

Umpire Training

March 2019

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1. Being an Umpire

- a. Honoring the game, Being the Professional Game Manager
- b. Protecting the participants
- c. Insuring the players have fun by setting the stage for a fun game experience
- d. Safety
 - i. On the field
 - ii. Around the plate
 - iii. Spectator Mgt
 - iv. Your Safety - Pay Attention from start-finish (never turn your back)
- e. Help optimize the experience for everyone. Create your own Umpiring 'style'

2. Your role & responsibilities

- a. Register with MLL, Background Check
- b. The role of the Umpire-in-Chief, Umpire Coordinator, MLL Board
- c. Game Management (not crowd control)
- d. Start the game on time, Pre-game routine (details later)
- e. Be a partner to the other Ump(s) on your team (your only loyal friends in the stadium)
- f. Be courteous, yet authoritative and "in command" of the field
- g. When you screw up rules or game management calls - work with the Chief Umpire to try to make it right/equitable within your ability to do so

3. Uniform and Equipment

- a. Shirt, cap, face-mask, shin guards, chest protector, bag, pitch counter, brush, rag (optional, for "leaving early")
- b. You will need to provide protection, shoes, slacks (grey or blue)
- c. Equipment Checks; cups, illegal bats, broken straps, primary issues

4. Basics Game Management

- a. Starting the game
- b. Time-outs, Communications with Managers
- c. The stance (Base and Plate)
- d. Balls & Strikes, Outs, Foul Balls, Obstruction, Interference
- e. Umpire to Umpire etiquette and signals

5. Pre-game ritual

- a. Prior to conference - do equipment check (bats, cups)
- b. Responsibility for starting/calling game (safety call)
- c. Plate Conference (Managers only - no Asst Coaches)
 - i. Balls-in!
 - ii. Check in with ScoreKeeper
 - iii. Introductions
 - iv. Field rules/quirks
 - v. Game time-limit, Inning run rule, mercy rules
 - vi. Insure roster exchange and Pitcher eligibility
 - vii. Pitcher/Catcher warm-ups
 - viii. Throw-down / starting field position
 - ix. Field-check / Play Ball!

- d. Final comments re Umpire discretion
 - e. Insure that next batter in rotation retrieves bat
6. Bases Umpire Responsibilities
- a. The Runners (Slides 40 - 45)
 - b. Infield Fly Rule (Slides 47 - 49)
 - c. Make your “Best Call” and ‘Sell It’
 - i. Lame excuses will not make your job easier - things NOT to do (Slides 74-84)
 - d. When you MAY change calls: (Slides 85 - 91)
 - i. When YOU make a wrong call - or Your Buddy asks you to -
 - ii. DON’T CHANGE YOUR BUDDY’S CALL!
 - e. Pre-game Umpire Conference (Slides 92-101) Discuss and agree who will cover what areas and situations - Plate Umpire will lead conference.
7. Reducing the Margin of Error (Slide 14)
- a. Angle, then distance
 - b. Watch the ball, glance at the runner
 - c. Relax, Concentrate, Hustle when getting into position
8. Interference and Obstruction
- a. Obstruction (Slide 15, 22, 23)
 - b. Obstruction (award bases)
 - c. Interference - offensive or spectators (Slides 24 - 28)
 - d. Dead Ball (Awarding bases)
9. Home Plate / Obstruction and Avoidance.
- a. Runner must attempt to avoid contact at the plate (can be called out if doesn’t avoid - and if Catcher HAS THE BALL and IS IN POSITION TO MAKE THE PLAY)
10. Basic Umpiring ‘Signals’ (Slides 113 - 118)
- a. The ‘Set Position’
 - b. “Safe” and “Out” moves
 - c. “Off the bag”
 - d. “Nothing here”
 - e. “Time”
 - f. “Left Early” flag
11. Starting the Game
- a. Pitcher gets to warm up with 8 pitches (not to take more than 1 min)
 - b. All players not on field or in box MUST be in the dugout
 - c. Only 2 Offensive coaches on field
 - d. 1 adult MUST be in the dugout
 - e. No more than 3 coaches can be in the dugout

12. Game Management

- a. Who makes the call?
- b. Only the Umpire can call 'Time Out' (players and Managers can ask - only Umpires can grant request)
- c. If two Umpires, only one should engage in conference, unless the first Umpire asks his partner to join in or help out with a call.
- d. One play - one call. Don't allow discussion or debate of ANY judgment call. Only challenges of a RULES VIOLATION warrants a discussion and perhaps a reversal.
- e. Always feel free to ask your partner for assistance if needed, but never interfere or question or correct your partner's call unless asked.
- f. NEVER defer to 'I'll ask my partner' when challenged by a Manager on a judgment call.
- g. Do not tolerate FISHING EXPEDITIONS. If a Manager challenges a call applying to a rule interpretation, ask "What rule are you citing to support your challenge?" If they can not cite the Rule# and Page#, then call it good and resume play.
- h. Interaction with the ScoreKeeper
 - i. Identify them before the game and introduce yourself
 - ii. Home team provides the Official ScoreKeeper
 - iii. Suggest that teams compare Pitch Counts after each half-inning
- i. Non-interaction with the spectators / parents (their opinions don't penetrate your skull - try to keep them safe, but otherwise keep your distance.
- j. Let the Managers manage their players, coaches and THEIR fans
- k. ONLY a Manager can coach a Player while on the field during a game. If a parent is 'coaching', particularly from beside the backstop, stop play and ask the Manager to ask the parent to cease - once they cease, resume play.

