

LOCAL UMPIRE CLINIC

8U/9U Division

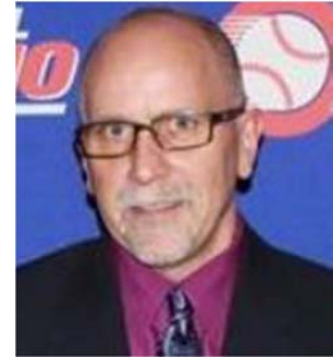
Student Workbook — A Tool for Local Umpire Training





Dear Baseball Ontario Member

On behalf of the Baseball Ontario Executive, we thank you for your involvement in our program. The umpires' program is only successful because of dedicated individuals like you.



Rookie Ball umpire training is not a prerequisite to attend Level 1 Umpire Clinics. We have created this document to facilitate local associations in training their Rookie Ball umpires. You will find many valuable resources in this Guide to help you ensure participants receive the most benefit from their clinic.

The clinic can be taught as one 6-hour session or broken up into smaller sessions (i.e.: 3 – two-hour sessions or 2 –three hour sessions). Please adapt the agenda to meet your local's needs.

Above all, remember to have fun, enjoy the camaraderie of your colleagues, and be proud of your contributions to Baseball Ontario.

Yours in baseball,

Ray Merkley
Supervisor of Umpires
Baseball Ontario





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Baseball Ontario Umpires' Committee would like to thank the many Baseball Ontario Course Conductors who contributed to the creation of the Baseball Ontario Umpire's Development Program in a wide variety of ways. Their input has been integral to the success of this program.

Sources

Baseball Canada – Canadian Content Baseball Rules

Baseball Canada 2 Umpire Positioning Manual

Baseball Canada Umpires' Committee – Rule Interpretations

Baseball Ontario Constitution, Playing Rules and Regulations

Baseballumps.com

Official Rules of Baseball

Ucomics.com

MLB sources

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UMPIRING FUNDAMENTALS

This section is fundamental to all beginning umpires. It is covered in this manual as well as in each year of the Level 1 program. Instruction of these key fundamentals creates a strong base for umpires to build on as they continue to develop their skills. There are many opportunities in Baseball Ontario for umpires.

Introduction

Welcome the participants to the clinic and introduce yourself.

Baseball Ontario Contacts

BASEBALL ONTARIO UMPIRE COMMITTEE



Supervisor of Umpires
Ray Merkley



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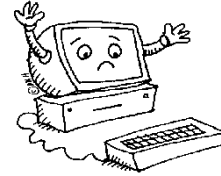


Baseball Ontario On-Line

Visit Baseball Ontario's webpage at www.baseballontario.com

Follow the links to the Umpires' Section for:

- To view your profile and download your Umpire Card
- Quarterly Blue Signals Newsletter
- Committee contact information.
- Baseball and umpiring links
- Official Rules of Baseball and all specific Baseball Ontario Rules



Email umpire@baseballontario.com for any Baseball rules questions.

BASEBALL ONTARIO ONLINE

 www.BaseballOntario.com

 Baseball Ontario Umpires

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 [baseballontarioumpires](#) #ONUmp



Characteristics of Good Umpires

Lead the students through a discussion of the basic qualities and skills necessary to be successful as an umpire. Use one of the following strategies:

- Show a video clip of umpires (i.e. Naked Gun, A League of Their Own) followed by open discussion
- Have a coach discuss what they look for in an umpire
- Create groups and assign each group one of the topics from the chart on next page and share their group ideas with the rest of the class
- Have individual students think silently about each topic for one minute then share and record their ideas with a partner. Have a new partner for each topic. This strategy is called: "think; pair; share"



Umpire Characteristics Chart

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| a) LOUD/can be heard | b) Proper fitted protective equipment |
| c) Have rules knowledge | d) Look messy or sloppy |
| e) Use incorrect signals | f) Be fair & Honest |
| g) Hustle & work hard | h) Be out of uniform |
| i) Arrives late | j) Have good judgement |
| k) Clearly explain rules | l) No mask/protective equipment |
| m) Favour one team over other | n) Use proper signals |
| o) Leaning on backstop/fence | p) Complain about partner |
| q) Argue with coaches or players | r) Have confidence |
| s) Not in proper position | t) Be in uniform |
| u) Arrive on time | v) Try to improve |
| w) Be afraid to answer questions from coaches/players | |
| x) No signal/voice to indicate a hittable pitch or strike | |
| y) Answer questions from coaches/players | |
| z) Use inappropriate language | |



Things Good Umpires Do...



Things Umpires Should *NOT* Do...



Uniform and Equipment Standards

Mention that the items below are required for Level 1 umpires but also describe the complete proper uniform. The Baseball Ontario crest is recommended but not mandatory.

UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT STANDARDS

The items listed on this page are a reference to the approved uniform and equipment for Baseball Ontario umpires. Giving the right first impression is a very important part of good officiating. Uniforms should be clean and wrinkle-free. Shoes should be clean and polished.



BOTH UMPIRES

- ☐ Navy/Black shirt with crest
- ☐ Navy/Black cap
- ☐ Grey pants
- ☐ Black belt
- ☐ Black shoes
- ☐ Black socks

PLATE UMPIRE ONLY

- ☐ Athletic supporter with cup
- ☐ Chest protector under your shirt
- ☐ Shin guards
- ☐ Plate shoes (optional)
- ☐ Indicator, Brush, Belt, Ball Bag
- ☐ Mask with throat protector



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BLUE NOTES

Umpires must not wear watches or carry cell phones.
Other colour shirts may be used as long as umpires match.





Starting Positions

These areas form the basis of umpire starting positions that are used by all umpires. Label the diagram below with the following umpire starting positions:

P2 – Base Umpire with no runners on base (facing home plate)

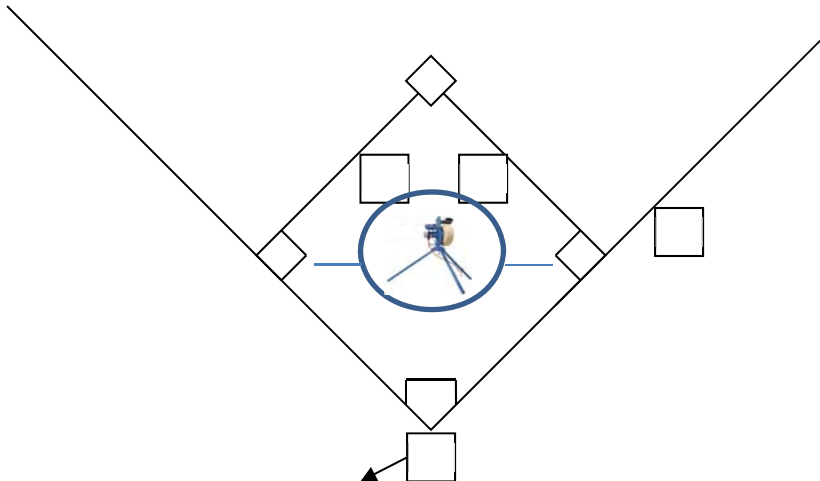
P3 – Base Umpire with runner on first base only or runners on first and third

*umpire should be facing home plate

P4 – Base Umpire with runner(s) on any other base

*umpire should be facing home plate

When runners are in motion the plate umpire will move to an area approximately 15 feet away from home plate in the vicinity of 1st base line extended. The plate umpire goes to this position when he is not required to rotate to 3rd or be on the line for a fair/foul call, move for a tag-up, overthrow, etc.



Important Note:

Plate Umpires **MUST** be behind the catcher and behind home plate **NOT** to the side. It is too difficult to judge hittable pitches from the side.

Umpires are required to wear equipment, especially a mask.

Umpires are safest behind the catcher dressed in full equipment.

