

2006 California District 54

Coaches Handout



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I. Setting Expectations

Like managers, coaches and parents, umpires are there to help give our kids the best baseball experience possible. As we looked at ways to improve your child's baseball experience, were reminded of the words of the Little League Mission and Pledge:

Little League Mission

Through proper guidance and exemplary leadership, the Little League program assists youth in developing the qualities of citizenship, discipline, teamwork and physical well-being. By espousing the virtues of character, courage and loyalty, the Little League Baseball program is designed to develop superior citizens rather than superior athletes.

THE LITTLE LEAGUE PLEDGE

I TRUST IN GOD
I LOVE MY COUNTRY
AND WILL RESPECT ITS LAWS
I WILL PLAY FAIR AND STRIVE TO WIN,
BUT WIN OR LOSE,
I WILL ALWAYS DO MY BEST.

The message should be clear.

By **our** leadership, our kids will learn from us to respect the authority of an umpire and to accept things that happen on the field in a sportsmanlike manner. How can we expect our kids to do that if we don't show them the way? Managers and coaches, you have an even more awesome responsibility because you are now the example to twelve to fifteen kids, not just your own. In order to foster a feeling of mutual respect for each other and for the game the League has these expectations:

Umpires are expected to be:

- **Prompt for games**
- **Professional in manner and appearance**
- **Knowledgeable about the rules**
- **Consistent in game administration**
- **Flexible relative to player level (e.g. 9-10 A versus 11-12 Majors)**
- **Courteous and helpful to players, managers, and coaches**
- **Aware of safety issues**

Managers and coaches are expected to be:

- **Courteous and respectful of umpires, other coaches, and players**
- **Reasonably knowledgeable about the rules**
- **Aware there are NO ARGUMENTS on judgment calls**
- **Aware that discussions about rules interpretations are OK**
- **Mindful of the Little League Pledge and Mission**

Parents and spectators are expected to be:

- **Courteous and respectful of umpires, coaches, and players**
- **Cheering positively for players realizing the weight your words carry as parents**
- **Mindful of the Little League Pledge and Mission**

Players are expected to be:

- **Courteous and respectful of umpires, other players and coaches**
- **Doing their best to play fair and try to win**
- **Having fun and enjoying themselves learning to play the great game of baseball**
- **Mindful of the Little League Pledge and Mission**

II. Manager and Coach Responsibilities

BEFORE THE GAME:

- **Show up early and have the field prepared on time.** If you are the home team, this includes lining the field, raking and dragging the infield, preparing the pitcher's mound, and filling any dangerous holes. The visiting team is expected to help out.
- **Get your team to the game on time ready to play.** No one likes to wait.
- **Do your pre-game warm-ups as stipulated in League policy.** Each team is allotted ten minutes to do infield/outfield warm ups before the game. And then, we still need five minutes for the plate conference.
- **Make sure your players are properly equipped and ready to play.** Cups, shoes, masks, other gear, catcher properly equipped (cup, chest protector, shin guards, helmet and mask with throat protected, and give two game balls to the umpire, and have more game balls available at the field if necessary.
- **Make sure you have someone to serve as an official scorekeeper early.** In case of dispute the home team book is the official scorebook, so make sure someone is keeping score. It's not the umpire's job to keep score.
- **At the plate conference, introduce yourself to the umpires, and learn their names.** It is easier to have a discussion later if you refer to each other by name.

DURING THE GAME:

- **Help the umpires keep the game moving.** Hustle your players into position and back to the dugout, including warming up pitchers. Make sure your catcher is ready as soon as you can. Make sure your catcher and your pitcher know how to do the balls-in-coming-down thing – 5 pitches, call it before the 5th one.
- **Inform the umpire-in-chief AND the opposing manager of substitutions in the batting order.** The umpire doesn't need to know Billy and Sally switched positions, but does need to know if Sally enters the lineup for Billy. This is less of an issue with continual batting orders and free field substitutions.
- **Be a positive role model.** Show good sportsmanship. Don't yell out questionable instructions, such as: "Run over the catcher the next time he gets in the way!" Control your players, coaches and parents.
- **Understand that umpires make mistakes.** It's rare that an umpire affects the outcome of a game with a bad call. If there is a bad call, try and remember to keep it in perspective. There are bound to have been far more mistakes by your players that lead to extra bases and runs than those from bad calls. Encourage everyone to play through it and not be distracted.

AFTER THE GAME:

- **Win or lose, participate in the handshake.** Again, this is another example of showing good sportsmanship. Shake hands with the opposition even if something didn't go your way. Win graciously, and lose with dignity.
- **Get your team and equipment out of the dugouts quickly.** This is especially critical if another game follows yours. The longer you take, the later the next game gets started.
- **If you choose to fill out umpire evaluations, do so all the time, both positively and negatively.** It's only fair to all umpires that we don't hear from you only after a bad game. Take a day to gather your thoughts and submit an evaluation. There is a form near the end of the manual.

III. 50 True or False Rules Quiz of Little League Baseball

Please read each of the following statements. Please determine if the statement is true or false and circle the “T” or “F” as appropriate. For your convenience, each statement is followed by the appropriate rule reference(s) that apply which either prove or disprove the statement.

