



2020 South Lyon Junior League – Baseball Umpire Manual

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South Lyon Junior League Website: www.sljl.org

Umpire Information: [www.sljl.org/Umpire Information](http://www.sljl.org/Umpire%20Information)

E-mail Communication: Due to the volume of e-mails received, please title all umpire-related e-mails sent to the umpire-in-chief, payroll coordinator, and/or umpire schedulers with *"Umpire - your name"*

Baseball Payroll Coordinator: paymaster@sljl.org

Rulebooks:

SLJL.ORG website under "General Info-Documents"

NFHS Baseball 2020 (National Federation of State High School Associations)

"This must be the only job in America that everybody knows how to do better than the guy who's doing it." - Nestor Chylak, former MLB American League Umpire

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Umpire General Information: All Divisions

2020 SLJL Baseball Umpire Pay rates:

	Ages	Game Length (Spr/Fall)	# Umps	Spring	Spring Solo (x2)	All-Star (x1.5)	Fall	Fall Solo (x2)	Pre-Game Rainout or Forfeit (c)
BCP	6-7	1.5/1.75 (a)	1	\$15	n/a	\$23	\$18	n/a	\$10
Kaline	8	1.5/1.75 (a)	1	\$18	n/a	\$27	\$21	n/a	\$10
Mays	9-10	1.5/1.75 (a)	2	\$20	\$40	\$30	\$23	\$46	\$10
Reese	11-12	2.0/2.0 (b)	2	\$35	\$70	\$53	\$38	\$76	\$20
Koufax	13-14	2.0/2.0 (b)	2	\$40	\$80	\$60	\$43	\$86	\$20
Colt	15-16	7 innings	2	\$45	\$90	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$20
Palomino	17-19	7 innings	2	\$50	\$100	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$20
		(a) - Hard time limit							
		(b) - No new inning after time limit							
		(c) - Pre-game rainout or forfeit: called at field of play at game time							
		Full pay if rained out after the game begins							

Umpire

Qualifications:

- 12 years old
- Must be 2 years older than the division you are umpiring

Scheduling Process: Signup Genius

Payment Process:

- You are hired by the SLJL as a self-employed contractor
- Your income is taxable if you earn more than \$600 for the calendar year (spring and fall seasons)
- Bonus Program: If you make more than the \$600, you are eligible for the SLJL umpire bonus program:
 - A signed W9 form will be required for all umpires earning \$600 or more. Bonus payments will be contingent upon receipt of a signed W9 form submitted to the SLJL treasurer at the end of the fall season.
 - Add bonus structure

Pre-Season:

- Applications – SLJL website
- Training Clinics – Mandatory attendance; one main clinic for all umpires, a second clinic for all new BCP/Kaline umpires.

Umpire Dress Code:

- Full protective equipment required for home plate umpires; including face mask*, chest protector*, shin guards* and athletic supporter with cup**.
- SLJL Navy blue umpire shirt and plain navy blue ball cap**
- Khaki-colored, black or gray long pants required. No shorts or jeans are allowed.
- No other uniform colors are allowed.
- It is recommended you wear hard-toed shoes. It is also recommended you bring a ball bag and brush.
- All umpires must own and bring their own indicator.

*Furnished by and property of the league ** Purchased by Umpire

Umpire Gear:

- Shirt, hat, outerwear: KV Sports in South Lyon
- Indicators, ball bags, brushes available at KV Sports - South Lyon, and Play it Again Sports - Novi.
- Masks, chest protectors, shin guards available at Play it Again Sports, Novi. Discount available for SLJL umpires.

Umpire Expectations

- Umpiring is a paying job that brings responsibilities
- Umpires are expected to know the rules and mechanics
- Be familiar with the SLJL and NFHS rulebook (<http://umpirebible.com/fed/default.htm>)
- **Umpires are required to arrive 15 minutes prior to any game start time. That is when your game pay begins. Late arrivals may not be paid for full games and are subject to termination.**
- Umpires must follow league rules; not suggested changes by coaches or other umpires.
- You must wear an approved SLJL umpire shirt and hat for games in which you umpire.

- Other umpire expectations: reliability, arrival time, dress code, performance, and professionalism
- Excessive tardiness, late cancellations, or missed games will result in termination of the umpire's employment

Please notify UIC of the following situations:

- Partner does not show up
- You switch games with another umpire or get a substitute •
- Umpire equipment is missing or damaged
- Coach or parent ejection or unsportsmanlike behavior
- Game called as a rainout at the field before the first pitch or during the game

Other:

- Remember this is a job. South Lyon families pay money to play and you are paid to umpire. You must know the rules (www.SLJL.org), umpire a fair game, and respect everyone.
- All coaches and league trustees/commissioners are instructed to provide umpire feedback regarding attendance, performance and dress - both good and bad.
- Your schedule can be revised at any time for various reasons (weather, reschedules, attendance, and performance). If your games are affected, an e-mail notification will be sent.
- Attendance is critical. Your 15 minute early arrival time should include a meeting with both head coaches in which you discuss and remind them of specific division rules and review field conditions.
- Postseason/all-star assignment priority will be given to umpires that perform well throughout the season.

SLJL Specific Information:

Weather Policy

Our rulebook states:

The umpire and the two head coaches will decide by majority vote whether to suspend play due to inclement weather or darkness. If **lightning or thunder** exists, suspend the game and vacate the playing area for a minimum of 30 minutes from the most recent occurrence.

- Each time thunder or lightning occurs, the 30 minute clock is reset, no exceptions.
- School rules indicate that the playing fields must be vacated.
- If the game is called off in the middle of the game, you will be paid in full.
- If you are at the field and the game is called off pre-game, you'll get paid in part for showing up.

If the SLJL decides to cancel games in advance, the cancellation notice will be posted, typically by 5 pm, on the home page of the SLJL website, www.sljl.org, in the gray "Announcements" box, , as well as on the SLJL Twitter and Facebook accounts. I ask that you always check these locations before leaving for your game

If the weather is suspect, and if you don't see anything on the website and/or if you don't receive a cancellation e-mail from the SLJL or me, please go to the game, and the decision to play will be made by the two head coaches and you. If the decision is made to cancel at the game, you will indicate a "pre-game rainout" on your pay submission. You will be paid in part for showing up. If the game is cancelled after the game starts, you will be paid in full.

MHSAA Game Suspension Policy:

<https://www.mhsaa.com/officials/resources-policies/game-suspension-policies>

- A. When lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the contest must be suspended. The occurrence of lightning or thunder is not subject to interpretation or discussion — lightning is lightning; thunder is thunder.
- B. When lightning is observed or thunder is heard and the contest is suspended, contestants shall not return to the playing field until lightning has been absent from the local sky and thunder has not been heard for 30 minutes.
- C. Spectators shall be advised of the action being taken to seek shelter. (Some hosts may be able to offer shelter to spectators but are not required to do so.)
- D. Heat Index/MHSAA Policy: Current conditions for South Lyon found at

www.intellicast.com/Local/Weather.aspx?location=USMI0791

MODEL POLICY FOR MANAGING HEAT & HUMIDITY Adopted March 22, 2013

1. Thirty minutes prior to the start of an activity, and again 60 minutes after the start of that activity, take temperature and humidity readings at the site of the activity. Using a digital sling psychrometer is recommended. Record the readings in writing and maintain the information in files of school administration. Each school is to designate whose duties these are: generally the athletic director, head coach or certified athletic trainer.
2. Factor the temperature and humidity into the Heat Index Calculator and Chart to determine the Heat Index. If a digital sling psychrometer is being used, the calculation is automatic.
3. **If the Heat Index is below 95 degrees:**
 - All Sports
 - Provide ample amounts of water. This means that water should always be available and athletes should be able to take in as much water as they desire.
 - Optional water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes in duration.
 - Ice-down towels for cooling.
 - Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action.

If the Heat Index is 95 degrees to 99 degrees:

 - All Sports
 - Provide ample amounts of water. This means that water should always be available and athletes should be able to take in as much water as they desire.
 - Optional water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes in duration.
 - Ice-down towels for cooling.
 - Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action.
 - Contact sports and activities with additional equipment:
 - Helmets and other possible equipment removed while not involved in contact.
 - Reduce time of outside activity. Consider postponing practice to later in the day.
 - Recheck temperature and humidity every 30 minutes to monitor for increased Heat Index.

If the Heat Index is above 99 degrees to 104 degrees:

 - All Sports
 - Provide ample amounts of water. This means that water should always be available and athletes should be able to take in as much water as they desire.
 - Mandatory water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes in duration.
 - Ice-down towels for cooling.
 - Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action.
 - Alter uniform by removing items if possible.
 - Allow for changes to dry t-shirts and shorts.
 - Reduce time of outside activity as well as indoor activity if air conditioning is unavailable.
 - Postpone practice to later in the day.
 - Contact sports and activities with additional equipment
 - Helmets and other possible equipment removed if not involved in contact or necessary for safety. If necessary for safety, suspend activity.
 - Recheck temperature and humidity every 30 minutes to monitor for increased Heat Index.

If the Heat Index is above 104 degrees:

 - All sports
 - Stop all outside activity in practice and/or play, and stop all inside activity if air conditioning is unavailable.

Note: When the temperature is below 80 degrees there is no combination of heat and humidity that will result in need to curtail activity.

