

# **ESBA PLAYING RULES AND UMPIRING SUPPLEMENT**

The following documents are intended to help umpires and coaches become as knowledgeable as possible about baseball rules.

East Side Playing Rules amend and supersede the Official Baseball Rules.

Full East Side Playing Rules are contained on the [eastsidebaseball.com](http://eastsidebaseball.com) website under Bylaws/Rules. Note there are additional rules for end of season tournaments for Pinto, Mustang and Bronco Leagues.

Pony and Colt currently use Cobb Inter-Park Playing Rules, available through a separate link.

Some of the following documents, at the end of this supplement, apply specifically to Pinto or Shetland Leagues.

For coaches and umpires, it is important to accept that umpires are human and are subject to making human mistakes or being visually blocked at times. All new umpires (and coaches) have a learning curve. It is part of East Side's culture and expectations that umpires and coaches are to be treated with total respect at all times. Temperamental misbehavior by anyone is unacceptable at East Side games.

Violations of our rules, including Zero Tolerance Policy violations or game ejections, must be reported by umpires to Director of Officials immediately (that night), with full details.

Likewise, improper conduct by any umpire should be reported by coaches to the League Commissioner or Board Rep, with full details.

Our families consider having fun as the number one reason for playing East Side Baseball. It's not fun to observe disagreements or arguments at the park. It's also teaching kids the wrong message about sports or interacting with others in life.

# ESBA ADVICE TO NEW UMPIRES

**There's a lot more to becoming a good umpire than just knowing the rules and positioning. Here are some points of advice from veteran umpires:**

Relax as a field umpire. New umpires tend to fidget, moving around, checking around them. Veteran umpires tend to stand comfortably in one spot, arms relaxed.

Veteran umpires do not signal "safe" calls when obvious to all, such as a throw getting past a defender or no play being made.

Delay your call by one full second – prevents embarrassment, reversing your call, allowing for a missed catch or base, and damaging your credibility. Veterans typically delay several seconds before making a clearly obvious call. Never anticipate the call, you'll be wrong a lot.

Always stop and plant to make a base call – don't make the call on the run. Eyes bouncing looks bad.

"Selling" a close call reduces bad reactions by 90%! If a tag play, point to the tag. Signal dropped balls or off the base or missing base. Selling involves firm, loud voice and proper body language.

Never yell "fair ball", just signal with arm if close call.

Certain calls like missed bases or leaving early require actually seeing it happen., never guessing it might have happened. But tag plays sometimes require best guessing if not great angle. If calling a missed tag, best to see daylight. Ask your partner for help if needed. If both are wrong, fine, you're showing coaches you tried your best.

Don't be afraid to admit to a coach you might have missed that call or pitch. Helps with credibility and might make him feel better if he thought you missed it. Acknowledges you're human and not perfect. Remember that base coaches sometimes have a better angle of a tag play or missed base. Of course, you can't use their opinion, but know they may have had a better view.

You lose anytime you get "hooked" with a temperamental reaction. You win if you can remain composed and calm with respectful words. Gains respect of everyone watching, even if they disagree. And every umpire creates a reputation around the park. Going home later thinking you got the best of a coach is not a good thing. You'll likely see that guy again.

East Side has a Zero Tolerance Policy addressing coaches' behavior toward umpires.

The ESBA board wants it enforced. Unless a really bad reaction by a coach, one option is to quietly tell a coach that a ZT violation just occurred, ES wants you to enforce the rule, and you're issuing a warning. If it is repeated you are expected to report it to Dave that night, with full details. ZT violations vary in seriousness and might not include ejection, but can. Ejections at ES are rare. Most commissioners are very responsive in dealing with problem coaches. They need to know who any problem coaches are.

Be sure there are no extra coaches or others on the field. Watch for any gear on the field. Be sure dugout gates are closed. Think about danger to people and complicated rules for interference and live balls entering dugouts.

## **FOR MUSTANG AND OLDER:**

Understand that about the hardest thing in all of umpiring is mastering the “Mustang Strike Zone”. It’s different and can change with different pitchers. It’s not enjoyable to anyone to see every batter walked every inning.

Practice your third strike ring-up and close tag play calls.

Don’t be afraid to ask your partner his impression of your strike zone, especially early on.

Don’t respond to a coach asking “Blue, where was that pitch?”. It’s bush and the same as complaining about the pitch, implying he thought it was a strike. You can tell the coach he can’t question balls and strikes but you’ll be glad to discuss his pitcher’s location between innings. Remember, complaining about balls and strikes is prohibited at every level of baseball.

For Mustang field position, might prefer the “Little League” position, standing behind infielders instead of on the infield grass, with runners on. For first base, have right foot just foul of the foul line and stand back near the outfield grass.

It’s okay to explain to Bronco or older pitchers what they did to cause a balk. You can usually tell by their reaction if they don’t understand.

Sometimes it’s tempting to give coaching advice to players, especially pitchers, but some coaches don’t like that. Egos can get in the way.

# ESBA CONDENSED OFFICIAL BASEBALL RULES

The following selected key articles are presented in a condensed, quick-read version of the Official Baseball Rules:

## 1.00 Objectives of the Game

- Home plate is in fair territory.

## 2.00 Definitions of Terms

- Catch: Runner may tag up at point fielder first touches fly ball, fair or foul, and even juggled. Not a catch if fielder catches fly ball then drops ball due to collision with another player, a wall or the ground.
- Foul Ball: A hit ball is not foul until the ball stops or touches a player, fence, etc. in foul area, or that bounds past first or third base over foul area. Fly ball first caught over, or touching foul area is foul. Position of player, fair or foul, catching or touching ball is not considered; it is the relative position of the ball and the foul line.
- Foul Tip: Batted ball that goes sharp and direct from bat to catcher's hands, if caught. It is not a foul ball, but is in play, runners can advance; out if third strike. "Over batter's head" is not a valid rule; it is whether there is a discernible loop off the bat (foul ball, if so).
- Interference: Runner interferes with (usually called if contact made) defensive player making play or if hit fair ball touches runner before ball touches or passes an infielder. Ball is dead, touched runner out, no other runners advance unless forced.
- Obstruction: Fielder impeding progress of runner if not in possession of or receiving ball.
- Strike Zone: Over home plate, from top of knees up to letters (specifically, upper limit is midpoint between top of shoulders and top of pants). Black edge not in strike zone.

