The proper word is "retouch"

Time: A legal suspension of play as granted by the Umpire.

Situations when umpire may call or grant time:

- Weather, darkness, or other condition make immediate further play impossible;
- Light failure makes it difficult or impossible to play;
- An accident incapacitates a player or an umpire;
- A manager requests "Time" for a substitution or for a conference with one of his players;
 - NOTE: Play is not suspended until the umpire grants "Time."
- An umpire wishes to examine the ball, to consult with either manager, or any similar cause;
- A fielder, after catching a fly ball, FALLS into a bench or stand, or FALLS across ropes into a crowd when spectators are on the field.
 - NOTE: If a fielder, after making a catch, steps into a bench, etc. but DOES NOT FALL, the ball is in play and runners may advance at their own risk.
- An umpire orders a player or other person removed from the playing field;

Hint: Before putting the ball back in play after a dead ball situation, be sure the batter is in the batter's box and ready to receive a pitch.

Timing Play: See Force Play.

Touch: the act of a runner touching a base to which he is legally entitled. Umpires frequently use this word to mean "retouch" referring to an umpire as having "all touches and tags" at a specific base.

Trips to the Mound:

- A maximum of 2 trips per inning per pitcher;
- The 2nd trip to the same pitcher in the same inning removes the pitcher from the pitching position;
- A pitcher once removed from the mound may not return to pitch;
 - Exception: If the pitcher is removed, but possesses re-entry rights, that player may return to pitch and shall receive 3 warm-up pitches.
- If on the first trip, the pitcher is removed, but retained in the game, the player may return to pitch.
- No circumvention of this rule shall be tolerated.
- A coach cannot visit a pitcher twice during the same batter.
 - **Umpire Action:** Warn coach that he can't make the trip. If he still goes to the mound, the manager is ejected and the pitcher is required to pitch to the batter. Once the at bat is completed, the pitcher shall be removed from the pitching position.
 - The only exception is if the offense substitutes a Pinch hitter for this batter, then the coach may make a second trip to the mound but he must remove the pitcher.

Trouble Ball: normally a ball that could require a judgment decision from the umpire. This definition includes:

- a batted ball that could be caught from the waist down.
- a batted ball that requires a fielder to turn and chase it.
- a batted ball that will require a fair/foul decision.
- a batted ball that causes three or more fielders to converge.
- a batted ball that could result in a home run.
- a batted or thrown ball that could go out-of-play and potentially require a decision on spectator interference.

Uncaught Third Strike: See Dropped Third Strike.

Wind-up: See Pitching Rules.

NOTES: _____

Small Diamond Coverage Mechanical Fundamentals

For use with Youth Baseball and Softball

Pre-Game: Plate Meeting and Warm-Ups

Plate Meeting/ Ground Rules

- With your partner 5 minutes before the start of the game, head for home plate.
- You will likely need to call for the coaches.
- The head coach **MUST** be at the plate meeting. **DEMAND IT!**
- Introduce yourselves to the coaches.
- If you have not already done so, get the game balls.
- Take the home coach, then the visiting coach's line ups.
- Go over them, correct obvious mistakes now!
- You are now in charge.
- Ask the home coach to explain the ground rules.
 - If there are problems, you correct them on the spot.
 - If there are no problems with the ground rules, get the game going.
- If foul lines are wavy, call it as it is drawn.
- If lines are absent, then explain to the coaches that fair and foul calls will be your judgment and there will be no discussion about fair/foul decisions.

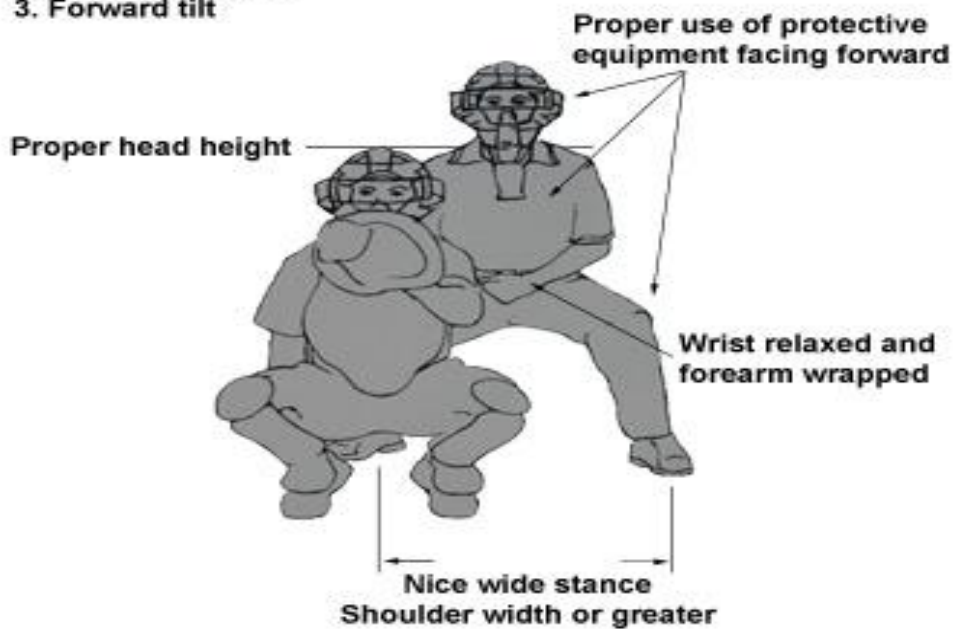
Warm Ups

When	Who	How many pitches or throws
Start of game	Pitchers	8
Between Innings	Pitchers	5
Injury Subs	Pitcher	As many as YOU deem
	Player	5
Normal Sub	Pitcher	8
	Fielder	5
Re-entering Starting Pitcher	Pitcher	3

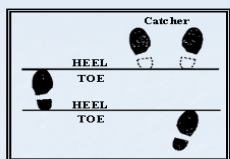
The Slot (front view)

Proper HEAD POSITION is controlled by:

