

## **MUA Umpire Manual**

An official must devote time, thought and study to the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to carry out these rules so that he may render effective and creditable service in a fair and unbiased manner.

### **PREREQUISITES FOR GOOD UMPIRING:**

- 1-Umpires should be physically fit
- 2-Decisions must be made confidently and with good timing.
  - Read the play, pause and make the call
  - The closer the play, the more emphasis on the call
  - Avoid making the call too quickly (common with new/novice umpires)
  - Do not make a call while moving. (Stop, read the play, pause, then make the call)
  - Make your call with confidence and in an authoritative voice.
- 3-Complete Knowledge and Understanding of the Rules is a MUST
  - Study the rule book
  - Anyone can make the routine call, it's the difficult/ out of the ordinary call that separates the good from the ordinary umpires. The little things make a HUGE difference.
- 4-Proper Umpiring Mechanics are Essential for Best Field Coverage
  - Positioning is important to get the call right!
- 5-An Umpire must develop a "thick skin" and totally ignore remarks from the crowd.
  - They (fans & coaches) don't know the rules nearly as good as they think they do.
- 6-An umpire must be loyal to his fellow umpires
  - Never shift blame to another umpire. Endorse and support decisions of fellow umpires.
  - There is proper protocol to change a call. Always follow it (rule 9.02, B & C).
- 7-Effective umpires never "Showboat"
  - Do not draw attention to yourself
- 8-Umpires must be courteous to players and coaches. Never argue with players or coaches. All discussions should be brief. A dignified attitude will often prevent an argument, but a sarcastic or confrontational attitude will encourage arguments.
- 9-Good umpires hustle and are alert
- 10-Umpires working together must have mutual respect
- 11-Always look and act professional and have a neat, clean and pleasing appearance.
  - Umpires who look good can sell the call more often. A poorly or not neatly dressed umpire suffers loss of respect and may diminish his credibility.

## **PRE GAME MEETING**

The pre-game meeting is held by the plate umpire who is the “Umpire-In-Chief” (U1). The head coaches must attend the meeting because they are responsible for the safety of their team once you ask them this question: Are all of your players legally and properly equipped? They must answer verbally in the affirmative. At that point they are responsible for their team and not you.

Since our rules allow the home team to warm up from the mound during the plate meeting, it should be held off to the side, in the vicinity of the home team’s on-deck circle (third base dugout). U1 should be facing towards the field and U2 should be facing him. The home coach should be on U1’s left and the visiting coach on U1’s right.

Questions to ask and comments to make.

Introduce yourself and your base umpire. Shake hands.

1. (Home coach first): Are all of your players legally and properly equipped including bats and helmets.
2. Remember sportsmanship is very important. Everyone here today must display good sportsmanship.
3. There is only 1 minute when teams change the field. Hustle in and out. I’m keeping the time. If your pitcher wants all his warm up throws he only has one minute.
4. Please have a player put on a helmet and shag any foul balls on your side of the field so we can continue playing.
5. Warm up relief pitchers ahead of time/ between innings so when they come into the game, they are not “cold”.
6. Please remind your players to keep one foot in the box throughout their at-bat.
7. If you have a question about a call, ask for time and we can discuss it like gentlemen. I will tell you what I saw. We only discuss calls with the head coach and only if he is acting like a gentleman. Balls/strikes/safe/outs are not open to discussion.
8. Coaches do you have any questions/comments???
9. Good luck to each of you. Let’s play baseball.

## **END OF GAME PROCEDURE**

At the close of the game, the plate umpire will raise one or both arms into the air and say “BALL GAME” to officially denote the end of the game.

In Minors, Majors and Senior League, it is very important to walk together to exit the field and straight to the umpire’s dressing room. Do not hang around the field after the game for this may encourage comments from disgruntled fans/coaches. Again, umpires need to stay together when leaving the field and should leave on the winning team’s side. Don’t forget to return the home team’s baseballs. You may leave them near the mound if the coach is not readily available or if you just prefer. In Prep and Rookie, it is our policy to shake hands with the players and coaches before leaving the field.

## MUA UMPIRE SIGNALS

**STRIKE** – Verbally call a strike unless the batter swung. Raise your right arm to your side and point to the right side with your right hand on all strikes. Call the strike upright once you have come up out of your stance. Remember not to rush your call. See it, replay it, come completely up, make your call. You should never look to the side while making a strike call because it takes your eyes off the field and you might miss a play. On a called strike 3, you can be more emphatic and louder calling “STRIKE 3”. Do not say “you’re out”. Do not verbalize and “ring them up” on a swinging strike 3. Simply give the “out” hand signal. It is best to have different signals for strike and out so as not to be confusing.

**BALL** – Verbally call a ball loud enough that the coaches can hear. No hand signal is given. Verbalize it down low in your stance. Remember not to rush your call. See it, replay it, make your call, come up. You can say “BALL 4”, but NEVER point to first!

**OUT** – Signal an out by raising the right arm to your right side even with your shoulder, bent at the elbow and with the right fist closed. Do not point with your left arm and then signal with the right arm. Be more emphatic and verbalize on close plays. Sell it.

**SAFE**- Raise both bent elbows until they are even with your shoulders with your hands in front of your chest...hands open and flat, palms down. Open your arms, keeping your arms even and straight with your shoulders. Your open arms should be parallel with the ground. Bring your hands back in toward your chest to complete the signal safe. Verbalize on close plays and be emphatic. Sell it.

**CATCH** – signal a catch by giving the out signal. Wait until the catch is complete to make the signal.

**NO CATCH** – This signal is the same as a safe call. You should verbalize it on a play that is not obvious.

**INFIELD FLY** – All umpires can call infield fly. Point to the ball as it has just reached the top of its arch and verbalize “INFIELD FLY BATTER IS OUT”. If the ball is close to the foul line, and there is a possibility it could go foul, say “INFIELD FLY IF FAIR”.

**FOUL BALL** – Raise both arms straight up with open hands and verbalize “FOUL”. Must be very emphatic on close plays. No need to do this on obvious foul balls hit out of the park. Everyone sees that it is foul.

**TIME OUT** – Same hand/arm sign as foul ball except verbalize “TIME”. You can use one hand too.

**DO NOT PITCH** – Right arm straight out front with the palm outward toward the pitcher and fingers up. The ball is dead.

**FAIR BALL** – NEVER verbalize a fair ball. Point into fair territory to signal a fair ball.

**FOUL TIP** – Scrape the right hand across the tips of the fingers on the left hand. Then give a strike hand signal.

PLAY – Point toward the pitcher and verbalize “PLAY”. This must be done after EVERY dead ball!

