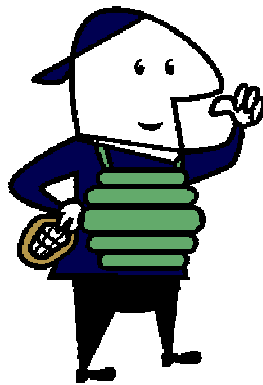


Middletown Little League Umpire Handbook



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2009

General Guidelines for Middletown Umpires

www.middletownlittleleague.org

The purpose of these guidelines is to help in providing consistency in rule application and management of games.

APPEARANCE

Umpires should wear the league shirt and cover which are provided. Whenever practical black, gray or dark blue pants with black shoes and socks should also be worn.

All calls should be made clearly. A loud voice should be used where a verbal call is appropriate and appropriate hand signals should plainly and unequivocally indicate the call.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The plate umpire is the umpire in chief (UIC) for that game. The UIC will not overrule or question a call by the other umpire. Upon request of the other umpire, the UIC shall offer his opinion on a play, if he/she has one. The UIC shall also make the final ruling on any rules interpretation, but only if formally requested by the other umpire or a manager as a protest of an alleged incorrect rules interpretation.

All rules decisions shall be made in conformity with the little league rulebook as supplemented by local rules. Any interpretations issued by or through the league UIC shall be followed.

PRE-GAME

Prior to the start of the game, the UIC shall hold a conference with the other umpire. The purpose shall be to go over positioning and areas of responsibility for calls, as well as ground rules and any other pertinent items. During the game, the UIC shall communicate with the other umpire as necessary to assure proper positioning, particularly when the other umpire is an untrained umpire.

There shall be a conference with the managers. This conference should take place about five minutes before the scheduled game time. The UIC should

confirm that the managers have exchanged lineups and should go over the ground rules.

GAME MANAGEMENT

The UIC shall see that the game moves along. In particular, the UIC shall assure that teams promptly take the field between innings. If the pitcher and/or catcher are not promptly taking the field and proceeding with warm up pitches, the UIC shall limit the number of warm up pitches, with due consideration for the weather. The rulebook time limit of one minute takes priority over the number of warm up pitches, and no team shall be allowed to consistently take significantly longer than one minute to be ready to play when on defense. If there is no catcher available to take warm up pitches, the pitcher should be directed to play catch with one of the infielders. There is no absolute right of either the pitcher or catcher to take warm up pitches if there is delay in getting ready.

Good sportsmanship is expected of all participants in the game and all spectators. The umpires shall take appropriate steps to attempt to avoid unsportsmanlike conduct. This may include informally speaking to players, managers or coaches or issuing formal warnings, or ejecting any participant for significant or repeated unsportsmanlike acts. The umpire must maintain proper composure, avoid intemperate remarks and not argue with any participant or spectator.

POST-GAME REPORTS

If any disciplinary action has to be taken during game, the umpires shall report what happened to the league UIC. The game umpires are also encouraged to report any unusual problems even if they did not lead to any disciplinary action and to contact the league UIC with any rules questions or field positioning/mechanics questions.

The league UIC is John Marsini: 732-267-2726

CHAPTER 1 THE UMPIRE

Character, good judgment, ability to get along with youngsters and the desire to do the job well are the attributes of a good umpire. This is only part of what it takes to be a Little League umpire. The adult volunteer is also a person who commands respect, knows the rules of the game and reacts intuitively to play situations, which dictate the umpire's position. Since the advent of baseball, the umpire has occupied a unique role. As sole judge and jury the umpires' authority is unquestioned, but the dignity with which each umpire exercises his duties, the good judgment and common sense they apply in the interpretation of the Rule Book are the hallmarks of an efficient and well-respected official. When you accept the responsibility of a Little League Umpire and are appointed by the league president, you should recognize and accept that you are a representative of the league and of Little League Baseball. You are authorized and required to enforce all the rules and regulations of Little League Baseball, Inc., whether we agree with all the rules and regulations or not. We must enforce all of them to the best of our ability; we cannot pick and choose which ones we are going to enforce. First and foremost, the safety of the children and the integrity of the game must be number one in the umpires' mind and how he enforces and interprets the rules. The Little League Volunteer Umpire could be one of the most important volunteers in the local league structure.

CHAPTER 2 POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN UMPIRING AT ANY LEVEL UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

Of utmost importance to the novice, as well as the experienced umpire, is his or her uniform and equipment. Appearance is a solid attribute to good umpiring. The well-groomed umpire creates an atmosphere of respect and dignity. The approved uniform is light blue or navy blue shirt and the Little League Umpire patch affixed to the upper left sleeve of the shirt. A patch from another baseball or softball organization is not appropriate in a Little League game. Navy blue, black or gray pants. Plate cap navy blue or black (short visor), base cap with (longer visor). Black belt and shoes with navy blue or black socks. Standard equipment should include special shoes (for plate umpire) with instep protector and box toe, no metal cleats however; ball and strike indicator, small broom or brush for cleaning home plate, chest protector, protective cup, shin guards and face mask. The ball bag must also be navy blue, black or gray. Your ball and strike indicator was designed for your left hand not your right, and shin guards should always be worn under your pants leg. It is very important to shine your shoes before every game and to keep both uniform and equipment immaculately clean. Sloppy dress will give the impression of sloppy work. Your uniform is a reflection of the pride you demonstrate in your umpiring. Proper fit and cleanliness are essential. Generally, the first impression people have of the umpire is his personal appearance. Your decorum is something you can control.

FRATERNIZATION

Umpires must not carry on idle conversations with manager, coaches or players during the progress of a game or with other umpires unless proper officiating of the game requires it. Actual conversation and contact between umpires during the game should be minimized; however, there are going to be times when umpires have a legitimate need to get together.

HANDLING SITUATIONS

Compare two umpires with nearly the same ability. One can have more success than the other simply because he is able to react to unusual situations. It is expected that the players, managers and coaches will become emotional. When the umpire becomes emotional too, a critical situation is created. It is possible to keep your poise through trying situations.

PROPER POSITION

Quite often a play will call itself if you are in proper position. It is impossible to make a call without guessing if you have the wrong angle on a play. Study and practice until you know what position you should be in and how to get there. It is impossible to be in the perfect position for all plays, as the play does not always develop as you anticipated. Three important factors to remember in positioning are ANGLE, DISTANCE AND TIMING. Angle is more important than distance!!

DESIRE

Perhaps the most important trait of an umpire is desire. A real umpire can show desire in a number of ways. With lots of hustle, honesty and understanding he is always willing to learn from others and his own mistakes. If he resents constructive criticism, then he is missing the most important trait, desire. Umpires at all levels of experience should always be willing to take additional training, update themselves at clinics or schools and ensure they know the yearly changes and the interpretation of those changes.

DISAGREEMENTS AND EJECTIONS

All umpires are expected to be perfect at the start of each game and to get better as the game progresses. Because this is not always the case, there are bound to be disagreements. When emotions run high with players, coaches, and umpires, it must be the umpires that have control. Umpires must expect disagreements and remain calm in keeping control of players, coaches, and managers. A manager's disagreement can usually be handled in a firm but gentlemanly manner. Ejections from a game whether a player, manager, or coach should be a last resort, but umpires must control the game. If an ejection is necessary to maintain control, do it. Umpires must establish control with their decision-making abilities, and respond to players and coaches in a firm but courteous manner. Extreme verbal and/or physical abuse must not and will not be tolerated. A report must be filed with the league official so that the league can take corrective action or disciplinary action. **HANDLING DISAGREEMENTS: THE FIRST STEP IN HANDLING DISAGREEMENTS IS BEING ABLE TO RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU ARE MOST LIKELY TO ENCOUNTER THE M.** Keep all personalities out of your work. Every game is a new game. You must be able to forgive and forget. Cooperate with your partners and help each other.

Don't hesitate to ask for assistance if you are blocked out on a play. The main objective is to have all decisions ultimately correct. Avoid sarcastic comments. Don't insist on the last word of an argument, a manager is walking away let him go! If, after an argument, a manager is walking away let him go! Never charge a manager or follow him if he is moving away; and do not point your finger or use violent gestures during an argument. Keep your temper. A decision or an action taken in anger is never sound. Watch your language! Never use language toward a player, coach, or manager, which, if directed at the umpire, would result in the player, coach, or manager being disciplined. If the manager has a legitimate point to argue under the rules, it is your duty to listen to him. An umpire can do this with dignity and no loss of respect. Be understanding -- remember, the players are engaged in a heated contest. You are impartial judges and should maintain a calm dignity becoming the authority you have. Keep active and alert on the field at all times. Keep the game moving, a ballgame is often helped by energetic and earnest work of the umpire. Be courteous, impartial, and firm, and so compel respect from all. Remember that you are the ONLY representative of Little League Baseball on the field. Act accordingly. Don't think your blue umpire's shirt grants you immunity from having to take a little criticism. It's part of umpiring. Plan on it. Successful umpires know how much to take. If a manager is on your back, but not enough to warrant an ejection, then stay away from him. This is especially true between innings. Standing near an unhappy coach, just to show him will only lead to further tensions. **TO ERR IS**

HUMAN

Umpires are human. Missed pitches or errors in judgment will happen. Umpires should do their best to have as few as possible, but when you boot a call or miss a pitch do not resolve to even the score. Once called that is it, it's over and done.

THE GOLDEN RULE

No umpire should ever criticize another umpire's decision at anytime or anywhere. Umpires should not wear their umpire uniform when they are sitting in the stands or standing by the fence during a game. If they are asked their opinions they should have no comment, always be neutral and impartial.

CHAPTER 3

WORKING THE PLATE

THOUGH ALL PHASES OF UMPIRING ARE IMPORTANT, A PROSPECTIVE UMPIRE MUST PROVE HIS ABILITY TO CALL BALLS AND STRIKES IF HE IS TO EXCEL AND BUILD A SOLID REPUTATION AS THE COMPLETE UMPIRE. GOOD JUDGMENT IS NATURALLY A PREREQUISITE FOR ACCOMPLISHING THIS TASK. JUDGMENT ALONE HOWEVER WILL NOT SUFFICE. ONE MUST UNDERSTAND THE MANY FACETS OF WORKING THE PLATE. THESE INCLUDE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE STRIKE ZONE, THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER POSITIONING, AND THE

CRITICAL NEED FOR DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE MECHANICAL TECHNIQUES.

INSIDE PROTECTOR

Assume a position behind the catcher looking between the catcher and the batter; you must be able to clearly see the pitcher, the entire plate and the batter's knees. To see all of those elements, it is important to move into "the slot" --that area between the catcher and the batter. The farther you are into the slot, the better you will see the strike zone. Two additional factors have tremendous impact on your view of the strike zone: head height and stability. Your head should be positioned so the bottom of your chin is even with the top of the catcher's helmet. If you work with your head lower, your view of the knee-high pitch at or near the outside corner of the plate will be restricted. The head is straight ahead looking at the pitcher. Your ear closest to the catcher should be just to the outside of the catcher's shoulder. These are good starting positions. From the moment the pitcher releases a pitch until the ball arrives in the catcher's glove, your head should remain absolutely still. If your head moves at all, your view of the strike zone will be blurred and your judgment will be inconsistent. Assume your crouch when the pitcher is about to release the ball. You'll view the pitch from between the batter and catcher. Don't go down too early, for you will put unnecessary strain on your muscles. Relaxation between pitches is very important. Many umpires wear themselves out for the late innings by staying in a set position for too long a period of time. The upper body should remain in an almost upright position. One important note, don't kneel down to view the pitch. You must remember that in a two or three-man crew, the plate umpire often covers third base. Going to third from a standing position is far easier and quicker than trying to get there from your knees. (It's true that some great umpires kneel; there are usually exceptions to every rule. But, unless you're an exceptionally fast umpire, stay in a crouch, not on a knee.) When kneeling, you give the impression that you are physically tired or bored and not in the game. Which ever position you use, it is important that you do not put a hand on the catcher or position yourself against the catcher. Your hands should be kept in front of you. You may hang them at the side of your legs, hold them together in front of you or hold on to your thighs. Don't put your hands over your shin guards at the knees or put them on the catcher. This practice always looks bad to the spectators.

