

# Umpire Clinic



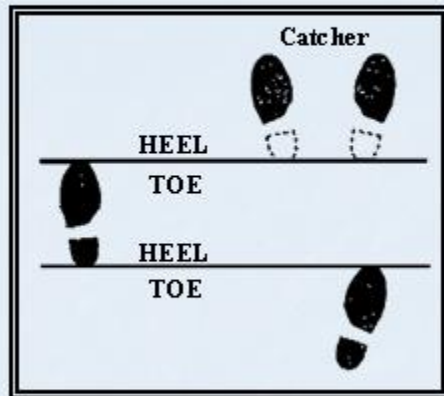
# Introduction (cont'd)

- 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

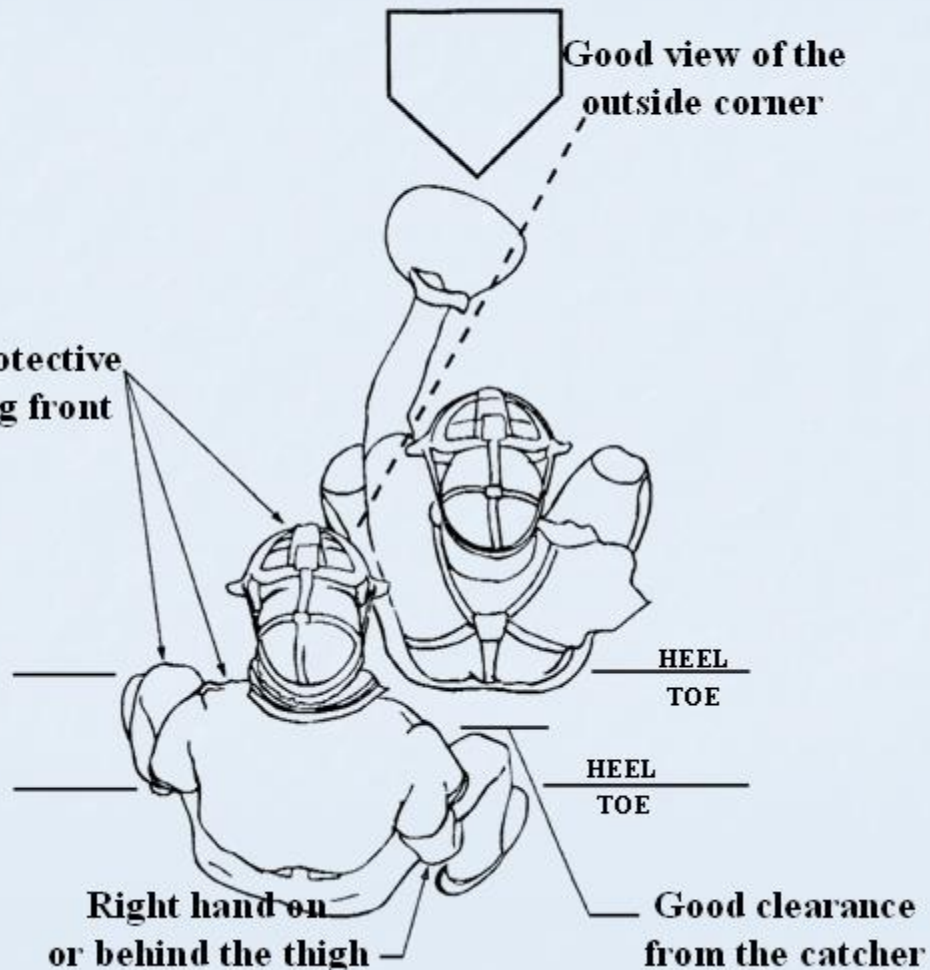
# Equipment Needed

- Umpire uniform (dark navy or light blue)
- Grey pants
- Black Shoes
- Counter
- Hat
- Will will supply home plate equipment if needed.  
(Mask, chest protector, ball bag and shin guards)