- T - F 1. The hands are considered part of the bat. - 1.10, 6.05(f), 6.08(b)
- T - F 2. The batter-runner must turn to his right after overrunning first base. - 7.08(c) & (j)
- T - F 3. If the batter breaks his wrist when swinging, it's a strike. - 2.00 - Strike
- T - F 4. If a batted ball hits the plate first, it's a foul ball. - 2.00 - Fair Ball & Foul Ball
- T - F 5. The batter cannot be called out for interference if he is in the batter's box. - 6.06(c)
- T - F 6. On a foul tip, the umpire must announce "Foul," and the ball is dead. - 2.00 - Foul Tip
- T - F 7. The batter may not switch batter's boxes after two strikes. - 6.06(b)
- T - F 8. The batter who batted out of order is the person declared out. - 6.07(b)
- T - F 9. The batter may not overrun first base when he gets a base-on-balls. - 7.08(c)
- T - F 10. A runner is always out if a batter ball hit him. - 7.08(f)
- T - F 11. If a batter keeps his bat in the strike zone in the bunting position, it's an automatic strike. 2.00 Bunt & Strike
- T - F 12. The batter is out if a bunted ball hits the ground, bounces back up and hits the bat again. - 6.05(g)
- T - F 13. The batter is out if his foot touches the plate when he hits the ball. - 6.06(a)
- T - F 14. The batter-runner is always out if he runs outside the running lane after a bunted ball. - 6.05(j)
- T - F 15. A runner is out if he high-fives a coach or other players after he hits a homerun over the fence. - 7.09(i)
- T - F 16. Tie goes to the runner. - 6.05(i), 7.08(e)
- T - F 17. The runner gets the base he's going to, plus one base on a ball thrown out-of-play. - 7.05(g)
- T - F 18. In an Infield Fly situation, an umpire must call it anytime a ball is popped up in the infield. - 2.00 Infield Fly
- T - F 19. Runners may never run the bases in reverse order. - 7.02
- T - F 20. The runner must always slide when the play is close. - 7.08(a)(3)
- T - F 21. The runner is always safe when hit by a batted ball while touching a base. - 7.08(f)
- T - F 22. A runner must physically make contact with a fielder making a play to be called out for interference. - 7.09
- T - F 23. It is a force out and no runs can score when a runner is called out for not tagging up on a fly ball. - 7.10(a)
- T - F 24. An appeal on a runner who missed a base cannot be a force out. - 7.10(b)
- T - F 25. A runner is out if he runs out of the baseline to avoid a fielder who is fielding a batted ball. - 7.08(a)(1)
- T - F 26. Runners may not advance when an infield fly is called. - 2.00 – Infield Fly
- T - F 27. An umpire is guilty of interference if he gets in the way when the catcher is going after a wild pitch or passed ball. - 2.00 - Interference, 5.09(b)
- T - F 28. A pitch that bounces to the plate cannot be hit. - 2.00 - Ball & Strike
- T - F 29. The batter does not get first base if hit by a pitch after it bounces. - 2.00 - Ball
- T - F 30. If a fielder holds a fly ball for 2 seconds, it's a catch. - 2.00 - Catch
- T - F 31. You must tag the base with your foot on a force out or appeal. - 6.05(i)
- T - F 32. The ball is immediately dead on an illegal pitch. - 7.08(c)
- T - F 33. If a player's feet are in fair territory when a ball is touched it is always a fair ball. 2.00 Fair Ball & Foul Ball
- T - F 34. The ball must always be returned to the pitcher before an appeal can be made. - 2.00 - Appeal
- T - F 35. A batter is automatically out if he throws the bat. - 6.05
- T - F 36. A fielder must make physical contact with a base runner for obstruction to occur. - 2.00 - Obstruction, 7.06
- T - F 37. The pitcher cannot take signs from his manager or coach. - 8.01, 8.02
- T - F 38. If a fielder catches a fly ball and then falls over the fence, it is a homerun. - 2.00 - Catch, 6.09(h), 7.05 (a)
- T - F 39. The ball is dead anytime that an umpire is hit by the ball. - 5.09(f)
- T - F 40. The manager must appeal a bad call to the plate umpire. - 9.02(b)
- T - F 41. The manager can visit his pitcher once every inning. - 8.06(a)
- T - F 42. The pitcher cannot wear a white T-shirt under his uniform. - 1.11(a)(3)
- T - F 43. A fielder cannot fake a catch to decoy a runner into slowing down. - 2.00 Interference & Obstruction
- T - F 44. A runner is out if he collides with the fielder who is attempting to catch a throw from the outfield. - 7.08(b)
- T - F 45. If a runner leaves a base early, he cannot score. - 7.13
- T - F 46. If a runner misses home, he can always go back & touch it for the run to count. - 7.10(b) Approved Ruling 2
- T - F 47. A starter must play six consecutive outs and bat once before a sub can replace him. - 3.03
- T - F 48. Players on the bench may yell to distract a fielder from catching a pop fly. - 2.00 - Interference
- T - F 49. Fielders can't trick runners to return to a base by saying a pitch was fouled. 2.00 Interference & Obstruction
- T - F 50. The official scorekeeper must inform the umpire when a team is batting out of order. - 6.07 Note

