

Umpire Clinic

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A. Umpire responsibilities

- (1) Wear shirt provided by CTAA. Jeans or Black/Gray long pants are preferred. Shorts are permitted but only “conservative.”
- (2) Remember to bring a watch to the games (UIC). Check the time frequently to see how the game is moving. If the game is sluggish, make an effort the speed things up. (See “Top ten ways to speed up a game”)
- (3) Show up for games. Arrive at the field at least 15 minutes before game time.
- (4) For UIC make certain you have the game ball and two back-up balls (Anyone doing the plate should have a ball bag).
- (5) Meet the managers at home plate 5 minutes before game time. Introduce yourself and partner and cover ground rules.
- (6) Cooperate with your partner. Help each other. Don’t hesitate to ask for help if you are blocked from a play. The main goal is to have all decisions ultimately correct.
- (7) Avoid sarcastic comments.
- (8) Have small ears!
- (9) If a manager has a legitimate point to argue under the rules, it is your duty to listen.
- (10) Be courteous, impartial and firm and so compel respect from all.
- (11) Remember that you are a representative of CTAA and a member of our umpire group. What you do or say reflects on us all!
- (12) Be familiar with the rules (read, read, read)

B. Baseball Rules (This does not cover all rules – read OBR)

1) Infield Fly:

An INFIELD FLY is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive nor an attempted 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. When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare “INFIELD FLY.” for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near the baseline, the umpire shall declare “INFIELD FLY, IF FAIR.” The ball is alive and the runners can advance at the risk of the ball being caught or retouch and advance after the ball is touched the same as on any fly ball. If the hit ball becomes a foul ball it is treated the same as any foul.

If a declared Infield Fly is allowed to fall untouched to the ground and bounces foul before passing first or third base it is a foul ball. If a declared Infield Fly falls untouched to the ground outside the baseline and bounces fair before passing first or third base it is an Infield Fly.

On the Infield Fly rule the umpire is to rule whether the ball could be handled by an infielder with ordinary effort – not by some arbitrary limitation such as the grass or the baseline. The umpire must rule also that a ball is an Infield Fly even if handled by an outfielder, if in the umpire’s judgment the ball could have been as easily handled by an infielder.

When an infield fly rule is called runners may advance at their own risk. If on an infield fly rule the infielder intentionally drops a fair ball the ball remains in play despite the provisions of rule 6.05(L). The Infield Fly rule takes precedence.

2) Balk:

The purpose of the balk rule is to limit what the pitcher is allowed to do in an attempt to pick off a runner. A pitcher cannot fake a pitch and then throw to a base, or fake a throw to a base and then pitch. If he starts either action, he must finish that action without hesitation or alteration. The rule specifies many specific actions, but it is a judgment of the umpire as to whether an action is started and not completed.

Point to remember:

- A pitcher on the rubber may do one of three things:
 1. Throw to a base
 2. Deliver a pitch
 3. Disengage the rubber (pivot foot first)

In (1) and (2) above, the move must be completed without interruption or alteration, except for a fake to 2nd or 3rd.

- The pitcher does not have to step off the rubber to throw to a base.
- The pitcher may throw from the rubber to a base from the windup position. It must be done before any movement that is part of the normal motion that is part of his windup.
- The pitcher may fake a throw to second or third base from the rubber, but not to first base. This may be done from the windup or the set position. You do not have to step off the rubber to fake to 2nd or 3rd (remember the base must be occupied – you cannot fake to an empty base). The only way to fake to 1st is to legally step off the rubber first.
- A jump turn is legal and considered being in contact with the rubber.
- The pitcher may place his hands in a different set location before each pitch.
- A pitcher must come to a set before pitching to the batter, but not before throwing to a base. A stretch move prior to the set is optional.
- He may not set twice before the pitch.

- He must disengage the rubber with his pivot foot first.
- He must step in the direction of the throw and prior to the release of the throw (direction and distance).
- The ball is not immediately dead if a pitch or throw is completed after the umpire indicates - "THAT'S A BALK."

Rule 8.05 - PENALTY: The ball is dead, and each runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out, unless the batter reaches first on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batter, or otherwise, and all other runners advance at least one base, in which case the play proceeds without reference to the balk.

APPROVED RULING: In cases where a pitcher balks and throws wild, either to a base or to home plate, a runner or runners may advance beyond the base to which he is entitled at his own risk. **Note: If a runner is put out after all runners have advanced one base, the out stands and the balk is ignored.**

Example 1:

A runner is on second, 2-2 count. The pitcher stretches, but doesn't come to a set before delivering the pitch. The umpire calls " THAT'S A BALK ", but the pitch is thrown and the batter hits a grounder to shortstop. F5 looks the runner back and throws to first too late to get BR. What's the call? Where do you place the runners?