HOME RUN – Point to the sky with your index finger making circles with it.

GROUND RULE DOUBLE – Raise 1 arm above your head and show 2 fingers signifying 2 bases.

BALK, INTERFERENCE and OBSTRUCTION – Point to the offending player or pitcher and verbalize “BALK”, “INTERFERENCE” or “OBSTRUCTION”...whatever is the case. Then call time and award bases. (Remember after obstruction time will not be called until the play is over unless the obstruction happened while a play was being made on the runner (like in a run-down) so use the “delayed dead ball” sign of your left fist out to your side in addition to pointing with your right. Bases will be awarded then).

ROTATION – Initiated by U1, he will point to third with his right hand and U2 will respond by pointing to first with his right hand.

STAYING HOME/NO ROTATION – Initiated by U1, he will point to the plate and U2 will respond by either pointing down or by extending both hands outward palms out indicating that he has “all bases”.

TIMING PLAY- With 2 outs and base runners on, it is possible that a run can score before the third out is made. (Not on a force play). You must watch for this. The sign for this is touching your wrist where you would normally wear a wrist watch. If the run counts, turn to the press box, point to the plate and say “the run counts”. If the run does not count, turn to the press box and say “No run counts” while waiving it off.

### **CHANGING A CALL / ASKING FOR HELP**

If you are uncertain about a call or you didn't see it, ask your partner for help. Do not yell it across the field but walk up to him away from all players and coaches and speak as in a conversation. Face away from the crowd when talking. Ask him what did he see? Your partner will tell you what he saw and then you make the call. Your partner should not make the call for you but only tell you what he saw and you make the call after you have gotten the help you need. It is your call to make, not his. You shouldn't ask for too much help in a game because this will cast doubts on your ability to be a credible umpire.

- **NEVER offer your opinion of a call unless you are asked by the other umpire!!!!!! NEVER change his call.** If he asks for help, tell him what you saw and let him change it if he wants to. If a player or coach tries to appeal to you when it wasn't your call, redirect them to your partner but NEVER offer ANY indication of what you thought to anyone but your partner.

## **THE PLATE UMPIRE (U1)**

1-Plate Umpire is the umpire-in-chief and has the responsibility for the pre-game meeting, announcing “Play” at start of the game and after each dead ball and handling issues that may arise.

2-Use the square stance. \*\*See diagram for proper stance illustration

3-Visualize the strike zone.

- The rule book defines the strike zone but use good judgment with regard to the age and ability of the players.

4-Proper strike call mechanics make the difference.

-Let the pitch hit the mitt, delay for a second while you replay it in your mind then make the call. Always be aware of timing. Hasty calls invite mistakes and the appearance of mistakes.

-Say nothing on a swinging strike. Everyone knows he swung. Just give the hand sign.

-On a pitch that is a ball, verbalize it.

-Call balls down in your stance and strikes upright.

-On a swinging strike 3, no need to “ring him up”. We all know he’s out.

-On a called strike 3, call it loudly and “ring him up”.

5-Fingers help communicate.

-Use left hand for balls and right hand for strikes. Wait until after the 3<sup>rd</sup> pitch to give the count then give it every other pitch after that.

-Use fingers often if the scoreboard count is incorrect.

-You can verbalize the count if you want. Coaches seem to like that.

-A 3balls/2 strike count is never shown with only the fists. Use fingers. In umpiring, there is no such thing as a “full count”. It is “3-2” or “3 balls, 2 strikes”.

6-Remove Mask with the Left hand.

-Hold the mask in the left hand as you make the safe/out call.

-When using your hands, hold the mask under your left arm against your body. Never lay it on the ground or park it on top of your head.

-Practice taking it off and putting it on with your hat on to get where your hat does not fall off.

7-Your Umpire hat always faces forward with the bill out front.

-Never wear your hat backwards like a catcher. Be Professional.

8-For Best Protection, Always face the pitcher in your stance. That is how your gear is designed. All the protection is in the front.

9-Don't follow the action after the ball is hit, **WATCH YOUR ASSIGNMENT!**

-Never just stand behind the plate on a hit. Be prepared to make the call if something happens to the field umpire. You may be called on for help.

-Always be looking for interference or obstruction. Your partner usually can't see it.

-Be ready for a play at the plate. Get into proper position.

-With nobody on, run up the line, trailing the runner to the running lane cut-out and:

-Watch for a pulled foot at first base by the 1<sup>st</sup> baseman or tags if pulled off the base.

-Watch for running lane violations.

- Watch for obstruction or interference.

-Watch for catches on fly balls. You will have the call on most of them.

10-Help the base umpire if called on to do so by him.

11-Verbalize close foul calls loudly. Obvious foul balls, no need to verbalize.

-POINT ONLY on fair calls. DO NOT VERBALIZE FAIR CALLS.

-Do not be ambiguous on foul-fair calls.

12-Call 'em, don't explain 'em.

-No need to call "ball low". If catcher asks, tell him. Do not let the catcher show you up. You can talk to him with masks on before the pitcher is ready when he and you are in your positions.

13-Know when and how to call time out. A catcher does not warrant "time out" to step out front of the plate and call a play. If he wants to go talk to his pitcher, that does warrant a play stoppage. Remember, you MUST put the ball back in play after every time out, interference call, foul ball or at the beginning of each half inning.

14-Communicate all situations with the field umpire with hand signals

15-Give the catcher room, but be close. If he goes after a foul ball, move with him, but keep your eye on HIM, not the foul ball.

16-Keep the plate clean

-do not interrupt the flow of the game to clean the plate

-clean it after a hit, between batters or during a dead ball.

-clean it at the beginning of each half inning as soon as the catcher "throws down".

17-React immediately to a hit batter

-always a dead ball and walk out into the field of play.

18-Indicate foul tips. This lets the coaches and players know the ball is "live".

19-Indicate dropped third strike. Immediately give the "safe sign" while verbalizing "No Catch! No Catch!". This lets coaches and players know that a play is still going on and to run to first or tag/throw the runner out.

20-Stay on top of a slow roller or a hit ball close to the line.

-Get out quickly from behind the plate and get your mask off (left hand) and get on top of the foul line to make the call. This is your primary assignment on balls in your area that are close to the line.

21-Be alert to a play at home plate. Always in foul territory out of the way of a throw.

-45 degree angle to the play. Make sure the ball was not dropped before making your call.

22-Don't disagree openly with your field umpire.

