

Mid-America Umpires

# MAU Umpire Manual

Information Guide for Mid-America Umpires

2012

Key Explanations  
& Techniques

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## Key Explanations & Techniques

### Angle & Distance

There is a perfect umpire position for each play that occurs on the playing field. That position is defined as the location of the field which will enable you to clearly see all the essential elements necessary to make an accurate ruling. Proper positioning consists of **proper angle to the play and the proper distance from the play**. As a rule, you should establish the proper angle to the play first then acquire the appropriate distance. In other words, angle before distance.

The proper angle for all force plays is 90° unless the umpire is working 1<sup>st</sup> base with no runner on and the throw is originating from the right side (see *Ninety-Degree Theory, Positioning for Plays at the Plate, and Pressure*). Proper distance for force plays is 15-20 feet.

For tag plays, the umpire must secure a position a lot closer because a tag is applied to a very specific part of the runner's body. The umpire must be able to see the exact point on the body where the tag was applied. The recommended distance for tag plays is 8-10 feet. With multiple runners in the 2-umpire system, this is sometimes very hard to accomplish. Again, get the best angle first and then, if you can, get the correct distance.

### Ground Balls to the Infield

With no runners on base, on a ground ball to the infield the base umpire will move from his position on the foul line and set up for the play at 1st base. He should generally move to a position approximately 15 to 20 feet from the base and such that he will be approximately at a right angle to the throw from the infielder. Umpires are to take as many of these plays possible in fair territory.

When the base umpire comes in to set up for the play at 1st base, he should come off the foul line while facing the batted ball. As the ball is about to reach the fielder, the umpire should square his body towards 1st base – with proper distance and angle to the base – while continuing to watch the ball by keeping his head turned towards the fielder. Then, as the fielder releases the ball (and the umpire sees that the throw is “true”), he will come to a set position (hands on knees as a basic fundamental), turn his

head towards the base, and focus on the bag while he listens for the sound of the ball hitting the glove. In the early stages of professional umpiring, it is highly recommended that the base umpire have his hands on his knees for this type of play at 1st base. (Variations are permissible as the umpire gains experience.)

The base umpire should call the play at 1st base using a crisp, clear, visible mechanic. If the play is strictly a routine out, then it is permissible for the umpire not to use voice with the mechanic. If the umpire does choose to use a voice with the routine out mechanic (which is also acceptable), then he should make sure that he is not overly loud on the routine out call so as not to draw unnecessary attention. However, as the play gets closer, the umpire should vary the intensity of his signal and voice based on the closeness of the play. In other words, the closer the play, the louder the umpire's voice and the stronger his signal, so that he is using his loudest voice and strongest signal on "bangers."

After calling the batter-runner out at 1st base, the umpire will return to his original position on the 1st base foul line. He may either jog back to that position or walk briskly; either method is acceptable.

On a ground ball to the infield with no one on base, the plate umpire will come out from behind home plate by coming around the left side and then proceed to jog (not spring) down the 1st base line (straddling the foul line), going no farther than the 45-foot line. He should be virtually stopped when the play occurs at 1st base. There are four reasons for having the plate umpire come up the line with no one on base:

1. The plate umpire will be watching for interference by the batter-runner while out of the 45-foot lane. Should the plate umpire see such an infraction, he should make the call. This is not to say, however, that the base umpire may never make such a call. For example, if the base umpire observes the batter-runner interfere with the play at 1st base while clearly out of the 45-foot lane, it is of course permissible for the base umpire to make this call also.
2. The plate umpire will be ready for any overthrows at 1st base. If the plate umpire sees the ball being overthrown at 1st base, he will immediately and rapidly move with the overthrow and take responsibility for the ball going out of play.
3. The plate umpire is also in position to help on swipe tags on the batter-runner at 1st base if there are no runners on base. Although this is rarely used, it is permissible for the base umpire

to ask for help on a swipe tag on this play – if, for some reason, the base umpire has not had a good look at the play. (Note that the “appeal” should be initiated by the first base umpire immediately and before a confrontation with a player or manager occurs.) The terminology by the base umpire would be, “Did he tag him?” or “Do you have a tag?” while pointing to the plate umpire. The response by the plate umpire would be a very emphatic, “Yes! He’s out on the tag!” or “No! He missed him!” (while using a strong visual signal). Again, this technique is rarely used (because, for one thing the base umpire should be in fairly good position for the play to begin with); and when it is used, the plate umpire must emphatically sell the call (verbally and with a strong visual signal).

