



SNOQUALMIE VALLEY
LITTLE LEAGUE

SVLL Youth Umpire Program

Spring 2019

SVLL Program Contacts

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Uniforms & Equipment

Uniform and Attire

SVLL Required Uniform

- Blue Uniform shirt (tucked in) – **provided by SVLL**
 - OK to have rain gear on if necessary
- Shoes or Sneakers
- Black, Dark Blue, or Grey pants or shorts
- SWEATS or Dark warm-up pants okay too

Equipment

Equipment is provided by SVLL

- ✓ Mask
- ✓ Chest protector
- ✓ Shin guards
- ✓ Ball bag, indicator, plate brush
- ✓ Bring it to every game!!!

You must provide the following:

- A protective cup for males – don't even think of getting out there without it

Scheduling

Game Assignments

- SVLL will assign a YU to each game for the entire season.
- Master schedule will be posted on SVLL.net and weekly email reminders will be sent on Sundays.
- Levels: AA, AAA and Coast
- When available, some games may have 2 youth umpires at the AAA & Coast Level.
- Practice games may be offered early in the season

Schedule Conflicts

YU's are responsible for their games

- If a conflict comes up, it is up to the YU to find a replacement ***prior to reaching out to the league***
 - The list of available umpires and contact information will be on SVLL.net
- The UIC is the only one who can un-assign from a game

No-shows are not an option!

- Failure to show up by start time of a scheduled game will result in a monetary fine of \$10 off your monthly payment
 - So find a replacement and notify Ryan – don't just not show up
- Each no show will result in a payment penalty, 3 times and removal from the program will be considered

Resources

- SVLL Information: <https://www.svll.net/Default.aspx?tabid=2609565>
- Little League University: www.littleleagueu.org/search#user_type=umpire
- District 9 Umpires: <http://www.d9ump.org/>



Game Basics

Conducting Yourself as an Umpire

To Successfully enforce the rules, you must look and act like an umpire

- **Look like an umpire – wear your equipment, shirt and look put together**
- **Keep the game moving swiftly (between innings is important)**
- **Strong and commanding voice**
- **Develop a loud and crisp voice for calling strikes, fouls, dead balls, out/safe, and other calls**
- **Communicate with coaches in an even, but firm tone**
- **Don't let coaches or players get out of hand – if you must, warn and eject.**

You must BE and APPEAR impartial

- **Umpires do not care who wins the game**
- **Don't spend time between innings chatting with coaches, players and spectators**
- **Never show bias to one team or the other**
- **At the end of the game, leave promptly**

The Umpire Pre-Game Meeting

- **Fifteen minutes to game time, the umpires meet with each other.**

This is extremely important

- **Go over the division of responsibility**
 - Discuss Fair/foul coverage
 - Discuss Catch/no catch coverage
 - Discuss handling overthrows out of play
- **Go over the ground rules**
- **Go over your umpire signals**
- **Discuss handling of problem calls and getting help**
- **Discuss who is the UIC and what is he/she going to call**

Pre-Game Meeting with Managers

Five minutes before the game time, umpires call the team managers to home plate for the pre-game meeting (2 minutes) – PU runs this meeting

- **No players should be on the field at this time**
- Introduce yourself and your partner and find out who is the GC if neither of you are adults
- Ask coaches to confirm that all **players are properly equipped, and that all equipment is regulation**
- Go over **ground rules**; especially important is establishing out-of-play at Lewis Creek and other parks
- Clarify special **local rules, like time limits**
- **Tell coaches to ask for time before coming out**

Game Safety

- **Players do not handle bats in the dugout.** *The batter coming up should grab his or her bat when it is time to exit the dugout.*
- **Players should remain in the dugout except when they are playing.** Also, make sure players aren't standing in the dugout opening where they could be hit by a foul ball or errant throw,
- **No on-deck hitter allowed.** At the beginning of an inning, the first batter of the inning may come out of the dugout with a bat and warm up well away from the plate and any player or coach. But at no other times, not even during a pitching change, can a batter be outside the dugout.
- **All batters and runners wear batting helmets.** Also, any players who are coaching bases must wear a helmet.
- **The catcher must have a “dangler”** (a throat guard, or Yeager as it is called) attached to his mask, even for hockey-style masks.
- **During warm-ups before the game, the player standing next to the coach who is hitting grounders and flies must have on a catcher's helmet and mask.**
- **Between innings, any player can warm-up the pitcher, but that player must have on the catcher's helmet and mask.** Shin guards and chest protection is not required for warming up a catcher.
 - *Adults may not warm-up a pitcher during the game.*

Effective Game Management

Keep the game moving

- Get defense changeover quickly
- Use ready catcher (player with mask, or courtesy catcher)
- New pitcher gets 8 warm-up pitches initially, then 5
- Try to keep changeover to one minute

If coaches have question on a call

- Coach asks for time, then approaches ump who made call
- Call for help IF you think more info can help get call right
- Discuss with other ump's AWAY from coaches
- If a coach comes out yelling at you, eject immediately

Judgement vs. Rule

- Distinguish between **judgment calls (not arguable)** and **questioning the application of rule (appealable)**
- **Judgement Calls:** Balls/Strikes, Safe/Out
- **Rules:** Running tags up on Fly ball, Interference