Answer: R2 is awarded third and the batter returns to the plate with the count 2-2.

The ball is not immediately dead when a balk is called. If the pitch is thrown or a pick-off attempt is made the ball is still live. (Sometimes called delayed dead ball.) The ball becomes dead when all play has ended after the balk call or when the pitch or pick-off throw is caught.

Example 2:

Runner is on first base. The pitcher balks during his throw to first and the ball gets away from the first baseman. The runner attempts to get to third and is out on the tag.

Answer: The out stands. He made the one base he would have been awarded for the balk. When he went beyond 2nd base he went at his own risk. If he had been out at 2nd the out would not count and he would be awarded second because of the balk.

3) Drop 3rd Strike:

The batter becomes a runner when the third strike is not caught, providing (1) first base is unoccupied, or (2) first base is occupied with two out. When a batter becomes a base runner on a third strike not caught by the catcher and starts for the dugout, or his position, and then realizes his situation and attempts to reach first base, he is not out unless he or first base is tagged before he reaches first base. If, however, he actually reaches the dugout or dugout steps, he may not attempt to go to first base and shall be out.

If there are two outs and there are runners on first, first and second, or bases loaded, the batter creates a force by becoming a runner. These runners are all forced to advance and an out may be obtained by making a play on any one of them. If the bases are loaded, the catcher may step on home or throw to third, second or first.

4) Fair/Foul:

A FAIR BALL is a batted ball that settles on fair ground between home and first base or home and third base. A ball is fair if it is on or over fair territory when bounding to the outfield past

first or third base, or that touches first, second, or third base. A ball is fair if it first falls on fair territory on or beyond first base or third base, or that, while on or over fair territory touches the person of an umpire or player, or that, while over fair territory, passes out of the playing field in flight.

A fair fly shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time the fielder touches the ball.

FAIR TERRITORY is that part of the playing field within, and including the first base and third base lines, from home base to the bottom of the playing field fence and perpendicularly upwards. Home plate, first base and third base and all foul lines are in fair territory.

A FOUL BALL is a batted ball that settles on foul territory between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that bounds past first or third on or over foul territory, or that first falls on foul territory beyond first or third base, or that while on or over foul territory, touches the person of an umpire or player, or any object foreign to the natural ground.

FOUL TERRITORY is a part of the playing field outside the first and third base lines extended to the fence and perpendicular upwards.

5) Interference/ Obstruction Calls:

There are three types of interference - (1) offensive, (2) defensive and (3) obstruction.

OFFENSIVE INTERFERENCE is an act by the team at bat, which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play. If the umpire declares the batter, batter-runner, or a runner out for interference, all other runners shall return to the last base that was in the judgment of the umpire, legally touched at the time of the interference, unless otherwise provided by these rules. In the event the batter-runner has not reached first base, all runners shall return to the base last occupied at the time of the pitch.

The umpire, after witnessing an act by the offense must ask himself the following question; "Did the offense interfere with, obstruct, impede, hinder or confuse the fielder attempting to make the play?" If yes, interference should be called. The call must be made as soon as possible. The ball is immediately dead and no runners may advance beyond the base they held at the time of the offensive interference. The umpire must be aware of where all runners are at the time of the call. When the offensive interference occurs the umpire immediately calls it (An exception: If the a batter (or an umpire) interferes with the catcher attempting to make a throw to retire a runner, the ball is delayed dead. If the runner is put out, the interference is ignored. The ball becomes dead when the catcher's throw is caught or goes through the intended destination.).

DEFENSIVE INTERFERENCE is an act by a fielder, which hinders or prevents a batter from hitting a pitch. It should be noted that this is the only defensive interference. Hindering the runner by the defense is obstruction (see below).

Examples:

- If a runner is hit by a batted ball, he is out. No judgment of intent is required unless he is hit by a deflected ball, or the ball that has passed an infielder, in which case the umpire must decide if he intended to be hit to interfere, obstruct, impede, hinder or confuse the defense or if another fielder had a play on the ball.
- A runner must avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball. If he does not he is guilty of offensive interference. The fielder's protection begins the moment the ball is hit. That protection continues as he completes his initial play. His protection ends if he

misplays the batted ball and has to move to recover it. Contact with the fielder is not necessary for interference to be called. When a ball is hit, you have to judge which fielder has the best chance to field the ball. That fielder is then "protected" meaning; must not be interfered with, from the time the ball leaves the bat, up through the gloving of the ball and the act of throwing. The fielder is protected even if he started to field the ball from outside the base path and then moves into the base path to field the ball. The runner must avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.

- Interference with a thrown ball must be judged as an intentional act. If a runner is hit by a thrown ball while running the bases, he is not out unless the umpire judges that the runner intentionally interfered, obstructed, hindered or confused the defense attempting to make a play.