## 3.00 Game Preliminaries

- Once a game is started, the Umpire-in-chief is the sole judge as to suspending, ending or resuming a game due to playing conditions.
- If a spectator clearly prevents a fielder from catching a fly ball, batter is out, except if fielder reaches over fence or railing into stands.

## 4.00 Starting and Ending a Game

- When the ball is put in play any time during the game, all fielders except the catcher must be in fair territory (including first baseman).
- A player or coach who yells "time" or commits any other act intended to cause a balk will be removed from the game.

## 5.00 Putting the Ball in Play. Live Ball

- If a fair ball goes by an infielder, then touches a runner immediately back of him, the ball is in play (not interference).

## 6.00 The Batter

- A batter is out if he hits a fair or foul ball with one or both feet entirely outside batter's box.
- There is no rule that a batter is out when his bat slips out of his hands after a swing (only if thrown is anger).

## 7.00 The Runner

- If two runners occupy the same base, the following runner is out when tagged.
- A runner is out if he overtakes and passes another runner before such runner is out.
- Two bases are awarded, from the runner's position at the instant the throw begins, when a fielder's throw goes into a dead area (dugout, stands, under or over fence). One base is awarded if such a throw is from the pitcher on the rubber.
- A runner is out if he runs more than three feet out of a baseline to avoid being tagged. A runner must also avoid a fielder fielding a ball.
- A batter-runner is out if umpire judges his being out of three-foot line causes interference with throw to first base.
- A runner, after running past first base, may turn inward (left) and immediately return to first base without liability of being tagged out, if he did not make an attempt to advance toward second base.
- A runner is out for interference if a hit fair ball touches him, unless the ball goes through or by an infielder immediately before touching the runner. Standing on a base does not protect a runner from interference.
- Players and coaches of the offensive team must vacate any space needed by a fielder to field a batted ball and may not interfere with a thrown ball.
- A runner is out if a base coach physically assists him in leaving or returning to a base.
- A batter-runner is not out if his bat is dropped accidentally and the ball rolls against the bat, fair or foul.

Articles 8.00 The Pitcher and 9.00 The Umpire have been excluded from this version.

ESBA

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# FOUL BALLS

**Foul lines** are on **fair** ground and line up with the back tip of home plate and the foul poles; therefore, home plate is on **fair** ground, and fly balls hitting foul poles are **fair**.

## Batted balls:

- are not considered **foul** until the instant the ball stops or touches a fence, a player equipment over foul ground.
- first touching fair ground before passing 1B or 3B, then passing outside the vertical plane of the base are **foul** (see diagram).
- passing beyond 1B or 3B before touching ground are considered **fair** or **foul** based on where they first touch ground or a player (see diagram).
- touched by a fielder are considered **fair** or **foul** based on the vertical position of the ball over the foul line, not where the fielder is standing (see diagram).
- touching a runner are **fair** or **foul** based on the vertical position of the ball (the batter or runner may be out for interference if ball over fair ground - see rule).
- touching 1B or 3B, then veering foul are **fair** balls. But batted balls veering off the pitchers rubber then rolling foul before passing 1B or 3B are **foul**.
- rolling into a discarded bat on fair ground are **live** - continue play (if unintentional); such contact on foul ground is a **foul** ball.

Runners may advance after a fly ball is caught over **foul** ground (same as fair ground).

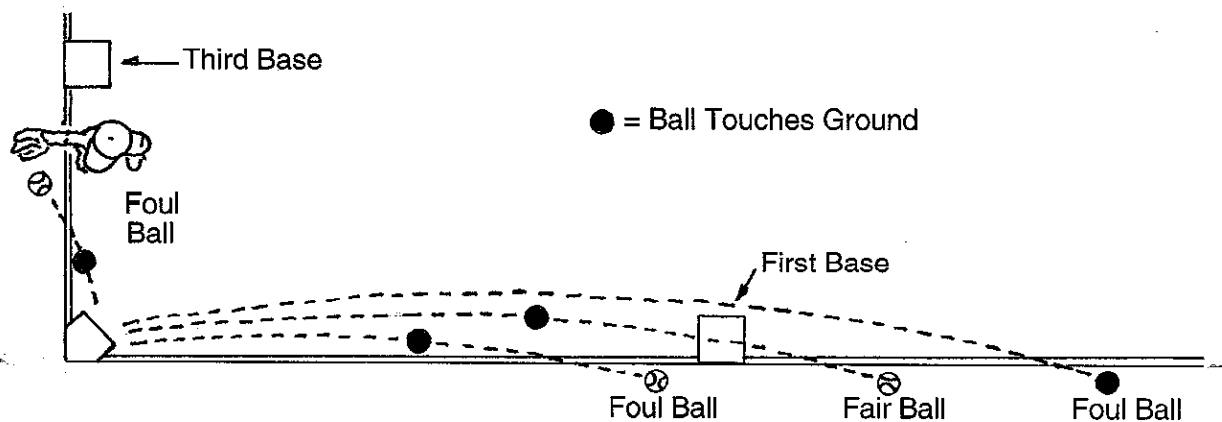
Base coaches preventing a fielder from catching a foul fly ball, even if unintentional or if the coach stays in the coach's box, may cause the batter to be called **out**.

Batter-runners are subject to being called **out** if running to 1B outside of (not within) **the 3-foot lane**, if the umpire judges that he may have prevented a play being made.

**Foul tips** go "sharp and direct" into the catcher's hands (not trapped); it is a strike and **not a foul ball**, and the ball is live and in play. (No "over the batter's head" rule).

Runners must **retouch** their bases after a **foul** ball, before the next pitch.

