



Umpire Manual

Town of Clarence Baseball Association

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Baseball Text Alerts

Register online at www.clarencebaseball.org for "Text Alerts"

It's a simple process to sign up. You can use the link on the website. You can either "create account" or "sign in" and change your preferences at any time. Go to: "Manage Phones", to list any phone numbers that you would like to receive texts, and "Text Alerts" to designate which texts you want to receive

For cancellations due to weather, check for text alerts first. If you do not receive a text, you should show up for the game and if no teams show up, call Jon and you will get paid.

Umpire vouchers can be printed off on the TCBA website under "Umpire Information"

PREREQUISITES FOR GOOD UMPIRING

ALL BASEBALL UMPIRES SHOULD BE PHYSICALLY FIT at the start of each season and then make certain that they keep themselves in good condition, particularly during the period they are working games.

DECISIONS MUST BE MADE POSITIVELY AND PROMPTLY, but an umpire must not be too hasty in calling a play. It is considered the best procedure when an umpire has to run to get into position on a play, to come to a stop where he can see all of the action clearly before he makes the ruling. Try not to make a decision while in motion.

GOOD UMPIRING IS DEPENDENT, TO A LARGE EXTENT, UPON A COMPLETE KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE RULES.

PROPER UMPIRING MECHANICS ARE ESSENTIAL IN ATTAINING THE BEST COVERAGE. It is important that all umpires take the best position possible for any given play without being in the way of any player or throw or batted ball.

AN UMPIRE MUST TOTALLY IGNORE REMARKS FROM THE CROWD AND SPECTATORS. Umpires must be "deaf" and "thick-skinned" and ignore any and all spectator comments.

THE EFFICIENT UMPIRE WILL NOT "SHOWBOAT".

UMPIRES MUST BE COURTEOUS TO PLAYERS AND COACHES but avoid visiting with them immediately before, during, or after the games. A business-like attitude and atmosphere must prevail. Avoid "coaching" the players. Any comment or suggestion you feel compelled to make, should be made to the appropriate coach.

THE JUDGEMENT NECESSARY IN MAKING A DECISION IS ACQUIRED THROUGH EXPERIENCE.

A PLEASING PERSONAL APPEARANCE IS INVALUABLE TO AN UMPIRE. Remember, do not wear a white shirt, as the ball will have a tendency to get lost in the shirt as it is being delivered to the batter.

AVOID MAKING THE PITCHED CALL TOO QUICKLY. Let the pitch hit the catcher's mitt before you make the call. On the first called strike, the call should be loud. On the second strike, if it's a called strike, louder. On the third strike, if it's a called strike, loudest of all and perhaps with some body movement, making it different from strikes one and two. Say nothing on a swinging strike, but indicate with right hand and arm that you noticed the swing. When the pitch is a "ball", call "BALL" loudly enough for the infielders to hear.

KNOW HOW AND WHEN TO CALL TIME-OUT. Let them play unless there is a valid reason for calling time. Don't call time too quickly when it would prevent the completion of a play. An injury, for example, is not an automatic time-out. As soon as play is completed, call time.

KEEP THE PLATE CLEAN. Use a small brush that fits in your pocket and clean the plate when it is dirty, and always before the start of each half inning.

AVOID AMBIGUOUS FAIR-FOUL CALLS. It is important that you use completely different gestures when you call a batted ball fair or foul. For the foul call, turn your body towards foul territory, extend your arms above your head, and bring them down to waist level in the direction of foul territory. Yell, "FOUL" as emphatically as you gesture, when the ball is judged fair, use no verbal call, but point towards fair territory while keeping your eye on the ball.

STAY ON TOP OF THE SLOW ROLLER DOWN THE FOUL LINE. This type of hit can end up fair or foul and you have to get close to it to make the proper call.

THE MECHANICS OF CALLING AN OUT ARE SIMPLE. The out call is a stand-up one and basically the same everywhere. The left hand is held lightly at your thigh. Raise your right fist to at least eye level with thumb up. For a routine out, that is enough; for the close out, more body emphasis might be needed and "you're out" might be expressed.