-If he asks you for help, walk up to him and tell him what you saw and let him make the call from there. Face away from the stands while discussing and make sure no players or coaches can overhear your conversation.

23-To err is human but do your best on the next play and going forward.

-You are going to miss or boot some calls. It happens. Never try to 'even it up ' on the next call.

24-See em better, call 'em better.

-Be in the proper stance or position to make all calls.

25-Learn not to flinch behind the plate. It takes a lot of practice.

-You can't make the correct call if you're moving or turning away.

26-Be prepared to handle coach's beefs

-Don't let him "constantly" complain about your calls the entire game. It will happen some. You can expect that. But remember, enough is enough. He is setting a bad example for his players. Let him know, politely that his behavior will not be tolerated. If he persists, dump him. YOU must always maintain an attitude of calm and courtesy.

27-Between innings, stand a few steps up the baseline of the team taking the field.

- Remember, that team is NOT swinging bats and you won't be hit while they are warming up. Count pitches and keep up with the time. Once the catcher has thrown down, brush the plate, don your mask, assume your position and call "play".

28-Be sure the batter is in the box.

29-Watch for unsportsmanlike play or comments

-Malicious contact, harmful threats and foul language are reasons for ejection from a game.

30-If you have had a conflict with a coach, do not pay him any attention between innings unless he calls for you. Your back should be to him as you stand up the baseline. Then if he wants to discuss his beef, tell him the discussion is over and walk away. If he continues to persist, warn him 1 time. If he won't let it go, eject him from the game. This is only a last resort.

31-Do not be too "chummy" with fans or coaches during a game.

-The other team will always think you are conspiring against them.

32-Plate umpire is ALWAYS responsible for runners on 3<sup>rd</sup> base tagging up on fly balls and runners touching/scoring at home plate as well as runners touching 3<sup>rd</sup> on his way home. Sometimes, when in a rotation, you are responsible for plays at 3<sup>rd</sup> base. You are also responsible for the "continuing action" on double plays in case of interference.

33-When the coach is granted time to talk to his pitcher, go to the OPPOSITE side of the field from that coach's dugout about a third of the way between the plate and base. Remember, he is unhappy with either you or the pitcher and probably both, so this position will help keep him out of trouble by removing the opportunity for him to say something to you as he walks by. While he is out there, you can make use of the time by cleaning the plate, then returning to the line. If he takes too long, you may have to go out and hurry him up.

34-Smile, have fun and enjoy the game.

## **THE BASE UMPIRE (U2)**

- 1-Be in Proper Position from the 1<sup>st</sup> Pitch to the last.
- 2-Walk forward on each pitch or have your hands on your knees.
  - Be ready to move on a hit
- 3-Watch each pitch. If you are in “A” (nobody on), you may be called upon to call a swing or no-swing on a checked swing. If you are in “the middle” you should never be asked to call a swing or no-swing.
  - Swing/Strike is the out sign, No swing is the safe sign.
  - With runners on (in Majors and Senior) watch the pitcher for balks until the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.
  - In Minor and Rookie, make sure the runners don’t leave early.
- 4-Exhibit proper posture on the field at all times
  - Never cross your arms or legs or put hands in pockets. Looks unprofessional
  - Never let your mind wander. You will miss a call.
- 5-Avoid Ambiguity
  - Never use your left hand on Out calls
  - Stand still, read the play, pause a second and then make the call.
  - Close plays require “selling” the call. Be more emotional and emphatic on these calls to sell it.
  - You should verbalize a call while you give the hand sign safe or out...especially on close plays.
- 6-Timing is critical. Don’t be too quick to make a call. This is a common mistake. Make sure of the call and that nothing happened to change the situation (dropped the ball, came off the bag, etc.)
- 7-Double Plays. You must see the play at 2<sup>nd</sup> base, watch for the throw to first and let the throw lead you to the play at 1<sup>st</sup> base. Got to hustle. Watch the bag and listen for the ball hitting the mitt or glove.
- 8-Watch for Obstruction or Interference
  - See rule book for definitions
- 9-Try to be at a 45 Degree angle to the throw at all bases when making a call
- 10-Be aware of infield fly rule, tag plays, force plays, and tag ups on fly balls.
- 11-Base umpire should place his hands on his knees when the pitcher steps on the rubber if there are runners on. That way both umpires know when the balk rules start. If no runners are on (you are in “A”) you can stay upright and take one step forward with the pitch.
- 12-Between innings, the base umpire should position himself in the outfield grass in short right field.
- 13-During a timeout with runners on base, the base umpire should go into the grass in the outfield on whichever side he is positioned in the infield during a play.



14-Base Ump is ALWAYS responsible for runners on 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 1<sup>st</sup> base tagging up on fly balls and ALWAYS responsible for runners touching 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> bases...and sometimes 3<sup>rd</sup> base too.

### **PLATE UMPIRE STANCE**

Box/Square Stance (See illustration for visual details)

The most common and comfortable stance is the box stance or square stance. Your feet are wider than shoulder width. Your “slot” foot is slightly in front of your other foot. The “slot” is the area between the batter and the catcher. Bend your knees and at the waist so as to get your eyes as close to the top of the batters strike zone as possible. (Sometimes with little players this is difficult). That way you know anything above your eyes is a ball (without thinking) and below them could be a strike. Your head will be in the “slot” between the batter and the catcher. If the catcher is set up inside, place your head above his. You can rest your hands on your knees or place them behind your knees to avoid taking a hit. Do not set up too early and have to hold your stance for a long time if the pitcher is slow. This will become very tiring. Usually, if you set up as the pitcher starts his motion, you will be about right. You may have to adjust this from pitcher to pitcher. Remember, do your best not to flinch. If you have been hit, you can always remind the catcher that it’s up to one of you to catch the ball and he’s the only one with a glove.

### **BASE UMPIRE STANCE**

With no runners on base, you are located about 8-10 feet behind the 1<sup>st</sup> baseman just barely across the foul line in foul territory. As the pitch heads toward the plate, you will be taking one step forward standing upright. Do this on each pitch.

With runners on base, you will be in the infield. (See section for positioning/mechanics). Once the pitcher steps on the rubber, you bend at the waist and place your hands on your knees. That lets the plate umpire know that the pitcher is on the rubber and balk rules are in effect. If the pitcher steps off the rubber then you stand up from hands on your knees. That way the plate ump knows the pitcher has stepped off.

### **UMPIRE POSTIONS / MECHANICS**

#### **Plate Umpire (U1)**

Positioned in the slot behind home plate.

