



Youth Umpire Training Manual

Ali Audi – VP/Chair Baseball OPS
amaudi@audilaw.com; 814-883-9759

Dan Milliken - Majors Commissioner
Pennstate07@gmail.com; 717-580-7185

Jeremy Welker – Minors Commissioner
Jwelker50@gmail.com; 717-712-3264

Matt Dean – Colts Commissioner
Msdean140@yahoo.com; 717-798-1708

I. Schedule

HLL umpires shall officiate the following games which are expected to be scheduled at the following fields and times:

- Minors – 2 Umpires (plate and field); weeknights North Field and Gelder Park as needed.
- Colts – 1 Umpire; Fridays at North and Koons; Saturday afternoons/Evenings at North
- Majors – 2 Umpires; Inter-league matchups with LD, Hampden Township – Friday Nights at South and Pebble
- Other inter-league games (currently planning 9U home/away with Annville) – 2 Umpires; Likely a Saturday night in late April or Early May
- Summer Slam – 2 Umpires per game – North and South Fields
 - June 14/15 – 10U and 12U
 - June 21/22 – 8U/11U
 - June 28/29 – 9U

II. The Basics

The umpire is the authority figure. If you look the part and act the part, you will get treated the way you should be: with respect. This starts the minute you show up at the field. The basics of umpiring are very simple:

- Look professional
- Act professional

Look professional: An umpire shirt will be provided and must be worn. An umpire who takes pride in his appearance also takes pride in his game. Respect is all about perception.

Act professional:

- Know the rules.
- Show up on time.
- Take charge: your authority is assumed act that way. You are the umpire. You are in charge.
- Be pleasant. Be polite. But, be firm and confident out there.
- Take your time on calls: Pause-read-react. There is nothing to be gained by rushing, except trouble.
- Your calls: Make 'em loud and make 'em proud – everyone has a right to know what your call is.
- Don't hesitate. The best way to avoid confrontations is to be in the correct position to make the right call, and to "sell" close plays with confident verbal and hand signals. Don't show off though, you are not the show.
- Don't argue. Listen to reason, but be firm. If you are sure you made the right call, say so, and move on with the game. If you are not sure, listen, use your best judgment, make the call, and move on.
 - "That's not what I saw"
 - Remember that if you change a call after a coach lobbies for a change, the coaches will be empowered to lobby for more changes. Stick to your call and the coaches will accept your calls.
- Don't be afraid to confer with your partner if you are not sure on something.
- If a manager asks you to check with your partner, do it, but remember it's still **your** call.
- Even professionals make mistakes: treat each call as a new one. Don't try to "even things up" if you blow a call.
- Be a team out there: support your partner. Don't change his calls; you aren't supposed to. If you think your partner missed something, when the play is over, call time and go to your partner first away from the players and coaches. Talk it over. Get it right. Then, whoever made the initial call, announce clearly what the call is now.
- Smile and be nice – it goes a long way towards making things run smoothly.
- Always watch the BALL, and you will likely not miss an important play.
- Don't let inane comments bother you. Parents, and coaches will usually say things like "that

- looked close" and the like, but they are not meant to undermine your authority. Save your 'authority' for prevention of direct, mean spirited, or repeatedly disruptive personal attacks.
- Never hover around a particular dugout, or mingle too closely with players and spectators, as this will cause problems. You don't want it to look like you favor one team or the other.
 - NEVER get into a shouting match with a spectator. Go to the offender's team manager, and politely ask him to control his parent(s).
 - Always make calls with clear, firm decisiveness, and confidence.
 - Keep home plate clean.

Before the game

- Get to the game on time. Show up early (at least 15 minutes).
- Confer with your partner.
- Make sure the managers have the field prepared on time.
- Have a plate conference. Introduce yourself to the managers, and learn their names. It is easier to have a discussion later if you refer to each other by name.
- Go over the ground rules at the plate conference: things like stealing rules; where dead ball territory is, keep gates closed, if there are holes in the fence what will happen if the ball goes in there, etc.
- Make sure the players are properly equipped and ready to play.
 - Bats must have USA Baseball Stickers
 - Catchers must have cup and throat guard (verbally confirm)
 - Pitcher can wear sleeves – just not white or gray; pitcher's glove cannot be white or gray
 - **There is no Little League rule against pitchers wearing sunglasses**
- Home Coach should provide umpires with two game balls and payment
- Start on time and note official start time – have a watch or timer to ensure that new innings don't start after limit (1:45 for minors; 1:30 for Colts)