Don't allow "chirping" on judgment calls

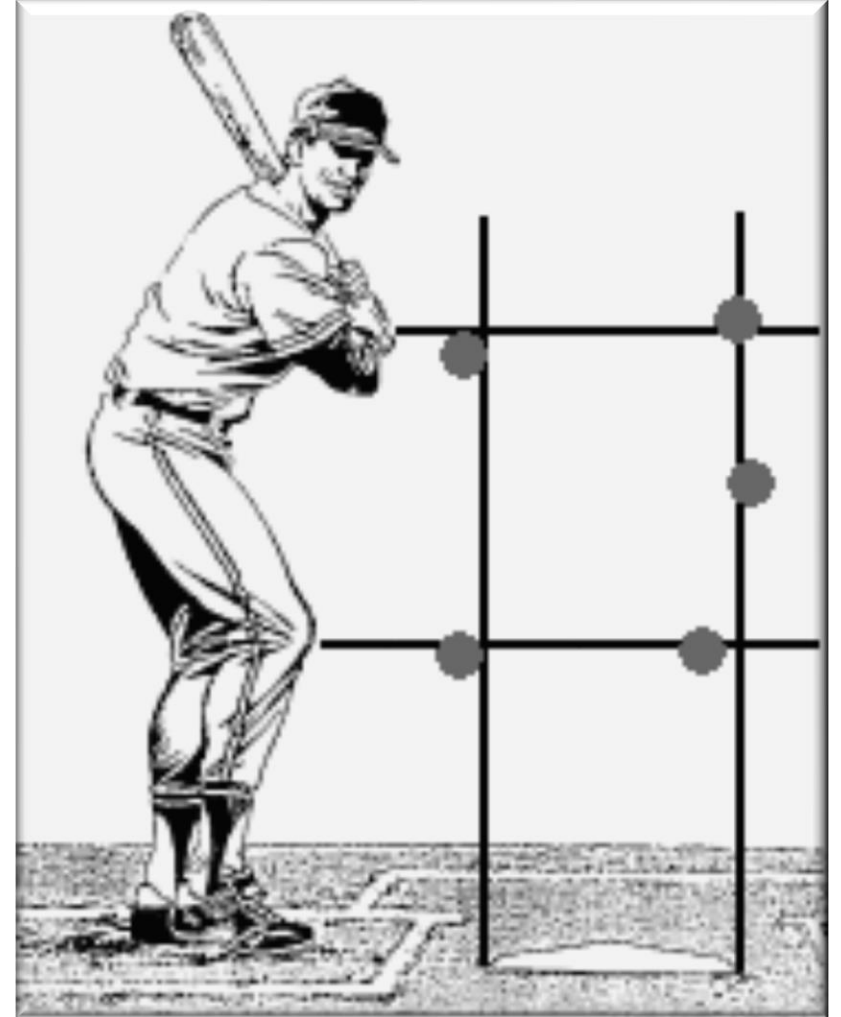
- If chirping from the bench, approach the coach and stop it immediately.
- If from a coach, warn him to stop. If continues, then ...!
- If from the stands, ask the coach to help.

The Strike Zone

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.

KEY POINTS:

1. **Over the plate** – any of the ball touches any part of strike zone
2. Top is at the **batter's armpits**
3. Bottom is at the **batter's knees**
4. Based on the batter's **natural stance when swinging**



Ending the Game

All divisions play 6 inning games

- If the home team is ahead after 5 ½ innings, the game is over

All divisions use the “Mercy Rule” – if the

- Visiting team is ahead by 10 after 4 or 5 complete innings
- Home team is ahead by 10 after 3 ½ or 4 ½ innings, the game is over.

Weather

If it is too dark or raining too hard for you to see balls and strikes, or if the field is too muddy to play on, discuss the situation with the two managers

- The two managers can agree to delay the game and try to wait out a rain shower
- But, rain or snow alone is not a reason to call a game here in the PNW – player safety is

Time Limits

- No Time Limits will apply and per the official rules the umpires shall make determinations regarding when to call a game.
- No new inning shall be started within 1 hour of the next scheduled game on Saturdays.
- **EXCEPTION:** AAA interlock games shall be limited in duration. No new inning shall start after 2 hours and the game shall not exceed 2 hours 30 minutes in total length.

Dead Ball Becomes Live

Putting the ball back in play

- Every time the ball is taken out of play by an umpire calling **“Time”**, **“Foul”**, or **“Dead ball”**, the ball must then be put back in play. This is very important.
- When the **pitcher has the ball** on the pitching plate (“Rubber”), the **catcher is in the catcher's box**, and **the batter is ready to take his position in the batter’s box**, point to the pitcher and call loudly, **“Play”**.
- The **“Play”** call signals players and umpires that the ball is back in play, the game is on, and legal actions can take place.