Positioning for plays at the plate: Take the play by starting somewhere between the first base line, extended and the point of the plate, then swing left or right depending on the direction of the throw and the closeness of the play. If the play is likely to be a “swipe tag”, the optimal position is generally the third base line, extended (ie: if you were to draw an imaginary line extending the line from third base on through the plate and beyond). Swipe tags can occur when the play will be close and the runner will attempt to elude the tag or when the catcher must reach out and take the throw from his right side. Throws coming from the right side of the field will almost always result in swipe tags. If the play is likely to be a “blocking of the plate” or a “block tag”, first base line, extended is usually best. Block tags usually occur on ground balls to the infield, throws

coming from the left side of the field or any play where the throw from any direction has the runner beat by a large margin.

On every play/hit the plate umpire has somewhere to go and something to do. If you are just standing there, watching the ball, you aren't doing your job. The plate umpire ALWAYS has the touch of third as well as the runner from third tagging up.

If there are no runners on, and the ball is hit in the infield, the plate umpire will come out from behind the plate while taking his mask off with his left hand and trail the batter/runner toward first. He should get as close to the running lane cutout as possible before stopping to observe the play at first. Look for a pulled foot or a tag on the runner in case your partner appeals to you for help (if no appeal, keep your mouth shut!). Also, whether the batter/runner is in or out of the running lane and did he interfere with the fielder's throw or catch. Be sure that YOU don't interfere with the runner or catcher.

If there are no runners on, and the ball is hit to the outfield, the plate umpire will come out from behind the plate almost to the mound (but never on it) in the general direction the ball was hit to observe and rule on the catch/no-catch. It is good form to let your partner know if the ball is not caught so he can be prepared for the dash to second if the runner goes. If the ball is hit down the line, the plate umpire should go as far out as he can get before stopping in time to be still when the ball is caught and shall be straddling the line. The plate umpire has ALL fair/foul calls and catch/no catch calls to the outfield unless the base umpire elects to go out on a "trouble ball" down the right field line.

In the VERY rare case where U2 goes out on a trouble fly ball on the right field line, U1 must assume the responsibility for the batter/runner at ALL bases and trail him all the way around the base paths. This would include plays back into first, plays at second, third and at home plate. Do not try to "run the bases" with the player. A proper use of the "shortcuts" is essential in order to be in position at each base.

Whenever there is a runner on first only or first and third, you are in a rotation. See the "Rotation Signals Guide" in the "Umpire Signs and Communication" section of this manual. You only rotate all the way to third if the ball is HIT out of the infield (either on the ground or in the air- not thrown). If you are in a rotation and the ball is hit, you must IMMEDIATELY start toward third in FOUL TERRITORY until you see that a play is imminent at third, then rotate into fair territory to make the call. Verbal communication to your partner letting him know you have third is always appreciated. If there is a runner on third, you must see him touch home over your shoulder as you head up the line to third. If the ball gets away from the third baseman and the runner heads home, you have to hustle to the plate for that call. In this case, you will run in FAIR territory so as not to impede the runner and because the throw will be coming from foul territory, so you are less likely to get hit with the ball. If the ball is NOT hit out of the infield, you come back to the plate, either in front and towards the mound if there is nobody on third or behind so you can see the touch of the plate. In both cases you are watching for interference and obstruction.

Even if you are in a rotation situation, it is important to remember that you ONLY rotate if the ball goes out of the infield on the hit (not on a bad throw). Otherwise, the base umpire has the safe/out call at all 3 bags. Additionally, remember that you are at third for a play on the runner from first base only. If the play is obviously not going to be made on him at third, go back to the plate. The base umpire has any plays at third on the batter/runner.

On a ball hit to the **infield** when there is a runner on first only, the plate umpire comes out from behind the plate, taking his mask off with his LEFT hand, and HUSTLING to a spot between the mound and the plate to watch for any infractions. If the hit is close to a foul line, the plate ump gets on that line quickly to determine fair or foul.

Any time there is a runner on second, the plate umpire stays home for a potential play at the plate, but still watches for obstruction or interference. The only exception to this rule is if there are runners on first and second, but not third, and less than 2 outs. If a fly ball is hit to the outfield where both the runner at first and the runner at second may tag up and try to advance, the plate umpire will cover third for any potential throw coming in there and the base umpire should cover second for any potential throw coming in to second. On anything other than a catchable fly ball to the outfield, the plate umpire stays home

With a runner on third and a ball hit to the outfield, you will need to get positioned so both the runner at third AND the outfielder who is under the ball are in your line of sight in order to rule on whether the runner left early. This may require you to get up against the fence.

Make sure you watch your assignment. Your partner will be watching his. See “Responsibility Guide” under “who’s call is it” in this manual.

### **Base Umpire (U2) (Major, Senior League and Minors)**

**Position A:** Both feet in foul territory and shoulders square to the plate. Approximately 10-12 feet beyond first base AND a few feet behind the first baseman. If the first baseman is farther back, you must be farther back as well so you can observe him and stay out of his way. If he is closer in, you don’t get closer to the base than 10-12 feet. This is your basic position with no runners on base. NOTE: your 45 degree angle should be from the trajectory of the ball, so it will be different for a throw to first from third than from second. Be ready to make the call. Look at the bag (for the touch) and listen for the “thud” of the catch.

From this position, the base umpire’s primary responsibility is the batter/runner, **NOT THE BALL.**

Upon a ball put in play of any kind, the Base ump moves in toward B for 5-6 steps to get at a 45 degree angle from the throw to make a call at 1<sup>st</sup> base. If the ball goes through the infield, the base ump hustles in toward position B pivoting to watch the runner as he touches 1<sup>st</sup> base. The base ump does not watch the ball in the outfield. Do not wait until the runner crosses 1<sup>st</sup> base before moving in. Move in toward B at once on the hit and stop if the infielder catches it and makes a throw to 1<sup>st</sup> base. Watch the base (for the touch) and listen for the “thud” of the ball hitting the glove. Wait a split second to replay it in your mind and to make sure the ball doesn’t get dropped. Make your call.

If the ball is hit to the first baseman or to the second baseman moving to his left, position yourself in foul territory at a 45degree angle to first base so you don’t interfere with the play. Beware of bad throws and stay out of the way of the players going after the ball or rounding the bag to head towards second. If the batter/runner does try for second, you must cross the foul line inside the bag after the runner has gone by and hustle to your position for a play at second. Be alert to the runner changing his mind and going back to first and a possible play there as well.