# THE SLOT (TOP VIEW)

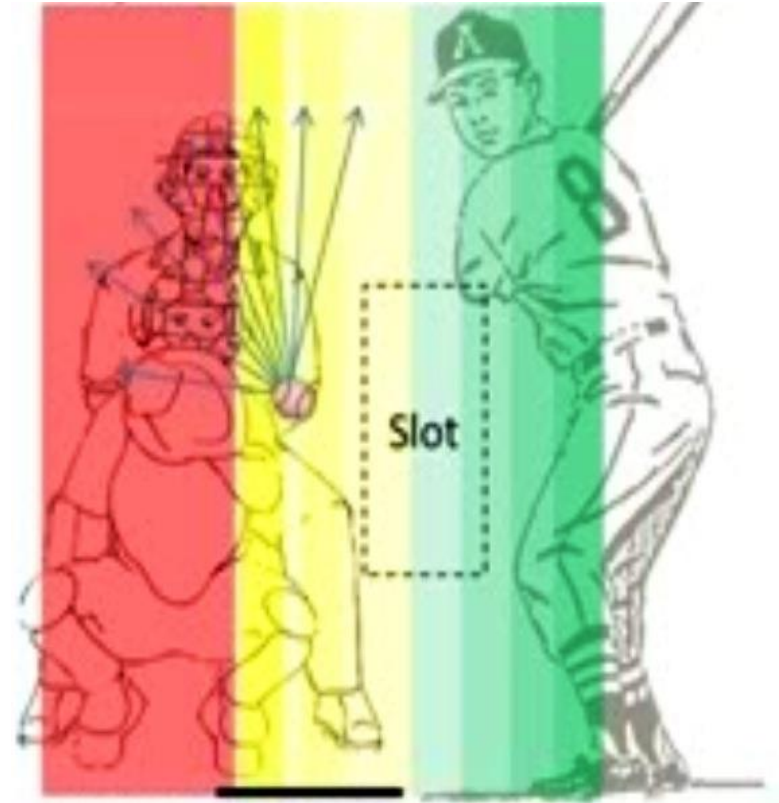
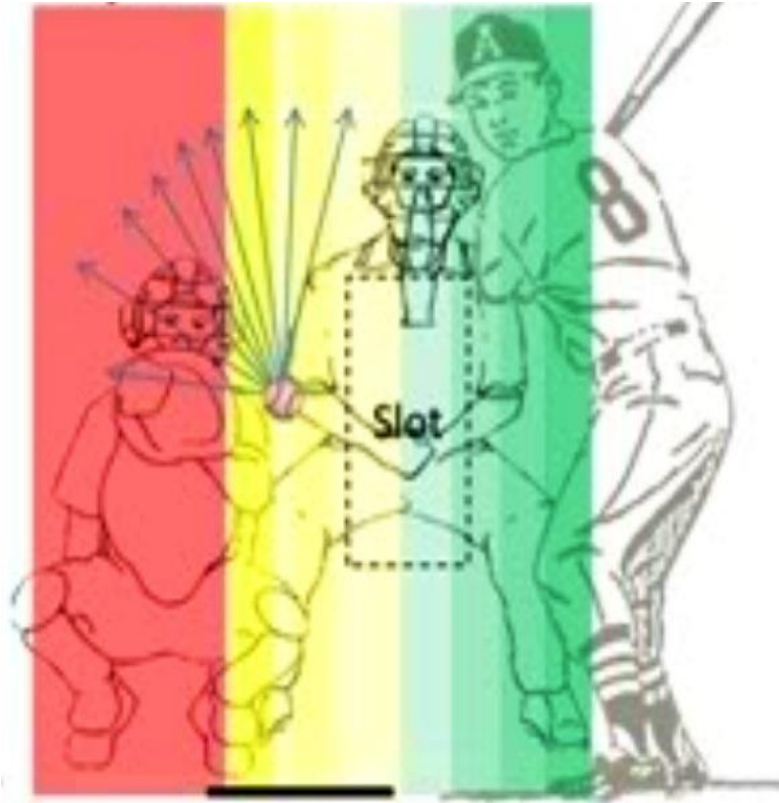


**Proper use of protective equipment facing front**

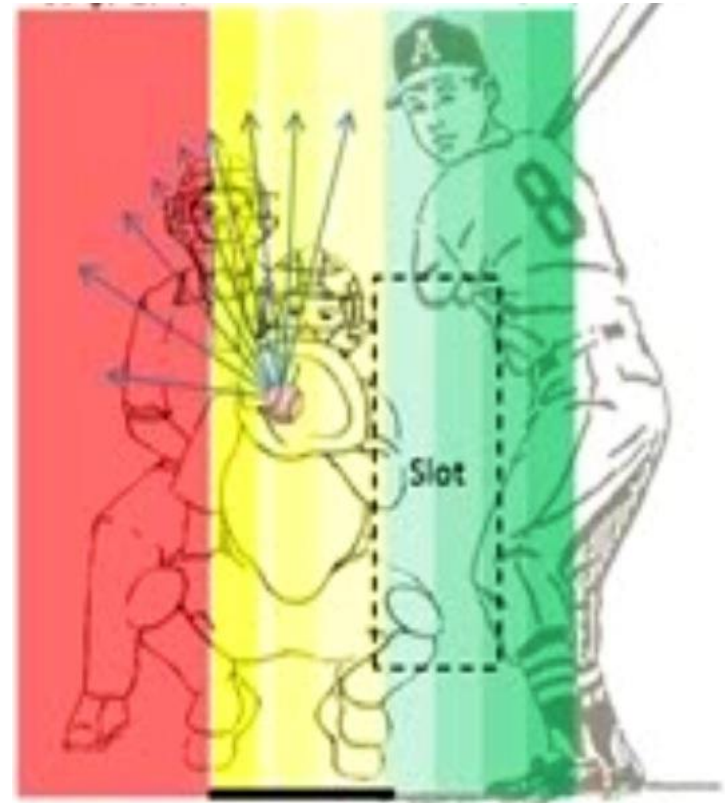
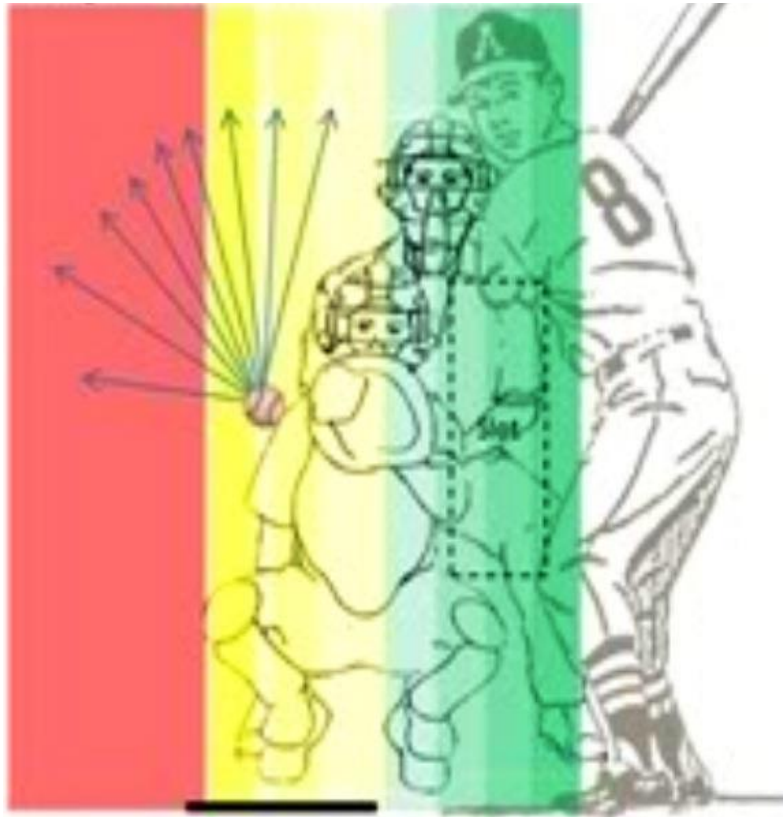


# The Slot & Batted Balls hit Backwards

- A batted ball hit backwards (a Foul Ball) will generally travel straight back or away from the batter.
- While in the Slot, you may feel exposed or vulnerable to getting hit by an untouched pitch, especially if the catcher sets up outside, but the chances of getting hit by a batted ball hit backwards is much greater if you move.
- Trust your gear!