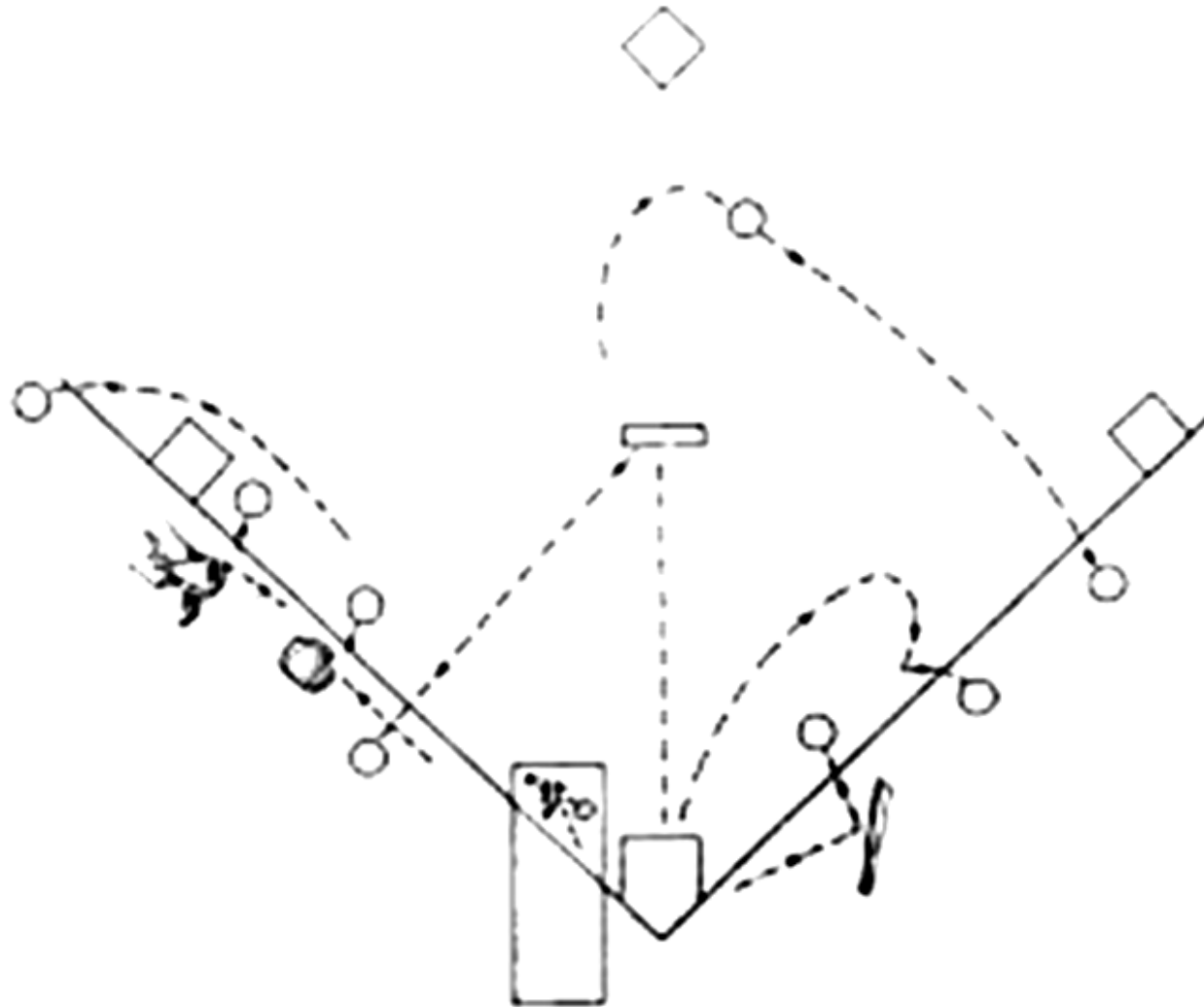
Dead Ball

- **Foul ball, not caught** – 90% of your dead ball/runner return situations are foul balls.
- **Ball thrown out of play**
- **Offensive Interference** – for example:
 - Batted ball hits base runner
 - Base coach intentionally interferes with thrown or batted ball, or physically assists a base runner
 - Runner makes contact with fielder making play on the ball
 - Fielder obstructs base path when not making a play on the ball
- **Batter hit by pitch**

Judging a Foul Ball

- **Judge the position of the ball**, not the fielder, relative to the foul line:
- **There are three fair/foul scenarios:**
 1. **Infield ball not reaching 1st base or 3rd base is judged by ...**
 - Where the ball is first touched (bounder, line drive, or fly), or
 - Where the ball settles (bunt, dribbler)
 - The ball can wander in and out of fair territory until settles or is touched
 2. **Bounding ball over 1st base or 3rd base is fair**
 - Crosses plane of the base, or touches the base
 3. **Fly ball beyond 1st base or 3rd base that drops uncaught in foul territory is foul.**
- **Note:** a fly ball that is caught in foul territory is a live ball.
- **Note:** A ball that first touches “foreign” object in foul territory (like a backstop, fence, etc.) is always foul

Foul Ball Illustrations



Fair or Foul?

(1)



(2)



(3)



Batter / Hitter Basics

Batter hit by pitch:

- **Not in strike zone:** Award first base; runners advance if forced
- **While swinging:** Strike; if third strike, batter out. (Hands not part of the bat.)
- **Batter in strike zone:** Strike; if third strike, batter out.
- **Batter not in strike zone, but makes no attempt to avoid:** Ball – use rarely, and never at Coast or AAA.
- NOTE: Throwing the bat is NOT an out. There are warning issued to players and teams at time of instance

Batter hit by batted ball:

- **While still in batter's box:** Foul ball (dead ball) (w/in two steps)
 - Only really an issue on a bunt
- **Outside of batter's box:** Out (interference–dead ball)

Runner Basics

The batter-runner (BR) heading to 1st base:

- If runner is outside the running lane in last half of distance to 1st base, and interferes with a throw to first from the vicinity of home plate, as with a bunt, BR is out
- BR can overrun 1st base to either side. BUT, any move toward 2nd base invalidates protection
- Overrunning 1st base, the BR is assumed to have touched the base.

On base path, if the BR runs more than 3 feet off path to avoid a tag, the BR is out

- “Base path” is defined as line of natural progress. It is, technically, the line between the runner at a given time and the base toward which he is running.

Two runners on a base

- The base belongs to lead runner; the trailing runner must retreat
- However, this is not an automatic out; the defense must tag the trailing runner before reaches his legal base.

