



# Solana Beach Little League Umpire Clinic

## Sources:

1. EABSA, Umpire Clinic Jeff Pierce

<https://www.jarvisrec.com/documents/EABSA/Umpire%20Clinic.pdf>

2. The District 33 Umpire Clinic Presentation

<https://www.cadistrict33.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1432358>

# How to Run SBLL Umpire Clinic

# Agenda

**10:00 - 10:10 (Introduction):** Instructor Meeting-Field Set Up. Check-in table

**10:10 - 10:25 (Drill #1):** Basic 6 in Lines for Orientation-Expectations-House Keeping; (Ball, Strike, Time, Safe, Out, Foul)

**10:25 - 10:55 (Drill #2):** Split into 3 Groups based on color of name tag

- **Group 1 - Plate Umpire (PU)**
  - Balls Hit to Infield-Clearing Catcher-Trailing BR
- **Group 2 - Base Umpire (BU)**
  - Angle/Distance
  - Plays from A, B and C
- **Group 3 - Soft Toss** 5 Minute Demo then Soft Toss
  - Soft Toss (Step In, Set Up, Ball/Strike)

**11:00 – 11:15 (Drill #3):** Everyone Back Together

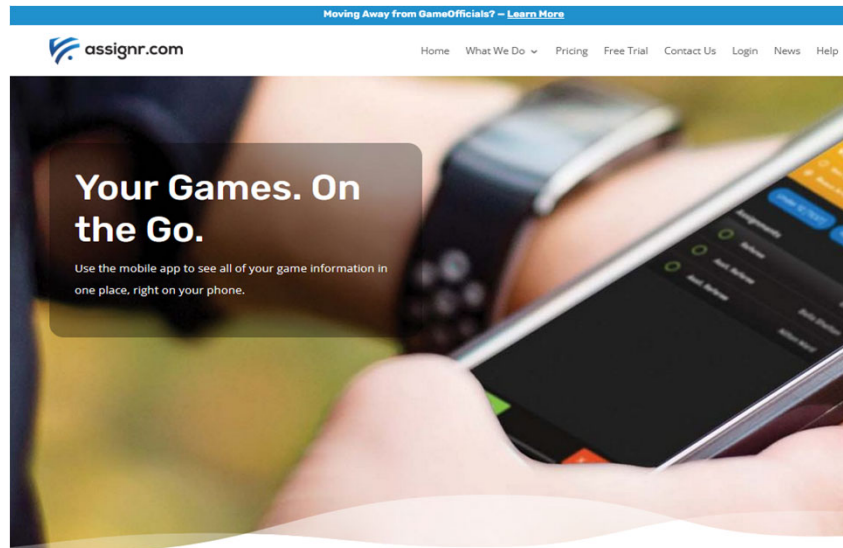
- **Bleachers**
  - Umpire Gear- Parking Lot Meeting-Equipment Check-Lineups-Plate Meeting

**11:15 - 11:35 (Drill #4):** Split into 3 Groups

- **Group 1 - Plate Umpire (PU)**
  - No one on. Fly Balls to LF-CF-RF-Catch/No Catch
- **Group 2 - Base Umpire (BU)**
  - From A-Pivot taking BR back into 1<sup>st</sup>, Curl/Slash and take BR to 2<sup>nd</sup>
- **Group 3 - Soft Toss** (Centerfield) 5 Minute Demo then Soft Toss
  - (Foul/Time, Check Swing, Foul Tip)

**11:50 - 12:00 (Drill #5):** Everyone together and thank everyone for coming; will get everyone set up in Assignr app

# Assignr App



**Assignr is the #1 Rated Mobile App for Officials**



★★★★★  
Google Play: 4.5 / 5.0



★★★★★  
App Store: 4.9 / 5.0

# Legend



= Instructor



= Plate Umpire (PU)

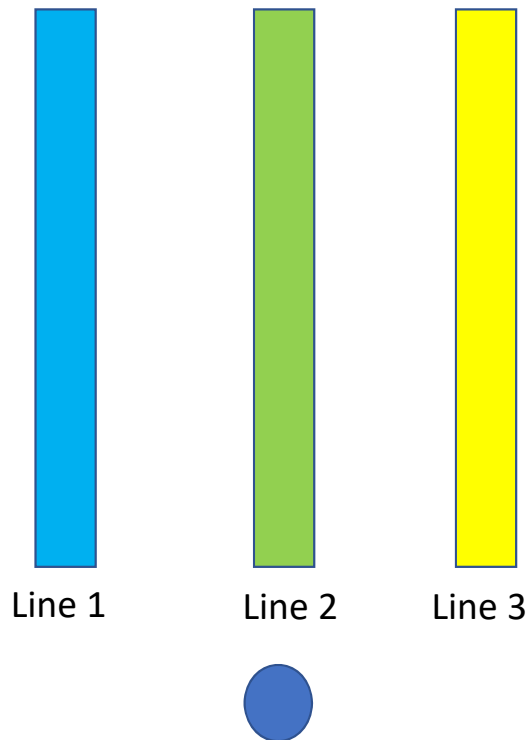


= Base Umpire (BU)



= Helper / Player

# Drill #1



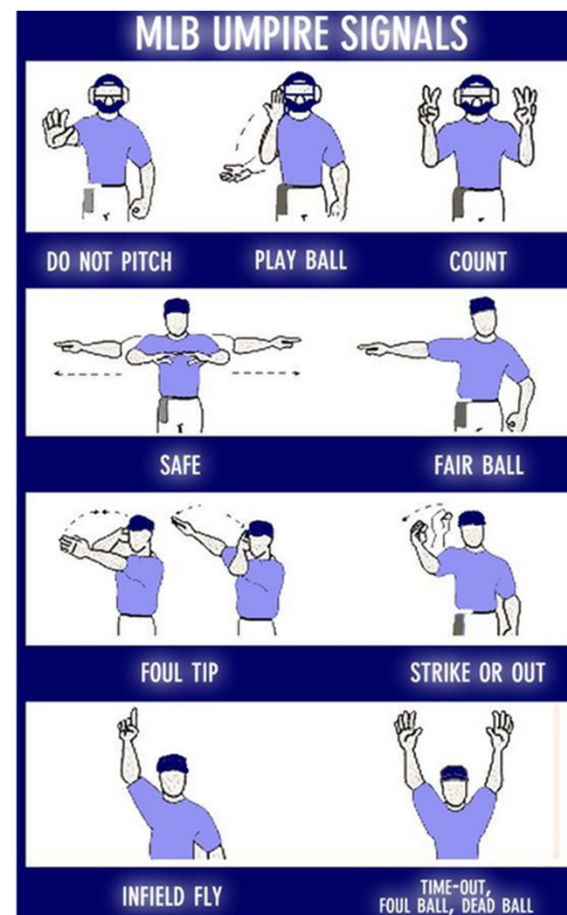
**Will always start with:**

1. Rubber
2. Set (get into position)
3. Then make call

**SET UMPIRE POSITION**

**Basic 6 Calls:**

1. Ball
2. Strike (loud)
3. Time
4. Safe
5. Out
6. Foul



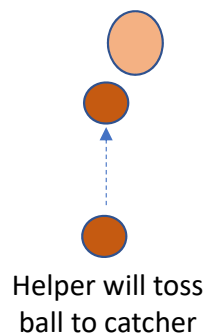
# Drill #2a

Scenario: Infield hit

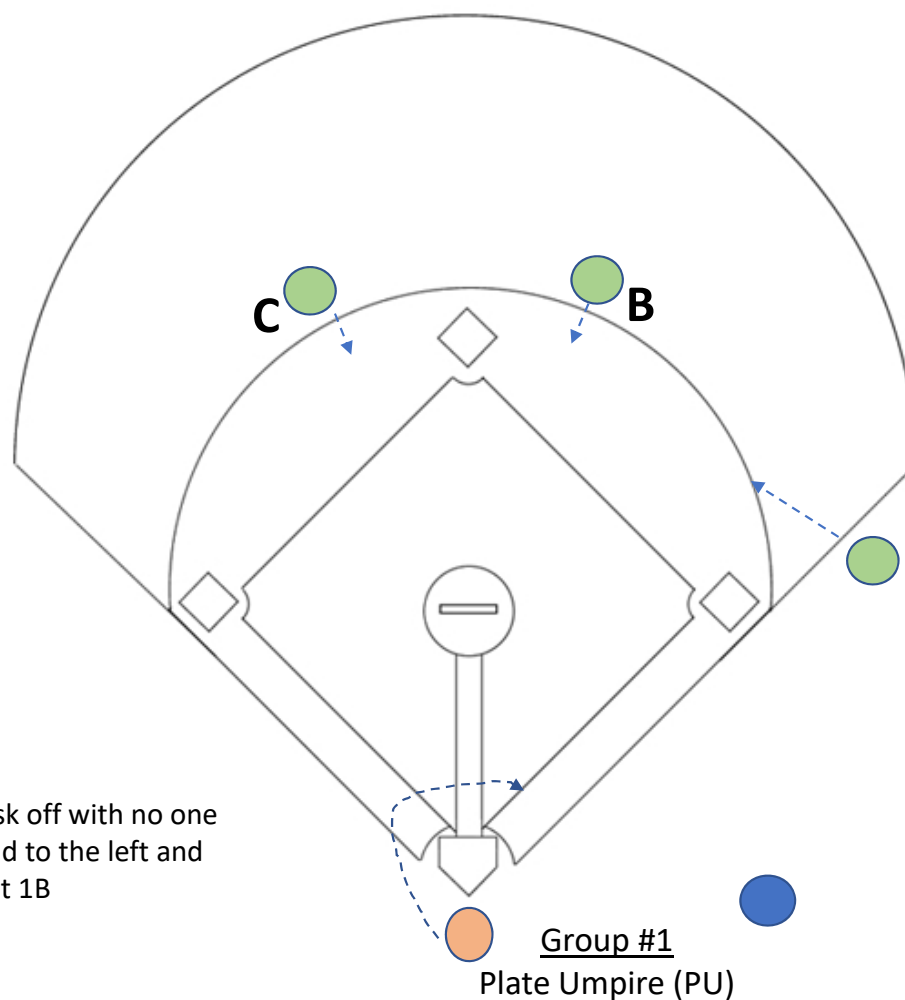
Group #3

Soft Toss

\* Continued on following slide



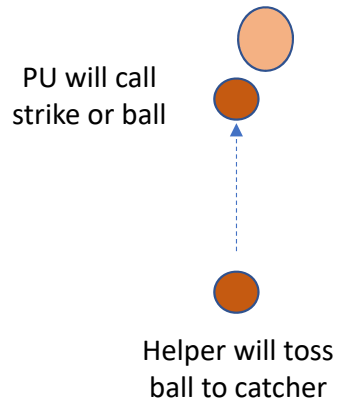
- PU will take mask off with no one on will go around to the left and help make call at 1B



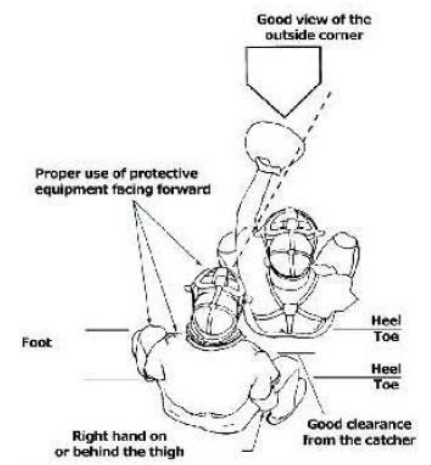
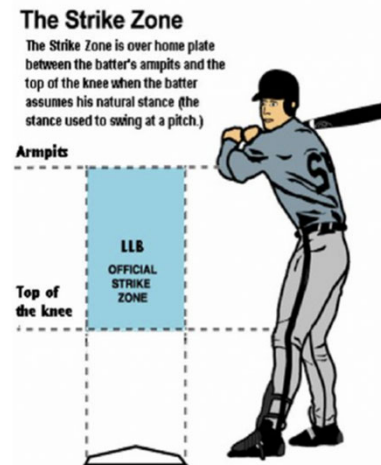
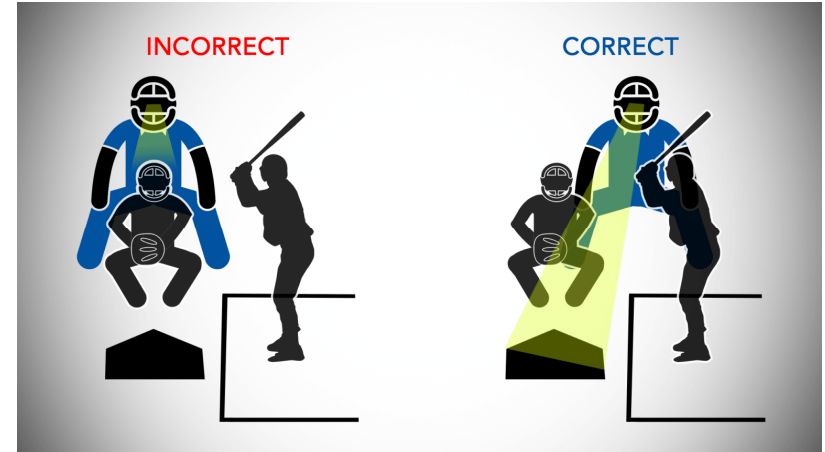
- On an IF hit, BU will run in the following directions to make calls
- BU needs to slow down to make sure 1B catches ball and doesn't drop it

# Drill #2b

## Group #3 Soft Toss



- To achieve effective positioning that will result in a consistent strike zone for the duration of the game, the slot is used. The slot is defined as the space between the chest of the batter and the catcher's shoulder closest to the batter.