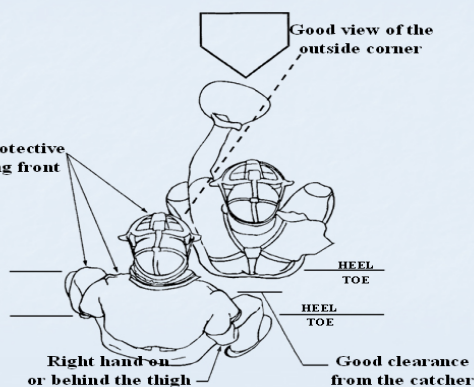
1. Width of stance
2. Amount of squat
3. Forward tilt



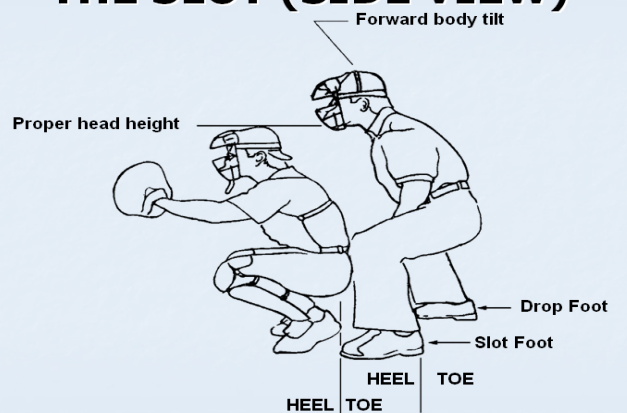
THE SLOT (TOP VIEW)



Proper use of protective equipment facing front



THE SLOT (SIDE VIEW)





A. Do Not Pitch



B. Play Ball



C. Time-Out, Foul Ball or Dead Ball



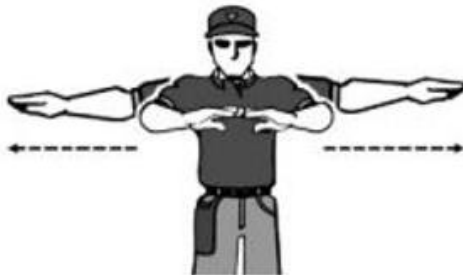
D. Delayed Dead Ball



E. Strike or Out



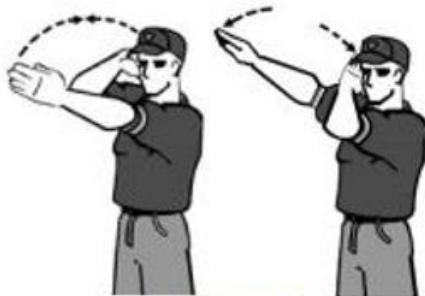
F. Infield Fly



G. Safe



H. Fair Ball



I. Foul Tip



J. Count



K. Time Play

Plate Umpire Responsibilities on Every Play:

1. All ball/strike, fair/foul and catch/no-catch calls.
 - a. Also determine if the ball is in dead-ball-territory.
 - b. Determine whether a home run, ground rule double or overthrow, has occurred.
 - c. The plate umpire must **communicate** every "Catch" and "No-Catch" situation since often the base umpire will not be aligned fully with the ball.
 - i. Ideally, the base umpire will achieve an orientation that allows him to see the runners and the touch of the ball by the fielders.
2. To determine whether a tag or interference occurred in the running lane.
3. All touches and retouches at third base.
4. All plays at the plate.
5. First-to-third responsibilities:
 - a. With a runner on first base, the plate umpire can elect to take a play that develops at third base. HOWEVER, there are two limitations to this:
 - i. Since the plate umpire has all catch and fair/foul rulings, a ball hit down the right field line, or hit deep into the right field will require him to rule on that ball first.
 - ii. The plate umpire may not always have the luxury of moving down the third base line in foul territory.
 - b. The Plate Umpire will communicate "**I've got third if he comes**" and will communicate "**I've got third, I've got third!**" when he is in position to take the developing play.
6. Second-to-third responsibilities (although rare):
 - a. Due to the catch responsibilities.
 - i. Example: a high fly ball to left centerfield is misplayed by the fielder. The plate umpire comes out to the left of the mound and rules on the no-catch. The plate umpire would then be in a position to take the runner to third base or home as required.
7. Determine whether **assistance** with any irregularities, such as a rundown, is required.

What is the Plate Umpire doing?

- The Plate Umpire usually moves in foul territory, three to six feet from the base path, holds and waits in foul territory until assured a play is possible.
- Depending on the developing play, he may need to move into the diamond for a better angle on the play.

Situations

Umpire Action: When the Ball is hit, what does the Plate Umpire Do?

Assuming the umpire has no responsibilities for fair/foul or catch/no-catch:

● On a ball hit into the infield:

- If there is a possible play at the plate, the Plate Umpire will:
 - Go to the first or third base line **extended** in order to watch the play develop.
 - Preferably, take these plays on the first baseline extended.
- If there is no possible play at the plate, the Plate Umpire will:
 - Clear the catcher.
 - Trail the runner up the first baseline as far as the baseline mid-point.
 - Straddle the line watching for interference, overthrows, or any situation that he might be asked to assist the base umpire on.

● On a ball hit to the outfield the Plate Umpire will:

- Move into the infield in the direction of the ball.
- Glance at any runner who is scoring to ensure they touch third base and/or home plate.
- Assume any first-to-third responsibilities accorded to him.
- Have all responsibilities at home plate.

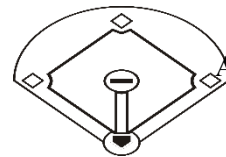
● On a ball popped up at the plate, the Plate Umpire will:

- Observe the catcher's shoulders and move in the opposite direction the catcher goes in.

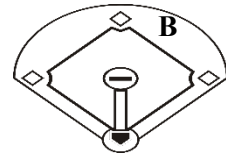
- If a fair/foul ruling is forthcoming, then straddle the line.

Starting Positions for the Base Umpire

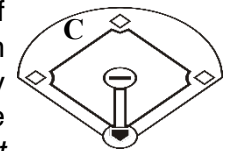
Position 'A': *With no runners on base.* Working from this position the umpire would be situated in foul territory, 10-12 feet behind the first baseman.