During the game

- Help keep the game moving. Hustle the players into position and back to the dugout, including warming up pitchers.
- Stay near the plate during warm-ups, but out of the way near the backstop.
- Keep warm-up pitches to no more than 8 for a new pitcher, 5 for a returning one.
- Let the catcher get in position first, and then you set up.
- Keep equipment off the field. This means bats, balls, buckets, catcher's gear, etc. If you see it on the field during play, wait until the play finishes. Call time and have the equipment removed.
- Keep the players in the dugouts when they aren't on the field. The dugouts are for players, managers, and coaches only.
- There is NO on-deck hitter in little league baseball at any time. The first batter of the inning can come out to take practice swings at the start of the inning under your supervision, but that's it. Keep the batter away from the plate while the pitcher is warming up.
- It is not the umpire's responsibility to keep track of pitch counts or pitcher eligibility. That is up to the coaches.

After the game

- As soon as the game is over, give the baseballs back to the manager who gave them to you.
- Put the equipment back clean in the umpire storage area.
- Report any broken equipment to the league commissioner or VP OPS immediately.
- If there has been controversy during the game, you will need to report it. It will eventually have to be in writing, but report it by phone first.
- Any ejections or other behavior which you believe crosses the line of sportsmanship should be reported immediately to the League Commissioner or VP BBOps that same day.

III. Umpire Signaling

PAUSE - READ – REACT

Remember in each of these calls timing is everything. Selling the call is a matter of the game situation and each umpire will respond differently. There is nothing wrong with putting a little extra on the gesture and voice, in fact it is an important part of the game. In time each umpire develops his or her own personal sense of rhythm and timing, style and flair.

Play

Along with strike and ball, this is the one call the plate umpire will make most often during a game. Pointing at the pitcher (or the plate) with the right hand and calling "play." The call is essential for the batter and catcher. The gesture is essential for the pitcher, defense and offense. In every case in the rule book (Section 5.00) it is clear that the play signal is a verbal signal: "...the umpire shall call "Play"."

Strike

Always signaled with the right hand, each umpire develops a personalized system for signaling the strike.

Ball

Never signaled. The general preference is that the verbal signal "ball" loud enough that both dugouts can hear it. Calling "Ball One," "Ball Two," etc. allows you to maintain the rhythm of your calls.

TIME!

Raising both hands into the air and calling in a loud voice "TIME!" All umpires on the field will immediately signal the time call. Sometimes the call must be made several times in order to shut things down. Once time is called every effort must be made by all umpires to stop the action-taking place. Umpires learn that there are many moments when time is out, and it has not been called. This is normal in the course of a game as the umpires change their field positions, players repair equipment, or hundreds of other reasons. It may be the simple lifting of the hands communication between crewmembers, or the plate umpire holding the stop hand up. Not all "t"ime is big-"T"ime.

The Count

Balls are signaled using the left hand. Strikes are signaled using the right hand. Both hands extend to shoulder level at the same moment. A full count is always signaled as "three balls, two strikes" and never signaled using clenched fists. The count is relayed back to the pitcher after every pitch and a verbal report is made usually after the second or third pitch and from that point on. The count is always read aloud as "two balls, two strikes" and not "two and two" or "twenty-two" or other similar variation.

Safe

Both left and right arms are raised together, to shoulder level, in front of the umpire and then a sweeping motion is performed out, parallel to the ground, palms down. The verbal call of "safe" may be made. To complete the call you normally return to the set position. To sell a safe call you might consider doing it two or three times in rapid succession. It is not always necessary to even make the sign or call. If the play is obvious do nothing.

Out!

The clenched right fist and a short hammered motion seem to be favored by most umpires. Again, personal style is acceptable as long as it does not distract you from seeing any further plays taking place. Check that the fielder is really in possession of the ball. The signal can be made with only a gesture or can be sold with a loud call of "He's Out!" or "She's Out!" Signal every out.

On the tag!

Point at the runner with the left hand; signal the out with the right hand. Complete the sign by saying

"On the tag, he's out!" if you want to sell it a touch. (Remember you are the umpire, not the color commentator.)

Missed the tag!

A "selling it" call that occurs when a runner slides under the tag or the tag is high. You can save some grief by indicating a loud "Safe, he missed the tag!" and following it with a tapping motion where the tag was. Everyone will know you saw the tag and most will assume the runner had the bag before it.