THE PLATE UMPIRE AT WORK

When working behind the plate or on the bases, use the indicator in your left hand. A little bit of experimentation will show that it was not made for the right. Use of the indicator in the left hand frees the right for use in calling strikes. It is very difficult to change the indicator with the right hand and there is danger of throwing it away while calling pitches. The mask is removed as often as possible when the plate umpire is not actually engaged in calling balls and strikes. The left hand is used in removing the mask; shift the indicator so the thumb is free. Grasp the mask so that the thumb is at the side of or under the jaw and the index and middle finger are gripping the frame. Remove the mask by lifting out first, then up. By using

this method, you can be sure that your cap will remain on your head. By keeping the mask in your left hand you will avoid the danger of hitting a player with it or throwing it while calling a runner out. Most people feel that the out signal looks better if made with an empty right hand. In calling a batted ball hit down the baseline, the plate umpire should remove his mask as soon as the ball is hit. Hustle up the baseline as far as possible (30/45 foot line is recommended). Be sure to stop before it is time to make your decision. On a hard hit ball the umpire may not have time to remove his mask or get to the baseline. Do the best you can. The plate umpire should make the decision on the batter running inside/outside the three-foot line and interfering with the first baseman taking the throw. This play occurs only on a bunt or slow roller down the first baseline, therefore, he should be in good position while the batter probably will not. As the plate umpire, be sure to give the batter a chance to get in the box before the pitcher pitches the ball. If the pitcher begins his motion while the batter is not ready and it is unintentional, call "time". If he does it on purpose, call "time" and warn him. Each such pitch after a warning will result in an illegal pitch being called in Little League (with runners or bases empty) and a balk (JR/SR/BG only) with the bases occupied. A quick pitch may be called without warning, but it is good mechanics to stop play the first time because of possible physical danger. Under normal conditions, the plate umpire will have to go to third base to cover a play anytime a runner goes from first to third on a batted ball. He should go down the line in foul territory, then cross into fair territory as close to the base as possible. If there is an overthrow, the umpire (remain in fair territory) must be at the runner to home plate so he can call the play. The plate umpire should leave his place behind the catcher on every batted ball. He should come out in front of the plate so he can get a better view of the plays taken place on the field. If there is a possible play at home, the plate umpire will need to move into position for the best possible view of the play. **LEARNING TO DEAL**

WITH FLINCHING

Flinching is usually an erratic problem. It can irritate the umpire far more than it will affect his umpiring. It's doubtful that flinching will make you miss pitches, but the umpire also is concerned and rightly so with his image, if noticed by the fans or players. Remedies include forcing yourself to wait as long as you can before getting into the just-before-the-pitch stance. This shortens the time of stressful concentration. Also rest your eyes for a fraction of a second shortly before the pitch. Be sure to give yourself time to adjust for the upcoming pitch. It's a matter of timing, flinching usually does not stay with you for long. Perhaps one reason for flinching is subconscious or even a conscious lack of confidence in the catcher. **BRUSHING**

THE PLATE

Every gesture and motion of the umpire means something. There is even a correct way to dust the plate. The umpire should assume a position (as a courtesy to the fans) with his back to the pitcher's mound. The feet should be spread apart about the width of the shoulders. Bend at both, the knees and hips. Brush with a vigorous motion toward and away from the umpire. The plate should be brushed before each half inning and as needed during

play. Above all, do not allow the catcher (or other players) to brush the plate with hand or glove. Ask him to request that you do the brushing. When a catcher is making remarks about your call, never let him turn around to protest more than once. Put a stop to it and warn him. A good way to do this without embarrassment to him is to brush the plate and look him in the eyes and explain your dissatisfaction. Take more stern action the next time it happens, if he is a slow learner.

BETWEEN INNINGS

The first duty of both umpires between innings is to keep the players hustling on and off the field. He will then stay on that side of the plate to be out of the player congestion that may occur on the side of the field of the team coming to bat. A good spot to stand is just off the foul line, even with the plate. While at that spot, the umpire should attend such duties as counting warm-up pitches, replenishing his ball supply, inspecting the baseballs in his ball bag, and seeing that there is no equipment such as gloves or bats left on the field. The umpire should never lay his equipment on the ground between innings. (i.e., mask, chest protector, etc.)

CHAPTER 4

UMPIRING THE BASES The same as working the plate, remember, PAUSE, READ and REACT!--on every play, chest to the ball. Watch the ball/glance at the runner(s) Umpire must READ 1. Ball 2. Fielder 3. Runner(s) and 4. Partner.

Before calling any play it is absolutely necessary for you to stop and get set. Do this before the play happens. Never call a play when you are running to get into position, stop and get set, this way your eyes will not be moving and you will take a better picture of the play. In getting set, bend at the knees and hips. Try to keep your upper body straight from the waist up. If you will put your hands on your knees it will help maintain balance as well as lock you into position. If possible, you should start all your calls from this set position. As you make the out signal, it is wise to keep the left arm crossed in front of your body. If your left arm comes out away from the body it looks like you are calling the runner out with your right and safe with your left. As the game begins, the base umpire should hustle from the home plate area down the first base line to his between innings position. The between innings position is down the first baseline in the outfield grass in fair territory. All umpires should avoid visiting with anyone between innings unless there is a problem between umpires that needs attention. In getting into position at first base with no runners on base, the umpire should be about ten to fifteen feet behind the first baseman. Never allow the fielder to stand behind you. Another important point is on every pitch be in the set (hands on knees) position. When positioning yourself before the play, place your hands on your knees, thumbs on the inside, locked in to the set position; or let your arms hang loose at your sides. Do not fold your arms on your chest as this makes you look like you are loafing or bored. When the ball is hit to the infield, the umpire should assume a position to first base and then to the fielder making the throw, a right angle (90 degree) would be formed. (See Figure 1.)

Don't be lazy; hustle out there, maintain your original distance away from the base so you will have a good view of the fielder reaching for a high throw. If the ball is hit to the third baseman, run toward him until you have your angle. Do the same toward shortstop. When a ball is hit to the second baseman's right, move into fair territory so the angle will be as close to ninety degrees as possible. If the ball is hit to the second baseman's left or the first baseman, you will be in foul territory. Be sure to stay out of the runner's path even though it means distorting the angle slightly. Be sure to get set to call the play. Very important as you move to your position and get set, (keep your eyes on the ball) keep watching as the fielder throws the ball. Be sure to judge the quality of the throw. Take your eyes from the ball as it passes the mound and focus your attention on the base.

Watch the runner tag the bag and the fielder's foot to make sure he keeps contact. Listen for the sound of the ball as it hits the first baseman's glove. Remember, you judge the runner safe or out when the first baseman has secure possession not when the ball first reaches him when he makes a juggled catch. To prevent calling the play too quickly, you must remember to use your eyes properly. After the play is complete, pause (develop the picture of the play), then call it. Practice will aid you in adapting and keeping the proper timing interval between the play and the call. **TIMING, TIMING, TIMING.** If the throw goes through the first baseman, don't make a call, as there is no play to be called. **THE PIVOT AT FIRST BASE IS SO IMPORTANT THAT IT MERITS SPECIAL**

DISCUSSION. With no runners on, a ball hit through the infield or a fly ball to the outfield, which does not require that the base umpire go out, you should take a pivot across the baseline into the infield to get into better position to follow the action. (See Figure 2) As the ball is batted, run toward a spot on the baseline between first and second base which is approximately the same distance from the base as the between pitches position of the first baseman. Time your movement so that you will execute the pivot just as the runner rounds first base. The pivot is executed across the baseline. The movement should be timed so that the left foot is planted just after reaching the baseline. The umpire pivots on the left foot so that he is watching first base as he executes his turn to the left. Take your eyes off the ball as you approach the spot and watch the runner tag the bag as you make your pivot. Do not do anything to give away the fact that the runner has missed a base. When you have entered the infield, move in either direction to call a play. You will find that it is easy to beat a runner to second base from this position. Some umpires allow the runner to pass in front of them. That umpire will then be behind the runner at second base. It is very difficult to call the play from behind the runner. There are times when the base umpire should go into the outfield to rule on certain trap ball situations. An agreement must be reached by the umpires so that they will know their responsibilities (pre-game conference). Some umpires agree that the base umpire will go out when he senses trouble on any fly ball. Rule of thumb: On a Little League size field the base umpire will not go out on any fly ball. The plate umpire should watch the base umpire, if he goes out the plate umpire covers for him on the

bases. If the base umpire stays in, the plate umpire must make the decision on fly balls, while the base umpire follows the batter-runner to second and third base. With a runner or runners on base, the base umpire should position himself on the outside edge of the infield behind the infielders. His position depends upon which base or bases are occupied. Examples: With a runner on first, he should be stationed behind the second baseman on the first base side of second base. With a runner on first and second, second only, second and third or third only, he should position himself behind the shortstop on the third base side of second base. (See Figure 3 & 4) From those positions with any ball hit through the infield or a fly ball to the outfield, he should move into the infield grass so that he will be able to see the ball, runner and the bases from this position. Never position yourself on the infield in a Little League diamond before the pitch. **HELPFUL HINTS WHEN WORKING THE BASES:**

Always know where the ball is. 2. Never make a call on the move, get set and wait until the play is over before you make the call. 3. How close you want to be to a developing play depends on several variables, including: the type of play, your mobility, and your peripheral vision. Begin by moving to a position 8 to 10 feet from a tag play; 12 to 15 feet from a force play. As you gain experience, adjust those distances to fit your own ability. 4. Run-downs - The best coverage in a run-down is by both umpires, on each end of the play, if possible. When the situation allows for both umpires to work a run-down; use verbal communication to direct each umpire's coverage. Generally, the call is to be made by the umpire who has the runner coming at him. This demonstrates good teamwork and looks good to everyone. This requires good communication and eye contact. 5. Hustle to be in the best position to make all of your calls. The positions that were listed were for a two-umpire system. For more information, see the diagrams listed in the Little League Umpire Manual. **FIGURE 1 NO RUNNERS ON BASE** When the ball is hit to the infield, the umpires should assume a position to first base and then to the fielder making the throw such that a right angle (90 degrees) is formed. Don't be lazy; hustle out there, maintain your original distance away from the base (10-12 feet) so you will have a good view of the fielder reaching for a high throw. If the ball is hit to the third baseman, run toward him until you have your angle. Do the same toward shortstop. When a ball is hit to the second baseman's right, move into fair territory so the angle will be as close to ninety degrees as possible. If the ball is hit to the second baseman's left or the first baseman, you will be in foul territory. Be sure to stay out of the runner's path even though it means distorting the angle slightly. **FIGURE 2 THE PIVOT** The three-step movement used by the base umpire as he moves into the infield from Position A. When a batted ball is hit to the outfield, the base umpire will pivot to observe the batter-runner's touch of first base, anticipating the batter-runner's advance toward second. A proper pivot occurs on the infield grass, one or two steps from the edge of the first base cutout; it includes planting the left foot, turning the body counterclockwise (to the left) on the right foot as the batter-runner reaches first base, and stepping briskly with

the left foot towards second base as the batter-runner continues around first. **FIGURE 3 RUNNERS ON BASE RUNNER ON FIRST BASE ONLY** With a runner on 1st base only, the base umpire will position himself midway between the second baseman and the 2nd base bag approximately 18 to 20 feet from the base. The umpire's body should be square to the front edge of home plate. From this position he will be in a good starting position for help on half-swings and for checking to see if the runner leaves early. This initial positioning with a runner on 1st base only is very important, and umpires should make sure that they are not too deep towards the outfield or too far to the first base side so as to be blocked from seeing the plate by the second baseman. If the umpire is positioned as described in the previous paragraph, he will be in a good starting position for the runner leaving early as well as for double plays. **FIGURE 4 RUNNERS ON BASE RUNNERS ON SECOND OR THIRD OR BASES FULL** With a runner on either second or third base (no matter whether a runner is on first or not) position yourself behind the shortstop four to five feet on the third base side of second base. From this location you will be able to easily get into position for any play on a lead runner. From this position, with an easy ball hit through the infield or a fly ball to the outfield, you should move into the infield grass so that you will be able to see the ball, runner, and bases. Note that with runners on base, the base umpire should make all of the calls on all of the bases (including third). The plate umpire may be called upon for assistance on a close play but it should be your call.