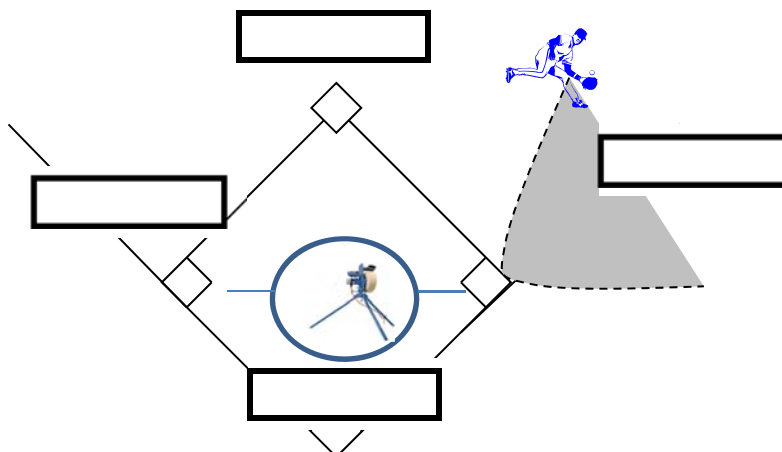




Outfield Fly Ball Coverage

No Runners

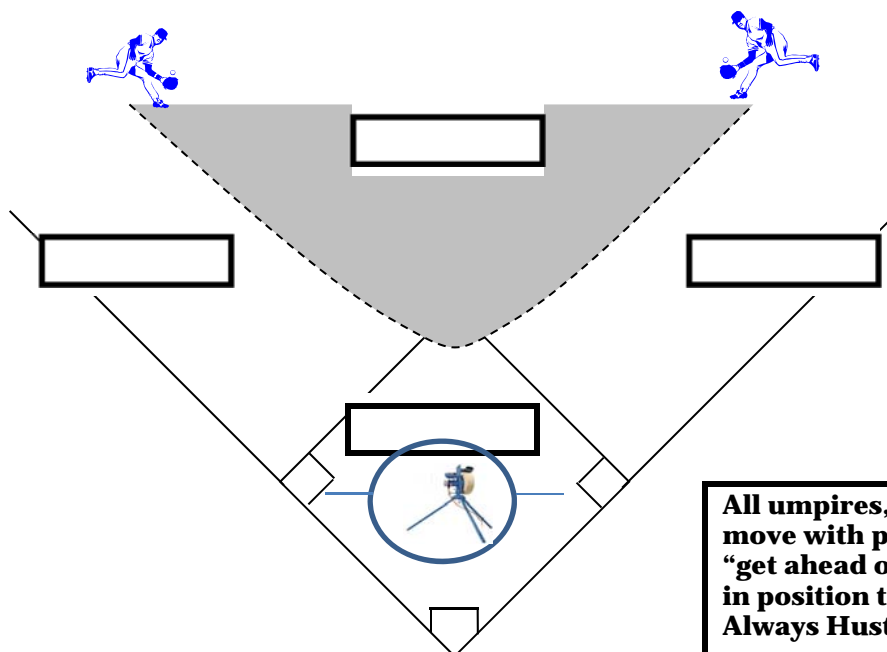
In each box, indicate whether the plate or base umpire is responsible for fly balls in that area.



With Runners

In each box, indicate whether the plate or base umpire is responsible for fly balls in that area.

The shaded area is called the _____.



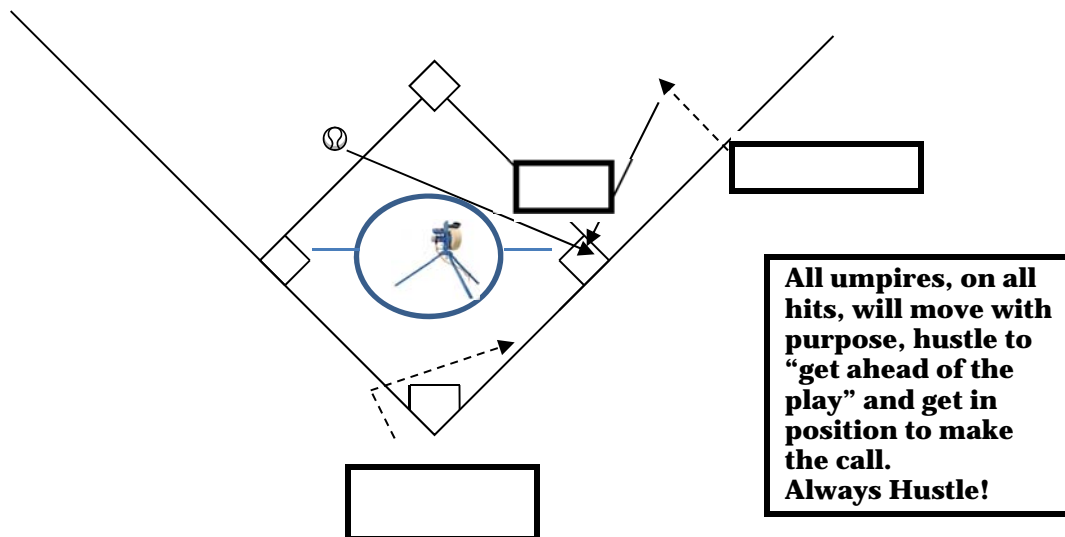
All umpires, on all hits, will move with purpose, hustle to "get ahead of the play" and get in position to make the call. Always Hustle!



Infield Ground Ball Coverage

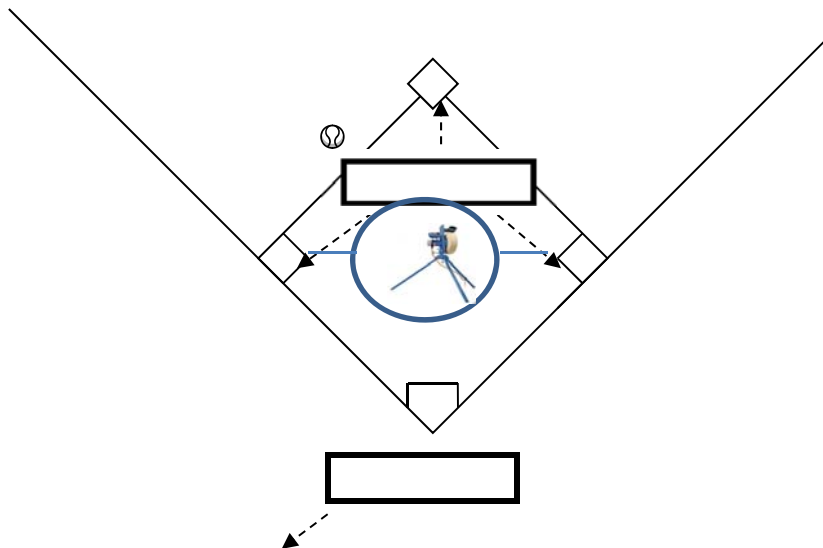
No Runners

Indicate in the boxes below the umpire responsible for each movement. Also indicate the ideal angle for making calls at first base.



With Runners

Indicate in the boxes below the umpire responsible for each movement.¹



¹ The base umpire would be positioned in either P3 or P4 to begin the play, depending on the location of the runners.

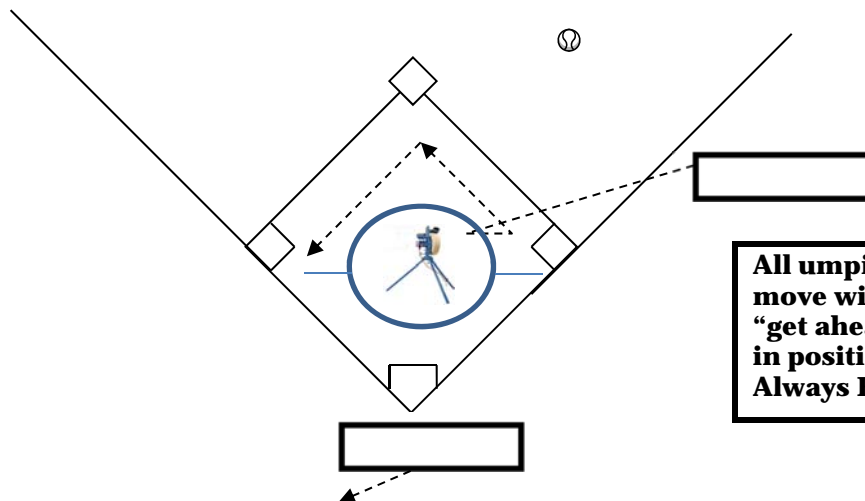


Base Hit Coverage

No Runners

Indicate in the boxes below the umpire responsible for each movement on a base hit.

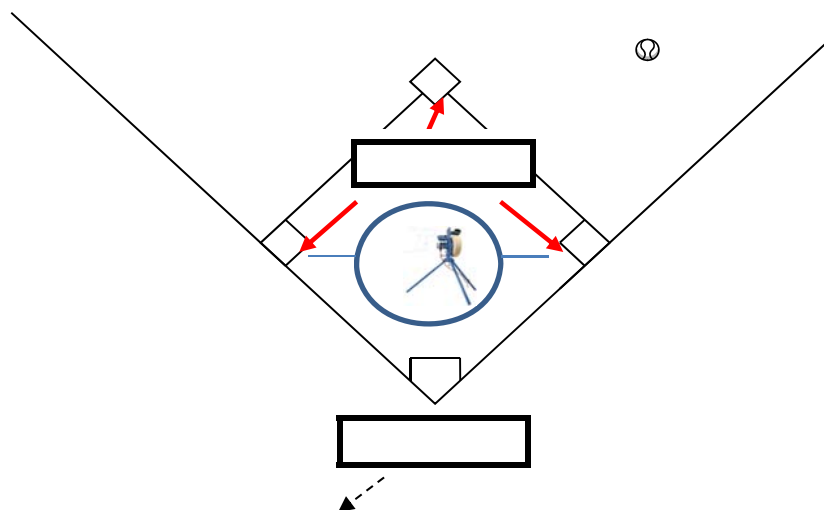
The turning movement of the base umpire in the infield is called the _____.