4. The plate umpire is in a position to cover any play on the batter-runner at 1st base in case the base umpire has gone foul due to (a) pressure from the 2nd baseman and (b) subsequent overthrow at 1st.
  - In all four situations, the plate umpire would return directly to the plate following the play.
  - There is also a 5th situation not mentioned, but is worth mentioning. This is the pulled foot by the 1st baseman or pitcher that is covering the base. The plate umpire is in fairly good position to help on that too.

Once again, on ground balls hit to the infield, the base umpire should try to take as many plays as possible in fair territory, working for an approximate 90-degree angle to the throw. This would include all ground balls hit to 3rd base, shortstop, back to the pitcher, and the 2nd baseman’s right or directly at the 2nd baseman.

If the ground ball is topped in front of the plate where the catcher and pitcher are both going for the ball, the base umpire would again come into fair territory and try for the 90-degree angle to the throw (in this case the base umpire would swing several steps into fair territory). If the ground ball is topped just a few feet down the 1st base line, the base umpire would do the same thing. However, if the ground ball is hit down the 1st base line in the vicinity of 1st base, the base umpire must stay on the line until the ball is touched (or passes 1st base) because the base umpire has fair/foul responsibility after 1st base, while the plate umpire has this responsibility until the ball reaches 1st base. If the base umpire must point the ball fair (as on ball fielded by the 1st baseman behind the bag but near the line), he

would first indicate that the ball is fair (by pointing) and then move off the line into fair territory to make the call at 1st base.

If the ground ball is hit to the 2nd baseman's left, the base umpire should again try to move into fair territory to make the call (his angle would be cut back from the 90-degree angle in this case). However, if the base umpire feels pressure from the 2nd baseman moving to his left (or from 1st baseman for that matter), it is permissible for the base umpire to move into foul territory to take this type of play, keeping in mind the concepts of proper distance and angle to the play. In this situation, should the ball be overthrown at 1st base, the base umpire must be ready to swing around in front of the cutout at 1st base and then get a wide angle so as to be "ahead" of the batter-runner for any play at 2nd base.

On plays where the pitcher will be covering at 1st base, the base umpire should again try to take the play in fair territory. When the pitcher will be covering, the base umpire should move approximately two steps off the foul line into fair territory and position himself approximately 20 feet from the 1st base bag. Although this positioning does not provide a 90-degree angle to the throw, the umpire is in very good position to see the pitcher touch the inside edge of the base. Also, this positioning will allow the umpire to be out of the way for both the pitcher covering the bag as well as the batter-runner overrunning 1st base. Should the fielder miss the swipe tag and the batter-runner miss touching 1st base, the mechanic by the base umpire would be, "Safe!" (giving safe signal). Again, if the base umpire is pressured by the 1st baseman (or 2nd baseman) on this play, it is permissible to take the play in foul territory; but the suggested and recommended position is in fair territory as just explained.

### **Swipe Tags at First Base with No Runners On**

When the base umpire moves in to take his position for plays at 1st base, he should remember that he is not "cemented" to the ground at that spot. For example, after the base umpire has watched the infielder field the ground ball (with his head turned towards the ball and his body already squared to the base), he will watch the throw released by the infielder. If the umpire sees the throw is not "true" – that is, if he anticipates a high wide throw at 1st base – then he must be ready for a possible swipe tag at 1st base. To be in position for the swipe tag, the base umpire must step around to his left or right – depending where the throw is – in order to see the swipe tag.