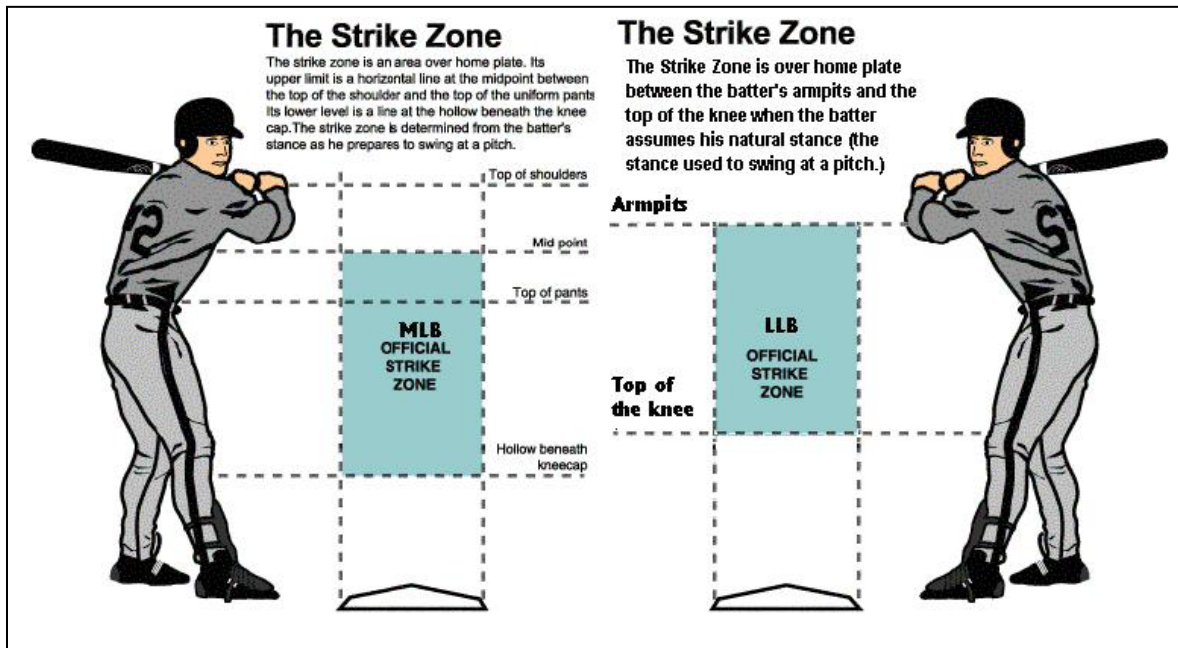
IV. The Most Misunderstood Rules in Little League Baseball

If you have questions about this or any other rules, please feel free to contact your league UIC.

The Strike Zone (2.00):

“The **STRIKE ZONE** is that space over home plate which is between the batter’s **armpits** and the **top of the knees** when the batter assumes a natural stance. The umpire shall determine the strike zone **according to the batter’s usual stance when that batter swings at a pitch.**”

The strike zone on the left is what is referred to as a “shifted” strike zone and preferred by many coaching staffs and teams as player age and abilities improve. It encourages many concepts that coaches teach pitchers such as not throwing up and staying down in the zone. Teams should observe an umpire’s strike zone and adjust to it.



Examples of the “shift” strike zone (left) versus the official rule book strike zone (right).

Out of the baseline (7.08a1):

The confusion with this rule is the definition of “baseline”. It is not the direct line between two bases.

The runner establishes the baseline: it is a direct line between the runner and the base to which he is advancing or returning. Depending on the circumstances, his/her baseline may change as the play develops.

For example, if the runner takes a wide turn at first into the grass behind the second baseman's normal position, and the throw comes back to first, the baseline goes from the runner to first base. If the first baseman tries to tag him, he cannot deviate more than three feet to either side of this line. The other source of confusion with this rule is the fact that the runner is not out for being out of the baseline unless he’s avoiding a tag. If he’s running around a fielder who is trying to field a batted ball, there is no violation.

Everyone's favorites: **Interference** and **Obstruction**

Remember: the offense interferes, the defense obstructs.

Interference - Rule 2.00 and 7.09:

The umpire must judge that someone on the offense "interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses" a defensive player who is trying to make a play on the ball. Some interference calls are easy, such as a runner being struck by a batted ball, or a runner colliding with a fielder trying to field a batted ball. The troublesome ones are when the umpire must judge the intent of the runner, such as:

- A runner makes contact with a thrown ball. The umpire must be convinced that the runner **intentionally** interfered with the throw (raised arms, timed it so ball hits him, etc.)
- A runner makes contact with or gets in the way of a fielder trying to field a thrown ball. INTENT is required here. If a runner just runs into a fielder while that fielder is waiting for a throw, it's not interference unless the umpire judges the runner intentionally ran into him.
- A runner doesn't contact a fielder fielding a batted ball, but causes him to miss it by some other action. **Contact is not needed for interference.** So, if a runner: yells at a fielder as he runs behind him; waves his arms at the fielder; runs at the fielder and stops at the last second, stops in front of the fielder and jumps over the ball, etc., AND the umpire judges that this act caused the fielder to miss the batted ball, it's interference.
- A base coach or someone from the bench gets in the way or yells "DROP IT". The rule says any member of the team at bat, not just the batter or runner, can cause interference.

