



Welcome to District 8

Coaching Rules Program

Every fan thinks they are the umpire.....  
Of course they have the best point of view!



Every coach thinks they are the umpire...  
Of course they have a better point of view  
than the fans!



But we all know who has  
the best point of view...



# THE UNIQUE ROLE OF AN UMPIRE



- Must know, understand and enforce all of the rules
- Must efficiently manage the game
- Must be professional in attitude and appearance
- Must ensure that all SAFETY issues are enforced
- Is a representative the Local League, District #8 and Little League Baseball/Softball
- ...and remember that although a game cannot be played without an Umpire, the outcome should not be dictated by the Umpire

# COACH NO-NO'S

Coaches need to follow on the ball field prior to and during the game:

1. Cannot catch any player including the pitcher
2. Need to wear closed toe shoes - no sandals
3. While conducting any type of infield/outfield, coaches must have a player with a mask catching. The mask must have a throat guard and be a catcher's mask. Coaches are not allowed to catch.
4. Arguing judgment calls.
5. Wait to be granted "time" before coming onto field

# Umpire Training

## PRE - GAME ROUTINE

### Umpire Meeting: 30 minutes before game

- Meet with partner to discuss game plan
- Inspect the field and each team's equipment for safety



### Home Plate Meeting: 5-10 minutes before game

- Go over local ground rules
- Exchange lineup cards
- Discuss in-game conduct
- Go over proper procedures how to discuss calls made, with the exception of judgment calls
- Discuss mandatory play, 10 run rule and any other special play rules

# THE STRIKE ZONE DEFINITION

The Strike Zone is that space over Home Plate which is between the batter's armpits 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.

## **Rule 2.00**

**Note:** Any part of the ball that passes through any part of the Strike Zone shall be called a strike. The strike zone starts at the front of the plate, not where the ball ends up.

# FAIR BALL DEFINITION

- A Fair Ball is a batted ball that settles on fair ground between home plate and first base
- or between home plate 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, second or third base
- or that first falls on fair territory 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, passes 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.

# FOUL BALL DEFINITION

- A **FOUL BALL** is a batted ball that settles on foul territory between home plate and first base
- or between home plate and third base
- or that bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory
- or that first falls on foul territory beyond first or third base
- or that while on or over foul territory, touches the person of an umpire or player, or any object foreign to the natural ground.
- **NOTE:** A foul fly shall be judged 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 foul or fair territory at the time that fielder touches the ball.

# THE CATCH

- A "Catch" is the act of a fielder in getting secure possession in the hand or glove of a ball in flight and firmly holding it before it touches the ground. If the fielder has made the catch and drops the ball while in the act of making a throw following the catch, the ball shall be adjudged to have been caught. In establishing the validity of the catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove complete control of the ball and that release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. Not a "Catch" if ball is dropped after a collision with wall or another fielder, if ball is dropped in a fall to ground or if it touches another fielder or umpire first.

# INFIELD FLY RULE

- An **Infield Fly** is a fair fly ball (not a line drive, lazy line drive nor an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when there is a force out at third base, less than to 2 outs. The ball must reach it's APEX. The pitcher, catcher and any outfielder in the infield on the play shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule. The batter is out and the ball is alive and runners may advance at the risk of that ball being caught, or retouch and advance after the ball is touched or caught, the same as on any fly ball. If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul.

# INFIELD FLY 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". If a declared **Infield Fly** is allowed to fall untouched to the ground, and bounces foul and remains foul before passing first or third base, it is a foul ball. If a declared **Infield Fly** falls untouched to the ground, outside the baseline, and bounces fair before passing first or third base, it is an **Infield Fly**.

# LIVE BALL



- The only way a ball can become "live" is the umpire's pronouncement of the word "Play" and this can only happen when the pitcher is holding the ball and standing on the rubber.
- On the first pitch at the start of an inning, the defensive players must be in position, the batter must be set in the batter's box, the catcher must be set in the catcher's box and the pitcher must have the ball and be on the rubber before "play" can begin.
- After an uncaught Foul Ball any runners must be returned to the base, the batter must be set, the catcher must be set and the pitcher must have the ball and be on the rubber before "play" can begin.
- In all other Dead Ball or Time Out situations the batter must be set, the catcher must be set and the pitcher must have the ball and be on the rubber before "play" can begin.