Sources: <https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/plate-mechanics-explaining-slot/>  
<https://probaseballinsider.com/what-is-the-strike-zone-in-baseball/>



# Drill #3

- Gather all kids into a 3 different circles with each instructor

## Meeting with Base Umpires

- Talk about any signs you will use to communicate with each other

## Introductions and Procedures

- To be completed before the plate conference, the pregame inspection of playing equipment:
  - Bats must be USA labeled (no USSSA bats allowed)
  - Batter's helmets must have attached face shield
  - Catcher's gear and helmet must have throat guard
- Umpire crew introduction to each manager/coach. Learn the first name of the manager for each team to establish a personable rapport. When shaking hands to end the meeting, use their first name to wish each "good luck" in the game.
- Collect, review, and confirm lineups. Ask if any players are ineligible to pitch based on the pitch count regulation.
- Playing field ground rules. Be sure to point out areas in foul territory that are designated "out of play," or have the potential cause a stoppage of play.

## Reminder for Managers and Coaches

- Follow all of Little League's rules, regulations, and principles for safety and sportsmanship.
- To avoid setting a negative tone, umpires are encouraged to keep the following points in mind, but advised NOT to verbalize them during the plate conference.
  - While conducting equipment inspection prior to the game, informally and politely remind each team's manager of the following:
  - No throwing helmets or bats (automatic game ejection).
  - Helmets must be worn at all times for all offensive players on the field (even in foul territory).
  - A helmet is to be worn by an offensive player not in the lineup who is designated to retrieve the bat after each at-bat.
  - No jewelry of any kind is to be worn (except for Medical Alert bracelets or necklaces).
  - Hustle on and off the field as means to keep the game moving at a consistent pace.
  - For safety reasons, all players are to remain inside the dugout when on offense, with the exception of the current batter.

## Manager/Coach Ground Rules

- Ask if all male players are properly equipped with athletic supporters that protect the groin area (require a verbal response).
- Explain that time will not be granted for managers to discuss "judgment calls" made by umpires (safes, outs, balls, strikes, etc.)
- Do not leave the dugout until a proper time-out is called or granted by an umpire.

Knowing what is to be discussed during the plate conference comes from practice and repetition. This is your first, best opportunity to set the mood for the game, and establish a positive, working dialogue with each team's coaching staff. Be polite and respectful of their positions, and by all means necessary, avoid using a dictatorial tone or arrogant attitude. Lastly, avoid the phrase, "Are there any questions?" The plate conference is not the time or place for a clinic on the playing rules and regulations.

Sources: <https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/tips-for-conducting-an-effective-pregame-plate-conference/>

# Drill #4a

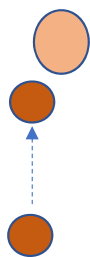
Scenario: Outfield hit and runner goes to 2B

A = No Runners On  
B = Runner on 1<sup>st</sup>  
C = Any Other Combination

Group #3

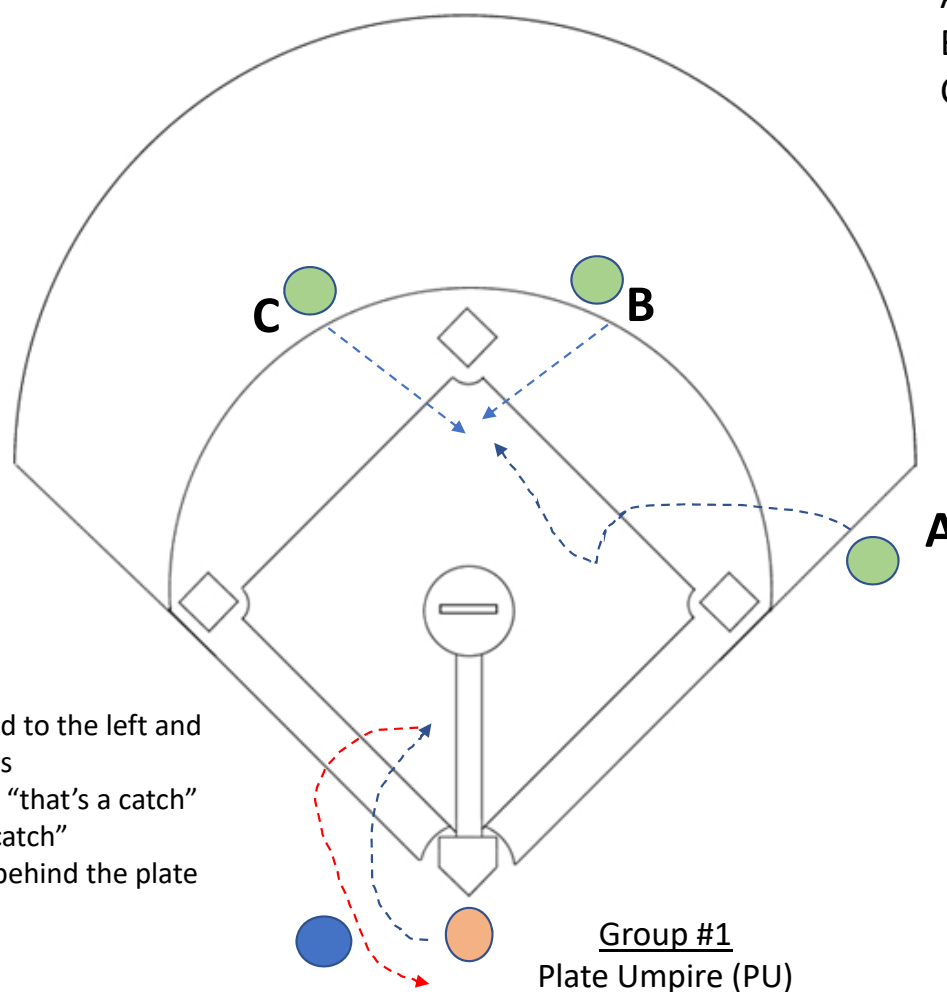
Soft Toss

\* Continued on following slide



Helper will toss ball to catcher

- PU will take mask off and will go around to the left and watch to see if OF makes catch or drops
- If it's a catch, will signal an out and say "that's a catch"
- If dropped, give safe sign and say "no catch"
- PU will then drop step and go back to behind the plate



Group #1  
Plate Umpire (PU)

Group #2  
Base Umpire (BU)  
Will Rotate to B and C

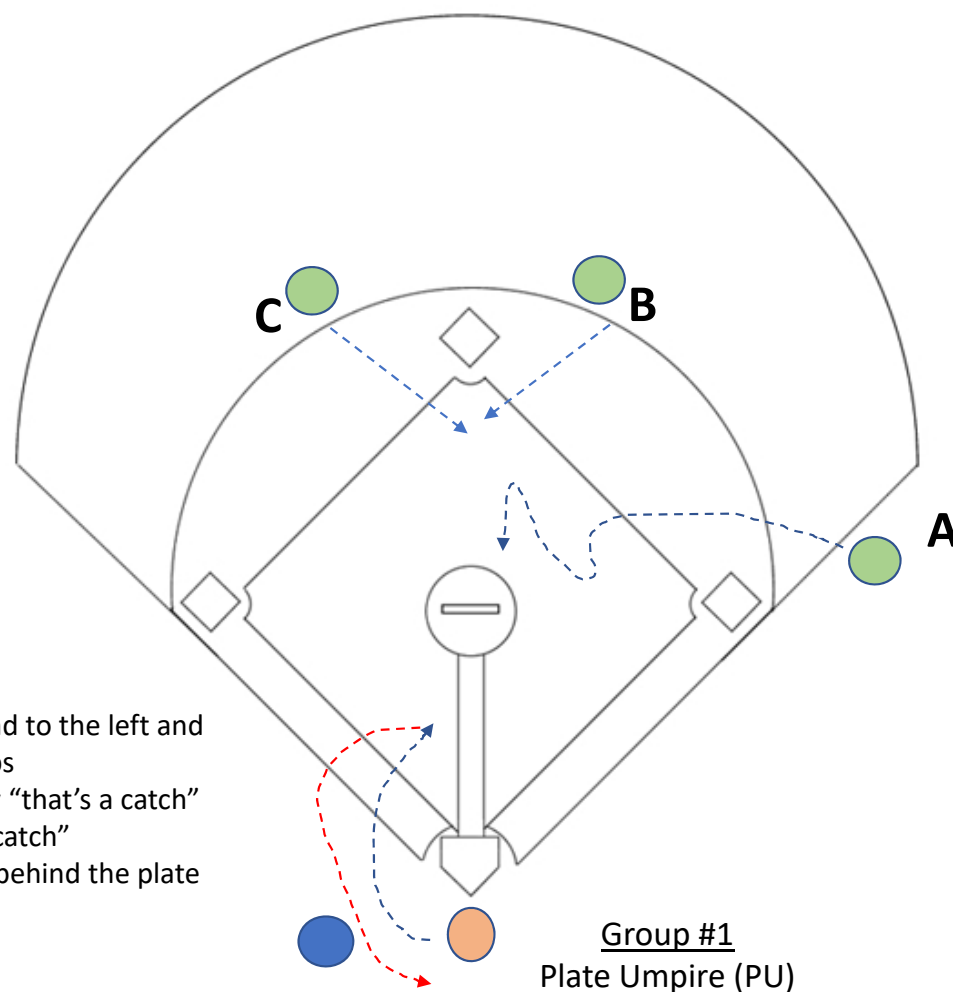
- On outfield hit, BU will run into IF on fly ball and will turn head to the right and watch that the runner touches 1B and then they will get into a position to make the call at 2B

Sources: <https://www.printyourbrackets.com/printable-baseball-diamond-diagram.html>

# Drill #4b

Scenario: Outfield hit and runner rounds 1B but goes back to 1B

A = No Runners On  
B = Runner on 1<sup>st</sup>  
C = Any Other Combination



- PU will take mask off and will go around to the left and watch to see if OF makes catch or drops
- If it's a catch, will signal an out and say "that's a catch"
- If dropped, give safe sign and say "no catch"
- PU will then drop step and go back to behind the plate

- Group #2  
Base Umpire (BU)  
Will Rotate to B and C
- On outfield hit, BU will run into IF on fly ball and will turn head to the right and watch that the runner touches 1B but if runner heads back to 1B, then BU retreats back to get a better angle of play at 1B

Group #1  
Plate Umpire (PU)

Sources: <https://www.printyourbrackets.com/printable-baseball-diamond-diagram.html>

# Drill #4c

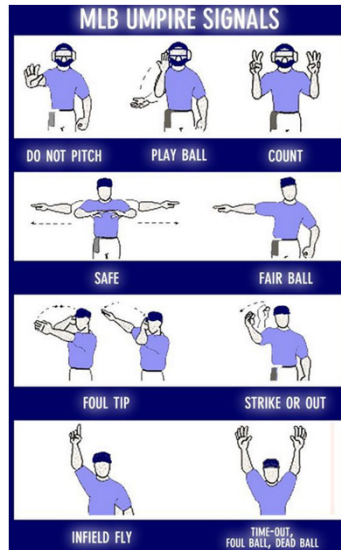
## Group #3 Soft Toss

PU will call:

- Foul/Time
- Check Swing
- Foul Tip



Helper will toss  
ball to catcher



### The "Check Swing – Batter Offers"

Mechanic is used when a batter starts their swing and then attempts to stop it but is unsuccessful. It is also used when the batter attempts to bunt and does not make contact with the ball.