Over for Heat Index PDF

Umpire Gear Storage in Lockboxes:

- For those SLJL fields that have division play with umpires requiring umpire protective gear, umpire gear will be located in the lockbox.
- If the lockbox is not open pre-game, ask one of the head coaches to open the box for you.
- If any gear is missing, damaged, wet, ill-fitting, or in general bad shape, notify the umpire-in-chief as soon as possible.
- In the event that gear is missing, or un-wearable, notify the head coaches that you will call the game from behind the mound, as you would do for a BCP or Kaline game. **Never** work behind the plate with missing or unsafe equipment.
- All umpire gear is to be stored on lockbox shelves and not on the bottom of the box.



SLJL Field Locations

Atchison Park

Behind Lyon Twp Municipal Center
58000 Grand River Avenue
New Hudson, Michigan
48165

Bartlett Field

Bartlett Elementary – East side of school
350 School Street
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

Brummer Field

Brummer Elementary
9919 Rushton Rd.
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

Centennial Field

Centennial Middle School – back field off 9 Mile Rd.
62500 W. Nine Mile Rd.
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

Hardy Field

Hardy Elementary
Directions: Take 10 mile (Lake St.) east out of South Lyon – approx. 4 miles. Turn left onto Rosemont Drive. Proceed through the subdivision. The school is at the back of the subdivision (Birchwood/Collingswood).
Birchwood dr.
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

Kent Lake Field

Kent Lake Elementary
30181 Kent Lake Rd.
New Hudson, Michigan
48165

McHattie Park Field

McHattie Park – South of Wendy's Restaurant
550 S. Lafayette
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

Millennium Field

Millennium Middle School – behind the school/Biggby's Coffee
61526 W. Nine Mile
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

Nine Mile Field

Between Millenium and Centennial Middle Schools – field closest to 9 Mile Rd.
61526 W. Nine Mile
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

Salem Field

Salem Elementary
7806 Salem Rd.
Salem, Michigan
48175

Sayre Field East (Sayre #1)

Sayre Elementary
23000 Valerie
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

Sayre Field West (Sayre #2)

Sayre Elementary
23000 Valerie
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

SL East HS – JV Softball

52200 West Ten Mile Road
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

SL East HS – Varsity Softball

52200 West Ten Mile Road
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

SLHS Freshmen Softball Field

South Lyon High School – South end of school property
1000 N. Lafayette
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

SLHS JV Baseball Field

South Lyon High School – North West side of school property
1000 N. Lafayette
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

SLHS JV Softball Field

1000 N. Lafayette
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

SLHS Varsity Softball Field

1000 N. Lafayette
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

Volunteer Field North (Vol #1)

Volunteer Park – on East Side of Dixboro between 8 & 9 Mile Rd.
9 Mile & Dixboro Rd.
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

Volunteer Field South (Vol #2)

Volunteer Park – on East Side of Dixboro between 8 & 9 Mile Rd.
9 Mile & Dixboro
South Lyon, Michigan
48178

Umpire General Information: All Divisions

PRE-GAME:

BOTH UMPIRES: Discuss the items below before the game:

- Use hand signals to communicate to each other the number of outs before each batter gets in the batter's box. The plate umpire holds both arms out (elbows near the waist) to show the number of outs to the base umpire. Fists for no outs. One finger on each hand for one out. Two fingers on each hand for two outs. The base umpire repeats this same gesture back to the plate umpire to show that he sees and agrees with the number of outs.
- The plate umpire makes all fair/foul calls except when the base umpire is in position A and a fly ball is hit in the air down the first base line past the first base bag.

PRE-GAME MANAGERS MEETING

Please be sure to conduct pre-game meetings before **every** game. Meeting content should include some or all of the following: (at a minimum, consider the asterisked items *)

- Introductions between umpires and coaches*
- Reminder of game length*
- Review “out of play” areas specific to the field (dugouts, extended fence lines, etc.)*
 - Tell the managers to instruct their outfielders to raise both hands in the air if a ball rolls through one of these gaps and to NOT reach underneath the fence. If a ball rolls through a gap in the fence and the outfielder raises his hands in the air, the batter will be awarded second base and all baserunners will advance two bases (ground rule double).
- Ask coaches to keep the playing field clear of bats, balls, buckets, bags, etc. Gates should remain closed in fenced fields.*
- No player is to be on the field without a helmet.
 - Safety base use: Runners must use if in place, or they can be called out if a collision with the first baseman
 - Sliding: It is the runner's responsibility to avoid contact. If there is contact, and they do not slide, they will be called out. Do not call runner out if no contact (“no harm – no foul”).
 - Runners leaving early, before the pitch crosses the plate, may be called out (n/a for Reese, Koufax, Colt, Palomino)
- Ask coaches to have their players hustle on and off the field in between innings*
- 5 pitch warm-up maximum for pitchers.
 - Ask coaches to have someone warm up the pitcher if the catcher is not ready. Only coaches and players are allowed to warm up the pitcher. A player may warm up the pitcher provided that he wears a catcher's mask.
 - Warm ups are for pitchers, not catchers. If the catcher takes the field after the pitcher has had his 5 warm up pitches, call for balls in and play to begin
- Courtesy runners for catchers are acceptable (must be last player out)*
- No jewelry (OK with titanium necklaces)
- No siblings or players are to back up the catcher for BCP and Kaline games. Backup must be a coach.*
 - If pitchers must warm up within a fenced field, they must do so in outfield foul territory, and a spotter must join them, facing the field, with a glove, and wearing a helmet, to protect the pitcher who is warming up.

- Let coaches know that if they want to call timeout, they must first get the home plate umpire's permission before entering the field of play. Time out will not be granted until all action on the field is complete (baserunners reaching base, e.g.).
- On deck batters must be behind the hitters*
- No hitting sticks on the field of play

Umpire Positions: 2-man System

Position A: No baserunners

Position B: Baserunner at 1B, 1B-3B

Position C: Baserunner at 2B, 1B - 2B, 2B - 3B, or 1B - 2B - 3B.



With no runners on base	U1 starts in A
With a runner on first only	U1 starts in B
With runners on first and third	U1 starts in B
ALL other configurations	U1 starts in C

DURING THE GAME

PLATE UMPIRE: From your position behind the catcher, point to the pitcher and shout "Play!" to start the game. Do this to start every half inning and also to start the game again after a time out.

PLATE UMPIRE: Keep your indicator in your left hand. When the ball is put in play, immediately remove your mask with your left hand so your indicator and mask are both in your left hand. This will leave your right hand empty for making an out call. (Practice taking off your mask with an indicator your left hand until you can do it quickly while leaving your hat in place on your head.)

PLATE UMPIRE: Keep home plate clean and face the stands when you sweep it. Do not show your back side to the spectators.

PLATE UMPIRE: Pitchers warming up are allowed 5 pitches. After the new pitcher has finished throwing his 5 warm-up pitches, approach the mound and let the pitcher know how many outs there are, where the baserunners are, if any, and what the count is if the pitcher is entering the game in the middle of an at-bat.

PLATE UMPIRE: Jewelry and necklaces are not allowed to be worn by any player on the field. Pitchers are not allowed to wear a white or gray long-sleeve shirt underneath a short-sleeved uniform .

PLATE UMPIRE: Once in your crouch waiting for the pitch, remain completely still until the pitch is caught by the catcher, has gotten past the catcher, is struck by the batter, or hits you. Don't flinch and always keep your eyes open. If you blink you may not see a swing and a miss that everyone else saw. Trust your protective gear. When calling balls and strikes, allow a moment to pass between the arrival of the pitch and your call. After the pitch comes in, think to yourself "That's a ..." and then call out "Ball" while still in your crouch, or "Strike" as you stand up straight and give the strike signal with your arm.

PLATE UMPIRE: Keep the game moving. If a pitch is hit out of play or down the line into foul territory, confirm the ball is dead and out of play and then throw the pitcher a new ball from your ball bag. If the catcher retrieves the ball, have him hand it to you so you can put it in your ball bag. If another fielder retrieves the ball, have that player toss the ball to the nearest base coach. You may also do this when the pitch gets by the catcher with no runners on base.

PLATE UMPIRE: If you lose track of the count or number of outs, call time and confirm it with your partner. If no partner, confirm with the home team's scorekeeper.

PLATE UMPIRE: Announce the count and hold your hands out to show the pitcher the number of balls and strikes. Balls are indicated by the fingers of your left hand and strikes with your right hand. **PLATE UMPIRE:** When a batter swings and misses, don't call out "Strike!". Instead, just give the strike indication without saying anything. Be reserved on a called strike three. Don't make the batter feel any worse than he already does for having struck out looking. On ball four, just say "ball four" and do not point to first base (looks like a strike).

PLATE UMPIRE: When a batter makes a partial swing and a miss, and the end of the bat reached the first base line for a right-handed batter (or the third base line for a left-handed batter), stand up, point to the batter and call out "Yes he did!" and then "Strike!" while giving the strike indication with your right arm. If the batter makes a partial swing and a miss but did not complete the swing as described above, stand up, point to the batter and call out "No he didn't!" and then "Ball!".

PLATE UMPIRE: When a batted fly ball is caught in the air, make the out indication with your arm and shout "Catch!" loud enough for everyone on the field to hear you.

PLATE UMPIRE: Keep track of the time. BCP/Kaline/Mays: When time limit is reached, and a batter is at the plate, announce "last batter", and allow the batter to complete their at bat.

BASE UMPIRE: When a ball is hit in the air to the outfield with one or more runners on base, watch the feet of the baserunners and listen for the plate umpire to shout "Catch!" If any of the baserunners leave their base before you hear the plate umpire shout "Catch!", don't say or do anything. To make a proper appeal that the baserunner left early, a player on the defensive team must step on that base while holding the ball or tag the baserunner who left early. If the baserunner did leave early, call out "Yes he

did!" while indicating an out with your arm. If the baserunner did not leave early, call out "No he didn't!" while indicating safe with your arms.