If the fielder comes off the bat at 1st base but the fielder tags the batter-runner before he reaches the base, the mechanic by the base umpire would be an emphatic, "On the tag!" (while pointing at the play with his left arm) and then followed by "He's out!" (while giving the out signal). Should the throw pull the fielder off the bag and the swipe tag misses the runner as well, the terminology by the base umpire would be, "Safe! You missed the tag! Safe!" or "Safe! No tag! Safe!" Should the throw pull the 1st baseman off the bag but no tag attempt is made, then the mechanic by the base umpire would be, "Safe!" (giving safe mechanic); followed by "He's off the bag!" (giving a sweeping motion away from the bag with both arms). All of these types of mechanics need to be given very forcefully and emphatically by the base umpire.

With no one on base, should the batter hit a ground ball up the 1st base line, the plate umpire will come up the foul line and be responsible for the fair/foul decision (provided the ball becomes fair or foul before reaching 1st base). The plate umpire will also be responsible for these three items: interference out of the lane, overthrows, and help with swipe tags, and responsibility on plays on batter-runner back into 1st when the base umpire has overthrow responsibilities. If the ball is fielded, for example, by the pitcher up the 1st base line and the pitcher tags or attempts to tag the batter-runner, the responsibility for the tag is based upon the field location of where the batter-runner is tagged. If the tag (or attempted tag) is made before the 45-foot line, the responsibility belongs to the plate umpire. If the tag is made past the 45-foot line, the responsibility belongs to base umpire. This would be one occasion when a swipe-tag appeal could be legitimately used. (For example, the base umpire could ask for help if he doesn't see a swipe tag made just past the 45-foot line.) Otherwise, as mentioned earlier in this manual, the swipe-tag appeal is rarely used.

### **Ninety-Degree (90°) Theory**

The ***ninety-degree (90°) theory*** prescribes the proper angle for the base umpire to achieve for umpiring force plays at first base when his starting position is in foul territory and the throw to first originates from the left side of the infield. Since the fielder reaches directly toward the throw, this angle will position the umpire so that he can see the fielder's foot, the batter-runner's foot and the receiving side of the glove or mitt. To accomplish this, the umpire must establish the 90° angle to the line of the throw. This should be the umpire's initial positioning. If the throw is not an on-line or ***true*** throw, it may be necessary for the umpire to adjust his angle from the initial 90°. Potential force plays often turn into tough tag plays when the throw is off the mark. In that event, the 90° angle may not be the best

angle for the ensuing play. An adjustment is necessary to see the tag attempt when the throw pulls the fielder off the bag. The 90° theory does not apply to umpire positioning when the throw originates from the right side of the infield.

## Pressure

**Pressure** is the criterion used to identify the situations in which the base umpire should position himself in foul territory for plays at first base. When the throw originates from the right side, the majority of plays should be taken in fair territory 2-3 steps off the foul line. However, there will be times that the umpire experiences **pressure** and needs to move into foul territory for the play at first. Three conditions illustrate **pressure**:

1. A position 2-3 steps in fair territory would put the umpire in the line of the 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman's throw.
2. A position 2-3 steps in fair territory would put the umpire in a position that would make it impossible for him to see the 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman's release of the throw and the play at 1<sup>st</sup> without abrupt head movement.
3. On a batted ball fielded by the 1<sup>st</sup> baseman, a position 2-3 steps in fair territory would put the 1<sup>st</sup> baseman between the umpire and the pitcher covering and block the view of the play at first.

## As Far As the Play Will Allow

Remember that there is an ideal distance to be from every play. It would be great if you could always get to that optimum point. Unfortunately, that is not possible. In the 2-umpire system, getting the ideal distance can be especially challenging. Keep in mind that you always want to be set (stopped) before the play occurs. Therefore, you advance only as far as you possibly can in order to be stopped before the play happens. In the past, there has been a lot of ambivalent instruction which admonishes the umpire to be set when making his call. Failure to distinguish between the call and the signal has led to some serious misunderstandings. It is much better to be moving when signaling your decision than to be moving when the play actually occurs

Umpiring is a function of time. The trajectory of the ball, its velocity, and the position of the fielders are all important factors in helping you determine how far you can advance toward a play before gearing down and stopping.

Understand that umpiring is not a contest to see how close you can get to a play. In order to see all the essential elements and have credibility, you should be neither too close nor too far. It is important to have a predetermined goal in mind when advancing into position. Remember, if you can hustle into position, you can also hustle out of position. Knowing the proper position for the most probable play is priority #1; getting there is priority #2.