1. The first part of the mechanic is identifying that the batter swung. Just prior to the pitcher delivering the ball, get set in your stance. You shouldn't be in the process of getting set as the pitch is being delivered.
2. As the pitch comes in and you determine it to be a checked swing, stand straight up out of your stance. There is no need to bring the feet together when performing this movement.
3. Lift the arm that is on the side of the batter and, with the hand, point at the batter while verbalizing, "Yes He Did!" If the batter is female, verbalize, "Yes She Did! Hold the arm in that position for a few seconds and then.
4. Drop the arm to the side.

### The "Check Swing, Ask for Help"

Mechanic is used when a batter checks their swing and the catcher requests that the umpire asks their partner for assistance with the call.

1. Just prior to the pitcher delivering the ball, get set in your stance. You shouldn't be in the process of getting set as the pitch is being delivered. As the pitch comes in and it is determined to be a checked swing, call the pitch a ball as normal if it didn't pass through the strike zone.
2. When the catcher asks for the umpire to get assistance with the call, stand straight up out of your stance and take a cross-over step to the right. This will allow for a clear view of the base umpire.
3. Using the left arm and hand, point at the base umpire and verbalize, "Did He Go!" If it is a female batter, verbalize, "Did She Go!"
4. If the base umpire responds with, "No He Didn't," no further action is required.
5. If the base umpire responds with, "Yes He Did," signal a strike while verbalizing, "then that is a strike."
6. Return back behind the catcher and give the count, since it has now changed.

Sources: <https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/check-swing-ask-help-strike-mechanic/>

## Drill #5

- Gather all kids into a 3 different circles with each instructor
- Thank everyone for coming
- Explain Assignr that we will release games weekly or bi-weekly

Sources:

# Umpire Introduction

# Introduction

- Overview of Presentation
  - “Basic Training” class intended to familiarize new umpires with common situations, rules and “how to’s”
  - Helps the new umpire know what to do on the field
  - Refreshes rules/mechanics for experienced umpires

# Expectations of SBLL Umpires

- Maintain positive attitude and professionalism at all times
  - Project the example of the attitude we expect from everyone else
- Keep tempers in check
  - Umpires expected to have “thick skin”
  - Don’t have “quick triggers” for ejections (***more on ejections later***)
- Be out there for the league and players
  - Not solely to demonstrate that we’re “in control” .....**But** ... know **how** and **be able** to maintain or regain control



# Expectations of SBLL Umpires

- Understand and implement the rules as best we can
  - Always strive to get better and learn more about the game
  - Understand that everyone makes mistakes – don't dwell on them but learn from them for next time
    - Dwelling on a mistake will cause you to “daydream” and lose focus for the next few plays and possibly miss calls
- Take this job as seriously as you would any other in terms of your etiquette

# Equipment Needed

- Umpire polo shirt (dark navy or light blue)
- Catcher's mask (for plate umpire)
- Protective cup
- Chest protector
- Shin guards
- Counter
- Brush

Prior to Start of Game

# Plate Umpire Prior to the Game Start

To Check:

- All bats must say USA (all travel bats must remain outside the dugout)
- Batters helmets must have manufacturer face shield
- For Catchers
  - Must have throat guard attached to mask
  - Must be wearing a cup
- All players are in the dugout
- Meet with both managers to discuss
  - Strike zone
  - Dead ball areas
  - Advance at 3<sup>rd</sup> base on passed ball

# Plate Umpire Meeting with both Managers

Meet with both managers to discuss

- Introductions
- Get lineups
- Go over game/local rules
  - Strike zone
  - Dead ball areas
  - Advance at 3<sup>rd</sup> base on passed ball
- Continuous lineup
- How many players
- Any ineligible pitchers
- Both managers have checked their players equipment, need to hear a “YES” from both managers

# Signaling Mechanics

Slideshow Created By:  
Hayes A. Davis

# Plate Umpiring

# Plate Umpire – Ball Call



**Ball Call:** Always stay down in your set position. There is no hand signal. Loudly and clearly call "Ball!"

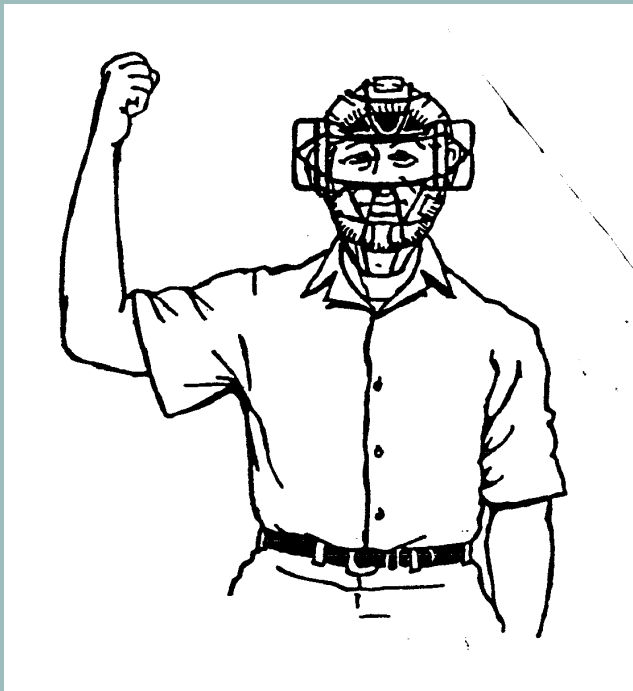
After the call is made then rise up out of the set position to relax between pitches.

The only time the ball number is indicated is on "Ball Four!"

Never point to first base with either hand on ball four as it might confuse the defense as an out signal.



# Plate Umpire – Strike Call



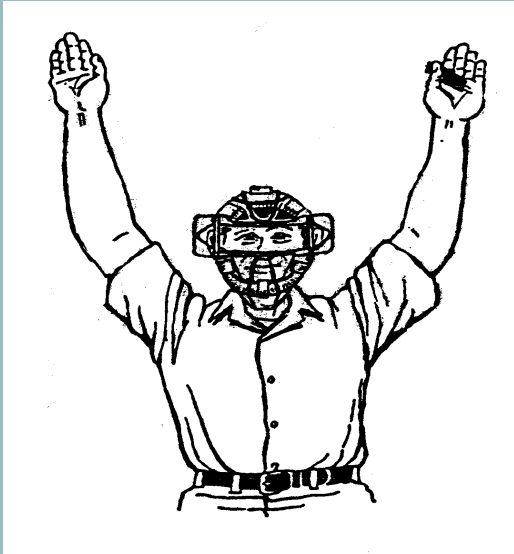
**Strike Call:** Wait for the pitch to hit the catcher's glove (proper timing technique). Stand erect out of your crouch. Made with a raised right arm and clinched fist and then "pound the door" with the fist. Different styles, like open hand (or a point) out to the side are also used. NEVER take your eye off the ball when making this signal as you may miss a play in progress. Verbalized as "Strike!"

Never call a "swinging strike" unless it is strike three which could lead to the batter-runner attempting an advance to first on a "third strike not caught."

Called third strikes require a little more vocalization.

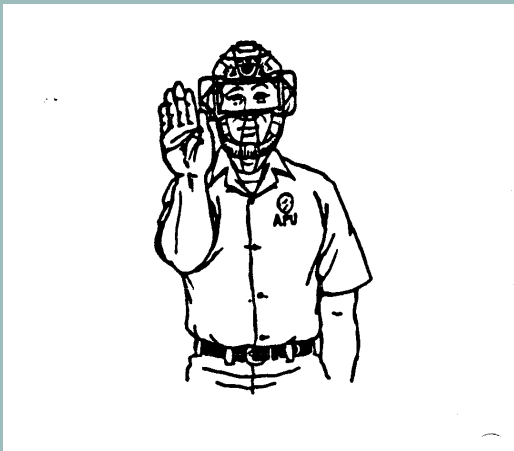
**NOTE:** On a "third strike not legally caught" where the batter is NOT entitled to advance to first base, the plate umpire should follow the strike three call with "Batter is out!, Batter is out!" to warn both the defense and the offense that the batter cannot legally attempt an advance to first base.

# Plate Umpire – Time Call



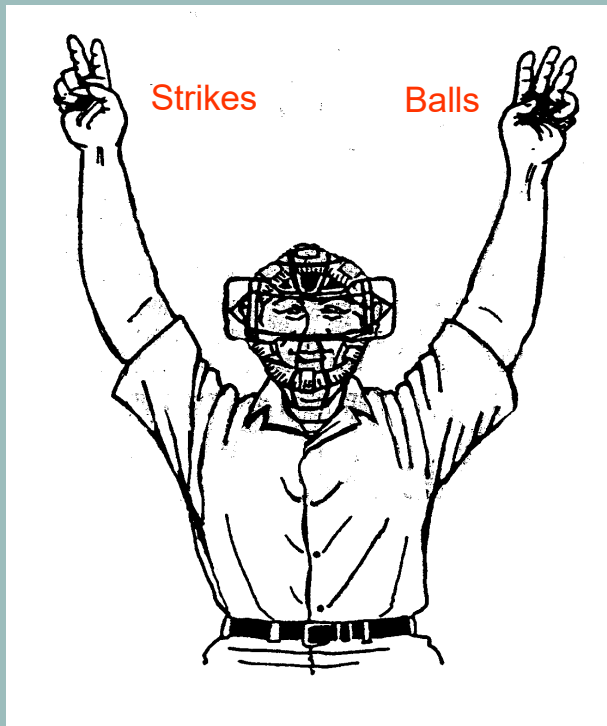
**Time Call:** It is very important that everyone on the field knows when you have called time. Raise both hands high in the air (palms out) and verbalize "Time!" This signal should be echoed by your partner(s). Once "Time" has been called, NOTHING can occur on the field of play.

**MOVE 2 STEPS AWAY TO THE LEFT OF RIGHT OF THE BATTER DEPENDING IF RH OR LF HITTER (for example if right handed hitter, you would move 2 steps to your right)**



The "stop" or "do not pitch" signal may be used to allow a batter to get set in the batter's box. It cannot be seen as clearly as both arms raised and should not be routinely substituted for the raised arms signal. This signal has the SAME impact as both arms raised high in the air. The ball is not live and no plays can be made.

# Plate Umpire – Giving the Pitch Count



**Giving the Pitch Count:** The pitch count is signaled by holding up fingers on the left hand to indicate balls while the right hand is used to indicate strikes.

The pitch count is verbalized as, "three balls, two strikes", not "three and two", "thirty-two", "full count" or with closed fists.

Generally, the count isn't verbalized until the second or third pitch to the batter. The pitch count **SHOULD** be given after every "action pitch" (i.e. when batter has two strikes or three balls on the count to him).

Give the pitch count towards the pitcher and make the verbalization loud enough that the batter and coaches can hear it also. This avoids having to repeat the pitch count to different personnel.