Some other examples of interference are:

- Yelling at a fielder as he attempts a catch or play (Note that the rule states "the team at bat." This includes coaches/ and the manager and players on the bench).
- Waving arms to distract the fielder.
- Stopping directly in front of a fielder attempting to field a ground ball

Points to keep in mind:

1. You cannot have interference unless somebody is making a play. A play is a throw, attempted throw, or attempted tag of a runner or of a base for a force out.
2. There are no "safety zones" on the field. Rule 7.11 states that the offense must vacate all space necessary for a fielder to make a play. The batter's box, the coach's box, the running lane, the dugout and the base path are not automatic safety zones. An offensive team member may be called out for interference in some situations while occupying any of these spaces.

BATTER'S BOX - The batter may be charged with interference even though he is within the batter's box. The umpire must use very judgment and, in most cases, the batter is given the benefit of doubt. The batter cannot be expected to disappear. He is protected from an interference call for a short period as he is reacting to the results of pitch. . If he just swung at a pitch, or had to duck a pitch and is off-balance, he can't reasonably be expected to then immediately avoid a play at the plate. However, after some time passes, if a play develops at the plate, the batter must get out of the box and avoid interference. However, if the umpire judges that he intentionally interfered with a play or did not try to avoid interfering when he could have, he can be called out even though he is in the box. The batter should always be called out when he makes contact and is outside the box. Rule 6.06(c).

COACH'S BOX - The coach's box must be vacated if a player needs that space to make a play. If the coach interferes with a player attempting to catch a foul fly ball in the coach's box, the batter is out and the ball is dead. No runners may advance or score.

RUNNING LANE - A runner is not free from interference while in the lane, nor automatically guilty when out of the lane. If he is out of the lane he is in serious jeopardy of being called for interference, but it is not automatic. The rule states that he is out when out of the lane and causes interference. If in the lane he could still cause interference, but he must be doing something obviously intentional like grabbing the fielder's arm or glove, or deliberately touching a thrown ball. If the catcher does not make a throw because the runner is outside the lane, this is not interference [no play is being made]. If the runner is hit by a thrown ball while outside the lane, it is interference. The runner is protected at the last step when he must move out of the lane to touch the base, if he was in the lane to begin with. If he is out of the lane the entire

distance and is hit in the last step, interference probably should be called. This is a judgment call. Rule 6.05(k)

BASE PATH - 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. After a runner has been put out, (typically on a force play at second) he has no rights to the base path. If a runner is put out at second by a long distance, he must duck or get out of the path. If he is hit with the throw while in the path or makes contact with the fielder who is in the act of throwing, while on his feet, he is guilty. Since he is already out, the runner being played upon is called out. Rule 7.08(b), 7.09(1)

Collisions vs Interference:

The runner has a right to an unobstructed path while running the bases. The fielder has a right to make a play without interference. The runner has the right to the base path except when a fielder is attempting to field a batted ball or has possession of the ball.

Sometimes when the runner and fielder collide, no penalty should be applied. This applies mainly to plays where the throw and the runner arrive at the same time. When a runner collides with a fielder attempting to catch a throw, the umpire must first decide if the collision was intentional, and then decide if the act interfered with, impeded, hindered or confused the fielder. If the runner is legally in the base path and simply running the bases when a collision occurs, he is not out. If he deviates from his path and/or intentionally interferes, or makes malicious contact, he is out. In sliding to a base, he must be able to reach out and touch the base with his hand.

If a runner slides into a fielder while more than an arms length from the base it's interference if the fielder is attempting make a play. If a runner goes into a base standing up and with this act hinders the fielder's attempt to make a play, it is interference. This hindrance would have to be by contacting the fielder while in the act of throwing or attempting to throw. If the fielder does not attempt to throw simply because the runner is in the base line standing up there is no interference. If runner does not slide, he must not touch the fielder while the fielder is attempting a play. If the runner has already been put out before he interferes, then the ball is dead and the runner being played upon is also out.

6) Awarding Bases for Thrown Ball Going Out of Play:

Much confusion exists regarding the proper award of bases after a ball enters dead ball territory. The most common myth is the statement "he gets 1 plus 1." This is not correct. Rule 7.05 covers award of bases and an umpire must know all the details of this rule. Rule 7.05(g) is the focus here. The basic thing to remember is: When a fielder throws the ball into dead ball territory, the runners are awarded two bases. One exception is for a throw going into dead ball territory from the pitcher in contact with the rubber, the runners are awarded one base. If he is not in contact with the rubber, he is a fielder.

The complicated part of this rule is deciding from what position the two bases are awarded. Several situations can affect the award.