For instance on a fly ball to the outfield that is the plate umpire's responsibility, the plate umpire should get out as far as he can and be set for the catch or no catch. He should not go past a diagonal line from the 1<sup>st</sup> base bag to the 3<sup>rd</sup> base bag. This line cuts through the back portion of the 18-foot dirt circle of the mound. So, on a high fly ball, he will get that far and no further. On a line drive to the outfield, he will probably only get onto the edge of the infield grass and the dirt near home plate.

For the base umpire, he will go out on a ball from the A position once he reads a "trouble" ball and be quite a ways out there on a high fly ball. On a line shot toward the line that the right fielder is going hard for, he probably will only get one to 2 steps into the outfield before he needs to come to a standing set for the play.

These are just a few of the ideas that describe the term, "As Far As the Play Will Allow."

#### **1. Pause, Read, React:**

The Pause, Read, React technique illustrates the step-by-step approach a base umpire should take in order to determine his responsibilities and best positioning for an ensuing play. When the ball is initially hit, the umpire should hesitate momentarily to assess the potential situation (Pause). While paused, he observes the location of the ball and the fielders in order to mentally determine if the ball is in his area of jurisdiction. He then assesses the most likely play situation that could occur (Read). Following the read, he establishes his position based on his best judgment of what is most likely to occur. He decides to either go out or come in (React).

Example: Fly ball hit to right field with no runner on base.

Base umpire steps forward with his left foot parallel to the first base foul line. While opening to the field of play, he has hesitated rather than reacting spontaneously and mistakenly committing to any action that may prove to be unnecessary. Square to the foul line and open to the field of play, he then reads the location of the ball and the position of the fielders. These

two criteria determine his read and provide him the information he needs to determine whether he should (1) advance into the outfield for better positioning for a potential play or (2) advance into the infield and take all play responsibility on the batter-runner. Criteria explaining when the umpire should go out and when he should come in are discussed under Trouble #41 in this glossary.

## **2. Pivot**

When running, a pivot is the planting of the front foot and a coordinated turn of the body around that fixed point enabling the umpire to establish a new path. This footwork facilitates the umpire's ability to change his course while squaring his upper body to the ball or to other key elements on the field that he needs to see. Though the pivot is most frequently used at 1st base by the base umpire, this footwork can be used by any umpire at any point on the field to change directions.

## **3. Pivot Point**

With no runners on base, the base umpire will be positioned in foul territory. On balls hit to the outfield which do not require him to "go out," the base umpire will come into the infield grass and pivot. The spot at which he plants his lead foot to initiate the pivot is referred to as the pivot point. This point should be 8-10 feet beyond a direct line connecting 1st and 2nd base. When the umpire anticipates no play back into 1st, he should pick a pivot point that will enable him to comfortably stay ahead of an advancing runner. If you anticipate a possible double or triple, the pivot point should be progressively toward 2nd rather than close to the cutout at 1st. This is referred to as cheating the pivot.

## **4. Trouble**

Early play recognition enables the umpire to identify potentially tough calls in the outfield in a timely manner and provides an opportunity for him to improve his position for those potential plays. This is especially important in the 2-umpire system where only two people are responsible for all the possible plays throughout the field. Following are some relevant cues that define potential trouble and would require the umpire to "go out" or advance "as far as the play will allow" to secure a better position.

1. Any batted ball down the right or left field line that requires a fair/foul decision;
2. Any batted ball that requires an outfielder to run/move aggressively toward a foul line;

3. Any batted ball that has the potential to enter a dead ball area (ground rule);
4. Any batted ball that has the chance of leaving the playing field in flight or after bouncing;
5. Any batted ball that has a chance to be touched by a spectator;
6. An outfielder running hard in or hard back to field a batted ball in flight (tough chance);
7. Two or more fielders are converging on a fly ball when there is doubt who might actually make the play or a collision is possible.