Position 'B': *With runners on base.* On the rim of the outfield grass positioned between first and second base, approximately on an imaginary line drawn from home plate through the edge of the dirt of the mound. Normally in this position the second baseman would be in front of, and slightly to the left-hand side of the base umpire.

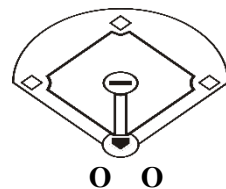


Position 'C': *With a runner on second, second and third, or third base.* On the rim of the outfield grass, positioned between second and third base approximately on an imaginary line drawn from home plate through the edge of the dirt of the mound. Normally in this position the shortstop would be in front of, and slightly to the right-hand side of the base umpire. *Different age levels and game situations may require you to move in, or out. It is important to have a clear angle to a possible pick-off play at first base should one develop.*



Note: In Majors (12u), Juniors (14u), and Seniors (18u) level baseball, Base Umpire works from the INSIDE of diamond for positions B and C.

Position 'O': *Used with lower level baseball and softball, such as Coach Pitch leagues, where a one-man system is employed.* Behind the catcher, either to the left of a right-handed batter, or to the right of a left-handed batter. From this position, the umpire will move directly into the field as soon as the ball is hit.



Base Umpire Responsibilities on Every Play:

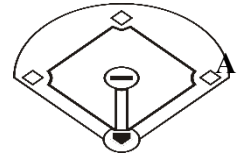
- To determine **his placement** during the plays made on the diamond.
 - Move to create an angle to see the ball, the glove and the runner.
 - Angle is far more important than distance. You can get too close to a tag.
- Tags on all base runners except those which are part of the first-to-third responsibilities of the Plate Umpire.
 - Focus on what is being tagged. Watch all other action in your peripheral vision.
 - Signal all safe/out calls on the bases.
- All touches and retouches at first and second base.
 - Know if the situation of touch and tag at third is the base umpire's call.
- Base umpire makes **all** fly ball calls in the middle of the "V" for balls to the outfield with runners on base.
- Listen for the plate umpire to verbalize every "Catch" and "No-Catch" situation.
 - Achieve an alignment that allows him to see the runners and the touch of the ball by the fielders.
- Leading off violations**
 - The leading-off violation is the sole responsibility of the base umpire.
 - It should not, however, become the sole preoccupation of the base umpire.
 - If the runner pulls your focus before the ball has arrived at the catcher, he has left early.
 - If the runner did not attract your attention, then you did not see a violation.
 - Give the required signal and enforce the penalties as required in the rule books.

Situations-

Umpire Action: Where the ball is hit will dictate the motion of the Base Umpire.

1. With no runners on base, the Base Umpire will start in Position A.

- Once the ball has been batted, determine whether to come into the diamond or to remain outside the diamond.
- If a ball is played by an infielder, then the umpire will work **outside** of the base paths.
- You should avoid positioning yourself too deep.
- Base umpire has complete responsibility for all calls that will be made on the batter-runner.



An Infielder makes a play at first

- Move to the right in order to attain a good angle to observe the play.
- 90 degrees for a throw from the shortstop
- More acute angles for throws from second base.

Bunt or slow hit into the infield

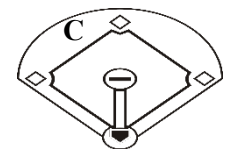
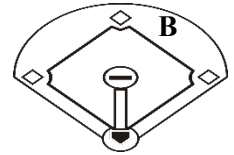
- Come almost to the baseline to attain the best angle on any play that will develop.

Ball hit to the outfield

- Come inside, pivot and ensure the runner touches or tags each base.
- Follow the play in any direction, taking the runner to first, second or third base.
- If a play develops at any base, attain an angle to see the play.
- If play breaks down at any time, the umpire should work into the infield to follow any plays that develop.

2. With only one runner on first base, the Base Umpire will start in Position 'B'

- Ball on the infield, and **when there will only be a play at second base** - the base umpire moves to his right several steps and sets for the tag.
 1. Position several steps from the play.
 2. Determine tag or no tag.
 3. Assess the throw and the tag; then check on the possession of the ball by the fielder before making the signal ("Show me the ball!").
- **Ball hit to the outfield**, the Base Umpire comes inside as he would with no runners on base.



3. With a runner on second base, third base, second and third base, or with the bases loaded the base umpire will start in Position 'C'

- Some umpires like to work themselves inside at every opportunity while others work the "rim" of the diamond.

4. On a ball popped up at the plate

- Determining a **tag** or **no-tag**:
 - Move into position to take the play, square to the bag. Follow the throw with your head, not your body.
 - a. See the tag by using the eyes properly.
 - b. Go to hands-on-knees set to observe the tag.
 - Assess the throw from the fielder.
 - Adjust to the throw in case it is offline.
 - Assure the requirement of "firm and secure possession" has been met.
 - Finally, **signal** the play using a proper signaling mechanic.

How a Base Umpire makes the Call

After watching the attempted tag as listed above, mentally determine

- **NO** a tag did not take place.
 - Immediately signal "**SAFE**"
- **YES** a tag took place.
 - Focus eyes on the glove and determine if the possession of the ball is "firm and secure."
 - Upon seeing the ball, signal "**OUT.**"

A ruling contains 2 components

1. The "**call**" is a 100% mental process.
2. The "**signal**" is a 100% physical process.

The Base Umpire's eyes must be focused on the critical aspects of the tag as it develops.

- **If the tag is on a base**
 - The umpire's eyes will **focus on the bag** and the feet of the fielder and runner as he arrives.
 - The arrival of the ball will be clearly seen in the peripheral vision.
- **If the tag is on the runner's body**
 - The umpire's eyes will **focus on the glove** of the fielder.
 - The glove will direct your eyes to the runner.

Ruling on a potential ball in dead ball territory:

- Move back to the screen or out as required.
- Let the catcher, or other fielder, draw you towards the ball.
- Track the ball, following the ball into the glove of the fielder.
- Make the call as required.