If the throw was the first play by an infielder, two bases are awarded from where the runners were at the time of the pitch. This is the case in 99% of the plays. An exception will be described later. Time of pitch is when the pitcher began his motion to the plate. "Where the runners were," means from the last legally held base. The direction they were running or how far between bases they were has nothing to do with the award. They get two bases closer to home plate from wherever they were positioned.

If the throw was the second play by an infielder or any play by an outfielder, two bases are awarded from the last legally touched base at the time the throw left the fielder's hand.

Things to remember:

- The moment when the ball enters dead ball territory has no effect on the determination of the placement of the runners. The placement is from where the runners were at the time of the pitch or the time the throw left the thrower's hand depending on whether the play was the first play by an infielder or some other play.
- Two bases are always awarded. The decision that must be made - is from where?
- A play for purposes of this rule is a legitimate attempt to retire a runner. A throw to a base, an attempted tag or attempting to touch a base for a force out are plays. A fake throw or fielding a batted ball is not.
- An infielder is always an infielder for purposes of this rule even if he has gone into the outfield. Anytime the infielder's throw is the second throw after the batted ball has been fielded, the time of throw will apply in determining the award.
- The catcher is an infielder for purposes of this rule. If he throws a batted ball out of play as the first play, the award is from time of pitch. If he throws away a ball on a second play or one in which the batter has not become a runner, the award is from time of throw.

EXCEPTION:

If ALL runners including the batter runner have advanced one base before the first play by an infielder, the award is from time of release. The key word is ALL.

Example 1:

A runner is on second. A high pop-up is hit to the shortstop. The runner holds. The shortstop drops the ball, then throws to first attempting to get the batter who has already rounded the base before the release of the throw, and the ball enters dead ball territory. This was the first play by an infielder. The award is from time of pitch. The exception states that ALL runners must advance a base before the time of release award is used. Because the runner at second held his base, the award is from time of pitch.

Example 2:

A runner (R1) is on first base. Batter hits a ground ball to SS. The throw to second is too late and R1 is safe. The second baseman throws to first and the ball goes into dead ball area. R1 is awarded home and the batter is awarded second. This was the second play so time of release applies. R1 was at second when the throw was made. The batter was not at first at the time of the release.

7) The Appeal:

An APPEAL is an act of a fielder in claiming a violation of the rules by the offensive team. Appeals must be made while the ball is in play (alive). When the ball is dead, it becomes in play when the pitcher has the ball and is on the rubber and the umpire says, "play."

When the ball is alive, an appeal may be made by the defense in any of the following ways;

1. By touching the runner whom they believe committed a base running infraction;
2. By touching the base they believe was missed while the runner was advancing;
3. By touching the original base that a runner left before a fly ball was caught.

In all cases, the defense must make a verbal appeal to the umpire or complete an act that is unmistakably an appeal. Accidentally touching a base that was missed is not an appeal. A throw to a base to catch a runner who had not retouched is unmistakably an appeal.

Appeals must be made before the next pitch or play. If the defense makes an appeal after "time" has been called, the umpire should say "put the ball in play and appeal again." Since no runner may advance or be put out while the ball is dead, this is not a play and the defense has not lost their right to appeal after the ball is put in play.

The appeal itself is not a play. A fake throw to hold a runner is not a play. It is a play when a balk is committed during an appeal. Plays that occur during "continuous action" after an infraction do not cancel the defense's right to appeal.

The defense loses their right to appeal when any of the following actions occur:

1. When the throw made in an appeal attempt goes into dead ball territory. When this occurs no more appeals may be made at any base. This is an "err" on an appeal and is interpreted to be the same as a play.
2. A balk is committed before or as part of an appeal attempt.
3. A pitch is made to the batter.
4. A play is made that is not part of continuous action.

Continuous action example:

Runner on first misses second as he advances to third on a hit. The defense makes a play on him at third and he is safe. The play was part of continuous action after the hit. The defense may appeal the infraction at second.

C. Top eleven ways to speed up a game

- 1) Start the game on time. The goal is to have the first pitch take place at the scheduled game time.
- 2) The maximum time for warm up pitches between innings is one minute. This is a maximum! Most pitchers don't need or want all eight warm up throws.
- 3) Pick up the bats and toss them towards the dugout. Don't wait for the batter or the on deck hitter to retrieve the bat.
- 4) Pick up the bat for a batter who hits a foul ball. If you pick it up and hold it out, most batters will run back to the plate.
- 5) Pick up the mask and helmet for the catcher. They will move quicker if you help.
- 6) If the catcher is not ready between innings, make sure the manager has someone to warm up the pitcher and help the catcher put on his equipment.
- 7) Keep track of the game time. At the end of the inning check to see how the game is moving. If the game is running long, eliminate infield/outfield balls and throws to second base.
- 8) Make sure you always have a second ball in case one is hit out of play.
- 9) Make sure the batter always keeps one foot in the batters box unless he hits a foul ball. This is a Pony Baseball rule.
- 10) Do not be afraid to help prepare the field for play.
- 11) When conditions are such that the ball is wet, have the pitcher warm up with a non-game ball and have the home team supply dry balls during the game.