All umpires, on all hits, will move with purpose, hustle to “get ahead of the play” and get in position to make the call. Always Hustle!

With Runners

Draw arrows from the box below to show where the base umpire must be prepared to move on a base hit when runners are on base.²



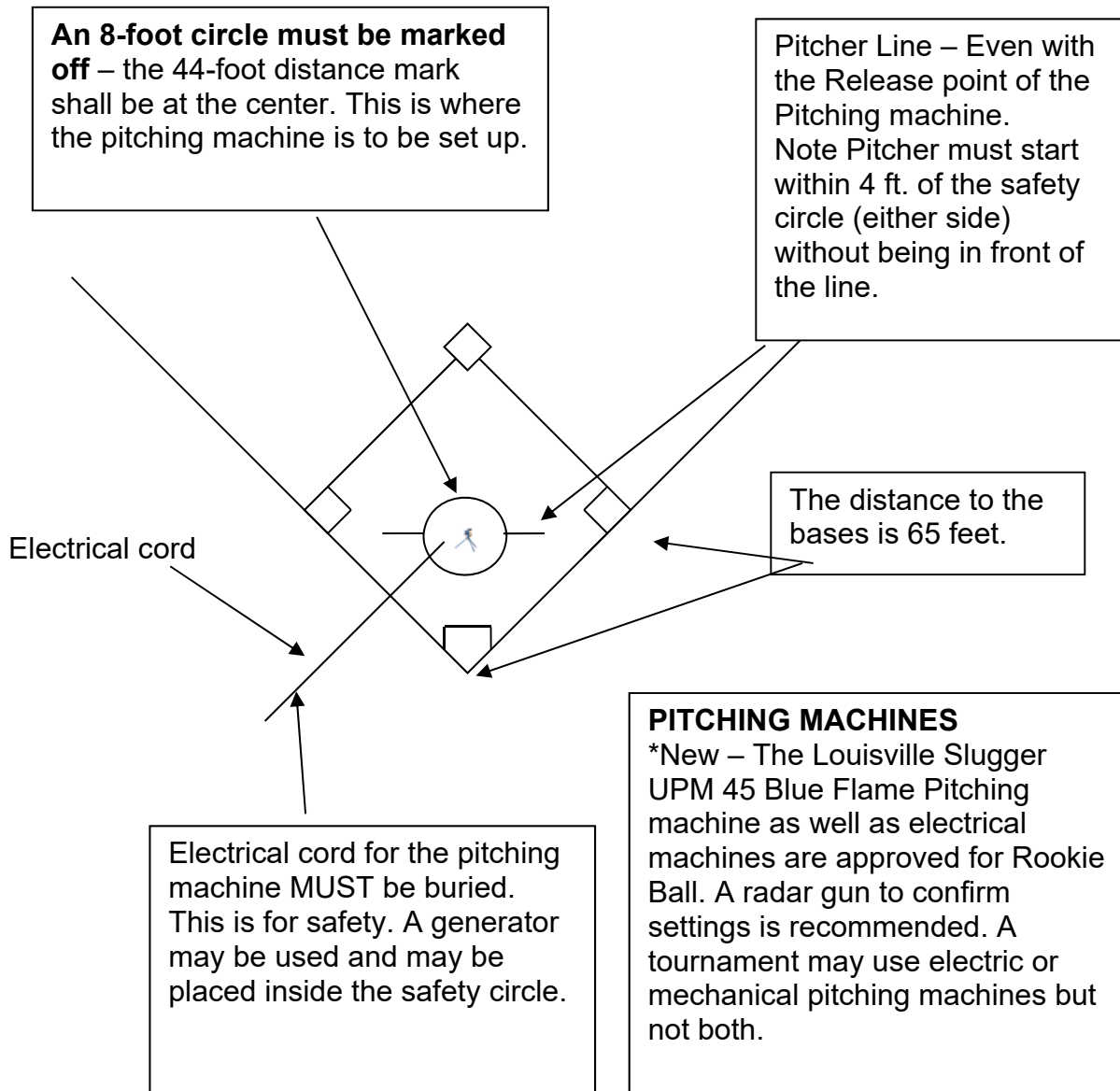
² The base umpire would be positioned in either P3 or P4 to begin the play, depending on the location of the runners.



BASEBALL ONTARIO 9U/ROOKIE BALL RULES

Baseball Ontario makes several exceptions to the Official Rules of Baseball. These rules are specific to Baseball Ontario and for Rookie Ball divisions and can be accessed at www.baseballontario.com in complete detail. A full listing of Baseball Ontario RQ2 Rookie Ball Rules are also listed in the appendix at the back of this booklet.

Diamond Layout





Playing Rules

Players

In rookie ball, there should be at least 10 players. There are two centerfielders. However, teams can play with 9 players.

The pitcher must stand beside the pitching machine but outside of the safety circle AND behind the release point of the pitching machine. This is an important rule because it protects the safety of the pitcher. The pitcher must be no further than 4ft away from the safety circle and must be behind the release point of the machine.

At NO time may the pitcher enter the 8-foot circle area.

PENALTY: If the pitcher enters the 8-foot safety circle AND makes contact with the ball - the play is called dead and all runners are awarded 1 base.

The pitcher must start **behind** this line and within 4 ft. of the safety circle - either side is acceptable. The pitcher does not have to stand on the line.



Until the ball is fed into the pitching machine – outfielders shall position themselves 12 feet behind the base paths for rep and 15 feet behind the base paths for select.



The pitcher **MUST** wear a regulation batting helmet with a face mask and chinstrap. They may not remove it until the play is complete.

PENALTY: Time is called at the completion of the play. 1 base is awarded from the position of the runners at the time play was completed.

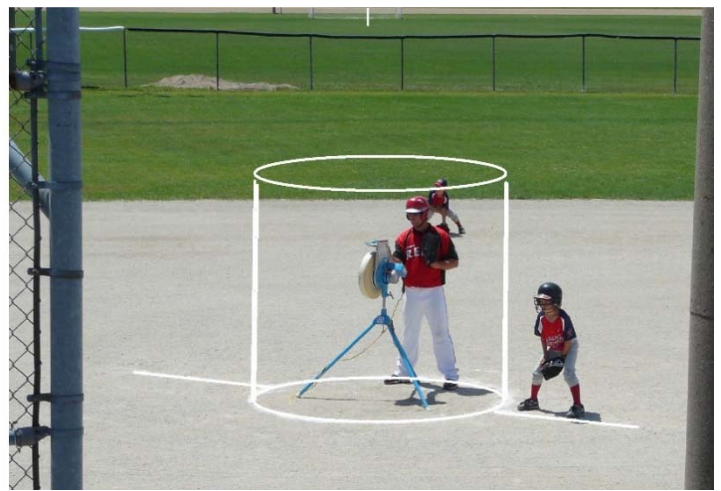


The pitcher can **NOT** wear a regular batting helmet. This helmet would **NOT** be acceptable.



Safety Circle

As soon as the ball is released from the pitching machine – the pitcher may move from their starting position behind the 4-foot safety lines.



Operator of Pitching Machine

- ✓ Offensive coach remains inside the safety circle while ball is live.
- ✓ Must wear baseball helmet or skull cap.
- ✓ May not tamper with machine speed.
- ✓ May adjust machine pitching height.
- ✓ May instruct a batter before a pitch.
- ✓ Cannot coach any runner including batter-runner during play.
- ✓ Must not interfere with any play.
- ✓ Be mindful when umpire calls “Play” or “Time” (for the safety of batter and umpire).





The Pitching Machine

The pitching machine must be set up at the beginning of the game. The speed must be a minimum of 35 mph (miles per hour) but not more than 40 mph. 64.37km is the speed in metric, however MOST pitching machines measure/display in mph. This can NOT be altered until the inning has been completed (i.e.: not changed after half an inning).

EXCEPTION: At the umpire's discretion, the pitching machine speed may be 'fixed' in the event the speed was accidentally adjusted (i.e.: ball hits machine, coach bumps machine speed dial, etc.)

If at any time, _____ feels that the machine speed is erratic, the umpire can correct or change the machine calibration during an inning.



The Umpire oversees and in control of when pitches should occur. **DO NOT ALLOW a coach to pitch before the Catcher, Batter and all players are ready.** The umpire should hold their hand up until all players are ready then point at the coach and Say – Pitch. This is a safety issue and should be watched carefully. Any coach who continually pitches when players are not ready should be removed from pitching duties. (Note – not ejected from the game).

The **offensive coach** who is the pitching machine operator may adjust the HEIGHT of the machine for each batter. This coach may NOT adjust the speed.