All defensive players except the catcher must be on **fair ground** when pitch is delivered.



# BALKS

A balk is an illegal act by the pitcher with a runner or runners on base, entitling all runners to advance one base. The purpose of the balk rule is to prevent the pitcher from deliberately deceiving the base runner. See Article 8.05 of Official Rules of Major League Baseball.

**For East Side Baseball:** Balks are not called in Mustang. Major balks are called in Bronco after spring break (October 1 for fall season). In Mustang and Bronco, a runner cannot be called out on a play caused by a balk – allows runners advances gained. All balks apply in Pony/Colt.

**Major Balks** - apply for ESBA Bronco, Pony, Colt:

- Significant shoulder or body movement once set.
- Failure to complete pitch after starting delivery motion.
- Feinting throw to 1B or 3B while on rubber.
- Failure to step toward base when throwing from rubber - must step ahead of throw.
- Removing hand from ball once set if not delivering pitch or throwing to a base.
- Failure to pause (come to stop) in set position.
- Feinting throw to 3B then immediately turning to throw or feint throw toward 1B runner.

**Other Balks** - which may also be called in ESBA Pony and Colt:

- Throwing or feinting throw to unoccupied base.
- Illegal or quick pitch (umpire should prevent, correct).
- Delivering pitch if not facing batter.
- Not contacting rubber in delivering pitch or making pitching motion.
- Unnecessarily delaying game.
- Straddles/stands astride rubber without ball or feints pitch while off the rubber.
- Drops ball while contacting rubber.
- Catcher out of box during pitch.

## Coaching Tips:

Teach new pitchers not to contact rubber until ready to go to set position – once he contacts rubber, he has to be aware of his hand and body movement. If not ready or comfortable, step back off rubber with proper foot – now he's a regular fielder without most pitcher restrictions.

Pitcher must be in contact with rubber to receive catcher's signals.

It is not required to step off rubber to throw to a base – but must meet rules about stepping directly toward a base before he throws. Teach right-handers proper hop-step to 1B. Can't just pivot and swing leg.

Teach base runners that once pitcher's free foot swings behind rubber, he must pitch or throw to 2B on a pick-off play – illegal to throw to 1B or 3B for pick-off or to 2B if unoccupied.

Expect variations in umpire interpretations and how tight umpires may call balks.

# HOW TO APPEAL A MISSED CALL:

Note the key word “**missed**” call – don’t waste everyone’s time and patience if it was simply a “**close**” call, or you’re just “**fishing**” for a possible reversal - never happens. Only consider a rare appeal if a rule misinterpretation may be involved, or if the umpire’s view may have been blocked or a bad angle and his partner may have had a clear view – and you truly believe the call was missed.

At East Side it's okay to appeal an umpire's call if you:

- Ask for **time** after the play has ended;
- Go out to the **umpire who made the call**;
- **Quietly and respectfully** ask about the call, and explain your position;
- Ask if he would **confer** with the other umpire if not satisfied;
- **Thank him** for listening – then disengage.

**Never raise your voice** or show any form of **disrespect** - you are a role model with many children and their parents watching you.

**Never argue or continue the discussion** after hearing the umpire’s response. Remember, if the umpires just didn't see it, nothing can now change that - it's not part of the game to just take your word for it. **They have to see it to call it.**

**Never appeal “close” calls** if the umpire had a reasonable view – the other umpire isn’t in a position to reverse a close call if 100’ away. Waste of everyone's time.

**Never appeal missed bases** or leaving early on a fly ball – it would have been automatically called if the umpire saw it (per ESBA Rules).

***If you're appealing more than an average of one call a game, you need an attitude adjustment - it's likely you're the problem, not the umps.***

\* \* \* \* \*

**As an umpire:** Seek to get the call right. You should always listen respectfully to a coach’s proper appeal and seek help from your partner if you’re not sure about your call. But, if you are sure, don’t waste time by asking your partner’s opinion. Also, it should be a rare occasion, maybe never, that you reverse a really close play from the opposite side of the diamond – be absolutely sure if asked by your partner.

# **ESBA ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

## **STANDARDS OF COACH BEHAVIOR TOWARD UMPIRES**

**ANY COACH SHALL BE SUSPENDED FOR ONE GAME IF HE DISPLAYS ANY FORM OF DISRESPECT TOWARD AN UMPIRE.**

**Acts of disrespect include any derogatory remark, or any extreme physical reaction, or continuing to argue after the next pitch, or clear act of poor sportsmanship to an umpire's call, including balls and strikes. A second occurrence of violating this policy in the same season may result in that coach's suspension until the ESBA Board determines further disciplinary action, which may include suspension as a coach for the rest of that season.**

### **INTERPRETIVE GUIDELINES OF ZERO TOLERANCE**

As specified in the Conduct article of the ESBA Bylaws, certain extreme conduct can result in game ejection, such as temperamental outbursts, profanity directed at an umpire, engaging in an argument, derogatory name-calling, threatening comments, throwing objects or engaging in assault.

Furthermore, under Zero Tolerance any disrespectful or derogatory remarks or gestures or extreme body language or throwing or kicking any object in reaction to an umpire's call as described above is cause for suspension, even if game ejection does not occur.

Commenting on or questioning ball and strike calls is unacceptable at all levels of baseball and cause for suspension. It is not acceptable to ask "where was that pitch?", as this implies to umpires that you thought it was a strike, showing up the umpire.

It is acceptable for a head coach to confer respectfully with an umpire about a call. Once that conference has concluded, the matter is over. See ESBA document "How to Appeal a Missed Call".

It is not possible to list every conceivable example of poor sportsmanship warranting suspension, but the above provides general guidance. The final assessment of an action subject to suspension is based on whether the behavior was in any way disrespectful to an umpire or inappropriate for an ESBA coach and role model, as judged by a league's Commissioner and Board Representative.

Every coach is responsible for following this policy, and every member is responsible for reporting violations. Suspensions are administered by a league's Commissioner, Board Representative and the President.