# Plate Umpire – Checked Swing Appeal

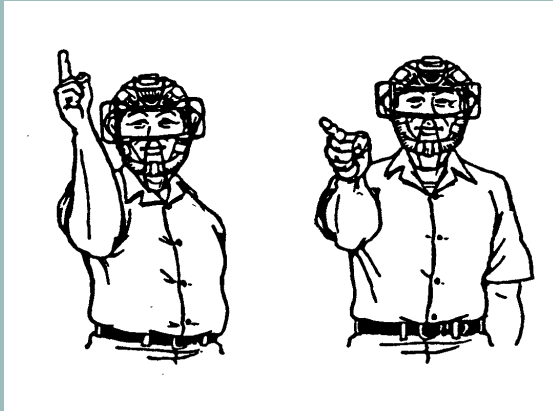


## Checked Swing Appeals

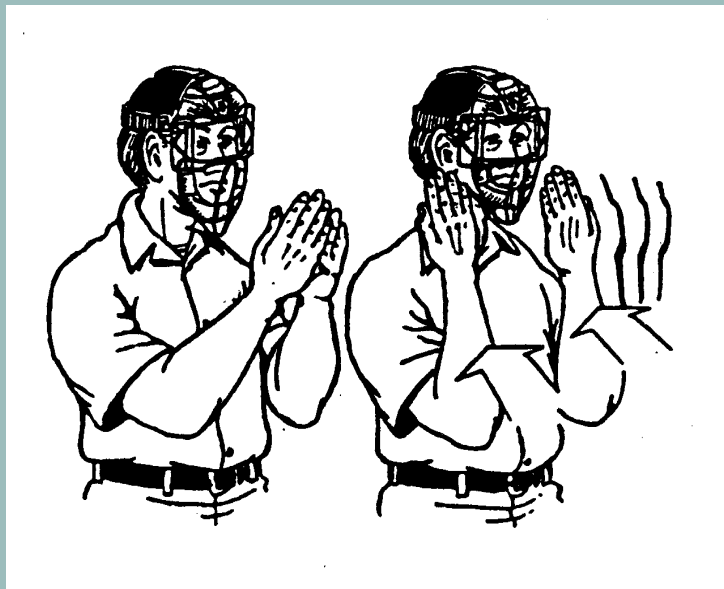
**Ball:** The plate umpire remains in the set position and calls, "Ball, no he didn't go!" If the catcher asks for an appeal, the plate umpire will point at the appropriate base umpire and loudly ask, "Did he go?" If the base umpire responds with a "no swing" signal the plate umpire will then merely indicate the current pitch count. If the base umpire responds with a "swing" signal the plate umpire will then indicate, "Then it's a strike. The count is now..."

**Strike:** Checked swing strikes (asked for by the offensive team) are NEVER appealed. After an appropriate warning, any player or coach that persists in requesting appeals on a checked swing strike should be removed from the game.

# Plate Umpire – Putting Ball in Play



**Putting Ball in Play:** The rules require that a verbalized “play” be called anytime the ball is made live again after becoming dead. First raise your right hand up forming a right angle and then point at the pitcher. Unless the ball is live no bases can be run, runs scored (except on dead ball awards), appeals made or any runner be put out. The verbalization of “play” is also important in letting your partner(s) know when the ball is alive versus dead.

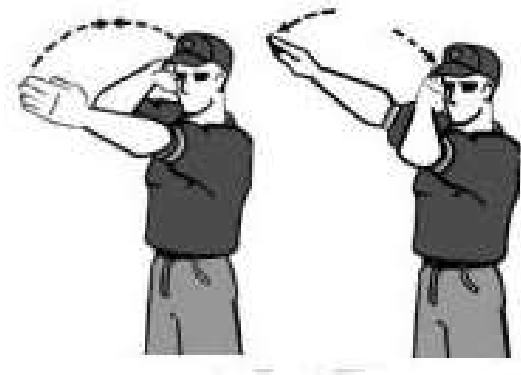


An alternative way to signal “play” is to put both hands up in front of your body with the palms in and then making a “come here” motion.

# Foul Tip

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
- Because the ball is alive and runners can advance never say "Foul Tip." Announcing "foul" anything could stop the action.
  - The ball is alive and runners can advance at their own risk



Sources: [https://www.ducksters.com/sports/baseball/baseball\\_umpire\\_signals.php](https://www.ducksters.com/sports/baseball/baseball_umpire_signals.php)

<http://files.leagueathletics.com/Images/Club/19401/Umpire%20Signals%20and%20Communicating%20with%20Your%20Partner.pdf>

# Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike call

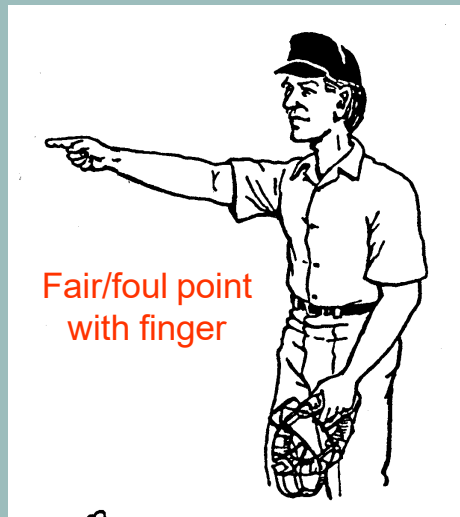
The “Uncaught Third Strike” Mechanic is used when the batter becomes a runner due to the third strike not being caught with two outs or first base unoccupied.

1. On a pitch that is strike three and is determined to have not been caught, the signal used to indicate the third strike is by pointing with the right hand and arm out to the side using no voice. Using this signal mitigates any confusion that could occur from players misconstruing the standard strike mechanic as being an “out” call. At that point, four possibilities could occur.
2. If the ball gets away from the catcher and it is obvious to everyone that the pitch was not caught, no additional action is needed.
3. If the pitch is short-hopped by the catcher, and the batter-runner attempts to advance with no tag attempt, use the “Safe” mechanic and verbalize, “no catch”.
4. If the batter-runner attempts to advance and a tag attempt misses, use the “Safe” mechanic and verbalize, “no tag”.
5. If the batter-runner is tagged immediately, use the “out” mechanic.

# Plate Umpire – Fair/Foul Call



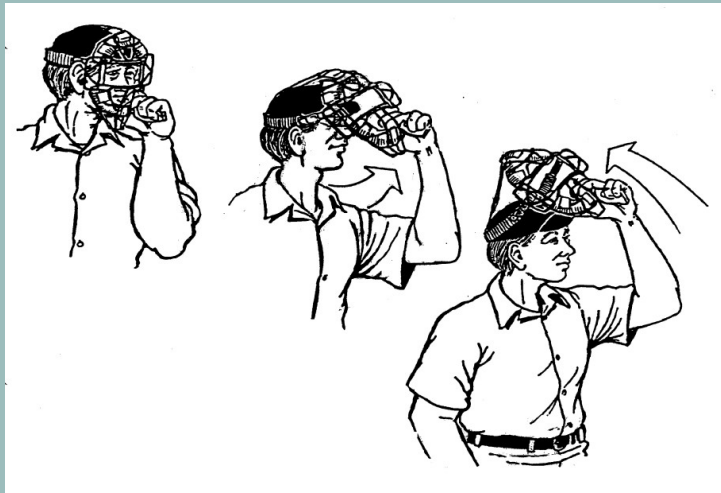
**Fair and Foul Call:** The Fair Call is NEVER verbalized! Any sound associated with indicating a fair ball could be construed as "foul" and stop play. Merely point into fair territory and say nothing. If necessary, emphatically point into fair territory if it appears that players are not reacting to the batted ball.



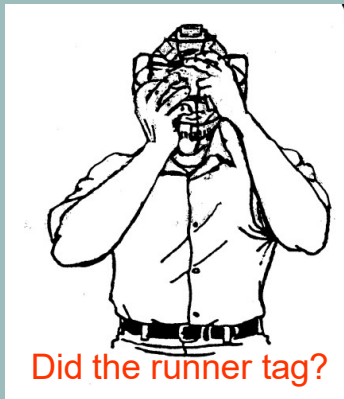
The Foul Call is always preceded by the Time signal which kills all play and alerts the runners and coaches. The umpire then points toward foul territory. The arm and hand signals are accompanied by emphatic voicing of "Foul!" or "Foul Ball!" Once the foul call is made all action is immediately suspended. You can never change a foul ball into a fair ball and will have to live with the call.



# Plate Umpire – Mask Removal

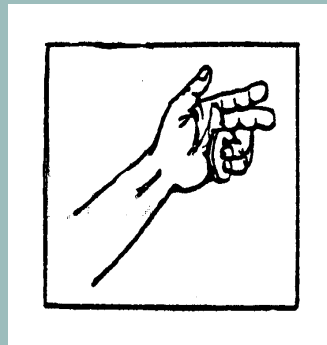


Proper mask removal technique



Did the runner tag?

Wrong – blocks view

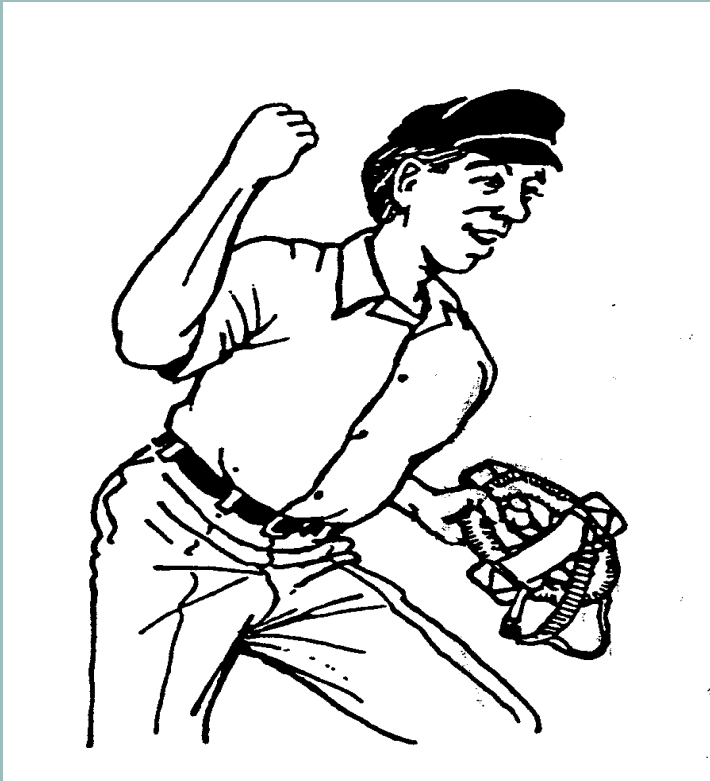


Indicator properly held

**Mask Removal:** The mask should be removed often to provide the best possible view of all action. The key to successfully removing the mask and leaving your hat in place is to make sure that the mask is loose on the head. It should lift away from the face and wiggle fairly easily when your head is tilted forward and down. Always use the left hand to remove the mask. Grasp the mask in the lower left padded area, pull the bottom of the mask STRAIGHT OUT and then push the mask STRAIGHT UP, clearing the brim of the cap. Done properly, the mask removal will allow an 8-stitch cap to be worn under a mask.

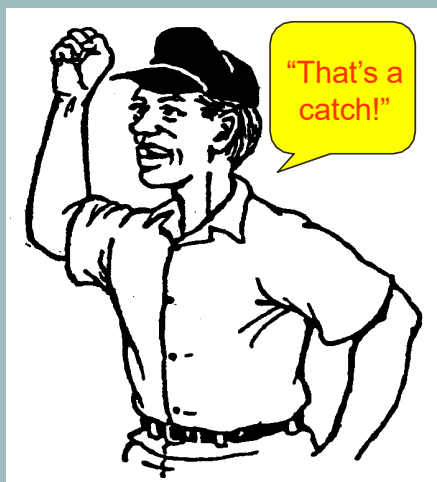
Improper technique will lead to your hat flying off or obstructing the view so a play is missed. The indicator is held with the ring and pinky fingers of the left hand and the remaining two fingers and thumb are then free to remove and hold the mask. It takes some practice but becomes second nature for experienced umpires.

# Plate Umpire – Out Call



**Out Call:** The signal is similar to the strike signal. Mask is ALWAYS held in left hand so it doesn't go flying when making the call. It is possible that on rapidly developing plays at home (i.e. squeeze plays) that the mask cannot be removed in time since these plays occur so quickly. The right arm creates a right angle, fist is clinched. Verbalized as "He's out!" Be emphatic on close calls which will "sell the call."

# Plate Umpire – Catch/No Catch



**Catch and No Catch Call:** On questionable plays in the outfield or infield, the umpire should always indicate whether or not the ball was legally caught. This is the only way runners, fielders and coaches are made aware of the status of the ball. These calls are not usually initiated for routine situations, but the Out signal is used on routine fly balls that are caught.

On close catches the umpire should loudly verbalize, "That's a catch, that's a catch!"

The signals for these calls are the same for the Out and Safe signal. The Out signal indicates that the catch was legally made and the Safe signal indicates that the catch was not legally made. The Catch call is, "That's a catch!" while the No Catch call is, "No catch! No catch!" On close plays either way the signal and call should be made more than once.