Obstruction – Rule 2.00 and 7.06:

Like interference, this is a tough call when there is no contact. If a runner has to slow down or stop because of a fielder's action OTHER THAN fielding a batted ball, you have obstruction. Here are some examples of obstruction that are not so obvious:

- A fielder boots the initial play, and then gets in the runner's way as he goes after the ball. No interference here on the runner because the fielder booted the ball. The fielder is only "protected" on the initial play, not a subsequent play after his error.
- A batter-runner has to slow down on his way to first because the first baseman is standing on the base. This happens a lot in the lower divisions.
- A fielder stands in the baseline or puts his leg down and blocks the base or plate well before he has the ball. A fielder cannot block the base while he is waiting for the throw to come in.

Remember that there are two types of obstruction: Type A, where the defense is making a play on the obstructed runner (immediate dead ball, obstructed runner gets at least one base), and Type B where the runner is obstructed while play is going on elsewhere (play goes on, base awards made after play ceases).

Batter's Interference – Rule 6.06(c):

There are things a batter does (or fails to do) that are interference, and other things he does (or fails to do) that do not. Confused? First off, the batter's box is NOT a safety zone for the batter. If he's in the box, he's usually OK in these situations:

- The ball gets by the catcher and the catcher knocks over the batter trying to get to the ball (no penalty, live ball)
- The catcher throws the ball back to the pitcher or to a base to retire a base stealer, and the ball hits the batter or his bat (no penalty, live ball UNLESS the batter PURPOSELY moves into the catcher or the path of the ball)
- The batter swings so hard that he hits the catcher's glove on the follow-through, knocking the ball away from the catcher (dead ball, runners return)
- However, if the batter had time to get out of the box but stays in and gets in the way, then he's guilty of interference. This usually happens in lower levels when the ball gets by the catcher, a runner tries to score, and the batter stays in the box and affects the play at the plate. If the batter gets in the way of a play while OUT OF THE BOX, he will almost certainly be guilty of interference, even if it's unintentional.

Must-slide rule (7.08a3):

There is no “must-slide” rule in Little League Baseball. Never has been – never will be. Here's the rule: **7.08 -- Any runner is out when (3) the runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag;**

“The Right Call” Casebook -- Comment: There is **no** must slide rule. The rule is slide or attempt to get around. The key in this situation is “fielder has the ball and is waiting to make the tag.”

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Hurdling or going over the defensive player that has the ball and is waiting to make a tag is a legal maneuver.

Rule 7.08(a) (3) does not prevent or make hurdling illegal.

Rule 7.08(a-3) is easily the most misunderstood rule in the book. It is easily broken down as follows:

- (1) The fielder must have the ball in his/her possession; AND
- (2) The fielder must be WAITING to make the tag;

If BOTH of those two criteria are satisfied, then the runner must EITHER:

- (1) Slide; OR
- (2) ATTEMPT to get around the fielder.

- Notice the rule says, “attempt to get around”, not “avoid”. Contact may occur with no penalty assessed. There is no “Must Slide” rule and no league may create one. No league may modify this rule.
- **Remember, the fielder must have the ball and be waiting to make the tag.** The runner has three options when the fielder HAS THE BALL AND IS WAITING TO MAKE THE TAG: 1) slide, 2) attempt to get around the fielder, or 3) go back to the previous base. If the runner does none of those and goes in standing up, he's out.
- But if he attempts to get around and successfully avoids the tag without going out of the baseline, he's safe.
- If the runner **attempts** to avoid, but still makes contact, the runner is **not** automatically out. What constitutes an attempt is entirely up to the judgment of the umpire.
- If the ball is on its way to the base, or the ball and runner get there simultaneously, and there's contact because the runner didn't slide or attempt to get around, this is just a collision, and collisions are part of baseball.

Base awards on a bad throw (7.05g):

There's a myth that the runners get "one plus one" on a throw that goes out of play – Not in LLB. The runners always get two bases from the last base legally touched depending on who makes the throw and when the throw is made.

- If the throw is the first play by an infielder, the runners get two bases from the time of the pitch.
- If the throw is a subsequent play by an infielder, or any throw by an outfielder, the runners get two bases from the time of the throw (the moment the ball leaves the fielder's hand) (*not* the time the ball goes out of play).
- If the throw comes after all runners, including the batter, have reached their next bases, the runners get two bases from the time of the throw.
- The umpire must make some judgment calls here. He must first judge whether the throw is the first play by an infielder. For example, if the shortstop steps on second and then throws to first to complete a double play, his throw is a subsequent play, the first play being the out at second. The other judgment the umpire must make is determining where the runners were at the time the throw left the fielder's hand. A runner could be a step away from second when a throw is made and halfway to third when the throw finally goes out of play. Here, the base award would be two bases from first base, the last base legally touched before the throw.

Infield Fly (2.00):

Most everyone understands when the infield fly is in effect (runners at first and second or bases loaded with less than two outs). The trouble comes when the umpire must judge one thing: is the fly ball one that an infielder may catch with **ordinary effort**?

"Ordinary effort" is judged differently at the different levels; ordinary effort for Majors shortstop may not be ordinary effort to an AA Minors shortstop, and just about any popup on the infield of an a Minors game is beyond ordinary !

An umpire may judge that a ball hit to short left field warrants an Infield Fly call, whereas a ball hit behind second base (shortstop and second baseman must run hard to get to it) does not. Also, if an outfielder catches the ball but the umpire judges an infielder could have made the catch with ordinary effort, an Infield Fly call is valid. It is entirely up to the umpire to judge "ordinary effort".