If there is no runner on base, the base umpire will read the ball or fielders from his position in foul territory using the pause, read, react technique. If he determines trouble, he will advance into the best angle and distance he can to observe the play. He will communicate his intention to the plate umpire. The plate umpire assumes responsibility for all plays on the batter-runner. If possible, the base umpire may be able to return from his position in the outfield after “going out” and take responsibility for a play at the plate on the batter-runner. This is unlikely unless there has been an overthrow at 3rd and the batter-runner attempts to score. The base umpire will not communicate to his partner that he has the play at the plate until he is in a position to take the play.

If there is any runner on base, the base umpire still has responsibility for a trouble ball in the outfield between the left fielder and right fielder; however, he will never advance beyond the dirt/grass line to observe the play. Trouble balls that cause the left fielder or right fielder to move toward their respective foul lines are the responsibility of the plate umpire.

**Reminder:** We are speaking only in the Two-Umpire System. The Three-Umpire System allows the umpire on the inside or the slot position to go out on specific trouble balls to the outfield.

### **Watch the Ball and Glance at the Runner(s)**

In the 2-umpire system, it is very important that you know the status of the baseball and the runner(s) at all times. The technique used to accomplish this requires the umpire to divide his attention between the ball and the runners. Watching the ball and reading the fielder will provide an early cue as to what play possibilities exist. In many situations, the same umpire will have multiple responsibilities (e.g. runners touching bases, tag-ups on fly balls, obstruction and interference.). For this to be accomplished, he must watch the ball and glance at the runner(s). The terms watch and glance are important. The

priority is clearly the ball. The term watch implies that he spends more time reading the ball than glancing at the runner(s). This is not to downplay the importance of observing the runner(s). It is critically important that the umpire divides his attention properly and focuses his attention momentarily on the runner(s) at the appropriate times (e.g. when a runner is approaching a base or nearing a fielder).

Example: No runner on and base hit directly to the left fielder. The base umpire will hustle into the infield watching the ball as he busts in. Watching the ball will tell him whether the ball was fielded cleanly or got by the fielder. After reaching the appropriate point, he will pivot and glance at the batter-runner as he approaches and passes 1st base and the fielder determining whether or not the base was legally touched and if any obstruction occurred. The umpire then returns his attention to the ball and reads where the fielder is going to throw it. Once that is determined, he glances back at the batter-runner to determine whether or not he is advancing to the next base or returning to the one he just passed. Depending on the play, the umpire will either advance into play position at 2nd and set for the imminent play; or, he will stop and build an angle back into 1st for a potential play there.

The concept of watching the ball and glancing at runners will be used constantly throughout the game to enable the umpires to anticipate proper play positioning. It is especially important in the 2-umpire system. In the more advanced systems, the responsibilities are divided differently and it is much easier for the umpires to see everything they are expected to see.

The admonition “keep your eye everlastingly on the ball” is terrible advice and will create lots of problems for you. Knowing your responsibilities and how to use your eyes properly are keys to effective umpiring.

## Reading Cues

The key to staying ahead of the game and being able to adjust to non-routine plays is your ability to read cues and recognize play possibilities before they occur. An umpire must watch the game from a completely different perspective than a fan, player, manager or coach. You are constantly reading the ball, the fielders, the runners and your partner. Examples:

- Observing the position of an outfielder’s front foot will indicate to an alert umpire where he intends to throw the ball. Long before the fielder ever releases the ball, the umpire can

correctly determine where the ball is going to be thrown. This provides him the extra time he may need to stay ahead of the runner and acquire the proper position for an ensuing play.

- Observing the flight of a throw after it leaves an infielder's hand will help you determine whether you are going to have a force play or a swipe tag play at 1stbase.
- Observing the base path of a right-handed hitter as he leaves the batter's box en route to 1stwill give you an idea of whether or not you are going to have a possible runner's lane violation.
- Observing how hard a ball is hit to the 2ndbaseman will indicate whether the infielder is going to throw to 2ndfor a force play, attempt a tag on the runner advancing to 2nd, or throw quickly to first.
- Observing the quality of the throw to the plate from an outfielder will alert you to the type play that is most likely to develop. If the throw pulls the catcher up the 1stbase line, you are more likely to have a swipe tag play than a collision play; therefore, you should acknowledge this cue and adjust your position toward the 3rdbase line extended.
- Observing your partner turn his back to the infield when a ball is hit down the right field line with no one on base tells you that you have responsibility for all plays on the batter-runner.