Signaling the Double Play

To signal a double play you will actually make the signal for the first play while moving and pivoting to take the tag at the other end of the play.

- This is the only time an umpire should signal on the move.
- You must be stationary to make the final call, but the first signal is made while moving.

Communication is key to proper positioning of both umpires.

- If the base umpire does not hear "I've got third" then the base umpire has all plays that develop on all runners on base.
- The plate umpire assumes all responsibility for coverage of plays that develop at home plate. If the plate umpire rotates home, he will communicate "**I'm going home!**" telling the base umpire that coverage of subsequent plays at third are his.

Respond to the Pressure

With the ball in the infield the base umpire could be required to move in many ways, again determined by the game situation and your experience.

It is important to get the best angle to every play that could develop.

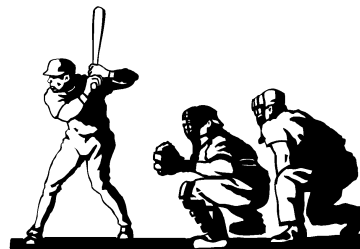


Appendix

Pre-Tests, Worksheets, Case Studies & Forms

Facts and Fiction Pre-Test

Okay, here is your first pre-test. Below are some baseball myths, mixed in with some facts. Can you tell which is which? Simply mark each statement as either true (T) or false (F). Don't be afraid to mark your answers boldly. (Go ahead- use ink.) One day, you will appreciate your original answers.



Pre-Test

Post-Test---

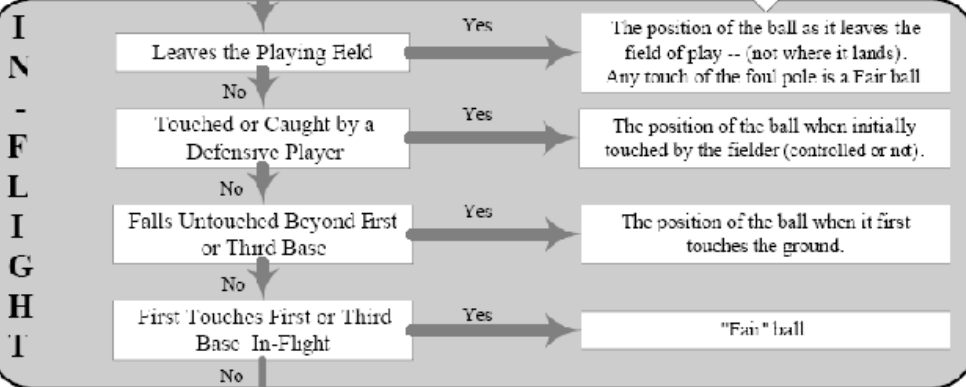
	1. The batter-runner is out if tagged when he overruns first base and turns to his left to return to the first base bag.	
	2. The batter is awarded first base if an inside pitch hits the batter's hands as he holds the bat (not in the strike zone).	
	3. On a foul tip, runners attempting to steal must return to their original base, occupied at the time of the pitch.	
	4. With the bases loaded and two out, if the catcher does not catch the third strike cleanly, he can obtain the third out by stepping on the plate, with the ball in his possession, before the runner from third base touches the plate.	
	5. A batter is out if he hits the ball fair while his foot is touching home plate.	
	6. A base runner hit by a fair ground ball, while in contact with a base, is safe.	
	7. If a batter is holding his bat as if in a bunting position extended over home plate, as the pitch passes him, it is automatically a strike.	
	8. A pitcher must break contact with the pitching rubber prior to attempting to pick off a runner.	
	9. The batter is not awarded first base when hit with a pitch that first bounces off the ground.	
	10. A fly ball is ruled caught after a fielder holds it in his hand or glove for several seconds.	

Ruling Fair or Foul, The "Point of Decision "

A Batted Ball

Right Off The Bat - Any batted ball that makes an immediate contact in the home plate area with **the batter** while the batter is still (even partially) in the batter's box, **the umpire**, or **the catcher** (other than a FOUL TIP - See Rule 2.00), is a **FOUL ball**.

Point of Decision



All batted balls begin "In Flight". If not caught or touched in flight they become ground balls. (Yes, some become ground balls much sooner than others.)

If the batted ball is not resolved "In-flight" (above) it gets resolved as a ground ball (below). **

G R O U N D B A L L

Point of Decision is determined by which of the following occurs first

- That Rolls To and Touches First or Third Base - A ball advancing to and making contact with a base removes all doubt; "Fair" ball.
- That Bounds Beyond First or Third Base - Point of Decision - the position of the ball as it passes the base.
- That Is Touched By a Fielder -- Point of Decision - the position of the ball is as the fielder makes initial contact with it.
- That Touches An Offensive Player, Coach or Umpire -- Point of Decision the position of the ball as it is touched/touches the player, coach or umpire.
- In Foul Territory Before it Passes First or Third Base that touches an object, foreign to the natural ground, (e.g. equipment, fence, etc.) or any person, is immediately called foul.
- That Comes to Rest Untouched -- Point of Decision is where the ball comes to rest.

* Refer to Official Baseball Rules, 2.00 Definition of Terms; Fair Territory.

** This analysis addresses the application of Fair/Foul. Baseball can interject many distracting factors such as interference, ground rules or just unusual baseball moments. **The umpire must remember that once the bat makes contact with the pitch, the umpire's top priority is determining Fair/Foul.**

Definition -- Point of Decision: The precise instant that the decision of "Fair" or "Foul" is to be made. The decision shall be made by judging the position of the ball in relation to the foul line and/or foul pole. Any portion of the ball on or over fair territory constitutes a "Fair" ball.

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Fair or Foul Worksheet

How well do you know the rules? You make the call!