DURING THE GAME

BASE UMPIRE: Mays : Baserunners cannot leave their base before the pitch crosses the plate. If you see runners leave just a fraction early in Mays, let it go. And then at the end of the inning go tell the plate umpire that the baserunners are very close to leaving early. The plate umpire should then go have a discussion with that manager, who can remind his players to stay on the bases. If a baserunner has taken two or more steps before the pitch reaches the batter's box and has obviously left the base early, he should be called out.

BOTH UMPIRES: Pay close attention to where all the baserunners are when a defensive player throws the ball to a base to make a play. A baserunner may advance a maximum of one base beyond the base he was going to ***at the time of the throw*** on a ball that is overthrown.

BOTH UMPIRES: If a baserunner fails to step on a bag while running the bases, don't say or do anything. If the defensive team makes a proper appeal that a baserunner missed a base, call out either "Yes he did!" while indicating an out with your arm or "No he didn't!" while indicating safe with your arms.

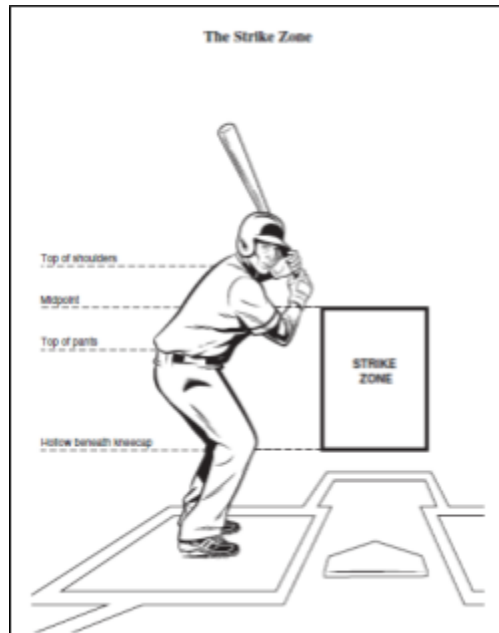
BOTH UMPIRES: When making a call: **Pause. Read** the play. Then **react**. Be decisive.

BOTH UMPIRES: Don't make calls that belong to your partner umpire, don't overrule a call made by your partner umpire, and don't attempt to assist on a call made by your partner umpire unless asked to do so.

Rules and Mechanics

The Strike Zone:

- As written in the 2015 NHFS rulebook, Section 35
 - The strike zone is that space over home plate, the top of which is halfway between the batter's shoulders and the waistline, and the bottom being the knees, when he assumes his natural batting stance. The height of the strike zone is determined by the batter's normal batting stance. If he crouches or leans over to make the shoulder line lower, the umpire determines height by what would be the batter's normal stance.
- Per the 2015 Official Baseball Rules (Major League) :



Umpire Signals:

Official NFHS Baseball Signals

A. DO NOT PITCH



B. PLAY BALL



C. FOULBALL/TIME OUT/DEAD BALL



D. DELAYED DEAD BALL



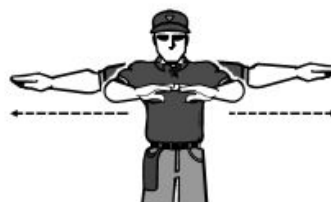
E. STRIKE/OUT



F. INFIELD FLY



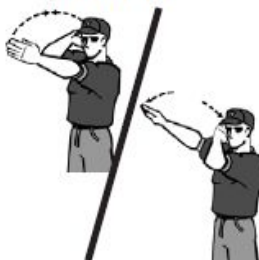
G. SAFE



H. FAIR BALL



I. FOUL TIP



J. COUNT



K. TIME PLAY



- A. Right arm straight out front with palm outward and fingers up — signifies do not pitch, the ball is dead.
- B. Pointing with right hand index finger while facing pitcher — signifies play is to start or be resumed and simultaneously umpire calls "Play."
- C. Both hands open above the head — signifies foulball, time-out or ball is dead immediately.
- D. Left fist extended to the side at shoulder height — signifies an infraction for which (1) the penalty may be ignored or (2) bases may be awarded after no further advance is possible.
- E. Fist up and then out away from body. Coordinate, verbal call, "He's out!" or "Strike!", with the hammering action of the closed fist.
- F. Index finger of right hand is held above the head — signifies infield fly.
- G. Coordinate verbal call, "Safe." Signal also used for dropped balls in the outfield and to determine if a batter's checked swing was legal.
- H. Point toward fair ground with open hand. No verbal call.
- I. The palms of the hands glance off each other as they pass above eye level, followed by a strike call.
- J. Left hand indicates balls followed by the number of strikes thrown on the right hand. Verbally give count.
- K. Place two fingers of the right hand on the left wrist, as if on top of a watch. This signal will only be used in two-out situations where a time play involving a potential run is likely.

Umpire Signals:

Official NFHS Baseball Signals



A. DO NOT PITCH



B. PLAY BALL



**C. FOUL BALL, TIME-OUT,
DEAD BALL**



D. STRIKE/OUT

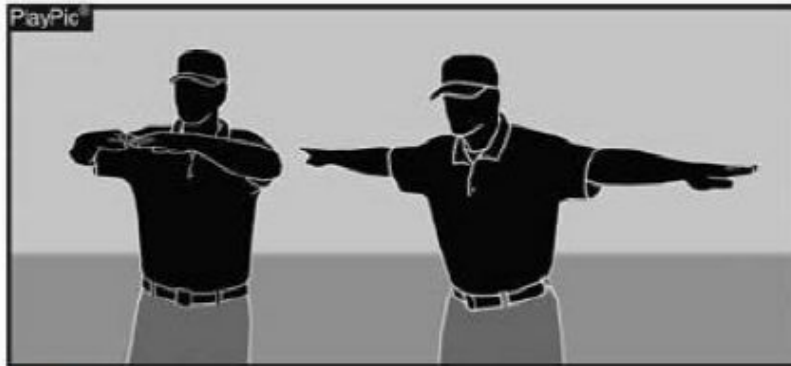


E. INFIELD FLY

- A. Right arm straight out front with palm outward and fingers up – signifies do not pitch, the ball is dead.
- B. Pointing with right hand index finger while facing pitcher – signifies play is to start or be resumed and simultaneously umpire calls “Play.”
- C. Both hands open above the head – signifies foul ball, time-out or ball is dead immediately.
- D. Fist up and then out away from body. Coordinate, verbal call, “He’s out!” or “Strike!”, with the hammering action of the closed fist.
- E. Index finger of right hand is held above the head – signifies infield fly.

Umpire Signals:

Official NFHS Baseball Signals



F. SAFE



G. FAIR BALL



H. FOUL TIP



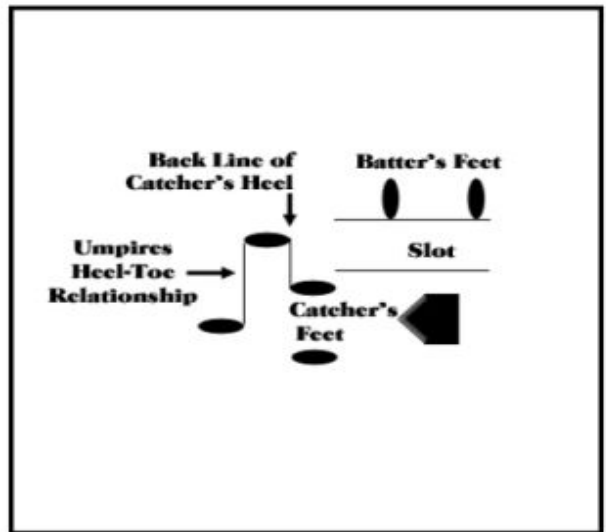
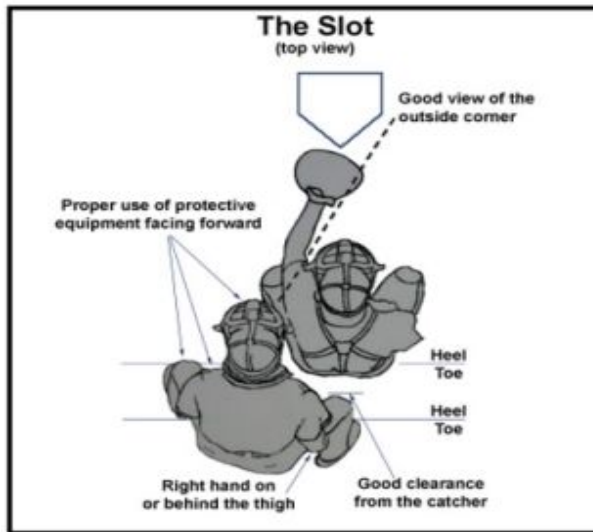
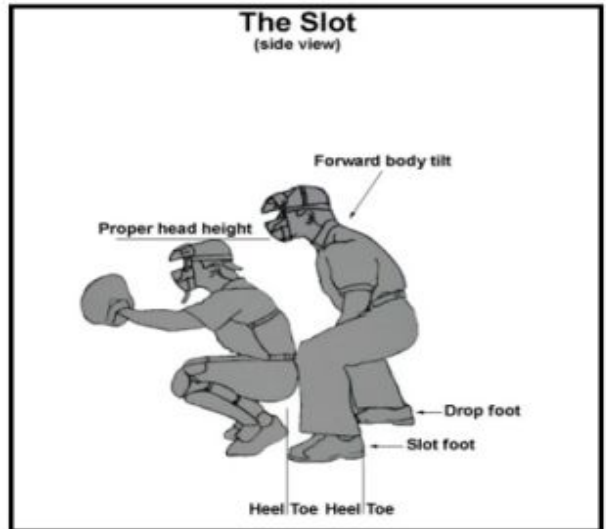
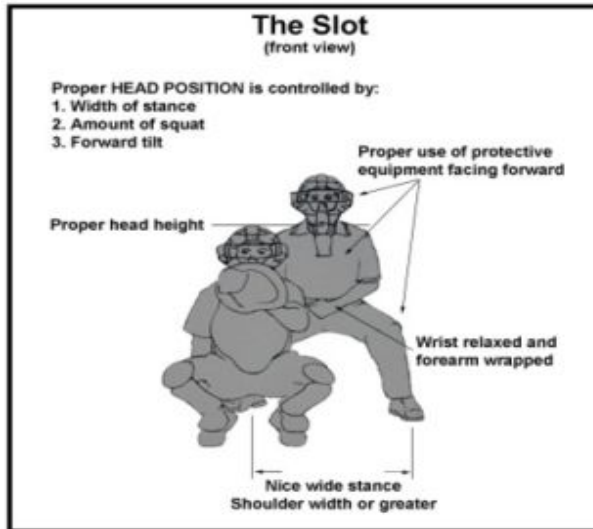
I. COUNT