CALLING A PLAYER SAFE NEED NOT BE ROUTINE. There is generally little difference among umpires in the basic manner in which they make the safe sign. If you're moving, come to a halt as you begin the sign. With your feet apart for stability, raise your flexed arms from your sides upward and outward in twin arcs, extending from nearly shoulder high, straight out with palms down and wrists straight. For more emphasis, add "you're safe", and/or a criss-crossing of your arms.

Pre-game Instructions for Coaches and Captains

-Normally the end of the backstop to the players bench and then straight out is used as out of play for overthrows and pop-ups. However in some cases the fence would be more appropriate.

-Review the overthrow rules, special ground rules for the diamond that the game is on, and any special rules for that league.

-Discuss safety: All batters, on deck people, runners, and players must wear a batting helmet. A pitcher warming up is also required to wear a batting helmet. Advise coaches to keep bats, gloves, helmets, etc. out of the field of play.

-Discuss rules for thrown bats, sliding and any other mutual concerns.

During the game

1. You can't start an inning after 2 hours and 15 minutes after game start.
2. Clean the plate at the beginning of each half inning and whenever it is dirty.
3. Give the starting pitcher and any new pitcher 8 pitches to warm up. After that they get 5 pitches. This could be adjusted for cold weather or injury.
4. A pitcher may not return to the pitcher's position once he has relinquished that position in a game.
5. The batter cannot advance on a dropped third strike. Except American, National and Senior.
6. Between innings, stand on the foul line of the team on offense
7. Keep the game going, don't let time between innings drag on.
8. All the games are 6 innings in length. If the game is tied, then 1 extra inning can be played as long as the inning is started before the 2 hour and 15 minutes.
9. Remember, the decision to end a game due to darkness or weather is yours. The safety of the players comes first and your decision is final even if the coaches do not agree. If 4 full innings are not completed (3.5 if the home team is winning), the game is not complete and must be started over from the beginning at a later date.

Close Plays

What you see is what you call. Hustle, Anybody and everybody will disagree on a close call. Usually it is a play at first base - watch the first baseman's foot and listen for the ball hitting the glove (his foot might leave the bag before he catches the throw). Sometimes the first baseman drops the ball as you turn to watch the throw to another base on another player. Interference calls happen frequently.

Calling Balls and Strikes

1. Position yourself behind the pitcher; for right-handed pitchers off right shoulder, off the left shoulder for a lefty.
2. Your perspective on balls and strikes will be distorted when standing behind the pitcher to call them. You will have a tendency to call low balls, strikes and effectively lower the strike zone. Your judgment in this area will improve through experience, as long as you try to improve. Set your own limits and try to be consistent in your calls
3. You call balls and strikes and keep track on an indicator
4. It is necessary to give the count after every pitch. However, when you give the count, be nice and loud. The louder you are the better everyone likes it.
5. The strike zone for Major League is from shoulder blades to knees and one ball on each side of plate. Call the height of the ball when it crosses the plate, not the catcher's glove. American League, armpits to knees and one ball on each side of plate. You call height of the ball when it crosses the plate, not when it hits the catcher's glove. Some younger pitchers can't throw it hard or fast enough and the ball loops.

TOWN OF CLARENCE BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

UMPIRE MANUAL

Thank you for helping the T.C.B.A. by umpiring this season. This manual has been prepared to assist you. Although our coaches have been instructed to assist you, we won't get full cooperation! So, REMEMBER,

You are in charge of the field! Coaches are told to maintain field and bench discipline. Poor sportsmanship is not to be tolerated. The coach is to be advised that if he or his players behave in a manner offensive to the orderly and sportsmanlike conduct of the game, they will be ejected out of sight and sound. Confer with the coaches before the game begins and advise them that if either one wants to question you on a call, they must ask for time out and both will come out on the field to discuss this with you. If you are in error on the call, and they so advise you — go ahead and change your decision. However, let them know a judgment call, i.e., he is out, safe; was it a strike or a ball, foul etc., will not be reversed. Once you make a judgment call, as opposed to an interpretation of the rule, stick to it. We have had experiences where the ump changes his mind depending on the persuasiveness of a particular coach, **DO NOT DO THIS**.