5/11/15



# ESBA GAME TIME LIMIT GUIDELINES

ESBA Playing Rules set time limits for each league, specifying that **no inning may start after the time limit has been reached.**

Further, the rules state that **games should not be ended prematurely.** This is to prevent ending a game solely because one team cannot tie or win due to per inning run limits.

*Participation trumps winning or losing. ESBA's philosophy does not place winning or losing above participation. People paid their money to watch their kid play ball - not just to see who wins. Run limits are meant to foster more enjoyable competition and participation, not to facilitate winning or going home sooner.*

However:

**If the time limit expires AND one team cannot tie or win AND there is another game to follow**, the game should be ended "gently" - such as agreeing that the next batter will be the last. This is to keep following games from being delayed.

Or:

**A game may be ended when both coaches mutually agree to stop play**, for reasons such as a late hour or the preceding paragraph provision will occur before any players can bat.

There is no expectation that a game should end prematurely simply because the time limit is nearing. Time limits are not curfews and were set realizing that many games will continue 15 or more minutes beyond the time limit.

9/10/10

## ESBA COMMONLY MISUNDERSTOOD BASEBALL RULE ISSUES

Did you know...

Home plate is on fair ground (foul lines intersect at back point).

A hit ball is not actually foul until it stops foul, or touches a player, fence or other object on foul ground; or bounds past first or third base outside the base over foul ground; or first touches the ground foul beyond first or third base.

**All bases and foul poles are on fair ground.**

A "foul tip" that is caught is simply a strike, and runners may advance/steal; a third strike "foul tip" is a strike-out. A "foul tip" goes sharp and direct into the catcher's hands; otherwise it is a foul ball, which may be caught for an out. There is no "over the batter's head" rule.

Under the "infield fly rule", the batter is automatically out and runners do not have to advance if: a fair fly ball is hit in the general area of the infield, can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when runners occupy first and second or bases are loaded, and less than two are out. (Protects offense from easy double or triple play.)

A batter may run to first base after a third strike is not caught, if first base is not occupied or if there are two outs. A pitched ball that bounces first and is then caught by the catcher is not a catch. The batter does not give up his right to run until he is put out or enters the dugout.

There is no rule penalizing a batter for accidentally slinging his bat.

"Obstruction" occurs when a defensive player, without the ball or not fielding or receiving the ball, impedes a runner, usually near a base. "Interference" is most commonly an offensive infraction occurring when a runner is contacted by a hit ball (unless an infielder first had an opportunity to field it), or if the runner contacts or intentionally hinders a defensive player fielding a hit ball.

A batter-runner may safely overrun first base and then turn to the left to immediately return to first base, as long as he does not make any attempt to advance to second base or does not "round" first toward second.

A runner may tag up and advance after a caught fly ball, even if it's foul. If a fly ball is bobbled, the runner may leave the base when the fly ball first contacts the fielder.

A base coach may touch a runner, but not to assist him in starting or stopping.

A runner may be called out for avoiding a fielder's tag only if he runs more than three feet out of the base line (or normal running path), but the runner must also avoid interfering with the fielder receiving the ball.

When a runner overtakes and passes another runner, the trailing runner (who passed the runner ahead of him) is immediately out.

When two runners occupy the same base, the trailing runner is out when tagged.

Scorers charge an error if a misplayed ball is judged to have usually been handled by a fielder of that age with ordinary effort (whether touched or not); a fielder's choice if another runner is forced or tagged out instead of the batter-runner; a sacrifice if a bunt successfully advances another runner or if a caught (or dropped) fly ball to the outfield scores a runner. Errors and fielder's choices count as times at bat, lowering a batting average.

A runner who is struck by a hit fair ball even while standing on a base is subject to being called out for interference (standing on a base does not protect the runner).

It is not a legal catch if a fielder catches a fly ball but subsequently drops it because his momentum carries him into another player, a fence or he falls to the ground, no matter how many steps are taken. In the umpire's judgment, he must the ball and be able to pull the ball out of his glove.

When there are two outs, no runs are counted if the third out is a force out.

A pitcher may not straddle the rubber without the ball if runner(s) are on base (hidden ball trick).

All defensive players other than the catcher must be on fair ground when the pitch is made.

Base coaches must vacate a coach's box to allow a defensive player to field a foul fly ball.

If a runner must return two or more bases during a live ball, he must retouch in order each base he passed.

Awarding extra bases after a thrown ball enters a dead area is made from the runner's position at the time the throw left the fielder's hand, not when the ball entered the dead area. Two bases are awarded if a fielder's throw, one if a pitch.

If a hit ball rolls into the bat while it is on the ground, fair or foul, there is no penalty unless judged to be intentional interference.

A pitch that first bounces on the ground, then is hit fair by the batter is a live, fair ball. If the batter swings and misses, it is not considered a caught ball if it first contacts the ground.

A pitcher may not receive catcher's signals unless he is in contact with the rubber.

When a fielder first touches a hit ball near the foul line, it is the position of the ball over the foul line, not the player, that determines whether fair or foul.

3/96; 2/21

## SELF-ADMINISTERED RULES TEST

Check your knowledge of the playing rules ... takes about 10 minutes. Answers are at end of test. Scoring 30 out of 34 is good. More importantly, see if you get all 34 correct on your final try.