Fair Ball

The right-hand points into the field in fair territory. **There is no call "Fair" ever made.**

Foul Ball

The same signal as "Time" but the call becomes "Foul." Umpires often add a point into foul territory with one hand after giving the time signal. Once verbalized, this call sticks. The base umpire needs to pay specific attention to a ball hitting the batter in the batter's box. If the batter has not moved the base umpire will immediately call "Foul." If the batter is in motion the base umpire must delay to see if the plate umpire is going to make a call. Only if the plate umpire is silent, and the base umpire is certain the batter contacted the ball outside of the batter's box would the base umpire signal "Time, that's interference, the batter is out!" otherwise the call is "Foul!"

No Pitch

The same signal as "Time" but the call becomes "No Pitch." If you are the plate umpire, step away from the plate. It can be helpful to repeat "No Pitch."

IV. The Base Umpire

Helpful hints when working the bases

- Always know where the ball is on the field.
- Never make a call on the move, get set and wait until the play is over before you make the call.
- Get as close to the play as possible without interfering.
- Hustle to be in the best position to make the call.

Positioning:

Where to stand before the pitch in a 2-man system

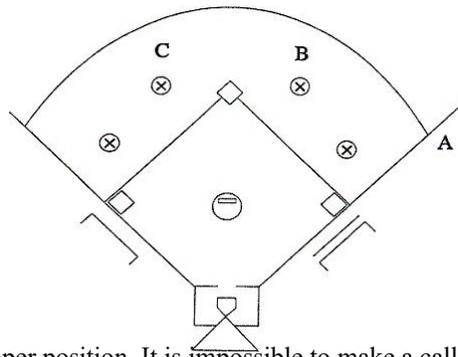
Diagram 1 shows where you should be before the pitch. There are three basic positions: A, B, and C. The X's are the infielders. The chart below shows where to be in each situation:

- A----Bases empty
- B---- Runner on first base
- C---- Runner on second base
- C---- Runner on third base
- C---- Runners on first and second base
- C---- Runners on second and third base
- C---- Runners on first and third base
- C---- Bases loaded

Only time at A is with no one on base

Only time at B is with ONLY a runner on first

Quite often a play will call itself if you are in the proper position. It is impossible to make a call without guessing if you have the wrong angle on a play. Study and practice until you know what position to be in and how to get there. It is impossible to be in the perfect position for all plays, as the play does not always develop as it is supposed to.



Three important factors to remember in positioning are ANGLE, DISTANCE AND TIMING. ANGLE IS MORE IMPORTANT THE DISTANCE!

V. Behind the Plate

Positioning:

Assume a position behind the catcher looking between the catcher and the batter; you must be able to clearly see the pitcher, the entire plate and the batter's knees. To see all of those elements, it is important to move into "the slot" that area between the catcher and the batter. The farther you are into the slot, the better you will see the strike zone. Two additional factors have tremendous impact on your view of the strike zone: head height and stability. Your head should be positioned so the bottom of your chin is even with the top of the catcher's helmet. If you work with your head lower, your view of the knee high pitch at or near the outside corner of the plate will be restricted. The head is straight ahead looking at the pitcher. Your ear closest to the catcher should be just to the outside of the catcher's shoulder. These are good starting positions. From the moment the pitcher releases a pitch until the ball arrives in the catcher's glove, your head should remain absolutely still. If your head moves at all, your view of the strike zone will be blurred and your judgment will be inconsistent.

Assume your crouch when the pitcher is about to release the ball. You'll view the pitch from between the batter and catcher. Don't go down too early, for you will put unnecessary strain on your muscles. Relaxation between pitches is very important. Many umpires wear themselves out for the late innings by staying in a set position for long a period of time. The upper body should remain in an almost upright position.

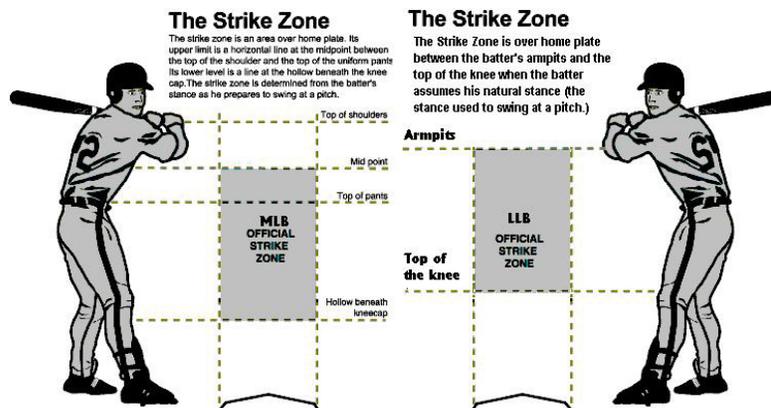
The Youth baseball Strike Zone (2.00)

“The STRIKE ZONE is that space over home plate which is between the batter’s armpits and the top of the knees when the batter assumes a natural stance. The umpire shall determine the strike zone according to the batter’s usual stance when that batter swings at a pitch.”

