

HTV Umpire Class

Summer/Fall 2020

Baseball is supposed to be a fun way for the kids to get exercise, but the current pandemic requires some new, different procedures to be put into effect. These guidelines will stay in effect through *at least* the end of this season. Some of these rules are adapted from California District 68.

Remember, **you set an example** for the players, coaches, and spectators. You should be calm and friendly, and importantly, you must wear a mask over your mouth and nose at all times except when getting a drink, and you should always socially distance.

NEW: Umpiring During the Pandemic

- First and most importantly: **always wear a face-covering over your nose and mouth**. The only exception is when getting a drink. You are not exerting yourself like a player, there's no need to let it slip down your face
- Further, there is no need for you to get close to anyone, **so you should always be socially distanced**, except when in motion or making a call
- There should be **no umpire-coach meetings** at the beginning of the game. The rules followed are standard, there is no need to go over them at the beginning of a game
- However, you should go over these rules with your partner to make sure **you both understand how to run the game**— especially as first time umpires
- Instead of a home plate umpire and a base umpire, there will be a ball strike umpire (BSU) and first base umpire (U1)

Pregame

- You should get called/texted by Joe Deceglie to have games scheduled about a week in advance. Be sure to answer his calls. You must show up for the games you accept. **If you need to reschedule, call back as soon as possible** to let him know. If you do not show up for a game that you are scheduled to umpire, you will likely not be scheduled again
- Bring from home your indicator, brush, drawstring bag, water, and a watch, preferably all sanitized
- Please wear long pants, umpire shirt, and, preferably, a hat
 - When it is cold, try to wear sweatshirts and long sleeves underneath your umpire shirt. This is not always feasible for very cold nights, but try
 - For the first few months of the summer season, shorts may be acceptable on hot days. Long pants should be worn starting in September— it's O.K. to sweat a little
 - You **must wear your umpire shirt**. The players have a uniform, the umpires must have their uniform too. If you need a different size, or an extra, ask someone at HTV
- Get to the field complex at least 15 minutes before the game. Meet with your partner at the concession stand

- We want to be on the field 10 minutes before game time to check the field and start game on time
- Make sure you **sign in on the HTV check-in form** and get your temperature taken before reporting to the field. Walk to the field with your partner (socially distanced, if possible)
- Balls will be provided by the teams and you should never be touching baseballs
- When at the field, leave your drawstring bag, water, and other belongings outside the field (outside the gate), down the line and out of play if in field, or far away from home plate
 - The base umpire should try and leave everything but water near home plate umpire's belongings off the field
- As teams are warming up, make sure bases are firmly attached to magnetic base, and note if there is a safety base (orange/red) at first
- The home team should take the field as soon as they are ready, and the time starts at game time (6:30, 1:00, etc.) as according to your watch or phone
- Talk to partner about covering different plays before the game

Little League Rules (Read Supplementary Rules Sheet)

- No new inning may begin after 1 hour and 45 minutes after game time. Game time is determined by your watch or phone, and must be told to each coach. A strict time limit of 2 hours is in effect, and the score goes back to the previous inning
- Game time is the scheduled time of the game, if both umpires are ready: not first pitch. However, if you are late (you shouldn't be), game time waits for you
 - Try and get the home team on the field, warming up for the first inning, a few minutes before the scheduled time, if possible
- This year, games are spaced out to allow for cleaning and other safety procedures. Stay in contact with the director at the field to know if games are running late
- Runner's may not leave the base until the ball reaches the batter
- Players may not slide head-first into the next base. They may dive head-first back into a base they have already reached
- All players avoid contact or slide on all plays: they **do not need to slide**
- All catcher's must have a dangling throat guard attached to their mask

Majors Rules

- The infield fly rule is in effect
- Bunting and slashing are allowed
- There is no 5 run rule in any inning
- No new inning after 1 hour 45 minutes, drop dead at 2 hours after game time
- Runners may advance from 3rd on all plays
- All other rules are the same

Ball Strike Umpire

- The BSU is the Umpire-in-Chief for the game. You keep the time and "run" the game, working with your partner
- This year we will not call balls and strikes from behind home plate. BSU should stand about 10 feet behind the pitcher, a few steps to the pitcher's arm side. For a right handed pitcher, this is the third base side; for left handed pitchers, the first base side.