D. Signals and Communication

1. Preliminaries:

READ - PAUSE – REACT: Remember when you make a call, 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 a personal sense of rhythm and timing, style and flair.

Method: Come set, pause, read the play, stand upright, make the call. On the safe call, extend both arms straight out in front of your body, parallel to the ground, spread them fully open, return them to the front position and then reassume your set position. On the out call, place the left hand on your belt buckle and raise your right hand to “pound out” the call.

Finally, a reminder: as the field umpire all calls start from a "set" position, usually hands-on-knees or standing with hands at your side. Most important: Never be caught moving on a call. For the field umpire all calls should return to a set position, either standing or hands-on-knees. This brings the body into balance, allowing you to pivot smoothly to follow the developing play or to stand and move smartly to your proper field position.

2. Essential Signs for the Players and Fans:

The plate umpire's right hand signals play, strike, out, fair ball - "the ball's alive", and on the rarest of occasions "infield fly" and hopefully even rarer, an ejection. The left hand does everything else including awarding bases, controlling the pitcher and holding the indicator and the mask. Remember that simple instruction and almost everyone, coach, player and fan, will be clear about your intentions.

a) 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"."

b) 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.

c) Strike:

A strike is always signaled with the right hand and verbalized. Each umpire develops a personalized system for signaling the strike. Some do the traditional clenched fist while some indicate the strike out to the side with an open hand. Some umpires face forward, some turn. Some will call strike then signal. Others do both simultaneously. One essential element is not to turn away from the action particularly in a two-man system. In a two or three man system, by not facing forward, an umpire might even miss a play at the plate while going through their actions.

Some umpires will verbalize “strike one,” “strike two,” and “strike three.” Some umpires prefer to say only “strike” for one and two. Always say, "strike three." Do this firmly but

don't "sell the call." If the catcher has dropped or trapped the pitch, you still go through with a firm "strike three" keeping eye contact with the batter/catcher.

d) Ball:

There is no signal for a ball. It can be verbalized. Say "ball" loud enough that both dugouts can hear it. Calling "ball" can help you maintain the rhythm of your calls. If you choose not to call "ball" make certain that you signal the count often. Never indicate why a pitch was a ball. You just invite controversy.

e) Ball Four:

Ball four is the one ball count that an umpire should announce aloud. You should NEVER point to first base even with the left hand. Just say "BALL FOUR". If the batter looks like a deer in the headlights, just say, "take your base." If the umpire points to first after the pitch the defense might think it's strike three. Even if you use the left hand, the players may not take note of which hand it was and be confused. Professional umpires never point to first!

f) Dropped Third Strike:

Never say "Strike Three - You're Out!" CTAA umpires are encouraged not to make this call. In some leagues, the third strike does not have to be caught while in others it must be caught. This is the case in Cranberry for Minor and Bronco 11. Often the plate umpire is in the worst situation to call the trapped ball, for example a breaking ball in the dirt for the swinging third strike. The UIC should call "Strike Three." Then look to his partner to get a ruling on the drop or trap. The base umpire should signal, not call, with a small discreet "out" means the ball was caught. If the ball was trapped or dropped point to the ground with your right hand. The UIC then can call "Batter's Out." This procedure relies on an experienced base umpire. In our leagues I suggest the UIC let the original strike three call stand and if you have a situation where you know the batter now erroneously becomes a runner, you can follow this by the call "The Batter Is Out!"

g) The Count:

Balls are signaled using the left hand. Strikes are signaled with the right. A full count should be signaled as "three balls, two strikes." However, some umpires signal with a clenched fist. The count is signaled each pitch. This is mainly for the pitcher. A verbal report is made usually after the second or third pitch and from that point on. The count should always read aloud as "two balls, two strikes" and not "two and two" or "twenty-two" or other similar variation.

h) 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 may elect to 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.

i) 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. It is advisable to wait a second or two before making this call. Watch that the ball does not come loose and check that the fielder is really in possession of the ball. The call can be made with only a gesture or can be sold with a loud call of "Out!" Signal every out.

Sometimes a little added information will go a long way in preventing controversy:

“Out on the tag!” or point at the runner with the left hand; signal the out with the right hand. Complete the sign by saying "out" plus "on the tag" if you want to sell it a touch.

Safe, he missed the tag!