J. TIME PLAY

Umpire Plate Mechanics:

The Slot – Right Handed Batter (reverse the position for a left-handed batter)



Tips:

Keep eye level at top of strike zone

Do not move head as pitch is thrown

Umpire Signal Mechanics:

Putting The Ball In Play

Any time the ball is not in play (dead ball) and at the Beginning of the game, the plate umpire (only) must put the Ball in play. This is one of the most under used signals for Amateur baseball, but should be used every time the ball is Put back into play. This signal is particularly important at the Junior, Senior and big league levels because of lead-offs, Attempted steals and pick-off attempts. Prior to the ball Being put back in play, no action may be taken. Remember That anytime a foul ball occurs, the ball is dead and must be put back into play. The ball is not put back into play until the Pitcher is touching the pitching rubber.

Step 1 & 2

Point aggressively to the pitcher with the Index finger of the right hand. Verbalize “ Play !”.



“ PLAY”

Ball

Step 1

When the pitcher is on the pitching plate (rubber) you should go to the ready position as Shown in picture 1.



“ BALL”

Step 2

Once you have judged the pitched ball, you Should verbalize “Ball”. This verbal call is Made while still in the set position as depicted In picture 2.

Strike

Step 1

After the picture has come to the set position Or in ready to start the wind-up, the umpire Should get into the set position as indicated in Picture 1.



Step 2

After judging a pitch a strike, the plate umpire Should raise up as indicated in picture 2.

Step 3

Signal the strike as indicated in picture 3 and 3A. If the strike was a swinging strike, then Do not verbalize anything. If the strike was Not swung at, then perform the strike Mechanic and verbalize “Strike”. If the pitch is Strike three, then verbalize “Strike Three”.



“Strike” or “Strike 3”

Note: Most umpires have their own customized third strike Call (also known as a punch-out). If you use a customized Third strike call, use one that still allows you to keep an eye on The ball. The only time you should use a “punch-out” call is When it is a non-swinging strike call.

Safe

Step 1

Once you have arrived at the position where you will make the judgment call at a base, you should return to the hands-to-knees set position as indicated in picture 1.

Step 2

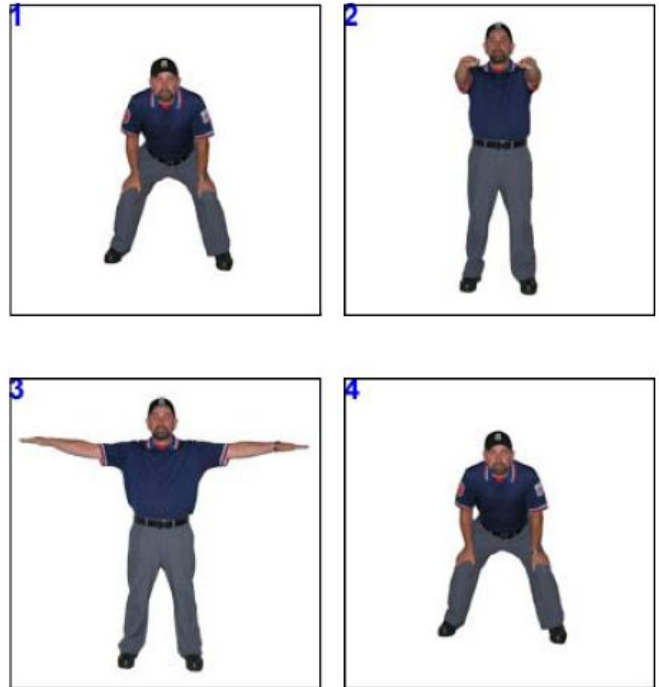
Raise straight up into the position indicated in Picture 2.

Step 3

Indicate the safe signal, as indicated in picture 3 and verbalize "Safe". The proper verbalization is not "He's safe" or "She's Safe", it is simply, "Safe".

Step 4

Return to the hands-to-knees set position, if the situation does not dictate you need to go elsewhere. (while this is taught at the Western Region school, most umpires do not return to this "hands-to-knees" set position.)



"Safe"

Safe-off the bag

You will start this signal mechanic the same as the normal Safe signal in steps 1 through 3, above. This is a call that needs to be "sold" to everyone because most of the time no one but you and possibly your fellow blues will detect the fact that the fielder pulled his/her foot off the base.

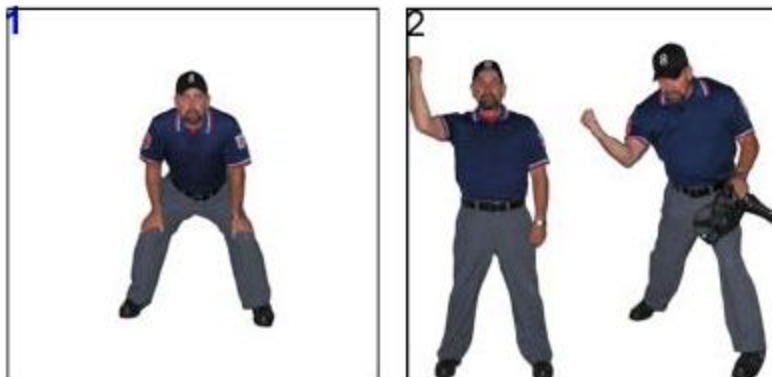
Step 1 & 2

After the normal safe signal, indicate, with both hands, a sweeping motion across your body as indicated in picture 1 & 2. Repeat the Safe call and the safe signal again. The verbalization should be, "safe. He's off the Bag. Safe".



"He's off the bag!"

Out

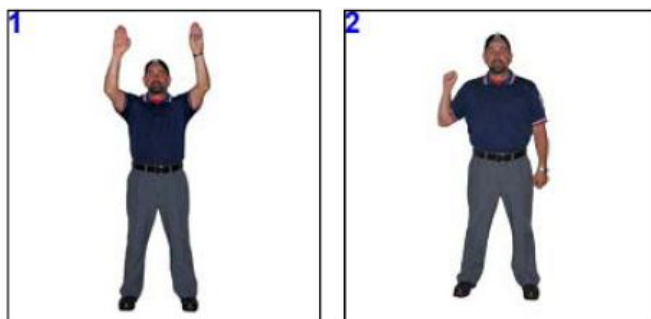


“He’s Out”

Foul

Step 1

Raise both hands above your head and declare, “Foul”. Your Fingers are together. This is the Same signal as calling time. (Keep in mind that The ball is no longer live upon the foul call- You have basically declared time without Actually saying “Time”.)



“Foul”

Step 2 & 3

Point to the direction of the foul ball.



Foul Tip

Step 1

Raise up from the set position.

Step 2

Strike or slide your right hand on the top of your left hand as indicated in picture 2.

Step 3

Straighten your right arm at an upward angle as indicated in picture 3.

Step 4

After indicating the foul tip signal, indicate the Strike signal as shown in picture 4.

Note: A foul tip is a live ball. Runners can steal. Do not verbalize anything on a foul tip-It is a swinging strike and Any verbalization of "foul" would kill any subsequent action. (It might cause runners to believe the ball is dead if they heard any version of the word "foul".)

Check Swing Appeals

Step 1

If asked to check with the base umpire, on whether a batter swung, point to the base Umpire and verbalize the base umpire's first Name to get his/her attention. Verbalize, "John, did he go?"

Step 2

The base umpire will respond with a safe signal, if the batter is adjudged to have not swung and verbalize-"No, he didn't." If the batter was adjudged to have swung, then the base umpire will respond with the Strike signal and state, "Yes, he did."

Step 3

The plate umpire verbalizes, "Then that's a Strike" or "Then that's a ball."

Step 4

Indicate the count both verbally and physically.



"John, did he go?"

"No, he didn't." or
"Yes, he did."



"Then that's a ball"
Or "Then that's a
Strike"

"The count is three
Balls, two strikes."

Balk (90foot Field-Juniors and above)

This mechanic is the same for both the plate umpire and base Umpire. The only difference, from this depiction, is that the Plate umpire does it from behind the plate with the gear on.

Step 1

Hands-to-knees set position.

Step 2

Upon seeing a violation calling for a balk, raise Up and point to the pitcher, stating "That's a Balk!"