Comparison with the Catcher Outside



Comparison with the Catcher Inside

**NEVER** set up on the opposite side of the catcher!

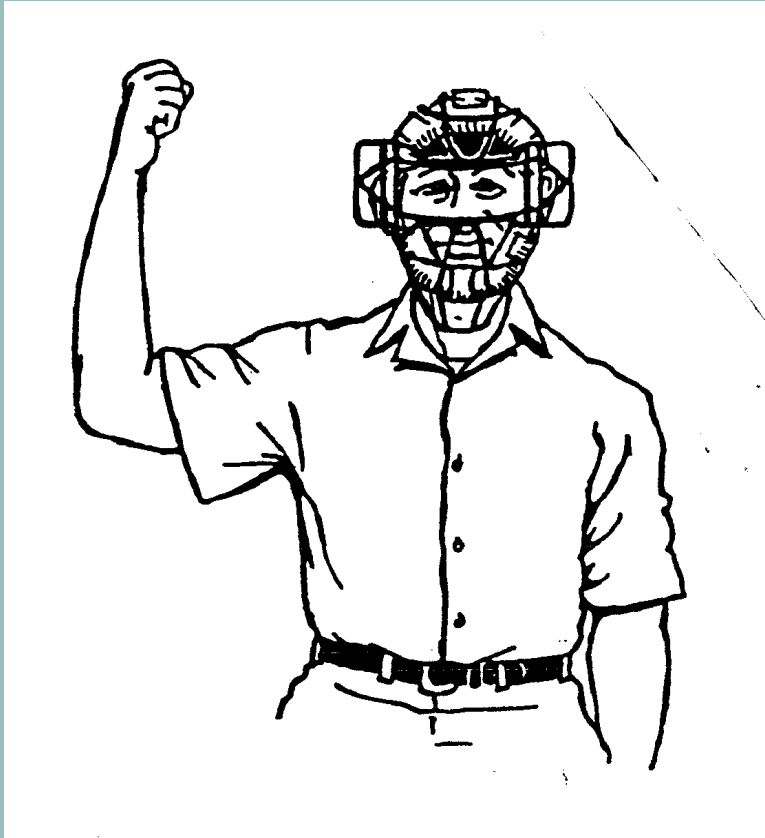
# Signaling Mechanics

Slideshow Created By:

Hayes A. Davis



# 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 – Ball Call



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

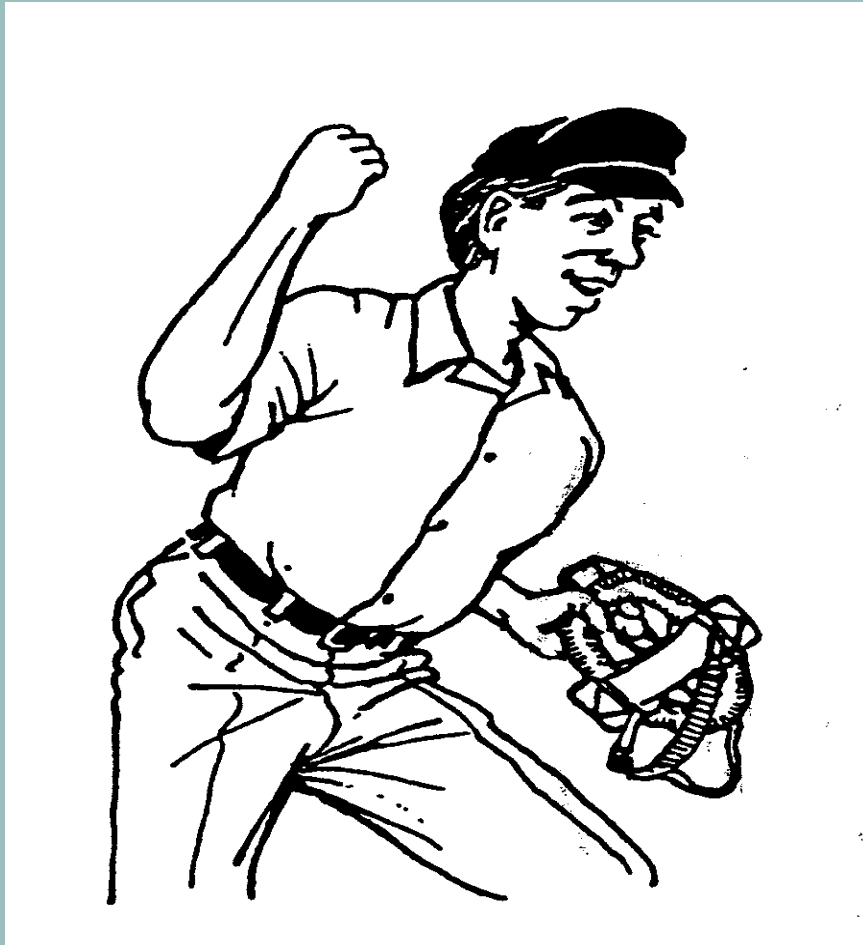
After the call is made then rise up out of the set position to relax between pitches.