CHAPTER 5 WORKING WITH AN INEXPERIENCED PARTNER The pre-game conference, between the veteran umpire and the rookie, should include a discussion of what type of game you like: by-the-book, common sense, quiet-and-efficient, etc. Relax him with some anecdotes from your career. Make him understand that you and he are a team and that you have confidence in his ability to do the job. A few maneuvers that may help you see your way through a game. First, before every pitch, catch your partner's eye. If he's in the wrong position, subtly move him. (Ideally, you discussed that on the way to the game.) Second, communicate out loud, obviously, firmly: "I've got third", "Take it", "That one's mine." All good umpires do that anyway. Third, don't talk with him between half-innings. Such meetings fuel everyone's inherent paranoia, especially if you and he confer after he's made an unpopular call. Finally, protect him during rhabarbs. An umpire may be entirely right on a call, however because of the situation, he may take a lot of heat. One undeniable law of umpiring is that the amount of heat you take is in inverse proportion to how good you were on the call. In other words, if you were very good, you won't take much abuse. If you were very bad, you may grow gray listening. After the game, the new umpire yearns to know what happened and why on certain plays and how he did. Tell him, start with all the calls he got right. Then, with honesty, and understanding, tell him what he did wrong in a positive manner. If a real umpire lurks somewhere beneath the uniform, he won't resent your constructive criticism.

CHAPTER 6 PRE-GAME CONFERENCE WITH YOUR CREW Everyone knows that umpires should have a good pre-game conference so each will know his responsibilities. Failing to have a solid pre-game can lead to major problems. **FAIR/FOUL COVERAGE** Calling fair/foul, from home to first and home to third, up to and touching the bag and a bounding ball over the bag should always be called by the plate umpire. With the bases empty, down the line over and past the bag at first, the base umpire can make the call if you discussed that possibility in the pre-game. In a two-man crew with runners on base, the plate umpire has both foul lines from home to the fence. **TAG-UPS & TOUCHES** The base umpire has all tagups/retouches, on first and second, however, if there are multiple runners the base umpire normally has the trail runner and the plate umpire, has all touches of third except for the batter runner and also has all tagups at third. **FLY BALLS TO OUTFIELD** A. The plate umpire takes all fly balls and/or line drives on a Little League field. B. If the base umpire goes out to rule fair/foul, catch/no catch, on a trouble ball the plate umpire must be prepared to cover all the bases. However, the practice of the base umpire going out on an easy fly ball is not recommended for Little League size fields. **BATTED BALL HITS BATTER** The field umpires should yell, "TIME" when he sees that occur. For the ball is either foul (the ball hit the batter while in the box) or fair (the ball hit the batter when out of the box and he's out). In either case the ball is dead immediately. Signaling "TIME" allows the crew to discuss whether or not the batter was in or out of the box. **CHECKED SWING** When in doubt the plate umpire should check with the base umpire before making his decision, however, if a call is made of "ball" the plate umpire may still go to the base umpire for help if he deems it necessary (highly recommended). The plate umpire steps to the side of the catcher and points to the base umpire with his left hand when he wants help on a checked swing (half swing). The base umpire raises his arm in the strike signal if he did swing and gives the safe signal to show no swing. There should also be verbal communications. The plate umpire asks, "Did he go?" the base umpire says, "Yes, he went", or "No, he did n't go". If the base umpire responds, "Yes, he went" the plate umpire should indicate "Then it's a strike" and give the count. The plate umpire may - on his own volition - ask for help from the appropriate base umpire if in doubt on a checked swing. (If the pitch was called a strike there is no appeal.) Always make sure that your mechanics for checking with your partner on a check swing is different from any other mechanic and secret signals between umpires are not appropriate. **GETTING HELP** If you get blocked out of a play or you were not in position to make the call get help from your partner. 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. See Section 9.02(c) Rule Book.) Remember you have certain responsibilities; do not get into the habit of asking for help on each and every close play. We don't want to see NFL official huddles on the ball field.

SIGNALS Infield fly.

The plate umpire initiates the signal; the base umpire acknowledges it. Different crews use different signals, so find out what signal is used. Communicate; be aware of your partner. **GROUND RULES** Go over the ground rules with your partner and review any rules you do not understand. **CODE OF CONDUCT** A discussion with your partner should include the ejections of player and coaches. In order to maintain control of the game, ejections should be a last resort. **OTHER POINTS** There may be some points that are not listed that you may want to add to this list. Going over the above list before each game may seem like a boring exercise and one used by inexperienced umpires only, but it is important if you expect to have a good and smooth game with your partner.

CHAPTER 7 FAIR AND FOUL BALLS There is a lot of confusion in the mind of the average baseball fan regarding the fair or foul ball situations. **DEFINITION: 2.00** A fair ball is a batted ball that settles on fair ground between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that is on or over fair territory when bounding to the outfield past first or third base, or that touches first on or beyond first base or third base, or that, while on or over fair territory touches the person of an umpire or player, or that, while over fair territory, passed out of the playing field in flight. **NOTE:** A fair fly shall be adjudged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time such fielder touches the ball. **HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL POINTS TO REMEMBER:** A. A ball is in fair territory if any part of it is on or over any part of the foul line. B. A ball, which stops rolling before it reaches first or third base, is judged where it lies when it stops. C. A ball, which is touched before it reaches the base, is judged in regard to its position when touched. D. A ball that bounds into the outfield past first or third is judged relative to the base when it passes the base. If it goes over the base it is fair. If it is in foul territory as it passes the base, it is foul. E. A ball, which is batted over the fence, is judged according to its position with the foul line when it leaves the field. **RULING EXAMPLES:** 1. A batted ball bounces up to hit the batter or his bat after he swings at it. Ruling: This is a foul ball unless he was obviously out of the batter's box when the contact occurred. 2. The third baseman is careful to keep his feet in fair territory as he fields a ball in front of the base. Ruling: Judge the ball by its position not based on the position of the fielder's feet. 3. A line drive strikes the umpire who is straddling the foul line behind the first baseman. Ruling: Judge the ball according to its position with the foul line when it touches the umpire. If fair, the ball is in play. The umpire must make sure he is entirely in foul territory so that any line drive striking him will be foul. He was out of position on this play. 4. A batted ball rolls down the first baseline. It stops with part of the ball on the foul line and most of it over foul territory. Ruling: This is a fair ball. When it stops before reaching the base, it is fair if any part of the ball is touching the foul line. 5. A fly ball hits the foul pole. Ruling: Fair ball. The foul pole is fair territory. If the pole is behind the

fence, it is a home run. If inside the fence, it is a fair ball in play. If the ball hits the foul pole, which is inside the fence and is deflected over the fence in foul territory, it is a two base hit. 6. A batted ball is rolling down the first baseline in foul territory. While it is rolling the umpire calls it "foul". The ball hits a dirt clod and rolls into fair territory where it stops. Ruling: The umpire has committed the unpardonable sin of calling a foul ball too soon. The ruling must stand as all play stops on the call. 7. The batter hits the ball. It then strikes the plate and bounces into fair territory where it is fielded. Ruling: Fair ball. The plate is entirely in fair territory. 8. The batter hits the ball. It then strikes the plate and bounces into foul territory where it is fielded before it reaches first base. Ruling: Foul ball. 9. A line drive hits the pitching rubber and goes untouched into the dugout. Ruling: This is a foul ball. A batted ball, which touches first, second, or third base, becomes a fair ball. The pitcher's plate is considered the same as the ground around it. The location of the ball after deflecting from the plate would determine whether it is fair or foul. 10. A batted ball that comes to rest on home plate. Ruling: The ball is fair and in play.

CHAPTER 8 APPEALS Appeal plays should be divided into two classes. The first covers batting out of turn. **APPEAL PLAY I - BATTING OUT OF TURN Rule: 6.07 LIT TLE LEAGUE RULE BOOK** This is different from other appeals because the appeal is made to the umpire in the form of a statement with no play necessary on the part of the team making the appeal. This is also the only type of appeal that can be made by the manager or coach and the only appeal made while the ball is dead. If the appeal is made while the improper batter is batting, he is removed as the batter and the proper batter assumes the ball and strike count and completes the turn at bat. If a runner advances, while the improper batter is at bat, on a stolen base, balk, wild pitch or passed ball, such advance is legal. A batter who fails to bat in sequence is an improper batter. If an improper batter completes his at bat and continuous action ends, he becomes a proper batter if there is a subsequent pitch or play. The new proper batter is the player listed in the slot after such legitimized batter, and a new sequence is then established. A team always has a slot at bat. An umpire cannot suggest or indicate that a batter is improper, nor can the offense appeal its own error, although the offense can change batters. Only the defense can appeal that a batter has batted out of order. The umpire must check his line-up card or consult the official scorer, if he needs too. **APPEAL PLAYS II Rule: 7.10 LIT TLE LEAGUE RULE BOOK** The second class of appeal plays is the act of a fielder in claiming a violation of the rules by the offensive team. These appeal plays concern those plays in which the appeal is made by tagging a runner or a base and appealing to the umpire. A defensive player must make this type of appeal only. **Any runner shall be called out on appeal - A.** After a fly ball is caught the runner fails to retouch the base before said runner or the base is tagged. B. With the ball in play, while advancing or returning to a base, the runner fails to touch each base in order before said runner, or a missed base, is

tagged; 1) No runner may return to touch a missed base after a following runner has scored,

2) When the ball is dead no runner may return to touch a missed base or one abandoned after said runner has advanced to and touched a base beyond the missed base. C. The runner overruns or over slides first base and fails to return to the base immediately, and said runner or the base is tagged. D. The runner fails to touch home base and makes no attempt to return to that base, and home base is tagged. Any appeal under this rule must be made before the next pitch, or play or attempted play. If the violation occurs during a play, which ends a half-inning, the appeal must be made before the defensive team leaves the field. (The defensive team has left the field when no players remain in fair territory.) An appeal is not to be interpreted as a play or an attempted play. Successive appeals may not be made on a runner at the same base. If the defensive team on its first appeal errs, the umpire shall not allow a request for a second appeal on the same runner at the same base. (Intended meaning of the word err is that the defensive team in making an appeal threw the ball out of play: For example, if the pitcher threw to first base to appeal and threw the ball into the stands, no second appeal would be allowed.) Appeal plays may require an umpire to recognize an apparent fourth out. If the third out is made during a play in which an appeal play is sustained on another runner, the appeal play decision takes precedence in determining the out. If there is more than one appeal during a play that ends a half-inning the defense may elect to take the out that gives it the advantage. For the purposes of this rule, the defensive team has left the field when all players have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout. **KEEP THE FOLLOWING POINTS IN MIND REGARDING APPEAL PLAYS:** 1. In order to make any appeal, the ball must be live and in play. 2. Any appeal under Rule 7.10 must be made before the next pitch or any play or attempted play. 3. If a pitcher balks when making an appeal, such act shall be considered a play. No further appeal will be allowed. 4. If the pitcher or any member of the defensive team throws the ball out of play when making an appeal (err), such act shall be considered an attempted play. No further appeal will be allowed. 5. An appeal should be clearly intended an appeal, either by a verbal request by the player or an act that unmistakably indicated an appeal to the umpire. 6. On all appeals the ball is live and runners may advance on their own peril. **PLAY OR ATTEMPTED PLAY** A play or attempted play shall be interpreted as a legitimate effort by a defensive player who has possession of the ball to actually retire a runner. This may include an actual attempt to tag a runner, or actually throwing to another defensive player in an attempt to retire a runner. A fake or a feint throw shall not be deemed a play or an attempted play. (The fact that the runner is not out is not relevant.) **PUTTING BALL IN PLAY AFTER BALL IS DEAD** After the ball is dead, the plate umpire shall resume play by calling "Play" (pointing to the pitcher) as soon as the pitcher takes his place on the pitcher's plate with the ball in his possession. **IMPORTANT:** Get in the habit of making the ball "live" after every "dead" ball situation. (Rule 5.11) **RULING**