1. Know the rules that do apply to the league in which you are umpiring.
2. Always know where the ball is. Never take your eye off the ball when it is "LIVE". It will lead you to every play. Nothing hurts more than getting hit in the back of the head by a throw. The play at home takes priority over all other plays. Be there when in doubt. Anticipate the next play. When the ball is hit, be moving. **Hustle**.
3. You will make judgment errors — don't let this upset you. While you are watching a hit ball, a runner running to one base or another runner advancing to another base, violations of regulation play can and will occur. ALL YOU CAN CALL IS WHAT YOU SEE. American and National League Umpires are told "if 90% of your calls are correct, you've umped a good game."
4. If it's a foul ball, try to get off the mound to see where the ball lands and call it quickly "FOUL" loudly. A fair ball is identified by pointing (no call) with exaggerated motions toward the infield. That's it. All coaches will admit that the umpire who moves from the mound to call a play may have a better perspective from which to call a foul, out, or missed tag. **HUSTLE**
5. The minute or two you spend with the coaches before the game explaining what you expect, how you will call balls and strikes, and re-enforcing field and bench discipline will save you time throughout the game and will in fact make the game. Many of our umpires are respected by all coaches, even when the coaches lose. Spectators you have to live with — until they get so far out of hand that you advise the coach his team will be penalized, unless he tries to get them to calm down.
6. Umpires should know their rule book! They should, in fact, carry the book with them at all times, and not be afraid to consult with both coaches any time there is doubt as to a rule.
7. Balls and strikes, "foul", "safe", and "out" should be called in a loud voice, with visible arm motions for everything except a ball, in which case the absence of any motion becomes a signal in itself.
8. Umpiring by explanation is not to be desired! Say "Ball two", don't say "Too high". Even worse than umpiring by explanation is the case of Charley Even-up, the umpire who, having made a miscall, decides to give the next close one to the other team in order to balance things off. A second bad call is no way to wipe out one bad call.
9. Balls and strikes, "fair", "safe" and "out" should be called not only assertively but as quickly as possible. All pitches should be called at once. Sometimes foul, fair, safe or out must await the full outcome.
10. Enjoy yourself. Get into the flow of the game and have fun. You control the game. Be relaxed, alert and ready to play ball when you walk onto the field. Expect the best of the participants and demand it of yourself. If you're relaxed and enjoying yourself, the game will flow. Give each game your best, always hustle. Know the rules, hustle, have fun, and hustle.

PREPARATION

1. Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to scheduled start; this gives you ample time to check field, backstop, foul lines, and to decide what will/will not be in/out of play.
2. Let the coaches know what time you expect to start the game. If a previous game ran late and forced your game to be delayed, it is your responsibility to inform the coaches of the new starting time, the new time should be approximately 20 minutes after the end of the other game.
3. About 6 to 7 minutes before the first pitch, call coaches and/or captains together for ground rules. Get a game ball from each team before introductions

Referee Checklist

Below are some points to keep in mind when officiating sports at any level. All officials must have a good working knowledge of the rules and mechanics. In addition to this, very successful officials have an understanding of the human relations aspect of their jobs.