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 – Out Call

(On a Runner coming home from third base)



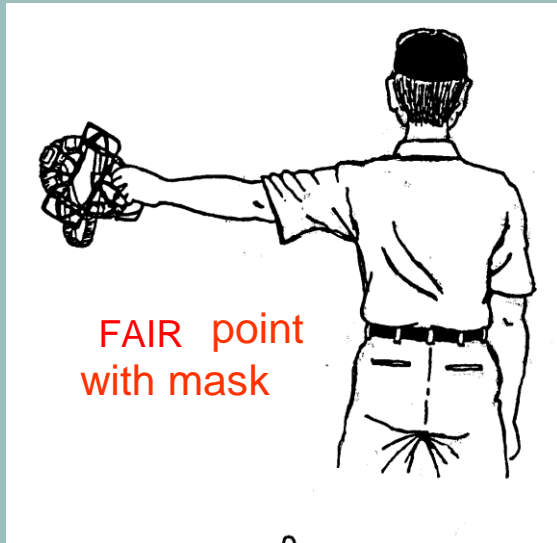
**Out Call:** The signal is similar to the strike signal. Mask is ALWAYS held in left hand so it doesn't go flying when making the call. It is possible that on rapidly developing plays at home (i.e. squeeze plays) that the mask cannot be removed in time since these plays occur so quickly. The right arm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

# Plate Umpire – 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.

# Plate Umpire – Fair/Foul Call

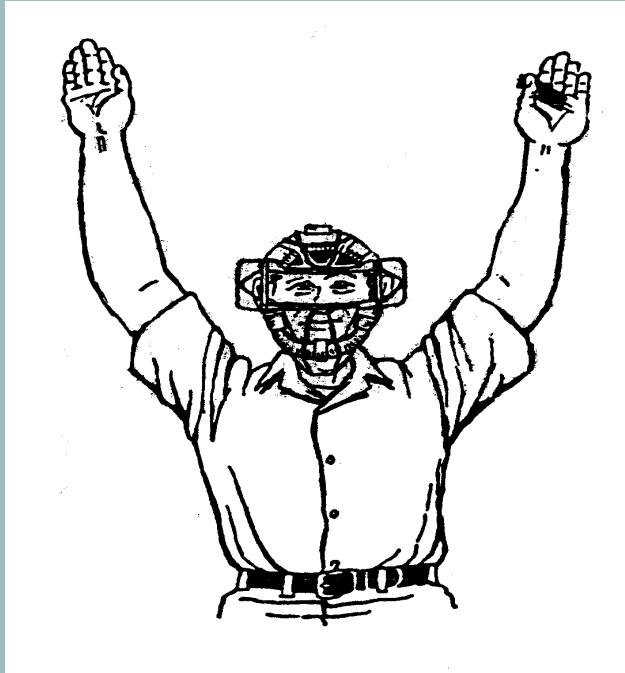


**Fair :** The Fair Call is NEVER verbalized! Any sound associated with indicating a fair ball could be construed as "foul" and stop play. Merely point into fair territory and say nothing. If necessary, emphatically point into fair territory if it appears that players are not reacting to the batted ball.

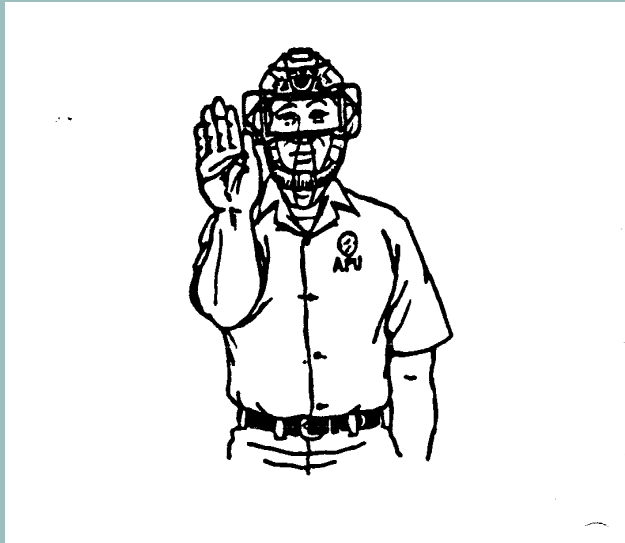


The Foul Call is always preceded by the Time signal which kills all play and alerts the runners and coaches.