- At the start of the game and every half inning, the BSU should explicitly check that the base umpire is ready in the A position, then put the ball in play. After every called time or foul ball, the home plate umpire should look at the base umpire to make sure they are ready (an explicit motion is not necessary), and put the ball in play
- As the pitch is being thrown, bend at the knees into the ready position (like a base umpire, described below) and track the pitch from the hand of the pitcher into the catcher's glove. Then take a moment to determine the outcome of the pitch. Make the appropriate call.
 - There is no motion for a ball. A strike is shown below. In addition, a loud "strike" should be said for a called strike, a soft "strike" for a swing and miss. A foul tip is a strike motion with a verbal "tip." A foul ball is a loud "foul" with both hands up
 - Little League Strike Zone: any part of the ball crossing the armpits, the bottom of the knees, and any part of a pitch within 1 or 2 balls width (3-6 inches) off both corners of the plate



- You should give the count every few pitches. When there's a play on the bases (passed ball, wild pitch, etc) where the batter is still up, you may want to repeat the count to make sure everyone knows what you called on that pitch. Otherwise, wait 2 or 3 pitches, and then give the count about every other pitch
 - Always give balls in your left (indicator) hand, strikes in your right. **Do not give full count with a closed fist, give 3 and 2**

In addition to ball strike responsibilities:

- If there is nobody on base, the BSU should be tracking the runner down the line and be ready to help if there is interference, a tag, or a ball going out of play (into the dugout, under the fence: the runner moves up one base)
- U1 has ALL fair/foul decisions down the first base line. If the BSU sees a foul ball hit the batter (batter still in the box), then they should call it immediately
- When there is a ball down the third base line, the BSU must break to the line hard. If possible, they should be on the line to make a fair/foul call. However, this will rarely be possible. Do your best to get as close as you can and be set for the call
- With runners on base, the BSU should work with the base umpire on tracking all runners touching each base, looking for interference, and being at the correct

location to make a call. Often times, the BSU will watch the lead runner touch second and third base, and make calls at those two bases, while the base umpire is occupied at first and home

- With two umpires, it is necessary that you communicate before the game and during the play who will make a call at each base.
 - Try to **predict where the play is going to develop** and where you and your partner need to be. Remain flexible and adjust
- Plays at the plate:
 - As a rule of thumb, if there's going to be a play at first, U1 should stay there to make the call, and the BSU should be prepared to make a call at home, getting in a good position at a good angle
 - Otherwise, U1 should be ready to sprint in foul territory to a correct position to make a call at home
- When making a strike-ball, fair-foul, or out-safe call, an umpire should be **completely stationary**. Try and get a **good angle on the play**, so you can see the foot on the base, the throw going into the glove, and the runners foot hitting the base
- Catch no catch responsibilities: on the infield, U1 has all catches made by the first baseman and all catches made by players running towards U1. In the outfield, U1 has responsibility for any catch/no catch decision that requires a fair/foul decision on the first base line. BSU has all other catch/no catch decisions

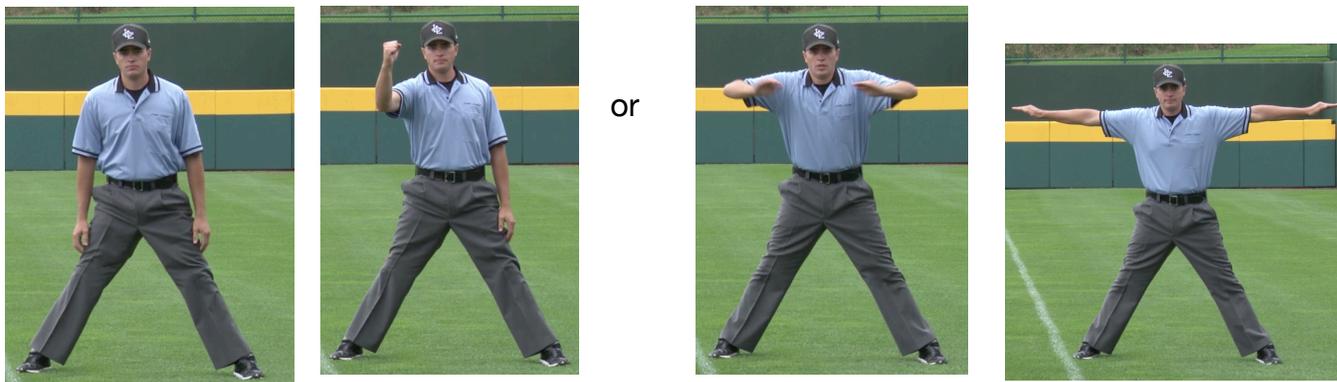
Base Umpire

- Positioning is key for the Base Umpire, as there is a lot of ground to cover and not much time to get to a good position
- **Focus on getting a good angle on the play over being close**— you should never be blocked by a player (even if they are in the play) to see the base, the ball, the feet of each player, and places where a tag can occur
 - For instance, a play at third should not be called from the edge of the infield grass in front of the shortstop, as you are behind the runner and cannot see the base
- When making all calls, you should be stationary, process the play, and then make the call. It is better if you take a moment to make the call, as it gives you time to process the play, and allows you to see dropped balls, feet off the base, and other occurrences that you may miss if you make the call immediately
 - When making any call, continue to look at the play so you do not miss anything
- To start, both umpires should be in the set position, shown here.
- This umpire is in the A position: note how he is completely in foul territory. If a ball hits him, he would know the ball is foul.