-NOTE: FOR COLTS THE STRIKE ZONE EXTENDS 3 INCHES ON EITHER SIDE OF THE PLATE (IF THE HITTER CAN REACH IT THEY SHOULD SWING AT IT)

FOR MINORS: ABOUT A BASEBALL OFF THE EDGE OF THE PLATE SHOULD BE CALLED A STRIKE.

MLB vs. Little League



If it looks like a strike call it a strike. Think Strikes. Strikes mean outs. Outs mean innings. Innings mean games.

MOST IMPORTANTLY – MAINTAIN A CONSISTENT ZONE. A STRIKE IN THE FIRST INNING SHOULD BE A STRIKE IN THE SIXTH. LET THE PLAYERS ADJUST TO THE ZONE YOU ESTABLISH.

VI. Rules

These are just a few of the most common rules that you need to be aware of as an umpire.

Must slide rule (7.08a3)

There is no must-slide rule. The runner has three options when the fielder HAS THE BALL AND IS WAITING TO MAKE THE TAG: ATTEMPT to slide, attempt to get around the fielder, or go back to the previous base. If the runner does neither and goes in standing up, he's out. But if he attempts to get around and successfully avoids the tag without going out of the baseline, he's safe.

- Remember, the fielder must have the ball and be waiting to make the tag. If the ball is on its way to the base, or the ball and runner get there simultaneously, and there's contact because the runner didn't slide or attempt to get around, this is just a collision.
- It is YOUR judgment as to whether the runner attempted to slide or avoid contact.
 - Example – if the catcher is inside the baseline and catches the ball and is waiting to make the tag; The runner crossing to the other side of the foul line is BY RULE an attempt to avoid and he is not automatically out.
- THIS IS DIFFERENT THAN LOWERING THE SHOULDER, OR ATTEMPTING TO DISLodge THE BALL. THAT IS AN AUTOMATIC OUT, REGARDLESS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND COULD ALSO BE CAUSE FOR EJECTION. USE YOUR BEST JUDGMENT.

Interference – (Rule 2.00 and 7.09)

The umpire must judge that someone on the offense "interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses" a defensive player who is trying to make a play on the ball. Some interference calls are easy, such as a runner being struck by a batted ball, or a runner colliding with a fielder trying to field a batted ball. The troublesome ones are when the umpire must judge the intent of the runner, such as:

- A runner contacts a thrown ball. The umpire must be convinced that the runner intentionally interfered with the throw (raised arms, timed it so ball hits him, etc.)
- A runner contacts or gets in the way of a fielder trying to field a thrown ball. INTENT is required here. If a runner just runs into a fielder while that fielder is waiting for a throw, it's not interference unless the umpire judges the runner intentionally ran into him.
- A runner doesn't contact a fielder fielding a batted ball, but causes him to miss it by some other action. Contact is not needed for interference. So if a runner: yells at a fielder as he runs behind him; waves his arms at the fielder; runs at the fielder and stops at the last second, stops in front of the fielder and jumps over the ball, etc., AND the umpire judges that this act caused the fielder to miss the batted ball, it's interference.
- A base coach or someone from the bench gets in the way or yells "DROP IT." The rule says any member of the team at bat, not just the batter or runner, can cause interference.

Batter's interference (Rule 6.06)

There are things a batter does (or fails to do) that are interference, and other things he does (or fails to do) that do not. Confused? First off, **the batter's box is NOT a safety zone for the batter.** If he's in the box, he's usually OK in these situations:

- The ball gets by the catcher and the catcher knocks over the batter trying to get to the ball (no penalty, live ball)
- The catcher throws the ball back to the pitcher or to a base to retire a base stealer, and the ball hits the batter or his bat (no penalty, live ball UNLESS the batter PURPOSELY moves into the catcher or the path of the ball)
- The batter swings so hard that he hits the catcher's glove on the follow-through, knocking the ball away from the catcher (dead ball, runners return)
- However, if the batter had time to get out of the box but stays in and gets in the way, then he's guilty of interference. This usually happens in lower levels when the ball gets by the catcher, a runner tries to score, and the batter stays in the box and affects the play at the plate. If the batter gets in the way of a play while OUT OF THE BOX, he will almost certainly be guilty of interference, even if it's unintentional.