# Plate Umpire – Time Call

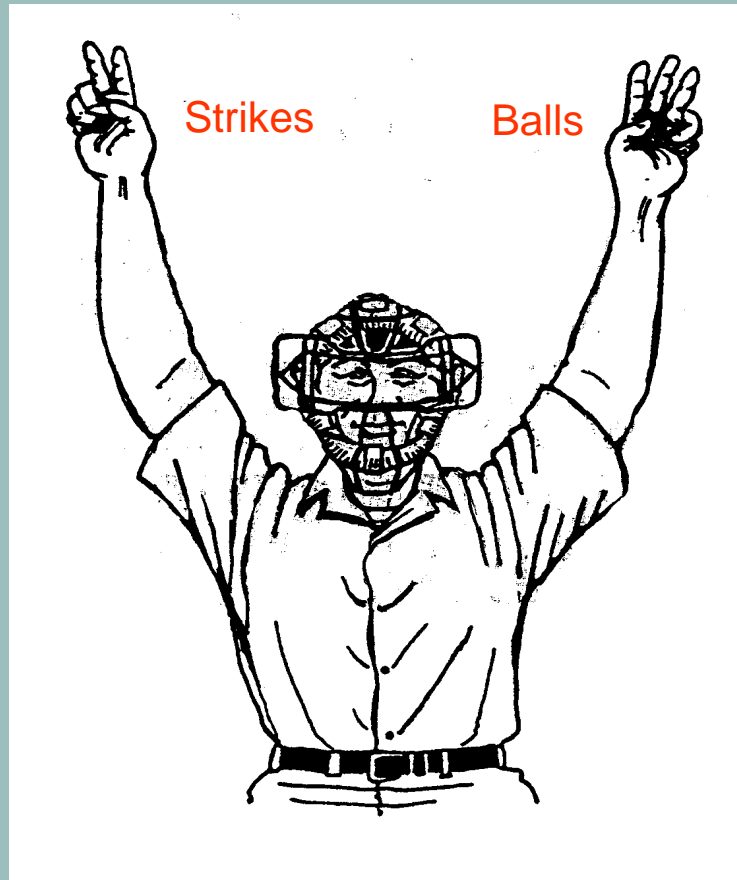


**Time Call:** It is very important that everyone on the field knows when you have called time. Raise both hands high in the air (palms out) and verbalize "Time!" This signal should be echoed by your partner(s). Once "Time" has been called, **NOTHING** can occur on the field of play.



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



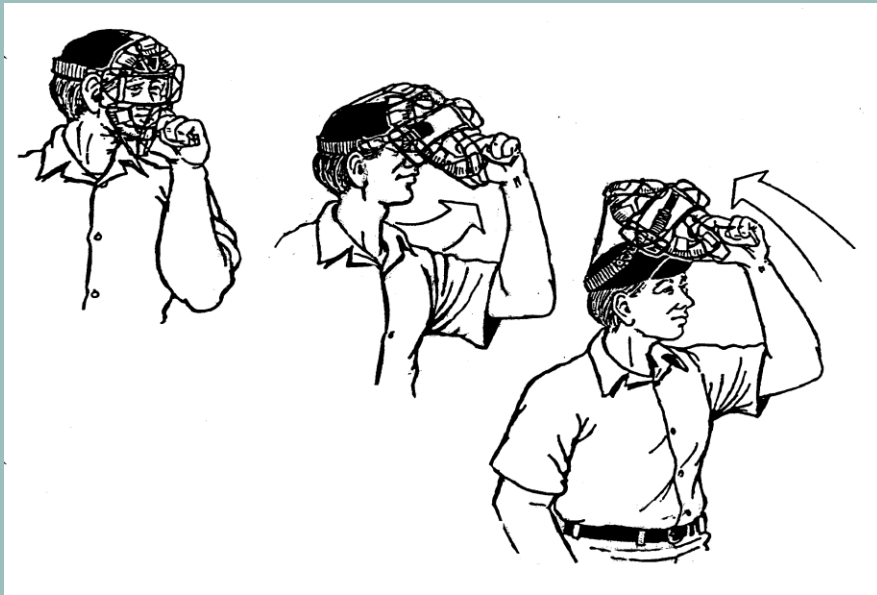
**Giving the Pitch Count:** The pitch count is signaled by holding up fingers on the left hand to indicate balls while the right hand is used to indicate strikes.

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

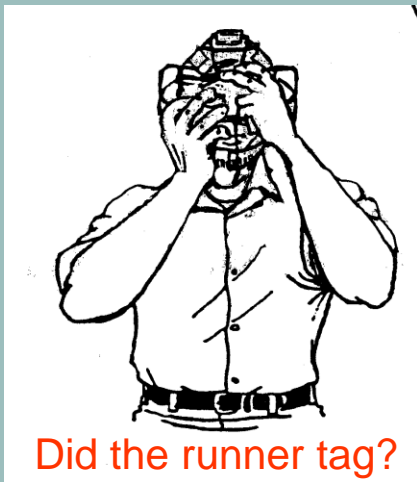
Generally, the count isn't verbalized until the second or third pitch to the batter. The pitch count **SHOULD** be given after every "action pitch" (i.e. when batter has two strikes or three balls on the count to him).

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 – Mask Removal

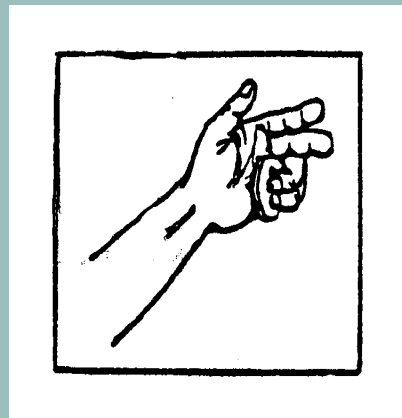


Proper mask removal technique



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 – 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.