Step 3

~~Since a balk call does not create a dead ball Situation, return to the hands to knees set Position. Remember, any resulting play after The balk call is live. If the Ball is hit, the Offensive manager will have the choice of Accepting the result or having the balk call Enforced, so be ready for the resulting play.~~

(Note: A balk or illegal pitch is nullified if ensuing action Allows all runners to advance at least one base, including the Batter runner-Rule 8.05 Penalty.)

Step 4

In most cases, after step 2, the pitcher will Stop his actions. In either case, If the ball is Not struck and no ensuing action occurs-at The first opportunity, call "Time".

Step 5

Point to the pitcher again and state, "That's a Balk!"

Step 6

Point to the runner on base and say "You!"

Step 7

Point to the awarded base and state the name Of the base depicted in step 7.

Repeat steps 6 & 7 for each runner-but be sure To start with the runner closest to home and Work your way backwards around the bases.



"That's a balk!"



"Time"



"That's a balk!"



"You!"



"Second Base!"

Removal of Mask

Properly Taking off the Mask

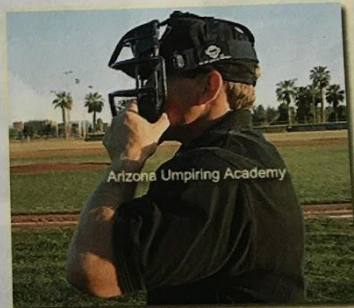
POINT OF EMPHASIS:

To successfully complete this particular training tip, the umpire must have mastered "Holding and Indicator" and "Putting on the Mask" training tip. Not handling and/or taking your mask or create numerous problems for an umpire.

Properly placing your fingers on the mask is extremely important. Remember to grasp your mask with your left hand. Clamp down around mask pads front and back. Don't forget that you are still holding your indicator.



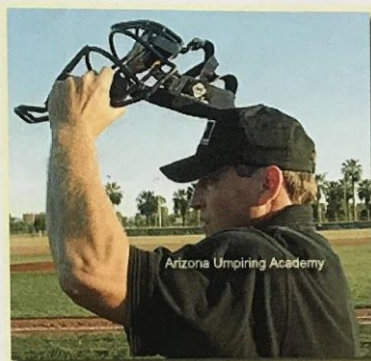
First and most important, the umpire must keep the head and eyes up and looking forward to all possible plays and responsibilities. Bring your left hand up to the mask and grab the mask as describe above.



It is important that the umpire do this step-by-step. First, pull mask out from the face. Do not pull the mask up yet, only out. The reason for only pulling the mask out from the face is to clear the bill of your hat.

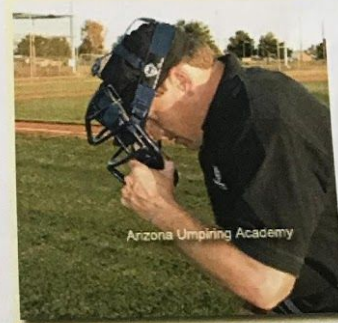
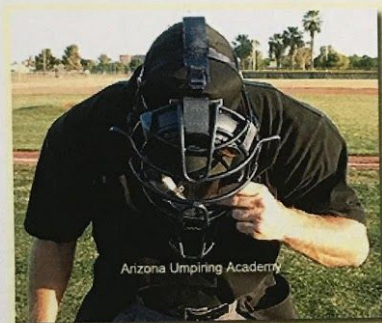


Once the umpire has pulled the mask out away from the face and is clear of the bill of the hat, lift straight up and slightly out.



The umpire must make sure that the head and eyes stay up and forward. The pictures to the right is an example of what not to do.

The game of baseball is extremely fast, and only takes a half of a second to miss a fair or foul or even an obstruction or interference situation.



There is nothing on the ground by your feet to umpire. Notice the umpire, Arizona Umpiring Academy's instructor, Jeff Macias, keeping his head and eyes forward to see all possible plays and responsibilities. Great job Jeff!

Check out the catcher and where his eyes and head are. Do you think he sees anything? Sure...the ground.

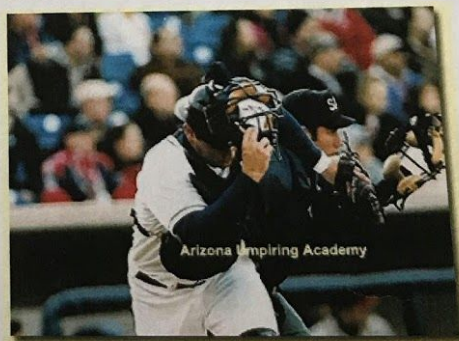


Plate Umpire between Innings

- Introduce yourself to each catcher before the first practice pitch.
- Watch some warm-up pitches from each starting pitcher.
- Replenish your baseballs if necessary.
- Between innings positioning is the side of the team coming to bat.
 - Stand 15 feet up the line.
 - Tell the on deck batter when there are two pitches remaining.
- Count pitches – this keeps the game moving.
- Hold mask with your left hand.
- Clean the plate after catcher throws down – face backstop when cleaning plate.

Base Umpire between Innings

- Do not come in to talk with plate umpire every half inning.
 - If there is something that needs clarification, then it is ok to come in and talk with plate umpire.
 - Do not meet between innings after a controversial call.
- Between innings positioning.
 - Short right field.
 - Stay away from players.
 - Keep out of the players' way.
- Jog, don't sprint into position.

Conferences Between Umpires - Getting the call right

- Send all coaches back to their dugouts.
- All umpires meet to discuss play.
- After umpires confer, go to coach that is negatively affected to explain ruling.
- Do not allow coaches to enter field to argue, warn them of possible ejection.
- Eject if prolonged complaining.

Expanded rules discussion/League rules

1. Overthrows: Awarding bases on an overthrow is determined **at the time of the throw**, not when the ball ultimately goes out of play.
2. Foul Tip: A ball tipped by the batter that first hits either the catcher's glove or bare hand and then is caught is simply a strike. **It is also a live ball, meaning a runner can steal.** It is not considered a foul ball, and should not be called as such. If the ball is tipped and then either hits the ground, chest protector, catcher's mask or body, or umpire first, it is a foul ball. It does not matter if the ball is caught.
3. Dropped third strike: The batter becomes a runner when:
 - A. The third strike called by the umpire is not caught by the catcher, providing:
 - I. First base is unoccupied, or
 - II. First base is occupied with two out.
 - B. A batter who does not realize his situation on a third strike not caught, and who is not in the process of running to 1B, shall be declared out once he leaves the (26 foot diameter) dirt circle around the plate area. Tip: When a batter strikes out, call "strike three" only, and do not say "Strike three, batter's out". If the catcher drops the ball and you don't immediately see it, the batter may not be out until the play is made at 1B (as long as the above conditions are met).
 - C. If the batter swings at a third strike and the catcher catches the ball on a short hop, **it is not a caught strike three.** A ball that hits the ground, foul tip or otherwise, is not a caught strike three.
4. Infield Fly Rule: The infield fly rule is pretty simple. The important thing is recognizing when you are in an infield fly situation, and then signalling with your partner to ensure that you're both mentally ready to call it. You are in an infield fly situation when two conditions are met: First, you have fewer than two outs. Second, you have runners on first and second, or bases loaded.

When both of these conditions are met then any high pop-up that "can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort" invokes the infield fly rule (IFF). The batter is out but the ball remains live, and in all other respects it is simply a fly ball. I emphasized the phrase "with ordinary effort" because ordinary effort means different things at different levels. Ordinary effort for a ten-year-old is much different than for an eighteen-year-old varsity high school player. This factors into your judgment.

The point of the infield fly rule is to protect the offense. It sounds counter-intuitive that calling a batter out is protecting the offense, but in fact the infield fly rule prevents the defense from "accidentally-on-purpose" misplaying the fly ball, then getting an easy double- or triple-play.

The proper mechanic for calling the infield fly is to point straight up with your right arm and calling as loudly as possible "Infield fly! Batter's Out!" If the fly ball is near one of the foul lines and it's not clear if it will be fair or foul, say instead "Infield fly if fair!" Technically, this is the plate umpire's call, but by convention the call belongs to anyone. In fact, the plate umpire is frequently the last one able to spot and identify a true infield fly. (<http://www.umpirebible.com/index.php/rules-fielding/infield-fly-rule>)

5. Bounced pitch: A bounced pitch can be swung at and legally hit by the batter. If a batter swings at a bounced pitch, it can be a swinging strike or a hit ball. If a bounced pitch hits a batter, it is a legal hit by pitch (normal hit by pitch rules apply), and a dead ball.
- The only thing a bounced pitch cannot be is a called strike.