Runner Basics – Part 2: Outs

The base runner is out in the following situations:

- The runner does not slide or attempt to avoid a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make tag
- THERE IS NO “MUST SLIDE” RULE!!! Note the requirements – fielder must have ball and must be waiting to make tag, and even then runner can attempt to go around.
- Intentionally interferes with a thrown ball or intentionally or unintentionally hinders a fielder attempting to play on a batted ball
- Is touched by a batted ball in fair territory before the ball is touched or passes through an infielder
- Slides head-first into a base while advancing
- Base runner passes a preceding runner
- Tagged by a live ball while off the base
- Fails to reach a base to which the runner is forced before he or the base is tagged

Runner Basics – Part 3: Appeals

Some infractions are not automatic outs

- **Rather**, the defense must call out the infraction and tag the offending runner or relevant base.
 - ✓ Runner misses touching a base (including first base)
 - ✓ Runner misses home plate and makes no effort to return
 - ✓ Runner fails to return to 1st base immediately after overrunning
 - ✓ Runner fails to tag up on a caught fair or foul fly ball
 - ✓ A player fails to bat in his proper position in the batting order

Appeal Basics

- The ball must be alive and put in play
- The defense must call out and specify the infraction while tagging the appropriate base or player
- Appeals must be made before the next play or pitch (not counting “continuous action” that includes the appealable infraction)
- You can appeal only once. If you error on the appeal, you lose the right

Runner Basics – Part 4: Base Awards

➤ **In many situations umpires make base awards**

Examples of base awards:

- one (e.g., batter hit by pitch)
- two (ball thrown out of play)
- three (fielder uses cap, for example, to field a ball)
- four (ball hit over the fence in fair territory)

➤ **The most common situation is a ball thrown out of play (into dead-ball territory) on a throwing or fielding error**

➤ **Concepts:**

- Time of Pitch (TOP) – last legally held base
- Time of Throw (TOT) – position on base path

Base Awards - Overthrows

- **Overthrows that go out of play** are ALWAYS two bases unless thrown from rubber. However...
- **Depending on circumstances**, two-base award on overthrows out of play are judged from **TOP** or **TOT**.
- **First play in the infield** (F6 overthrows F3 and ball goes into dugout): Two bases from TOP.
- **Second play in the infield** (F4 completing double-play to F3 throws it into the dugout): Two bases from TOT.
- **Throw from outfield** (F9 throws wild over fence and into the parking lot): Two bases from TOT.

Time of Pitch (TOP) – last legally held base
Time of Throw (TOT) – position on base path

Leaving Early (7.13)

- **Base runners may not leave their base until a pitched ball reaches the batter.**
 - If a play is made on the runner, let the play continue. If the runner is put out, forget the infraction; if the runner is safe, call TIME and enforce penalty.
 - If the batter gets a hit, let the play continue until action stops, then call TIME and enforce penalty.
 - If a clean hit forces the runner to the taken base, he cannot be returned.
 - Infraction for one base runner applies to all. Everyone returns, except where forces prevent it.

Interference

Any action by an offensive player that “obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play.”

- Runner is hit by batted ball: Runner out; dead ball.
- Runner collides (even slightly) with or impedes a fielder making play on batted ball:
 - Runner out; dead ball.
- Base runners must avoid any fielder attempting to field a batted ball.
- Runner intentionally impedes a player’s attempt to throw the ball to make a play: Runner out, and possibly the other runner is also out; dead ball
- Runner intentionally slaps away tag: runner out; dead ball.
- Batter intentionally or through willful neglect interferes with play at the plate: runner out; dead ball – unless third out, then batter is out
- But batter is not required to have eyes in the back of his head, just to back away from plate as runner comes in

Obstruction

“... 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”

- Type “A” Obstruction: When a play is being made on obstructed runner: dead ball; award base as appropriate
- Type “B” Obstruction: When a play is not being made on obstructed runner: delayed dead ball; award base as appropriate
- Base Award: Award the base runner the base which, in the umpire’s judgment, the runner would have attained had the obstruction not occurred.
- If obstructed while returning to a base (as on pick-off play), always award the next base.

Obstruction – Part 2

Calling Type B Obstruction (delayed dead ball)

- Point to offending fielder and hold extended fist and call “that’s obstruction”; when play concludes, enforce as needed

Calling Type A Obstruction

- Call TIME immediately and enforce the infraction

The two most common points of obstruction:

- Extra-base hit and F3 is watching the ball in the base path when BR bumps into him rounding 1B.
- Home plate – F2 is blocking the plate without the ball.
The base line belongs to the runner and the catcher should be there only when fielding a ball or with the ball already in his/her possession

Pitcher Basics

- **There are no balks in Little League**, but we call illegal pitches at the Majors and Coast level. (In AAA division, we issue warning so the kids learn about pitching rules, but we don't call infractions.)
- **Learn this:**. This is the extensive rule that lists all of the ways in which a pitch is illegal. However, in Little League we go pretty lightly with **8.05**.
- Note that **most illegal pitch types apply only when there is a runner on base**
 - Quick pitching and pitching from off the mound are always “illegal pitches”
- **Regulations specify pitch-count restrictions** (by age) and required days of rest between games, but these regulations are not enforced by the umpire.

Pitcher Basics – Part 2

- **A coach or manager can visit the pitcher on the mound with the following restrictions:**
 - Visit the same pitcher only **twice per inning**; third time is the hook
 - Visit the same pitcher only **three times in a game**; the fourth is the hook
- **Manager can substitute a pitcher at any time – even during an at-bat (the new pitcher assumes the count)**
 - **New pitcher gets 8 warm-up pitches** (unless entering due to an injury; in that case he gets as many as they need)
 - **A pitcher who is relieved** can remain in the game at another defensive position, *except not as a catcher.*

Definitions of Key Terms

Baseball rules are all built on the definition of terms.

We'll look closely at a few of these.

- **Catch**
- **Tag**
- **Inning**
- **Infield Fly (Infield fly rule)**

CATCH

CATCH is the act of a fielder getting secure possession in the hand or glove of a ball in flight and firmly holding it before it touches the ground

...

- To be a catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove **complete control** of the ball and that ***release of the ball is voluntary and intentional***.
- **KEYS** to judging a catch: Secure possession and voluntary release.
- **NOT a catch** if fielder (simultaneous with the catch) **collides** with player, wall, or fence, or **falls** down, and as a result of the collision or fall **drops** the ball.
- If the fielder drops the ball while making a throw ***following*** the catch, the ball shall be adjudged to have been caught (i.e., “drop on the transfer”).
- In a tag-up situation, runners may leave their bases the instant the first fielder touches the ball.

