

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT 8
LITTLE LEAGUE

THE LITTLE LEAGUE UMPIRE

The contribution of time and the devotion of the Little League umpire go often unrewarded, if not unnoticed.

As a representative of the Little League program, a movement which serves youth around the world and has earned wide respect for its integrity and discipline, the umpire occupies a unique role.

Likened to a police officer, the umpire must command respect and enforce the rules of the game. The umpire must also have knowledge of children and make every effort to be a good ambassador for Little League.

Decisions by umpires are questioned frequently, a privilege long enjoyed by people who watch baseball. Umpires can, and do, make mistakes and should be the first to admit it should the misinterpretation of a rule occur.

There are times when the inexperienced umpire may attempt to "even up" a bad decision. This is poor policy. The umpire should be sure a pitch has reached the catchers mitt before calling it a ball or a strike and should be sure the batted or thrown ball has reached the glove of a fielder before making the call. Every play should be completed before the final call is made.

An umpire should be conveniently "deaf" at times and should see and hear only that which is necessary while on the field of play. Every umpire should review his or her attitude occasionally and determine if it is in the best service to Little League.

The following attributes are most important when carrying out the essential duties and responsibilities of umpiring:

Understanding

This is vital as far as the youngster is concerned. The umpire must study

and know the rules and regulations while also studying the Little Leaguers whose reactions do not always coincide with the adult.

THE LITTLE LEAGUE UMPIRE ... Continued

Mental Attitude

In baseball it is the characteristic for players to question the umpire at times regarding decisions. Instead of taking a youngster to task for something said, the umpire should attempt to let the youngster know of a willingness, to assist with the problem.

Cooperation

A willingness to take time to answer a player when there is a question, whether it be on the playing field or off. Gain the players' confidence and goodwill.

Conduct

The Little League umpire should lean towards accommodating some things which occur on the field. Managers should not set a bad example by rushing on to the field and causing a disturbance. When this does occur, the umpire should be the one to set the example by remaining calm and exercising good judgment.

Appearance

Attire is important. This does not mean the umpire must have the very best of clothing but should be clean and neat. Shoes should always be shined and the umpire's cap should be worn. Sport shirts and trousers of dark blue, black or light gray are the accepted Little League attire. Leagues should furnish umpires with equipment as league property.

New Umpires

In Little League there are many umpires who lack experience. When an experienced umpire is working with a new umpire, every effort should be made to assist the new official with the fine points of the position.

THE LITTLE LEAGUE UMPIRE ... Continued

HELPFUL HINTS

1. Every game is a new game. Don't worry if you have had a bad game. Review it, and try to analyze your mistakes.
2. Patience is not only a virtue, but an essential. The umpire controls the environment. If he loses his temper, he loses control.
3. Umpires function as a team.' They should not be critical of each other on or off the field, and should support each other as necessary.
4. Umpires should keep themselves physically fit.
5. Calls should be made firmly and without hesitation. Umpires who are exhibitionists detract from the game and do nothing to improve it.
6. Umpires may be requested to explain a decision, but should not become involved in an argument about it.
7. Plate umpires should make sure the next batter is ready as soon as the pitcher has finished warming up. Delays can ruin a good ball game. It is up to the umpire to keep players hustling and the game moving.
8. Umpires should always be alert for field conditions which may call for a special ground rule. Umpires should see to it that managers, coaches and players are in their proper places during a game, and that equipment not in use is removed.
9. When a decision must be made about calling a game due to weather conditions, darkness or other factors, all umpires involved should confer before a decision is reached. However, it is the prerogative of the umpire-in-chief to make this decision on his own.
10. Keep your eye on the ball at all times.
11. Remember, the game is what the umpire makes it. You are part of the game. You

are important to the game. But you are not more important than the game.