## Pause, Read, React

The Pause, Read, React technique illustrates the step-by-step approach a base umpire should take in order to determine his responsibilities and best positioning for an ensuing play. When the ball is initially hit, the umpire should hesitate momentarily to assess the potential situation (Pause). While paused, he observes the location of the ball and the fielders in order to mentally determine if the ball is in his area of jurisdiction. He then assesses the most likely play situation that could occur (Read). Following the read, he establishes his position based on his best judgment of what is most likely to occur. He decides to either go out or come in (React).

Example: Fly ball hit to right field with no runner on base.

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better positioning for a potential play or (2) advance into the infield and take all play responsibility on the batter-runner.

## **Prioritizing Responsibilities**

It is essential that umpires prioritize their responsibilities if they are going to work the 2-umpire system to its maximum potential. All plays are important but it is impossible to see everything that occurs during the course of the game with only two umpires. It is very probable that an umpire will have multiple responsibilities following one batted ball. Consider the following play, for example. With runners on 2nd and 3rd and a fly ball down the right field line, the plate umpire has four clearly-defined responsibilities:

1. the fair/foul decision;
2. the catch/no-catch decision;
3. the tag-up at third; and
4. a possible play at the plate.

The first three of these actions are often going to occur at approximately the same time. It is critically important, however, that the plate umpire prioritize his duties on this one play. Fair/Foul is the number-one priority. If the ball is foul and not caught, the tag-up and possible play at the plate are irrelevant. If the ball is fair but not caught, the tag-up is irrelevant. The umpire's job on this play is to position himself for the fair/foul; then stay with the fielder and ball long enough to determine whether or not the fielder made a legal catch. If a catch has been made, the umpire must then glance back to 3rd to verify a legal tag-up. Finally, he must position himself for the potential play at the plate. The tag-up at 3rd is often an educated guess based on the position of the runner when checked. When a third or fourth umpire is added to the system, responsibilities change and coverage should improve.

## **Proper Use of Eyes**

The proper use of eyes is the key to good timing, and timing is the single most important factor in calling pitches and plays correctly. On pitches, it is critical that you track the pitch from the time it leaves the pitcher's hand until it reaches the bat or catcher's mitt. If you observe the pitch only as far as the plate area, you will be deprived of some very valuable information about the ball's flight that can help determine your call.

When the ball beats the runner to the base on force plays, it is critical that the umpire shifts his eyes from the base to the fielder's glove to ascertain firm and secure possession before declaring the runner out. Leaving this step out will create poor timing which will often result in missed calls or calls which have to be changed.

Using your eyes properly to track pitches longer and redirecting your eyes properly on force plays will guarantee good timing and more accurate calls.

### **Clearing the Catcher**

Clearing the catcher basically means getting out of his way. There will be times when the catcher turns abruptly and starts pursuit of a foul popup, passed ball or wild pitch. You must react quickly to avoid a collision. First, determine which way the catcher is going to advance. At this point, you do not look at the ball; you "read" the catcher to determine which way he is going to go. If the catcher's initial move is to his right, you will pivot on the ball of your left foot while swinging your right foot back. This clears the way for the catcher to move to his right without any interference from you. If the catcher's initial move is to his left, you will pivot on the ball of your right foot while swinging your left foot back avoiding contact with the catcher. If his initial movement is straight back, pivot on the ball of either foot and clear his pathway to the ball. Once the catcher has passed you, move into position to umpire the ensuing play. You could have a potential catch/no catch, spectator interference, or a ball going out of play.

Another time you will need to avoid the catcher is when the ball is hit within the infield and he is moving up the baseline in foul territory. The catcher is going to the right toward 1st; so you clear him by going left and positioning yourself on the 1st base foul line before advancing toward the forty-five foot line.