Obstruction (Rule 2.00 and 7.06)

Obstruction is one of the most common calls in the minor divisions, Pay attention! This will be especially common in Colts games. Coaches and Umpires should try to talk to fielders between plays to ensure they are not obstructing runners.

Like interference, this is a tough call when there is no contact. If a runner has to slow down or stop because of a fielder's action OTHER THAN fielding a batted ball, you have obstruction.

Examples of obstruction that isn't so obvious:

- A fielder boots the initial play, and then gets in the runner's way as he goes after the ball. No interference here on the runner because the fielder booted the ball. The fielder is only "protected" on the initial play, not a subsequent play after his error.
- A batter-runner has to slow down on his way to first because the first baseman is standing on the base. This happens a lot in the lower divisions.
- A fielder stands in the baseline or puts his leg down and blocks the base or plate well before he has the ball. A fielder cannot block the base while he is waiting for the throw to come in.
- Remember that there are two types of obstruction: Type A, where the defense is making a play on the obstructed runner (immediate dead ball), and Type B where the runner is obstructed while play is going on elsewhere (play goes on).

Out of the baseline (Rule 7.08a1)

The confusion with this rule is the definition of "baseline".

The runner establishes the baseline. It is not necessarily the direct line between the two bases.

- For example, if the runner takes a wide turn at first into the grass behind the second baseman's normal position, and the throw comes back to first, the baseline goes from the runner to first base. If the first baseman tries to tag him, he cannot deviate more than three feet to either side of this line. The other source of confusion with this rule is the fact that the runner is not out for being out of the baseline unless he's avoiding a tag. If he's running around a fielder who is trying to field a batted ball, there is no violation.

Leaving the base early (7.13)

This rule is unique to youth baseball and may cause an umpire a lot of headaches. The bottom line: if any base runner leaves a base before the pitch reaches the batter, all runners are guilty, and depending on the subsequent action, runners must return to any unoccupied bases. The Rule Book has a number of examples that are pretty straightforward. Some are less understood:

- If the batter is subsequently thrown out on a play, ALL RUNNERS return. For example, a batter hits a double with the bases loaded, but gets gunned down trying to stretch it into a triple. Since his out left all the bases open, no runs score and all runners must return. If his out was the third out of the inning, no runs score and the inning is over! Expect the offensive manager to be very peeved by this.
- The runners can only advance to the bases they would have achieved based on the umpire's judgment of the base value of the hit, regardless of any subsequent errors. For example, a batter hits a sharp grounder to the center fielder with the bases loaded, and the ball goes under the center fielder's legs all the way to the fence. After the play is over, the umpire may judge the value of the hit was a single. If so, he would put the batter on first, and put the other runners on second and third (only one run scores).
- If with the bases loaded the ball doesn't leave the infield, no runs score. This is explained in Example 15 in the Rule Book. What is not explained is if the ball is hit in the infield and then goes through because of an error on the fielder. Here the umpire should rule that the value of the hit is only one base, so everyone only gets one base and one run scores.
- If a runner leaves early, he cannot correct his mistake by returning to touch the base. For example, a runner on second leaves early then sees the ball is flied to right. He tags up and tries for third, and ends up scoring on a wild throw. He must return to second because he left early, regardless of the fact he subsequently tagged it. There is no "fixing" a 7.13 violation.

VII. HLL Local Operating Rules

A. Umpires and Game Balls

1. Umpire fees and game balls are provided by HLL.
2. It is the home team's responsibility to provide two game balls and pay the umpire the established fee.
3. HLL provides funding for all Umpire fees.
4. In the event of a partial game, the umpire must be paid in full for the resumption of the game. The time resets for the resumption game. The Home team will be charged umpire fees if the Umpire Coordinator is not notified of a rescheduled or canceled game (including obvious rainouts).
5. It is the Home Teams responsibility to contact Umpire(s) regarding change of game schedule or cancellation.