EXAMPLES: Here are some different situations, which may occur: 1. the runner on third leaves the base as the outfielder first juggles a fly ball. The fielder after completing the catch throws the ball to third base for the appeal. Ruling: The runner is not out. He may leave the base when a fly ball is first touched and need not wait until the catch is completed. 2. The runner on first rounds second base on a deep drive to center field. The center fielder makes a spectacular catch. The runner fails to retouch second base on his way back. The second baseman calls for the ball and makes the appeal. Ruling: The runner is out. Runners must touch all bases while advancing or returning while the ball is live. 3. With a runner on first base. A fly ball is hit to deep right field, the runner takes off to second base before the fly ball is caught thinking the fielder can never make the catch. The fielder in turn makes a spectacular catch, the runner seeing this starts running back to first base, the fielder throws to first and the throw beats the runner. Ruling: The umpire should call the runner out. Under the circumstances given a verbal appeal of this action is not required. It is obvious why the ball is being thrown to a base to which a runner is returning. 4. Bases full. The batter hits an inside the park home run. The third baseman calls for the ball and touches third to appeal that the runner missed the base. Ruling: The umpire will make no ruling until the third baseman completes the appeal by stating which runner he is appealing. If the third baseman makes such a statement as "He missed third base" the umpire may say "On which runner are you making the appeal?" 5. The bases are loaded. The batter walks. The runner who is forced to score misses home plate. Ruling: The runner has until he steps into the dugout to come back to touch the plate. If he does not, the defense may put him out by appealing the missed base. 6. The batter hits a double, but fails to touch first base. The ball is thrown to the first baseman, who makes the appeal. The first base umpire calls the batter-runner out. The manager of the team at bat protests the game because the ball was not returned to the pitcher on the rubber before the appeal was made. Ruling: The umpire was correct. The ball doesn't have to be returned to the rubber unless time had been called prior to the appeal. 7. No runners. The batter doubles but misses first base. Time is called. The pitcher steps on the rubber with the ball and the umpire says, "play". The pitcher legally steps off the rubber and checks the runner at second base. The pitcher's throw for the appeal gets past the first baseman, but remains in play. The runner advances to home as the ball is being retrieved. Can the defensive team still make its intended appeal at first base? Ruling: Yes. Since the ball is live and in play, if the ball is retrieved and thrown to first base immediately, the appeal is allowed.

CHAPTER 9 THE INFIELD FLY The infield fly rule is one of the most confusing rules in the minds of the typical player and fan. **DEFINITION: 2.00** An infield fly is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive nor an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied, before two are out. The pitcher, catcher and any outfielder stationed in

the infield on the play shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule.

When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare, "infield fly" for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near the baseline, the umpire shall declare "infield fly, if fair". The ball is live and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on any fly ball. If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul. **SEVERAL POINTS MUST BE KEPT IN MIND INVOLVING THIS RULE**

A. First and second base must be occupied. Whether or not third base is occupied has no effect on the rule. There must be no outs or one out. The rule was created for the protection of the runners, not the fielder. B. A bunt may not be ruled an infield fly. By the nature of the play a penalty would be imposed on the offense rather than the defense. C. A line drive may not be ruled an infield fly, as the calling of an out in this situation would not protect the runners. D. **The umpire must judge that the ball could have been caught with ordinary effort. Exactly what is ordinary effort? Little League shortstops and major league shortstops play under the same infield fly rule, but there's a universe of difference between their ordinary efforts.** This is only one of the many situations that you as the umpire must use your judgment in determining what ordinary effort is for the player. E. The umpires must be alert for the possibility of an infield fly. They should have a signal between each other to make sure each one is aware of the situation. Normally, the umpire nearest the ball followed by all other umpires calls the infield fly. This should be done in a loud tone with arm signals so that

everyone involved in the play, as well as the spectators, know of the ruling. **RULING EXAMPLES:** 1. A runner standing on second base or any base is struck by a fly ball that has been declared an infield fly. Ruling: The batter is out the runner is not. Should the runner have been off the base when struck, both he and the batter would have been declared out. 2. The bases are loaded with no outs. The infielders are playing in for a force play at the plate. A fly ball is hit which could have been easily caught if the infielder had been at normal depth. Because he is playing in, the infielder attempts to catch the ball while running with his back to the plate. Ruling: This is not an infield fly. The position of the fielder, not the ball, is the determining factor in this case. 3. An infield fly is declared by the umpire. The shortstop catches the ball and throws it to second base before the runner who had left the base can return. Ruling: A double play results. When an infield fly is declared the batter is out. The runners are not forced to run. The ball remains alive and in play in all other respects. 4. The infield fly situation is in effect. A fly ball is batted within the infield. The umpire makes no declaration. All runners run. After the play is over, one of the umpires announces that he has applied the infield fly rule and the batter is out. Ruling: This is a very serious mistake on the part of the umpire. The umpire must declare an infield fly as soon as he determines that the ball can be caught by the infielder with ordinary effort not after the play is over. **COMMENT:** Not calling an infield fly because you don't think it is an infield fly

(judgment) is perfectly acceptable, and preferred. However, not calling an infield fly because you forgot is not acceptable and is a correctable situation. (1) Do not allow the defense to turn an easy double play because you forgot to call it and (2) get the call right. Better late than not at all. 5. On a fly ball near the foul line in front of third base, the umpire calls "infield fly". The infielder lets the ball fall it rolls into foul territory. Ruling: Foul ball. The umpire should call "infield fly, if fair" on any doubtful fly ball. The omission does not change the fact that this is a foul ball.

CHAPTER 10 OBSTRUCTION DEFINITION: 2.00 AND RULE 7.06 RULE BOOK Obstruction is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. A fake tag is considered obstruction. When the obstruction occurs, the umpire shall call or signal "obstruction". A. If a play is being made on the obstructed runner, or if the batter-runner is obstructed before touching first base, the ball is dead and all runners shall advance without liability to be put out, to the bases they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, if there had been no obstruction. The obstructed runner shall be awarded at least one base beyond the base last legally touched by such runner, before the obstruction. Any preceding runners forced to advance by the award of bases as the penalty for obstruction shall advance without liability to be put out. B. If no play is being made on the obstructed runner, the play shall proceed until no further action is possible. The umpire shall then call "time" and impose such penalties, if any, as in the umpire's judgment will nullify the act of obstruction. The fielder may enter the path of the runner if necessary to field an errant throw; otherwise the fielder may not impede the runner unless the fielder has possession of the ball. After a fielder has made an attempt to field a ball and has missed, he can no longer be in the act of fielding the ball. For example: If an infielder dives at a ground ball and the ball passes him and he continues to lie on the ground and delays the progress of the runner, he very likely has obstructed the runner. In all cases of obstruction, the umpire calling the play should have the benefit of the advice of his partners. The umpire watching the obstruction will have difficulty in determining the position of other runners. It is recommended that when "time" is called on obstruction, if there is any doubt in the minds of the umpires about where the runner or runners shall be placed, the umpires shall confer. **RULING EXAMPLES:** 1. Batter-runner is obstructed before reaching first base with no play being made on him. For example: On a ground ball hit to the outfield. Ruling: Call the obstruction by pointing at the runner and calling, "Time - That's Obstruction"; then impose such penalties, if any that will nullify the act of obstruction. If a fly ball is caught in this situation, batter runner is out. 2. With bases loaded, batter hits a sharp ground ball, which deflects off of the shortstop, and as he starts to go after the ball, runner from second collides with him. Ruling: After the ball deflects off the shortstop, if the ball is within the fielder's immediate reach, the runner must avoid the fielder, and if contact occurs under those circumstances, interference shall be called and the runner declared out. However, if the ball is not within reach of the

fielder after it deflects off him (i.e., the fielder must chase after the ball), the fielder must then avoid the runner, and if contact occurs under those circumstances, obstruction shall be called. (Rule 7.06(b) Little League Rule Book.) 3. The runner is trapped between third and home. He is running back toward third when he collides with a fielder who doesn't have the ball. Ruling: The runner scores. He is allowed at least one base beyond the last base legally touched when the obstruction occurred.

CHAPTER 11 INTERFERENCE INTERFERENCE

RULE DEFINITION: 2.00 AND 7.09 RULE BOOK A.

Offensive interference is an act by the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play. If the umpire declares the batter, batter-runner or a runner out for interference, all other runners shall return to the last base that was, in the judgment of the umpire, legally touched at the time of the interference, unless otherwise provided by these rules. B. Defensive interference is an act by a fielder, which hinders or prevents a batter from hitting a pitch. C. Umpire's interference occurs: 1) when an umpire hinders, impedes or prevents a catcher's throw attempting to prevent a stolen base, or 2) when a fair ball touches an umpire on fair territory before passing a fielder. Important: These are the only instances when an umpire can interfere. D. Spectator interference occurs when a spectator reaches out of the stands or goes on the playing field, and touches a live ball. E. On any interference the ball is dead.

NOTE: The ball is not necessarily dead immediately. For example, on a batter's interference, when the catcher makes a subsequent throw, the ball is not immediately dead. The play is allowed to proceed. If the throw retires the runner, the play stands and the interference is ignored. If the throw by the catcher does not get the runner then you must enforce the penalty, call the batter out and send the runner back to his time of pitch base. **HELPFUL HINTS ON**

INTERFERENCE OFFENSIVE INTERFERENCE Note that under these rules, a fielder is protected while he is in the act of fielding a batted ball. In addition, a fielder is also protected while he is in the act of making a play after he has fielded a batted ball. If a runner hinders or impedes a fielder after he has fielded a batted ball, but before he is able to throw the ball, the runner shall be called out for interference. Furthermore, a runner who is adjudged to have hindered a fielder who is attempting to make a play on a batted ball is out whether it was intentional or not. **WILLFUL AND DELIBERATE**

INTERFERENCE Rules 7.09(g) and 7.09(h) were inserted in the rules to add an additional penalty when a base runner or a batter-runner deliberately and intentionally interferes with a batted ball or a fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball to deprive the defensive team of an opportunity to complete a possible double play. Keep in mind the rules provide that the runner or batter-runner must interfere with the obvious attempt to break up a double play. A runner from third willfully running into the catcher fielding a pop fly, or a runner on second base deliberately running into a ground ball or allowing the ball

to hit him to prevent a double play are examples that require the call of a double play under these rules. **BATTER-RUNNER AND CATCHER COLLIDE** When a catcher and batter-runner going to first base have contact while the catcher is attempting to field the ball, there is generally no violation and nothing should be called. This cannot be interpreted to mean; however, that flagrant contact by either party would not call for either an interference call or an obstruction call. Either one should be called only if the violation is flagrant in nature. A fielder has "right of way" to make a play, but an unavoidable collision cannot be construed as a violation on the part of either the runner or the catcher. **BATTED BALL STRIKES BATTER** A. If the batter-runner drops his bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory and, in the umpire's judgment, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball, the ball is alive and in play. B. If after hitting or bunting a fair ball, the batter's bat hits the ball a second time in fair territory, the batter is out and the ball is dead. **THROWN BALL STRIKES HELMET OR BAT** If a thrown ball strikes a helmet or bat accidentally (no intent on part of runner to interfere) in fair or foul territory, the ball remains in play the same as if it had not hit the helmet or bat. If, in the umpire's judgment, there is intent on the part of a base runner to interfere with a thrown ball by dropping his helmet or bat or by throwing either at the ball, then the runner would be out, the ball dead, and runners would return to the last base legally touched. **BATTED BALL STRIKES RUNNER** A. Under 7.09(m) a fair ball touches the batter or runner in fair territory before touching a fielder. The batter or runner will be called out and the ball is dead. B. If a fair ball goes through or by, an infielder, and touches a runner immediately back of him, or touches the runner after having been deflected by a fielder, the umpires shall not declare the runner out for being touched by a batted ball. In making such decision the umpire must be convinced that the ball passed through, or by the fielder, and that no other fielder had a chance to make a play on the ball. If in the umpire's judgment there was another fielder that could have made a play on the ball, he would then in turn call the runner out for interference. **INTERFERENCE ON THE BATTER-RUNNER** In running the last half of the distance from home base to first base while the ball is being fielded to first base, the batter-runner runs outside (to the right of) the three foot line or inside (to the left of the foul line) and, in the umpire's judgment, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base or attempting to field a batted ball. One important point to remember is that this is another judgment call. **Comment:** The batter-runner does not have to be hit with the ball in order to interfere with the play. Interference can be called if in the umpire's judgment the batter-runner on his way to first base and by being inside or outside the three foot line distracts the fielder. **RULING EXAMPLES:** 1. Bases loaded, no outs, ground ball to shortstop. Anticipating a double play, runner from second intentionally crashes into the shortstop and grabs him just as the shortstop is beginning his throw to second. Ruling: Runner from second is guilty of willfully and deliberately interfering with a fielder with the obvious intent to