If the umpires fail to call Infield Fly when it was obvious they should have and the defense fails to catch the ball and subsequently turns a cheap double play the umpires shall **retroactively** enforce the infield fly rule and place the runners back.

The ball is **live** during an infield fly. Once the ball is touched or hits the ground the runners may advance **at their own risk**.

Batting Out of Order (6.07):

This one is ALWAYS fun to try and straighten out. To simplify the rule, you must understand one basic premise: the PROPER batter (the one who should have batted) is the one who is called out. Here's more to try to clear this up:

- The ONLY time the proper batter is called out is when the defense appeals after the improper batter completes his time at-bat (getting on base or making an out).
- If the defense appeals while the improper batter is batting, the proper batter simply replaces the improper batter, and the proper batter assumes the count.
- Any base running advances or put outs while the improper batter is up are upheld.
- Any base running advances or put outs when the improper batter puts the ball in play are nullified (so if an improper batter hits into a double play, the defense may not want to say anything!)
- If the defense fails to appeal an improper batter before the next pitch or play, the improper batter is now “legalized”, and next up is the person following the **legalized batter** in the order.
- The scorekeeper is NOT ALLOWED to bring this situation to the umpire’s attention. It is the manager’s responsibility to catch a batting out of order situation and to inform the umpire.

The umpire is not allowed to bring this situation to anyone’s attention either. That’s the manager’s job.

Leaving the base early (7.13):

This rule is unique to LL, and may cause the umpires a lot of headaches. The bottom line: if **any** base runner leaves a base before the pitch reaches a batter, **all runners** are guilty, and depending on the subsequent action, runners must return to any unoccupied bases. The Rule Book has a number of examples that are pretty straightforward. Some that are less understood:

- If the batter is subsequently thrown out on a play, ALL RUNNERS return. For example, a batter hits a double with the bases loaded, but gets gunned down trying to stretch it into a triple. Since his out left all the bases open, no runs score and all runners must return. If his out was the third out of the inning, no runs score and the inning is over! Expect the offensive manager to be very peeved by this.
- The runners can only advance to the bases they would have achieved based on the **umpire's** judgment of the base value of the hit, regardless of any subsequent errors. For example, a batter hits a sharp grounder to the centerfielder with the bases loaded, and the ball goes under the centerfielder's legs all the way to the fence. After the play is over, the umpire may judge the value of the hit was a single. If so, he would put the batter on first, and put the other runners on second and third (only one run scores).
- If with the bases loaded the ball doesn't leave the infield, no runs score. This is explained in Example 15 in the Rule Book. What is not explained is if the ball is hit in the infield and then goes through because of an error on the fielder. Here the umpire should rule that the value of the hit is only one base, so everyone only gets one base and one run scores.

If a runner leaves early, he cannot correct his mistake by returning to touch the base. For example, if a runner on second leaves early, then sees the ball is flied to right. He tags up and tries for third, and ends up scoring on a wild throw. He must return to second because he left early, regardless of the fact he subsequently tagged it. There is no “fixing” a 7.13 violation.

Appeals (7.10):

Managers and coaches often have trouble with appeals and how to do them properly. An **APPEAL** is an act of a fielder in claiming violation of the rules by the offensive team. Rule 7.10 covers appeals.

Appeals must be made to the umpire that made the call being appealed.

Appeals must be made while the ball is in play (Alive).

You **don't** have to wait until the ball is dead to appeal. Example: Batter doubles but missed first base. You **don't** have to get the ball back to the pitcher and throw to first base: you may simply throw to first base and make an appeal (often referred to as a "live ball appeal").

When the ball does become dead, you must put it in play **before** appealing. It becomes in play when the pitcher has the ball and is on the rubber and the umpire says "play" (often referred to as a "dead ball appeal").

When the ball is alive an appeal may be made by the defense in any of the following ways:

- By touching the runner whom they believe committed a base running infraction;
- By touching the base they believe was missed while the runner was advancing;
- By touching the **original** base that a runner left before a fly ball was caught.

An appeal should be **clearly** intended as an appeal, either by a verbal request by the player or an act that **unmistakably** indicates to the umpire that it is an appeal. In all cases, the defense must make a verbal appeal to the umpire **or** complete an act that is unmistakably an appeal.

- Accidentally touching a base that was missed is not an appeal. For example: Batter doubles to right but misses first base. Right fielder throws to the first baseman, who steps on the bag and says A) nothing or B) "batter missed first". A) Is **not** an appeal. B) **Is** an appeal.
- A throw to a base to catch a runner who had not retouched is unmistakably an appeal. Example: Runner on third base (R3), fly ball to left, runner (R3) leaves before the catch. A throw to third base **is** an appeal. No verbal appeal is necessary here. This is an unmistakable act by the defense.

Appeals **must** be made before the next pitch or play. If the defense makes an appeal after "time" has been called, the umpire **should** say something like "put the ball in play and appeal again." Since no runner may advance or be put out while the ball is dead, this is not a play and the defense has **not** lost their right to appeal after the ball is put in play.

- The appeal itself is **not** a play. A fake throw to hold a runner is not a play. It is a play when a balk is committed during an appeal. Plays that occur during "continuous action" after an infraction do not cancel the defense's right to appeal.