# DEAD BALL



- **Definition:** A dead ball is a ball out of play because of a legally created temporary suspension of play. While the ball is dead, no player may be put out, no bases may be run and no runs may be scored.

- **Automatic "Dead Ball" situations:**

- 1) The beginning of a inning.
- 2) After any uncaught Foul Ball.
- 3) After the umpire calls "Time Out".
- 4) When a batter is called out for batting out of turn.
- 5) Following an "Illegally Batted Ball".
- 6) Pitched Ball thrown into dead territory.
- 7) Overthrows by fielder thrown into dead territory.
- 8) When hit by a pitch, either thrown or bounces first then strikes the batter.

# **AWARDING BASES - OVERTHROWS**

THE AWARDING OF BASES ON OVERTHROWS IS MADE BASED UPON TWO SEPARATE CONDITIONS: 1) TWO BASE AWARDS FROM THE TIME OF THE PITCH: 2) TWO BASE AWARDS FROM THE TIME OF THE THROW.

## **DETERMINATION #1: TWO BASE AWARD FROM THE TIME OF PITCH**

- 1) Thrown ball into dead territory on the first play by an infielder.
- 2) Fielder deflects wild pitch into dead territory while retrieving it.
- 3) Fair batted ball is deflected into dead territory.
- 4) Fair batted ball bounces over or flies through the fence.

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## **DETERMINATION #2: TWO BASE AWARD FROM THE TIME OF THROW**

- 1) Thrown ball into dead territory on the second play by an infielder.
- 2) Thrown ball into dead territory by an outfielder.
- 3) Any relay throw into dead territory by any fielder.
- 4) Thrown ball into dead territory by any fielder if B-R and all runners have advanced one base each.

# THE APPEAL

**\*The Appeal is an act of a fielder in claiming violation of the rules by the offensive team. Appeals must be made while the ball is in play (Alive).**

**Appeals must be made before the next pitch or play. After the ball is "live", the defense must make a verbal appeal to the umpire or complete an act that is unmistakably an appeal.**

**Appeals may be made by the defense in the following ways:**

- 1) By touching the runner they believe committed the running infraction.
- 2) By touching the base they believe was missed by the runner.
- 3) By touching the original base they believe that the runner left early.

*The defense loses their right to appeal when: 1) The throw made in an appeal attempt goes into dead territory; 2) A pitch is made to the batter; 3) A play is made that is not part of continuous action.*

# PROTESTS

## **Protesting Plays:**

*Judgment calls may **not** be protested. This means out/safe; fair/foul; ball/strike; obstruction/interference; hit batter. The judgment of interference/obstruction is not protestable, however the interpretation of what the umpire ruled after the offense, if in violation of the rules, is protestable. Remember, only rules interpretations are protestable. **Protests must be made before the next pitch.***

## **Protesting Ineligible Players:**

*Protesting the use of an ineligible player may be made anytime prior to the last out of the game. When an ineligible player is discovered he is removed from the game and the opposing manager may protest the game or not at his discretion.*

# OBSTRUCTION

*"OBSTRUCTION is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding the ball, impedes the progress of any runner."*

## **THERE ARE TWO APPLICATIONS OF THIS RULE:**

- 1) If a play is being made on a runner who is obstructed, the ball is immediately called dead.
- 2) If no play is being made on the runner who is obstructed, the ball is a delayed dead ball.

# OBSTRUCTION

## **PLAY BEING MADE ON AN OBSTRUCTED RUNNER:**

- 1) Time is called at the moment of obstruction.
- 2) The obstructed runner is awarded one base beyond the last base that he occupied
- 3) Any other runners advance one base if forced, if not forced they advance or return to their base according to the umpire's judgment.