deprive the defense of the opportunity to make a double play. Runner from second is declared out and so is the batter-runner. Runners return to first and third. 2. Runner on second base, one out. The batter hits a ball on the ground toward the hole. The third baseman charges in on the grass to try to cut it off as the shortstop breaks deep toward the hole while the runner is advancing. The ball gets past the third baseman without being touched by him and strikes the runner in the base path. The shortstop had a play on the ball. Ruling: Runner from second is out and the batter-runner is awarded first base. The ball passed by an infielder other than the pitcher before striking the runner. However, another fielder behind the runner was deprived of an opportunity to field the ball. 3. Runner on third, no outs. Batter hits sharp ground ball down third base line, which strikes runner on third base in fair territory while runner is still in contact with third base. Runner was not attempting to intentionally interfere, and third baseman is playing behind the runner. Ruling: Runner is declared out. Ball is dead, and batter-runner is awarded first base. The fact that the runner had contact with the base when struck with the batted ball has no bearing on the play. (An exception to this is when the runner is hit by an infield fly while on base. (See Infield Fly section in this manual.) 4. The shortstop is playing deep. The runner on second has to jump over the batted ball to avoid being hit with it. The shortstop fumbles the ball. Ruling: No interference. The ball is in play. 5. Same play as above. The runner hesitates in front of the ball until it is almost to him. Then he continues to run. Ruling: Interference. The runner is out. The batter is awarded first base. The ball is dead and all other runners remain on the base they occupied at the time of the pitch unless forced. 6. With a runner on second base, the batter swings at a pitch and misses. The catcher catches the ball and attempts to throw to third base to retire the runner who is trying to steal. The ball hits the batter or the batter's bat and rebounds. In the umpire's judgment, there was no attempt to interfere by the batter. Ruling: The ball remains in play and the runner may advance at his own risk. If the batter had moved purposely to interfere with the throw, he would have been declared out with the runner returning to second base. 7. The catcher attempts to throw out a runner stealing second base. The umpire touches his arm while giving a strike signal. The ball is overthrown into the outfield. Ruling: The runner must return to first base. Had the throw resulted in a putout regardless of the interference, the interference would have been ignored. It is important for the umpire to take a position that will never interfere with the catcher. 8. The catcher bumps into the umpire as he turns to chase a foul ball, causing him to miss the ball. Ruling: This is not interference according to the rules. 9. The pitcher dives at a batted ball as it streaks by him. He fails to touch it. The ball hits the umpire standing behind him. Ruling: The ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base. No other runners advance unless forced. (The umpire should not station himself behind the pitcher inside a Little League infield.) 10. The pitcher deflects a batted ball into the umpire who is standing behind him. Ruling: The ball is in play. (The umpire again should not station himself inside a Little League infield.) 11. The batter bats and while he is

running toward first base (to the left of the foul line) the ball is fielded and thrown toward first base. It hits the runner in the back of the head. Ruling: The runner is out and the ball is dead.

CHAPTER 12 THE PITCHER RULE: RESTRICTIONS ON PITCHERS WARMING UP

When a pitcher takes position at the beginning of each inning, that pitcher shall be permitted to pitch NO T TO EXCEED eight preparatory pitches to the catcher during which play shall be suspended. Such preparatory pitches shall not consume more than one minute of time. If a sudden emergency causes a pitcher to be summoned into the game, the umpire-in-chief shall allow the pitcher as many pitches as the umpire deems necessary. **INTENTIONALLY PITCHING AT THE BATTER** If, in the umpire's judgment, the pitcher intentionally pitches at the batter, the umpire shall warn the pitcher and his manager that another such pitch will mean immediate expulsion of that pitcher. At the same time the umpire shall warn the opposing manager that such an infraction by his pitcher shall result in that pitcher's expulsion. **QUICK PITCH** Umpires should judge a quick pitch as one delivered before the batter is reasonably set in the batter's box. The quick pitch is dangerous and should not be permitted. **RULING EXAMPLES** 1. No one on base. The pitcher begins his pitching motion and seeing the batter step out of the box stops his motion. Ruling: No rule is broken. Had the pitch been delivered the umpire would have called it a ball or strike. (Rule 6.02(b) Little League Rule Book.) 2. With a runner on base, the batter steps out of the box after pitcher has begun his motion, the pitcher stops. Ruling: Not an illegal pitch (or a balk (JR/SR/BG)). The pitcher is not penalized because he and the batter have violated a rule. The umpire shall call "TIME". Runners advancing would have to return to the base they occupied at the time the pitcher started his motion. (Under Rule 4.06(3) Little League Rule Book.) 3. The pitcher, while touching the rubber to take his sign accidentally drops the ball. Ruling: Illegal pitch, with runners on base. (Balk in JR/SR/BG) No penalty if bases are empty. 4. The pitcher is standing behind the rubber in the 10-foot circle without the ball in order that a fielder may attempt the hidden ball play. Ruling: This is legal. It is an illegal pitch or balk (JR/SR/BG) if he stands on or astride (straddles) the rubber without the ball. 5. With runners on base, the pitcher brings his pitching hand in contact with his mouth while in the 10 foot circle surrounding the rubber. Ruling: Call "Ball". It makes no difference whether the bases are occupied or not. This is not an illegal pitch or a balk. 6. Rule 8.01 states "Pitchers shall take signs from the catcher while standing on the rubber." What is the intent of the rule? Comment: The intent of the rule is to ensure that the pitcher does not quick pitch the batter after receiving the sign from off the rubber. 7. Is it an illegal pitch or balk when the pitcher takes his sign while off the rubber? Comment: Neither. It is not a balk or illegal pitch. The rules do not specify a penalty for this violation. The pitcher may be removed for unsportsmanlike conduct if he persists in this action after being properly warned. However, since the ejection of a player is something we want to stay away from, if the

pitcher is taking his signals from off the rubber, but not quick pitching, do not create a problem for yourself, but ignore the fact and don't call anything.

CHAPTER 13 TIMING AND PROPER

MECHANICS Timing and mechanics are very important in umpiring. **TIMING** Timing can best be described as the proper use of your eyes. Each player and fan watches the play then looks to the umpire to see his or her call. If the call is made too soon, the fan is sure to know. It is impossible for the umpire to call a play as it is happening without guessing what is going to happen, before it does. Anticipating the call is one of the umpire's worst mistakes. If each umpire were to analyze each questionable call that umpire would realize that poor timing was the cause of the poor call. Hesitation, in calling plays, is just as bad as calling them too soon. If you wait too long, people will think you can't make up your mind. Many major league umpires seem to take a long time in calling plays. They call all plays with this same timing so they are not suspected of guessing. Practice your timing. You owe it to yourself to be at your best in this phase of umpiring. Proper use of your eyes promotes good timing. **BALLS AND STRIKES** In calling balls and strikes, watch the ball as it crosses the plate. Follow the ball all the way to the catcher's glove. Make your decision after the ball crosses the plate, and above all do not call the pitch until the catcher has caught the ball. It is very embarrassing to call the pitch and then have the batter swing at it. Above all, don't anticipate. Practice in calling the pitches with proper timing will help your judgment. Again the proper use of your eyes will improve your plate work. Deciding what the pitch will be before it crosses the plate will result in guessing. In calling strikes, a vigorous motion of the right hand is used, while no signal is given in calling balls. There are many possible motions, which may be used in calling strikes. It is important that the strike motion be decisive and clear to everyone. The use of a decisive strike signal can help an umpire to convince the fans of his competence. Some umpires call balls and strikes so loudly that both dugouts can hear them. Others call strikes loud, but not balls. There is a definite advantage to calling both balls and strikes loudly. If no voice signal is used in calling balls, the timing factor will change. Players and fans will also get the idea that the umpire missed a strike call because of his hesitancy. In calling balls and strikes, the difference in tone should be audible to the stands. A good system is using a deep snappy voice on balls and a higher voice with longer sound on strikes. Strike three, ball four and pitches close to the edge of the strike zone should be more emphatic than the rest. There is a difference in being emphatic and being a showboat. The umpire should give the ball and strike count at least once per batter. He may however, give it more than once. The balls are indicated with the fingers of the left hand, while the right indicates the strikes. Never use your two closed fists to indicate a full count, use the correct number of fingers. If the batter swings at a pitch, the strike motion should be given, but no audible sound. On a half swing situation, if the batter strikes at the pitch, use the hand

motion for strike and say to the batter, "Yes, he went!" or something similar. It is a mistake to say, "No, he didn't go." Say to the batter, "Ball, he didn't go." Call 'em, don't explain 'em. Your ball and strike calls are not to be routinely explained such as "ball low", "ball inside", or "strike caught the corner." If the catcher asks where a certain pitch was, tell him. The catcher should not ask repeatedly "Where was the pitch?" If he does, you should tell him that you're not going to explain every pitch to him. Agree with the catcher if he should ask for example, "Was it low?" answer "Yes" without comment. A batter from time to time will inquire if what he swung at and missed was a strike. Give him the information he asks for, such as "No, I thought it was a little high", if that is what you thought. Make it short and don't editorialize. **FAIR AND FOUL CALLS** When the ball is foul, raise your hands overhead and yell in a loud and clear voice "Foul ball!" If the ball is fair, merely point toward fair ground. Signal vigorously several times if the players are in doubt or if the call is close. If some unusual play happens, where the ball is "fair", but everyone assumes it's "foul", do not yell "Fair ball!" Continue to point toward fair ground. You never say "Fair ball". **THE OUT CALL** Each umpire has his own distinctive signal for out calls. There are lots of accepted ways of calling outs. A. Raising the open hand, then making a fist while crossing your left hand in front of the body B. Another consists of shooting the right fist out as in a jab and bringing it back above the head. C. Punching the right fist out in an arc as if to punch the player out. D. A quick raise of the open hand then making a fist may also be used. E. A good umpire always develops a rhythm and signal on every out call. The closer the play, the more vigorous may be the signal of the umpire. On obvious plays do not demonstrate, but make the call. F. In all out calls the umpire should give the out signal and say loudly and clearly "OUT" or "HE'S OUT." **THE SAFE CALL** The safe signal seems to be more universal. The umpire begins by crossing his arms in front of the chest then brings them straight out to the side. The palms should remain down throughout the motion. The hands should be kept at shoulder level. The hands should be pointed and in a straight line with the arms with no bend at the wrist. With every safe call the umpire should give the safe sign and say loudly and clearly "SAFE". Terms such as "YOU'RE IN THERE" and "NO, NO" should not be used. Do not call the runner safe unless there is an actual play on him. If there is an actual play, make the call, but again, do not demonstrate unless it is close. When there is a play and the umpire doesn't make a call, it looks as if he wasn't watching the play. **INTERFERENCE CALL** On any interference the ball is dead (almost, but not always). The umpire should raise both hands overhead while calling loudly and clearly "TIME!!! THAT'S INTERFERENCE". (See Rule 7.09 and Chapter 11 in this manual regarding immediate dead ball or delayed dead ball.) **OBSTRUCTION CALL** If a play is being made on the obstructed runner (Rule 7.06{a}), the umpire shall signal the obstruction by immediately calling time (both hands overhead) and then pointing at the runner while calling loudly and clearly, "THAT'S OBSTRUCTION". If no play is being made on the obstructed runner (Rule 7.06{b}), the umpire