THE LITTLE LEAGUE UMPIRE ... Continued

CONTROLLING THE GAME

1. When calling balls and strikes, permit the catcher to have plenty of room, but get as close as possible without interfering. Under Rule 5.09 (b), umpire interference could occur.
2. Wait until the ball is in the catcher's mitt before calling the pitch. Never anticipate where the pitch will be.
3. Call the pitches what they are. Some catchers will attempt to assist in umpiring by calling out ball or strike. Politely remind him, that you are the umpire and will call the pitches.
4. When catchers pull pitches over the plate, warn them to stop it. When catchers do this, they are acknowledging the pitch was not a strike and are attempting to influence the umpire or inflame the fans.
5. Wait until a batted ball settles before calling it fair or foul, unless it touches a person or object. Batted balls can strike in foul territory and still become fair balls.
6. Time should not be called before a play is completed. Catchers often ask for time following a base-on-balls. Do not grant time until the batter-runner has reached first base and all runners including the batter-runner have ceased to move forward.
7. When the play is completed, call time. Prompt action saves many arguments.
8. A play that might occur could unintentionally be killed, off if time is called too soon. Every umpire should be aware of this fact and not call time or foul too soon.
9. Calling time too often will slow up the ball game. Many solutions are being sought to speed up the game. Do not be guilty of calling time unless the situation warrants.

10. Watch the ball. Do not move away from a play too soon. The adage "keep your eye on the ball at all times" can save embarrassing moments, particularly if the ball is dropped.
11. If a ball is live, never handle it. This will seldom occur, but always be alert and allow players to field or throw the ball.

THE LITTLE LEAGUE UMPIRE ... Continued

CONTROLLING THE GAME ... Continued

12. When a judgment decision is made, no explanation is necessary. Explain a decision only when an interpretation of a rule is in doubt.
13. On an appeal play, make no decision unless an appeal is made properly. Get set for the next play. This is important. Appeals are intended to keep the defense on the alert. Do not assist by making a decision before the appeal is made.
14. You may get hit, if you stand in fair territory in calling plays at home plate. Almost all plays around home plate can be called from a position in foul territory. Make every effort to avoid any interference.
15. Get into proper position quickly when a ball has been batted or thrown. Be alert and move fast. Hustle makes a big impression and helps you.
16. Do not make decisions on the run. Stop and then call the play. Your vision can be jumpy if you are on the move.
17. Be sure bases are secure and positioned as they should be. Unless bases are in exact position, difficult situations can develop.
18. When getting into position, be sure you are not obstructing the view of a fielder. Always check with a fielder who may be back of you.
19. Get as close to every play as possible without getting in the way. Always try to be looking into the play, and avoid being blocked out of vision.

20. Hustle out on fly balls to the outfield which seemingly may be trapped or become difficult catches. This is important. A trapped' ball off the ground or fence is not an out.
21. Try to anticipate what can occur before the next play takes place, but do not assume that it will happen.
22. When there is no doubt about the call, make it routinely, but when a play is close, give the action necessary to imply there was no doubt that it was exactly as you called it. Players and fans admire the umpire who indicates certainty and authority.

THE LITTLE LEAGUE UMPIRE ... Continued

CONTROLLING THE GAME ... Continued

23. Make your calls in fair territory at first base except when the pitcher is covering that base or when a batted ball is fielded by the first baseman, pitcher or catcher near to the first base line. Best position to call such a play is in foul territory, about ten feet toward home from first base.
24. Be sure to line up with runners on base when fielder is about to catch a fly ball, to make sure the runner does not leave too soon. With runners on first or second, leave third base to the plate umpire.
25. Never be without a rule book. Only use it when necessary. It is better to refer to the rule book to settle a dispute than have the situation protested and find you were wrong.
26. Hustle - Hustle - Hustle! This is the attribute of a good umpire.

PLATE UMPIRE

1. The strike zone is from the armpits to the top of the knees when the batter assumes his natural stance.
2. Be square to the batter. Use the stride stance with one foot slightly in front of the other (heel to toe).
3. With a right-handed batter at the plate, put your left foot between the batter and the catchers left shoulder, or the reverse for a left-handed batter. Keep your head at the same level as the catchers head, and be as close to him as possible without touching him. Be sure your position permits view of the entire plate.
4. As the pitcher looks for his sign, stand erect or with your hands on your knees. Always watch the ball for a possible balk. Assume the crouch position as the

- pitcher starts his windup.
5. Keep your head still and follow the pitch from the time it leaves the pitchers hand until it is caught. Keep your hands down and elbows in tight. Make the call only after the ball enters the catcher's mitt.
 6. When the ball is hit, move in front of the plate to watch the play develop (do not move in front of the plate with a runner on third base).