# OBSTRUCTION

## **PLAY NOT BEING MADE ON AN OBSTRUCTED RUNNER:**

- 1) Obstruction is not called until all action stops.
- 2) After the play is completed, time is called and the ball is dead and the obstruction is called.
- 3) All runners advance or return to their base according to the umpire's judgment.

# OBSTRUCTION

If a fielder is about to receive a thrown ball and if the ball is in flight directly toward and near enough to the fielder so he must occupy his position to receive the ball he may be considered "in the act of fielding the ball." After the fielder has made an attempt to field a ball and missed, he can no longer be "in the act of fielding."

A fielder may stand in the base path , IF, the throw is almost to him and he needs to be there to catch the ball. "Almost to him" is a judgment by the umpire. However, he may not actually block the base until he has possession of the ball. Until he has possession of the ball he must give the runner some way to get to the base. Obstruction can **NEVER** be called on a fielder for blocking a base when he has possession of the ball.

A "Fake Tag" is considered obstruction.

# INTERFERENCE

*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, the 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. In the event the batter-runner has not reached first base, all runners shall return to the base last occupied at the time of the pitch.*

*Defensive Interference is an act by a fielder which hinders or prevents a batter from hitting pitch. It should be noted that this is the only defensive interference.*

# INTERFERENCE

Batter's Interference - interferes with the catcher's fielding or throwing by stepping out of the batter's box, or making any other movement that hinders the catcher's play at home plate.

Catcher's Interference - interferes with the batter's ability to swing at a pitched ball.

Umpire's Interference - interferes with the catcher's throw or ability to make a throw, or hinders his action to make a play.

Runner is hit by batted ball in fair territory.

# THE “SLIDE RULE”

THERE IS NO “MUST SLIDE ” RULE !!!

Rule 7.08 - Any runner is out when - (a) (3) the runner does not slide OR attempt to get around a fielder who HAS THE BALL and is waiting to make the tag.

The key phrases here are: “**or attempt to get around**” and “**has the ball waiting to make the tag.**” The runner may slide or attempt to get around the fielder, but he **does not have to slide**. Plus, unless the fielder has the ball he doesn't have to do either.

The fielder cannot be on the base without possession of the ball, if he is, and he impedes the runner, it is obstruction.

# VISITS TO THE MOUND

A Manager/Coach is allowed to call time and visit the pitcher twice in an inning or three times in a game without penalty. However on the third visit in an inning or the fourth visit in the game the pitcher must be replaced.

The catcher and any other defensive players may join the manager on the mound during a pitcher's conference. Although there is no time limit written in the rules as to the length of these visits, the umpire must use his judgment to insure that these visits do not take up too much time, as they could slow the progress of the game.

# CHECK SWING RULE

"He broke his wrists", "the bat went past the front of the plate" ... many people believe these two statements are written in the rules or are official interpretations of a strike. **THEY ARE NOT !!** ... A strike by definition is "a pitch that is struck at by the batter and missed." Breaking the wrists or the bat moving beyond the front of the plate or the batter's body are factors that the umpire may use to make the judgment. Factors is all they are, not definitions. Did the batter "strike at" the pitch is the key factor.

In Little League the defense **does not** have the right to appeal a check swing to the field umpire, they may however ask the plate umpire to ask the field umpire for assistance. The plate umpire, at his discretion, can ask the field umpire for his opinion.

# DROP THIRD STRIKE

The Drop Third Strike applies to Majors, Intermediate 50/70 Division, Juniors, Seniors and Big League.

When the third strike called is not caught by the catcher, the batter may run to first. Provided first base is un-occupied or if first base is occupied with two outs.

# SEVERE WEATHER

While there is no official policy for handling severe weather, Common Sense must prevail and the safety of players, coaches and spectators is the priority.

A must have App - Little league Weatherbug - Once program to your phone, it will track weather wherever your phone is. The App will provide up to date information such as temperature, wind speed and direction, plus a interactive radar weather map. Within the App, there is an addition app called Spark. Spark gives you a current map showing the latest lightening strikes in relationship to your location as well as gives you the distance in miles. It updates every 15 seconds to provide current and accurate weather to assist in maintaining the safety of all persons at the game.