1. A line drive flies over third base in fair territory but lands on the foul side of the left field line.
 - a. Fair
 - b. Foul
2. A batted ball bounces in front of the base, crosses over the bag and lands in foul territory beyond the base.
 - a. Fair
 - b. Foul
3. The third baseman, while standing in fair territory, reaches into foul territory and touches the ball while in flight, which is clearly in foul territory.
 - a. Fair
 - b. Foul
4. A hit ball hits the ground next to the plate in foul territory, but it spins and comes to rest on the plate.
 - a. Fair
 - b. Foul
5. A batted ball hits the batter's leg while standing in the batter's box, then bounces into fair territory where it is fielded.
 - a. Fair
 - b. Foul
6. There is a runner on third base standing in foul territory. A line drive hits him and then bounces into fair territory where it is fielded.
 - a. Fair
 - b. Foul
7. A line drive hits the pitcher rubber without touching a player and bounces into foul territory between home and third, where it comes to rest.
 - a. Fair
 - b. Foul
8. A ball hits in fair territory to the right of the pitcher's mound, it takes a weird hop and goes into foul territory before reaching third base where it is touched by a fielder or comes to rest.
 - a. Fair
 - b. Foul
9. A hit ball rolls directly along the foul line, touches the corner of the base then rolls foul never passing the bag.
 - a. Fair
 - b. Foul
10. A batted ball hits in foul territory before reaching a base. Before coming to a complete stop, it hits a pebble and bounces into fair territory where it is fielded or comes to rest.
 - a. Fair
 - b. Foul
11. The batter swings at a pitch and tips the ball, which goes directly into the catcher's glove. Is the ball dead or is it still alive and runners may advance?
 - a. The ball is alive.
 - b. The ball is a dead foul ball.

NOTES: _____

Force Play Worksheet

Force Play is a key element that provides a foundation for other rules. You must identify force plays. Answer with Y for “yes” or N for “no”. (From *Umpire Survival Training the absolute essentials* by Mark Swiss)

Abbreviations used in this section are:

F1 – pitcher	F6–shortstop	BR – batter/runner
F2–catcher	F7–left fielder	R1 –runner from 1 st base
F3 –first baseman	F8–center fielder	R2 –runner from 2 nd base
F4 –second baseman	F9–right fielder	R3 –runner from 3 rd base
F5 -third baseman		

Pre-Test

Post-Test

	<p>1. Two out, bases loaded. A ground ball is knocked down by F6 behind second base. R1 rounds second as F6 comes up with the ball. F6 throws to F4 as R1 dives back to second base and is tagged out. Is this a force play? Does the run count if R3 gets home before the out at second base?</p>	
	<p>2. Two out, runners on first and third. Batter hits a sharp ground ball, knocked down and recovered by F4. With R1 caught between him and first base, F4 runs toward R1 and tags him out. Is this a force play? Does the run count if R3 gets home before R1 is tagged?</p>	
	<p>3. One out, runners on first and third. Batter lines to deep left field. R3 tags up at third base and R1, thinking the line drive is a sure hit, is off and running. F7 makes a great catch for the second out and throws to first, where F3 steps on first base with the ball in his possession well ahead of R1 returning to the base. Is this a force play? Does the run count if R3 gets home before the out at first base?</p>	
	<p>4. One out, bases loaded. Batter hits a sharp ground ball over third base that is fielded cleanly by F5. In his natural momentum, he steps on third as he throws home to play on R3 at the plate. Is the play at the plate a force play?</p>	
	<p>5. Continuing play 4 (above)- the throw arrives at the plate. R3 is safe at the plate. The catcher notices that the BR stumbled after hitting the ball and throws to first base to play on him. If BR is out at first, does R3's play at the plate score a run?</p>	

Mechanics Worksheet 1

How are you coming along? Indicate your call on each of the following situations. Use *MORE INFO* if you believe there is not yet enough information to determine your answer.

Pre-Test		Post-Test
	1. Which umpire has the responsibility for fly balls and line drives to the pitcher and catcher?	
	2. Which umpire has the responsibility for fly balls and line drives to the rest of the infielders?	
	3. Whose responsibility for the catch/no catch is it if the 2 nd baseman is trying for the catch behind the first baseman and is running toward the foul line?	
	4. Is it necessary to signal a catch on a routine out?	
	5. What should the plate umpire do on a ground ball to any infielder if it isn't near a foul line?	
	6. If the ball rolls up the first base line, what should the plate umpire communicate to his partner? Why?	
	7. The base umpire is responsible for what bases and plays?	
	8. If it looks like a difficult catch (trouble ball) in short center field, what should the base umpire do?	

From *PBUC Quiz #4 from Manual for the 2-Umpire System (Red Book)*

Mechanics Worksheet 2

1. Positioning with No Runners on Base, how far behind the 1st baseman should the base umpire position himself? If the first baseman moves deeper than normal, does the distance change? If so, what is the new distance? Are you in a hands-on-knees set position or a standing set position?
2. All fair fly balls to the infield belong to the _____ with no men on base.
3. Why is it important that the base umpire watches the release of the throw before focusing on the play at first base?
4. True-False. R1 only. The position of the base umpire is midway between the back edge of the grass of the pitcher's mound and the second base cutout, on the third base side of the field.
5. When is a time play in order?
6. What is included in a pregame meeting and who is required to attend?
7. What is the proper procedure to follow on an appeal?
8. With what three things will a base umpire need to concern himself?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
9. What must the Plate Umpire do on every play?
10. Who handles all fair/foul calls?
11. Who handles all catch/no catch calls?
12. Who handles all touches on bases?

Dead Ball Worksheet

Dead Ball is a very basic element of baseball. Let's measure the depth of your existing dead ball knowledge. Don't be afraid to mark your answers boldly. (Go ahead- use ink.) Indicate whether the ball becomes dead "D", or remains live, "L" as a result of the following actions:

Pre-Test

Post-Test

	1. The batter is hit by the pitch.	
	2. An uncaught foul fly ball.	
	3. Batter requests time.	
	4. A foul tip.	
	5. Pitcher steps off (legally dismounts) the pitching rubber.	
	6. If a team records its third out of an inning.	
	7. A spectator picks up, or interferes with, a live ball.	
	8. The catcher interferes with the batter's swing (Catcher's Interference).	
	9. A batted ball hits a runner between 1 st and 2 nd base, in front of the second baseman.	
	10. A caught foul fly ball.	