THE LITTLE LEAGUE UMPIRE ... Continued

PLATE UMPIRE ... Continued

7. Face the backstop when dusting off the plate, and keep - your back to the pitcher.
8. When there is a play at the plate, take off the mask with the left hand and move to the third base side of the plate to make the call. Never anticipate the call. Wait for the play to happen. Watch the play for a few seconds after the call is made in case the catcher drops the ball. If the runner is safe, spread the arms wide. The closer the call, the more emphatic it should be.
9. If the catcher crowds the inside corner, raise your head a little higher to see both the pitcher and the plate, or adjust to the outside corner. Be sure the new stance permits view of the entire plate and the ball, from its release to the catchers glove.
10. If the catcher positions himself to one side, shift a little in the same direction to permit some protection from the pitched ball.
11. If the catcher maintains a high crouch stance, move your head a little higher to permit a clearer view of the pitch. Do not duck below the shoulder level of the catcher.
12. To call a strike, stand erect; raise the right fist above the head and call "strike". Do not call "strike" when the batter swings and misses. Be emphatic when calling a batter out on a third strike call.
13. To call a ball, just remain in the crouched position and call "ball" with no hand signal. No explanation of the call should be given.

14. Indicate a fair batted ball by pointing to fair territory with no verbal call.
15. If the batter is still in the batters box and is hit by a fouled ball, call "foul" and raise both hands.
16. On a foul tip, give the foul tip signal, than the strike signal. Do not call "foul" or "foul tip". Remember, a foul tip is a ball legally caught by the catcher. It is not a foul tip if caught on a rebound unless it first touches the catchers hand or glove, or if the catcher drops the ball.
17. When a batter receives a ball four, do not point to first base. Just say ball four.

THE LITTLE LEAGUE UMPIRE ... Continued

PLATE UMPIRE ... Continued

18. The following situations are fair batted balls:

- A ball settles on fair territory between home and first base or home and third base.
- A ball is on or over fair territory, including any part of first or third base, when bounding toward the outfield.
- A ball first falls on fair territory beyond first or third base before rolling foul.
- A ball while on or over fair territory touches any umpire or player.
- A ball while over fair territory passes out of the playing field beyond the outfield fence.
- Touches first or third base.

19. A protest shall not be received or considered if based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of an umpire's judgment. The following situations are judgment calls:

- A batted ball is fair or foul. . A base runner is safe or out.
- A pitched ball is a strike or a ball.
- A pitched ball is legal or illegal.
- A base runner leaves the base too soon on a caught fly ball.
- A base runner leaves the base before the pitched ball reaches the batter (Little League level only).
- A base runner did or did not touch a base.
- A fly ball is or is not caught legally.
- A hit is or is not an infield fly.
- Whether a play does or does not involve interference, or obstruction.
- Whether a field is fit to continue or postpone play. . Whether there is sufficient light to continue play.

BASE UMPIRE

1. With nobody on base, the base umpire should take a position ten to fifteen feet behind the first baseman with both feet in *foul* territory. If the first baseman is playing deep, ten feet is far enough. Allow him to react to the ball without running into you. If the first baseman is playing even with the bag, or a little behind it, fifteen feet is fine. Allow him to move anywhere on a batted ball, then you move accordingly.

THE LITTLE LEAGUE UMPIRE ... Continued

BASE UMPIRE ... Continued

2. When umpiring on a Little League field and there is a runner on first, or when there are runners on first and third, the base umpire takes a position about ten feet behind second base on the second base side of the field, and in line with second and third bases.
3. When umpiring on a Senior field (big diamond) and there is a runner on first, or when there are runners on first and third, the base umpire moves to the infield, taking a position on a tangent running from home plate to the edge of the dirt circle on the first base side of the pitchers mound. The base umpire should be about half way between the pitching rubber and second base. The umpire should be square to home plate and must be down in the set position (both hands on the knees).
4. In all remaining situations on a Little League field, the base umpire takes a position about ten feet behind second base on the shortstop side of the field, and in line with second and first bases.
5. In all remaining situations on a Senior field (big diamond), the base umpire moves to the infield, taking a position on a tangent running from home plate to the edge of the dirt circle on the third base side of the , pitchers mound. The base umpire should be about half way between the pitching rubber and second base. The umpire should be square to home plate and must be down in the set position (both hands on the knees).

JURISDICTION - WHO CALLS IT?