On close non-catches, such as trapped balls, the umpire should loudly verbalize, "No catch, no catch!" This allows his partner and all players to know that the ball is still in play and avoids confusion.

# Base Umpire - Infield Fly Declaration



**Infield Fly Declaration:** Any umpire may initiate the call of Infield Fly. However, on balls hit near the foul lines the plate umpire is responsible for the initial call which is vocalized as, "Infield fly if fair!"

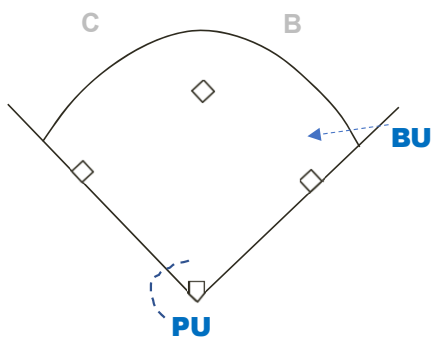
To protect all runners the Infield Fly call should be echoed by all umpires. The call should be given loudly and clearly so there is no confusion for the runners.

The umpire first points high in the air while calling, "Infield fly!" The umpire then makes the Out signal and calls, "The batter's out!" To avoid confusion for the players the signals and calls may be repeated.

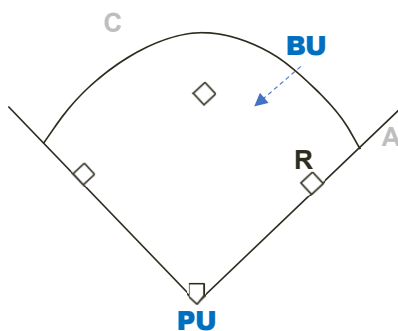
# Position at Start of Play (ball hit in infield ball)

(aka .... Rotation)

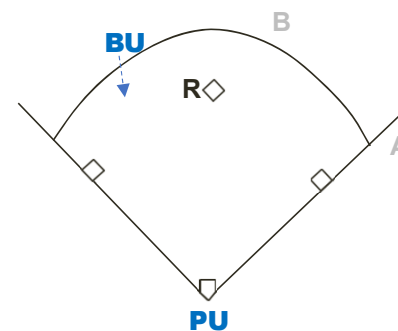
## 60' Diamond



**Bases empty**



**Runner on 1<sup>st</sup>**



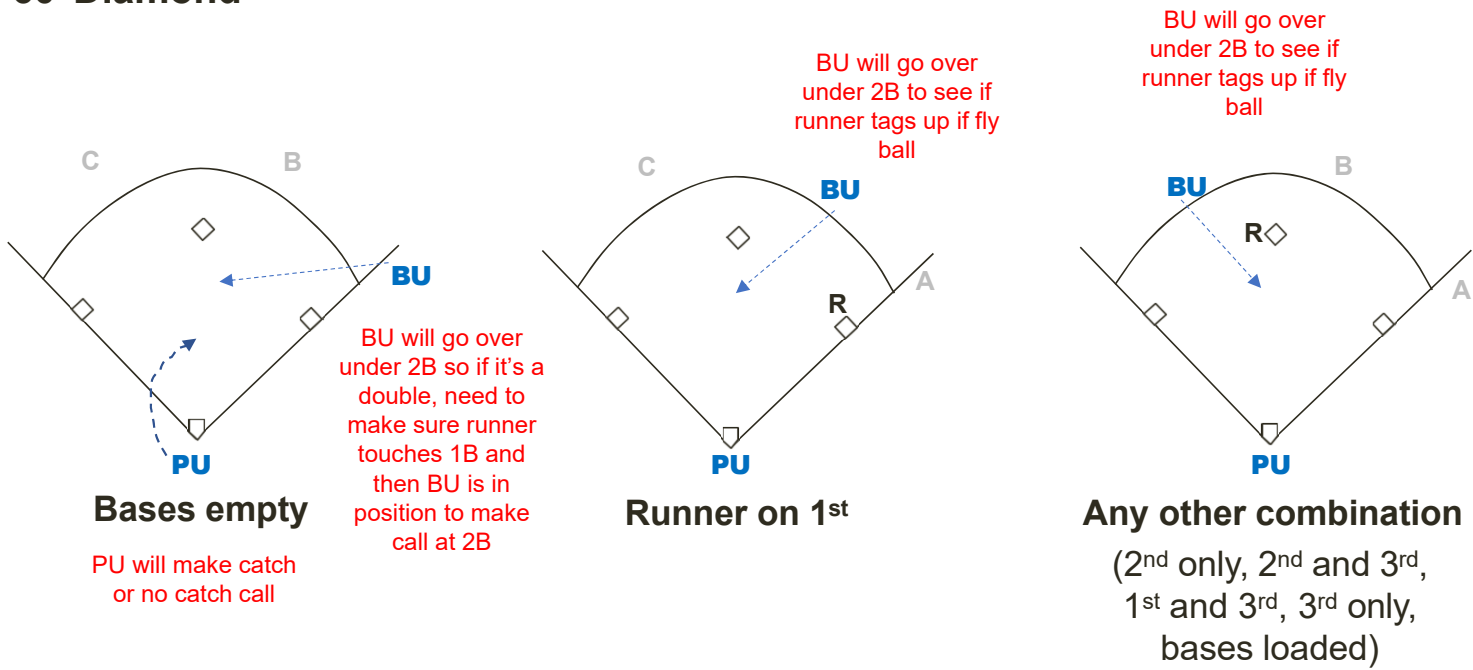
**Any other combination**

(2<sup>nd</sup> only, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>,  
1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> only,  
bases loaded)

# Position at Start of Play (ball hit to outfield ball)

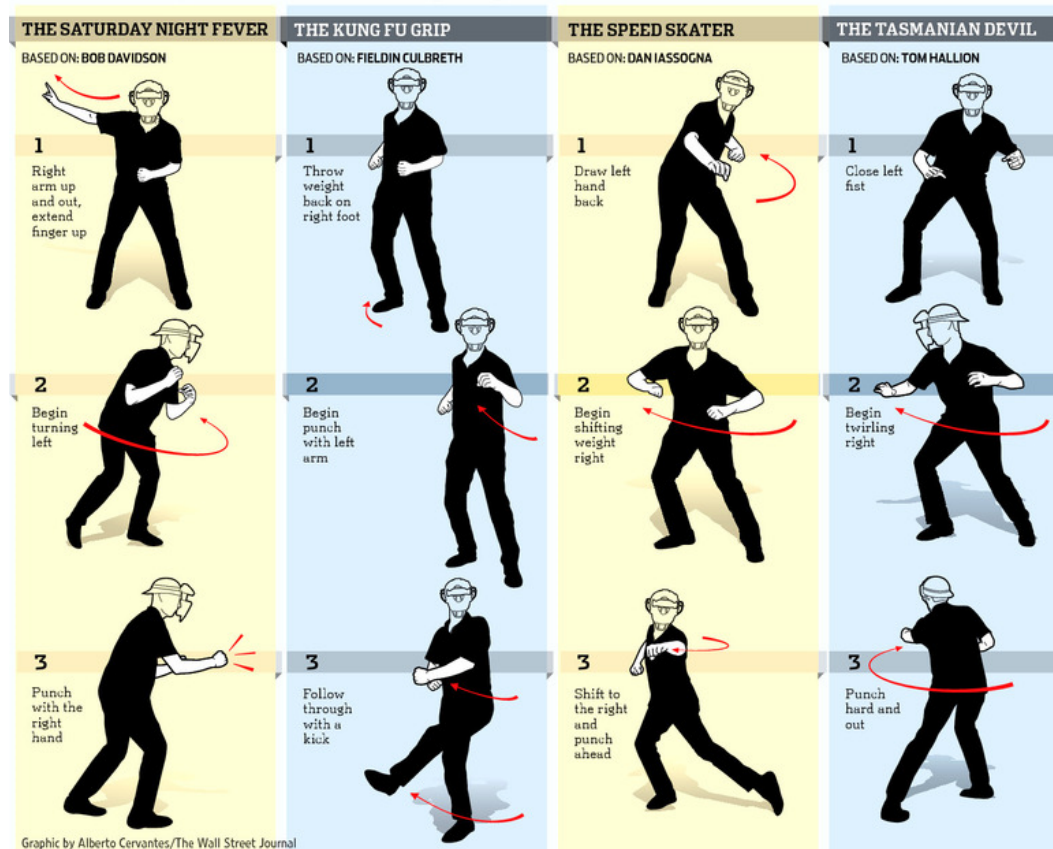
(aka....Rotation)

## 60' Diamond



# Sample Strike 3 Calls

**Striiiiike 3!** | A breakdown of some of Major League Baseball's most distinctive third-strike calls.



Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424053111904006104576500353926412590>

Base Umpiring



## Things the base umpire needs to know

- Before the ball is hit
  - Where to be at the start of the play
- Responsibilities as pitch is delivered
  - Base umpire has certain responsibilities on the pitch
- After the ball is hit
  - Where to go and how to move into position as play develops
- Other basics:
  - How to observe a play and get the call right
  - **PAUSING BEFORE MAKING YOUR CALL**
  - Knowing what calls are the BU's and what calls are the PU's
  - Basic rules (we'll cover the basics)
  - Basic responsibilities of plate versus base

# Responsibilities on the pitch

- On every pitch, what are the immediate priorities for a base umpire?
  1. Watching for the illegal pitch (and/or balk in Juniors and above)
  2. Handling pickoff plays to the bases (Juniors and above)
  3. Assisting on the check swing appeal
  4. Handling the "runner leaving early" rules (Minors and Majors)
  5. Watching for pickoff plays from the catcher
  6. Watching for attempted steals, particularly double steals when possible

# Where to go when ball is hit

*Single most important tip to learn .....*

- Ball is in – You're out, Ball is out – You're in
  - If a hit ball stays in the infield and is fielded by an infielder, BU stays outside and makes call from shallow outfield or in the dirt
  - If a hit ball gets through to the outfield (either on a fly ball or ground ball), BU busts inside, turns to watch runner tag first and follows runner and ball to the play. BU should be set ahead of arriving runner.
    - Only way to keep up with the runners and be in position for the play
    - Helps you stay out of the way of the ball coming in
    - *Aside from being the proper mechanic, it makes your life as the BU much easier!*

***If you learn ONE thing at this clinic, learn this tip !!!***



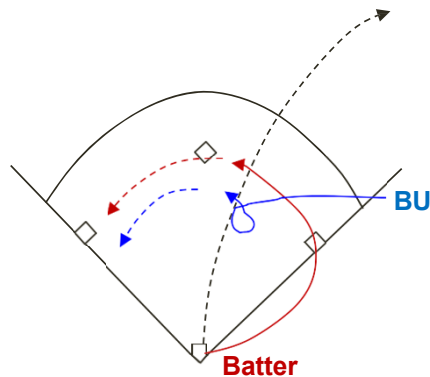
Second most important tip for the new base umpire

# Where to go when ball is hit

*Out – You're in ..... In – You're out*

- Example Play: Outfield hit with no one on
  - BU breaks into infield, turns left to watch runner touch 1<sup>st</sup>, then moves with and ahead of runner to be ready for a play at 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - No way to stay out and beat runner to bases as well as watch runner touch 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>
    - The runner would be behind you and the ball would be coming in from your back
    - You might even be in the way of the ball coming in

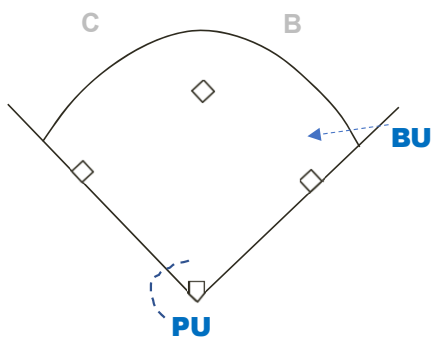
Example



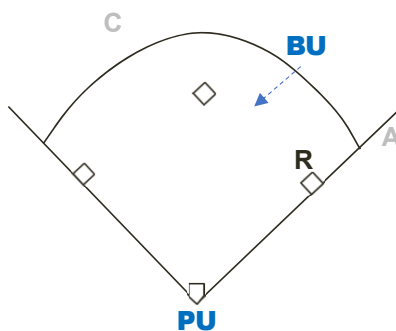
# Position at Start of Play (ball hit in infield ball)