On a hit that leaves the infield, U2 will NOT look at the ball in the outfield, but will quickly move into fair territory and into the infield grass while pivoting to see the batter/runner touch first, then go to second and/or third if he goes. Your responsibility is to make all decisions on the batter/runner at first, second and third. Make use of your shortcuts across the field and remember to set up for the proper angle. The angle is more important than the distance. U1 will have any plays at the plate as well as any catch/no catch on the ball.

On any obvious foul balls between first and home, you will hustle to the play, staying out of the way of the fielders to rule on the catch/no catch. See “Game Situations”. From this position you don’t have to worry about balks since there are no runners on, however, you should be looking for illegal pitches (the penalty is a ball added to the count of the batter) and ALWAYS be alert to the batter. You may be called upon to answer an appeal on the swing/no swing question.

Make sure you watch your assignment. Your partner will be watching his. See “Responsibility Guide” under “who’s call is it” in this manual.

**Position B (Majors and Senior)(Rookie and Minor: Only with a runner on first ONLY):** Approximately half way between the pitcher’s mound and second base, on the first base side of the infield (this will put you approximately on the grass line) more or less on a line extended from the plate through the edge of the mound with your feet square to the plate. This is your position with a runner on first only or with runners on first and third. You will never be in this position with a runner on second. You are ALWAYS in a rotation if you are in “B”. You NEVER “go out” from B or C!

As soon as you first get into this position, look at your partner for his signals so you can be on the same page and work as a team.

From here you will closely watch the pitcher for balks. If you see an infraction, call it immediately. You should never be called upon to rule on a check swing from the middle. Be alert to pick off throws to first.

U2 ALWAYS has the touch and tag up of first and second (U1 always has the touch and tag up at third).

First, U2 must make the catch/no catch call on any fly ball hit to the outfield that is from the left fielder’s starting position and all the way in, to the right fielder’s starting position and all the way in. The most important thing here is the ball and whether it was caught or not, but you still have to see the runners in order to rule on whether they left early. Your natural inclination will be to move out to get a better view of the catch/no catch- DON’T! Move into a position that allows you to have the runner at first in your line of sight as well as the fielder who is catching the ball. Do this by turning your back to the infield and backing up towards the mound (we call this the “working area”) in the direction needed to see both the runner and the fielder. On a fly ball to left center, it will be almost impossible to see both and still be in position to make a call at second if the runner goes, so do the best you can. This is just a drawback of the two-man system. Again, the first priority is the catch/no catch. U2 ALWAYS has the call at 2<sup>nd</sup> on tag ups and usually at third as well (except if the plate umpire has given the “double tag” signal).

Upon a hit to the outfield (a ball that is not caught or catchable in the air), the base ump will turn his back to the mound (facing the outfield) and back up towards the mound dirt into the working area and watch the runners as they touch first and second. The runner from first will usually get to second before the batter/runner gets to first, so look for the touch at second, then turn your head to see the touch at first. NEVER watch the ball in

the outfield. Glance up only to see where the ball is coming back into the infield to see if there is going to be a play at a base so you can take a few steps toward that base. You may have to make a call at that base.

Whenever you are in “B”, you are in a rotation. See the “Rotation Signals Guide” in the “Umpire Signs and Communication” section of this manual. The rotation only applies if the ball is HIT out of the infield (either on the ground or in the air- not thrown). This allows you to focus on the runners and plays at first and second, while your partner has any plays on the runner FROM FIRST at third. Once the runner from first passes second, you release him to your partner unless he comes back to second. You will still have any plays on the batter/runner at third. If the ball is NOT hit out of the infield, you have the safe/out call at all 3 bags. Be aware of the 6-3-5 play (infielder throws to first who then throws to third). You have the call at first and at third because the ball did not leave the infield.

Even if you are in a rotation situation, it is important to remember that you ONLY rotate if the ball goes out of the infield on the hit (not on a bad throw).

On a ball hit to the infield, take a few steps toward the base the infielder is most likely to throw to in order to get an out but be aware, sometimes they don't make the smart play so be ready to adjust. Try to get as close to a 45 degree angle to the play as possible. Be completely stopped when ready to make the call. Look at the bag (for the touch) and listen for the “thud” of the catch. Be sure not to get in the way of the throw.

On a steal attempt, as soon as you realize the runner is going, drop step and head towards the base letting the flight of the ball lead you there. Get as close to the play as possible but remember that the angle is much more important than the distance.

Make sure you watch your assignment. Your partner will be watching his. See “Responsibility Guide” under “who’s call is it” in this manual.

**Position C (Majors and Seniors) (Rookie and Minors- only with a runner on third ONLY):** Approximately half way between the pitcher’s mound and second base, on the THIRD base side of the infield (this will put you approximately on the grass line) more or less on a line extended from the plate through the edge of the mound with your feet square to the plate. This is your position with a runner on third only or anytime there is a runner on second. You are NEVER in a rotation when in “C”. You NEVER “go out” from B or C!

As soon as you first get into this position, look at your partner for his signals so you can be on the same page and work as a team.

From here you will closely watch the pitcher for balks. If you see an infraction, call it immediately. You should never be called upon to rule on a check swing from the middle. Be alert to pick off throws to ANY base. You have the call on all of them.

Your mechanics are exactly the same as in “B” except that since you are never in a rotation from C, you have ALL plays at ALL bases (unless a double tag situation occurs – see “game situations”).

Make sure you watch your assignment. Your partner will be watching his. See “Responsibility Guide” under “who’s call is it” in this manual.

**Position D (three-man crew only):** Same as “A” but on the third base side

**Position E (Minor and Rookie only):** Approximately half way between first and second base at the edge of the OUTFIELD grass line with your feet square to the plate so you can look for the runner(s) leaving early. This is your position with runners on first and third. You will never be in this position with a runner on second.

From E, U2 will run in toward the mound to B and then turn his back to the mound watching the runners as mentioned above. Once you get into “B”, it is exactly the same as “B” above.

**Position F (Minor and Rookie only):** Approximately half way between second and third base at the edge of the OUTFIELD grass line with your feet square to the plate so you can look for the runner(s) leaving early. This is your position anytime there is a runner on second.

From F, U2 will run in toward the mound to C and then turn his back to the mound watching the runners as mentioned above. Once you get into “C”, it is exactly the same as “C” above.

**MINOR AND ROOKIE ONLY:** When there is ONLY a runner on first, go to “B”. When there is ONLY a runner on third, go to “C”. Make sure you can see the runner out of the corner of your eye as you watch the ball cross the plate. Anytime there are multiple runners on base, you must be in either “E” or “F”.