1. Batter hits a fair ball while stepping on home plate:  
a) Batter is out; or  
b) Batter is not out, ball is fair.
2. Batter hits a foul ball while stepping on home plate:  
a) Batter is out; or  
b) Batter is not out, just a foul ball.
3. Batter swings, hitting ball straight down. Ball then hits batter while he is still in the batter's box:  
a) Foul ball; or  
b) Batter is out.
4. A fly ball is popped up near 1" base but over foul ground. The 1<sup>st</sup> baseman collides with the coach, who is standing in the coach's box trying to stay clear of the play. Ball drops:  
a) No call made as coach was in the coach's box; or  
b) The batter is ruled out if the umpire judges the fly ball might have been caught.
5. Batter accidentally slings his bat after swinging:  
a) Batter is warned and called out if repeated; or  
b) No penalty regardless of frequency.
6. Pitched ball hits ground, then batter swings and hits ball fair:  
a) Live ball, in play; or  
b) Dead ball, pitch counted as ball.
7. Batter swings at pitch, fouls the ball sharp and direct into catcher's chest protector. Catcher traps ball against chest (ball hit chest protector first):  
a) Foul ball, not a catch; or  
b) Foul tip (strike), batter is out if last strike.
8. Batter swings at pitch, fouls the ball with a slight loop into catcher's mitt (catch held, ball not sharp and direct):  
a) Caught foul ball out because not sharp and direct; or  
b) Foul tip (not foul out) because not over batter's head.
9. Batter has 2 strikes when it is discovered that he is batting out of turn:  
a) Batter is ruled out, proper batter then due up; or  
b) Batter is simply replaced by proper batter, who inherits same 2 strike count.

10. Batter reaches base safely but is discovered to have batted out of turn, prior to 1<sup>st</sup> pitch to the next batter:  
a) Improper batter-runner is removed and proper batter (who didn't balk) is called out; or  
b) Improper batter-runner remains on base and the next batter who follows the improper batter-runner is now due up.
11. Batter reaches base safely but is discovered to have batted out of turn after a pitch is made to the next batter:  
a) Improper batter-runner removed and proper batter (who didn't bat) is called out; or  
b) Improper batter-runner remains on base and the next batter who follows the proper batter is now due up.
12. After 2 outs, the runner from 3d base crosses home plate before the runner at 1<sup>st</sup> base is forced out or at 2<sup>nd</sup> base:  
a) Run counts; or  
b) Run does not count.
13. When a close tag play occurs at home plate, the runner is declared out if he fails to slide:  
a) True; or  
b) False, assuming no collision.
14. If a runner misses a base and after the play is over is called out for the 3<sup>rd</sup> out:  
a) Other runners scoring ahead of him count unless missed base was a force play; or  
b) No runs count due to the missed base being the 30d out.
15. When a thrown ball (not a pitch) enters a dead area during play, runners are awarded bases:  
a) From the instant the ball enters the dead area; or  
b) From the instant the throw was released by the fielder.
16. A fly ball is caught over foul ground and the runner at 3rd base subsequently tags up and runs home safely:  
a) Allowed to score; or  
b) Runner returned to 3<sup>rd</sup> base by umpire.
17. A hit ball strikes a baserunner who is standing in contact with his base. Ball is over fair ground:  
a) Runner is out; or  
b) Runner is not out.

18. A hit ball strikes a runner who is running between 1 and 2 base and fielders had no prior opportunity to field the ball. Time is called immediately and the runner hit by the ball is called out:
- Remaining non-interfering runners are allowed to stay at bases reached safely, or
  - Batter-runner is advanced to 1<sup>st</sup> base an remaining non-interfering runners are returned to bases they occupied prior to interference.
19. A hit ball strikes a baserunner who is running between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> bases, just after the 1<sup>st</sup> baseman had an opportunity to field the ball but missed it:
- Interference; or
  - Not interference.
20. A hit ball strikes a baserunner who is running between 1 and 200 bases, just after the pitcher had an opportunity to field the ball but missed it;
- Interference (if pitcher did not touch ball); or
  - Not interference.
21. Runner is in his base path but runs into an infielder who is attempting to field a hit ball:
- Runner is out; or
  - Runner is not out.
22. Batter-runner hits fair ground ball, runs through and safely touches 1 base, then turns inward (left) before returning to 1<sup>st</sup> base. He is tagged before returning to 1<sup>st</sup> base:
- Batter-runner is out; or
  - Batter-runner is out only if he made a move interpreted as intending to advance to 2<sup>nd</sup> base.
23. 2 runners occupy the same base:
- Trailing runner is out when play stops; or
  - Trailing runner is out when tagged.
24. Runner B overtakes and passes runner A:
- Runner A instantly out; or
  - Runner B instantly out.
25. Runner cannot reach 3d base because the 3rd baseman is blocking the runner's path to the base. The 3rd baseman is in the act of receiving a thrown ball and tags the runner who is blocked from the base:
- Runner is out; or
  - Runner is ruled safe due to obstruction.
26. Runner is obstructed before rounding 2nd base, then is tagged out trying to advance to 2<sup>nd</sup> base:
- Runner is automatically ruled safe at 3<sup>rd</sup> base due to obstruction; or
  - Runner is called out if umpire judged he could not have reached 3<sup>rd</sup> base had he not been obstructed.
27. A hit ground ball first touches fair ground but then bounds past 3<sup>rd</sup> base outside (foul) of the base:
- Fair ball; or
  - Foul ball.

28. A hit line drive passes directly over 3e base but hooks and first touches ground in the outfield over foul territory:

- Fair ball; or
- Foul ball.

29. A hit ground ball is fielded by the 3rd baseman before reaching the base. The fielder is standing with both feet on fair ground but the ball is vertically over foul ground:

- Fair ball; or
- Foul ball.

30. A hit ball settles on home plate:

- Fair ball; or
- Foul ball.

31. A hit fair ball rolls in front of home plate, then strikes the bat dropped by the batter-runner as he runs to first base:

- Batter-runner is out; or
- Play continues, live ball.

32. A hit ball strikes the pitcher's rubber, then veers foul before passing 1<sup>st</sup> base:

- Fair ball; or
- Foul ball.

33. A hit ball strikes 1<sup>st</sup> base, then veers foul without passing over any part of the base:

- Fair ball; or
- Foul ball.

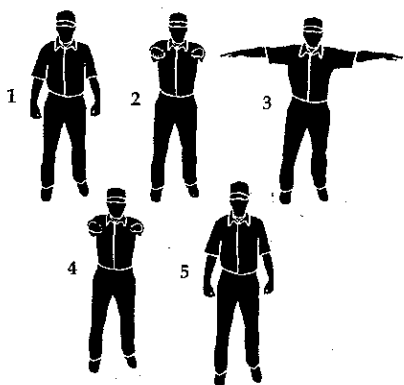
34. A fly ball is initially caught on the run by an outfielder whose momentum takes him 5 steps before he falls to the ground, dropping the ball as he hits the ground:

- A catch; or
- Not a catch.