(aka .... Rotation)

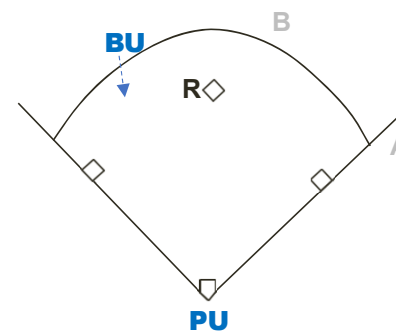
## 60' Diamond



**Bases empty**



**Runner on 1<sup>st</sup>**



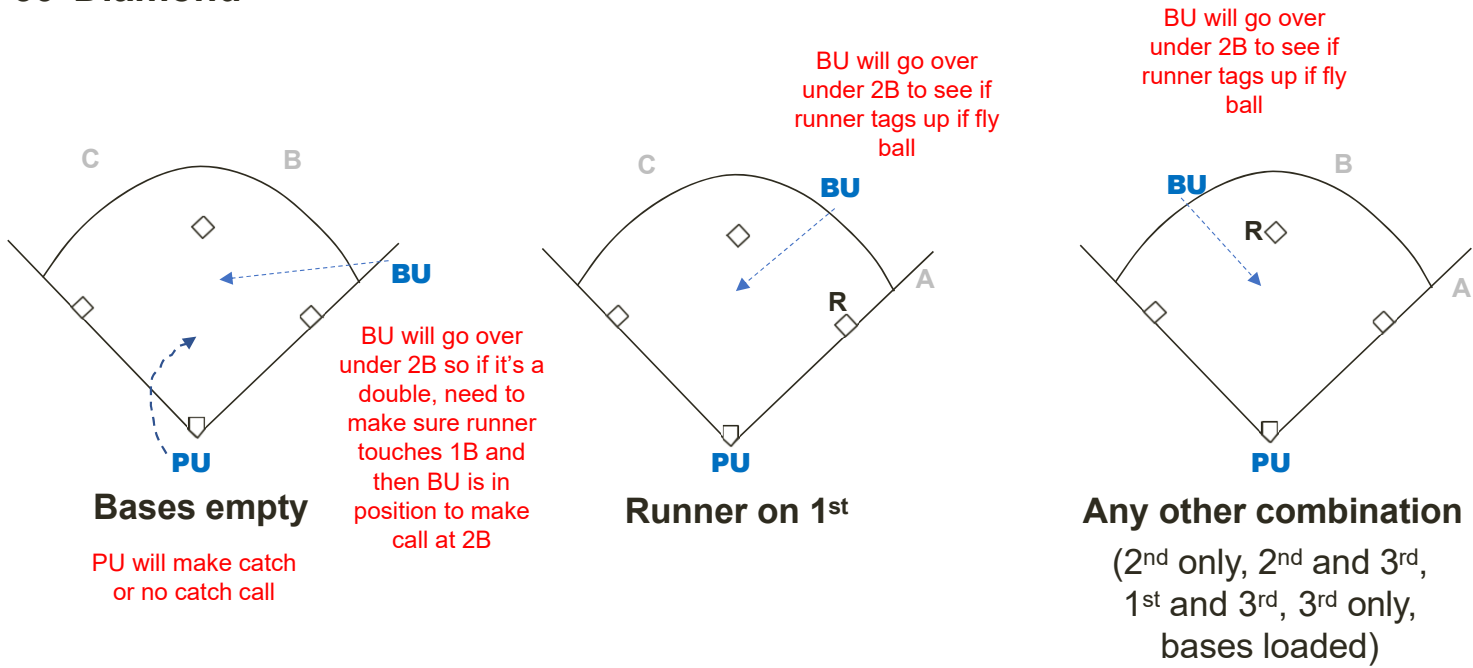
**Any other combination**

(2<sup>nd</sup> only, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>,  
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bases loaded)

# Position at Start of Play (ball hit to outfield ball)

(aka....Rotation)

## 60' Diamond



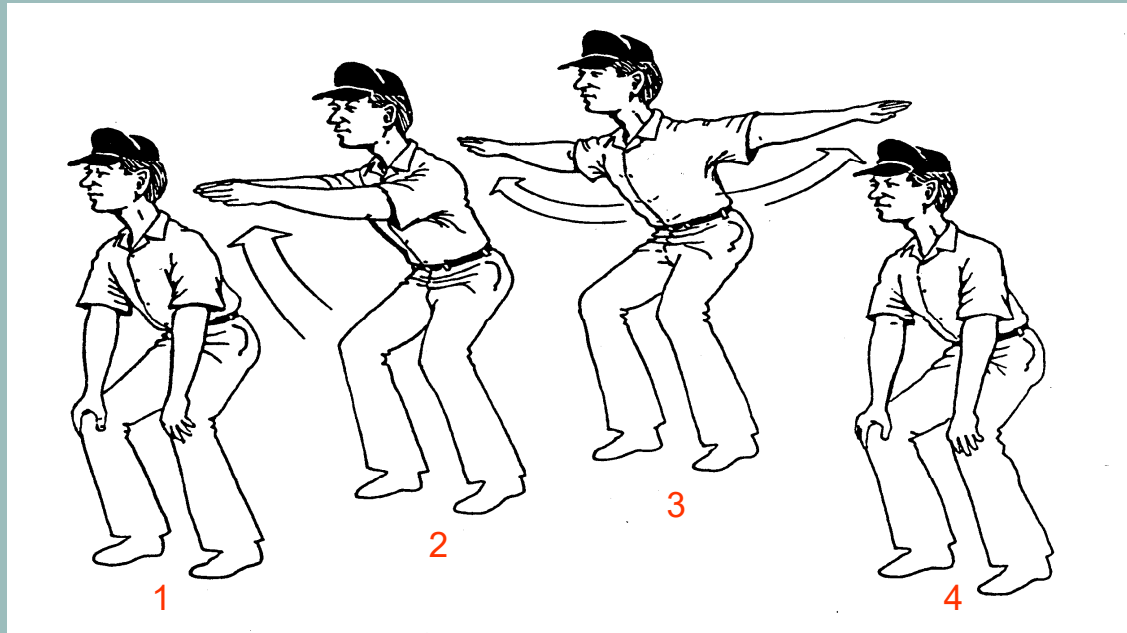
# Base Umpire – Set Position



**Hands-on-Knees Set Position:** The hands-on-knees set position is used by the base umpire before every pitch is delivered. It allows him to quickly respond to the proper positioning for making calls. It is also assumed before calling most plays. (However, there are times when a play develops so quickly that the base umpire must assume a standing set position.)

To assume the set position, lower your seat and don't bend over at the waist. Place the hands on the knees or thighs with only the thumbs on the inside of the legs. Keep the head up and don't lower the chin. Align the elbows with the arms. Relax the shoulders to dissipate the physical tension. Keep your weight forward in your stance which enhances agility. The set position is also assumed after making any call originated from this position before hustling to the next pre-pitch position.

# Base Umpire – Safe Call Sequence

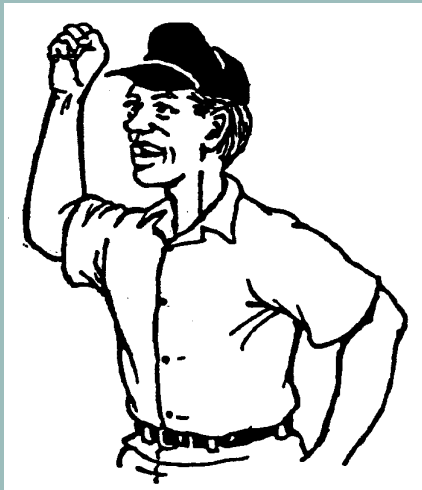


## Safe Call Sequence:

- 1 - In most instances the safe call is initiated from the "hands-on-knees" set position.
- 2 - The hands are lifted from the knees and fully extended OUT and UP with palms down.
- 3 - When shoulder height is attained, the hands are horizontally split to the sides of the body. The call is verbalized as , "He's safe!" as the hands are split.
- 4 - The hands are then returned to the out-and-up position and then the set position is re-assumed. The sequence gives the impression that the umpire was steady and in a good position to make the call.



# Base Umpire – Out Call



**Out Call:** The out call is normally initiated from the hands-on-knees set position.

The right arm is brought up high and then bent at the elbow to form a right angle.

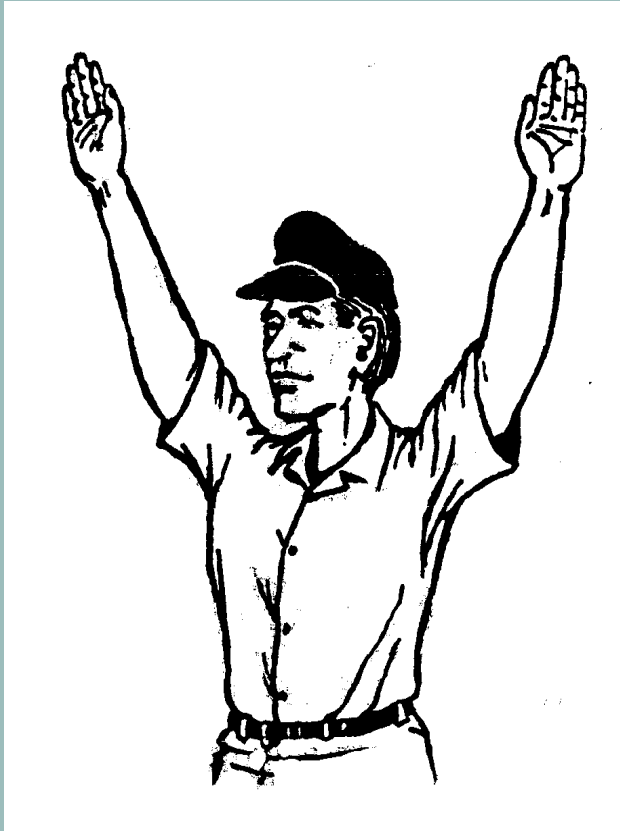
The hand is closed into a fist and then slightly pumped forward.

The call is verbalized as, "He's out!" The umpire then returns to the set position.

On any close out call the base umpire should "sell the call"

by making the call louder and more emphatic while being quieter and less demonstrative on routine plays

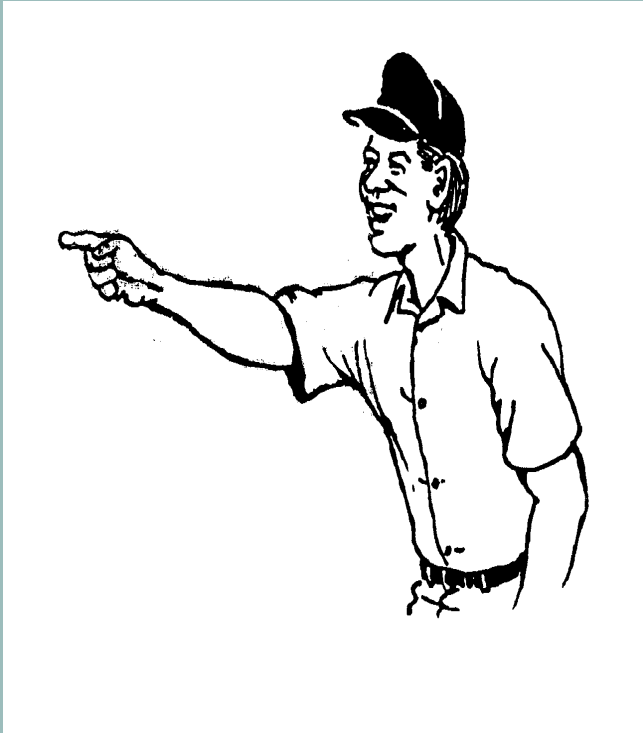
# Base Umpire – Time Call



**Time Call:** The time call is initiated any time there is a need for a dead ball situation. It is also used to "echo" a partner's Time call. Both arms are fully raised and the palms are facing out. The call is verbalized LOUDLY as, "Time!"

The Time signal and/or call is often used by the base umpire in conjunction with other types of calls such as interference, obstruction, foul balls and ground rule doubles.