No Runners on base: Position A (Major, SL and Minor)

Runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base only: Position B (ALL)

Runner on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> base: Position C (Major & SL)

Position F (Minor & Rookie) & quickly rotating in to C on a hit.

Runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>: Position B (Major & SL)

Position E (Minor & Rookie) & quickly rotating in to B on a hit.

Bases Loaded: Position C (Major & SL)

Position F (Minor & Rookie) & quickly rotating in to C on a hit.

Runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> only: Position C (Major & SL)

Position F (Minor & Rookie) coming in to C on a hit.

Runners on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>: Position C (Major & SL)

Position F (Minor & Rookie) coming in to C on a hit.

Runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> only: Position C (ALL)

## WHO'S CALL IS IT?

One of the hardest things to get used to as an umpire is to watch your “responsibility” rather than watching “the game”. There is never any play where an umpire is just a spectator. Spectators sit in the stands. On many plays, you don’t even get to see “the play” because you are watching your assignment. That’s why you get the big bucks.

### A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE FOR UMPIRE RESPONSIBILITY.

Situation	Nobody on- U2 in “A”	Runners on- U2 in the middle
Fly balls or line drives to the outfield	U1 Catch/no catch. Fair/ foul.	U1 Catch/no catch by LF or RF but only <i>if</i> they are moving any distance toward their respective foul lines. Fair/Foul. In other words, you have everything down the lines. Tag ups at third. Sometimes plays at third (see rotation guide). Communicate!
	U2- Don’t even look at the ball. All touches & decisions on the batter runner at first, second and third.	U2- Catch/no catch from LF straight in all the way to RF straight in. Touches and tag-ups at second & first. Plays at first second and sometimes third (see rotation guide). Communicate!
Fly ball or line-drive very close to right field foul line, AKA- “trouble ball”	U1 <u>IF</u> your partner goes out, pick up responsibility for the batter/runner all the way around the base paths. Otherwise it is the same as any other fly ball to the outfield.	U1 Catch/no catch. Fair/foul. Touch and tag-up at third.
	U2- You <u>MAY</u> decide to go out on this. This will be rare, but if you do, LET YOUR PARTNER KNOW! If so, you have the catch/no-catch and fair/foul. If you don’t go out, it is the same as any other ball to the outfield.	U2- Runners touching and tagging up. Any plays at the bases.
Batted ball to the outfield (grounder that gets through, etc.)	U1 Observe the play from in front of the plate. Look for obstruction, interference, displaced equipment etc. Touch at third and plays at the plate.	U1 Observe the play looking for infractions. Positioning depends on rotation. Touch at third and plays at the plate.
	U2- Batter/runner at first, second & third.	U2-Runners touching and any plays at bases. (adjusted for rotation)
Fair fly balls to infield positions	U1 Catch/no-catch.	U1 Catch/no-catch to pitcher & catcher or to first or third basemen but only when moving <u>TOWARD</u> their foul line. Pitcher and catcher ALWAYS belong to U1.
	U2- Batter/runner, should the ball be dropped. Plays at all bases.	U2-Catch/no-catch to second or short and to first or third if straight-in or when moving <u>AWAY</u> from their foul line.
Line drives to infield positions	U1 Catch/no-catch <u>EXCEPT</u> : first and second basemen straight in or moving towards the line belong to U2.	U1 Catch/no-catch to pitcher & catcher or to first or third basemen but only when moving <u>TOWARD</u> their foul line. Pitcher and catcher ALWAYS belong to U1.
	U2- Batter/runner <u>unless</u> ball hit straight to first or second basemen or towards the line, then <u>YOU</u> have the catch/no-catch.	U2- Catch/no-catch to second or short and to first or third if straight-in or when moving <u>AWAY</u> from their foul line.

Ground ball to infield	U1 Interference, obstruction, running lane violations. Also, but ONLY if asked: pulled foot or swipe tag.	U1 Fair/foul. Plays at the plate. (Stay on top of slow rollers.)
	U2- Batter/runner.	U2- All runners touching and all plays at first, second and third (never in rotation unless ball is HIT <u>out</u> of the infield).
Obviously foul pop-up between first and home that has no chance of landing fair.	U1 Catch/no-catch if fielder is facing you. (Get close and follow the players, not the ball).	U1 Catch/no-catch. Get close.
	U2- Catch/no-catch if fielder is facing you. (Get close and follow the players, not the ball).	U2- Obstruction or interference by players or coaches. (Do NOT watch the ball, watch the players).
Double plays	U1 N/A	U1 Interference or obstruction. Continuing action at second. Do NOT follow the ball to first.
	U2- N/A	U2- Plays on runners. Does the wheelman touch the bag w/ball in possession. If dropped, was the drop on the release? Obstruction, interference. Out or safe at first (or wherever the second out is coming from).
Steals	U1 N/A	U1 Balks, interference (especially by the batter), obstruction, legal slide?
	U2 N/A	U2 Balks, interference, obstruction, safe/out, legal slide?
Fair or Foul	U1 Everything down the left field line. Everything between home and first base IF TOUCHED or motion stops before it gets to the bag. Everything down the first base line if the base umpire rotates in.	U1 Everything.
	U2 Line drives or ground balls that go past first base. Fly balls to right <i>if</i> you go out.	U2 None.



## UMPIRE SIGNS AND COMMUNICATION

Communication between umpires is vitally important. Umpires communicate with each other as much as players/coaches do in a game...both verbally and with hand signs.

Umpires **MUST** communicate each time the situation changes in a game...(an out, a hit or runners advance). The plate umpire will initiate the signs to the base ump. This communication is very important with runners on base!!!!!! The base umpire must be looking in for the signs. **PAY ATTENTION!**

Signs Given in Proper Order:

### Outs

Always give the outs before any other sign and after each out. Give the outs by holding your fingers with the correct number of outs with your arm out to the side. With no runners on base, give this sign after each out anyway.

### Infield Fly

If the infield fly rule is in effect, this sign is next after the outs. Sign this by tapping the bill of your hat (or your mask where your hat bill would be) with your fingers of your right hand.

### Rotation or Staying Home

There are situations with a runner on first where the plate umpire will rotate to cover a play at third base on that runner from first. This allows the base umpire to focus on the batter/runner once he sees the runner from first touch second. The signal for this is for the plate umpire to point to third with his right hand. The base umpire will respond by pointing to first with his right hand.