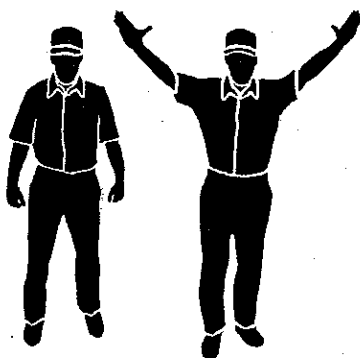
#### Answers:

- |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 1) a  | 13) b | 25) a |
| 2) a  | 14) a | 26) b |
| 3) a  | 15) b | 27) b |
| 4) b  | 16) a | 28) b |
| 5) b  | 17) a | 29) b |
| 6) a  | 18) b | 30) a |
| 7) a  | 19) b | 31) b |
| 8) a  | 20) a | 32) b |
| 9) b  | 21) a | 33) a |
| 10) a | 22) b | 34) b |
| 11) b | 23) b |       |
| 12) b | 24) b |       |

# UMPIRE'S SIGNALS



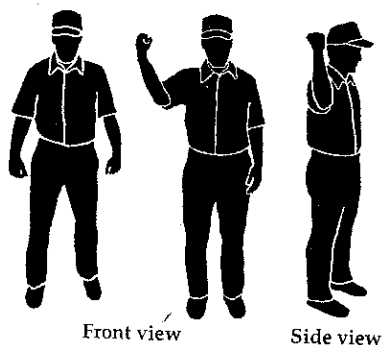
**"SAFE"  
OR CHECK SWING**



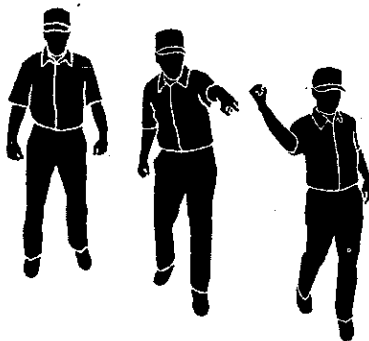
**"TIME"  
OR DEAD BALL**



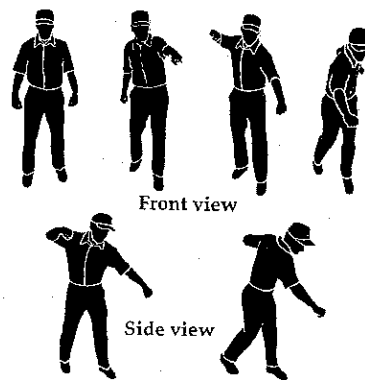
**"FOUL"  
(JUST POINT IF FAIR)**



**"HE'S OUT"**



**"HE'S OUT"  
(TAG)**



**"HE'S OUT"  
(SELL)**

# ESBA PINTO UMPIRE & RULES GUIDE

## UMPIRING BASICS:

**Know the Rules:** Continuously improve your knowledge ... both the Official Baseball Rules and ESBA Playing Rules ... know established casebook interpretations and Pinto procedures. Check your rules knowledge by taking the self-administered ESBA Pinto Rules Test.

**Attitude:** A good umpire always knows the game situation, concentrates and hustles. He is consistent, decisive and objective. He is courteous and respectful and never loses his temper. He draws as little attention to himself as possible.

**Control:** Arrive early, get pre-game warm-up finished. Start the game on time and keep it moving, especially between innings. Don't allow excessive coach-player conferences or other exceptional delays. Keep coaches in proper locations - inside dugouts, behind catcher, in coaches box areas. Listen politely to proper coach questions and appeals. Don't end games prematurely just because one team can't catch up, unless both coaches agree to do so. As game starts, ask scorekeeper to write down game start time (according to your watch).

**Positioning:** Umpires should stand on foul ground about 20' behind first and third. First base umpire is senior (umpire-in-chief), calls 1B and home; keeps track of pitches, strikes and outs (use mechanical indicator). Don't stand nearer home plate on final pitch or strike; it's more important to be in position for a play at first or a close foul ball than a foul tip (coach behind catcher can call tip). Umpire at first also makes tag calls if half-way between first and second. Third base umpire calls 2B and 3B. If only one umpire, stand at first base position until runner on first or second; then move behind second base; ask coach behind catcher to call foul lines.

**Making Calls:** Move quickly to best call spot or angle, usually 45-90 degrees to line of throw. Anticipate play, but don't anticipate call; delay the call one count after the play. For force play, watch bag and foot and hear the ball pop. For safe call, raise open hands out in front of body to shoulder level, then quickly extend hands and arms apart, straight out to sides, calling "safe!" sharply. For out call, punch right fist up quickly (like shaking hands) with arm extended at 90 degree angle, calling "he's out!" sharply. Reverse your call if you know you blew the call, or confer with your partner if unsure; the objective is to get the call right. To call time, raise both arms high, calling "time!" clearly. To announce the pitch count, state the number of total pitches, then number of strikes ("four and two"). If final strike or pitch is coming up, be sure coach-pitcher hears you.

**Appeals:** If a coach wants to appeal a call, he must first ask for time, then go to and respectfully confer with the umpire who made the call. Listen politely, considering his point. If you are certain you made the right call, stick with it. If you are not sure about it, go to your partner to ask for help or defer to him. He should not reverse your call unless you allow him to and he is sure about what he saw.

**Foul Balls:** Be sure a ball is definitely foul and will remain foul before calling "foul". If foul, raise both arms high, calling "foul ball"; you may also point foul after raising arms. If a fair ball is close to the line, just point in fair direction, but don't call "fair" - it could confuse people thinking you called "foul". See sheet on foul balls .. they can be surprisingly complicated.