B. Majors and Minors Supplemental Rules

1. No inning shall start after 1hr and 45 minutes. In the event of a suspended game, the time resets to zero. This rule applies for regular season and playoff games. It does **NOT** apply for the Championship game.
2. Regular Season Games can end in a tie if time expires.
3. There are no ties in playoffs. There is no time limit for the Championship game.
4. Prior to the First Sunday in May, or other date as determined and communicated by the Division Commissioner and OPS Committee, runners may steal only one base per pitch.
 - *Example: A runner attempts to steal 2nd base on a pitch. The catcher throws down to second but the ball gets past the infielders and sails deep into center field. The runner must remain at 2nd base. He/she cannot advance to 3rd base until the subsequent pitch.*
5. Prior to the First Sunday in May, or other date as determined and communicated by the Division Commissioner and OPS Committee, runners may not steal home. This includes attempting to score on a passed ball/wild pitch, or executing a double steal on a throw to second or another base. A runner may only score on a ball hit in play or by being forced to advance on a walk, hit batter or catcher's interference.
 - The goal is to help with the development of catchers, giving them the opportunity to make throws to second and less occurrences of having to "eat it" after a passed ball.
6. For regular season Minors games, a 5 run maximum will apply to every inning up to and including the 4th inning. The inning is over as soon as the 5th run is scored. If more runs cross the plate because of a continued play or homerun, the batter will be credited with the appropriate hit, but only the 5 runs will count. After the 4th inning, the 5 run rule no longer applies and is to be considered an open inning.
7. 12/10/8 Run Rule - If after three (3) innings, one team is ahead by twelve (12) runs, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede victory. If after four (4) innings, three and half innings if the home team is ahead, one team is ahead by ten (10) runs, the manager of the team with least runs shall concede victory to the opponent. If after five (5) innings, four and a half innings if the home team is ahead, one team is ahead by eight (8) runs, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede victory to the opponent. See LL Rule 4.10(e)
8. Bunting is permitted in Minors Division and above. Colts players are not permitted to bunt as they should be encouraged to swing the bat and learn to hit live pitching. A Colts player who attempts to bunt shall have a strike called on them, unless the play results in the hitter being retired.
9. In Minors Division, once a player positions themselves to bunt during a pitch, they may not pull the bat back and swing away at that pitch (i.e. no "slash bunts").
10. Any attempt to slash bunt in Minors will result in the batter being called out and all runners returning to their previous base.
11. Slash bunt plays are permitted in Majors and above.

C. Rules for Information – Not Umpires' Responsibility to Monitor

1. A team must bat the whole lineup consecutively. There are no pinch hitters or designated hitters. Once a game begins, a player's position in the batting order may not be altered for any reason except for injury, illness or other inability to complete the game in which case he may be removed. **If a player is removed after a plate appearance, the batting order is to collapse down one spot (i.e., if the 5th hitter has to leave the game, the 6th hitter becomes the 5th;**

- the 7th becomes the 6th and so on).** Under no circumstances shall there be more than two players sharing a batting position.
2. It is required for a team to bat their entire lineup. Once the player leaves the game, he cannot be reinserted into the batting order if the order has already been collapsed.
 3. For Minors, the entire lineup will bat for the entire season, including playoffs.
 4. Playing Time
 - Players shall play at least 9 defensive outs (3 innings) and bat at least once. This rule does not apply if the game ends early.
 - In Minors, players shall not sit more than 1 consecutive inning.
 5. MAJORS - For regular season inter-league games, the house rules of the home team shall prevail in the case of a rules conflict. All Little League and HLL player-oriented rules such as those related to pitch counts, minimum play, batting and conduct apply regardless of the location. Umpire shall confer with coaches and apply HLL home team rules.
 6. SUMMER SLAM – Umpires working Summer Slam games will be briefed on the applicable rules of those tournaments.