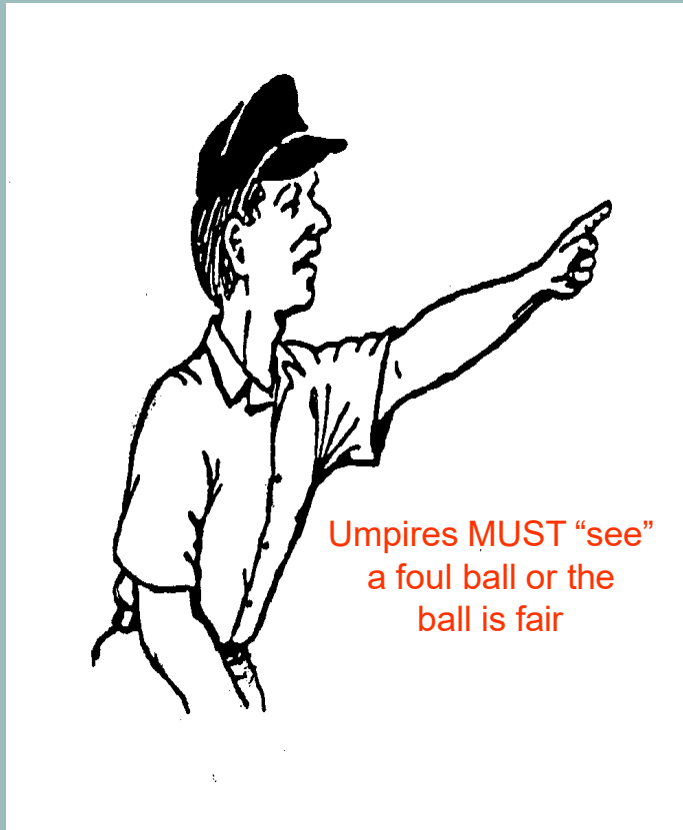
# Base Umpire – Fair Ball Call



**Fair Call:** No voice is ever used to indicate a batted ball that is fair. The base umpire merely points into fair territory. On close fair balls or in the event that the players do not respond immediately, the base umpire can emphatically point into fair territory several times.

In cases of close fair/foul balls the base umpire is better off leaving the ball "fair" until additional information can be obtained. Runners can always be put back to their time-of-pitch bases if the ball is later determined to be foul.

# Base Umpire – Foul Ball Call



**Foul Call:** A foul ball is first indicated by raising both arms and signaling Time. This kills all play and alerts the runners and coaches.

The umpire then points toward foul territory.

The arm and hand signals are accompanied by an emphatic call of "Foul!" or "Foul Ball!"

Once a batted ball is declared a foul ball it is forever foul. An umpire who makes the mistake of calling a fair ball "foul" should be ready to take some well-deserved heat.

It's better to leave a close call Fair and later put runners back than to kill all action by calling the ball Foul.

# Base Umpire - Infield Fly Signal to Partner



**Infield Fly Signal to Partner:** This signal is flashed among umpires as a reminder of a potential infield fly situation. Under the proper conditions, a fly ball which an infielder can handle with ordinary effort must be declared an infield fly and the rule invoked. The infield fly situation signal is normally initiated by the plate umpire and then acknowledged by the base umpire. In the event that the plate umpire initiates this signal when the infield fly is not in affect, the base umpire should call Time and then conference with the plate umpire to insure that the infield fly is not improperly applied.

Another infield fly communication signal that is commonly used is the umpires touching the brim of their caps with their right pointing finger.

# Base Umpire - Infield Fly Declaration



**Infield Fly Declaration:** Any umpire may initiate the call of Infield Fly. However, on balls hit near the foul lines the plate umpire is responsible for the initial call which is vocalized as, "Infield fly if fair!"

To protect all runners the Infield Fly call should be echoed by all umpires. The call should be given loudly and clearly so there is no confusion for the runners.

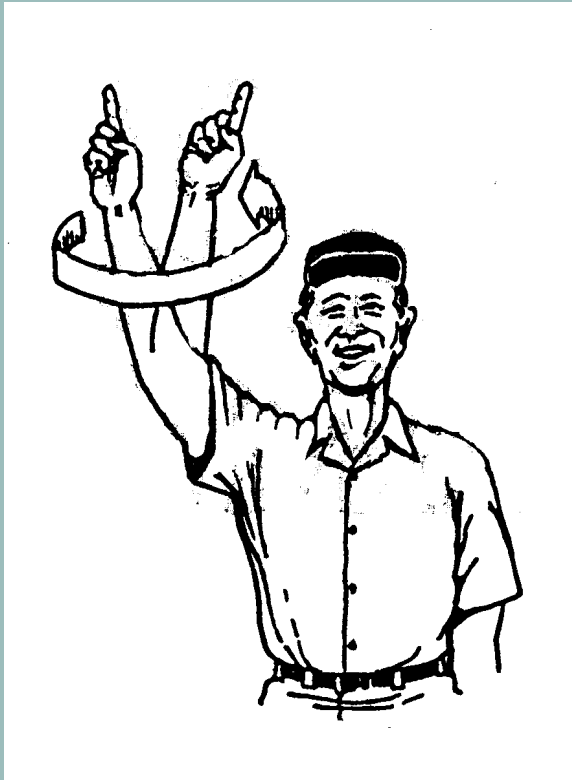
The umpire first points high in the air while calling, "Infield fly!" The umpire then makes the Out signal and calls, "The batter's out!" To avoid confusion for the players the signals and calls may be repeated.

# Base Umpire – “Off the Bag” Call



**Off the Bag:** This signal is an explanatory one used on plays in which the ball “beat the runner” but the fielder came off the bag to make the catch. It is used after the Safe signal and call has been made to indicate the umpire’s reason. It is vocalized as, “He’s off the bag!” The sweeping motion should be made in the direction the fielder moved and pulled himself off the base.

# Base Umpire – Home Run Signal



**Home Run:** This signal indicates the four base award for the home run. Unlike the ground rule double, it is not necessary to indicate that the ball is dead.

The base umpire points his right finger high in the air and then twirls his finger in a tight circle. There is no voice call associated with the home run signal.

The umpire then watches the bases he's responsible for to insure that runners legally touch the bases.

He then hustles to his next starting position and awaits potential appeal plays on missed bases, if appropriate.



## Base Umpire - Ground Rule Double Signal



**Ground Rule Double:** On a ground rule double the base umpire should first make the ball dead by initiating the Time signal and call. He then raises two fingers to indicate a two base award.

This same signal is also used for the awarding of two bases for overthrown balls that go out-of-play.

## Base Umpire - Checked Swing Appeal Responses



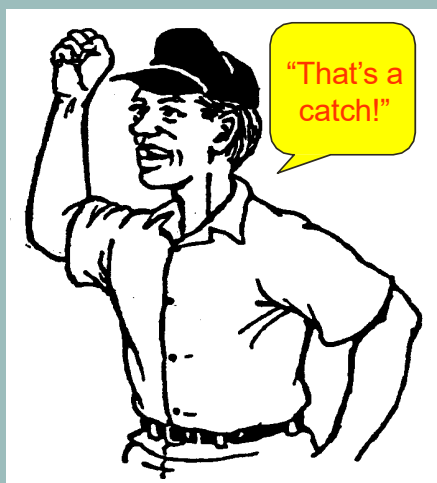
**Strike:** The base umpire initiates the Out signal while responding, "Yes, he went!"



**Ball:** The base umpire initiates the Safe signal while responding, "No, he didn't!"

**Helpful Hint:** The general rule of thumb on making the judgment call is whether or not the barrel of the bat breaks the plane of the foul line.

# Base Umpire – Catch/No Catch



**Catch and No Catch Call:** On questionable plays in the outfield or infield, the umpire should always indicate whether or not the ball was legally caught. This is the only way runners, fielders and coaches are made aware of the status of the ball. These calls are not usually initiated for routine situations, but the Out signal is used on routine fly balls that are caught.

On close catches the umpire should loudly verbalize, "That's a catch, that's a catch!"

The signals for these calls are the same for the Out and Safe signal. The Out signal indicates that the catch was legally made and the Safe signal indicates that the catch was not legally made. The Catch call is, "That's a catch!" while the No Catch call is, "No catch! No catch!" On close plays either way the signal and call should be made more than once.

On close non-catches, such as trapped balls, the umpire should loudly verbalize, "No catch, no catch!" This allows his partner and all players to know that the ball is still in play and avoids confusion.

# Base Umpire - Pointing Balk-Interference-Obstruction



- **Balk/Interference/Obstruction Point:**
  - The base umpire will always point at the situation and call, "That's a balk!", "Illegal Pitch!", "That's Interference!" or "That's obstruction!" as the case may be. On a delayed dead ball situation, it let's everyone know that you saw an incident occur although penalization may not take place until a later time.
  - Depending on the circumstances, the point and call may be preceded by or followed by the Time signal and call.

# Base Umpire – Enforcement/Ejection



**Enforcement:** This signal always follows a Time signal/call, then the Pointing signal. It is the act of awarding a runner additional bases predicated upon a violation by the defensive team. The call is made as follows. Point at the runner and call, "You!" Then make the Enforcement signal towards the base you're awarding and call, "Third base!" (Or whichever base you're awarding to the runner.)

**Ejection:** This signal is NEVER used in conjunction with the Pointing signal. Make sure you do not contact anyone or come exceptionally close to anyone with your gesture. Be positive, strong and aggressive but DO NOT "showboat". Keep your words simple; nothing cute like "Hit the road!", "To the showers!" or "See ya' later!" The call is merely, "You're gone!" Maintain your composure and professionalism. REMEMBER, the most vicious and damaging arguments often occur AFTER the ejection.

# Call It, Blue!



The End

BONUS MATERIAL

# Ejections and Dealing with Difficult Fans



# Ejections

*(Part 1 of 2)*

- Players – Reasonable causes for ejection
  - Threats or cursing either verbally or via body language
  - Repeated complaints about calls (again, try to have thick skin)
  - Reserve ejections to those who really deserve it .... But don't permit anyone to continually demonstrate disrespect to either the umpire crew or anyone else involved in the game
- Gross unsportsmanlike behavior
- Flagrant malicious behavior
  - Example: "Plowing" the catcher while attempting to score

# Ejections

*(Part 2 of 2)*

- Managers/coaches – Reasonable causes for ejection
  - Same as for players
  - Encouraging or “egging-on” spectators to complain about umpires calls
  - Arguing a call and not giving up on it

# Handling Difficult Fans or Coaches (part 1)

- Umpires are expected to have “thick skin”
  - Expect complaints and criticism – it’s natural for fans to think you made a bad call when it didn’t go their way
  - Learn to brush it off (almost as though you didn’t hear it – tune out the “fan chatter” .....)
  - For the “common complaints and comments” ... don’t react to fan criticism
    - Reacting acknowledges that you heard the comment and will encourage repeat behavior
    - Many times a complaining fan will stop complaining if it doesn’t get them anywhere (they make a spectacle of themselves)
    - **NEVER react by engaging spectators in arguments or debates about behavior or a call**

**However, there are times when umpires need to react ...**

**... *IN THE CORRECT WAY* (see next slide)**

# Handling Difficult Fans or Coaches (part 2)

- Out-of-Control Fans
  - Ask coach to help control and get the Game Coordinator or Board Member to help you
- Don'ts:
  - Don't engage spectators in arguments or debates
  - Don't eject a manager as a way to punish a team whose fans are complaining or out of control, or in an attempt to regain control
    - Official rules do not provide this course of action and do not imply that it is the coach's responsibility to control the spectators
- Do's:
  - Call time and contact a league official (board member) to gain control
  - If required, clear the field until control is regained
  - If control is not regained, consider postponing conclusion of game until a later date

# Base Umpiring

## – More Detail



# Pausing before making the call

*(Part 1 of 2)*

- **Problem:**

- Umpires sometimes feel pressure to make quick calls (nerves, knowing everyone is watching you, the fast pace of a play)
- In a fast action play, a new umpire will sometimes make a split second decision and make a quick call
- Quick calls are many times wrong

- **Examples:**

- Close play at first. What did you really see? Did runner's foot hit the bag first, or was the ball caught first? Are you absolutely sure of your call? Are you sure first baseman didn't pull his foot?
- Runner stealing 2<sup>nd</sup> with a close tag. After your quick "out" call, you notice the ball on the ground between the runner and the fielder



Third most important tip for the new base umpire

# Pausing before making the call *(Part 2 of 2)*

- The Solution
  - Stay calm at all times before, during and after a play
    - Feeling out of control will sometimes cause a knee-jerk fast call
  - Watch the play through to completion .... And think about what you just saw
  - Force yourself to delay (maybe by counting to 3) before verbalizing your call
  - Think to yourself ... “I’m **sure** he was safe/out” ... then say it for real, and appear confident as you make the call.
  - On tag plays, **find where the ball is after the play is over** and *confirm the out* only after verifying that the fielder had the ball in the tag-hand and had never lost control of it during the play (if the fielder is picking it up off the ground, runner was likely safe)
    - **If you think the tag was good but you aren’t sure where the ball is, ask the fielder to show you the ball, then make the call as needed.**

***After the play, PAUSE!!! Then make your call.***

# Coach Appeals vs. Judgment Calls

- Coaches can only argue or appeal a call when they deem a rule was violated or not applied correctly
- Coaches cannot appeal or argue judgment calls
  - Six Common Judgment Calls
    - Ball or Strike (I.e, strike zone)
    - Fair or Foul
    - Safe or Out
  - Other Judgment calls
    - Whether obstruction or Interference has occurred
    - Whether a hit ball is an Infield Fly
    - Check swing calls

Very common for a coach to argue a safe or out call. This is not proper and is not allowed, but they do it anyway.