From *Umpire Survival Training the absolute essentials* by Mark Swiss

Rule 6.07 - Batting Out of Turn

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Improper Batter Comes to Bat



Improper Batter Completes the Time at Bat



Improper Batter Becomes Legalized At the time of:

- ▶ Next Pitch to next batter
- ▶ Any Play *
- ▶ Any Attempted Play *

During this period, on any Appeal by either team:

- No out is recorded.
- Proper batter replaces improper batter and assumes the current ball/strike count.
- **NOTE:** During this period, any scoring or advancing of base runners by any action *other than the improper batter becoming a base runner*, is legal and will stand regardless of subsequent actions below.
(Examples: runner advancing on a stolen base or a balk will stand.)

At this point, an Appeal may only be made by the defensive team.
(Example: offense cannot undo a double play by appealing an improper batter.)

On a successful appeal:

- The results of the improper batter's time at bat are cancelled.
- All runners return to the base they occupied prior to the last pitch.
- The proper batter is ruled out, (*not the improper batter*).
- The batter now due is the player who follows the proper batter who was just ruled out. (*Yes, this could be the player who just batted improperly.*)

- When an improper batter becomes legalized, it is too late to appeal any earlier batter. All at bat results stand.
- Batter now due is the batter who follows the batter just legalized.
- Legalization does not change the Official batting order.

NOTE: If, because of an improper batter becoming legalized, a batter now due to bat is on base, he is passed over and the batter following the now due batter becomes the proper batter.

* A play or attempt not in conjunction with or a continuing action of the play resulting from improper batter's at bat.

This diagram/flowchart, when used in conjunction with the Official Baseball Rules version of rule 6.07, will help the reader to remember, retain and understand this often-confused rule. For re-prints and other information, visit us at www.cmumpires.org.

Batting out of order case studies

Below are some game situations which attempt to define several “batting out of order” situations that tend, in particular, to occur in recreational baseball and softball.

1. If the error is discovered while the incorrect batter is at bat

It is the top of the 2nd inning with B2 on 2nd base and 1 out. B4 comes to bat for her team. With the count at 1 ball and 1 strike, B2 steals 3rd on a wild pitch. The defensive coach realizes that B4 is batting out of order, calls time, and appeals batting out of order to the plate umpire. The umpire checks his line-up card and sees that the coach is correct. The person who is supposed to be batting is B3.

RULING: The umpire has B3 come out of the dugout and takes B4’s place at the plate with a 2 ball, 1 strike count and allows B2 to stay at 3rd.

2. If the error is discovered after the incorrect batter has completed his turn at bat and before a pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown to another batter

It is the bottom of the 4th inning with no out and runners at 1st and 3rd. B3 is supposed to bat but instead B5 batter takes her place. On the first pitch B5 hits a sharp single to right field, scoring the runner at 3rd with the runner at 1st thrown out at 3rd trying to advance extra bases. B5 advances to 2nd on the throw to third. We now have 1 out with B5 at 2nd base. B3 now comes to the plate to bat but before the pitcher throws a pitch (legal or illegal) the defensive coach calls time and appeals batting out of order. The plate umpire checks the line-up card and agrees with the coach.

RULING: B3 batter is out for missing her turn at bat, he takes away the run that scored and returns the girl back to 3rd base. The out made at 3rd stands. B5, who batted out of order, is removed from 2nd base and B4 batter is the next legal batter.

3. If the error is discovered after a. the first pitch (legal or illegal) to the next batter or
b. any play or attempted play not in conjunction with, or a continuing action of, the play resulting from the improper batter’s time at bat (ex. pick-off to first base)

It is the bottom of the 5th inning and B3 batter is due to bat, but B8 batter in the line-up bats instead and draws a walk. B9 batter is hit by a wild pitch, giving her 1st base and advancing B8 to 2nd. B3 realizes that she missed her turn at bat, jumps up, grabs a bat and comes to bat. On the first pitch, she hits a single, scoring B8 from 2nd and moving B9 to 2nd. B4, seeing that B3 just batted, comes to the plate and has a pitch thrown to her for a strike. The coach from the defensive team realizes that something is wrong. He calls time and goes to the plate umpire to appeal batting out of order. After the plate umpire checks the line-up card and both teams’ scorebooks, he agrees with the coach. He rules yes, B8 and B9 batted out of order at the beginning of the inning, that B3 also batted out of order when she followed B9.

RULING: Because the defensive team's coach waited until a pitch had been thrown to B4, everything became legal and therefore B4 is the correct batter.

4. Situation 1: B9 batter is to start the inning but the B1 batter bats in her place. B1 hits a double and is standing on 2nd when the coach from the defensive team calls time and appeals batting out of order. The plate umpire checks the line-up and agrees that B9 should have been the person batting.

RULING: He calls B9 out and because B1 is the next legal batter the umpire removes her from 2nd to bat.

5. Situation 2: B5 is the next batter but B6 erroneously bats instead. The offensive coach discovers the mistake while B6 is still batting and has a count of two strikes.

RULING: _____

6. Situation 3: B5 is the next batter in the batting order but B6 erroneously bats instead. B6 walks and is awarded first base. Prior to the next legal pitch, the defensive team appeals that B6 has batted out of order.

RULING: _____

7. **Situation 4:** B1 singles and is followed by B3 who also singles, advancing B1 to third base. Before the next legal pitch to B4 the defensive team calls time and appeals that B3 batted out of order.

RULING: _____

8. **Situation 5:** The correct batting order at the start of an inning is B5, B6, B7, and B8. B7 erroneously bats in place of B5. The infraction is not detected until B8 is batting with a count of 1 ball and 1 strike.

RULING: _____

9. **Situation 6:** R1 is on third base with two outs. B5, an improper batter, is batting instead of the proper batter, B4. F1 throws a wild pitch to the backstop, which is ball three, allowing R1 to score. On the next pitch, B5 walks. Prior to the next legal pitch, the defensive coach appeals that B5 batted out of order.