### **Drop Step – Opening Your Gate – Clearing the Catcher**

The drop step and the technique used in opening your gate are identical. These are two different terms that describe the same footwork. This footwork is used by the plate umpire to avoid a catcher in pursuit of a foul popup, wild pitch or passed ball. It will also be used by the base umpire when he is working on the first base foul line (1) to acquire proper angle for fair/foul decision when the ball lands beyond him and (2) to clear the pathway of the first baseman in pursuit of a ground ball between him and the foul line, or, when he is in pursuit of a fly ball in foul territory. Additionally, when he is working in the middle

of the infield, the base umpire will use this footwork frequently to position himself for steals of 2nd base, pick-offs, and the second-to-first double play.

**The technique:** You simply keep one foot on the ground turning (pivoting) on the ball of that foot as you swing the opposite foot back. Where you land that free foot swinging back will depend on where you need to position it in order to square your body to the ensuing play.

Some of us do not understand that this first step of clearing the catcher is a key activity in all of sports. Being able to read the catcher by watching his shoulders will help you avoid being run into by him. It is also important in avoiding the 1st and 2nd baseman on pop ups near the 1st baseline. The drop step is used in many sports such as football as a back judge, referee and sometimes as an umpire. Even the wing guys will do it as they leave the line of scrimmage. All trail basketball officials use it once they react to a quick break the other way. Tennis players have to use it to get to cross court position and you can find it in almost any sport.

On pop ups most of us look up at the ball. That is our 1st mistake. We need to train ourselves to not look up initially on any fly ball except a line drive. We need to learn to let fielders take us to the play. So, before you clear the catcher or go after a pop up or fly ball anywhere, we need to read our nearest fielder. For the plate umpire that is our catcher, for the base umpire in position A, that is the 1st baseman. In fact, on every ball hit to the right side for the base umpire, you should be taking a READ step and begin to read the ball, fielders and how they are moving toward the ball.

On steal attempts most of the base umpires we have seen have been just turning and not getting closer to their play at 2nd base. The 1st step is the drop step from position B with the right foot as we read the catcher coming out of his position readying himself to make the long throw to 2nd base. The 2nd step is to read the throw. If it is on the money, all we have to do is continue to cross-over with our left foot and at least one more right step followed by what I consider a close step. This close step should be toward the middle of the diamond and it puts you into a squared up position with your chest facing 2nd base and the tag attempt of the runner from 1st base. Remember not to close too soon because you will get hit with the throw. The entire time until the throw passes you, you have been watching the ball. Once the ball passes you, you need to focus on the fielder's glove since it is the slowest moving object of the 3

possible ones to observe. The ball is moving too fast to continue following it. The runner is coming out of the right side of your vision and he is moving faster than the glove. The base is a non-moving part of the equation but it is incidental to the out and it will always be in your background vision. The glove is going to catch the ball and try to make a tag. This is what we observe on any tag play. Before we see the tag attempt we also need to get into a set position. Many of you that are not trained and too many of you that have been trained properly still do not see the value in going to a HANDS-ON-KNEES SET (HOKS). I believe you are all wet in your thinking. The HOKS is still the best look at any play there is. It is necessary for base umpires to use it on all plays on the bases (tag or force plays) except the front end of double play. For the plate umpire, since he has a mask, he probably will not be able to get a HOKS except for the play at 3rd on a 1st to 3rd play or on a fly ball tag-up with runners on 1st and 2nd. Most plays at the plate need a last 2nd adjustment. Please in a 2-man system, no knee set positions. These are so out of touch with reality, you cannot believe that this is even an option.

Now, once you are set for this play in a HOKS, you observe the glove and if in doubt the ball is still in the glove or not, ask the fielder to show you the ball. If it is there, no is the time to call and signal the out. Most tag plays on steals are close so most of them need to be sold with an emphatic voice and signal of whatever your great timing, outstanding judgment and perfect position has afforded your judgment. However, not all throws are great or good even. Sometimes the throw is going to come more toward you than it is toward 2nd base. So, the adjustment is now made by moving not toward 2nd base but keeping the ball in front of you and stepping toward the 1st to 2nd base, baseline you will be looking at the back end of the runner and the middle infielder catching the ball in the baseline. You may have obstruction or a tag attempt that would have been difficult to see if you would have continued toward the middle of the diamond. On this play you probably will not be able to get a HOKS because of how you end up moving away from the ball. You do get a good standing set by taking a last second adjustment with a STEP, LOOK AND A LEAN to see the tag attempt if there is one. It is all you can expect to get in a 2-umpire system.