6. Strike Zone: You will get coaches asking you pre-game about your strike zone. If you give them specific details, you've opened yourself up to unnecessary scrutiny if they disagree with any calls during the game. By definition, the top of the strike zone is defined as a horizontal line at the midpoint between the top of the batter's shoulders and the top of the uniform pants. The bottom of the strike zone is a line at the hollow beneath the kneecap. The right and left boundaries of the strike zone correspond to the edges of home plate. **Expanding the strike zone by one or two baseballs at the top and sides of the zone is appropriate, particularly at the younger divisions (Kaline/Mays).** If a coach should ask about your strike zone pre-game, an appropriate response would be that you will call a "fair, consistent strike zone", and then make sure you indeed call it consistently as you can. I would also suggest you tell the coaches that we want the batters to swing and not have a "walk-fest".
7. Baserunners: The common misconception is that if a runner runs through 1B on a hit and then turns toward 2B, he can be tagged and called out. This is not necessarily the case. **If the runner turns towards 2B but makes no effort to advance to 2B, he should not be called out if tagged.** If, in the umpire's opinion, the runner intended to advance to 2B and then was tagged out trying to get back to 1B, he can be ruled out. Again, this is the umpire's judgment. We don't want to unnecessarily call out a runner if they clearly have no intent to advance.
8. Runner Interference: The base path belongs to the runner except when a fielder is in the path attempting to field a batted ball or when a fielder is in the path and in possession of the ball. If the runner on the base path makes contact with a fielder attempting to field a ball or a fielder already in possession of the ball, this is ruled as **runner interference**, dead ball, and the runner is out. The offensive team is NEVER allowed to interfere with the defensive team's ability to make a play. In most instances the umpire is required to make a judgment, Sometimes judgment of intent is required. This is one of the most difficult calls for an umpire to make.
9. Fielder Obstruction: Obstruction is called when the defense hinders the runners ability to run the bases, and is a delayed dead ball. Bases are awarded after the play is complete.
 - A. Obstruction is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding the ball, impedes the progress of any runner.
10. Hit by Pitch:
 - A. Batter intentionally crowding the plate: If a pitched ball hits a batter in the strike zone, the pitch is considered to be a strike, not a hit by pitch, whether or not the batter attempts to avoid the pitch. This applies as well to both a regular swing or bunt attempt that hits the batter. Also, if the pitch is out of the strike zone, and a batter does not attempt to avoid being hit by a pitch, an umpire has the right to rule the pitch a ball and make the at-bat continue (this is rarely enforced).
 - B. If a batter is hit by a pitch, but also swings at the pitch, the ball is immediately dead as soon as it contacts the batter. If the umpire rules that the batter swung (or that the pitch was in the strike zone, even if the batter did not swing), it's a strike, so the net result is a strike and a dead ball.
 - C. The hands are not part of the bat, but part of the batter, so this applies to a pitch hitting the hands as well. The pitch is dead upon contact with the player (so no foul ball if the pitch deflects off the body of the player into the bat).
11. Batter leaving batters box while hitting the ball: A batter is out if he hits a ball with one or both feet on the ground outside of the batter's box. This does not apply to swings and misses.
12. Batted ball hits home plate: Home plate is considered to be in fair territory, so a ball that hits the plate and continues into fair territory is considered a fair ball.

13. Batter interference with catcher: NFHS 7-3-5 Interfere with the catcher's fielding or throwing by: leaning over home plate, stepping out of the batter's box, making any other movement which hinders actions at home plate or the catcher's attempt to play on a runner, or failing to make a reasonable effort to vacate a congested area when there is a throw to home plate and there is time for the batter to move away.

PENALTY: When there are two outs, the batter is out. When there are not two outs and the runner is advancing to home plate, if the runner is tagged out, the ball remains live and interference is ignored. Otherwise, the ball is dead and the runner is called out. When an attempt to put out a runner at any other base is unsuccessful, the batter is out and all runners must return to bases occupied at the time of the pitch. If the pitch is a third strike and in the umpire's judgment interference prevents a possible double play (additional outs), two may be ruled out (8-4-2g).

14. **Balk:** (<https://www.umpirebible.com/OBR16/6.0.htm#602> ; <http://umpirebible.com/fed/6.0.htm#624>)

SLJL Note: Per NFHS rules, a balk is an immediate dead ball.

The balk: an illegal act by the pitcher with a runner or runners on base, entitling all runners to advance one base; is probably the least understood infraction in all of baseball.

The rule centers on the actions of the pitcher and it's important that developing pitchers learn about the do's and don'ts of pitching, to avoid getting called for the balk.

In short, the intent of the balk rule is to prevent the pitcher from *deliberately deceiving* a base runner, and thereby gaining an unfair advantage over the runner. *Umpires are instructed to rule based on the "intent" of the pitcher, if there is any doubt.*

It's important to note for developing pitchers that once they step on the rubber, they have changed their status from "infielder" to "pitcher" and the rules governing pitchers are in effect. To change their status back to "infielder" all they have to do is step off the rubber with their pivot foot. Note that it's illegal to act like a pitcher when you're not on the rubber (i.e. go through pitching motions).

In the official MLB rule book, there are 13 different ways to balk. I've paraphrased them below for you...

- 1) The pitcher makes their natural pitching motion but fails to throw the ball to home plate.
- 2) The pitcher feints a throw to first base, while touching the rubber, but fails to make the throw. Note that this rule applies to throws to first base only. The pitcher can fake a throw to second or third base, provided there are runners on those bases. Also note that if the pitcher steps off the rubber they don't have to throw.
- 3) The pitcher fails to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base. Note that you can't throw and then step. Also note that you have to step directly towards the base. There is no 45-degree rule, or mostly toward the base. Obviously it's the umpire's judgment that governs.
- 4) The pitcher throws or feints a throw to an unoccupied base, except for the purpose of making a play. Note that it's okay to throw to second base if the runner on first base has already taken off, attempting a steal.

- 5) The pitcher makes an illegal pitch. Note that a "quick pitch" or pitching before the batter is reasonably set in the batter's box is an illegal pitch (it's also dangerous). Make sure you wait for the batter to get ready, and remember that just being in the batter's box doesn't mean the batter is reasonably set.
- 6) The pitcher delivers the ball to the batter while they are not facing the batter. I've never personally seen this happen, but I bet somebody actually tried this sometime.
- 7) The pitcher makes any motion naturally associated with their pitch when they are not touching the rubber.
- 8) The pitcher unnecessarily delays the game.
- 9) The pitcher fakes a pitch without the ball. Note that it doesn't matter whether you're on the rubber or not.
- 10) The pitcher, after coming to a legal pitching position, removes one hand from the ball (other than releasing the ball on the throw).
- 11) The pitcher accidentally or intentionally drops the ball. Note that you have to be touching the rubber before this is a balk.
- 12) The pitcher, while giving an intentional base on balls, pitches when the catcher isn't in the catcher's box. Note that the catcher has to start in the catcher's box and then quickly move outside to catch the ball. (NOTE: NFHS/SLJL rules: An intentional walk may be announced by the coach or catcher without the need to throw 4 pitches)
- 13) The pitcher delivers from the set position without coming to a stop.

Those are the official rules governing the balk. Here are a few of the common mistakes I've seen with developing pitchers.

- Turning your shoulders towards first base to look at the runner after coming to the set position. Keep your shoulders still and turn your head. When you turn your body towards first base, you're making a move to the base and you have to step and throw.
- Not stopping after coming to the set position (see 13 above). I tell my pitchers to stop, take a breath, and then throw.

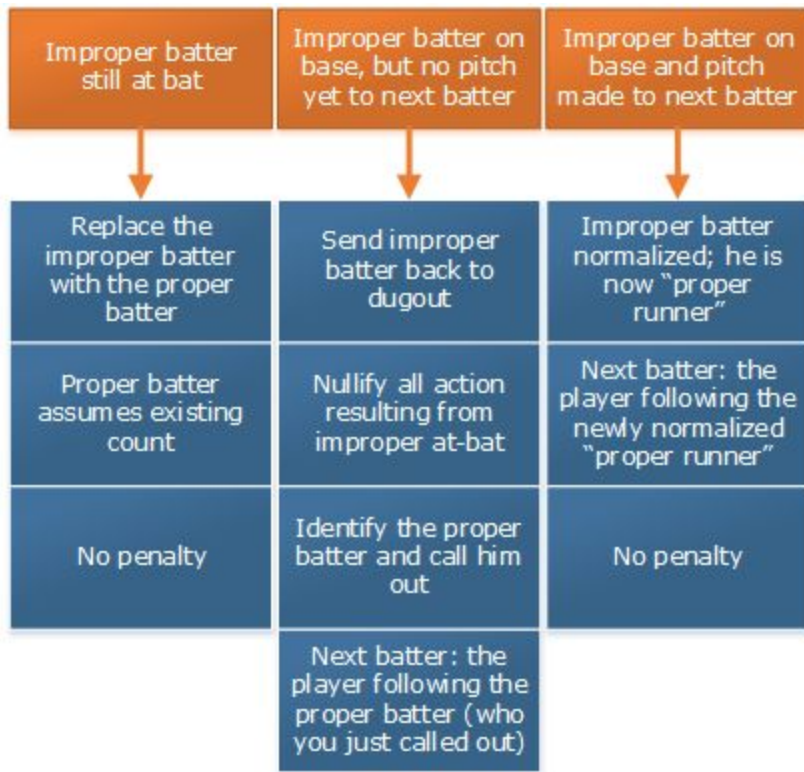
15. Baserunning awards:

BASERUNNING AWARDS TABLE

NO. BASES AWARDED	DETERMINED FROM BASE OCCUPIED AT TIME OF:
ONE BASE (runners)	
1. Balk	1. Infraction
2. Pitch from pitcher's plate thrown out of play	2. Pitch
3. Throw from pitcher's plate goes out of play	3. Throw
4. Unintentional catch and carry	4. Pitch
5. *Catcher obstruction (if attempting to advance)	5. Pitch
6. Forced (because batter is awarded 1st base)	6. Pitch
7. Pitch strikes runner	7. Pitch
ONE BASE (batter)	
1. Walk	1. Pitch
2. Pitch thrown out of play on ball four	2. Pitch
3. *Batter is obstructed	3. Pitch
4. Hit by pitch	4. Pitch
5. Runner interference (unintentional)	5. Pitch
6. Umpire interference (hit by batted ball)	6. Pitch
7. Pitch lodges in defensive player's or umpire's uniform or equipment on ball four	7. Pitch
TWO BASES (batter and runners)	
1. Fair batted ball bounces over, through, goes under, lodges in or under fence	1. Pitch
2. #Fair batted ball or thrown ball lodges in defensive player's or umpire's uniform or equipment	2. Pitch
3. *#Live thrown ball or pitch touched by illegal glove or mitt	3. Infraction
4. *#Live thrown ball or pitch touched by detached player equipment which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by fielder	4. Infraction
5. First throw by infielder and ball goes out of play or lodged in or under fence	5. Pitch
6. For any subsequent play by an infielder or for any throw by an outfielder and ball goes out of play or lodges in or under fence.	6. Throw
7. Intentional catch and carry (runners only)	7. Pitch
THREE BASES (batter and runners)	
1. Fair batted ball contacted with detached player equipment or illegal glove/mitt	1. Infraction
FOUR BASES (batter and runners)	
1. Fair batted ball over fence in flight	1. Pitch
2. Fair batted ball hits foul pole above fence in flight	2. Pitch
3. Fair batted ball prevented from going over fence because it is touched by spectator	3. Pitch
4. Fair batted ball prevented from going over fence because of contact with detached player equipment or illegal glove/mitt	4. Pitch
UMPIRE JUDGMENT	
1. Spectator interference	1. Infraction
2. *Runner(s) obstruction (minimum of one base)	2. Infraction
3. Defensive malicious contact	3. Infraction
*Award only if infraction is not ignored	
#An award to the batter-runner on a pitch is only made if he has the right to advance to first base.	

As a general rule, SLJL gives one additional base after a ball has exited play.

16. Batting out of order (www.umpirebible.com/index.php/rules-batting/batting-out-of-order)



17. SLJL Rules:

- A. Player Rotations: If a coach approaches you about the opposing team not rotating their players correctly., it is not your duty to police it. Tell the coaches to contact their trustee and have them address the issue.
- B. Ball under control: Mays rules state that play is dead (runners may not advance) when an infielder has the ball under control and in the infield area. Reese rules state that play is dead (runners may not advance) once the pitcher has the ball under control and is near the pitching mound. "Under control" means that the ball is clearly in possession and is not being thrown or rolling on the ground while in play, and that the defensive player could make a play with the ball if necessary.
- C. Ejections: (See Conflict Resolution): The SLJL rulebook reviews the situations in which you may eject a coach, player, or spectator. Swearing or a physical confrontation between coaches and you, for example, would result in an immediate ejection. The ejected person must leave the area of the playing field and immediate area. If they do not, you may call the game as a forfeit and leave the field. Warnings are appropriate as the situation dictates. If the offending or unsportsmanlike behavior continues , then an ejection is warranted. Details about the ejection must be reported to the boys VP, division trustee, and umpire-in-chief immediately after the game.

Tips to Speed up Games

- Encourage coaches in the pre-game meeting to have all players hustle on and off of the field.
- Encourage coaches to have the catchers get their gear on as quickly as possible.
- Let coaches know that they can utilize courtesy runners for catchers, all divisions. A courtesy runner must be ready to go; if there is a delay in waiting for the runner, you may tell them to wait and continue the game.
- **Enforce the 5 pitch maximum pitcher warm-up rule between innings.** If the catcher is not ready once the pitcher has had 5 pitches, play should resume once the catcher is ready.

1. **Make sure the game starts on time.** Be sure to arrive at the game site early enough to carry out all your duties and have the game start just as it is supposed to. If your contract stipulates a 4:00 game time, that means the first pitch is thrown at 4:00. If the first pitch is to be thrown at 4:00, then the mandatory pregame conference with both coaches must be over prior to that.
 - What we do is this: We start the pregame conference 10 minutes prior to game time. Keep the pregame meeting to 5 minutes. Plate umpire handles the introductions, gives his instructions and reviews the ground rules. That shouldn't take more than 5 minutes. As soon as the conference concludes, give instructions to the home team to take the field. Starting on time will set the tone to keep the game moving.
2. **Call for the batter.** As the pitcher is warming up to start the game, I look at his first 2-3 pitches, then I back out, turn, and call the batter. As soon as the final 2 warm-up pitches are thrown, I quickly clean off the plate and get ready to go. Between innings, when they are allowed only 5 pitches, I call the batter after the 3rd pitch. Invariably, the batter is going into the batter's box as the catcher is making his throw to 2nd base. Getting the batter in on time will keep the game moving.
3. **Don't chase foul balls/wild pitches.** If a ball gets by the catcher and goes to the backstop during warmups, give him another ball from your ballbag and let the warmups continue. If the same thing happens in the game, make sure that there aren't any runners on base or it's not ball-4, and give him a ball from the bag. Same with foul balls. Let someone from the bench chase the ball, and, if you can't throw the ball well, hand the ball to the catcher and have him throw it.
4. **Baseballs:** Make sure balls hit out of play are returned promptly, as we don't want to delay the game if we run out of baseballs.
5. **Keep the batter in the box.** We have the rule - let's make sure we use it. If the batter takes a pitch and he's not forced out of the box by the pitch, keep him in the box. Since this is a rule, you may have to keep reminding him. I do that all the time. You can do it quietly without anybody besides you, the batter and the catcher knowing what is going on. Batters in and out of the batters box does not keep the game moving.
6. **Get the bat.** If the play is over and you are waiting for the next batter to arrive at the batters box, go ahead and remove the bat from the field and return it to the bench area. Normally, you will hand it to the next on deck batter or toss it to that area. Let the batter get set. Otherwise, you lose time while the batter gets the bat, takes it to the bench and returns to the batters box to get set.
7. **Between innings:** I encourage teams to hustle between innings. After the 3rd out is made, if I'm the plate umpire, I usually walk toward the bench area of the team that is going to the field and remind them to hustle on and off the field. I also make it my business to know if the catcher is ready to take the field. If he is not ready to go, I remind them to get somebody out to warm up the pitcher. I always allow the catcher to throw the ball to 2nd base. Unless it is the first inning or they have changed pitchers, after 3 warmup pitches I say "two more pitches" to the catcher and call for the batter. Just remember to always count pitches. If you get caught up in a substitution and you lose count, ask the catcher.
8. **Changing pitchers:** Whenever a coach goes to the mound for a conference, you let him know what number conference this one is. If it is the 2nd to the same pitcher in the same inning the pitcher must go, tell him

before he goes to the mound. The base umpire should count warmup pitches (7 max). Once again, you call the batter after the 6th warmup pitch.

9. **Umpire conferences:** Normally when the pregame conference with the coaches breaks up, I tell my partner I'll see him at the end of the game. Unless you have something you absolutely need to discuss, there is no need for the umpires to get together between innings. In fact, if you have just had something confrontational, it not only doesn't look good, it looks bad, for the umpires to get together for a discussion after that inning is over.
10. **Courtesy runners** are part of the speed-up rules. Now that we have courtesy runners for the catchers and/or pitchers, remind the coaches at the pregame conference that they should have their courtesy runners ready to go as soon as the pitcher and catcher reach base. The game should not be delayed for the courtesy runner, that defeats the purpose of the rule.
11. **The Strike Zone:** I've intentionally saved the best for last. Notice please, that they do call it the strike zone, not the ball zone. We need to think strikes. As part of our chapter meetings, we have had coaches participate, telling us what they think of umpiring. The one item that consistently crops up is the strike zone. Coaches don't understand why umpires have so small a strike zone. As an umpire, I am flabbergasted that an umpire would have a small strike zone. Jokingly, I tell our guys of Bard's Law: the more strikes and outs you call, the quicker you get to go home. Remember, they don't pay us by the hour. I say that in jest, sort of.
 - The fact is, baseball is more fun when the batters swing the bat. The strike zone, as I interpret it, is any part of the ball passing over any part of the plate (17 inches wide) between the batter's armpit (letters of the shirt) and the hollow beneath the kneecap. That's what we are to call. Remember, any part of the baseball on any part of the strike zone is a strike. That adds the width of the baseball to the strike zone. If we make the pitcher throw the ball down the center of the plate, and not call anything above the waist a strike, we are in for some looong games. If you establish from the first pitch that you are going to call strikes, then the batter will swing the bat. That way every close pitch, the batter is more prone to swing the bat, not take the pitch and look back at you. I give the pitcher every bit of the strike zone - he's entitled to it. **Adopt a philosophy that it's a strike until they prove to you it's not.** The more strikes you call, the more they swing the bat. The more they swing the bat, the less deep counts you have. The less deep counts you have, the quicker the game. The quicker the game, the earlier you get to go home.
 - **What coaches look for is a consistent strike zone.** I will guarantee you that you will get less flak for having a big strike zone opposed to having a small strike zone. Small strike zones add to everyone's frustration. The game was intended for the batter to hit the ball and the fielders to make the plays. Nobody ever paid a nickel to watch someone walk. I'm not advocating calling strikes on pitches out of the strike zone. I am encouraging you to examine your strike zone, think about it, and give the pitcher his due.
 - For younger ages (Kaline/Mays), where pitchers are less accurate, an expanded strike zone is desirable. Typically, the bottom of the strike zone is not expanded, but the top of the strike zone can be expanded up to at least the underarm/upper chest/shoulders. It is easier (you will receive less complaints from coaches/spectators) to expand the inside and outside of the zone because it is harder for spectators and coaches to identify inside/outside pitches. It is also easier to expand the inside/outside of the zone mid-game in the event the strike zone you started with is too small for the level of competition (too many walks). In all cases, make sure your zone is consistent across both teams.
 - Whatever you do, don't shrink your strike zone with 2 strikes on the batter or with 2 outs in the inning. Again, we strive for consistency. If it was "there" for strike-1 or strike-2, don't hesitate to ring him up on strike-3.
 - We don't have the same strike zone as they use in the major leagues. If you watch a lot of baseball on television, you won't see many strikes called above the belt. We can't do that. Call those pitches strikes. Make the batter swing the bat. Trust me, the game will be more fun.
 - **Remember, it's a strike until they prove to you it's not.**