The defense loses their right to appeal when any of the following actions occur:

- When the throw made in an appeal attempt goes into dead ball territory. When this occurs no more appeals may be made at any base. This is the "err" in Rule 7.10 on an appeal and is interpreted to be the same as a play.
- A pitch is made to the batter.
- A balk is committed before or as part of an appeal attempt.
- A play is made that is **not** part of continuous action. **Continuous action example:**
- Runner on first (R1) misses second as he advances to third on a hit. The defense makes a play on him at third and he is safe. The play was part of continuous action after the hit, therefore, **yes**; the defense **may** appeal the infraction at second.

Successive appeals may not be made on a runner at the same base. You can appeal the same runner at another base. Example: Batter triples and misses both first and second bases. Defense appeals at first base; the umpire rules the runner safe there. The defense **can** appeal the miss at second base.

V. Discussions with Umpires

Many leagues are using youth umpires. There are generally umpires ranging in age from 13 to 17, and even a 12-year old available in a pinch. All of these umpires are usually well trained in rules and mechanics, but you should expect they will make rookie mistakes. You are expected to give each of these umpires the respect you would give an adult umpire, since they have the very same authority on the field.

Please remember once the game starts, even though they may be 14 and you may be 40, **they** are in charge of the field. You should never use your age to assert authority over them. If there is a more senior umpire with them and you question a call, go to the umpire that made the call, not the senior umpire. If you spot an adult umpire in the crowd, do not appeal to them for help – they cannot. If the junior umpire feels the need to confer with his partner, he will. If not, and he sticks by his or her call, live with it. If you feel an umpire is in error, you have the right to protest. If you feel an umpire is not being fair or honest, we want to know. Contact either your Division Coordinator, or League UIC and let the League handle the problem from there.

Key points to remember:

1. Listen for key phrases or actions:

- "In my judgment..."
- "Coach, I've heard enough."
- A hand up means you're getting too close or too agitated. You need to back off, or you may be watching this game from the parking lot and hearing about the next one from your assistant coach. Remember, ejections carry a **mandatory** one-game suspension from the next game played. Period. No exceptions.

2. You **cannot** argue judgment calls, i.e. balls and strikes, safe or out, catch or no catch, fair or foul.

3. You can and **should** discuss any rules you think are being misinterpreted.

4. **When approaching an umpire do NOT argue. You are making a sales call:**

- **DON'T argue** with an umpire. **DO** get him to consider your alternative view.
- Be nice, it works better when you want to make a sale, which is what you are doing.
- Make your point, but don't show up the umpire or grandstand. **You are NOT there to put on a show.**
- Make sure time is out, or you have asked for and been granted time. Then approach the umpire.
- Your job description as manager or coach doesn't include an objective to bait the umpires. Don't do it.
- Control your anger, no matter how ticked-off you are. Most umpires will listen to reason - none should listen to you yell at them. The good ones will toss you. It's not arrogance; it's good game management.
- Recognize when it is futile. Some umpires are a legend in their own mind, or don't understand they just *might* have kicked one. When this happens, resist the urge to get the parting shot in.
- Go to the right umpire. Not to the oldest one, or to the plate umpire. **Go to the umpire who made the call.** No umpire should overrule another (9.02(c)), so if you've gone to the wrong umpire the conversation you've earned should sound like:
 - You: "I thought the catcher missed the tag at home "
 - Base Umpire: "Yep, the runner from second touched 3B on his way through to score"
 - You: "Huh?"
 - Base Umpire: "You're talking to the wrong umpire. He made that call, not me."
 - You: "Oh. Excuse me, Mr. Plate Umpire..."
- You can suggest the umpire go for help from another umpire, but you may not demand it.
- If you paint an umpire into a corner, or try to intimidate the umpire, he'll either stop listening or get defensive. Either way he's not listening to your sales pitch, and you're not going to persuade him to change his mind. Isn't changing his mind why you are out there in the first place?