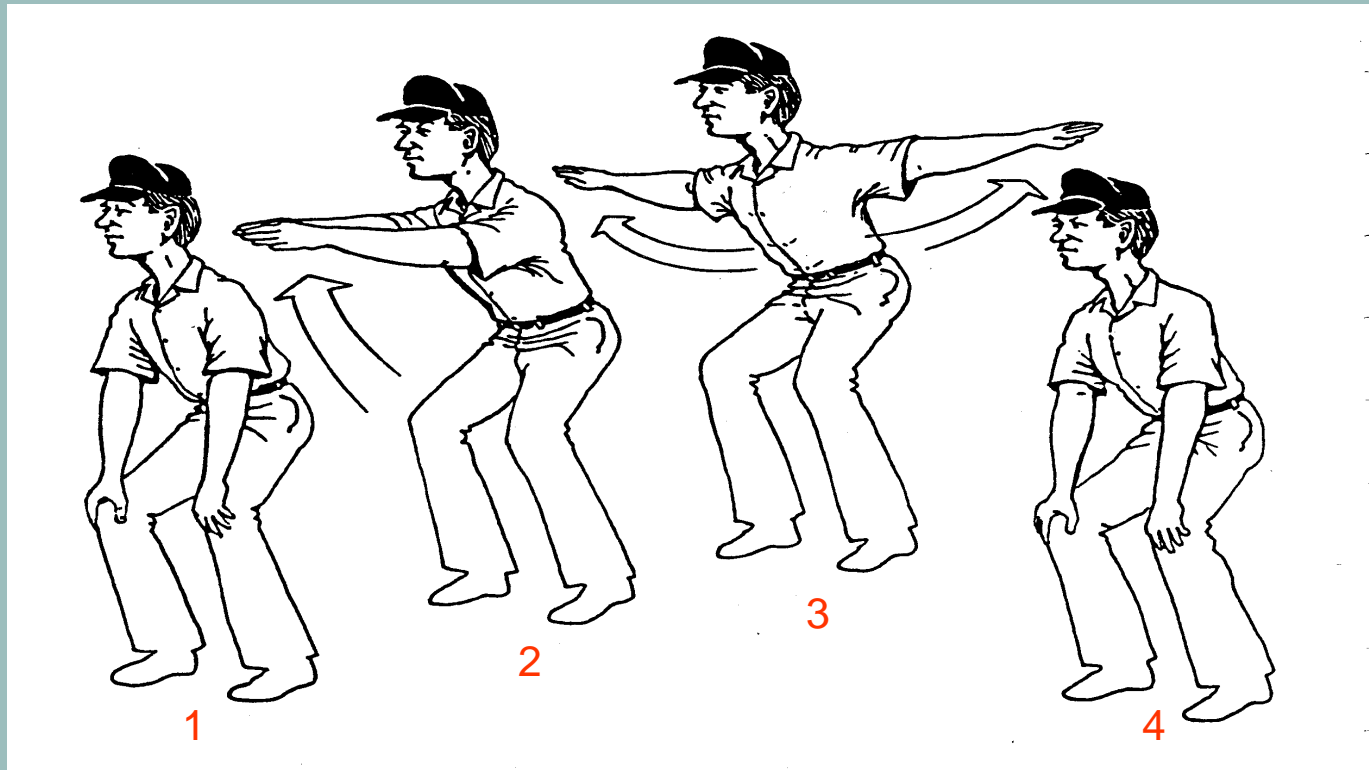
# Base Umpire – Set Position



**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.

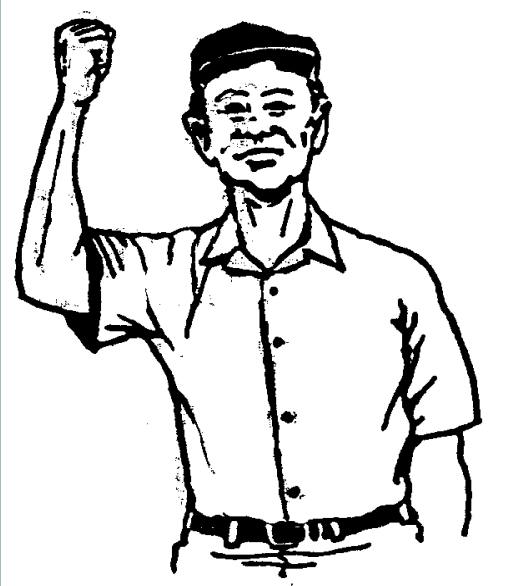
# Base Umpire – Safe Call Sequence



## 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.

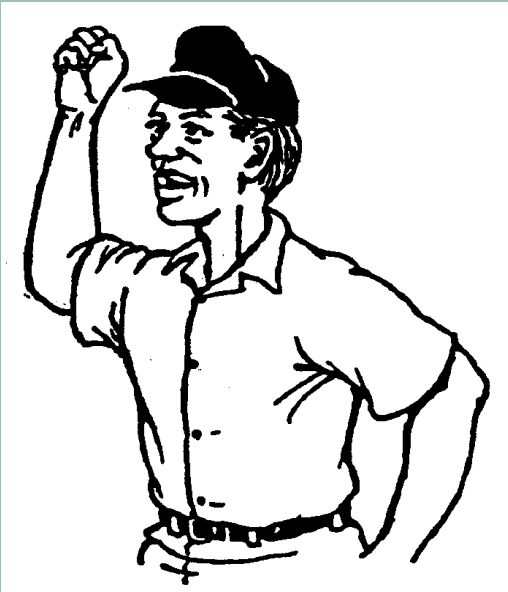
# Base Umpire – Out Call



**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.



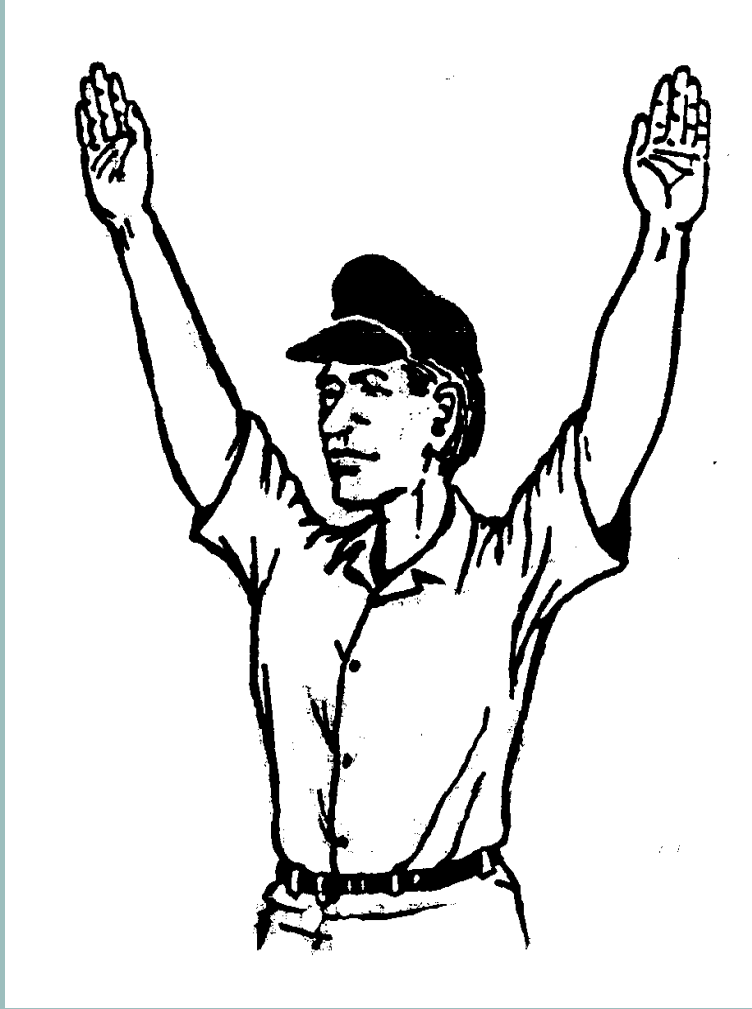
The call is verbalized as, "You're Out!" The umpire then returns to the set position.