**Runners:** During an "infield hit", a runner who attempts extra bases is subject to being tagged out; if he safely reaches a base beyond what he is entitled to, quickly call "time" as soon as play ends, and return him to his proper base. With two out and a ball is hit to the outfield for extra bases, watch carefully for runners crossing home plate before a tag out is made. Watch carefully for missed bases and fly ball tag-ups, but never call either unless you saw it clearly. Know rules on interference and obstruction.

**Calling Time:** Don't call time after every play, only after an "outfield hit" (runners no longer advancing) or in certain situations where either team needs to be protected (caught fly ball if runners don't tag up within 3 seconds; runner advances beyond proper base; etc.). When needed, call time quickly. If a player is injured, don't stop play prematurely, but coaches may attend to injured player immediately without waiting for play to end.

## Common Mistakes by Pinto Umpires:

Standing on fair ground before play starts  
Anticipating call, prematurely making call  
Losing concentration (outs, runners' positions)  
Failing to call "time" quickly enough when needed

Not hustling to best call spot  
Calling a ball foul prematurely  
Calling "time" unnecessarily after every play  
Inadequate preparation in reading rule information

# PINTO LEAGUE BRIEF RULES SUMMARY

See full Playing Rules and Bylaws on Conduct and Participation on ESBA Website

Min of **8** to play; if open 9th spot, automatic out. See rules on **fill-in players** (bat last, play OF). Can fill in up to roster of 9 until tournament.

Play **6 innings** but no inning starts after **1:15** (as of 3rd out of previous inning); no extra innings if tied. Stop if outcome not in doubt AND time expires; or both coaches agree to stop; or 5 min rule.

**5 run limit** per half inning or **3 outs**.

**Continuous batting order** of entire roster. **50% defensive participation** and **no player can sit 2 consecutive innings**. **2 full games** requirement for each player during season. **No defensive changes** during half inning except injury/illness/bathroom.

Use **4 outfielders**, evenly spaced; no rovers or dramatic shifts; at least 20' beyond infield.

Start each inning **without catcher** to speed play.

Must pitch **overhand** from directly behind front pitching rubber (landing foot behind rubber).

<b>Number of Pitches:</b>	First 2 Weeks:	<b>8 pitches/5 strikes</b>
	Next 2 Weeks:	<b>7 pitches/4 strikes</b> (and rest of fall season)
	Rest of Spring Season:	<b>6 pitches/3 strikes</b>

Batter **stays alive** on fouled last strike.

Batted ball treated as **foul ball** if **not hit** to or beyond **20' batter's arc**.

**Bunting** permitted but **limited** (once per inning - if executed).

Runner **out** for **leaving base early** (before ball is hit and if fair ball).

Runner automatically **out** (no appeal play) for **missing base** or **leaving early** on tag-up.

**Infield Hit Rule:** Only 1 base per batter or runner if "infield hit", regardless of overthrows. "Outfield hit" if batted ball reaches outfield grass on own momentum, even if first touches fielder or base; defense must stop runners (no longer advancing), then time is called. Runners advancing beyond one base on infield hit are subject to tag out. After time called, safe runner returned to proper base.

No defensive payer other than catcher can be **closer than radius** of pitcher's rubber. Player-pitcher must have **one foot** in pitcher's circle.

**Collisions:** Runner **must slide or avoid defensive player** with or receiving ball - called out if collision occurs (not just a brush), but also may be ejected if intentional and flagrant.

**One offensive and one defensive time out** per half inning. All coach-player conferences are charged time-outs, unless for injury.

**No:** Base on balls, base for hit batter, stealing, called strikes, infield fly rule, batter running on dropped third strike, protests, penalty for accidentally slinging bat, penalty for head-first sliding.

# PINTO LEAGUE "CASEBOOK" INTERPRETATIONS

## East Side Baseball Association

The following "official interpretations" of ESBA Pinto League Rules are a supplement to those rules intended to promote consistency and fairness in officiating Pinto games:

**Outfield Hits:** "Time" should be called the instant the ball is returned and controlled by any player standing in the infield, but only after all runners' progress has been stopped. A runner "dancing" off a base is not considered to be advancing. If a runner is more than just a few steps beyond his last base and the defense acts immediately to attempt to put him out (before time has been called), play may be allowed to continue. When a batted ball is hit just beyond the front edge of the outfield, an umpire's arm signal indicates his determination of an outfield hit (point to outfield). If a batted ball reaches the vertical plane of the front edge of the outfield on its own momentum, even if the ball first contacts a player or base, it is an outfield hit.

**Interference (offense):** If a batted ball hits a runner over fair ground (even if the runner is in contact with a base), time should be called immediately (dead ball); the runner touched by the ball is out, the batter is awarded first base, and any other runners are returned to their last bases. It is **not interference** if the batted ball first passed by an infielder (other than the pitcher) who could have fielded the ball; nor is it interference if the ball first touched the pitcher or another fielder. To be interference, the ball must be over fair ground; otherwise it is a foul ball. Interference is not called on thrown balls, unless judged to be a deliberate act. Interference should not be called on a runner at first base if the firstbaseman sets up in or so near the base path that the runner cannot see the fielder or reasonably avoid contact. It is interference if a runner's contact prevents a fielder from fielding a batted ball.

**Obstruction (defense):** Obstruction should be called sparingly, as it occurs frequently in Pinto play. It is a delayed call, after play ends. If the runner could not reach a base that he likely could have reached without being obstructed by a fielder, he is awarded that base. If he subsequently attempts reaching a base beyond that point, he is subject to being tagged out in spite of the earlier obstruction. Obstruction should not be called if unintentional contact occurs away from a base where a runner should have been able to see and avoid a fielder (may be interference if runner's contact prevents the fielder from fielding a batted ball).

**Collisions:** No "must slide" rule - see collision rule ... did runner slide or try to avoid fielder?

**Running Out of Baseline:** Must be more than 3 feet and fielder had to be attempting to tag the runner. Must consider that runners also have to avoid contact with players in the act of fielding a batted ball.

