

**Certified
Baseball
Clinic
Level I**



What makes a good Umpire?

You may want to think about these as you go about your task of officiating.

Have your head on right
Get into the flow of the game
Show confidence
Answer all reasonable questions
Stay cool
Dress properly
Be honest

Don't be a tough guy/gal
Don't bark
Forget the fans
Choose your words wisely
Be impartial
Listen
Use common sense

Other tips

Sportsmanship
Fair and firm in all decisions
Censure those whose behavior is unbecoming
Consistency
Keep a balanced outlook
Have the courage to make the call that you see
Put forth maximum effort before, during, and after the game

Treat all with respect
Self-control from start to finish
Help other umpires
Have strong working knowledge of the rules
Practice critical self-evaluation
Admit your own mistakes and correct them
Consider it a privilege, not an obligation to officiate

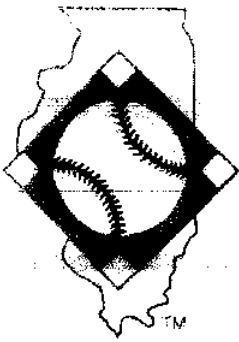
The dividing line between player, coach and umpire is how differently each looks at the fairness of competition: a player wants a fair start and knowledgeable umpires. A coach wants to project outcomes and doesn't want an umpire to determine the outcome. An umpire doesn't care who wins; he/she just cares that the game is played fairly and within the rules.

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BASEBALL THOUGHTS

1. Head out to home plate and the mound with head up and with determination.
2. If a catcher asks for help on a check swing, NEVER refuse.
3. When a relief pitcher comes in and is warming up, and you are the base umpire, walk behind first base to see where that free leg and foot are in relation to the plane of the rubber. It won't change when you're in the middle of the infield and you'll know when he does something differently.
4. If the team in the first base dugout is giving you static after a play, stand on the third base line between innings for a while.
5. If you are the base umpire, don't talk much to any players or coaches, even when a relief pitcher is warming up, unless you have something to say relative to the game.

Record all changes on your lineup card, even in a blowout.
7. Count warm-up pitches and don't allow excess ones unless the situation merits it.
8. Notice which foot a pitcher steps off the rubber with when nobody is on base—chances are he'll do it with the same foot when runners are on.
9. Clean your shoes.
10. Get clean matching bail bags and pants that fit.
11. Buy a new fitted hat at least every two years.
12. Make frequent eye contact with your partner, especially when runners are on base, and acknowledge hand signs.
13. Someone else keep an indicator and use it with runners on base.
14. As the plate umpire, flash the count regularly with runners on base.
15. Ask other umpires why they do the things they do, and ask for critique of your own work from umpires you respect.
16. Discuss odd plays every chance you get, and dig for the answers in as many sources as you can--don't quit looking for an answer just because you find one.
17. Never stop learning how to umpire. Don't be satisfied with your performance.
18. Take a lawn chair and a carpet square in your trunk.
19. Take the appropriate rulebook to the game sight, but leave it in the car or locker room.
20. Always volunteer to do the plate when you work with someone for the first time--you have more control there.

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A) Appearance

- half the battle is looking like you know what you're doing
- proper equipment including dress wear—grey slacks, black socks, clean shirt/hat.
- coaches will respect you more if you look the part of an umpire—will have less problems on close pitches

CARGO PANTS

B) Three Stances

There are three common stances taught. Two of them, scissors and box, are used by the majority of umpires today. No matter what stance is used, the plate umpire needs to work the “slot”, an area between the catcher and the batter—this will give the umpire a good look at the whole plate and less chance of getting hit/hurt by a foul ball. The “**positioning of the stance**” is also critical to work with the catcher. You need to be about an arms length away from the catcher, positioning the bottom of your chin just above the catcher's head. If you work too high, you have a greater chance of getting hit by a foul ball and your strike zone calling may be missing lower strike pitches. You also must keep your **back straight** and not hunched over to the plate—remember you will be calling 200-300 pitches or more a game.

--**Knee**—use this rarely—this may be needed with a small sized batter
Mobility and ability to see over a bigger sized catcher are the major disadvantages.

--**Scissors**—used by umpires who have sometimes have a harder time seeing the corner of the plate, shorter umpires could have an advantage seeing over a larger sized catcher, also less chance of getting hit with a foul ball

--**Box**—preferred method by many umpires as it may give more balance to an umpire compared to the scissors method

All stances require the umpire to be facing straight with shoulders square to the pitcher with the umpire standing in the slot, elbows in and head straight.

C) Calling the Pitch

--One ball on each side of the plate is a strike

--Remember your strike zone—coaches prefer you call the entire zone especially the lower strikes at the knee—don't get too picky on boarder line pitches

--**Be consistent**—what you call a strike in the first inning should be called a strike in the last inning

--After pitcher takes sign from rubber and gets set to pitch, you get in your stance waiting for the pitch—Relax and wait for the pitch

--Before calling the pitch, wait for the ball to hit the catcher's mitt—don't be too quick to call the pitch, **TIMING is everything**--use this guide--think in your mind after the ball hits the mitt 1001, 1002, 1003, call it

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--On balls, stay down on the pitch, make your call verbally (Ball 1, Ball 2) then rise up and take a step back

--On strikes, raise your right arm, like you either pounding a nail or grabbing a head of lettuce from the sky—NO thumbs showing, verbally call it (strike 1, strike 2, on a called strike 3 you want to give a bit more emphasis—louder voice more arm action), rise up and take a step back

--Swinging strikes—no need to verbalize it—don't say strike, 1,2, or 3—the batter and the coaches already know it is a strike

--Foul-tip—is not a foul ball—it is a live ball caught by the catcher that you will call a strike—be aware the catcher may be making a play on a runner
Use you hands to signal foul tip—they brush each other

--Ball Four—don't point to the runner to take the base—once you verbalize it, they should know to go down to first base

D) Coming out from behind the catcher

--Stay out of the catcher's way—right handed batter move left to the infield as the catcher moves right, left handed batter—let the catcher clear and then move to the left about half-way distance between the mound and the plate

--Remember make all your calls once you stop—not on the run.

--Pop fouls ball with catcher making play—move opposite direction from the catcher in order to call the play

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