4. When approaching an umpire do NOT argue. You are making a sales call (cont.):

- The word which should get you ejected immediately is not the dreaded F-word. It's the Y-word. **You**. As in "You made a terrible call" or "You are a terrible umpire". Talk about the call, not the individual who made it. "I think that's the wrong call" is factual, "You got the call wrong" is personal.
- There is a chance you have the rule wrong, not the umpire. On the other hand it isn't anywhere near a sure thing that the umpire has it right either. That's why you are out there, to try to get it right.
- You're stuck with the ump for the rest of the game. Don't moan and gripe for the next 2 hours. Don't play mind games with the umpire; it will get him thinking too much. That call is history, what you're really interested in are the calls for the rest of the game. Rattled umpires do not make good calls.
- Imagine you are on a long car trip on a steamy summer day with a pair of hyperactive 7 year-olds in the backseat. Turn off the A/C and listen to them fight for 2 hours. That's what it's like to be an umpire listening to crybaby coaches. It makes you understand why in some species, parents eat their offspring.
- Don't do this (that is, don't be a crybaby coach - what you do with your offspring is your business).
- Set a positive role model for your players. Hustle out there (but don't charge the umpire like a raging bull). Make your case crisply. When it's done, hustle back. And, don't moan to your players about the umpire all game - all it does is teach the players that they can blame their lack of success on anything and/or everything external. Rarely is a game lost on an umpire's call.
- Good things to say:
 - The play completes and you exit the dugout: "Time, please", and **wait** for it to be granted.
 - "Blue, I have a question about that call. Why did my runner get called out?" <listen to answer>
 - "Yes, but I thought X should have been called"<Umpire should have a reason why this wasn't so>
 - Shut mouth. Think. If it makes sense, say "Thanks", turn, and go to dugout. Let it go.
 - "Excuse me, I have a question on a rule," will almost always win you a chance to haul your soapbox out.
- If what the ump says it doesn't make sense, say so in a nice way. Think, and then make a rational argument, which is better than playing "Did-so"- "Did not". For example, when the ump says your runner gets sent back on Catcher's Interference, come up with something better than "But the runner on second was stealing, you can't let the catcher take it away by putting his glove up". If the answer is "Sure can, that's what the book says" you're toast, even though you have the rule right and the umpire has it wrong. You have left yourself nowhere to go.
 - Try: "I know runners are sent back if a runner gets hit by a batted ball or the batter is hit by a pitch, but a catcher can interfere on any swing of the bat. That's the one exception in the book where a stealing runner gets to keep his stolen base." You may not get your ruling, but you should have an umpire reading his rulebook after the game. The next time you come out you'll get listened to.
 - **Which brings up the following point:**
- Know the rules to a reasonable level. If you've been chirping "he's gotta slide" or "1+1" after every overthrow, don't expect to be taken seriously when you come out to discuss a rule interpretation.
- Sometimes, a manager will come out to discuss a judgment call, knowing full well that the call will not be reversed. His objective is to have the umpire wake up for future calls. Now, if you scream "The first baseman is standing my runner's way" from the dugout, and the first baseman does it again on the next play and blue calls obstruction, the other dugout will chirp "Come on blue, he's intimidated you into making that call". All sorts of high-decibel fun will ensue. Is that what you want?

Try this instead:

- Pick your moments. If their first baseman is standing in the way of runners, come out at a good time, like the end of an inning or during a lull in the action, and say something like "Last inning I counted four times when we had a runner on first and the first baseman got in his way. My runners are forced to run around him, and I think that should be obstruction. Could you watch that, please? Thanks."
- You didn't ask for a commitment from the umpire to call it. You didn't say, "You missed it". You left the umpire some room - maybe he has it right, and you don't. And, you got him thinking that he might be missing something, which was your objective. You did not show him up in front of the crowd or the other team - nobody but the two of you knows what you talked about. A good umpire will say something non-committal like, "Thanks, I'll keep an eye on it".
- Just make sure you tell **your** first baseman to make sure he doesn't get in the way of a base runner, because the next obstruction call may be on you, either because the ump is over-anxious or because he has a gonads problem and he's going to stick it to you. Either way, suck it back and don't bite.
- If you're absolutely you have the rule right and they don't, consider the situation. If it's a blowout, or the first inning, is this worthy of a protest? Even if you're right, maybe it's not. **Don't be afraid to protest if it's the right thing to do. It is your duty as a manager.** We all hate protests, but if it's the only way to get obstinate umpires to confer or read a rulebook, then I suggest that it is the right thing to do.
 - Just remember, the rulebook is poorly-written and confusing. When you have the crowd and both teams watching you, it's tough to find the rule you want. You may not want this to happen.
 - Have your rulebook, but don't bring it onto the playing field unless the umpire asks you to, or you ask the umpire if he wants to see it. But, don't be afraid to reference the book in the dugout, come out, and simply say "The rule that applies here is 5.09f". It's OK to stick it in your pocket when you go out, just don't pull a rulebook out unless asked.
 - When the umpires are ready to state their ruling to you, it may be a Good Thing to suggest that they tell both coaches at the same time - then you both hear the same words.
- If you get the umpires to confer you've achieved your goal. So retreat to near your dugout. Let them confer. They'll call you over when they're ready. Then hustle out; don't make them chase you down.
- Discussions should be one to one. Get your players and coaches out of there, then make your case.
- Control your parents and players. Tell the players "You play the game, I deal with the umpires".
- The prior two points above will make you many friends among the umpires. It may not get you any more calls, but at least you should be listened to when you need it.
- What to do when you have an absolute A-1 jerk of an umpire who just doesn't have a clue?
 - Keep your perspective. You're not married to the dolt; you only have to endure him for maybe 2 hours of your life. Suck it up and don't have a cow. Make notes during the game. Have a factual discussion with the league administrators later that day.
 - When it's over, it's over. Discussions end, and not everybody will be happy. Games end, and everybody's memory should be purged. If you encounter the guy again, it's a new game, the slate is clean, and you will not remember any specific situation from the previous game (although you might remember that he has no idea how to call a curve, or he doesn't give the bottom of the zone, or whatever).
 - The umpire is in control of the game. Leave it that way. If the guy cannot call a curve ball, or won't give the outside corner, then his reality differs from yours. His reality is the only one that counts. Deal with it. Adapt to it. If you can adapt to his version of reality better faster than the other coach, then you have an advantage.