PENALTY: During an inning, if the coach who is feeding the pitching machine tampers with the machine speed, the umpire will eject the coach.

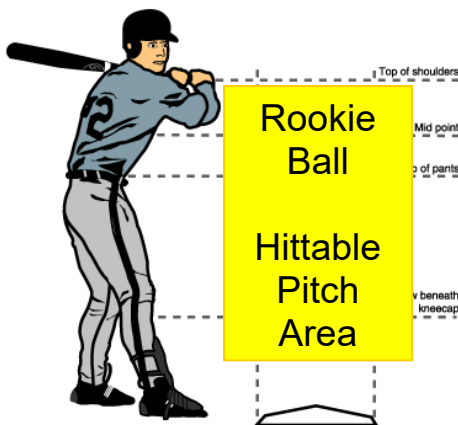




The Batter

In Rookie ball – a batter can't get a walk to first base, so balls are not counted. Pitches are judged as either strikes, which are hittable pitches or a NO Pitch, which is not a hittable pitch.

- Batters receive _____ “hittable” pitches from a pitching machine.
- A pitch that is over the batter's head or bounces in the dirt is not considered to be a hittable pitch unless the batter swings.
- After 5 hittable pitches, a batter is out.
- If the fifth hittable pitch is declared foul, the batter is _____ and shall continue receiving pitches.
- A batter who _____ is automatically out.
- All batters and on-deck batters must wear a regulation helmet that has earflaps and a chinstrap.
- EXCEPTION: If the regulation helmet has a manufactured faceguard (example: C-Flap) which prevents the use of a chinstrap - this is acceptable as long as the helmet is being worn as designed by the manufacturer.
- An inning ends after three outs or a maximum of 7 runs.
- When a homerun ends the game, all runners must touch home plate in order to score. In these situations: Maximum 7 runs still applies. No additional runs exceeding 7 will be counted.



What is a Hittable Pitch?

- Is not over the batter's head
- Does not bounce
- The batter can reach with his/her swing

NOTE: Batters cannot get a 'WALK' to first base.

Umpires should watch and wait until the pitch has reached the catcher. Then call – '**NO PITCH**' when the pitch is unhittable or call '**STRIKE ONE**' and count out loud the number of hittable pitches that have been thrown. Be loud!



Injured Player that is removed from the game, the player's spot in the batting order shall be DELETED. As a result of an injured player leaving the game leaves a team with less than 9 players – the game is forfeited.



Running

- There is no stealing. Runners must wait until the batter makes **contact** with the ball before leaving the base.
- If a runner leaves the base before the batter makes contact with a pitch, the ball is immediately dead, and no runners may advance. After one warning to the team, runners violating this rule will be called out.

PENALTY: The ball is dead, and runners may not advance. One warning is issued for each team. After the warning – any runners who leave early are called out.

Fielding

- The defense may use four outfielders.
- The pitcher must wear a batting helmet with facemask and chinstrap.
- There is a safety circle surrounding the pitching machine. Only the offensive coach is allowed inside this safety circle.
- If the pitcher enters the safety circle and touches a **BATTED** ball, the ball is dead, the batter runner is awarded first base, and other runners will advance, if forced.
- If the pitcher enters the safety circle to touch a **THROWN** ball, the ball is dead. All runners will be awarded one base beyond their last legally occupied base at the time the ball entered the safety circle.
- If the offensive coach (base coach) interferes with any attempted play by the defensive team, the batter is ruled out and runners return to their last legally occupied base.
- If a fair, batted ball hits the pitching machine **or** comes to rest in the safety circle, or hits a coach, the ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base and other runners will advance, if forced.
- If a thrown ball hits the pitching machine or cord within the circle, the ball is dead and each runner including the batter-runner shall advance 1 base from where they were at the time the ball went into the circle.
- The infield fly rule does **NOT** apply.





Calling Time

Time is only given at the umpire's decision. The ball does not have to go to the pitcher for time to be called. **Once the ball is in the infield AND all play has stopped**, the infielders may ask the umpire for time. Pitchers and catchers are also considered infielders.

When calling time, umpires must raise their hands above their head and use a loud strong voice. This will ensure that everyone hears that time has been called.

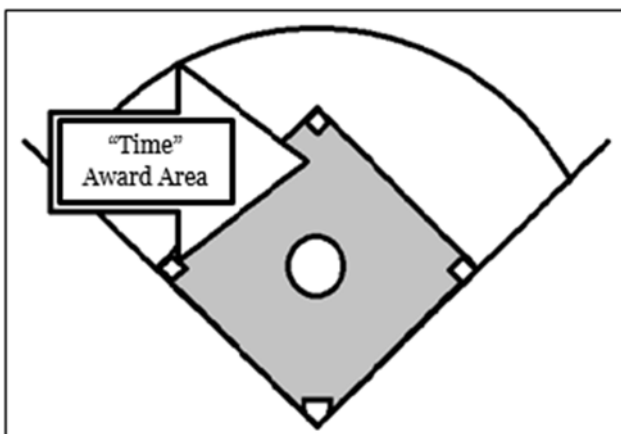
- Time is called when the ball has been returned to the and all continuous action has _____.
- The ball does not have to be returned to the pitcher first before an infielder may ask for time. Time is called when any infielder has control of the ball, the runners are no longer trying to advance, and all play has _____.
- Time should not be called immediately upon request. The umpire should look around at all Baserunners first, ensure that no runners are attempting to advance, and then call Time.



Important Note:

- The 'infield' is considered to be the 65-foot square made by the bases. The 1st baseman, 2nd baseman, shortstop, 3rd baseman, pitcher and catcher would be considered 'infielders'.
- Any outfielders, including the 'extra centre fielder' who are playing in the infield, don't count when throwing the ball to the 'infield' for the purposes of calling time. **The ball does not have to go back to the pitcher for the umpire to call time.**

Defining Area for requesting/awards of "Time"



An Infielder, having control of the ball, must be in fair territory and within the base paths (base to base to base) to request and be considered for an award of "Time". Awards of "Time" are at the discretion of the umpire.



Equipment Rules

- Chinstraps must be worn properly.
- No metal cleats.
- Catchers must wear full protective gear (shin guards, chest protector, helmet, mask with throat protector, cup) even during warm-up practice.
- Wood or metal bats may be used. Bats may not have a barrel that's diameter exceeds 2 ¾ inches.
- Helmets with ear flaps must be worn by the offensive (batting team).
- The pitcher must wear a helmet with a facemask.
- The operator of the pitching machine must wear a helmet (skull cap)



Important Note: After hitting the ball, batters MUST drop the bat and not throw it (accidentally or intentionally). PENALTY: Each team gets one warning per game. After the warning, batters will be called OUT for throwing the bat. The ball will be declared dead and runners shall return to their last occupied base.

Each Inning

- Each offensive inning shall be 3 outs or a maximum of 7 runs.
- If 2 are out, the 3rd out may be made on a:

_____ -OR-
_____ -OR-
_____ -OR-
_____.

- With less than 2 out, if the batter is put out on a caught fly ball, other runners may attempt to score, provided they tag up before advancing.
- If the ball is hit on the ground, outs may be made on the bases but only the pitcher or catcher may touch the plate to end the inning.
- If the batter's hit goes into the safety circle – the ball is dead, the batter is awarded first base and other runners will advance only if forced.





Rep and Select 9U/Rookie Rules Comparison

The Select and Rep Divisions of Baseball Ontario have two separate sets of rules unique to each division. These rules will differ from local or house league rules. It is always best to check the league that you are umpiring to make sure you are applying the proper rules for that level of 9U/Rookie baseball.

Umpires can use this tool to identify similarities and differences between the two divisions.