- **BE COMPETITIVE** - the players give maximum effort, so should you. Tell yourself, "I'm not going to let this game get away from me. I'm better than that." You are there to make the calls that control the game - Make Them!
- **HAVE YOU HEAD ON RIGHT** - Don't think your title grants you immunity from having to take a little criticism. It's part of officiating. Plan on it. Successful officials know how much to take. Ask one when you get a chance.
- **DON'T BE A TOUGH GUY** - If a coach is on your back but not enough to warrant a penalty, then stay away from him (or her). This is especially true during time-outs. Standing near an unhappy coach, just to "show him", will only lead to further tensions. Some officials develop irritating characteristics. Don't be one of them.
- **GET INTO THE FLOW OF THE GAME** - Each game is different. Good officials can feel this difference. Concentrate on the reactions of the players. Take note if the tempo changes. A ragged game calls for a different style of officiating from a smooth one.
- **DON'T BARK** - If you don't like to be shouted at, don't shout at someone else. Be firm but with a normal relaxed voice. This technique will do wonders in helping you to reduce the pressure. Shouting indicates a loss of control - not only of one's self, but also of the game.
- **SHOW CONFIDENCE** - Cockiness has absolutely no place in officiating. You want to exude confidence. Your presence should command respect from the participants. As in any walk of life, appearance, manner, and voice, determine how you are accepted. Try to present the proper image.
- **FORGET THE FANS** - As a group, fans usually exhibit three characteristics: ignorance of the rules, highly emotional partisanship, and delight in antagonizing the officials. Accepting this fact will help you ignore the fans, unless they interrupt the game or stand in the way of you doing your job.
- **ANSWER REASONABLE QUESTIONS** - Treat coaches and players in a courteous way. If they ask you a question reasonably, answer them in a polite way. If they get your ear by saying, "Hey ref, I want to ask you something", and then start telling you, interrupt and remind them of the reason for the discussion. Be firm, but relaxed.
- **CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WISELY** - Don't obviously threaten a coach or player. This will only put them on the defensive. More importantly, you will have placed yourself on the spot. If you feel a situation is serious enough to warrant a threat, then it is serious enough to penalize, without invoking a threat. Obviously some things you say will be a form of threat, but using the proper words can make it subtle.
- **STAY COOL** - Your purpose is to establish a calm environment for the game. Nervous or edgy officials are easily spotted by fans, coaches, and players alike. Avidly chewing gum, pacing around, or displaying a wide range of emotions prior to or during a game will serve to make you seem vulnerable to the pressure.

Official NFHS Baseball Signals

A. DO NOT PITCH



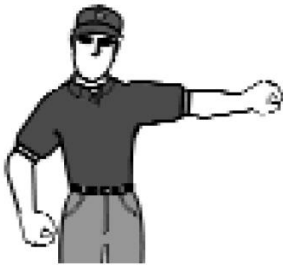
B. PLAY BALL



C. FOULBALL/TIME OUT/DEAD BALL



D. DELAYED DEAD BALL



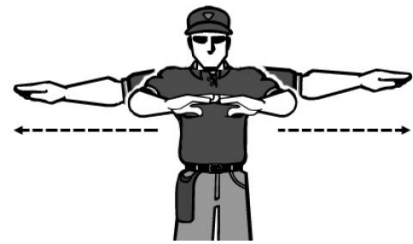
E. STRIKE/OUT



F. INFIELD FLY



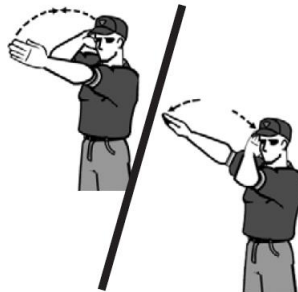
G. SAFE



H. FAIR BALL



I. FOUL TIP



J. COUNT



K. TIME PLAY



- A. Right arm straight out front with palm outward and fingers up - signifies do not pitch, the ball is dead
- B. Pointing with right hand index finger while facing pitcher - signifies play is to start or be resumed and simultaneously umpire calls "Play."
- C. Both hands open above head - signifies foul ball, time-out or ball is dead immediately.
- D. Left fist extended to the side at shoulder height - signifies an infraction for which (1) the penalty may be ignored or (2) bases may be awarded after no further advance is possible.
- E. Fist up and then out away from body, Coordinate, verbal call, "He's out!" or "Strike!", with the hammering action of the closed fist.
- F. Index finger of right hand is held above the head - signifies infield fly.
- G. Coordinate verbal call, "Safe." Signal also used for dropped balls in the outfield and to determine if a batter's checked swing was legal.
- H. Point toward fair ground with open hand. No verbal call.
- I. The palms of the hands glance off each other as they pass above eye level, followed by a strike call.
- J. Left hand indicates balls followed by the number of strikes thrown on the right hand. Verbally give count.
- K. Place fingers of the right hand on the left wrist, as if on top of a watch. This signal will only be used in two-out situations where a time play involving a potential run is likely.