### Double Tag

With runners on first and second and less than two outs, the plate umpire will signal "double tag" by bumping his fists together, then pointing to third. This tells the base umpire that on a fly ball to the outfield where both the runner at first and the runner at second may tag up and try to advance, the plate umpire will cover third for any potential throw coming in there and the base umpire should cover second for any potential throw coming in there. This is the only exception to the plate umpire staying home in this situation. On anything other than a catchable fly ball to the outfield, the plate umpire stays home (see rotation grid below for U1's responsibility with runners on first and second).

### Timing Play

With 2 outs, it is important to be aware that a runner could score before the last out has occurred and that run would count if it is not a force out. The base runner will be on 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base here and can score on a hit to the outfield or on an error. Sign this by placing 2 fingers on your wrist where you would wear a watch.

Remember, each sign is given by the plate ump to the base ump and the base ump mirrors it back to him.

### Sign Sequence:

- 1- Make eye to eye contact with your partner
- 2- Sign # of outs
- 3- Sign infield-fly if applicable
- 4- Sign Rotation or staying home
- 5- Sign Double tag if applicable
- 6- Sign timing play if applicable

Rotation Signals Guide

<b>SITUATION</b>	<b>PLATE UMP POSITION</b>	<b>U2 POS.</b>	<b>PLATE-SIGNALS:</b>	<b>BASE-SIGNALS</b>
No Runners on	Plate	A	Ready (to start game)	Ready
Runner on 1 <sup>st</sup> .	Plate	B	Rotation	Rotation
Runner on 2 <sup>nd</sup> .	Plate	C	Staying Home	Stays
Runner on 3 <sup>rd</sup> .	Plate	C	Staying Home	Stays
Runners on 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> .	Plate	C	Staying Home	Stays
Runners on 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> .	Plate	B	Rotation	Rotation
Runners on 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> .	Plate	C	Staying Home	Stays
Bases Loaded	Plate	C	Staying Home	Stays

### GAME SITUATIONS

#### Appeal Bases

-Upon proper appeal the appropriate umpire will render a decision. If the inappropriate umpire is asked, that umpire will redirect the player or coach to the appropriate umpire for the decision. Only the umpire who made the call can be appealed to and only he can change his call. See MLB rule 9.02. If asked by your partner for your opinion, you should tell him **PRIVATELY** what you saw and let him make his decision. Be alert to keep players and coaches away during your discussion and face away from the stands.

#### Balks

-Whenever a balk occurs, the umpire will point to the pitcher and call "BALK". This is a delayed dead ball. If the pitch is thrown and the ball is hit and the batter and all runners safely advance at least one base or if the pitch is ball four and it forces all runners to advance one base, the balk is ignored. If those scenarios do not occur then signal time and award bases in Major and Senior Leagues. In Minors you just add a ball to the batter's count. (NOTE: the balk rule in Minors is totally different than Majors and Senior.)

#### Calling "TIME"

-The object is to keep the game moving, so only call "TIME" when necessary. Remember, a coach or player cannot call "TIME", he may only request it. Only an umpire can call "TIME". A catcher stepping out front of the plate to call a play does not warrant calling time. Additionally, beware of calling time if no one asks for it. A player tying his shoe may be a diversion part of a designed play.

### Awarding Bases

-When the ball leaves the playing area, the umpire should call "TIME" and then award the appropriate bases. Base awards are ALWAYS made based on the position of the runners at the time of the pitch or the time of the throw, which made the ball become dead.

### Catcher's glove hit by practice swing

-This only applies when the practice swing hits the catcher's mitt before the ball is pitched. The plate umpire should immediately call time and everyone should re-set. There is no penalty.

### Checked Swings

- A batter's half swing or checked swing may require the plate umpire to seek help from his fellow umpire. If U1 has been blocked out from seeing it or is in doubt even though he saw the action, U1 may request help from the U2 by pointing with his left hand to U2 but ONLY if U2 is in the "A" position on a right handed batter. U1 should step away from the plate, point to U2 with his left hand and ask him "DID HE GO". U2 should immediately answer "YES HE DID" and give the out signal or say "NO HE DID NOT" and then give the safe signal. If U1 is certain the batter has swung, he should say "HE WENT" or "YES HE DID" then signal a strike. REMEMBER, U1 MUST honor the request of a coach or players to ask for help on a checked swing that was called a ball. NEVER grant the request for help if you called the checked swing a strike.

### Coaches on the Field

-Coaches should be on the field for coaching purposes only. Only the head coach may come onto the field to discuss situations with the umpires. Never talk with a coach if he runs onto the field or is not acting like a gentleman. Rules may need to be interpreted but keep explanations short and to the point. Explain to him what you saw then politely say "OK COACH, LETS PLAY BALL". If he does not go to the dugout, say it again then add "YOU MUST GO TO THE DUGOUT NOW OR I MUST EJECT YOU FROM THE GAME". If he still does not leave, eject him from the game as a last resort. Stay calm and do not argue. Remember, balls and strikes, check swings and balks are not to be discussed.

Note: Per MBA rules, all coaches other than base coaches on offense must be in the dugout. On defense, one coach may be outside the dugout to call pitches but must be within 3 feet of the door. In Rookie and below, in lieu of the pitching coach, there may be 2 defensive coaches beyond the bases (one on each side) and on offense there may be a coach with the batter.

## Disagreements

-Umpiring is a job where you are expected to be perfect on your first day and then get better everyday thereafter. As an umpire, you must keep your cool. While players, coaches and fans all become emotional, umpires must remain in control when dealing with them. Most disputes in games can be dealt with quickly and the amount of control an umpire has in a game is directly related to his ability to make decisions and to deal with players and coaches involved in a firm but courteous manner. You should make the call you see and see the call you make. Do not be ashamed to ask your partner for help if you need it. Your ultimate responsibility is to get the call right! If you miss a call, do not dwell on it or you'll probably miss the next one as well. Never "make up" for a missed call. Always, the last resort is ejection of a player or coach but if it is warranted, do it. Extreme verbal and/or physical abuse cannot be tolerated.

## Double tag

-With runners on first and second and less than 2 outs AND a catchable fly ball to the outfield is hit that may result in both the runner from first and the runner from second tagging up on the catch and trying to advance, the base umpire will take the runner from first and any plays on him at second (or back into first) and the plate umpire will rotate to take any plays on the runner from second into third. Remember, you each have to line up so you can see if "your" runner left too early, but still be able to get in position to make the call. This is the only situation where U1 leaves the plate area with a runner on second.