9U/ROOKIE BALL SPECIFIC SIMILARITIES:

- Any infielder who has control of the ball and is standing in the infield can request time. Time is granted at the umpire's discretion and may not be granted if a "baseball play" is still underway.
- Bunting is not permitted. **Penalty: Batter is out**
- Stealing is not permitted. **Penalty: Runner is out.**
- Lead offs are not permitted until the ball is hit. **Penalty: Runner is out.**

SPECIFIC SELECT VS. REP SIMILARITIES

SELECT DIVISION	RULE SIMILARITIES	REP DIVISION
5	Maximum # of hittable pitches	5
3	Number of outs per inning	3
Batter is OUT	Bunting—NOT Permitted	Batter is OUT
Runner is OUT	Stealing—NOT Permitted	Runner is OUT
A pitch over the batter's head or that bounces in the dirt and that the batter does not swing at.	Declaring a NO PITCH	A pitch over the batter's head or that bounces in the dirt and that the batter does not swing at.
4 Innings	Official Game	4 Innings or at any point that the opposing team is unable to win or tie the game.
YES	Coach operating Pitching Machine MUST wear a helmet. Ear flaps not required.	YES



SPECIFIC SELECT VS. REP DIVISION DIFFERENCES

SELECT DIVISION	RULE DIFFERENCES	REP DIVISION
40 mph	Speed of pitches	35 to 40 mph
No (Strike only if batter swings at and misses or is a foul ball)	Called strikes	Yes (pitched ball in strike zone that batter doesn't swing at)
Runner out	Lead offs not permitted (ball is declared dead and runners do not advance)	1st time: team warning Thereafter: runner out
7. However, awarded runs (e.g.: overthrow, dead ball) beyond 7 is acceptable.	Maximum number or runs per inning	7
1 per inning	Infield conference by defensive coach	Unlimited
15 runs after 4 innings (3 1/2 if home team ahead)	Mercy rule	18 runs after 3 innings (2 1/2 if home team ahead); 15 runs after 4 innings (3 1/2 if home team ahead); 10 runs after 5 innings (4 1/2 if home team ahead)
Added to bottom of batting order, provided team has not completed one rotation through order OR prior to start of the second inning	Player arrives late	Added to bottom of batting order
18 players 4 coaches	Maximum number allowed on a roster	25 players No limit, minimum 1 coach
All runners must touch home plate.	A homerun that ends the game, batted out of the playing field or as bases are awarded under the Official Rules of Baseball (for example: overthrow, detached equipment, etc.)	All runners must touch home plate to score. Maximum of 7 runs still applies, no extra run exceeding 7 will be counted.
Control of ball and standing within the understood boundaries of the infield.	Requesting "Time" by infielder	Control of ball and in fair territory within area inside basepaths; base to base to base.
15 feet beyond basepaths or grass, whichever is further.	Starting position of outfielders	12 feet beyond base paths.



Fair and Foul

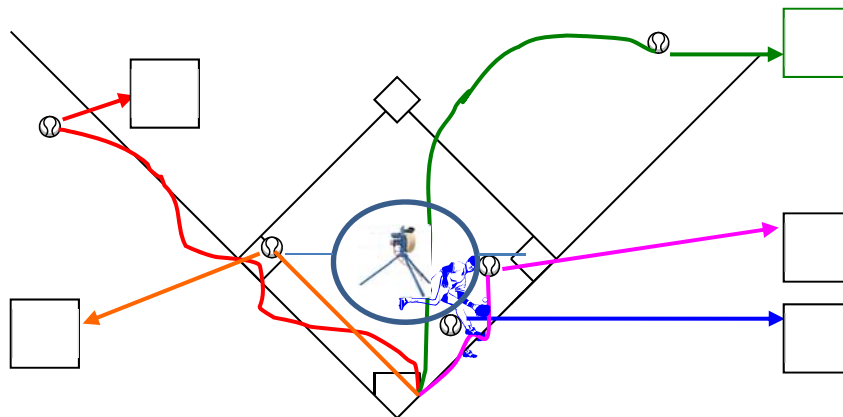
Discuss with the students that fair ball territory is that area bounded by the foul lines and the outfield fence from one foul pole to the other foul pole.

This means that the foul lines are really in _____ territory.

Fair Situations

A batted ball is fair in the following situations:

- A. Stops completely on or over fair territory before passing first or third base.
- B. Bouncing on or over fair territory when passing first or third base.
- C. Hits any portion of first or third base.
- D. First lands in fair territory past first or third base.
- E. Touched by a fielder when the _____ was in fair territory. It does not matter where the fielder is standing. The question is: "Where was the ball first touched"



Mechanics

- point to fair territory with a snapping motion
- do NOT use any voice

Coverage

All fair/foul calls are the umpire's responsibility, except for balls that pass first base when the base umpire is in P2 (no runners on base).

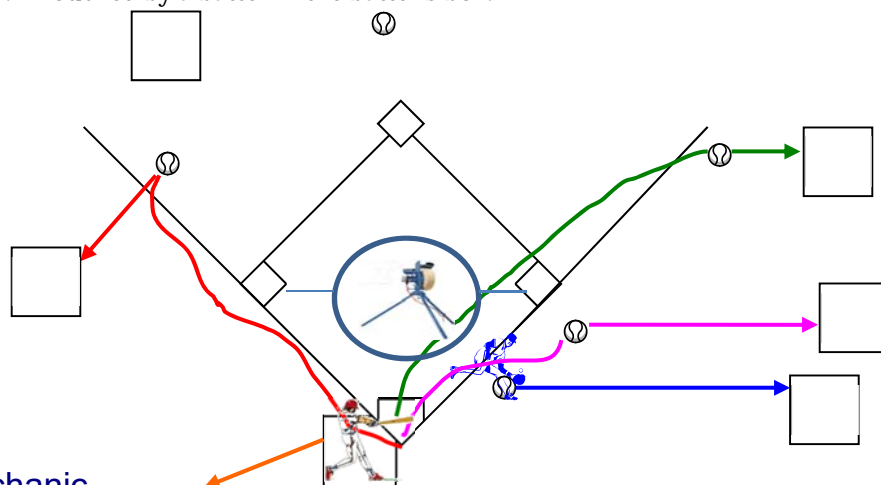




Foul Situations

A batted ball is foul in the following situations:

- A. Stops completely on or over foul territory before passing first or third base.
- B. Bounding on or over foul territory when passing first or third base.
- C. First lands in foul territory past first or third base.
- D. Touched by a fielder, umpire or any foreign object (i.e. bat) in foul territory.
- E. Touched by a batter in the batter's box.



Mechanic

- Raise both arms above head the same as for a "Time" mechanic
- Elbows slightly bent
- Yell "**FOUL**"
- Then point to foul territory with snapping motion

Coverage

The only fair/foul calls made by the _____ umpire are on balls that pass first base with no runners.



ROOKIE BALL GUIDE





Fair or Foul?

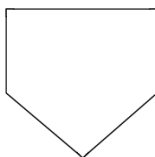
Read the following situations and determine if the ball is fair or foul.

1.	A batted ball stops right on the plate.	
2.	A batted ball hits third base.	
3.	A batted ball hits the foul pole.	
4.	A batted ball hits the dugout fence and bounces and stops in fair territory.	
5.	A batted ball hits the pitching rubber and then rolls foul but has not passed first or third base.	
6.	Only 5 feet from home plate, a batted ball rolls in foul territory, then hits a pebble and then rolls and stops in fair territory.	
7.	A batted ball rolls up the first baseline and before it reaches first base it stops on the centre of the line.	
8.	The batted ball hits the runner at third base who is standing in foul territory.	
9.	A fly ball is hit to the outfield. The ball first lands in fair territory and then rolls foul.	
10.	A batted ball bounces towards third base and bounces directly over the base and lands in foul territory.	
11.	A batted ball rolls foul, then rebounds off the un-buried electrical cord and rolls fair before third base.	
12.	BONUS: A batted ball hits the pitching machine and rolls towards the dugout. It comes to a stop on the first base chalk line.	



Pre-Game Meeting

Arrive _____ before game time. Enter the playing field _____ before and proceed to _____.



The following items are discussed at the pre-game meeting:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Important Notes

Do not discuss the following during the pre-game meeting:

1. Official Rules.
2. Events from previous games.
3. Your strike zone.





Pre-Game Meeting Discussion Points

- Shake hands with both coaches. Introduce yourself.
- Exchange of line-up cards, taking home team's card first. If the coach did not provide all carbon copies and there is a correction or addition to be made, ensure that all carbons are collected and put together and the change is made so it shows on all copies.
- Identify foul lines and poles, if not clearly marked out. **FOR EXAMPLE:**
 - *"The foul line along the first base side is chalked out to the yellow post in the outfield. The foul line along the third base side is only chalked on the infield. We will use umpire's judgment for fair/foul calls in the outfield on the third base side of the diamond."*
 - *"A black plastic tile runs along the top of the back fence and the area painted white on that tile is the marker for fair/foul"*
 - *point to the area that you are discussing with the coaches if something specific is to be noted so that the coaches have a visual understanding of what you are telling them.*
- When discussing the field – start with the first base side around the diamond to the third base side, finishing with the backstop behind home plate. This way no areas are missed.
- Identify dead ball area, or any imaginary fencing. **FOR EXAMPLE:**
 - *"Fencing on this diamond extends just past the dugouts. We will use umpire's judgement to determine when a ball stops in the area extended from the dugout fence to determine if the ball is out of play."*
 - *"We have tarps that are folded and situated beside the dugout. If a batted or thrown ball lands in or behind the tarps we will call it dead ball. If the thrown ball bounces off the tarps or is easily accessible, then the ball will remain live."*
 - *"There is no back fence on this diamond. However, there are some planted shrubs and orange pylons that we will consider the outer perimeter of this diamond. A batted ball that bounces past that area will be designated a ground rule double and not a home run."*
- Identify any holes in fencing, backstop.
- Identify unique aspects of the park, e.g. over hanging branches, light post, asphalt or sidewalk that may cut across at the back of the outfield.
- State the division of the game you are umpiring. List any time limits or curfews (e.g. number of innings) or park curfews.
- State which specific rules will be used pertaining to the division or tournament this game is part of.
- Answer questions that coaches may have pertaining to this game only. Do not talk about previous games.
- The coaches return to their dugouts.