A "selling it" call that occurs when a runner slides under or around the tag or the tag is high. You can save some grief by indicating a loud "safe" 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.

j) Fair Ball:

The right hand points into the field in fair territory. There is no call "Fair" anything ever called.

k) 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.

l) Dead Ball:

The same signal as "Time" but the call becomes "Dead Ball" or is simply left at "Time." The base umpire needs to pay specific attention to a ball hitting the batter in the batter's box. The base umpire will immediately call "Time" or "Dead Ball" if the plate umpire did not see the infraction. Never say, "foul" in this situation.

m) The Run Counts/Run Does Not Count:

An umpire can point at the plate each time a run crosses the plate legally. Scorers often key on this gesture (as well as catchers!). This is most important on the "time-play" or a "third-out" situation.

Signal and announce when the runner does not score so that the scorer and coaches maintain accurate records. The signal, done by the plate umpire, begins by forming an 'X' with the arms in front of the body then sweeping the arms out to the "time" position. The gesture is repeated and the call "The runner does not score!" is made.

3. Advanced Signs for the Players and Fans

a) Swinging Strike:

First point at the batter with your left hand then signal the strike with your right. It is good practice to verbalize something like "He went - strike."

b) "Check-Swing" or Appealed Strike

The plate umpire does not have to be asked to get help. He can simply request it. Experienced catchers will immediately ask you to get help from the base umpire after a check swing which you called a ball. A request should never be refused. With your left arm gesture clearly to the base umpire and ask "Did he swing?" or "Did he go?" If the answer is yes the base umpire signals - "Strike." If the answer is no the base umpire will signal a safe sign.

c) The Foul Tip:

This is a two-part signal. Extend your left arm up, in front of your body, palm down, to at least shoulder level. Brush the fingers of the right hand over the back of the left hand two or three times. The signal is completed by signaling the strike with the right hand. Remember the ball is

alive and runners can advance. Never say "Foul Tip." This could be confused with "foul ball" and could stop the action.

d) Infield Fly Call:

The umpire points into the air with their right hand and call "infield fly" or if close either first or third foul line "infield fly if fair."

e) Home Run or Ground Rule Double:

First, the ball is dead. Make sure any unnecessary action is killed, particularly if the ball has rebounded back into the field. The signal for a home run is circling the right arm and index finger overhead. The ground rule double is awarded by signaling "two bases" with two fingers held up usually on the left hand.

f) Awarding Bases:

Using the left hand point clearly at the runner and state "You second base" or "You third base", "You home" whatever the case may be. The runner is protected all the way to the base but not one inch beyond it.

g) The Balk Call:

Balks must be called with reference to the action. Remember, if the pitcher completes the delivery of the ball, or throws to a base, you are in a delayed balk situation. The sequence of arriving at that signal is: point at the pitcher, arm at shoulder height, and say "That's a balk" now if the pitcher hesitates in his delivery call "Time".... and award the bases "Runner, second base." etc. Pointing at the pitcher will allow sufficient time to determine a delayed balk call situation.

h) The Interference Call:

Point at the offensive player and make the call "That's Interference" followed by a loud gestured "Time" then shut down any remaining play on the field.

i) The Obstruction Call:

This call is like interference except the ball may remain alive. In all cases the call "That's Obstruction" is made while pointing at the defensive player making the obstruction. If a play is being made on the obstructed runner, the ball is dead so immediately signal "Time." This is followed by an awarding of a base or bases either after play has stopped or even while play remains ongoing. Unless a play was being made on the obstructed runner, the ball remains alive.

j) Catch or No Catch:

The "catch" signal resembles the "out" signal. No verbal indication needs to be given. The "no-catch" signal resembles the "safe" signal except the call of "No Catch" is clearly given. Sometimes it will be necessary to repeat this sign several times. An addition to the "No Catch" is the juggling routine, which indicates the fielder did not have possession. Juggle when the fielder is on the base for the force out but not in full possession of the ball.

Some crews give the safe signal and then point to the ground several times saying "on the ground, on the ground" when the ball is dropped. The terms "Catch" and "No Catch" could be mixed up over the crowd noise.

The verbal call needs only to be given on a trouble ball, for example: a ball caught diving or below the fielder's knees. Routine fly's can be signaled or not signaled, depending on crew and

local practice. If a ball is on the foul lines first signal whether the ball is fair or foul, then the catch or no-catch status if desired.

4. Signs for the Umpire Crew:

The last thing a crew needs is a whole collection of "secret" or "private" signs. Keep any signs simple. Much beyond these few universal signs and the umpire's sign list is growing too long.

a) How Many Outs & What's the Count:

To request the count point with the index finger of each hand and rotate them about each other.

Response: Give the ball and strike count with the left and right hand, and then signal the out hands extended out to the side. One can verbalize the count and outs along with the signals.

b) Possible Infield Fly Situation:

Infield fly signal is done simply with the thumb pointing and moving upwards. What is important is that play does not resume until all umpires are aware of the pending situation.