The TAG

TAG is the action of a fielder in touching a base with the body **while holding the ball securely and firmly in the hand or glove**; or touching a runner with the ball or with the hand or glove **holding the ball securely and firmly in the hand or glove**

- **The KEY** is the phrase “**securely in hand or glove**”
- **NOT a tag** if ball is trapped against body
- **NOT a tag** if touched with glove while ball in hand

INFIELD FLY

... 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 Conditions**
 - **No outs or one out**
 - **Runners R1, R2 OR, bases loaded**
 - **Infield pop-up (not blooper, and never a bunt)**
- Both umpires **point and call**: “Infield fly, batter out”
- **IFR is NOT enforced at the AAA level.**
- **If you forget to call the IF, you can apply the rule after the fact.**

Softball Rules

- Most of the rules of Baseball and Softball are the same.
- Important exceptions:
 - Leaving early – in Softball, the runner is out
 - Pitcher's Circle – in Softball, there is a circle (real or imaginary) centered around the mound, and if pitcher has the ball within the pitcher's circle, any runner must immediately advance or retreat. Failure to do so is an out unless a play is made on the runner (a fake throw by the pitcher constitutes a play). The pitcher having the ball in the circle does not mean the ball is dead.
 - Double first base – on initial play at first, runner goes for orange, fielder goes for white
 - Pitcher re-entry is allowed and there is no pitch count
 - Bunt – batter must retract bat or it is a strike (no so in bb)

SPECIAL AAA RULES

- **Pitching –ALL kid pitch, just like Coast!**
- **Batting/Running**
 - **Bunting is NOW allowed!**
 - **Stealing is NOW allowed, but only for 2nd and 3rd.**
 - **CANNOT STEAL HOME UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES**
 - **No more “pitcher has the ball” stops runners rule**

Umpire Rules – The Game Coordinator Rule

- An adult umpire on the field is no longer required.
- If no adult is umping, **the home team coach will appoint an adult** to be the “Game Coordinator”
- Special duties of the GC:
 - **Only the GC can suspend games** for darkness or rain
 - The GC has to ensure the safety rules are followed, but ALL umps must also do that
 - The GC must take action if coaches/players get out of hand, but again, ALL umps must do that too
 - The GC is not an umpire and cannot make calls

Umpire Rules – Who calls what

- Each umpire has his or her **own area of responsibility**
 - We'll discuss this more next week
 - Plate ump calls balls/strikes, plays at home, fair/foul, etc.
 - Field umps call plays at their bases
- Only make a call for a play that is yours!
 - **Never, ever should two umpires make a call on a play**
- After a play is over, **you can choose to get help** on a call from your partner and then maybe change your call
 - This sometimes happens on request from a coach
- **NO UMPIRE, ADULT OR JUNIOR, CAN OVERRULE ANOTHER UMPIRE, even if that ump was wrong**
 - This is a rule, just like 3 strikes and you're out.

Rule Myths Part I

- The hands are considered part of the bat.
- The batter-runner must turn to his right after over-running first base.
- If the batter breaks his wrists when swinging, it's a strike.
- If a batted ball hits the plate first it's a foul ball.
- The ball is dead on a foul-tip.
- The batter who batted out of order is the person declared out.
- The batter may not overrun first base when he gets a base-on-balls.
- If the batter does not pull the bat out of the strike zone while in the bunting position, it's an automatic strike.
- The batter-runner is always out if he runs outside the running lane after a bunted ball.
- A runner is out if he slaps hands or high-fives other players, after a homerun is hit over the fence.
- Tie goes to the runner.
- The runner gets the base he's going to, plus one on a ball thrown out-of-play.
- Anytime a coach touches a runner, the runner is out.
- The runner must always slide when the play is close.
- The runner is always safe when hit by a batted ball while touching a base.
- A runner may not steal on a foul-tip.

Rule Myths Part II

- It is a force out when a runner is called out for not tagging up on a fly ball.
- An appeal on a runner who missed a base cannot be a force out.
- A runner is out if he runs out of the baseline to avoid a fielder who is fielding a batted ball.
- Runners may not advance when an infield fly is called.
- No run can score when a runner is called out for the third out for not tagging up.
- A pitch that bounces to the plate cannot be hit.
- The batter does not get first base if hit by a pitch after it bounces.
- If a fielder holds a fly ball for 2 seconds it's a catch.
- You must tag the base with your foot on a force out or appeal.
- If a player's feet are in fair territory when the ball is touched, it is a fair ball.
- The ball must always be returned to the pitcher before an appeal can be made.
- With no runners on base, it is a ball if the pitcher starts his windup and then stops.
- If a fielder catches a fly ball and then falls over the fence it is a homerun.
- The ball is dead anytime an umpire is hit by the ball.
- The home plate umpire can overrule the other umps at anytime.

Working the Plate and Bases



What Does the Plate Umpire Do?