13. Dealing with "Situations" (105 - 111)

- a. Ejections
- b. Player discipline
- c. Chief (Plate) Umpire is final authority
- d. "Judgment" calls are NEVER debated (twice)
- e. YOU are ALWAYS RIGHT on JUDGMENT CALLS (unless you aren't)
- f. If you made the call - you will be defending the call if questioned (don't ever defer 'after' you make the call)
- g. Rules Challenges
- h. "Is the Umpire required to carry a Rule Book?"

14. Learn the RULES (Review Slides 224 - 240)

- a. Read the Rule Book. Focus on Rules 1, 2 and 9 (Definitions)
- b. Read it every chance you get
- c. Review the PPT deck provided
- d. Communicate with veteran Umpires (most like beer)
- e. Subscribe to the Umpire Facebook site
- f. Watch the veterans

15. Keeping the game going

- a. Quick turnaround between innings
- b. Have Catcher warm up if possible prior to end of inning
- c. Don't tolerate excessive time-outs by the batter
- d. Urge the Pitcher to be timely and not lolligag too much btw pitchers
- e. Umpire can direct the Batter to 'get in the box' and the Pitcher 'to pick up the pace'
- f. Manager's visit to the mound (not to be longer than feels comfortable by the Umpire) Only two visits per inning per pitcher (has to pull on third visit) 4 visits total per Pitcher (must pull on 4th)

16. Make sure you understand the three most important words "IN MY JUDGMENT"

Official Rules: 9.00 The Umpire

9.01

(a) The league president shall appoint one or more umpires to officiate at each league championship game. The umpires shall be responsible for the conduct of the game in accordance with these official rules and for maintaining discipline and order on the playing field during the game.

(b) Each umpire is the representative of the league and of professional baseball, and is authorized and required to enforce all of these rules. Each umpire has authority to order a player, coach, manager or club officer or employee to do or refrain from doing anything which affects the administering of these rules, and to enforce the prescribed penalties.

(c) Each umpire has authority to rule on any point not specifically covered in these rules.

(d) Each umpire has authority to disqualify any player, coach, manager or substitute for objecting to decisions or for unsportsmanlike conduct or language, and to eject such disqualified person from the playing field. If an umpire disqualifies a player while a play is in progress, the disqualification shall not take effect until no further action is possible in that play.

(e) Each umpire has authority at his discretion to eject from the playing field (1) any person whose duties permit his presence on the field, such as ground crew members, ushers, photographers, newsmen, broadcasting crew members, etc., and (2) any spectator or other person not authorized to be on the playing field.

9.02

(a) Any umpire's decision which involves judgment, such as, but not limited to, whether a batted ball is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or a ball, or whether a runner is safe or out, is final. No player, manager, coach or substitute shall object to any such judgment decisions.

Rule 9.02(a) Comment: Players leaving their position in the field or on base, or managers or coaches leaving the bench or coaches box, to argue on BALLS AND STRIKES will not be permitted. They should be warned if they start for the plate to protest the call. If they continue, they will be ejected from the game.

(b) If there is reasonable doubt that any umpire's decision may be in conflict with the rules, the manager may appeal the decision and ask that a correct ruling be made. Such appeal shall be made only to the umpire who made the protested decision.

(c) If a decision is appealed, the umpire making the decision may ask another umpire for information before making a final decision. No umpire shall criticize, seek to reverse or interfere with another umpire's decision unless asked to do so by the umpire making it.

Rule 9.02(c) Comment: The manager or the catcher may request the plate umpire to ask his partner for help on a half swing when the plate umpire calls the pitch a ball, but not when the pitch is called a strike. The manager may not complain that the umpire made an improper call, but only that he did not ask his partner for help. Field umpires must be alerted to the request from the plate umpire and quickly respond. Managers may not protest the call of a ball or strike on the pretense they are asking for information about a half swing.

Appeals on a half swing may be made only on the call of ball and when asked to appeal, the home plate umpire must refer to a base umpire for his judgment on the half swing.

Should the base umpire call the pitch a strike, the strike call shall prevail.

Baserunners must be alert to the possibility that the base umpire on appeal from the plate umpire may reverse the call of a ball to the call of a strike, in which event the runner is in jeopardy of being out by the catcher's throw. Also, a catcher must be alert in a base stealing situation if a ball call is reversed to a strike by the base umpire upon appeal from the plate umpire.

The ball is in play on appeal on a half swing.