E. Helpful Hints

1. **Arrive on time and be prepared.** In general, one should arrive a minimum of 15 minutes before game time. You should be on the field for ground rules and ready to go 5 minutes before the scheduled start.
2. **Always have a pre-game with your partner.** This is a good routine to establish. It is an absolute must when you are working with an unfamiliar partner, which we do often. If one partner arrived late, have a brief conference between innings.
3. **Always put the ball back into play.** With runners on base, each occasion that time is given or a ball is fouled, the ball must be pointed back into play. This may or may not be accompanied by the verbal "PLAY" mechanic. The batter must be in the box and the pitcher on the rubber with the ball. This is very important especially relating to pick-off attempts where the base umpire needs to know if the ball was live or not. A sharp pitcher will see you point the ball into play and immediately throw to first hoping to catch the runner napping. If you've made the ball live, there is no question that you have a valid play.
4. **If you are the home plate umpire, get your butt out from behind the plate.** Unless a play at the plate is imminent or a time play is possible, there is nothing for you to do staying behind home plate. Get down the first base line on a grounder, down towards third on a 1st to 3rd situation or follow the ball if hit into the outfield. If you think the fans, players and coaches don't notice, you are wrong! Nothing makes you look worse than trying to make a call at third from 5 feet in front of the plate because you didn't think the situation would allow the runner from first to advance. If the circumstances allow, get down the base line and help your partner out with half of a run-down in progress.
5. **Always hustle.** It distinguishes you from the poor or average umpire. This is probably the only thing that might get you off the hook for that "bad call" that inevitably happens to us all.
6. **Always stay focused on the game.** If you want to count the spectators or admire the scenery, do so between innings. Your lack of focus is noticed, and eventually you will get a late start or miss a play.

7. **Never leave the infield with runners on base while the ball is live.** Your primary responsibility is the base runners. Never go out any farther than the edge of the infield grass.
8. **Be aware that the strict and literal interpretation of the rulebook is not always the way it is done.** This comes through experience. Remember the level of the game you are working.
9. **Use, give and respond to signals with your partner.** Not just in an infield fly situation. It is very important that you and your partner are on the same page. No one is above this. The signals should be repeated each time the situation changes, even if just one runner replaces another on a base. They are not required when there are no runners on base.
10. **Never turn your head away from the field when calling balls and strikes.** This may be difficult to overcome, but you could miss something especially with a two-man crew. Slick strike-three mechanics may look brilliant, but there is no reason to turn your head or turn your back toward the field.
11. **Watch every touch of the bases by the runners.** This means every touch of 1st and 2nd as the base umpire and every touch of 3rd and home as the plate umpire. Missed bases and runners leaving early do happen and you must see it. Never call a runner out unless you are sure a base was missed or he left early.
12. **Appeal to the base umpire on a check swing by pointing with your left hand.** Ask him "Did he go?"
13. **Don't indicate pitch location on called balls.** It's not needed, unprofessional and you're asking for trouble.
14. **Don't call "time" until the base runners touch up.** The play is not over until the runners touch their respective bases on an award. Anything could happen.
15. **Don't call "time" every time a defensive player asks for it.** It's not needed, makes a long game longer and you are taking a potential advantage away from the offense. A shortstop should be able to throw the ball back to the pitcher from the infield dirt area.
16. **Slow down your timing!** Nothing is more embarrassing than to make an out call just as the ball squirts loose, or your right arm come up just before calling a runner safe. This virtually guarantees an argument. Behind the plate, the ball should hit the catcher's glove, a second or so should elapse and then you should make your call. This gives you the opportunity to really see the pitch.
17. **Work in the slot and keep your chin level with the top of the catcher's head.** The plate umpire should see the ball all the way into the catcher's glove. If you are directly behind the catcher or your head is at his head level, there is no way you can see the ball into the glove.
18. **Keep your head motionless.** You must "lock in" your head position. Attempting to accurately call balls and strikes while your head, and hence the strike zone, is moving is virtually impossible.
19. **Never make a call on the run.** Always stop moving before making a call. You must have a fixed reference point in order to properly call a play. Remember, angle is more important than distance. Get the proper angle, get as close as you reasonably can and stop! Get set and make the right call.

20. **Don't get talked into asking for help on your call after it has been made.** There are times when you may want to ask your partners' take on a call after the fact, but only on rare occasions. Never let it appear that one side talked you into it. You are asking for WW III from the perspective of one side or the other. If you are unsure of a tag or touch due to the limitations of the two-man system, ask before you make the call. If there is a need to confer with your partner, do so in private.
21. **Never put your hands in your pockets.** Also, don't stand there with your arms crossed. Both are examples of bad body language. Get a pair of gloves if your hands are cold and get into a set position.
22. **Always be careful what you say.** You never know who is listening, simply a word to the wise.
23. **Read the appropriate umpire manual and rulebook regularly.** Read more, learn more.