D. Colts Supplemental Rules

1. Home team takes the bench on the first base line and warms up first.
2. Games are 6 innings or at the conclusion of any inning which started prior to game time reaching 90 minutes, whichever comes first. No new inning may begin after 90 minutes have elapsed.
3. A half inning ends when there are 3 outs or 4 runs are scored, with exception to the final inning where a maximum of 8 runs/team may be recorded.
4. Field 10 players on defense (with 4 outfielders).
5. A maximum of 2 *defensive* coaches are permitted on the field (one positioned behind home plate to retrieve passed balls and one a minimum of 10 feet into the outfield grass behind 2nd base)
6. Score will be kept but no standings maintained.
7. Sliding
 - Sliding will be permitted with the exception of 1st base. Sliding into 1st base will result in an out. Emphasis should be placed on sliding as a means to reduce injury and the potential for collisions.
8. Pitching:
 - Machine Pitch – The first four innings of the game will consist of pitching from a machine. There will be no walks. Each batter will receive 5 pitches in which to either put the ball in play or strikeout. A hitter shall not strikeout if they foul off the 5th pitch seen. They shall continue to receive pitches until they either put the ball in play or swing and miss. The machine shall be set to 3,3,3 unless a different setting is agreed upon by the Commissioner and Coaches to provide a better pitch.
 - If the 5th pitch is deemed unhittable due to machine error, Umpire may award an extra pitch.
 - The final two innings shall be “kid pitch.” If a player pitcher throw four balls before the batter puts the ball in play or strikes out, then the offensive coach shall take over as pitcher for that batter. One strike shall be removed from the count, and the at-bat shall continue. If the batter has not put the ball in play (or struck out) by the 4th Coach pitch, they shall be called out, even if the Coach does not throw hittable pitches.
 - Pitching distance is 40 ft from the back of the plate and no closer. If a player cannot throw the distance, they may not pitch due to safety reasons. Coaches may pitch closer, but not less than 30 feet. As the season progresses, coaches are encouraged to give players the opportunity to pitch from 46 feet (i.e. from the top of the mound).
 - If a pitcher hits 2 batters, they are done pitching for the day.
 - There are no walks. Exceptions permitted for hit batters that are afraid to continue.
 - The strike zone is from shoulders to the middle of the shins and 3” each side of the plate. Players should be encouraged to swing.
 - Prior to the second Sunday in May, (around the 4th or 5th game) , machine pitch shall occur on a 4/2 ratio to kid pitch. After that time, the ratio should be adjusted to 3/3 or 2/4. Coaches may agree on the split after the middle of the season. At minimum, each team must go at least one time through the lineup with the machine, in order to allow weaker hitters the opportunity to get practice hitting “live” pitches.
 - Umpire should meet with coaches prior to the game to establish how many machine innings will be used and any other rules adjustments.

- In games with Umpires: during machine pitch innings, umpires should position themselves behind first base or second base similar to a “field umpire” in a 2-Umpire setup. During kid pitch innings, the umpire shall be behind the pitcher to call balls and strikes, unless they have equipment to call the game from behind the plate.
9. Base Running
- There is no stealing. There will be no leading, stealing or advancing on balls past the catcher or on overthrows back to the pitcher. Runners are allowed to lead off the base once the ball reaches the batter to begin training the players how play at upper levels.
 - Runners may continue to advance on safe hits to the outfield, until the ball is under control by a player who is on the infield dirt. A hit reaching the outfield may be in the air or on the ground, if it “touches grass” runners may advance at their own risk.
 - It is the umpire’s discretion as to whether the ball reached the outfield and if runners were permitted to advance. When the ball is back in the infield, the Umpire shall designate “dead ball” or “time.” He may then determine that runners should be sent back to a previous base for improperly advancing. Any outs recorded during the sequence shall count, even if other runners are sent back to a prior base.
 - Runners between bases at the time the ball is brought under control in the infield may only attempt to advance to the next base or retreat to the previous base and are at risk of being put out. (It does not matter if are half way or not.)
 - Runners who reach a base safely, may not advance beyond that base regardless of reason EXCEPT if the ball goes out of play. Then runners will be awarded one additional base.
 - If two runners are between the same two bases and entitled to the same base per this rule, the base will be awarded to the lead runner and the trailing runner will be place one base back.
10. On deck batters are not permitted. Most injuries in youth baseball are teammates hit by bats.
11. Accidentally Thrown Bats
- FIRST and SECOND offense in a game – Warning is issued to the hitter.
 - THIRD offense in a game by same player – PENALTY APPLIED
 - The Umpire will immediately call TIME and stop the play.
 - The batter will be declared out.
 - All runners are returned to their base.
 - The offending player shall not be allowed to bat the rest of the game. They may continue to play defense.
 - If their turn comes up again in the batting order, the batter will be skipped without penalty
12. Regulation baseballs shall be used, as provided by HLL



HERSHEY LITTLE LEAGUE – 2025 SUMMER SLAM UMPIRES' SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

Our spring season was a great success thanks to the work of our youth umpires. In order to prepare for Summer Slam, we want to inform you of some different procedures, some rules you will need to enforce, and some other items to be mindful of.

PROCEDURE

Please arrive 15 minutes prior to your assigned game time. Report to the registration tent/concession stand. You will receive 3 baseballs, plus your pay. We will also have water available – please stay hydrated, especially if you are doing multiple games. It is your responsibility to ensure that you return the 3 balls to the tent at the end of your game. Coaches (especially the Hershey ones) will try and throw them in their buckets. We need them back.

When the teams have entered the dugouts, they have been instructed to line up their bats outside of the dugout. Go through and make sure all bats have the USA Baseball sticker on the handle. Once you have confirmed, the teams should take the bats back inside.

