

# OHSAA Mechanics and Interpreter Workshop Information

---

Principles to follow in order to remain consistent as an umpire

## Miscellaneous

### **Behind the plate -**

- “FOUL” vs. Foul ball - hands up in the air – “FOUL” – point for emphasis
- Balls and strikes -- verbalize all called pitches – by saying ball or strike and number -- Ball one – Strike one -- Ball two etc. Say every number following ball and strike –
- Do not verbalize swinging strikes – or strike number on foul balls
- On foul tip -- show the tip signal – signal strike - -non- verbal -
- Ball Call - -Stay down (don’t track ball to outside/inside) – verbalize “ball ## -- then come up
- Do not turn your head to follow the ball – see the whole plate without moving your head (its hard)
- Give space to the catcher - -find your comfort spot –
- See the down and out from your positioning in the sweet spot
- Keep your feet square – shoulders square – straight back - straight neck (all if possible) – athletic stance with staggered feet for balance.
- Take your time with your balls/strike calls - there is no rush - verbal for the batter and catcher – signals for the fans and benches –
- Obvious ball calls - examples – ball to backstop or way high – not necessary to verbalize
- Strike three batter is out – think about when to use this – example – batter swings misses – ball is low – batter takes off toward first - catcher caught the ball and/or first base occupied less than 2 outs – you may say “He’s OUT!!”
- Showing the count -- it’s good to show the count when the next pitch may decide something – anytime 2 strikes or any time 3 balls.
- Showing the counter -- shoulder high (not way above your head ) – straight out -- always use consecutive fingers (example don’t show two (2) as longhorns)
- Getting ready to accept the pitch -- don’t get to the sweet spot too soon – find the rhythm of the pitcher - get to your position and hold – don’t ease into the spot – get there. -
- Be still during the pitch – don’t follow the pitch –
- Helping your base umpire by watching first baseman – if first baseman has foot on base – keep your hand in a fist -- if he pulls off open your hand -- then if the base umpire is not sure he can glance to you – do this every play even simple ones.

## **Interference**

Act by team at bat

Interferes with, impedes, hinders or confuses a fielder - purposefully or not

Runner impedes fielder - fielder allowed protection on first fielding attempt – runner must avoid contact or confusion - even if fielder is moving

### Penalty -

Dead ball immediately, Runner interfering is out, other runners return to where they were at time of interference, batter runner awarded single(not really your issue), if potential double play you have a right to award it –

Note: interference by coach on a pop-up batter can be declared out - on other plays determine impact of the interference and choose the penalty based on impact (tougher to call)

Note2: catcher impeding a batter is catcher obstruction (NOT catcher interference)

### **Malicious Contact**

Ball dead, runner is ejected, runner is out – unless scored prior to the play, all runner return to previous base

### **Hurdling / leaping**

Legal attempts to avoid a fielder IF the defensive player is lying on the ground – A diving player (diving over a defensive player is always out)

### **Obstruction**

Runner is impeded -- act by field or defensive team or team personnel that hinders a runner or changes the pattern of the play -- can be intentional or unintentional – physical or verbal -

- Fielder Has the ball - fielder has right to be there – fielder does not have to provide any access to base or any part of base
- Fielder does not have the ball - play is imminent - fielder may be in base path but needs to vacate it if ball is not imminent - Must allow some access for the runner to achieve the base or plate being attempted (does not have to expose the entire base) - no definitive definition to access to the base (100% judgment)
- Fielder does not have the ball - not in the act of a play - fielder has no right to base path – no contact allowed –
- There may be contact with no obstruction – example – rounding first but not going to second anyways.
- Usually happens around a base
- Watch for it in a rundown situation - there can be no contact in the base path without the ball
- Delayed dead ball – right arm extended for the duration of the play –
- Be careful – just because there is minor contact does not mean obstruction happened
- Runners advance at their own risk -
- Malicious contact supersedes obstruction
- Catcher impeding a batter is catcher obstruction (NOT catcher interference)
- Interference and obstruction do not cancel each other out -- penalize in order which they occurred.
- Fake tag is obstruction (if runner changes his approach to the base) -- award one base - - also a team warning –
- First base pickoff obstruction – only obstruction if he does not get back to the base and is tagged out - ignore the out – grant the obstruction - if runner gets back – no obstruction

### Penalty –

- Dead at the end of the play – playing action
- Umpire shall award the obstructed runner and each other affected by the obstruction
- Example – trail runner on first (doesn't go for 2<sup>nd</sup> because R1 is obstructed going 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>) grant runners 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Award is a minimum of 1 base beyond position on the base
- Preceding runners not obstructed, they are not granted / awarded free bases – no forcing of preceding runners.

### Base Umpire –

#### Mechanics -

#### From A position –

- On windup, slow walk toward plate – be moving – be watching – prepared to signal if requested for check swing –
- play at first – move into position at a 45 degree angle hands on knees when watching – pause / breath – safe signal – shoulder height – get it up there – verbalize – He's Safe or if out – then shoulders square – right hand head height – 90degree angle -- say He's out
- Watch for fair foul – Base umpire has from front of base down right field line (unless previous arrangements are made with plate umpire –but I would not – stay consistent with mechanics don't change things. (Plate umpire covers anything that does not make it to the base – a ball that crosses right in front of first base – the call is plate umpires foul ball call.
- Foul ball – both hands high in the air – Yell out foul ball -- mechanic also calls to point to foul territory –
- Catch or no catch in outfield – if a ball hits the ground – signal the safe signal and verbalize BALL DOWN ball down (don't say no catch )

#### From B position or C –

- Watching for pickoff – keep hands on knees – square/athletic stance – turn to the play – pause – make your call.

#### From A, B or C –

- Let the ball take you to the play – follow it with your head and body – follow to the fielder, then follow the throw to the base -- that way it won't catch you unaware.
- Double play – keep your chest facing the play – find the ball follow from fielder to base (say second) – after play at 2 – signal and verbal – step toward first a bit (2-3 steps)
- (home plate can call interference if slider at 2<sup>nd</sup> interferes with throw back to first)
- Do your best to watch all players touching bases – watch most forward runner first then pick up trailing runners (plate umpire has home plate then look back toward third).
- During an appeal of a missed base – know when it's your call – there are ways to signal your partner – if you know there is a miss – stand with fist hand (like an out) if touched use open hand.
- Potential check swing – if you are in B/C and you get asked about a check swing – call what you saw -- did the bat cross into the strike zone over the plate.

**General comments –**

- Blood on uniform – be flexible allow player to use a different number
- Your responsibility runs until you leave the confines of the field
- H.S. fighting – anyone who leaves their position or bench/dugout shall be ejected – it's hard but do your best to keep track of who is involved -- watch and write down numbers – allow the coaches to break things up. Don't break up a fight – use verbal commands – coaches must break it up - do not touch a player – too much legal responsibility.
- Consider each interaction with Players , Coaches , etc. as an opportunity to practice your people skills 😊😊