- You manage the start, finish and pace of the game
- You call balls and strikes
- You make all Fair/Foul calls
- You make all Catch/No-Catch calls
 - Get out from behind the plate to get a good look
- You make all safe/out calls at home
- You make running lane violation calls
- You help your partner if he needs it – watch all plays and give help IF ASKED
- You don't make calls that belong to your partner

Before anything can Happen – “PLAY”



Standing behind the crouching catcher



Stand straight up, right hand up



Point at the pitcher and say “PLAY”

This signal is used to start a game, to start every inning, and to start play again after a dead ball or time has been called

Umpire to Umpire Signals

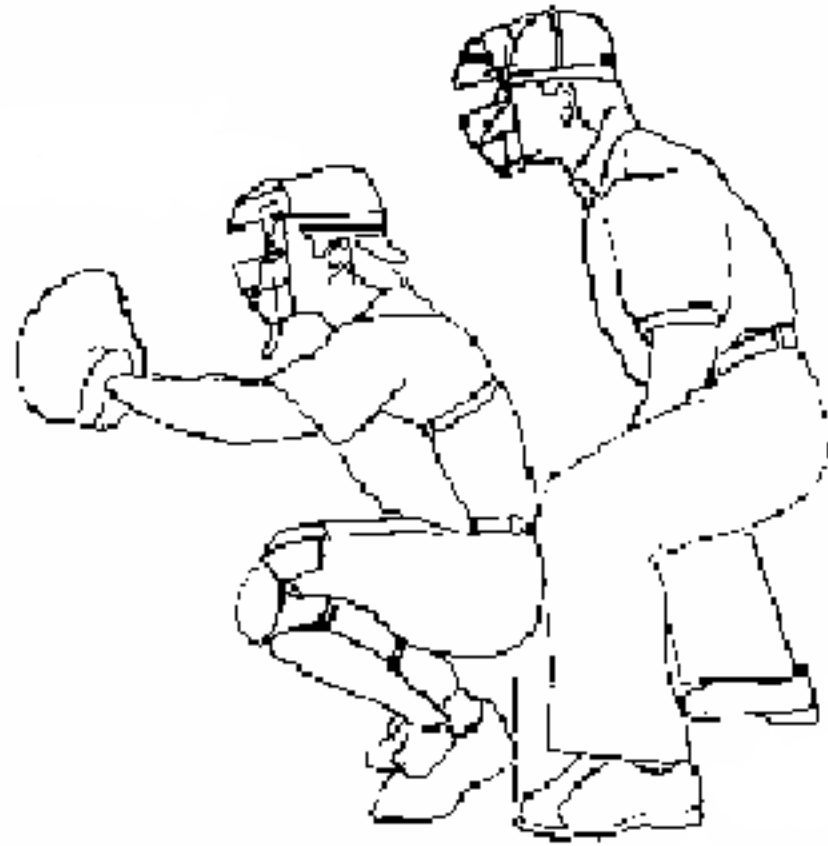
Communicating with you partner is critically important; learn and use the following guidelines:

- **PU gives the signals;** Base Umpire flashes back
- **Make eye contact with your partner** at every new batter, and whenever the situation changes (e.g., after a steal)
- ***Learn and use the following signals !!!***
 - Number of outs, if any – hands out to the side, fingers indicate number of outs
 - Infield Fly situation, if applicable – hand to hat bill
 - Check swing – left hand point to partner “DID HE GO”?
 - Lost count – twirl fingers

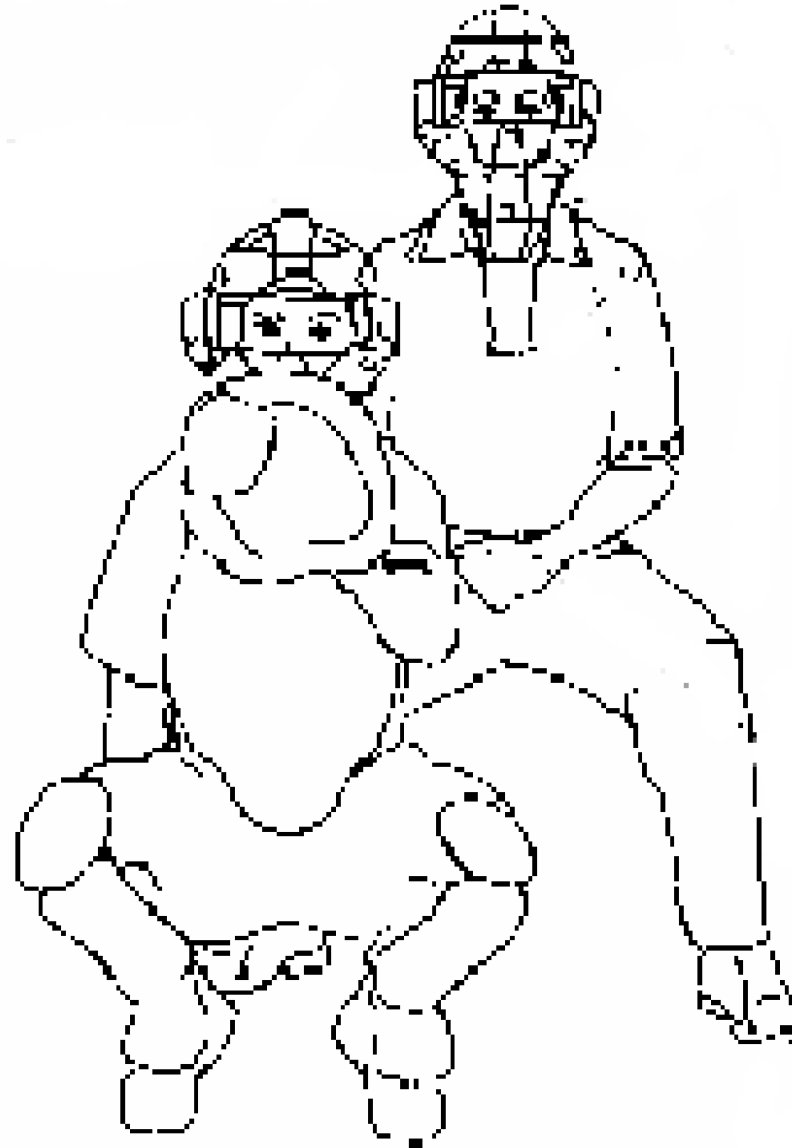
Getting into the SLOT: Setting Up

- Work the plate using the **SLOT position**.
Umpire's nose:
 - Inside edge of strike zone
 - Over catcher's head
- Remember, the strike zone changes with the player, so **visualize the zone**.
- **Legs apart** for stable platform
- Slightly **forward at waist**
- **Keep your head still**
- **Track the ball with eyes**
- **Uniform pause, then call**
- **Timing, timing, timing**