shall signal the obstruction by pointing at the runner while calling loudly and clearly, "THAT'S OBSTRUCTION". Note that under this section of the obstruction rule, the umpire shall not call time until all play has ceased and no further action is possible. **BALK CALL (JR/SR/BG)** In calling a balk, the umpire shall point at the pitcher and call loudly, "THAT'S A BALK". Time is to be called only when play stops. The ball is not dead automatically when a balk is called. For the purpose of the balk rule, play is considered stopped as soon as a fielder has possession of the ball. (Delayed dead ball situation.) **CATCH OR NO CATCH** If the catch is made, a raised arm with closed fist is the only needed sign. No sign is needed when the batted ball is not caught except in a case of doubt as to whether it hit the ground first or was legally caught. If the ball is not caught, give the safe motion with a couple of waves of the arms. Say "NO CATCH" rather than "SAFE", as the fact that the catch was not made does not insure the batter being safe. (Definition 2.00 - Catch) **TIME CALLED** when, "time" is called by the umpire the ball is dead. The umpire should raise both hands overhead while calling loudly and clearly "TIME". **NOTE:** Know How and when to Call Time Out. Don't overdo time-outs. Let them play unless there is a valid reason for calling time. Don't call time too quickly when it would prevent the completion of play. Don't grant a player's request for time out unless he has a bonafide reason. For instance, if a relay-man wants time so he can throw the ball to the pitcher, don't grant it. The offensive team has a right to an error made on the throw. An injury is not an automatic time-out. As soon as the play is completed call time. **NOTE:** Only one offensive time out per inning is allowed. (Rule 5.10(d) Little League Rule Book) **INFIELD FLY** Umpires must pre-determine the possible play with a signal. Example: The common signal is an open right hand with the palm on the chest area. Make sure your partner acknowledges the signal so you are both on the same page and know the infield fly is in effect. **HOME RUN SIGNAL** The home run signal is pointing the right arm overhead and making a circular motion (once or twice) above your head. (Verbalize call) **FOUL TIP** When a foul tip is legally caught, the umpire should give a foul tip signal. The signal is to brush the palms of the hands above the head as they pass each other. Most of the foul tips can't be detected at a distance. If the foul tip is not caught it becomes a foul ball. (Use foul signal.) **PROPER SIGNALS ARE VERY IMPORTANT** You will want to watch experienced umpires, including the professionals if possible, and then experiment to see which signals fit you best. Good mechanics will go a long way in creating a good impression. But remember that there are basic principles of umpiring and that sometimes even the professionals, due to their experience or the fact they are working 4-man crews, may not follow the basics a less experienced umpire should follow. Also don't learn to umpire by using the guru theory. Develop a mental check list similar to what a pilot might use, then when you find yourself getting off track you can return to that check list and correct your problem. One of the most profitable means of practice is with the use of a full-length mirror. Study your own actions from as

many angles as possible. **BASIC SIGNALS & CALLS BALL:** On a pitch that is a ball, stay in your stance and verbalize, "Ball." There is no signal for a pitch that is a ball. Verbalize a ball so that your voice can be heard in both dugouts. **CATCH:** Begin from a set position. To signal a catch for an out, stand with your shoulders square to the play, keeping your head still with your right arm up, arm extended and parallel to the ground. Bend the elbow 90 degrees; close your fingers into a fist, thumb tucked along the front of the curled fingers and facing you. Notion your right forearm forward and holds the position momentarily, as if you have just hit a nail with a hammer. Declare, "Catch! That's a catch!" **COUNT THE RUN:** When one runner scores just before a teammate is retired to end an inning, the plate umpire will "count" the run by pointing emphatically and repeatedly directly at home plate and announcing for all to hear, "Count the run! Count the run! That run scores!" As he makes the announcement, the umpire should look to the press box or the official scorer to insure that the run is credited in the score book. **DEAD BALL:** Extend both arms out in front of your body, slightly higher than your shoulders and slightly wider than shoulder width. Extend your hands out, fingers together and pointed up, palms forward as if trying to stop something with your hands. Declare, "Time!" Remember, in any dead ball situation, the ball must be put back into play. **FAIR BALL:** Move as close to the ball as safety and the play will allow, then straddle the foul line. Come to a standing set position before the play happens. Point to fair territory with the hand and arm on that side of your body. **FOUL BALL:** Move as close to the ball as safety and the play will allow, then straddle the foul line. Come to a standing set position before the play happens. Extend both arms out in front of your body, slightly higher than your shoulders and slightly wider than shoulder width. Extend your hands out, fingers together and pointed up, palms forward as if trying to stop something with your hands. Declare, "Foul!" Then, point to foul territory with the hand and arm on that side of your body. **INFIELD FLY:** Begin in a set position; when the ball is hit, pause, read and react; step up, turn and face the fielder(s) and the play. When the ball is descending and you are convinced the batted ball is an infield fly, point straight up with your right hand and declare, "Infield fly! The batter is out." If the batted ball is near foul territory, the verbal call is, "Infield fly! The batter is out, if fair!" If the batted ball is fair but uncaught, signal an out and declare, "He's out! He's out! The batter is still out!" If the batted ball becomes an uncaught foul ball, signal and declare a foul ball. **INFIELD FLY POSSIBLE:** On a regional basis, there are a number of signals used by crews to remind partners that an infield fly situation exists. The most popular signal is still an open right hand placed across the chest; among professional baseball umpires, the most common is a simple touch of the bill of the cap, using a closed fist to simultaneously indicate no outs or an extended forefinger to indicate one out; a few areas still have umpires pat the top of their heads. Which "infield fly possible" signal is used is not important; the fact that one is used and recognized is very important. **NO CATCH:** Begin from a set position. To signal the absence of a catch,

stand with your shoulders square to the play, keeping your head still. Extend both arms straight out parallel to the ground in front of your chest, shoulder high. The fingers of each hand are straight and together, thumbs along forefingers. Sweep both arms out, separating toward the sides of your body even with your shoulders until the arms are fully extended along the lines of your shoulders and hold the position momentarily. Declare, "No catch! No catch!" **NO RUN SCORES:** When one runner approaches the plate but fails to score as a teammate is retired to end an inning, the plate umpire will "wipe off" the run by waving with both arms emphatically and repeatedly toward the press box or the official scorer and announcing for all to hear, "No run". "No run". "That runner does not score." The physical signal resembles a basketball referee canceling a basket. **OUT:** Begin in a set position. Stand with your shoulders square to the play, keeping your head still. Bring your right arm up, arm extended and parallel to the ground. Bend the elbow 90 degrees; close your fingers into a fist, thumb tucked along the front of the curled fingers and facing you. Motion your right forearm forward and then back, as if pounding a nail. Declare loudly, "He's out." as you pound the nail. Return to a set position. **OUT ON A TAG:** Begin in a set position. Stand upright, take at least one step forward and point with your left hand at the location where the tag occurred. Declare, "On the tag..." Next, signal out: Bring your right arm up, arm extended and parallel to the ground. Bend the elbow 90 degrees; close your fingers into a fist, thumb tucked along the front of the curled fingers and facing you. Motion your right forearm forward and then back, as if pounding a nail. Complete your declaration with, "...he's out." **OUT - SELL:** To sell an out call on a difficult catch, simply extend your right arm fully and exaggerate the standard "pounding a nail" motion described above. To sell a close play on the bases, begin in a set position. Stand with your shoulders square to the play, keeping your head still. Instead of bringing your right arm up extended and parallel to the ground (as in a standard out signal), draw your right fist straight up toward your armpit (elbow fully bent). Simultaneously, extend your left arm toward the play, left fist clenched. Take one full step toward the play with your left foot and thrust your right fist toward the play as if throwing an overhand punch. Declare loudly, "He's out." as you "throw" the "punch" signal. Finally, return to your set position. **PLAY or PLAY BALL:** Point with either hand directly at the pitcher. Call forcefully, "Pay ball." **SAFE:** Begin in a set position. Stand with your shoulders square to the play, keeping your head still. Extend both arms straight out parallel to the ground in front of your chest, shoulder high. The fingers of each hand are straight and together, thumbs along forefingers. Sweep both arms out, separating toward the sides of your body even with your shoulders until the arms are fully extended along the lines of your shoulders. Call, "Safe!" (not "He's safe!") as you sweep your arms. Return your arms, still parallel to the ground, in front of your chest. Drop your arms to your sides and resume a set position. When BU responds to UIC's question about a check swing, the safe signal is used to indicate that a batter did not swing. **SAFE - FIELDER OF THE BASE:**

Begin in a set position. Stand with your shoulders square to the play, keeping your head still. Extend both arms straight out parallel to the ground in front of your chest, shoulder high. The fingers of each hand are straight and together, thumbs along forefingers. Sweep both arms out, separating toward the sides of your body even with your shoulders until the arms are fully extended along the lines of your shoulders. Call, "Safe!" (Not "He's safe!") As you sweep your arms. Return your arms, still parallel to the ground, in front of your chest. Next, with both arms chest high, "sweep" the arms together in a sideways motion indicating the direction in which a fielder lost contact with the base as you declare, "He's off the base!" Then, repeat the safe signal and again say, "Safe!" Finally, resume a set position. **STRIKE:** As UIC, stand up from your stance and step back away from the catcher. Continue watching the ball, normally in the catcher's possession; bring your right arm up, arm extended and parallel to the ground. Bend the elbow 90 degrees; close your fingers into a fist, thumb tucked along the front of the curled fingers and facing you. Motion your right forearm forward and then back, as if pounding a nail. Declare loudly, "Strike!" as you pound the nail. Then, relax as you prepare for the next pitch. Verbalize a strike so that your voice can be heard in the outfield. When BU responds to UIC's question about a check swing, the strike signal is used to indicate that a batter did swing. **TIME:** Extend both arms out in front of your body, slightly higher than your shoulders and slightly wider than shoulder width. Extend your hands out, fingers together and pointed up, palms forward as if trying to stop something with your hands. Declare, "Time!" Remember, in any dead ball situation, the ball must be put back into play.

CHAPTER 14 INSTRUCTIONS TO UMPIRES BATTER'S POSITION IN BATTER'S BOX The lines defining the batter's box are considered within the batter's box. When the batter assumes his position in the batter's box, he shall have both feet completely within the batter's box; (i.e., no part of either foot may extend beyond the lines defining the box when the batter assumes his position). (Rule 6.03 Little League Rule Book.) An illegally batted ball is one that a batter hits with one or both feet on the ground entirely outside the batter's box, he shall be declared out. (Any ball hit fair, foul, or a foul tip - Rule 6.06 Little League Rule Book.) Remember this is going to be very difficult to see if the umpire is concentrating on the pitch, as he should be. (Don't guess the batter out.) **BATTER STEPPING OUT OF BATTER'S BOX** Once a batter has taken his position in the batter's box, and the pitcher starts his windup or comes to a set position with a runner on and he does not go through with his pitch because the batter has stepped out of the box, it shall not be called an illegal pitch or a balk. Both the pitcher and batter have violated a rule, and the umpires shall call time and both the batter and pitcher shall start over from scratch. If the pitcher delays once the batter is in his box and the umpire feels that the delay is not justified, he may allow the batter to step out of the box momentarily by calling "Time". **THE STRIKE ZONE** The strike zone is the space

over home plate, which is between the batter's arm pits and the top of the knees when the batter assumes a natural stance. The umpire shall determine the strike zone according to the batter's usual stance when that batter swings at a pitch. The batter's stance becomes a problem to many umpires. Sometimes a batter will move up and down in the box with the ideas of confusing the pitcher. It is wise to call any doubtful pitch a strike in this case. It is beneficial to everyone for all umpires to be aggressive in calling strikes. Always think strikes and make the pitch convince you that it is a ball and those borderline pitches will take care of themselves. The umpire must be consistent in his calls if he is to maintain control of the game and gain the respect of all players, managers, and coaches.

IMPORTANT POINTS IN GETTING THE PITCH RIGHT: 1. Get a good view of the ball coming in. 2. Wait (Timing). Proper use of eyes. (Timing) (Artificial timing is the act of slowing oneself down to make the call and still missing the pitch just later.) 3. Concentration. 4. Consistency on your calls.