1. With no base runners the plate umpire takes all fair or foul calls on balls that come to a stop or are fielded before the first base bag.
2. With no base runners the base umpire takes all fair or foul calls on balls that roll up to the first base bag or beyond it. On any' fly bail or line drive that moves the right fielder towards the line, the base umpire **MUST** go out and handle the fair or foul call (and any catch or no catch). EXCEPTION: On a pop-up in the general area of the first baseman, come into the infield and pivot. This gives the fair or foul and the catch or no catch calls to the plate umpire.
3. With runners on base, the plate umpire takes all fair or foul calls.
4. With runners on base, the base umpire can only help on a ball fouled off the batter.

THE LITTLE LEAGUE UMPIRE ... Continued

JURISDICTION - WHO CALLS IT? ... Continued

5. With no base runners the plate umpire takes all catch or no catch calls on balls hit to the third baseman and shortstop. Takes all calls on the second baseman when moving to his right. Takes all calls in front of the mound. Has all catch or no catch calls in the outfield unless the base umpire goes out.
6. With no base runners the base umpire takes all catch or no catch calls on the second baseman when moving straight in or to his left. Takes all catch or no catch calls on balls fielded by the first baseman. EXCEPTION: Pop-up near first base, the base umpire should come into the infield and pivot, giving up the catch or no catch responsibility to the plate umpire. Takes the catch or no catch on plays when going out on a fly ball. The base umpire should only go out on balls from the center fielder to the right field line. **MUST** go out on balls that might be fair or foul calls down the right field line.
7. With runners on base, the plate umpire takes all catch or no catch calls on balls fielded by the third baseman if he is moving toward the foul line. Takes all catch or no catch calls in front of the mound. Takes all catch or no catch calls on balls fielded by the left fielder or right fielder if moving toward the foul line.

8. With runners on base, the base umpire takes all catch or no catch calls on balls fielded by the third baseman or first baseman if they move away from the foul line or if the ball is hit right at them. Takes all catch or no catch calls on the shortstop and second baseman. Takes all catch or no catch calls on balls from the left fielder to the right fielder and all balls hit directly to them.
9. When umpiring on the Senior field (big diamond), and with runners on base, the base umpire shall never cross the infield line when making a catch or no catch call on the outfielders (stay within the diamond).
10. During ground rule situations, the plate umpire has primary responsibility for any batted ball that goes out of play, unless the base umpire goes out. Then the responsibility belongs to the base umpire. On any thrown ball that goes out of play, generally the umpire that is closer to the play will call "Time", but if the other umpire sees the play clearly, that umpire will call "Time".

THE LITTLE LEAGUE UMPIRE ... Continued

JURISDICTION - WHO CALLS IT? ... Continued

11. During an infield fly situation, the two umpires will have signaled to each other before the play that an infield fly situation exists. Either umpire may call the infield fly whenever they determine that one has been hit. However, when the ball is near one of the foul lines the plate umpire should initiate the call by saying, "infield fly, if fair!" The base umpire then echoes his call. If the ball is behind the pitcher, the base umpire initiates the call, especially if a fielder has to run any distance for the ball. The base umpire is in the best position to determine if the ball can be caught with ordinary effort.
12. There are two situations where the plate umpire takes the play at third base. It *is* crucial in both situations that the base umpire knows where the plate umpire *is*.
 - a. When there *is* a runner on first base only, the plate umpire *is* responsible for any play on the runner from first at third base. When it becomes apparent that there will be a play on the runner at third base, the plate umpire will yell as he moves into position, "I've got third, I've got third!"
 - b. When there *is* a runner on second base only, or if there are runners on first and second and there are less than two out, the plate umpire *is* responsible for a play at third on the runner at second if he tags on a fly ball and tries to advance. When the runner at second returns to the bag to tag up, the plate umpire will yell as he moves into position, "I've got third if he comes!" The base umpire should acknowledge that he heard his partner.
13. Your partner *is* your only friend out on the field. Be sure you keep it that way! Always let your partner know where you are on the field. Learn to communicate with each other in a loud *voice*, and make sure your partner hears you.
14. If there *is* a check swing, the plate umpire should make a determination when the pitch *is* called. If a strike *is* called, there *is* never an appeal. If the call *is* that the batter did not swing and there *is* a request from the catcher that you check with the base umpire, point down to your partner and ask loudly, "Did he go?" The base umpire will immediately signal safe, saying, "No, he didn't go", or will

signal the strike, saying, "Yes, he went."