(An alternate call could be something like "Out on One!")

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



Umpires MUST “see”  
a foul ball or the  
ball is fair

**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.

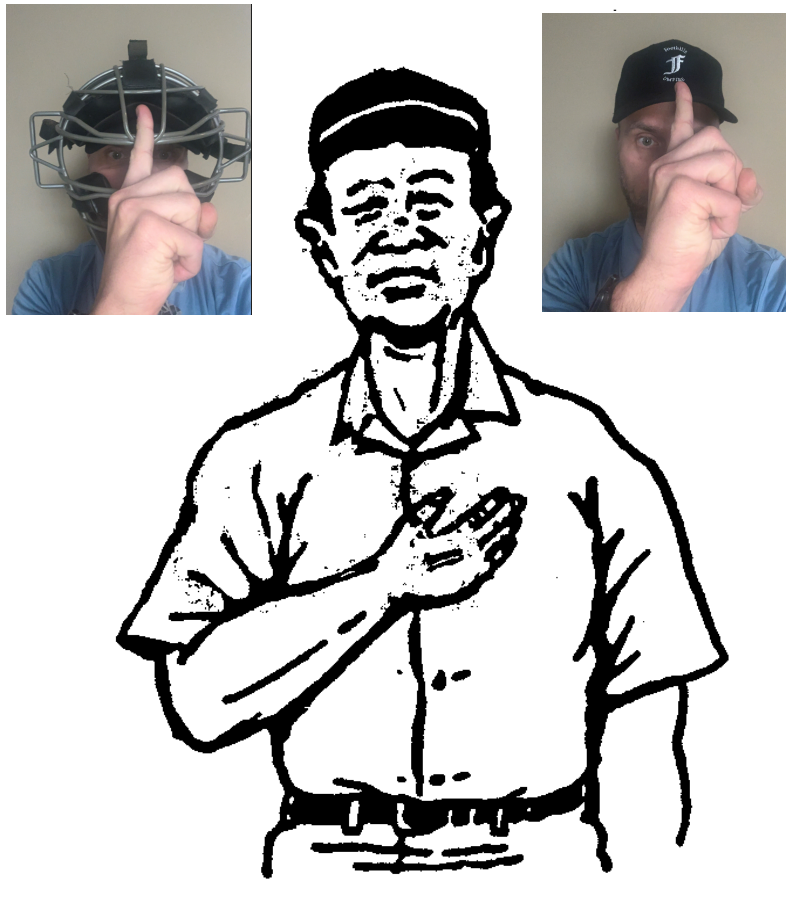
The umpire then points toward foul territory.

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.

**PREFERRED SIGNAL**



# 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



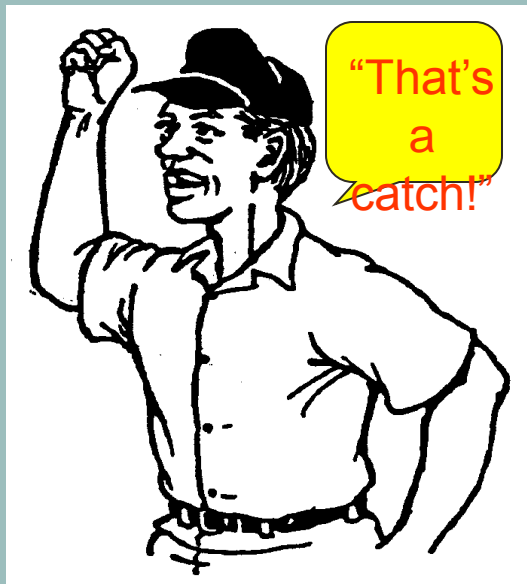
**Strike:** The base umpire initiates the Out signal while responding, "Yes, he went!"