ARGUING BALLS AND STRIKES No manager, coach or player, should be permitted to leave the bench (nor can the coach leave his position in the coaching box) to question an umpire's decision on the calling of balls and strikes. If he does, he will be warned. If he continues he will be ejected.

BASE COACHES Do not begin an inning unless both base coaches of the offensive team have taken their positions in the coaching boxes.

LINEUPS The home team manager and the visiting manager shall give the batting order in duplicate to the umpire-in-chief. The umpire-in-chief shall make certain that the original and duplicate copies are the same, then provide a copy of each batting order to the opposing manager. The original copy retained by the umpire shall be the official batting order. As soon as the home team's batting order is handed to the umpire-in-chief, the umpires are in charge of the playing field and from that moment have sole authority to determine when a game shall be called, halted or resumed on account of weather or the conditions of the playing field. (Rule 4.01 Little League Rule Book.) All umpires should get used to handling the lineups.

CURFEW In Little League games, no inning shall start after 10:00 p.m. (JR/SR 10:30 P.M. BG 11:00 P.M.) prevailing time. It will be held that an inning starts the moment that the third out is made completing the preceding inning. (No one in the local league has the power or authority to extend the curfew of any Little League game.) (Umpires responsibility - See Rule 9.00.)

PROTESTING GAME A. Protest shall be considered only when based on the violation or interpretation of a playing rule or the use of an ineligible player. No protest shall be considered on a decision involving an umpire's judgment. Equipment, which does not meet specifications, must be removed from the game and shall not be the basis for a protest. B. The managers of contesting teams only shall have the right to protest a game (or in their absence, coaches). However, the manager or acting manager may not leave the dugout until receiving permission from an umpire. C. Protests shall be made as follows: 1. The protesting manager shall immediately, and before any succeeding play begins, notify the umpire that the game is being played under protests. 2. Following such notice

the umpire shall consult with the associate umpires. If the umpire is convinced that the decision is in conflict with the rules, the umpire shall reverse that decision. If, however, after consultation, the umpire is convinced that the decision is not in conflict with the rules, said umpires shall announce that the game is being played under protest. Failure of the umpire to make such announcement shall not affect the validity of the protest. D. Protests made due to use of an ineligible player may be considered only if made to the umpire before the final out of the game. Whenever it is found that an ineligible player is being used, said player shall be removed from the game, and the game shall be continued under protest or not as the protesting manager decides. (An ineligible player refers to age, residence, pitching eligibility or Rule 3.03 substitution.) E. Any protest for any reason whatsoever must be submitted by the manager, first to the umpire on the field of play and then in writing to the local league president within 24 hours. The umpire-in-chief shall also submit a report immediately. F. A committee composed of the president, player agent, umpire-in-chief and one or more other officers or directors who are not managers or umpires shall hear and resolve any such protest as above, including playing rules. If protest is allowed, resume game from exact point when infraction occurred. NOTE 1: This does not pertain to charges of infractions of playing rules or regulations such as field decorum or actions of league personnel or spectators, which must be considered and resolved by the Board of Directors. NOTE 2: All Little League officials are urged to take precautions to prevent protests. When a protest situation is imminent, the potential offenders should be notified immediately. Example: Should a manager, official scorer, league official or umpire discover that a pitcher is ineligible at the beginning of the game, or will become ineligible during the game or at the start of the next inning of play, the fact should be brought to the attention of the manager of the team involved. Such action should not be delayed until the infraction has occurred.

RUNNER LEAVES A BASE ILLEGALLY When a pitcher is in contact with the pitcher's plate and in possession of the ball and the catcher is in the catcher's box ready to receive delivery of the ball, base runners shall not leave their bases until the ball has been delivered and has reached the batter. The violation by one base runner shall affect all other base runners. If a runner leaves a base illegally, play can be made on that runner. If the runner is out, the out stands. If said runner reaches safely the base to which the runner is advancing, that runner shall be returned to the base occupied before the pitch was made and no outs results. "Time" will be called and no play can be made during the return to base. However, should a runner leave a base too soon and the batter hits the pitched ball safely, then the only advance allowed to all runners is to the nearest base beyond the one occupied by the batter through the batter's clean hit. In no event shall the batter advance beyond first base on a single, error, second base on a double or third base on a triple. The umpire-in-chief shall determine the base value of the hit ball. If more than one base is occupied and any one of the runners leaves too soon, such illegal action shall prevent the advance of all runners except

those forced to advance by a batter becoming a base runner. When a base runner has left a base too soon and the batter hits the ball and advances beyond first base as the result of a play being made on another runner; the batter shall be entitled only to as many bases as is credited to that batter for a clean hit, no error involved, and each base runner shall be returned to the unoccupied base nearest the one each left. When the umpire detects a runner illegally leaving the base too soon, he shall drop a signal flag (or handkerchief) immediately indicating what has happened, but continue to move into position himself for the call on that play. (The signal flag should be red.) After the play has been completed "Time" should be called. Then the rule violation should be announced after which the batter and base runners will be advanced to the bases to which they are entitled. Be sure to recover the signal flag. When any base runner leaves the base before the pitched ball has reached the batter and the batter bunts or hits a ball within the infield, no run shall be allowed to score. If three runners were on the bases and the batter reaches first base safely, each runner shall advance to the base beyond the one they occupied at the start of the play, except the runner who occupied third base, who shall be removed from the base without a run being scored. (Exception: If at the conclusion of the play there is an open base, paragraphs (A) and (B) of Rule 7.13 will apply.)

RUNNING OUT OF THE BASELINE Any runner is out when running more than three feet away from a direct line between bases to avoid being tagged, unless such action is to avoid interference with a fielder fielding a batted ball. Two helpful hints in making the right call: 1. If the fielder does not have the ball and the runner runs outside of the imaginary three-foot line, this rule does not apply because the runner was not avoiding a tag. 2. A runner establishes his baseline when the umpire determines a play will be made on said runner. Baseline is not always direct from base to base. (Rule 7.08 (a) (1) Little League Rule Book.)

THE RUNNER DOES NOT SLIDE Any runner is out when the runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag. (Rule 7.08 (a) (3) Little League Rule Book)

HELPFUL HINTS IN MAKING THE RIGHT CALL: 1. In order for the rule to apply the fielder must have possession of the ball and waiting to make the tag. 2. If the fielder is waiting with the ball to make the tag, the runner now has to do one of two things, that runner must slide no matter if he is ten feet from the base or "attempt" to get around the fielder. In his attempt to get around the fielder, the umpire must be sure that the runner does not go outside of the imaginary three foot line for if that runner does, he will be called out. (Under Rule 7.01 (a) (1).)

RULING

EXAMPLES: 1. With a runner on third base. The pitcher throws a wild pitch, the catcher runs after the ball and recovers it, the runner advances to home plate and the catcher runs back to tag the runner out, but the catcher and runner get to home plate at the same time; the runner runs into the catcher and the catcher drops the ball and the runner touches home plate. Ruling: The runner is safe, and the run scores. (Rule 7.08 (a) (3) does not apply because the catcher was not waiting with the ball to make the tag.) 2. A runner on first base attempts to

steal second base, the catcher throws the ball to the second baseman who is standing waiting about five feet in front of the base. As the runner gets close to the second baseman who is going to tag him, he jumps around the second baseman brushing his glove and knocking the ball out of the glove without going outside the imaginary three foot line. Ruling: The runner is safe at second. (Rule 7.03 (a) (3) does not apply because the runner made an attempt to get around the fielder without leaving the three foot line.)

HEAD FIRST SLIDE Any runner is out when the runner slides head first while advancing. Common sense should prevail as to whether a child slides head first or stumbles, falls, trips, etc. (Little League Rule 7.08 (a) (4))

UMPIRE REPORTS In writing your reports (i.e., fights, protested games, ejections, etc.) remember that they are actually legal documents and that others may be privileged to examine them. Tell precisely what happened and the exact language that was used. Be sure of your facts and confine your report to the facts only and not personal opinions. Take extreme care in writing your reports. Always proofread the report to make sure it is free of errors and clear to the reader. Always keep a copy of the report for your own records. The report should be submitted to your local league President, and/or the Umpire in Chief within 24 hours after the incident. Cases of a violent nature (bumping incidents, assault on an umpire, confrontation off the field, etc.) should be reported to the League President as well as the District Administrator. Do everyone, including the players, a favor and report assaults to the police immediately.

INJURED PLAYERS When a player becomes injured during a game, your job is to inform the player's manager or coach and essentially do nothing further. While this may appear unsympathetic, especially when a player is in severe pain. Remember, you are there to officiate, not to attend to the player's medical needs. When a player is injured in a game you are umpiring in, do the following: 1) stop the game as soon as possible; 2) report the injury to the player's manager; 3) report the injury to a league official; 4) do not touch, move or assist in moving the injured player; 5) do not resume the game until the injured player (if he is able to continue to play) is pronounced ready to play by the manager or medical personnel or is removed from the playing field; 6) be patient because in many circumstances, you may have to wait for medical personnel to arrive at the game site to attend to or remove the injured player.

CHAPTER 15 SOFTBALL The game of softball is the same as baseball in the areas of mechanics, base and plate, obstruction, interference, etc. Where it is different is base running (leaving early), field layout, equipment, and pitching. In this chapter we will touch on those areas.

BASE RUNNING A runner is out if that runner fails to maintain contact with the base to which that runner is entitled until the ball has been batted or reaches the batter (Little League Softball) or has been released by the pitcher (Junior, Senior, or Big League Softball). When a runner is off a base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing a turn at bat, and while the pitcher has possession of the ball within the eight (8) foot radius circle, the runner must immediately attempt to advance to the next base or return to the

base the runner is entitled **Ruling examples:** 1. Runner on 3rd. Batter receives ball four and while batter-runner heads to 1st base and catcher throws ball back to the pitcher who is in the circle. Batter-runner continues through 1st right to 2nd. Umpire calls the batter-runner out for not staying on the base while the pitcher has possession of the ball in the circle. (Rule 7.08 (a) (5)) Ruling: The umpire misinterpreted the rule. On a ball four the runner is doing what the rule says, "... immediately attempting to advance..." The ball in the circle does not prevent a batter-runner from advancing 2. Runners on 2nd and 3rd. Pitcher delivers the pitch, but before the ball reaches the batter the umpire sees both runners leave their respective bases early. He calls both runners out. Two out, no one on base. Ruling: As soon as the umpire sees a runner leave early he should announce, "No Pitch, the runner on 2nd left early and is out." You cannot get two outs for leaving early. If you have a situation where 2 or more runners left at almost the same time, call the runner closest to home out and put the rest back to their original base. 3. Runner on 1st. Pitcher delivers the pitch, and the runner on 1st leaves the base after the pitch gets to the catcher. However, on the throw back to the pitcher in the circle the runner on 1st stays off the bag and breaks for 2nd after the ball gets to the pitcher in the circle. Umpire allows runner to stay at 2nd even after the manager insists she should be returned or called out. Ruling: The umpire is 100% correct. The runner immediately attempted to advance. 4. Runners on 1st, 2nd and 3rd, no outs. The pitcher delivers a pitch and all the runners leave their respective bases. The ball is returned to the pitcher while he is in the circle. The runners on 2nd and 3rd return to their bases immediately, while the runner on 1st stands perfectly still while off the base. The umpire waits a few seconds and then calls the runner on 1st "out". Ruling: The umpire is correct. Each umpire should silently count to three and if the runner has not made an attempt to advance or return then call the runner out. **PITCHING** A side-arm pitch is not permitted. The wrist must not be farther from the body than the elbow. There is no **BALK** in softball. A dropped ball is a ball which slips from the pitcher's hand during the delivery. A ball will be declared on the batter and the ball will remain in play and the runners may

advance at their own risk. Crow Hop is defined as the act of a pitcher who steps or hops off the front of the pitcher's plate, re-plants the pivot foot, establishing a second impetus (or starting point), and pushes off from the newly established starting point and completes the delivery. Leaping is an act by the pitcher which causes the pitcher to be airborne on his or her initial move and push from the plate. The momentum built by the forward movement of the pitcher causes the entire body including both the pivot foot and the non-pivot foot to be in the air and moving toward home plate as the delivery is completed. With this style of pitching, the pitcher will release the ball simultaneously with his or her return to the ground. The pivot foot may remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front foot touching the ground as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground throughout her entire delivery. The pitcher may have one or both feet on the pitcher's plate. The pitcher may have the ball in one or both hands. If the ball is in one hand a backward step (rocker motion) may be taken. This backward step must be taken prior to or simultaneous with the bringing of the hands together. If the pitcher starts his or her windup with both hands on the ball or during the act of delivery of a pitch, only one step forward toward the batter can be taken. Towards the batter must be within the 24 inch pitcher plate **BATTERS BOX** The batter's box shall be rectangular 7 feet by 3 feet. It shall extend forward from the center of home plate 4 feet and to the rear 3 feet. (Rule 1.04) **PITCHER'S PLATE** In all divisions of softball, the pitcher's plate shall be a rectangular slab of white ned rubber 24 inches by 6 inches and set in the ground so that the distance between the front side of the plate and the rear point of home plate is 40 feet. (Rule 1.07) **SOFTBALLS** In Little League Softball the approved mandatory softball for regular season and tournament play is the 11-inch softball. Senior and Big League Softball utilize the 12 -inch softball. (Rule 1.07) **CATCHER'S GLOVE** The catcher must wear a mitt or glove of any shape, size or weight consistent with the protecting the hand, this can be a first basemen's mitt or fielder's glove. (Rule 1.12)