- **Use reference points to frame the strike zone:**
 - **Visualize the top of the zone – often the batters hands are at the top of the zone**
 - **If the catcher is in nice and tight, look at his knees relative to the batter**
 - **But, at AAA and Coast, this usually doesn't work**
 - **See the ball hit the catcher's mitt** when the ball arrives – but it isn't where he catches it that counts!
- **Be sure you can see the entire plate** so you can see the low and away pitch



What's A Strike

A STRIKE is a legal pitch which meets any of these conditions

- 1. Struck at by the batter and is missed** (swinging strike)
- Not struck at, if **any part of the ball** passes through **any part of the strike zone** (called strike)
- 3. Fouled by the batter** when there are fewer than two strikes
- 4. Bunted foul** (batter is out and ball is dead if batter bunts foul on third strike)
- Touches the batter **as the batter swings** at it (dead ball) – NO MATTER WHERE; HEAD, HANDS, etc.
- Touches the batter in flight **in the strike zone**
- Becomes a **foul tip** (ball is live and in play)

The Strike Call



You decide it is a strike



Stand straight up, right hand out



Clinch fist, raise arm and say "STRIKE"

A Foul Tip is not a Foul Ball

A FOUL TIP is a batted ball that goes *sharp and direct from the bat to the catchers hands and is legally caught*.

It is not a foul tip unless caught and any foul tip that is caught is a strike, and the ball is in play. It is not a catch if it is a rebound, unless the ball has first touched the catcher's glove or hand.

- 1. Sharp and direct** from bat to catcher's mitt
- 2. Must be caught**
- 3. Always a strike**; if strike 3, batter is out.
- 4. Always a live ball**
- 5. Not a foul tip if a rebound**, unless first touching the catcher's hand or glove.

The Foul Tip Call



You decide it is a foul tip



Stand up and put your right hand on your left forearm



Slide your right hand up and out



Clinch fist, raise arm and say "STRIKE"

What's a Ball

A BALL is a pitch which does not enter the strike zone in flight and is not struck at by the batter

- If a pitch **touches the batter in flight and is not in the strike zone**, the batter shall be awarded first base
- If the **batter swings at such a pitch and misses**, it is a STRIKE
- If the pitch **touches the ground and bounces through the strike zone** it is a BALL
- If the pitch **touches the ground and bounces and then touches the batter**, the batter shall be awarded first base

The Ball Call



You decide it is a ball



You stay down and say
"BALL"



What's a Foul Ball

- **There are three fair/foul scenarios:**
 1. **Infield ball** not reaching 1st base or 3rd base is judged by ...
 - Where the ball is **first touched** (bounder, line drive, or fly), or
 - Where the ball **settles** (bunt, dribbler)
 - The ball can wander in and out of fair territory until **settles** or is **touched**
 2. **Bounding ball over 1st base or 3rd base is fair**
 - Crosses plane of the base, or touches the base
 - Breaks the glass
 3. **Fly ball beyond 1st base or 3rd base** that drops *uncaught* in foul territory is **foul**.
- **Note: a fly ball that is caught in foul territory is a *live ball*.**
- **Note:** A ball that first touches “foreign” object in foul territory (like a backstop, fence, etc.) is always **foul**
- **Judge the position of the ball, *not the fielder*, relative to the foul line**

The Foul Call and the Fair Non-Call



Say (loudly) “FOUL”
(also used for “TIME”)



**NEVER CALL “FAIR” OUT
LOUD.** Just point into
fair territory.

Where do I Go on Crack of the Bat?

- **Know what is going on!** Every new batter pause and review the situation and anticipate action
- **Get out from behind the plate. In two-man system, the Plate Umpire is always in motion.**
 - **Trail batter-runner** 1/3 of the way to 1B if no R3
 - Set up for your **catch/no-catch** call, or
 - Set up for your **fair/foul** call

Avoiding the Catcher

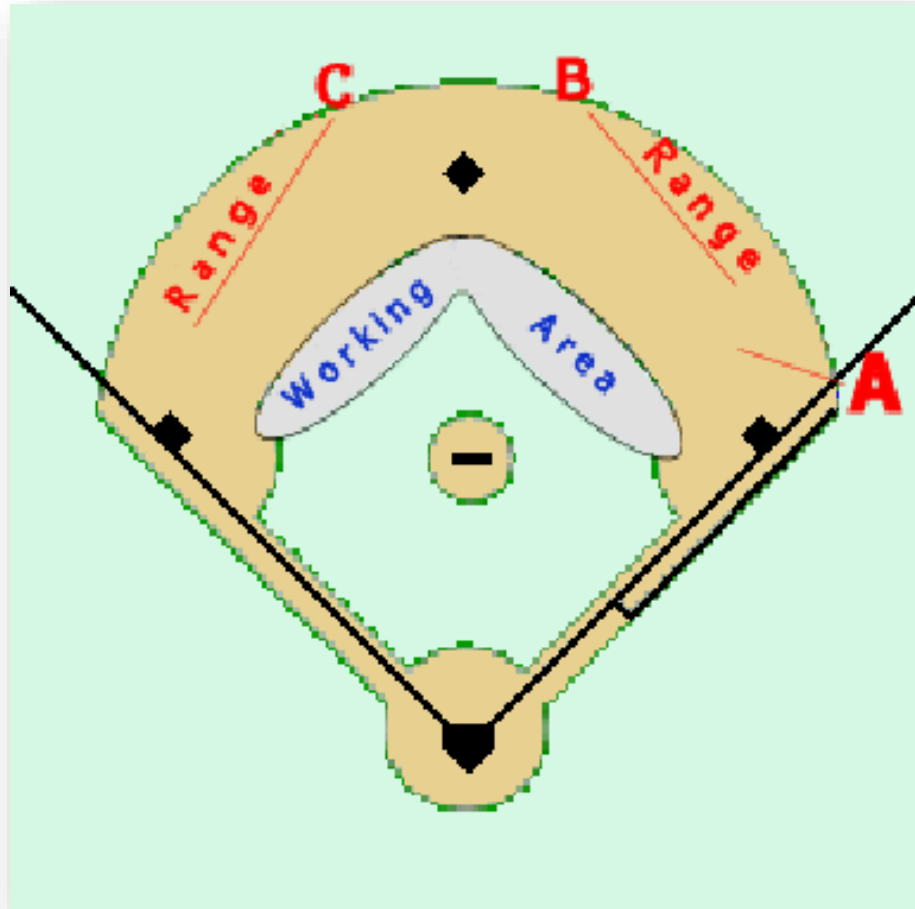
- **On a pop up near or behind the plate**, take your eyes off the ball and watch the catcher
 - **Removing your mask while doing so**
- If he goes right, swing your right leg back (called “opening the gate”) and let him by
- If he goes left, swing your left leg back
- **He’ll take you to the ball**