F. Umpire Quiz.

1. Batter is in the front of the batter's box. As he swings, his front foot is in mid-air outside the box. He contacts the ball and hits a single just before his foot lands on the ground completely outside the batter's box.
 - a. Legal play and batter-runner is on first.
 - b. Batter is out. Play is dead. No runners can advance.
 - c. No pitch. Play is dead. No runners can advance.
2. The batter squares to bunt, but the pitch is outside. He steps on home plate with his foot partially in the batters box and hits a fair ball.
 - a. Legal Play.
 - b. The batter is out.
 - c. Foul Ball.
3. With two outs, the batter takes the pitch as the runner attempts to steal home. The batter bumps the catcher while moving out of the box preventing the catcher from tagging the runner sliding into home.
 - a. Legal play the batter was in the batter's box.
 - b. The batter is out. Ball is dead. No run scores.
 - c. The batter is out. The run scores.
 - d. No play the runner returns to third.
4. With a 2-2 count, the batter hits a line drive toward the second baseman. The ball deflects off the fielder's glove, hits the base umpire and is caught by the shortstop on the rebound.
 - a. The batter-runner is out.
 - b. The batter-runner can be put out if the shortstop throws to the first baseman before the batter-runner reaches the base.
 - c. The ball is dead and batter returns to the plate with a 2-2 count.
 - d. The ball is dead and the batter is awarded first base.

5. A runner on first base. The pitcher from the set position attempts to pick off the runner on first. The ball goes wildly over the fence out of play. The ball is dead and
 - a. the runner remains on first.
 - b. the runner is awarded second base.
 - c. the runner is awarded third base.

6. The batter hits a high fly ball to right field that curves toward the foul line. The right fielder gets under the ball while straddling the line. The ball deflects off the right fielder's glove while the ball is over fair territory and lands in foul territory. What's the call?
 - a. Fair ball.
 - b. Foul ball.

7. In a squeeze play situation with one out, the runner on third breaks for the plate. The pitcher pitches and charges the plate. The batter attempts to bunt and nicks the pitch, which deflects off the catcher's mitt high into the air and is caught by the pitcher. The runner from third crosses the plate on the play.
 - a. Foul tip out for the second out, run scores.
 - b. Caught foul ball for the second out, run scores.
 - c. Foul ball, runner returns to third.

8. There is one out and a runner in third. A suicide squeeze play is called. The runner on third breaks for the plate. The pitcher recognizes the steal attempt and legally steps off the rubber and throws home. The batter squares and bunts the ball, making it safely to first and the runner scores.
 - a. Interference by the batter, dead ball and the batter is out, runner returns to third.
 - b. Interference by the batter, dead ball and the runner is out.
 - c. The play stands.
 - d. Balk on the pitcher but since the runner advance one base ignore the balk and the play stands.

9. In which of the following situation does a team have the option of taking the results of the play or enforcing the penalty (2 answers).
 - a. The pitcher balks, continues to pitch and the batter and all runners do not advance one base.
 - b. A batter hits with an illegal bat.
 - c. A pitcher throws a defaced ball and the ball is put into play.
 - d. A fielder throws his glove at a batted ball.
 - e. The catcher interferes with the batter's swing.

10. The batter hits a pop up down the first base line. As the catcher settles under the ball well into foul territory, the batter comes up from behind the catcher and scream loudly. The catcher drops the ball.
- The play stands.
 - The batter is warned of unsportsmanlike behavior.
 - A team warning is issued.
 - The batter is ejected for unsportsmanlike behavior.
 - The batter is out for interference.
11. Which if the following results in a dead ball?
- A thrown ball hits a helmet laying outside of the dugout.
 - A fielder throws his glove at a bated ball but misses it.
 - A thrown ball hits an umpire.
 - A thrown ball hits a base runner unintentionally.
 - None of the above.
12. A runner on second and one out. The runner in second base is moving with the pitch. The batter hits the ball into the hole between the shortstop and the third baseman. The shortstop moves over to make the play but the ball travels between the shortstops legs. The third baseman goes behind the shortstop and as he is attempting to field the ball the runner from second inadvertently brushes him. All runners are safe on the play.
- The play stands.
 - Interference is called and the batter is out and the runner returns to second.
 - Interference is called the runner from second is out.
 - No one is out but the runner must return to second base.
13. With base empty and a 2-2 count on the batter, the batter swings and misses a low pitch. The catcher catches the pitch on one hop. As the batter heads to the dugout, the defensive coach yells for the catcher to throw the ball to first. The catcher proceeds to throw the ball into right field. The first base coach then calls the batter to run to first, which he does.
- The batter is out for abandoning his attempt to reach first.
 - The batter is safe if he did not enter his dugout.
 - The batter can remain at first regardless of whether he has reached the dugout or not.