Sample Dialogue:

1. "Hi, my name is Sampson, this is my partner Joel." --shake hands with both coaches
2. "Foul lines are well marked to the yellow post on the first base side and to the flag pole on the third base side which is situated in the field of play at the back fence (point to both markers because they are not the same structures). If a batted ball hits the flag or the pole and the ball deflects out of play it will be a ground rule double. It is NOT an out of the park home run."
3. "The roof of the dugout extends over the fence into the field of play. If a thrown ball hits the roof facing and bounces directly back into the field of play the ball will remain live."
4. "There is a gate along the first base side fence (point to it) where a ball may pass under and there is a small hole directly behind me in the backstop."
5. "There are two light posts along the back fence. A yellow line is painted partway up these posts. If a batted ball hits the post on or above the yellow line it will be considered an out of the park home run."
6. "This is a (house-league or rep or select) (list age division) game. Time limit is (number of minutes or there is no time limit and is a 7-inning game). The run limit for this division is? per inning (if applicable). (League or OBA) mercy rules apply."
7. "Players are to hustle on and off the field and are to retrieve out of play foul balls from their half of the park."
8. "Do you have any questions?"
9. "Have a good game."





ON-FIELD SESSION

In this session, you will provide the solid mechanical foundation for umpires upon which we will build in future years.

Lots of practice and repetition is a great way for young umpires to develop confidence and master new skills.

Base Mechanics

This section covers the basic skills required by base umpires.

Starting Positions

As a warm-up, have students running around the diamond to the various basic positions as taught in the classroom session. Some ways to do this could include:

- Have all students stand in each basic position for example: P2, P3, P4, Plate Umpire.
- You can call out a position at random (i.e. **"P4 GO"**) and all umpires must run to that approximate position.
- You could also call out a situation (i.e. **"RUNNER AT 3rd BASE GO"**) and the umpires would all have to yell the correct position ("P4") and then run to that position.
- Randomly give each student a card with one of the basic positions listed (i.e. P4). Don't let students show each other their cards. On your call of "GO", all students run to the position on the diamond they think matches their card. Then have all students show their card to verify that all the same positions are together.
- For small groups, have each umpire take a turn running to any position of their choice (i.e. P2) and then have that umpire explain why they are there (i.e. "There are no runners on base.").



Plate Umpire



Base Umpire



Set Position

All infield calls by the base umpire should be made from this position

- Feet no less than shoulder width apart
- Settle in comfortably with knees slightly bent
- Thumbs on inside of knees, fingers on outside
- Lock elbows



Out Calls

After beginning in SET position there are 3 distinct movements

- Rise to full height
- Right arm to 90-degree angle to body, elbow facing 45 degrees away from body and close fist
- Snap arm forward and stop at 90-degree angle (as if hitting a door). Coincide with voice “**(S)HE’S OUT!**”



Safe Calls

After beginning in SET position there are 4 distinct movements

- Rise to full height.
- Both arms to 90-degree angle to body, facing in front of you, hands are open palms facing ground.
- Snap arms to side and stop when at the side (ensure they are still parallel to the ground). Coincide with voice “**SAFE**”
- Bring arms back to front then return to SET position.



For calls that are very close - the umpire should use a loud and clear voice with the signal.

For calls that are easy and obvious (for example: the ball is on the ground) the umpire can use a regular voice with the signal.



Time Mechanic

After beginning in SET position

- Rise to full height
- Raise hands over head with elbows slightly bent
- Keep the four fingers together, with the thumb separate
- Call **“TIME”**



Catch/No Catch Calls

- For catch call, have students add voice **“THAT’S A CATCH”** to an OUT mechanic.
- For no catch call, have students add voice **“NO CATCH”** to a SAFE mechanic.

Fair/Foul Calls

These calls must be made while straddling the first base foul line and facing the outfield. This is the base umpire’s call when the ball passes first base while positioned in P2 (no runners on base). In all other cases, the plate umpire makes fair/foul calls.

FAIR

- use left arm
- point to left with snapping motion
- do NOT use any voice



FOUL

- raise both arms above head
- elbows slightly bent
- yell “Foul”
- then use right arm to point to right with snapping motion





Plate Mechanics

This section covers the basic skills required by plate umpires.

The Mask

Explain to students the importance of learning this skill properly, both to maintain unobstructed (clear) vision and to keep the uniform (hat) clean and on the umpire's head.

Putting it On

Have students hold mask by bottom left padding with their left hand. Have them hold the harness in their right hand, and place mask over hat brim while simultaneously pulling the harness down and over the back of the hat.

Taking it Off

Have students hold mask by bottom left padding with their left hand. **Right hand should not be used to remove the mask at all.** Have students pull mask out away from the face, then up and off. This 2-step movement will ensure that the hat remains in place. This is the proper way to take the mask off – it doesn't matter which is the umpire's dominant hand. The indicator is always in the umpire's left hand.



The Pitch

Focus on teaching students to get comfortable and be able to see strikes – which are hittable pitches and also NOT Hittable pitches.

Strikes – Hittable Pitches

Teach the following mechanic to be used after the pitch has been caught or missed by the catcher:

- Begin in comfortable, bent position with arms tucked near body.
- Rise to full height.
- Right arm uses same mechanic as taught for OUT mechanic (hitting the door).
- Say "STRIKE ONE". Emphasize calling each strike by the number.
- After the call, step back and relax until pitching machine operator gets set again.



NO Pitch - NOT Hittable Pitches (in the dirt or over batter's head)

Teach the following mechanic to be used after the pitch has been caught or missed by the catcher:

- Begin in comfortable, bent position with arms tucked near body.
- Rise to full height.
- Call "NO PITCH".
- After the call, step back and relax until pitching machine operator gets set again.



A batter **SWINGS** at **NO Pitch** (in the dirt or over batter's head)

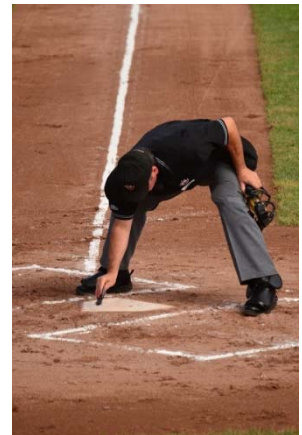
Teach the following mechanic to be used after the pitch has been caught or missed by the catcher:

- Begin in comfortable, bent position with arms tucked near body.
- Rise to full height.
- Right arm uses same mechanic as taught for OUT mechanic (hitting the door).
- Say "STRIKE ONE". Emphasize calling each strike by the number.
- After the call, step back and relax until pitching machine operator gets set again.

Brushing Plate

Ensure students know to wear ball bag on right side and to carry a brush.

- Remove mask using proper mechanics (using left hand).
- Come around to front of plate through empty batters' box (batter's opposite side).
- Bend down to brush plate with rear-end facing center field.
- Sweep plate quickly.
- Move to side, put mask back on before returning behind the catcher.



Practice Drill

Set up a pitching machine. Ensure the umpires and the practice catchers are wearing appropriate equipment.

- Before the first pitch, have the plate umpire clean the plate.
- Feed the pitching machine and have it deliver pitches to the catcher. The plate umpire calls each pitch. The umpire can also declare if the pitch is un-hittable.
- Ensure the plate umpire indicated how many strikes there are on the batter.
- Rotate umpires through the drill to get practice.





Positioning Drills (No Runners) – HUSTLE!!!!

The following drills focus on the basic teamwork and positioning required in the 2-umpire system. Each of these drills requires three groups: plate umpires, base umpires and batter-runners. As well, volunteers will often be required to field balls or play positions. When possible, you are strongly encouraged to use adults or older students as volunteers. Baseballs should not be used. Tennis balls or soft “T-balls” are safe alternatives.

Plays at First

Keep this drill simple ... resist the temptation to create “banger” plays or have balls bobbled or dropped by the first baseman. Beginning umpires need lots of practice with routine, basic plays at first.

- Have volunteers play shortstop and first base.
- Teach base umpires the starting position 6-10 feet behind the first baseman entirely in foul territory. Teach them to take a 90-degree angle to the throw, come to set position, and make the appropriate call. Demonstrate how this 90-degree angle would change for throws from the third baseman or second baseman.
- Teach plate umpires to exit to the catcher’s left and follow the batter-runner halfway up the first baseline and come to a standing set.
- Have runners rotate to the base umpire line, base umpires to plate, and plate umpires to the runner’s line.