RULING: _____

A coach with a good understanding of the rule will not bring an “improper batter” situation to the attention of the umpire until AFTER the player has batted and prior to the next legal pitch. This way an “out” is assured and no harm can occur with respect to base runners as a result of the “improper batter” putting the ball into play. A coach with less than a stellar understanding of the rule will expect an “out” when bringing the matter to the attention of the umpire WHILE the “improper batter” is still batting. A thorough understanding of this rule minimizes “discussion” times with coaches who may not have a good understanding of the rule.

NOTES: _____

Ball: A pitch which does not enter the strike zone in flight and is not struck at by the batter. While simple in definition, what happens when said ball *touches the ground*?

- A pitch, not swung at, touches the ground and bounces through the strike zone; **Ball or Strike?**
- A pitch touches the ground, bounces, and hits the batter. **Is the batter awarded first base?**
- A pitch touches the ground; the batter swings and gets a hit. **Is it a legal hit or foul ball?**

Imagine how strong an umpire you will be when you can see plays like this and get them right!
You will not only get them right, but will amaze those around you by being able to give specific reasons for your ruling.

Situation Worksheet

1. The batter hits a line drive into the right-center field gap. The absent-minded first baseman is standing near his regular position, watching the baseball. As the batter-runner rounds first he nearly runs into the first baseman, but veers around him and proceeds to try for a triple. The first baseman has violated a rule. What is the violation called?
 - a. Blocking
 - b. Interference
 - c. Obstruction
 - d. Posting
2. Runner on first, stealing on the pitch. The batter hits a ground ball to the shortstop, who throws to second, but R1 is safe at second. The second baseman then tries to throw out the batter-runner, but the ball gets by the first baseman and goes into the dugout, out of play. Ruling?
 - a. R1 stays at second; BR stays at first
 - b. R1 to third; BR to second
 - c. R1 scores; BR to second
 - d. R1 scores; BR to third
3. The home team, which is using the third base dugout, is batting. The batter hits a high fly ball that will come down near the third base dugout. The third baseman goes over and it appears he will easily catch the ball. However, he trips over two fielding gloves that were illegally left lying on live ball territory by the home team, and he fails to catch the ball. The batter is out due to interference by the home team players.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. R2, no outs. The batter-runner bunts the pitch and is running to first on fair territory, illegally outside the 45-foot running lane. The catcher fields the bunt and throws to first. The ball just barely touches the batter-runner's shoulder. The first baseman flinches, but catches the ball for an out at first. He then throws home against R2, who is safe. Ruling?
 - a. BR is out for running lane interference; R2 scores
 - b. BR is out due to the tag of first base; R2 scores
 - c. The ball became dead when it touched the BR outside the running lane- running lane interference; R2 goes back to second base
 - d. Same as 'c' except the runner goes back to third base
5. The first baseman dives to his right to field a sharp ground ball. The pitcher is running down the first base line to cover the bag. The first baseman throws ahead of the pitcher, who is approaching first base with the runner. The pitcher reaches for the throw, but misses it and falls on the first base bag. In attempting to touch the base, the runner steps on the pitcher rather than the base. The runner tumbles past first base. The catcher has backed up the play, and runs the ball over and tags the batter-runner. The batter-runner is out because he failed to touch first.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. R3, R1, two outs. Ground ball up the middle, just past the pitcher's right side. The shortstop gloves the ball in front of second base and attempts to tag the sliding R1 instead of tagging the base. The tag is missed, but R1 slides past the base without touching it. As R1 scrambles back to the base, the shortstop tags him before he is able to return. R3 scored before the tag was applied for the third out (a 'time play'). The defense appeals that R1 missed second base, hoping to get a force out-an 'advantageous fourth out' - to negate the run.
 - a. The appeal is upheld; R1 is out and the run cannot score since the third out is now a force out
 - b. The appeal is not allowed, the run scores
 - c. The umpire should simply call R1 out for being out of the baseline, thus avoiding this whole mess.
7. R1, R3, one out, home team at bat, fifth inning. Squeeze play; runners stealing on the pitch. The batter attempts to bunt over the head of the charging first baseman. He pops the ball over the first baseman's head, but the pitcher makes a spectacular diving catch (taking attention away from R3). R3 touches home as the catch is made. He sees that R1 will be out easily, and he proceeds quietly to his dugout. The pitcher tosses the ball to first base for an easy retouch appeal, and R1 is the third out. The pitcher's trainer and manager sprint onto the field to check their pitcher for injury. A normal change of half-innings ensues; no one, including the plate umpire, deals with R3's failure to retouch or his run (which obviously scored before the third out-a time play). After nine innings, the scoreboard says the score is 2-2, and the visiting team eventually wins by an apparent score of 4-2 after 12 innings. In their locker room after the game, the umpires discuss the fifth inning double play, and realize that the run scored for the home team. What should they do?

- a. Nothing. It is up to the home team to find the error.
 - b. The umpires must inform the official scorer and the two managers that the home team won the game in eight-and-a-half innings by a score of 3-2.
 - c. The 4-2 final score stands; the mistake was not recognized before the end of regulation play, so the extra innings must count.
 - d. The 4-2 final score stands; the mistake was not recognized before the umpires left the field.
 - e. The umpires must refer the matter to the league president, commissioner, or supervisor by telephone.
8. R1. Line drive at the first baseman who dives, but can only trap the ball for 'no catch.' R1, believing there is a catch, returns to first. The fielder tags first base and then R1 (who is touching first). Ruling?
- a. Both runners were forced to advance during the play, so both runners are out.
 - b. The BR is out, removing the force against R1, who is safe.
 - c. R1 is out for interfering with the play by running the wrong direction. The BR is out on the tag of first. Double play.
 - d. R1 is out as soon as he touches first, because BR was entitled to the base. The ball is dead, and BR is placed at first.
9. The batter hits a deep and high fly ball into the right field corner. The right fielder gets under the ball at the fence, near the foul pole. He is standing on foul territory. The fielder jumps and touches the ball with his glove while the ball is over fair territory. The ball deflects off his glove and travels over the fence on the foul side of the foul pole. Ruling?
- a. Home run. The ball was fair and traveled over the home run fence.
 - b. Foul ball. The fielder was on foul territory when he touched the ball, and the ball was foul when it went over the fence.
 - c. Ground rule double. The ball was fair but traveled over the fence over foul territory.
10. R3, one out. The batter swings, contacts the catcher's mitt, and hits a deep fly ball to right field. The plate umpire correctly signals 'interference' on the catcher. R3 tags up and scores. Ruling?
- a. The ball is immediately dead on the catcher's interference and the batter-runner is awarded first base. R3 back to third.
 - b. Since the offense scored, the play stands.
 - c. The umpire goes to the offensive manager and asks him whether he would like the interference enforced (batter-runner awarded first, R3 back to third), or the results of the play (batter-runner out, R3 scores).
 - d. The umpire allowed the entire play to occur. Then, since the batter-runner did not reach first, he enforces the interference (batter-runner awarded first, R3 back to third). He will grant the offensive manager the results of the play if the manager requests such, but he does not offer the option.