# Handling appeals and arguments

- Coach disagrees with call
  - Must request time from the dugout
  - Umpire may grant time ... but should do so **only after the play has stopped**
    - Common knee-jerk reaction is to grant time right away. Don't. Hold up your hand to acknowledge the request but wait until play is over
  - Coach must approach the umpire who made the call
  - Coach can ask for a clarification of the call
  - Tips for Umpire
    - Realize this situation is common, so get used to it
    - Be confident in yourself, but not arrogant or argumentative
    - Be respectful .... You might have been wrong, so don't set yourself up to "eat crow". This will earn their respect for that game and those that follow.
    - Start you're response: "Coach, He was out"
    - Remember: Appeals are not debates

# Coach Appeals & Umpire Conferences

- When can (or should) one umpire help another with a call?
  - 9.02c No umpire can over-rule or seek to reverse the decision of another umpire unless asked to do so by the other umpire
  - Coach asks BU to seek “help” from Plate Umpire
    - If question deals with a judgment call, coach shouldn’t be appealing, although sometimes a coach will do so anyway under the “polite” explanation that he thinks “*your view may have been obstructed.*” If your view was not obstructed, simply say “Coach, I had a clear view and I ruled him out”
  - BU **does not** have to seek opinion of PU if BU is confident in the call or ruling (but if you have any doubt, go ahead and consult)
- **During “conference”:** Coach returns to dugout. Ruling umpire can ask for “help” .... ***but this is not to be interpreted as BU asking PU to make the call, nor should PU “take over” in an attempt to “correct the situation”.***
  - BU simply asks PU “what did you see”, or “did you see him drop the ball” (whatever the situation requires). Once BU is satisfied, turn and make your final call
- **After conference:** *Original umpire who made the call* reinforces original call or changes call (can provide brief explanation ... such as “*Ball was on the ground – Runner is Safe at First*”)

# Live Ball – Dead Ball

- Ball is live when plate umpire puts ball into play
  - Plate umpire calls “Play” when pitcher is on mound ready to pitch
  - Sometimes PU forgets to put ball into play – ball is still live upon the pitch
- Ball becomes dead when:
  - Any umpire calls time
  - Hit ball leaves the field in either fair or foul territory
    - Foul ball
    - Home run
    - Ground rule double
  - Thrown ball leaves the field
- No one can be put out when ball is dead
  - Reason why appeal plays need to be done when ball is live

# Infield Fly

- Official Definition:
  - Fair fly ball (except line drives and bunts) that can be caught by an infielder with “ordinary” effort, when 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> (or 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>) are occupied and less than 2 out  
*(just think: The situation where you have 2 “sitting ducks” on what should be an easy pop-up when defense may want a double-play)*
  - **Notes & Clarifications**
    - Any fielder (including pitcher, catcher or outfielders) can catch an infield fly
    - Umpires calls it when the ball is at its *maximum* height (its “apex”)
- Purpose
  - Infield fly is meant to avoid defense taking unfair advantage of offense by obtaining a “cheap” double-play on an intentionally dropped ball
- [How to call](#)



# Time Plays

- Whenever the 3<sup>rd</sup> out of an inning is made on a tag play, any runs that crossed the plate before the tag-out count
  - Sometimes it's a close call as to whether the runner crossed the plate before or after the tag
- Whenever a runner is on second and there are 2 outs, this can commonly turn into a "timing play" situation
  - Outfield hit and batter tries for a double and runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> tries for home
- PU will motion to BU with fingers to his wrist
- BU doesn't really do anything different on this play
  - But be aware that PU will be staying home regardless of whether there may be a play at 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - *Don't try to make your safe or out call "faster"*

# Obstruction

*(How to recognize when it occurs)*

- Official definition
  - Any act of a fielder who, while **NOT** in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. Examples: Fake tags, blocking a base, base path or home plate when not in possession of the ball
- Concepts to understand when determining if obstruction has occurred
  - Fielders have a right to be where needed to field a batted ball. Therefore, even if they do not yet have possession of the ball, but are moving to or in a position to field a batted ball, they have first right of position. The runner needs to move around or avoid the fielder in this case (otherwise they risk being called for interference).
  - The above concept does not apply to fielders who are fielding a thrown ball. A fielder cannot be in a position or moving to a position that impedes a runner or blocks a base, home plate, or the base path, even while a thrown ball is in-flight and the fielder is preparing to make the catch (i.e., the catch is eminent)

***The determination of whether obstruction has occurred is a judgment call and is not subject to appeal or argument by managers/coaches.***

# Obstruction

*(What to do when it occurs: two types of obstruction)*

- What happens when obstruction occurs (and what penalty is enforced) depends on which of the two types of obstruction has occurred
- Type A – Immediate Dead Ball
  - Occurs when a play is being made on the obstructed runner or when obstruction occurs on batter who hasn't yet reached 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Penalty enforcement
    - Immediately call "Time! That's obstruction!" Then award runner one base. Note: even if runner was going back into a base, the award is the next base.
- Type B – Delayed Dead Ball
  - Occurs when no play is being made on obstructed runner
  - Penalty enforcement
    - Call "That's obstruction" (but do not call time). Let the play continue. When play is over, award the runner whichever base the umpire deems the runner would have reached had obstruction not occurred. (Note: the umpire may not award any additional bases beyond where the runner ended up.)
    - After the play: "Time! We had obstruction on the runner! Runner ended up at second, and runner stays at second!"

# Interference

*(What it is and how to recognize it)*

- Official Definitions

- **Offensive Interference:** Any act by the batter or runners that obstructs, hinders, impedes or confuses a fielder attempting to make a play. Examples:
  - Runner running into or impeding fielder in act of fielding a batted or thrown ball; batter impeding catcher from throwing out a runner who's stealing, runner from 1<sup>st</sup> sliding into fielder attempting to turn a double-play, runner who is hit by fair ball before it passes by a fielder.
- **Defensive interference:** Any act by a fielder that hinders or prevents a batter from hitting a pitch
- **Umpire's interference:** When (1) the plate umpire interferes with the catcher's throw attempting to prevent a stolen base or (2) when a batted ball hits a base umpire in fair territory before passing a fielder
- **Spectator interference:** When a spectator reaches out of the stands or comes onto the field and touches a live ball

Most common



# Interference

*(What to do: Enforcing the penalty)*

- **Offensive Interference**
  - Immediately call “Time! That’s interference!” (**immediate dead ball**)
  - Member of offense who committed interference is out. Other runners awarded last base legally held or next base if forced (batter-runner awarded first if not yet at 1<sup>st</sup>)
- **Example situations**
  - **Example 1:** Runner on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Batter hits and ball strikes runner leaving 2<sup>nd</sup>. Umpire calls “Time!, That’s interference!”
    - Runner hit by ball is out, batter awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base and runner from 1<sup>st</sup> is forced to 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - **Example 2:** Runner on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Batter hits and ball strikes runner leaving 1<sup>st</sup>. Umpire calls “Time!, That’s interference!”
    - Runner hit by ball is out, batter awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base and runner from 2<sup>nd</sup> returns to 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - **Example 3:** Batter bunts the ball and in leaving for 1<sup>st</sup>, kicks the ball with his foot when ball was in fair territory.
    - Batter is out; all other runners return to their bases
    - If ball was in foul territory, batter is out only if kick was intentional

# Offensive Interference

- *Additional Comments:*
- *⇒ When a runner is moving toward second base on a double play ball, there is no requirement for the runner to slide. The fielder must expect the runner to be there. As long as the runner is moving toward the base, there would generally be no interference.*
- *⇒ If sliding into second base, the runner must be able to reach the base with hand or feet. If the sliding runner is not able to reach the base with his/her hand or feet, and in the umpires judgment the slide caused the second baseman not to complete the double play, call interference and get the out at 1st base also.*
- *⇒ If the batter or a runner continues to advance after he/she has been put out, he/she shall not by that act alone be considered as confusing, hindering or impeding the fielders.*
- *⇒ If contact between the runner and fielder occurs after the ball is released, there would be no interference.*

# Foul Balls

- A hit ball becomes foul when .....
  - It settles to a stop in foul territory between home and 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - First touches ground in foul territory past 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - Touches an object in foul territory before being caught
  - Bounding ball passes 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> in foul territory  
(i.e., does not cross over ANY PART of 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base)
- Note
  - The foul lines are in fair territory. Any ball that touches ANY PART of the foul line is FAIR
    - **Never call or yell “Fair Ball!” – Just POINT fair ....**

Whether a ball is Fair or Foul is a JUDGMENT CALL and is not subject to appeal or argument

# Who makes the call

- **Plate Umpire** Typical Calls

- Catch/no-catch on all fly balls and line drives whether infield or outfield
- All Fair – foul (unless discussed otherwise in plate meeting)
- Calls at home plate
- Sometimes calls at 3<sup>rd</sup> base for 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> situations (explain)
- Usually will take the Infield Fly call (but actually either umpire can call)

- **Base Umpire** Typical Calls

- Safe – out on all bases (except for 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> situations)
- Obstruction or Interference

# Pitched Ball Goes into Dead Ball Territory

- Ball is dead immediately whenever ball goes into dead ball territory
  - Umpires immediately call time
- Base awards (where do the runners go?)
  - One base from the time of the pitch (regardless of whether the runners were going or not)
  - **Special rule if ball gets stuck in the backstop**
    - If a pitched ball becomes lodged in the net behind home plate, or goes under the net, the runners need to be stealing to be given the base award. If in the umpire's judgment the runner(s) were not attempting to advance (i.e., steal), then they will be sent back.

# Thrown Ball goes into Dead Ball Territory

- Ball is dead immediately whenever ball goes into dead ball territory
  - Umpires immediately call time
- Base awards (i.e., where do the runners go?)
- First play by infielder
  - Two (2) bases from the time of the pitch
- Outfielder *or* second play by infielder
  - Two bases from the time of the throw

# Foul Tip

- A foul tip is not the same as a foul ball
- A foul tip can be considered exactly the same as a swinging strike
  - Ball remains live (so don't call foul ball)!!
  - Runners can steal
  - Can count as strike 3 (batter out)
- Definition
  - Batted ball that goes directly to the catcher's mitt

# Common myths

- [Overrunning first](#) – May turn either way but has to go directly back to the base
- Batter gets first base whenever he/she's hit by pitch
  - [Called strike on a hit batter](#)
- Ball is dead on a foul tip
  - Unless caught by catcher
- Batter's hands are part of the bat
- It's always a strike if batter doesn't pull bat out of the strike zone on a bunt attempt



# Thank you!

## To Dos:

- [www.assignr.com](http://www.assignr.com) if you have not completed your information
- Payment every two weeks

If you have any questions, please contact [umpire@solanabeachlittleleague.com](mailto:umpire@solanabeachlittleleague.com)