Do not straddle the line

- There are 2 basic calls for the base umpire: out and safe. Eventually, you will want to learn calls like “off the bag,” or “on the tag.” For now, verbalize these events, you can learn mechanics later. You must still look for these occurrences
- Run to the spot where you have a good angle, and if possible, about 5-10 feet away. Get a good angle before getting closer. Stop moving, get set, then make the call with good mechanics





- All plays will start with U1 in the A position
- For advanced umpires, you can follow the In-Out Mechanics: the base umpire goes where the ball isn't
 - On balls that stay in the infield, the umpire stays on the outside of the first baseman, but onto the dirt to make a good call at 1st base
 - For balls to the outfield, U1 can make their way to the infield, staying out of the way of all players. It may be necessary to make a call at home, so be ready
 - With no runners on, U1 can cross into the infield, watch the runner touch the base, and watch him to 2nd— the BSU should have the call at 2nd
 - With runners on, if there will be no play at 1st, U1 should be ready to sprint home to make a call at the plate. Remember, **angle over distance**
- U1 should always be prepared to help with check swings, even if they are rare at this age. You should also be looking for hit batsman, foul balls, etc. You **don't want to embarrass your partner** when they ask for your help
- U1 should always be keeping track of the count, outs, and innings on their indicator to provide back up for the BSU
 - Don't throw around the indicator, it looks very unprofessional
- Both umpires should be on the look out, but the field umpire has the responsibility for making sure no runner leaves early. All runners must be in contact with the base when **the ball reaches the batter**
 - What does the ball has reached the batter mean? It's purposely vague, so the umpires must use judgement in determining if the runner "left early."
 - The vagueness leads people to think the rule is "the ball crosses the plate." It's not. Don't let coaches try and convince you otherwise. If it isn't egregious, you don't have to call it. You should be confident that it occurred, as some penalties are odd and extreme
 - When a runner leaves early, the ball is not dead. Officially, umpires should have a red flag that they drop. In our case, let the play continue, just point and call "They left early!" Then, when the play is complete, call time:
 - If the runner who left early is out, they are out no matter what; if there is no hit, ALL runners return to their original base (on a steal for instance, ALL runners must return to their original base);

- If the batter gets a hit and force the runner, they only go as far as they would be forced by the hit (a double moves the runner only to third, no matter what, even if they start on third);
- If a runner leaves early with bases loaded, and the batter reaches first base on an infield hit or uncaught third strike, the runner on third is not out, does not score, and is removed from base
- Please read the rule book to understand rule 7.13
- In the A position, U1 gets fair foul calls on the entire 1st base line. Follow the ball in this case. Otherwise, follow the runner, and the BSU gets catches— you can assist as long as you don't miss your responsibilities

Umpiring a Game Alone

- It's a difficult thing to do, and you will miss some things. You need to be as mobile and aware as possible
- Balls and strikes are still your primary responsibility until the ball is in play
- With no runners on, you can commit yourself to first base
- Otherwise, stay around the pitchers mound to try and see calls at all bases, tracking base runners, and be ready for a play at the plate. Predict where the play will develop
- You will miss things. Do your best

After the Game

- Do not leave without your partner, and walk back to the Concession Stand together. Let someone on HTV staff know the game is over.
- The method of payment this season will be determined soon
- Try to leave as soon as possible, making sure you socially distance and keep your mask on. There will be a place to wait for your parents

Pace of Game

- Try not to let batters step out repeatedly, they can keep one foot in the box
- Coaches are allowed one offensive time out per inning in which they can talk to their batter. Don't let them talk to every batter
- Between innings, coaches **are not** allowed to warm up their pitchers: Since we are not sharing any equipment this year, have the pitcher have a catch with the 3rd baseman or shortstop until the catcher comes out. Between innings should take 2 or 3 minutes at most, hopefully about 1 minute.
 - When inning breaks take a long time, you can reduce the number of warm up throws with the actual catcher the pitcher receives. If they come out immediately, give the normal amount (or less, if they want), 8 for a new pitcher, 5 for a returning. After 30-45 seconds, take one away, etc. Try to always give them at least 2 or 3.
- **Don't be on your phone** constantly between innings. It's O.K. to check the time or respond to your parents. Always be paying attention— you should be speeding up the game, not slowing it down. Be discrete and professional