**Tag Plays:** First base umpire should call tag plays and 3' violations between 1B and 2/3 the distance to 2B; 3B umpire calls if near 2B bag.

**Pitch Count:** 1B umpire should state as total pitches then strikes ("4 and 2"), and always before last pitch (walk a few steps toward pitcher to be sure he is aware of last pitch). Umpires should not move nearer home plate on last pitch; hearing a foul tip is less significant than being out of position for a close foul call or a call at a base; coaches can assist with foul tips.

**Ending Games:** Games should not be ended prematurely due to 5-run limit, unless both coaches agree to. Coaches should consider ending an "out of reach" game prematurely if the time limit is near and continuing would delay the start of the next game or if the hour is late or the weather is bad.



## **Pinto Casebook (cont'd)...**

**Calling Time:** Time does not need to be called after every play; only after:

- Outfield hits; should be called quickly after runners are no longer advancing.
- Infield hits when runners improperly advance and need to be sent back.
- Caught fly ball (fair or foul) when runners do not advance (after 3 seconds).
- Runners choose not to advance if not forced (after 3 seconds).
- Time is requested after play ends or if either team needs to be "protected".

**Batting Out of Order:** Depends on when discovered ...

- If at bat not completed, simply replace with proper batter with same count.
- If at bat completed but before first pitch to next batter, proper batter is out, the improper batter is retired if on base; the batter following the proper batter is up.
- If after a pitch is made to the next batter, continue with that batter no sanction.

### **Coach Issues:**

- Coaches must remain inside dugout unless designated for on-field roles (base coach, pitcher, defensive coach behind catcher).
- Defensive coach must be in immediate area behind catcher; the sole reason he is allowed on the field is to assist his catcher with equipment and loose balls. He should not be allowed to delay the pace of the game to coach his fielders.
- Base coaches must remain in general vicinity of their base, not allowed to move halfway to home.
- Coaches may not confer with batters, runners or fielders without first receiving time (except for injury or exceptional situations).
- Coach-pitcher may not significantly delay game by repeatedly taking extra time to give verbal instructions to batters.
- Coach-pitcher's feet should be within width of pitcher's rubber when pitching; his landing foot must remain inside the pitcher's circle.
- Coaches should be reminded to have their catchers dressed before the end of each half inning (main reason games run late).
- Base coaches should be monitored for assisting runners.

**Dropped Ball;** It is not a catch if a fielder initially catches a fly ball on the run, but his momentum carries him into another player, fence or the ground, and he drops the ball.

**Ball Rolls into Bat:** There is no sanction if a batted ball touches the discarded bat on the ground, if unintentional; it is a live ball or a foul ball if on foul ground.

**Missing Player:** When a player is missing at the start of a game but expected later, he name should be listed at the end of the line-up/batting order. He bats in that spot no matter how late he arrives. Batters can be skipped over, then return later, in case of injury, illness, bathroom.

**Dead Ball Area:** If a thrown ball enters a dugout or other dead ball area, runners are two bases from the instant the fielder released the ball, but only if an outfield hit. This award is disregarded if an infield hit.

**Foul Balls:** See separate sheet covering foul balls.

**Certain rules** such as missing bases, assisting runners, obstruction, are normally not tightly enforced until after the 4th week of the season.

# KEY REMINDERS FOR TUMPS

*These points are emphasized because sometimes they aren't handled well:*

**Positioning:** Behind 1B or 3B, on foul ground in front of (not on) edge of outfield grass. Don't wear out the grass and be in position to see close foul balls down the line. Be alert to move to proper call spot toward 2B (behind SS) or running to home plate.

**Pitch Count:** Always call out pitch count loud enough for the pitcher to hear when nearing last pitch or last strike.

**Calling Time:** Call time quickly each time needed - after all outfield hits and some infield or fly ball situations. Do not call time for all infield hits.

**Player Conferences:** Prevent coaches from conferring with players too frequently – coach must be granted time out to "confer" with a player or coach, and only once per half inning.

**Coaches on Field:** 3 on offense (pitcher and base coaches); 2 on defense (backstop beside catcher and right at dugout gate – arm's length). Stop play until resolved.

**Zero Tolerance:** Be familiar with ESBA Zero Tolerance Policy. Don't hesitate to eject a coach if truly serious. For lesser ZT type actions issue a warning to any offending coach (or to his head coach) that he just violated East Side's ZT Policy, then eject same coach if repeated that game. Report all such conduct violations.

**Partner Misses Call:** Readily initiate conferring with partner if you know for sure he missed the call – not a close call, but clearly a missed call (ball dropped, foot off bag, view blocked, not a force, rule issue, etc.). Get the call right.

**Missed Base:** When a runner misses a base, call him out after the play ends (no appeal needed). Other runners scoring count unless the runner who missed a base is the third out, then no runners following him score; but, if the runner who missed a base was a force third out, no runners score on the play.

**Ending Games:** Be totally familiar with ending games rule. Don't end or let a coach end prematurely.

**Batting Out of Turn:** If discovered:

**Before** improper batter becomes a runner or is put out – proper batter **replaces** improper batter with same count; or

**After** improper batter becomes a runner or is put out, and before next pitch – proper batter is **out**, any advance nullified, improper batter is retired; next batter following proper batter in order now bats (often improper batter just retired); or

**After** improper batter becomes a runner or is out and a subsequent pitch is made to the next batter – the improper batter becomes the proper batter, resetting a new batting order.

**DIFFERENCES FOR UMPIRING SHETLAND:** Two divisions, 5U and 6U, very different.

5 innings or 1:15. 4 pitches, then tee. 5U doesn't use catcher. Biggest difference from Pinto is stopping play after outfield hit. Once ball is returned and controlled on infield, runners may not advance beyond base they are on or approaching, even if defense tries to get them out. Can be tagged out, but if safe at base not entitled to, they are returned to proper base. Read Shetland Playing Rules on website, including Tournament Tie-breaker.

2/1/21