

“Running Your Game”

“When You Arrive At The Field”

Check the “field” - - - batters box, foul lines, coaches boxes, on deck circles, & for any dangerous conditions that may effect safety of play.

“Fields New To You”

Check for the “out of play lines”. If lines are not marked, line up an object (from the home plate area out), such as a tree, telephone pole, window or chimney of a building, fire hydrant or any other permanent marker to establish your “line” (on both 1st & 3rd base sides of field).

“Uniform Tops (If Required)”

Check to see if “both” teams are wearing proper and required tops before game is to start. If there is a problem talk with the coach about the requirements for the player or players to be eligible to play).

“Check All Bats”

Enter each dugout (with your partner) and check all bats to be sure they are legal. Remove any that are illegal, or any in unacceptable condition. Plus always explain why you are removing any bat.

“Check In With Scorekeeper”

Check to see that both lineups are turned in. Also that the “minimal number” of players are present to qualify to start game. If any team is short a player or players (to legally start a game), keep the coach informed as to time remaining before the required start time.

“Infield Practice”

If time allows to have infield practice (for both teams) prior to their game, put the “visitors” on the field first, then the “home team” next.

“Batters Box Requirements”

Know the legal size of the batters box “7 feet x 3 feet” - - - - 4 feet forward & 3 feet back from the center of plate. Remember softball bats are 34” in length if you need something for measuring.

“Slowpitch Pitching Strike Zone” (Not Using Mat)
Balls & strikes are always called “as if batter is standing at the plate”, regardless of where the batter is “actually standing” in the batters box. Also use 3 warm up pitches or less per inning after game started.

“Ground Balls With No Runner On Base”
Ground balls batted “in, or through” the infield, with no runners on, home plate umpire “always” trails batter/runner up the 1st base line.

“Fair Or Foul Ball?”
To determine if a ball is fair or foul, it is where the ball is first touched by a fielder. Remember a ground ball that first touches the ground “fair” before 1st and/or 3rd base only needs to bounce over a “portion” of the bag to be ruled a fair ball (regardless where it lands next.

“Out Of Play Line (Dead Ball)”
Rulings are made as to “fielders feet” - - - “not the ball”. Remember where fielders feet were “last” before he or she “caught the ball”.

“Fly Balls To The Outfield”
Home plate umpire rules on fly balls to the outfield (also infield). With no runners on base, field umpire may go out on possible tough plays, if he or she signals and verbally communicates with their partner.

“Assistance By The Field Umpire”
On other than routine plays on a fly ball, the field umpire may gesture, as to what they observed by holding a “closed fist down” or either an “open palm facing down, or a finger pointing down” to let their partner know what they observed”. This is for assistance & help for the home plate umpire if they want or need it.

“Obstruction”
Catchers obstruction, if waiting for play at home or any other base, or obstruction on a runner. These are all a delayed dead ball situation, with an immediate verbal call along with a delayed dead ball signal.

“Batter Runner Passes Another Runner”

Always when batter runner passes a base runner, waiting to tag up on a fly ball, you “immediately declare an OUT” on the player doing the passing, and make sure the ball remains alive until the end of play.

“Interference”

Know without any question the ASA rules on the double play situation, fielder, coaches, umpire, fan & batted ball hitting runner “interference”

“Out Of Play”

Be positive on awards on all balls thrown out of play. A helpful “key” for awarding bases with multiple runners on base and the ball being thrown out of play. ALWAYS know where the runner, that occupied 1st base, was at the time of release of the thrown ball. (Remember it’s a 2 base award from the “release”, - - - “not when ball goes out of play”. There is ONE exception though to this rule - - so check it out !!!

“The Catch And No Catch Ruling”

Umpire making that call needs to watch that play all the way through for a voluntary release or no voluntary release to make that ruling.

“Running Bases Properly”

Runner ruled out if he runs outside of 3 feet to avoid an attempted tag. Batter runner is out if he retreats toward home plate, while going to 1st, to avoid a tag. It’s OK to go to the dugout area (but not inside of), then continue to 1st base. Runner returning to re-tag a base cannot cut across the infield. A runner must re-tag by running bases in reverse order going back.

“Time Limits”

Always inform teams, by starting to inform them at least 10 minutes before the end of the time limit, if it appears they may not get in their 7 innings. Keep them informed of remaining time as time progresses. Reduce warm up pitches if necessary. If you do have to rule on the time limit “don’t make it a surprise” (just limit it to a disappointment).

“The “Time-Play” Situation”

There are “only 2 times” to pass the “time-play-signal” between you & your partner. That’s with 2 outs & runners on “1st&2nd”, or “bases loaded”. “That’s it – ‘ONLY’ those two times”. If there is a runner scoring, the “home plate umpire” tells the scorekeeper “immediately after last out” if the run scores or doesn’t score. “DON’T” wait & make anyone ask you !!!” You tell scorekeeper results immediately.

“Forfeit Games”

If you do have a forfeited game, “DO NOT” work the game that the players may play with their allotted time. Give the new game ball to the home team, then you should leave area (with your partner) until next game time. Do not go sit in the stands. Leave the players sight.

“Verbal Communication”

Remember!!!! You cannot verbally communicate too much with your partner to keep him aware of what your doing or how your assisting on the play.

“2009 One Umpire System (With The Mat)”

Now that you’re working the “one umpire system” (some with the mat) there are some very important issues that need to be addressed:

On balls batted into “fair territory” (infield and outfield) all umpires need to progress into the “infield” (fair territory) and “remain there” until the end of play.

There are two exceptions” to these mechanics:

1/- When you are ruling on a ball on the “out of play line” you need to always be “on” that line in foul territory to make a proper call.

2/- If there is only one runner on base who is trying to score and you have time an are able to get back into foul territory in the home plate area for a possible play that’s an excellent position.

Other than those two situations, on every “FAIR BALL” you should be out in fair territory (out away from home plate) and remain there until all play has ceased. Be active, mobile and give 100% to the game.

(4 of 5)

Important: always make yourself a “very approachable umpire”, always be willing to explain rules or situations with respect, when necessary, and always give 110% every night. Remember: “you are being paid for a job”.

“Remember – treat a ballplayer, the way you would like to be treated, if you were a ballplayer”

Do this and you’ll go far, “successfully” !!!

Author/Umpire David Hamley

(5 of 5)