Extra Situations to Ponder

Situation A: During a pregame conference, an adult assistant coach verifies to the plate umpire that all players are properly equipped and are in compliance with NFHS rules and that they understand the guidelines and will display proper sporting behavior (NFHS softball 3.5.1)

RULING: _____

Situation B: With R1 on first, B2 hits a ground ball to F3 who (a) steps on first and then tags R1 who has remained on first; or (b) tags R1 while R1 is on first and then steps on first. (NFHS softball 8.3.3)

RULING (a): _____

RULING (b): _____

Situation C: With one out, R1 on second and R2 on first, B4 hits a ground ball directly to F1 who throws to F5 for a force on R1 at third. F5 then throws to F3 in time to put out B4. F6 holds R1, preventing him from advancing to third. (NFHS baseball 8.3.2)

RULING: _____

Situation D: With runners on first and third base and no outs, R1 and R2 proceed with a double steal. B3 hits a high pop fly over foul territory and the wind starts to carry the ball into fair territory. The umpire-in-chief prematurely calls foul ball as F2 makes the attempt to catch the ball. He drops the ball in fair territory. (NFHS baseball 5.1.1)

RULING: _____

Umpire Game Sheets

Below is an example of the Umpire Game Sheets that you will use for EACH and EVERY game that you umpire. This is your pay record and you will be responsible for obtaining the proper documentation.

Instructions:

1. Fill out ALL information on the sheet prior to the start of the game.
2. Each umpire must fill out a sheet.
3. Mark the appropriate boxes and fill in the information.
4. Have the pregame conference at home plate and obtain the signatures of each HEAD COACH. Your pregame meeting will take place with ONLY the head coach of each team.
5. Each umpire must sign one another's sheet.
6. At the conclusion of the game, the sheets must be turned in to the designated area. Failure to turn in the cards to the proper area and on a timely basis could result in a delay in your pay. **Please turn in sheets within ONE WEEK from game date. Failure to do so will result in a \$5 per sheet reduction in pay.**

SOA Umpire Sheet

Umpire Name: (Print)	<input type="text"/>
Game #: <input type="text"/>	Partner Name: (Print) <input type="text"/>
Date: _____	Field: _____
Time: _____	Division: _____

Pre Game Meeting

- 1 10 Minutes before game time - inspect playing conditions of field. Consider ground rules that may apply
- 2 5 Minutes before game time - call head coaches to home plate for conference. ONLY head coaches.
- 3 Plate umpire introduce base umpire and themselves to coaches by first name.
- 4 Ask coaches to sign this form acknowledging that all players are legally and properly equipped.
- 5 Go over ground rules - out of play, openings in fence, fences that are curled, etc.
- 6 Remind coaches about sportsmanship and arguing of calls. Be a sport.
- 7 Wish them good luck and notify them of GAMETIME. Play ball!

This is my timesheet and payment sheet. It must be turned into the umpire coordinator within 4 days of the above game.

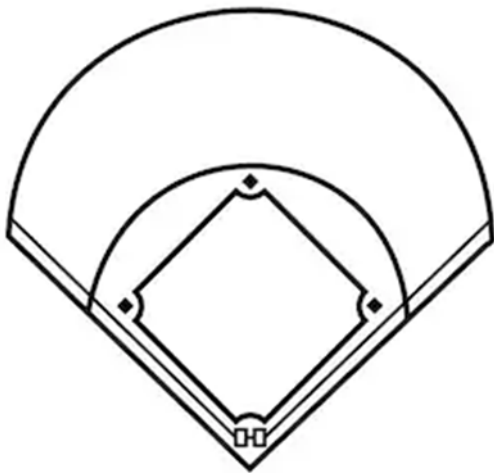
Umpire Name (Print) Umpire Signature Date

It is the Head Coach's responsibility to ensure that all players are legally and properly equipped.

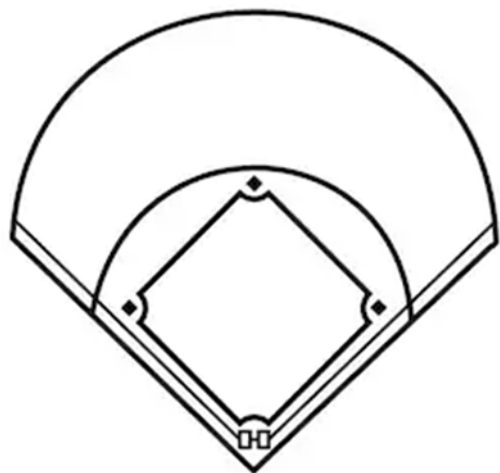
I certify that all of my players are legally and properly equipped to participate in this game. I also understand that if one of my players is found to be using illegal equipment during the game, I may be ejected from the game and other penalties as outlined in the SCBA general rules.

Print Name (Home Team) Signature (Home Team) Date

Print Name (Visiting Team) Signature (Visiting Team) Date



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