Ball Missed by First Baseman

This is a situation that beginning umpires will commonly encounter.

- Continue the above drill. Have the first baseman miss the ball, but the ball stays in play. Have batter-runners go to second.
- Teach the base umpire to run inside the baseline to the “pivot” spot on infield grass. Teach them to turn towards first base, then run parallel to the baseline on the infield grass stopping and coming set 10 feet inside the second base cut-out to make either a SAFE or OUT call.
- Teach the plate umpire to move up the first baseline, react to the missed ball and follow it towards the out of play line, then return via foul territory to an area near home plate.
- Continue through the drill, rotating roles.





Fair / Foul Infield Ground Balls Near the Baseline (1st or 3rd)

Briefly review the criteria from the Classroom Session for a FAIR or FOUL ball. Try to simulate some of these situations by rolling a ball softly up either the first or third baseline. You will need volunteers to play first base, pitcher (to field the simulated bunt) and third base.

- Teach plate umpire to exit to catcher's left and follow the ball down the appropriate baseline. Have plate umpire become set and make the FAIR or FOUL call when appropriate using the mechanic taught earlier in this On-Field Session.
- Teach the base umpire on a ball up the third baseline to assume the 90-degree angle and get set for a potential play. On a ball up the first baseline, teach the base umpire to straddle the line, or take one step into fair territory. If any ball hits or passes first base, have the base umpire make the appropriate FAIR or FOUL call using the mechanic taught earlier in this On-Field Session. Ensure both plate and base umpires realize that the fair/foul jurisdiction switches to the base umpire at the bag on the first base side.
- Be sure the runners are careful in this drill to avoid collisions, both for safety reasons and because we do not teach Offensive Interference in Level 1.

Fly Balls to Right Field (No Runners)

In this drill, we want to stress the importance of communication and teamwork. At Level 1, we will teach base umpires to go out to the outfield on all balls hit to right field with no runners.

- Have the base umpires start in P2.
- Hit or simulate routine fly balls to right field, away from the foul line.
- Have the base umpire communicate **"I'VE GOT THE BALL"**, run into the outfield, and get an angle on the play.
- Have the base umpire make a catch or no-catch call using the mechanic taught earlier.
- Have the plate umpires exit to the catcher's left, move around the first base side of the pitcher's mound, and follow the batter-runner to all bases. The plate umpire should communicate **"I'VE GOT THE RUNNER"** and be set to make a call at any base.





Fair / Foul Infield Pop Ups

This drill will reinforce proper technique for calling fair/foul and will also require good communication between the umpires.

- Hit or simulate high infield pop ups near the first base line with no runners on base. Have some stay in the infield, and some go a little deeper behind first base.
- Stress that balls before the base are the plate umpires' call, beyond the base jurisdiction switches to the base umpire.
- On each pop up, both umpires should straddle the foul line. Stress that the umpires should make eye contact and the appropriate umpire should communicate, **"I'VE GOT THE BALL"** once jurisdiction becomes apparent.
- Remind umpires to always signal fair or foul first, using the proper mechanics. The catch/no-catch call is the second priority. Again, remind the umpires to use proper mechanics.
- Occasionally, have a ball land uncaught. In this case, it is important for the umpire who does not have jurisdiction for the ball to react and move to a position where they can cover second base should the runner try for a double.

Runner on First – Fly Ball Coverage (Cone)

Before running drills, review the "cone" concept taught in the classroom session. Be sure they understand that any time there are runners on base, all plays in the outfield between the left and right fielders are the base umpire's responsibility, while plays towards either line are the plate umpire's responsibility. Run drills as follows

- Hit routine fly balls inside the cone. Have base umpires turn with the hit and make the catch/no catch call appropriately, while plate umpires go to an area near home plate and observe the play.
- Hit routine fly balls outside the cone. Have base umpires turn with the ball, then move part way towards first as the runner retreating to first is the base umpire's only responsibility. Have plate umpires bust hard down the appropriate foul line to make the **CATCH/NO-CATCH** call. Remind plate umpires to signal **FAIR/FOUL** first if the ball is near the line.

REVIEW / WRAP UP

Be sure to thank local association members who may have volunteered their efforts. Allow time for questions and final details. Have students write the review and discuss the results and clarify any issues.





ROOKIE BALL REVIEW

Umpiring Fundamentals

1.	When a ball is hit, and a routine play will occur no umpires need to move at all.	
2.	The pitcher must start within 4ft of the safety circle on either side but not in front of the release point of the pitching machine.	
3.	The coach feeding the pitching machine can pitch as soon as his batter is ready.	
4.	The batter may walk to first base if there are 4 'unhittable pitches'.	
5.	The umpires should be on the field for ground rules 5 minutes prior to game time.	
6.	If there are no runners on base and the batter hits a double, the base umpire needs to turn while moving into the infield. This movement is called a pivot.	
7.	The pitcher may enter the 8-foot safety circle to get the ball.	
8.	The pitcher can wear a regular hat while playing in the field.	
9.	A 'hittable pitch' is a pitch that the batter can reach and swing at. It is not over the batter's head and can't bounce first.	
10.	The electrical cord does not have to be buried.	
11.	Where should the plate umpire stand when watching and determining hittable pitches?	
12.	What is one mandatory item of uniform or equipment that an umpire must have?	
13.	List 1 thing that a good umpire should do.	

Positioning

On the following diagrams, indicate by using the letters "BU" where the base umpire should be positioned. (4 marks)

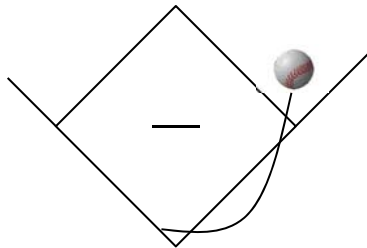
<p>14. Runners on first and second.</p>	<p>15. Runner only on second</p>
<p>16. Runner only on first</p>	<p>17. No runners on base</p>



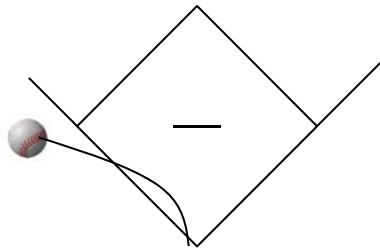
Fair/Foul

Based on the following statements and diagrams, circle whether the ball is fair or foul. (8 marks)

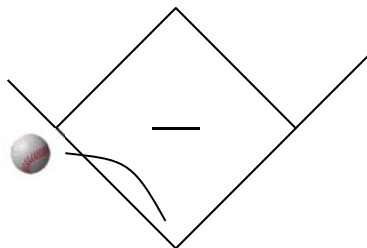
18. A fly ball lands where the picture indicates.



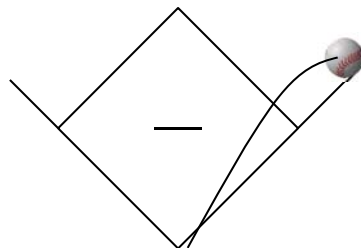
19. The ball is rolling and stops where shown.



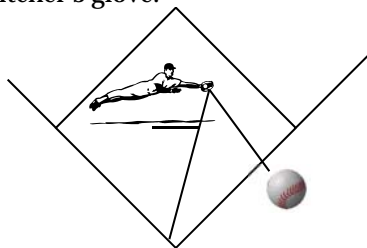
20. The ball is rolling and stops where shown.



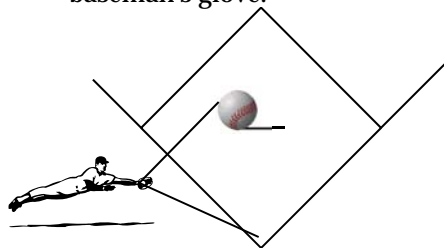
21. A fly ball lands where the picture indicates.



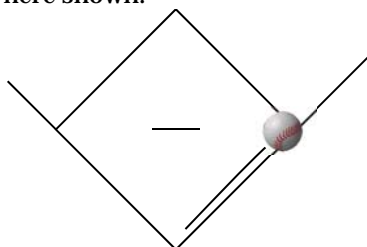
22. The ball is a line drive deflected off the pitcher's glove.



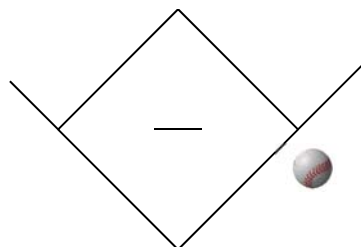
23. The ball is a line drive deflected off the 3rd baseman's glove.



24. The ball is rolling, hits first base and stops where shown.



25. The ball stops where shown.





APPENDICES

Additional Resources:



CONCUSSION FACT SHEET FOR UMPIRES

What is a concussion?