- **Keep the Game Moving! Tips on how to speed up a Game by Richard B. Siegel**
- Keeping the game moving is an important responsibility that all umpire's share. In a 7-inning game, if both teams take just three minutes to change sides between innings, more than 42 minutes is chewed up doing something other than playing baseball.
- However, wasting 4 to 5 minutes to change sides between innings seems to be the norm! Cutting even one minute off each inning change can add enough time to play another inning! With so many games played just before sunset, or jammed into a time slot between two other games, we must do everything we can to encourage the teams to make the best use of the limited time they're given to play.
- The first way to speed up the game is to **get the game started on time!** (Or a few minutes' early if both teams will comply.) When you allow the managers to casually go through their pre-game drills and pep-talks at their own pace, then they first start exchanging line ups at "game time," you might think you are just being accommodating and cooperative. However, you're making the mistake of letting THEM take control of the game. You should always try to arrive at the site of the game at least 30 to 45 minutes prior to the published game time. Even if you haven't yet changed into your umpire uniform yet, put on your umpire's cap (figuratively and literally) and walk out to the field and greet the managers so they know you are there. Assuming the game time is 4:00pm, say to each of them: "Please have you're field drills done and line ups ready to be exchanged at 3:55 sharp. We'll meet at home plate to go over the ground rules. THE GAME STARTS AT 4:00." Then return to the field at 3:50 to inspect the field and equipment. If you find they are not close to being ready to play, start barking your displeasure. However, you will begin to find your little 3:30 chat very often sets the tone that; 1) YOU are in charge; 2) this game WILL move along; 3) time wasting actions will not be tolerated; and of course 4) you get the game started right on time!
- Tell the managers at the pre-game conference at home plate that you're going to run a snappy game. Everyone hustles in and out between innings, to move the game quickly. Tell them to have their catcher suited up and ready to immediately start catching warm-ups at the end of that team's offensive inning. If the catcher batted or was a runner, tell the manager to have ANY OTHER player with mask ready to warm up the pitcher. If only nine players are present, another fielder already in the game (i.e. the right fielder) can be that warm-up catcher.
- If the team violates the above "tip," give one warm up pitch and play. They'll be much quicker getting out there next inning!
- Keep the time of any offensive and defensive conferences to a minimum. During any conference, dust off the plate, then walk close to the conference, hover nearby showing signs of impatience. If you feel they have had enough time order the conference to end.
- As plate umpire, immediately hustle out to the mound after the third out to inspect the ball and place it on the mound, or to wait for the pitcher to come out of the dugout. When the teams see you hustle, they will hustle.
- Tell the catcher to carry a "message" to his pitcher to take less time between pitches, if the pitcher is taking too much time.
- Unless you can't throw well, the umpire can speed things up if he, not the catcher, throws a new ball to the pitcher after a foul ball has been hit out of play.
- When making the ball live, loudly announce "play!" pointing to the pitcher to move things along.
- About 30 second before you plan to start an inning, if there is no base coaches in place, look to the offensive dugout and see if there is a base coach on the way out. If you don't see one coming out, call for him to take his position. Complain if he suddenly asks for a "moment" to get to his box just as you are about to call "play." If a team doesn't want to put base coaches out there, don't worry about it.
- Do not allow unnecessary coach/umpire conversations. Coaches can often be clueless about the rules. However, during a game is no time to be explaining the rules. A "quick question" can easily turn into a ten minute explanation. If a coach wants a lesson on a rule, ask him to meet you at your car after the game. (He almost never will.)

- Defensive teams have no inherent right to infield and outfield warm-up balls between innings. When you're ready to start order the pitcher to throw "one more pitch!" Tell the catcher to "throw it down" and he'll tell his teammates to get the "balls in."
- Don't be a "clean freak" with home plate. Dust off the plate while the catcher "throws down" at the beginning of each inning and any time the plate has been obscured by dirt after a play. However, resist the urge to jump out there and dust it every time a nervous batter kicks a little dirt onto the slab. Use the "dead ball" time while a foul ball is retrieved, or during a coincident "time out" to get that plate clean. Calling time in the middle of an "at bat" just to whisk off a few grains of sand holds up the game and actually interrupts the natural flow of the game.
- If courtesy runners are permitted in your league, insist that the courtesy runner has a helmet on and is ready to get out there as soon as the runner he will replace gets on base. If a coach is too slow choosing and preparing a courtesy runner, refuse to let the "C.R." go out. Next time the coach will be sure to have the CR ready. Courtesy runners were invented to provide a speed-up process. The way they are most often used, however, slows things down.
- **Become stingy when granting "time."** It is acceptable to grant time out for catchers to occasionally chat with pitchers. However, non-injured runners don't need "time" to dust themselves off if a fielder isn't holding a ball nearby. NEVER grant it for a catcher who wants to "force" a dancing runner back to third after a pitch/play. NEVER grant time to a defensive player who just wants to throw the ball back to the pitcher. NEVER grant time to a coach until all runners have reached their bases and show no signs of continuing to run. Get into the habit when a player asks for a frivolous time out, respond with, "Why?" or better yet, "No."
- **As umpires, stay out on the field between innings.** Avoid useless between inning chatter with fans, league officials, players, coaches, and other umpires. Keep your attention on the players warming up. Don't leave the field unless it is an emergency.
- "Let's go, batter!" Should often be heard from the umpire. These words should not be spoken in soft and sweet tones.
- With a 3-0 count on the batter, you really want the next pitch to be a strike. Appropriate to the level of play, try to avoid "walk-a-thons." If both of the pitchers are bad, only widen the strike zone for both teams. Do not give any more north and south.
- As the defensive team takes the field at the beginning of an inning, discourage the coach calling the team into a huddle. Suggest that he do that as the team comes off the field, or while they're at bat.

Conflict Resolution:

Per SLJL rules, coaches are not to argue balls and strikes, and judgement calls made by an umpire. If a coach is breaking this rule, use the ask, tell, dismiss procedure. If the behavior is bad enough (swearing, slurs, physical threat), you do not need to start at "Ask", you can simply dismiss/eject the coach.

Ask, tell, dismiss

1. **Ask:** Ask the coach to stop his unsporting behavior "Coach, that is enough, stop your behavior".
2. **Tell:** Tell them that this is their final warning and that their behavior will be noted to the UIC.
"Coach, stop your behavior NOW. This is your final warning and will be reported to the league"
3. **Dismiss:** "Coach, I am ejecting you, you must leave the field and go to the parking lot." (Out of sight and sound)
 - Do not restart the game until the coach has left. If the coach refuses to leave after a reasonable amount of time, or if at any point you feel threatened, abandon the game, go home, and contact the UIC/League.

In a baseball setting, the umpire should:

- Be fair, and do not make calls because of some incident that happened in an earlier game.
- Respond to questions, not statements.
- Not permit other coaches or players to be present during a discussion with a coach. I prefer my partner to listen, but I want him 15-20 feet from the scene. I need a witness but not help.
- Keep his mouth shut. The coach has come to rant and rave, and you and he are "alone." Don't defend your call. Listen to the coach. Accept everything he says. One should be relaxed, hands on hips or behind the back, not folded aggressively across one's chest. Wait until the coach runs down.
- Ask the question: Do you want to know what I saw? You may have to repeat that a couple of times. Stay on track: You want the coach to listen to what you saw. Don't go off on a tangent by replying to ANYTHING he said during his initial outburst. Don't defend your call. You're a broken record, spinning over and over: I will not defend my call. I will not defend my call. I will not defend my call. That record is playing through a speaker you alone can hear. You may need to say those exact words: "Coach, I won't defend the call. I told you what I saw. Let's play ball." (See the next section below.)
- Use an escalating method of control. First, control by demeanor: listen to the coach, don't argue, ask if he really wants an answer.
- Second, control by example: Explain quietly what you saw, tell him we're ready to play.
- Third, control by leaving the scene of the dispute: Walk away from the spot of the conflict, even if it's just a few steps. Turn your back on the coach, just as the matador does the bull. That is the key moment in this "dialogue." Everyone, participants and fans alike, can see that you are done with the argument. If anything else happens, it cannot be your fault!
- Fourth, control by force, with clear, pre-defined consequences for additional bad behavior: If the bull charges, unless he threatens, curses you (not the call) where others can hear, or physically abuses you, you have no choice: He's toast, but no one can say you precipitated the "final solution."
- In summary: DON'T DEFEND YOUR CALL.
- In the final analysis my experience with coaches of all ages and levels shows that the less said, the better. That's the heart of my recommendation. It is also the most difficult for an umpire to follow, especially when he knows he nailed that call dead to the ground.

Umpire Resources:

- http://www.stevetheump.com/umpire_tips.htm
- <http://www.umpireschoolhq.com/baseball-rule-myths-every-umpire-should-know/>
- <http://www.umpireschoolhq.com/baseball-rule-myths-every-umpire-should-know-part-2/> •
<http://www.umpireschoolhq.com/baseball-rule-myths-every-umpire-should-know-part3/>
- 2- man mechanics:
<http://www.umpirebible.com/index.php/mechanics/umpire-roles-two-man>
- NFHS rules: <http://umpirebible.com/fed/default.htm>