What Does the Base Umpire Do?

- Assuming there is no 3rd base umpire:
 - You have the safe/out call on all base runners at all bases except home.
 - You have the base-touch and tag-up on all runners at all bases except home. You also handle all appeal calls at all bases except home.
 - You watch for runners leaving early at all bases.
 - *You own all base runners at all times from first base through third base.*
- *If there is a 3rd base umpire, you own 1st and 2nd base.*
- On hits to the outfield, you must come **inside** the diamond; on hits to the infield, you must stay **outside** the diamond. This is **the Golden Rule**.

Start Positions for Base Umpire: A, B, C

The start positions for a single Base Umpire are simple:



- No runners on base, Position **A**
- With R1 only, Position **B**
- *In all other situations*, Position **C**

If there is a 3rd base umpire, use Position A for no runners on base, Position B for all other situations!

The Golden Rule for Base Umpire:

Inside Out / Outside In

- On hits to the **INFIELD**, you remain **OUTSIDE** the diamond and slide in your working range.
- On hits to the **OUTFIELD**, you come **INSIDE** the diamond to the working area, pivot and pick up your base runners.

REMEMBER: Inside-Out, Outside-In

The Silver Rule for Base Umpire:

Angle over Distance

- **Get in the right position** to make the call
 - Ideally, about 10 feet away from the play and at a 90 degree angle to the throw and/or tag
- But there is only one of you out there; you can't be everywhere at once
 - You will have to make calls at first base when you are in C position – **about 75 feet away!**
- **Get the right angle on the play** – that is more important than getting close
 - The right angle is where your view isn't obstructed by any other players, and where you can see the tag
 - Try not to get “straight-lined” by runners

Tag or No Tag?

- Determining a **tag or no-tag** is a matter of doing these things:
 - **Moving into position** to take the play (called “**Bust-to-your-Angle**”) and **standing still**. You will follow the throw with your head, not body. Don’t get too close.
 - **Finding the throw** from the fielder
 - Adjusting to the throw in case it is offline, called “lean-and-a-look”
 - **Going to hands-on-knees set** (unless doing a lean-and-a-look) to observe the tag. **DON’T MAKE A CALL WHILE ON THE MOVE.**
 - Seeing the tag by **using the eyes properly** – head still, watch the whole play before you decide
 - Assuring the requirement of “firm and secure possession” has been met – again watch the whole play
 - Finally, **signal the play as using a proper signaling mechanic and a firm voice**

Making the Out or Safe Call

- **The umpire's eyes must be** focused on the critical aspects of the tag (force play or not) as it develops.
- **If the tag is on a base the umpire's eyes will focus on the bag** and the feet of the fielder and runner as he arrives. The arrival of the ball will be clearly seen in the peripheral vision.
 - So don't be too close; you won't see the ball
- **If the tag is on the runner's body then the umpire's eyes will focus on the glove of the fielder.** The glove will direct your eyes to the runner.
- Now the umpire can complete the first part of the call process ... **YES a tag took place, or NO a tag did** not take place.
 - If the call is **NO** then the umpire will signal "SAFE".
 - If the call is **YES** the umpire must then bring his eyes to the glove and determine if the possession of the ball is "firm and secure." **Only when he sees this will he signal "OUT"**

Problem Calls & Getting help

- Our main goal is to get the call right. If you make a mistake, don't worry. If you can correct it, do so. If you can't, then learn from it and move on.
- If for any reason you are less than 100% sure about a call you've made, get help. This is up to you.
- If you see something that your partner might have missed, offer help. This is up to him.
- **Do NOT** let managers or coaches argue judgment calls; **do NOT** allow managers to charge the field
- However, managers can legitimately question and appeal an error in the application of a rule.
- Do NOT allow arguing, rudeness, or unsportsmanlike conduct. You have the authority to eject players or coaches. Use that power sparingly, but use it if you must.

Qualities of a good umpire

- Shows up, and shows up **on time**
- Looks like an umpire – kids REALLY respect that
- Pays attention to the game at all times – head must be in the game, eyes (almost always) on the ball
- Has good timing; is not too hasty to decide on a call – **pause... read** the play... then **react**
- Is decisive once the decision is made, and is proud to let everyone know the call – don't be shy
- Works and communicates well with partner
- Knows where to be and hustles to get there
- Knows the rules

QUESTIONS