On a half swing, if the manager comes out to argue with first or third base umpire and if after being warned he persists in arguing, he can be ejected as he is now arguing over a called ball or strike.

(d) No umpire may be replaced during a game unless he is injured or becomes ill.

9.03

(a) If there is only one umpire, he shall have complete jurisdiction in administering the rules. He may take any position on the playing field which will enable him to discharge his duties (usually) behind the catcher, but sometimes behind the pitcher if there are runners).

(b) If there are two or more umpires, one shall be designated umpire-in-chief and the others field umpires.

9.04

(a) The umpire-in-chief shall stand behind the catcher. (He usually is called the plate umpire.) His duties shall be to:

- (1) Take full charge of, and be responsible for, the proper conduct of the game;
- (2) Call and count balls and strike;
- (3) Call and declare fair balls and fouls except those commonly called by field umpires;
- (4) Make all decisions on the batter;
- (5) Make all decisions except those commonly reserved for the field umpires;
- (6) Decide when a game shall be forfeited;
- (7) If a time limit has been set, announce the fact and the time set before the game starts;
- (8) Inform the official scorer of the official batting order, and any changes in the lineups and batting order, on request;
- (9) Announce any special ground rules, at his discretion.

(b) A field umpire may take any position on the playing field he thinks best suited to make impending decisions on the bases. His duties shall be to:

- (1) Make all decisions on the bases except those specifically reserved to the umpire-in-chief;
- (2) Take concurrent jurisdiction with the umpire-in-chief in calling "Time," balks, illegal pitches, or defacement or discoloration of the ball by any player.
- (3) Aid the umpire-in-chief in every manner in enforcing the rules, and excepting the power to forfeit the game, shall have equal authority with the umpire-in-chief in administering and enforcing the rules and maintaining discipline.

(c) If different decisions should be made on one play by different umpires, the umpire-in-chief shall call all the umpires into consultation, with no manager or player present. After consultation, the umpire-in-chief (unless another umpire may have been designated by the league president) shall determine which decision shall prevail, based on which umpire was in best position and which decision was most likely correct. Play shall proceed as if only the final decision had been made.

9.05

(a) The umpire shall report to the league president within 12 hours after the end of a game all violations of rules and other incidents worthy of comment, including the disqualification of any trainer, manager, coach or player, and the reasons therefor.

(b) When any trainer, manager, coach or player is disqualified for a flagrant offense such as the use of obscene or indecent language, or an assault upon an umpire, trainer, manager, coach or player, the umpire shall forward full particulars to the league president within four hours after the end of the game.

(c) After receiving the umpire's report that a trainer, manager, coach or player has been disqualified, the league president shall impose such penalty as he deems justified, and

shall notify the person penalized and the manager of the club of which the penalized person is a member. If the penalty includes a fine, the penalized person shall pay the amount of the fine to the league within five days after receiving notice of the fine. Failure to pay such fine within five days shall result in the offender being debarred from participation in any game and from sitting on the players' bench during any game, until the fine is paid.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO UMPIRES

Umpires, on the field, should not indulge in conversation with players. Keep out of the coaching box and do not talk to the coach on duty.

Keep your uniform in good condition. Be active and alert on the field.

Be courteous, always, to club officials; avoid visiting in club offices and thoughtless familiarity with officers or employees of contesting clubs. When you enter a ball park your sole duty is to umpire a ball game as the representative of baseball.

Do not allow criticism to keep you from studying out bad situations that may lead to protested games. Carry your rule book. It is better to consult the rules and hold up the game 10 minutes to decide a knotty problem than to have a game thrown out on protest and replayed.

Keep the game moving. A ball game is often helped by energetic and earnest work of the umpires.

You are the only official representative of baseball on the ball field. It is often a trying position which requires the exercise of much patience and good judgment, but do not forget that the first essential in working out of a bad situation is to keep your own temper and self-control.

You no doubt are going to make mistakes, but never attempt to "even up" after having made one. Make all decisions as you see them and forget which is the home or visiting club.

Keep your eye everlastingly on the ball while it is in play. It is more vital to know just where a fly ball fell, or a thrown ball finished up, than whether or not a runner missed a base. Do not call the plays too quickly, or turn away too fast when a fielder is throwing to complete a double play. Watch out for dropped balls after you have called a man out. Do not come running with your arm up or down, denoting "out" or "safe." Wait until the play is completed before making any arm motion.

Each umpire team should work out a simple set of signals, so the proper umpire can always right a manifestly wrong decision when convinced he has made an error. If sure you got the play correctly, do not be stampeded by players' appeals to "ask the other man." If not sure, ask one of your associates. Do not carry this to extremes, be alert and get your own plays. But remember! The first requisite is to get decisions correctly. If in doubt don't hesitate to consult your associate. Umpire dignity is important but never as important as "being right."

A most important rule for umpires is always "BE IN POSITION TO SEE EVERY PLAY." Even though your decision may be 100 percent right, players still question it if they feel you were not in a spot to see the play clearly and definitely. Finally, be courteous, impartial and firm, and so compel respect from all.