The Short Version

- Ask for time **and make sure it has been granted by the umpire** before coming out
- Say “excuse me”, and call the plate umpire by name, or by “Sir” or “Ma’am”. If you **know** an umpire doesn’t mind being called “blue”, then use it, otherwise don’t.
- Ask the umpire, “What did you see on that play ?” or “I have a question about that play”.
- Listen to what he says, and think about it for a second. If it makes sense, then say “Thanks” and walk back to the dugout. If it doesn’t, then it’s your **duty** as manager to discuss it further.
- Start the discussion by saying something like “yes, but this is what I saw.” Or, “that may be, but did you see...” or “I don’t think that’s what the rule says. I think it says...”
- Listen to his reaction and think about it.
- If you hear “in my judgment” that means “I know I got the call right. Let’s play baseball.” Unless he’s misinterpreting a rule, the discussion should be over. If you think he has the rule wrong, keep talking, but confine your discussion to the rules.
- If after your discussion you are not satisfied with a rule interpretation, you **should** play the game under protest if you think that’s the right thing to do.
- Just because the umpire refuses to accept a protest will not affect its validity. Just make sure to mention **why** you are protesting **before** play starts, and note the point of protest in your book.
- Then, get back to playing ball.

VI. How to Protest in 10 Easy Steps

- Stay calm, and say something like “I’m sorry, but I don’t think that’s what the rule says. I would like to play the remainder of this game under protest.” Yes, you may make multiple protests in one game if need be.
- **Be nice, but don’t take no for an answer. You have a right to protest a rule misinterpretation. You do not have a right to protest a judgment call; so unless you have a rule to talk about, don’t bother. You don’t need the exact rule, but it helps. Keep your rulebook off the field until asked for it.**
- Get the plate umpire to accept a protest. Sometimes this is the hard part. However, if the umpire won’t accept the protest, this does **not** affect its validity (Rule 4.19). It just makes things slightly more difficult. If the protest is not accepted, make a note in your scorebook as in step 5 and move on. Sign your book.
- Get your scorebook in good order. The umpire should make sure the other manager does the same.
- Mark the **both team’s** scorebook at the play under protest, making sure to note precisely **at the time of the play under protest the following information about the situation:**
 - Visiting team name, home team name, place, date, and time
 - Umpire names (all of them)
 - Who is in and out of the lineup right now
 - What inning it is (top or bottom)
 - How many outs there are
 - What batter is up
 - What the count is on the batter
 - What runner(s) are on which base(s)
 - What is being protested
- Get the plate umpire to sign **both** scorebooks at the point of protest.
- Make sure both managers sign each other’s scorebooks. In case of dispute, the home team’s scorebook is the official scorebook, so make sure it is correct.
- **Resume playing the game. You’ve been nice, you’ve said your piece, and you’ll have your day “in court” later, so let it go and let’s play ball.**
- After the game, if you wish to continue the protest (only if you lose the game, unless you have some bizarre reason for protesting a game you won), you must file the protest **in writing** to the League President within 24 hours of the end of the game. Provide a copy to be sent to the Protest Committee as a courtesy.
- The Protest Committee, composed of the President, Player Agent, league’s Umpire-In-Chief and one or more other officers or directors who are not managers or umpires will then hear your protest. If the Protest Committee feels that there was a rule misinterpretation that affected the outcome of the game, the protest will be upheld, and the game will be replayed from the **exact** point of protest where the infraction occurred. That’s why you must note the exact circumstances at the time of protest; so the game can be resumed from there. If the Protest Committee does not uphold your protest then the result of the game stands.

Umpire Evaluation

Umpire's Name: _____ Game Date: _____

Division & Team: _____ Manager: _____

- Grading:
1. Exceptional - Some may equal, but none will exceed
 2. Very Good - Much better than required standards
 3. Average - Meets required standards
 4. Marginal - Does not entirely meet required standards
 5. Unsatisfactory - Does not meet expected standards

A. Personal appearance on the field (neatness & proper dress) _____

B. Judgment on the field (decisiveness & consistency) _____

- C. Field mechanics:
1. Communications/teamwork _____
 2. Position _____
 3. Timing _____
 4. Fair/foul coverage _____
 5. Movement of game _____

- D. Plate mechanics:
1. Communications/teamwork _____
 2. Position (balls/strikes) _____
 3. Head height _____
 4. Strike zone _____
 5. Consistency _____
 6. Timing (balls/strikes) _____
 7. Fair/foul coverage _____
 8. Movement of game _____
 9. Position (calls @ plate) _____
 10. Timing (calls @ plate) _____

E. Composure (handling situations with players, coaches, etc.) _____

F. Attitude _____

G. Rules knowledge _____

GENERAL COMMENTS: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Please send to League UIC)

Protest Form

Manager making this protest:

Game Date:

Division:

Home Team:

Visiting Team:

Manager:

Manager:

Plate Umpire:

Base Umpire(s):

Describe the Game Situation Prevailed At the Time of the Protest

Inning:	Outs:	Count:	Score:
_____	_____	Balls	Visitors
Top/Bottom		Strikes	Home

Pitcher:

Batter:

Runner(s) on base(s): **R1** **R2** **R3** **Lineups checked in scorebook ? Y / N**

**Please describe the incident that occurred and the reason for protest:
(Please include the rule you think was misinterpreted)**

Date Incident Was First Reported:

Date Report Was Mailed:

Manager's Signature:

Date:

Mail to the League President: (As a courtesy, include a copy for the Protest Committee).