Middletown Local Rules

www.Middletownlittlleague.org

July 14, 2009

1. Good sportsmanship is expected from all players, coaches, managers, and fans at all times .
2. **Unsportsmanlike acts** include but are not limited to: the use of words or actions to incite or attempt to incite spectators; use of **profanity, intimidation tactics**, or remarks which reflect unfavorably upon any other person, or baiting or **taunting**; use of any language intended to intimidate ; **throwing any object**; taking part in any **physical confrontation**, or **threatening** by gesture or word; for players, leaving their position or the dugout to approach any fight or confrontation; initiating an unnecessary, overly aggressive or **violent contact**; **arguing any judgment decision** by an umpire; for managers, failing to act, upon request of the umpires, to control parents or other partisan fans; or acting in any other manner not in accordance with the spirit of fair play .
3. Any **unsportsmanlike act** may be penalized (including **ejection without warning**) by the umpire (or in unusual, clear cases by the Director, a board member, or the UIC) during the game. The Director and/or the Board may impose appropriate or additional penalties after the game, without being limited by any decision to impose or not impose penalties during the game.
4. No tobacco or alcohol on field during games or practice.
5. **Catchers** must wear **mask with dangling throat guard** and helmet to **warm up** a pitcher at any time and during **infield practice**. During the game, catchers must also wear chest protector (majors and below boys must wear the long-type chest protectors properly) and shin guards.
6. Coaches are not allowed to warm up pitchers.
7. One adult **coach** must be **IN** the **dugout** at all times.
8. Player wearing batting helmet and glove will protect pitchers warming up during game within confines of field.
9. **On deck** batters are **not allowed**. Between half innings, only the batter due up first is allowed out of the dugout, but restricted to the area which would be the on deck circle for his/her team . No batting donuts
10. **Base coaches** shall stay in the **dugout between innings** and may take the field only when play is ready to resume. **Two adult coaches** are **allowed** (all levels) **provided** there is a **third coach** to be in the **dugout**.
11. Items from the concession stand may not be brought into the dugout or consumed during the game.
12. Players shall not leave the dugout during the game, except to take the field or perform game related functions.
13. All players must be in the lineup **3 consecutive innings**. This is the local **Minimum Play Requirement** (not applicable to travel softball), strengthening the MPR stated in Regulation IV(i), and Rule 3.03. At the top of the **fourth inning** both managers will meet to **exchange subs**. **Starters** may **re-enter** once, at any position in the lineup, at any time after the game goes **beyond the sixth** inning, in accord with Rule 3.03 as amended by the local MPR above.
14. A special pinch runner (**courtesy runner**) may be used **once an inning (for any player who has not previously been run for under this rule)**, but the runner may only be a player who is not presently in the batting order. See rule 7.14.
15. Home team takes warm-up and infield 4:55 to 5:10. Visiting team takes warm-up and infield 5:10 to 5:25. On weekends, infield time ends five minutes before game time, and is split evenly with home team having field first (35 minutes before game time or when prior game's teams clear the field, whichever is later). Both teams are responsible to line and prepare the field for play, and to rake the field after the game. Forfeit is one half hour after scheduled start time .
16. On **Weekends, no new inning** or 1/2 inning will begin **15 minutes** before the **next scheduled game time**. It is the responsibility of coaches and manager to have field and dugouts clean, equipment packed and players off the field so the next game can begin on time.
17. Home team has the official score book. **Home team supplies new balls** (2 softball, 3 base ball) to start game, and further as needed.
18. Immediately at game completion, players line up to shake hands at home plate. Players will then report directly back to dugout.
19. **Fitness of field for play**: The two managers, and/or league director, league representative or other board member(s), will determine if the game is to be played. Once the game is in progress the decision to continue play, delay or suspended belongs solely to the umpire(s).
20. Ten run rule "**mercy rule**" (LL rule 4.10 (e)) **does not apply**.
21. Sliding is required only as specified in Rule 7.08(a)(3): "Any runner is out when: ...the runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag;...". There is **no "must slide"** rule at any level.
22. **Intentional walk, Junior/Senior level**: Before a pitch to the batter, catcher may ask that batter be walked. Time is called, runner sent to first.

Baseball

23. The **senior league light** will determine that play is to be called for **darkness (no further play allowed)**, **though play may be called earlier if warranted in the judgment of the umpire.**
24. **Bats** shall be treated as **illegal** and removed from game if lighter than **minus 8** for Juniors and **minus 3** for Seniors.
25. The prohibition on **head first slides** which is applicable to **Majors** and below shall apply to **Junior** Baseball (Rule 7.08(a)(4): "Any runner is out when: ...the runner slides head first while advancing.").
26. Pitchers will warm up outside the major field, or on the Senior field provided a third player with a glove is positioned to protect the pitcher and catcher.
27. During the School season, players on a School team may pitch no more than 3 innings in a game, except School team pitchers may not pitch at all.
28. **Major and Junior League EH rule.** An **extra hitter (EH)** MAY be used if listed (SHALL be listed in majors) in the starting lineup as a tenth batting position. The EH does not take the field on defense. The starting **EH shall remain in the lineup but take a defensive position after the third inning** when other substitutions are made, and the **EH position shall be assumed by another player who was in the starting lineup.** Therefore, the starting and substitute EH must play the first six innings. After six innings, any player in the lineup may be designated the EH and the other nine players in the lineup shall play defense. The EH is terminated only if the number of available players falls below ten, at which time all players will play defense.
29. **Senior League EH rule:** An **extra hitter (EH)** MAY be used if listed in the starting lineup as a tenth batting position. The EH does not take the field on defense. The designated starting **EH shall play that position the entire game**, unless the EH position is terminated. The EH is terminated only if the number of available players falls below ten, at which time all players will play defense. A player may not be EH in consecutive games, or more than two times during the regular season.

Softball

30. The **softball field light** will determine that play is to be called for **darkness (no further play allowed)**, **though play may be called earlier if warranted in the judgment of the umpire..**
31. No more than ten runs shall be recorded for any half inning. The half inning ends under this rule when continuous action, during which the tenth run scores, ends, subject to any defensive appeal that might nullify any run(s).

BALK SUMMARY – 90 FOOT BASEBALL FIELD

On the big field where runners can lead, following are the basics for legal pitching with runners on base:

Windup position: Pitcher is on the rubber, hands in front of the body facing the plate. Free foot (stride foot, opposite of pivot foot) may be on or behind the rubber. From the windup, the pitcher may start his pitching motion and pitch; or, step directly toward a base to make or feint a throw; or, step off. (Step off means stepping backwards, toward second with the PIVOT foot as the first move.)

As soon as the pitcher steps off, he is an infielder and there are no restrictions on what he can do (except that he cannot make a motion that fakes making a pitch).

As soon as he starts his pitching motion (usually by moving his free foot to take a rocker step), he is committed to make a pitch - stopping or throwing to a base is a balk.

To throw to a base from the rubber, the first move must be a step toward the base. (There may be some minor other movement to position the feet to make the throw, but usually a throw to a base will be clearly different from the start of the pitching motion. If the initial motion looks the same as the motion on a pitch, it is a balk.)

The above is the wind up only.

Set position: The pitcher takes the rubber with the hands separated, pitching arm at the side. The pivot foot is in contact with the rubber, the free foot is in front of the rubber (meaning toward home, within the ends of the rubber), and the pitcher's body basically is facing toward third. The ball may be in the glove or in the hand. Signs are to be taken from the rubber. The pitcher should therefore take the rubber, hands apart, then look for signs.

The pitcher may at any time throw to a base or feint to a base other than first, or he may step off. For a throw or a feint from the rubber the pitcher must step toward the base. Failure to step for a feint or throw is a balk.

Before pitching the pitcher must come "set". This means hands together holding the ball in front of the body. There must be a "stop", meaning no movement of the hands or body. This "set" signifies that the pitcher now is ready to pitch, and from that position he may throw a pitch, throw or feint to a base (as above) or step off. Once set, any movement (other than the head) not part of the a throw/feint/step off is a balk. (For instance, turning the shoulders to look at first is a balk; coming set and then coming set a second time is a balk; taking a rocker step

after coming set is a balk.) If the pitcher does not come to a stop and pitches it is a balk.

Pick off moves: A pitcher while in contact with the rubber may throw to any base, at any time before or after the set, provided he makes a continuous move to make the throw and he steps toward the base. A "snap" throw without a step is a balk. A right hander picking up the free leg toward third as though pitching and then turning and stepping and throwing to first has balked (a left hander has balked if his free foot is picked up toward first and goes behind the plane of the back of the rubber before throwing to first, or if he starts toward home and then changes direction back to first).

A pitcher in contact with the rubber MUST throw to first, but may feint to second or third (provided that the base is occupied or that a runner is advancing toward that base - a throw or feint to an unoccupied base is a balk). A feint from the rubber must include a step toward the base.

These restrictions do not apply if the first move is the step off. If the pivot foot is lifted and placed on the ground behind the rubber, the pitcher is not longer a pitcher but is an infielder who may throw or not throw in whatever manner he likes. The only thing a pitcher who has stepped off may not do is make a motion that simulates his pitching motion. (If the pitcher after stepping off throws the ball away, the base award is two bases, as it would be if an infielder threw the ball away. One base is the award for a throw from the rubber going out of play.)

GROUND RULES FOR ALL FIELDS

All scoreboards are located beyond the outfield fence, out of play. A legally batted fair ball hitting the scoreboard on the fly is a HOME RUN. A legally batted fair ball that bounces and hits the scoreboard is a GROUND RULE DOUBLE.

The front, vertical section of any Press box, dugout or other structure that abuts the playing field shall be considered part of the fence. Any batted or thrown ball striking this part of the structure shall be considered alive or dead as would be ruled for striking the fence. Any opening that allows the ball to enter the structure shall be treated as an opening in the fence.

Any ball which passes through an opening in the fence (past the plane of the fence) is in dead ball territory. This includes any intended opening in the fence for access, whether gated or not, and the openings into the dugouts.

Any batted ball which touches a tree adjacent to or overhanging the field is immediately dead and shall not be played even if it falls onto the field of play, provided that the umpire judges that the contact with the tree was outside the foul lines. Any batted ball which touches a tree is live and remains in play as though it had not touched anything (and judged fair or foul by where it lands or is touched), provided that the umpire judges that the contact with the tree was not outside the foul lines. Any batted ball which contacts a tree near or overhanging an outfield fence shall be declared a home run only if the contact is not outside the foul lines and the ball falls beyond the fence in fair territory; if such batted ball falls on the playing field it shall be ruled not to have passed over the fence and it remains in play as above (an out shall be called if it is caught before it hits the ground). Any thrown ball striking a tree remains alive and in play, unless the umpire judges that the contact with the tree was outside the field of play (beyond the fence line).