Official Rules: 9.00 The Umpire

9.01

(a) The league president shall appoint one or more umpires to officiate at each league championship game. The umpires shall be responsible for the conduct of the game in accordance with these official rules and for maintaining discipline and order on the playing field during the game.

(b) Each umpire is the representative of the league and of professional baseball, and is authorized and required to enforce all of these rules. Each umpire has authority to order a player, coach, manager or club officer or employee to do or refrain from doing anything which affects the administering of these rules, and to enforce the prescribed penalties.

(c) Each umpire has authority to rule on any point not specifically covered in these rules.

(d) Each umpire has authority to disqualify any player, coach, manager or substitute for objecting to decisions or for unsportsmanlike conduct or language, and to eject such disqualified person from the playing field. If an umpire disqualifies a player while a play is in progress, the disqualification shall not take effect until no further action is possible in that play.

(e) Each umpire has authority at his discretion to eject from the playing field (1) any person whose duties permit his presence on the field, such as ground crew members, ushers, photographers, newsmen, broadcasting crew members, etc., and (2) any spectator or other person not authorized to be on the playing field.

9.02

(a) Any umpire's decision which involves judgment, such as, but not limited to, whether a batted ball is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or a ball, or whether a runner is safe or out, is final. No player, manager, coach or substitute shall object to any such judgment decisions.

Rule 9.02(a) Comment: Players leaving their position in the field or on base, or managers or coaches leaving the bench or coaches box, to argue on BALLS AND STRIKES will not be permitted. They should be warned if they start for the plate to protest the call. If they continue, they will be ejected from the game.

(b) If there is reasonable doubt that any umpire's decision may be in conflict with the rules, the manager may appeal the decision and ask that a correct ruling be made. Such appeal shall be made only to the umpire who made the protested decision.

(c) If a decision is appealed, the umpire making the decision may ask another umpire for information before making a final decision. No umpire shall criticize, seek to reverse or interfere with another umpire's decision unless asked to do so by the umpire making it.

Rule 9.02(c) Comment: The manager or the catcher may request the plate umpire to ask his partner for help on a half swing when the plate umpire calls the pitch a ball, but not when the pitch is called a strike. The manager may not complain that the umpire made an improper call, but only that he did not ask his partner for help. Field umpires must be alerted to the request from the plate umpire and quickly respond. Managers may not protest the call of a ball or strike on the pretense they are asking for information about a half swing.

Appeals on a half swing may be made only on the call of ball and when asked to appeal, the home plate umpire must refer to a base umpire for his judgment on the half swing. Should the base umpire call the pitch a strike, the strike call shall prevail.

Base runners must be alert to the possibility that the base umpire on appeal from the plate umpire may reverse the call of a ball to the call of a strike, in which event the runner is in jeopardy of being out by the catcher's throw. Also, a catcher must be alert in a base stealing situation if a ball call is reversed to a strike by the base umpire upon appeal from the plate umpire.

The ball is in play on appeal on a half swing.

On a half swing, if the manager comes out to argue with first or third base umpire and if after being warned he persists in arguing, he can be ejected as he is now arguing over a called ball or strike.

(d) No umpire may be replaced during a game unless he is injured or becomes ill.

9.03

(a) If there is only one umpire, he shall have complete jurisdiction in administering the rules. He may take any position on the playing field which will enable him to discharge his duties (usually) behind the catcher, but sometimes behind the pitcher if there are runners).

(b) If there are two or more umpires, one shall be designated umpire in-chief and the others field umpires.

9.04

(a) The umpire-in-chief shall stand behind the catcher. (He usually is called the plate umpire.) His duties shall be to:

(1) Take full charge of, and be responsible for, the proper conduct of the game;

(2) Call and count balls and strike;

(3) Call and declare fair balls and fouls except those commonly called by field umpires;

(4) Make all decisions on the batter;

(5) Make all decisions except those commonly reserved for the field umpires;

(6) Decide when a game shall be forfeited;

(7) If a time limit has been set, announce the fact and the time set before the game starts;

(8) Inform the official scorer of the official batting order, and any changes in the lineups and batting order, on request;

(9) Announce any special ground rules, at his discretion.