Time management for this tournament is HUGE. We need to stay on schedule as much as possible. At the designated game time, call for the coaches' meeting and start the game clock. Teams should not be taking any infield practice, they may warm up in the outfield only if time permits before the scheduled start time for their game. Otherwise, we will get started as soon as the guys finish re-lining the field. **NO NEW INNING MAY START AFTER 1:45.** This must be strictly adhered to in order to keep the tournament on schedule.

RULES – DIFFERENCES FROM REGULAR SEASON PLAY

- We will operate under the LLI run rules of 15 after 3 and 10 after 4. **THERE IS NO 8 RUN RULE IN TOURNAMENT PLAY.** Only the 8U Division has an inning cap of 5 runs in the first 4 innings. All other innings are uncapped.
- Pitchers may have only 8 warmup pitches between innings and 5 if a change is made during an inning. This is important to keep teams from purposely or inadvertently wasting time. A coach may warm up the pitcher, but those pitches count. **Please enforce this.**

- During Sunday elimination games -tie games go to International rules. This means the player in the batting order before the current lead-off batter shall start the inning at 2nd base. Consolation games may end in a tie, unless there is time to play extra innings.
- **Slash bunts** (getting in position to bunt and then pulling the bat back and taking a full swing or **setting up in a regular batting stance prepared to swing**) ARE ONLY PERMITTED IN 11U AND 12U. Please note the difference between a slash bunt attempt and taking a pitch in a bunting position. In 10U and below, a slash bunt attempt that is unsuccessful will be called a strike; if the ball is put in play, the batter will be out and all runners returned to their previous bases, unless the defensive team prefers to accept the result of the play (i.e. a double play, etc.).

12U AND 11U ONLY

- **Uncaught third strike rule** – 6.09(b) – The batter becomes a runner when: the third strike called by the umpire is not caught, providing (1) first base is unoccupied or (2) first base is occupied with two out (NOTE: A batter forfeits his/her opportunity to advance to first base when he/she enters the dugout or other dead ball area);

NOTE: the ball must be “caught” on the fly. Thus if it bounces in front of the plate and the catcher catches it cleanly, it is still a situation where the batter becomes a runner (if first is unoccupied or there are 2 outs) and a play must be made on him or another runner.

NOTE: first base is “occupied” if the runner was there when the pitch began. Thus a runner stealing second base is still occupying 1st base.

- **Infield Fly Rule** - Rule 2.00 defines the Infield Fly as, “a **fair fly ball** (not including a line drive or a bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with **ordinary effort**, when **first and second, or first, second, and third bases** are occupied **before two are out**. The pitcher, catcher, and any outfielder stationed in the infield on the play shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule.” It goes on to state that “[t]he ball is alive and runners may advance at the risk of being caught or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on any fly ball. **If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul ball.**”

NOTE: Remember the purpose of the rule is to protect the runners from being easily forced into a double play, NOT to give the defense a free out. If the dropped ball is to an unguarded area, then the rule should not be applied. If it is a gray area, apply the rule.

NOTE: This is NOT a dead-ball situation. The batter is out, but runners may advance. However, it is now a TAG situation. If the ball is caught, they must tag up.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS FOR ALL DIVISIONS

- Please review Sections II – VI in our Umpire Handbook (a copy of which is attached)
- Don't rush to make a call. Take a second, make sure that the catch is made, foot is on the bag or tag is made and then make your call. Let the play breath.
- Strike Zones – 12U and 11U should catch part of the plate. 9U and 10U can be a ball off the plate. 8U should be a little wider (about 3 inches on either side of the plate). For all divisions, the zone goes from armpits to top of the knee when the batter is in a natural stance.
- I know that we have been inconsistent in where we have the field umpire positioned when a runner is on base ("B" and "C" positions). Due to the smaller field size, we will go back to the Little League positioning as shown in our handbook – B and C positions should be behind the middle infielder.
- REMINDER – Fair balls are signaled ONLY; Foul balls are called loudly.
- BE LOUD. BE CONFIDENT. STICK WITH YOUR CALL. CONFER WITH YOUR PARTNER, ONLY IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT.
- Reminder – there is no "must slide" rule. They must make an ATTEMPT to avoid contact. If the defensive player forces contact, the runner is not automatically out. THIS IS A JUDGMENT CALL FOR THE UMPIRE.
- Please review the interference calls (especially batter's interference) in our handbook.
- If you have any problems, report them to the Tournament Director.