## Foul balls in the batter's box

-This is something that is often difficult for the plate umpire to see. He can easily be screened from seeing it by the catcher and/or the batter. Be observant of the reaction of the ball and the batter. Often the ball will go down, then straight out, rolling weakly towards the mound. The batter will also react in pain. Use your judgement and also your ears. The ball will sometimes react in the same manner if it hits the front edge of the plate. If you are in the field and you clearly see the batter get touched by the ball while still in the box, help your partner by immediately and loudly calling "foul". You want to kill this quickly before any attempted play begins. (Also do this if you see a foul ball straight up and back that touches the back stop since U1 will usually not be able to see it touch.) If you are absolutely certain that the batter was completely out of the box and in fair territory when he was touched by the ball, you should call "time" then declare the batter out. This should almost always be U1's call.

## Foul Fly Ball Between Home and Either First or Third That Has No Chance of Being Fair

-Since the ball has no chance of being fair, regardless of the location of any runners, the plate umpire should hustle over to the play, getting as close as possible to rule on the catch/no catch without getting in the way of fielders. Avoid looking at the ball and instead watch the fielders. They will lead you to the ball.

If the base umpire is in "A" and the ball is between home and first, both umpires should hustle to the play. Again, avoid the fielders and don't stare at the ball. Whichever umpire the fielder who catches (or attempts to catch) the ball is facing should make the call. If the fielder is facing neither umpire, the one that is the closest shall make the call.

## Foul Tips

-A foul tip is always a strike and the ball remains live and in play. The plate umpire must be alert for foul tips on bunts and on swinging strikes, especially third strikes. The field umpire should also be alert for foul tips in case they should be asked for help. Always signal a foul tip. See rules for the definition of a foul tip and know the difference between a foul tip and a foul ball!

## Infield Fly

-Umpires must signal to each other when there are less than 2 outs and bases loaded or runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. The signal is a reminder that an infield fly situation exists and should be given by each umpire prior to each batter when there is an infield fly situation. Remember, a fair fly ball that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort is an out, even if the ball is dropped. This is true even if the ball is caught by an outfielder. The ball is alive and runners may advance at their own risk. You should try to call it when the ball first starts to come down. Point to the ball with your right hand and yell “infield fly, batters out” or if it is close to the line, yell “infield fly, batters out if fair”. If it is caught in foul territory, he is out either way. (See infield fly signs for more help with making the call). There is no infield fly rule in Minor or below.

## Pickoffs (Major and Senior Leagues only)

-Base umpires must be alert for pickoffs since they can happen quickly. Most plays will look close. Be sure the runner is out. A close play doesn't mean that he is out. On an attempt at first, your instinctive move will be to turn and move closer to first. DON'T! The angle is more important than the distance and you will only have time to take one or two steps anyway. Your first step should be toward the foul line half way between the plate and first, then turn toward the base. This will improve your angle. Pickoffs at second require a step back, then turn with the throw into the play. On attempts at third, use the same mechanic as at first. As with any call, you should stop and be set before the play is made and you make the call. Keep your attention at the bag as long as the ball is there. Sometimes players do stupid things and you have to see it to call it or you'll look like the stupid one. If there is no tag attempted, you should not make any call.

## Rundowns

-The best coverage for rundowns is by both umpires, one at each end of the play. When the situation allows both umpires to work a rundown, yell to your partner to let him know you are coming and work that end only. The plate ump will run up the baseline to cover either the third base side or first base side of the play. If the rundown is between home and 3<sup>rd</sup> base, the base ump will run to get into position near 3<sup>rd</sup> base. Be careful not to run your partner off, rather wait until the runner is headed away from “your end” to set up, then let your partner know you are there and stay at that end. The call should be made by the umpire toward whom the runner is coming. This shows good teamwork, hustle and looks good to everyone. If there is also a runner on third or sometimes second, the plate umpire can not leave the plate until that run scores.

## Steal Plays

-When the runner from 1<sup>st</sup> base breaks for 2<sup>nd</sup> base, U2 should step toward the base, keep his eye on the ball, letting the flight of the ball turn him into the play, get set and make the call. On an attempt to steal 3<sup>rd</sup>, U2 should step toward 3<sup>rd</sup> base line to get at a 45 degree angle, follow the flight of the ball into the play, then turn toward the base, get set and make the call. Remember, the angle is much more important than the distance!

## Tag Plays

-All tag plays shall be verbalized with the proper signal. Know the available shortcuts on the field so you can get into the proper angle quickly. Do not make the call too quickly. Be patient and don't anticipate. Be sure you know the location of the ball before you make the call. Sometime it will squirt out the back of the play and you will not see it if players are on the ground. Ask the defensive player to "SHOW ME THE BALL" and if he holds it up, make the out call. If the runner is safe, where the ball is doesn't matter. Remember, a defensive player must have the ball or going for the ball because it is "in flight" to him in order for him to block the base or plate. (Rule 2.0 Obstruction, comment). If he is blocking it without the ball or it is not in flight to him, it is obstruction. On all plays at the plate, U1 should always remove and hold his mask in his left hand while making the out call with his right hand or the safe call with both hands.

## Timing Play

-When there are 2 outs and a runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> base, you are in a "timing play" situation. Be sure to signal this to your partner. U1 must determine if the runner touched home plate before or after a "non-force" 3<sup>rd</sup> out occurs. The run will then be announced to both teams as being scored or not, depending on the call. U1 should take a position approximately 6 to 8 feet behind home plate that is in line with both the runner touching the plate and the third out that is occurring on the bases. It is helpful when a timing play occurs, to verbalize the "OUT!" or the "SCORE" quickly so your partner can hear and you can determine if the third out was made before or after the run scored.

## **REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING:**

1. The most important part of being consistent is TIMING. At the plate, give yourself time to think about the pitch. See it, replay it, call it. On the bases, let the whole play develop before making your call. Give the fielder time to drop the ball before calling the runner out.
2. Communicate! Let your partner know where you are going and what is happening. Plate man, give signals EVERY time the situation changes. Field man, LOOK in for the signals and give them back to him. Give verbal signals during a play when warranted.
3. Work as a team with your partner.
4. Any legitimate question deserves a legitimate answer. Don't be unapproachable. Explain to the coach what you have if the situation warrants it.
5. Maintain your composure at all times. It takes two people to have an argument. Don't let your ego ruin the game! If the coach has had "his say" and is walking away let him go. Don't insist on having the last word. That kind of attitude will only cause problems.
6. KNOW your rules!
7. HAVE FUN!!!