(b) A field umpire may take any position on the playing field he thinks best suited to make impending decisions on the bases. His duties shall be to:

(1) Make all decisions on the bases except those specifically reserved to the umpire-in-chief;

(2) Take concurrent jurisdiction with the umpire-in-chief in calling "Time," balks, illegal pitches, or defacement or discoloration of the ball by any player.

(3) Aid the umpire-in-chief in every manner in enforcing the rules, and excepting the power to forfeit the game, shall have equal authority with the umpire-in-chief in administering and enforcing the rules and maintaining discipline.

(c) If different decisions should be made on one play by different umpires, the umpire-in-chief shall call all the umpires into consultation, with no manager or player present. After consultation, the umpire-in-chief (unless another umpire may have been designated by the league president) shall determine which decision shall prevail, based on which umpire was in best position and which decision was most likely correct. Play shall proceed as if only the final decision had been made.

9.05

(a) The umpire shall report to the league president within 12 hours after the end of a game all violations of rules and other incidents worthy of comment, including the disqualification of any trainer, manager, coach or player, and the reasons therefor.

(b) When any trainer, manager, coach or player is disqualified for a flagrant offense such as the use of obscene or indecent language, or an assault upon an umpire, trainer, manager, coach or player, the umpire shall forward full particulars to the league president within four hours after the end of the game.

(c) After receiving the umpire's report that a trainer, manager, coach or player has been disqualified, the league president shall impose such penalty as he deems justified, and shall notify the person penalized and the manager of the club of which the penalized person is a member. If the penalty includes a fine, the penalized person shall pay the amount of the fine to the league within five days after receiving notice of the fine. Failure to pay such fine within five days shall result in the offender being debarred from participation in any game and from sitting on the players' bench during any game, until the fine is paid.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO UMPIRES

Umpires, on the field, should not indulge in conversation with players. Keep out of the coaching box and do not talk to the coach on duty.

Keep your uniform in good condition. Be active and alert on the field.

Be courteous, always, to club officials; avoid visiting in club offices and thoughtless familiarity with officers or employees of contesting clubs. When you enter a ball park your sole duty is to umpire a ball game as the representative of baseball.

Do not allow criticism to keep you from studying out bad situations that may lead to protested games. Carry your rule book. It is better to consult the rules and hold up the game 10 minutes to decide a knotty problem than to have a game thrown out on protest and replayed.

Keep the game moving. A ball game is often helped by energetic and earnest work of the umpires.

You are the only official representative of baseball on the ball field. It is often a trying position which requires the exercise of much patience and good judgment, but do not forget that the first essential in working out of a bad situation is to keep your own temper and self-control.

You no doubt are going to make mistakes, but never attempt to "even up" after having made one. Make all decisions as you see them and forget which is the home or visiting club.

Keep your eye everlastingly on the ball while it is in play. It is more vital to know just where a fly ball fell, or a thrown ball finished up, than whether or not a runner missed a base. Do not call the plays too quickly, or turn away too fast when a fielder is throwing to complete a double play. Watch out for dropped balls after you have called a man out.

Do not come running with your arm up or down, denoting "out" or "safe." Wait until the play is completed before making any arm motion.

Each umpire team should work out a simple set of signals, so the proper umpire can always right a manifestly wrong decision when convinced he has made an error. If sure you got the play correctly, do not be stampeded by players' appeals to "ask the other man." If not sure, ask one of your associates. Do not carry this to extremes, be alert and get your own plays. But remember! The first requisite is to get decisions correctly. If in doubt don't hesitate to consult your associate. Umpire dignity is important but never as important as "being right."

A most important rule for umpires is always "BE IN POSITION TO SEE EVERY PLAY." Even though your decision may be 100 percent right, players still question it if they feel you were not in a spot to see the play clearly and definitely. Finally, be courteous, impartial and firm, and so compel respect from all.