**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

# Base Umpiring



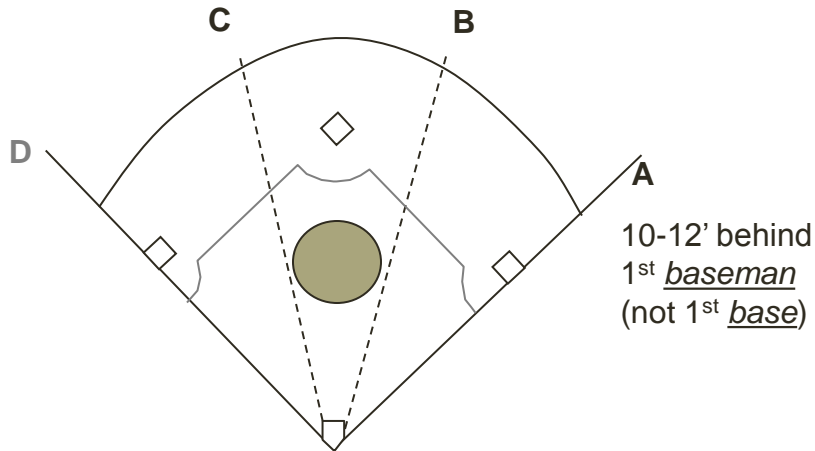
# Things the base umpire needs to know

- 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

# Base Umpire Positions

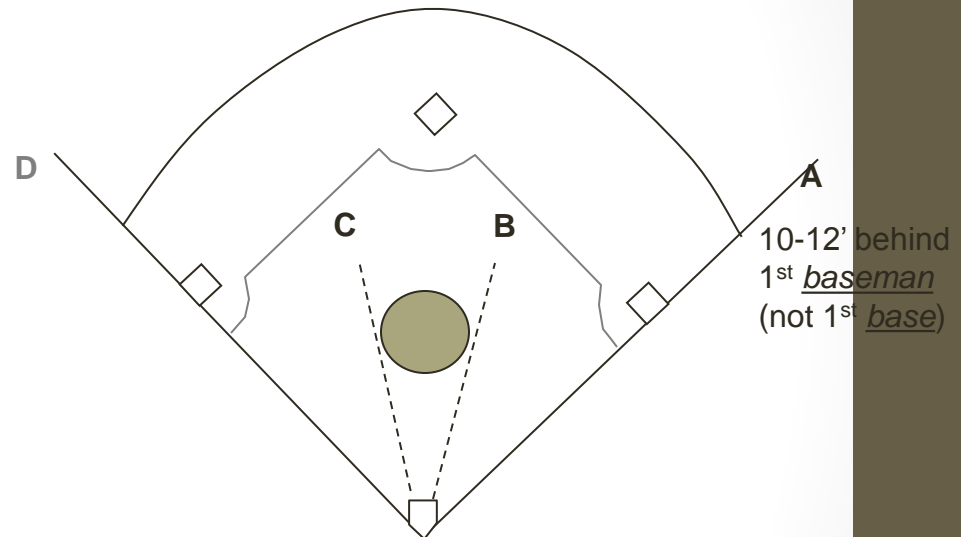


## Minors and Majors



**60' Diamond**

## Juniors, Seniors, Big League



**90' Diamond**

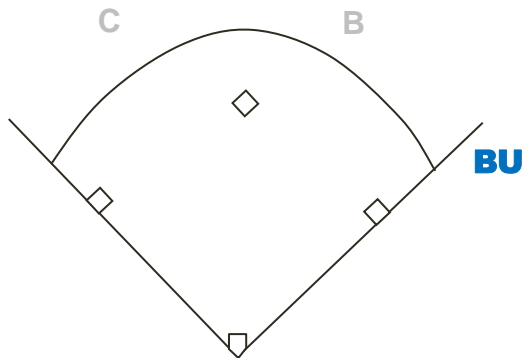
**Note:** The "D" position is only used when there are 2 or more base umpires (i.e., 3 and 4 umpire crews). It won't likely be used in regular season games since most games will use 2-umpire crews.

# Position at Start of Play

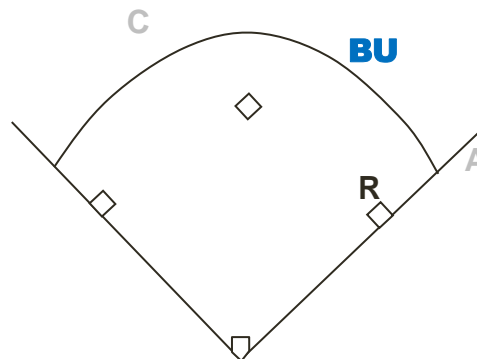
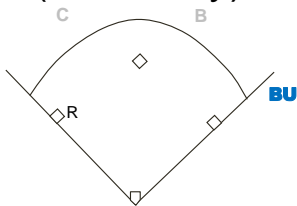
(aka .... Rotation)



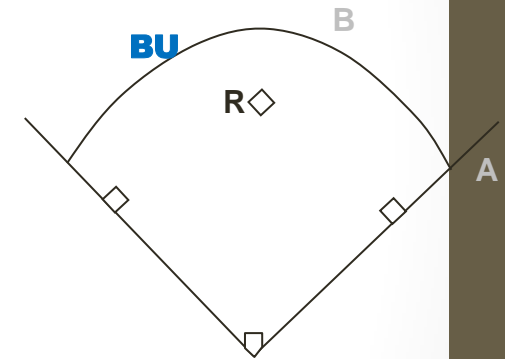
## 60' Diamond



**Bases empty**  
(or 3<sup>rd</sup> only)



**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>,  
bases loaded)

1

First most important tip for the new base umpire

# 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 !!!***

2

Second most important tip for the new base umpire

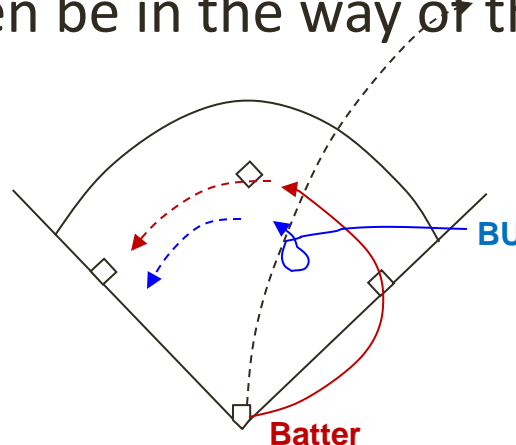
# Where to go when ball is hit

*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 video](#)





# Pausing before making the call



- Problem *(Part 1 of 2)*
  - 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.

# 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.***



# 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