- Usually, the BSU just stand near their position, possibly behind second base to not be in the way of warmups. Drink water, and get ready for the game to continue
- Base umpires should be in short right field or near the fence drinking their water

Being a Good Umpire

- Ignore parents who talk about your calls; they are usually wrong. If they start to get on your nerves, go to the coach and ask them to control their parents
- If the coach doesn't help, tell the coach that you will have to leave the field and they will forfeit
 - It should never get this far. You can usually ignore parents. Don't be confrontational. If there is a problem, call Mike, Frank, Roger, or the director on duty. They can deal with the parents and coaches for you
- You should not have to eject anyone. Call the director who is there to defuse the situation. Give a warning first
- **Be loud.** Coaches want to be able to hear your call, and being loud will give you more authority and make you sound more confident
- Take your time to make a call (a second or so), but don't be lazy or too slow
- The umpire who makes the call changes the call. If your partner, not the coach, asks you for help, you may then give your opinion to your partner. Meet and discuss quietly. **They always change the call, not you**
- If you do need help with a call, call your partner and have a brief discussion about it
- Don't allow the players to have gum, seeds, or food, and don't use them yourself
- If any umpire or coach sees lightning, all players must vacate the fields and go to their cars for 30 minutes. Communicate with the director on duty
- You run the field, so if there is rain, you determine when the field is playable. Heavy rain can send players to the dugouts to wait it out. Be in contact with the director who is at the field, they will help you with the decision. If the field becomes slick, unplayable, it is your call.

Common Myths to Know— These are all FALSE

- The ball is dead on a foul tip (a foul tip is tipped ball directly into the catcher's glove)
- A runner may not steal on a foul tip.
- A batted ball that hits the plate is a foul ball.
- The base coach can't leave the coach's box during play or he/she will be guilty of interference. **Note that this year, coaches should never approach the players**
- A batter-runner cannot overrun first base on a base-on-balls.
- A base runner cannot be guilty of interference on a ground ball if they don't touch the fielder.
- A batter who bats out of order is out.
- The pitcher gets eight warm-up pitches between innings.
- If a pitch hits a player's hands it's considered a foul ball, since hands are considered part of the bat.
- The runner must always slide when the play is close.
- In order to be called out on a caught foul ball, the batted ball must go higher than the batter's head.

- If a fielder holds a fly ball for two seconds, it's a legal catch, even if he/she drops it thereafter.
- A runner who runs more the three feet away from a direct line between bases is out of the baseline and should be called out.
- The runner is out if tagged when he/she turns to the left after crossing first base.
- It can't be an Infield Fly if the infielder is standing on the outfield grass.
- In order for a runner to be called out for interference, it must be intentional.
- The home plate umpire (BSU) can over-rule another umpire if he/she has more experience or a better look at the play.
- When the batter backs out of the box when a pitch is delivered, it's an automatic strike.
- A runner cannot be called out if hit by a batted ball while standing on a base.
- A pitch that bounces as it comes in cannot be hit.
- The batter is not out for interference with the catcher if he/she stays in the batter's box.
- Tagging the runner running from first on a ground ball is a tag play, not a force out.
- Judgment calls can be appealed if the manager feels that the umpire missed the call.
- Contact must occur for interference or obstruction to be called.
- If a fielder runs into an umpire while chasing a fly ball, this is interference and the batter should be called out.
- The batter-runner is always out if they run outside the running lane after a bunted ball.
- Any Little League player who slides headfirst at any time is out.
- If the batter does not pull the bat out of the strike zone while in the bunting position, it's an automatic strike.
- Tie goes to the runner.
- Runners may not advance when an infield fly is called.
- The batter does not get first base if hit by a pitch after it bounces.
- You must tag the base with your foot on a force out or appeal.
- If a player's feet are in fair territory when the ball is touched, it is a fair ball.
- If a fielder catches a fly ball and then falls over the fence it is a home run.
- The ball is dead anytime the ball hits an umpire.
- Runners must stay on their bases until the pitcher releases the ball.

Contact Information (Put These in Your Contacts)

Mike Young: President, Majors Director, D34 Ump: 631-335-144

Frank Vega: Vice President, Seniors, D34 Ump: 631-561-1498

Roger Snyder: Minors Director, Safety Officer: 631-925-6104

John Zammillo: Umpire-in-Chief: 631-987-5954

Joe Deceglie: Minors Scheduler: 631-757-4962

Useful References:

- Please read the Little League Rulebook. Tournament rules don't apply to you, but you should know the rules of the game that you umpire.
- Little League University has many useful videos that will help your mechanics once you leave. Watch them.
- There are many online websites for umpires. These are good resources and you can always learn something