A concussion is an injury to the brain that:

- Is caused by a blow to the head or body from contact with a player, ball, bat or the ground.
- Changes the normal functioning of your brain.
- Can range from mild to severe.
- Even a “ding,” “getting you bell rung” or what seems to be a mild blow to the head can be serious
- Presents itself differently for each person and each injury.
- Can happen even if you do not lose consciousness.

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

You can't see a concussion, but you might notice some of the symptoms right away. Other symptoms can show up hours or days after the injury.

Symptoms of concussion include:

- Amnesia (Memory loss of events before or after injury)
- Confusion
- Headache
- Numbness or tingling
- Loss of consciousness
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Nausea (feeling that you might vomit)
- Feeling tired, sluggish, foggy or groggy
- Feeling unusually irritable, sad or nervous
- Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays, facts, meeting times).
- Slowed reaction time
- Trouble sleeping (sleeping more or less than usual)

Exercise or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, working on the computer, playing video games or flying may cause concussion symptoms (such as headache or tiredness) to reappear or get worse.



How can I prevent a concussion?

Basic steps you can take to protect yourself from concussion:

- Wearing a helmet that covers the entire skull that is in good condition and fits correctly. (Note: You can still get a concussion if you are wearing a helmet.)
- Setting up behind the plate in the slot, which decreases the likelihood of sustaining a head blow.
- Do not work behind the plate if you have sustained a recent head blow and have not been fully evaluated and cleared to do so your primary medical physician.⁴



What should I do if I think I have a concussion?

- **Don't hide it.** Tell someone, either your parent or another family member. Never ignore a blow to the head, no matter how insignificant you think it may be. Also, if you believe someone you are working with has a concussion, tell your local Umpire-in-Chief so that they may follow up with that umpire.⁵
- **Report it.** Do not return to participation in a game, work out or other physical activity with symptoms. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to return to umpiring.
- **Get checked out.** Seek medical attention from your primary medical physician and they can tell you if you have had a concussion and when you are cleared to return to play.
- A concussion can affect your ability to perform everyday activities, your reaction time, balance, sleep and overall performance.⁶
- Take time to recover. If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a repeat concussion. In rare cases, repeat concussions can cause permanent brain damage, and even death. Severe brain injury can change your whole life.

These articles are just two in a series of Baseball Ontario Blue Notes. Visit the Umpire's section of the Baseball Ontario website for more articles about umpiring.

^{1,2,3} This paragraph was edited from the original text provided by Major League Baseball (MLB) in order to reflect the needs of amateur umpires versus professional MLB umpires and approved by MLB



Blue Notes



"A Tag"

There is a big difference between tagging a base and tagging a runner.

The common element in any type of tag is the defensive player must have control of the ball in either the player's hand or glove.



Tag of a Runner

"Tagging a Runner" must be performed using the ball being held in either a glove or hand and the player must be touched by the ball.

The ball must be securely held before and after the tag.

1) R2, ground ball to the shortstop. Shortstop tags the runner with an empty glove, ball is in their opposite hand and then throws to first base.

Result: R2 is safe. Runner must be tagged with the ball in either the hand or in the glove.

2) No runners, ground ball to the second baseman. Second baseman throws to first which pulls the first baseman off the bag. First baseman reaches back and tags the base with his empty glove while holding the ball with their bare hand.

Result: Batter runner is out. The base can be touched by any part of the body (including his glove attached to his hand) as long as the ball is securely held at the time.



Tag of a Base

With secure possession of the ball, the defensive player can "tag a base".

A base can be tagged with any part of the defensive player's body. The base does not need to be touched with the ball.

For example, the regular play by a first baseman he has only the foot touching the bag. When the ball is caught and securely held, a player would be out if the throw is ahead of the offensive player touching the base.

If there is either a tag or force play and the player is tagged, the umpire will declare ... "On the tag", point and state ... "Out".

www.BaseballOntario.com



Blue Notes

Getting The Play Right!

CREW CONSULTATION

Whether you're new to umpiring or have been umpiring for several years, umpires often struggle with understanding when to get help from their partner(s). Unfortunately, there is no exact rule of thumb, and usually it comes with experience. Ultimately, the goal of every umpire should be to get the play right. Umpires need to put aside their pride when deciding the best course of action. In this edition we'll provide some guidelines to assist you.

It is important however to remember that getting help should be something that happens infrequently, and that umpires are responsible for knowing their jurisdiction, reacting quickly, and getting themselves into the proper positions to make the calls that are their responsibility.

KEYPOINTS

When seeking help, an umpire should do so shortly after making the call. Try to avoid a lengthy argument with the coach before consulting your partner(s).

When seeking help, the umpires should always confer away from players and coaches. It is also suggested that the entire crew should meet if more than two umpires. There are circumstances where an 'unlikely' umpire may have relevant information.

Some judgement calls are NOT subject to reversal. These include: steal and tag plays (except if a ball is dropped without the umpire's knowledge), force plays (when the ball is not dropped and the foot is not pulled off the bag), balls and strikes (not including check swings).

Coaches are NOT entitled to a second opinion simply because they disagree with a call.

If a call is reversed, a coach is entitled to an explanation.

Remember some calls cannot be reversed without creating larger problems. For example, a catch / no catch with multiple runners on base.

The ultimate decision to change a call rests with the umpire who made the call.

HELPFUL GUIDELINES

- An umpire is urged to seek help when their view is blocked or their positioning prevents that umpire from seeing crucial elements of the developing play. Also, an umpire is urged to seek help in instances when the umpire doubts himself AND a partner has additional information that could lead to a proper ruling being made.

- Except under special circumstances (examples of plays listed below), the umpire making the call must be the umpire seeking assistance from his/her partner(s).

- There may be times when a partner may have critical information that is unknown to the umpire responsible for making the call. When that partner is certain that information would benefit the umpire making the call, that partner should alert his partner that he has such information to be shared. The mechanics for this should be discussed ahead of time by umpires not used to working with each other. (ie. Walking towards another umpire, or a pre-determined signal) Crucial, potential call-changing information should never be withheld when a play has clearly been missed.

The following plays lend themselves to the guidelines listed above:

- Deciding whether a batted ball was a homerun or a ground-rule double
- Deciding whether a fly ball that left the playing field was fair or foul
- A foul tip being dropped by the catcher, or being caught on a short hop
- Cases where an umpire clearly errs in judgement because a ball is dropped or juggled after making a catch, tag or force.
- Plays involving spectator interference
- Balks where an umpire clearly does not realize the pitcher's foot was off the rubber





Blue Notes

Body Language

One of the hardest parts of being an umpire is *game management*. One of the keys to good game management is how an umpire deals with players, coaches, managers and other umpires. Body language is read the moment an umpire walks onto the field until the moment the umpire leaves, and at no time, do people stop reading the umpire's body language.



Communication

It is said that
Communication is:

10% - the words we speak
20% - the tone of voice used
70% - **body language!!!!**

Have you ever considered your body language...

During the Game (plate)

Looking at your feet = lack of confidence, timid
Continually walking around = nervousness, uncomfortable
Hands in ball bags = bored

During the Game (bases)

Continually looking around = disinterested
Hands on hips = angry, annoyed, unapproachable
Dropping your head after a pitch = possibly disapproving, frustrated

Between Innings

Hands-on-hips = confrontational, angry, unapproachable
Hands in pockets = bored, lazy, disinterested
Arms crossed = closed off, bored
Hands at sides relaxed = calm, professional, neutral
Hands behind back = open, approachable

Making Signals

Whether it's an "out" or a "safe" signal, the delivery and body language used is very important in terms of selling a call to others.

The 3 keys to remember when making a mechanic are:

1. 'GET LARGE' – physical size of a person does not matter. Large refers to using your body to best of its capabilities while staying in control. Do not hide mechanics in front of your body, make them as large as possible for everyone to see.
2. 'BE CRISP' – A crisp mechanic always conveys confidence. Do not be slow or half-hazard, both show laziness and poor confidence.
3. 'BE AGGRESSIVE' – being aggressive takes into account all forms of communication with body language the most important followed by tone of voice.

Positive	Action	Negative
Continual eye contact demonstrates you're interested, paying attention, focused	Eye contact	Lack of eye contact shows you're uncomfortable, not paying attention, nervous
Can show you're relaxed, comfortable	Smile	Smiling at an inappropriate time can be seen as mocking, escalating a situation
Keeps hands relaxed at your side makes you appear comfortable	Crossing Arms	Closed off, disinterested, bored
Stepping backward is an indication you're trying to de-escalate a situation, or a hint to another person they're in your personal space	Stepping Away	Stepping forward makes a person look like an aggressor, very challenging and confrontational
Relax your body, shows you're comfortable and confident in yourself	Tensed Body	Tensed up body indicates you are uncomfortable, not in control
Keeps hands relaxed at your side makes you appear comfortable	Hands on hips	Immediately indicates confrontational
Shoulders back indicate confidence	Shoulders	Slumped shoulders indicate disappointed, upset, tired