### **Clearing the Bat**

After hitting a ball, the batter will sometimes drop or toss his bat into a position near home plate that might subsequently interfere with a play at the plate. As a courtesy, the plate umpire may opt to move (clear) the bat from its precarious position. Three criteria should be used in deciding whether or not to clear the bat.

1. **Is it necessary?** In other words, is there a possibility of a play at the plate? If there is no possibility of a runner attempting to score with a play being made on him, you do not need to clear the bat. If there is a possibility of a play, the umpire must determine....
2. **Is it available?** Ask yourself: is it near enough to the plate that I can get to it? If it is near enough, proceed to the final question....
3. **Is it possible?** Is it possible to get to the bat, move it, and get back into the proper position for the ensuing play at the plate? If the answer to all three questions is “Yes,” then clear the bat.

THIS IS KNOWN AS THE **NAP** THEORY

1. **Necessary?**
2. **Available?**
3. **Possible?**

The proper technique for clearing the bat will allow you to keep an eye on your responsibilities and move the bat safely away from the immediate area of the plate. While bending over to grab the bat, keep your head up with chin parallel to the ground watching the runner round 3rd. There is always the possibility of a missed base, obstruction, or a coach’s assist. In the 2-umpire system, these are all your calls as the plate umpire.

**The technique:** Grip the bat firmly with your right hand, point the handle or barrel directly toward foul territory, and slide the bat aggressively along the ground. The bat should never leave the ground. Make sure that you slide it far enough so that it is out of your way when you position yourself for the potential play and it is not in the catcher’s way if he needs to adjust to a bad throw. Sliding the bat rather than picking it up and throwing it also minimizes any risk of injury to an on-deck hitter who may be coaching the approaching runner.

Also, it is important that you don't try to kick it out of the way too, because if you do, it will sometimes come back in a circle to you and be in an even more treacherous position than before the kick. Either do it correctly or not at all. Definitely do not pick it up and hold it. Slide it away from the plate area.

## The Plate Umpire

# MAU Umpire Manual

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## The Plate Umpire

### Important Definitions

#### The SLOT:

The area between the catcher's head and the batter's body when the batter is in his natural stance and the catcher is in his normal crouched position. YOU WANT YOUR EYES AND HEAD in the middle of the slot.

#### TRACKING:

Observing the entire flight of the pitch with independent eye movement while keeping the head and body still. This is one of the most common reason an umpire misses a pitch. They give up on the pitch too soon, or do not track the ball into the glove, and the ball does something to either make it a strike or a ball after the umpire has stopped tracking and already decided on the pitch.

#### TIMING:

The result of using your eyes properly while tracking the ball from the pitcher's release to the bat or the catcher's mitt. The proper use of the eyes suppresses the natural tendency to react immediately and call the pitch prematurely. Timing is and was the largest mistake umpires make. Proper timing is not something you gain by thinking of waiting longer to announce your decision but one of the proper use of your eyes. Watching the ball from the time of release until you see the ball hit the catcher's mitt before you make up your mind is of the utmost importance. Refer to: **PROPER USE OF EYES**. There is a practice technique to use your finger and track it only with your eyes and no head movement at all. This is a must if you hope to learn good timing. SEE IT! DECIDE IT! CALL IT!

### Basics of Working the Plate:

The plate assignment is one of the hardest jobs in sports officiating. It normally requires more than two hundred (200) decisions in a two-hour period. It takes a great deal of concentration and common sense to perform. The same basics used on the bases, positioning, concentration, timing and selling the calls can be utilized at the plate as well.

The slot position is the area between catcher's head and the batter's body when the batter is in his natural stance and the catcher is in his receiving position. The purpose of the slot position is to give the plate umpire the best possible view of the strike zone while maintaining correct equipment protective abilities.

### **Positioning, Evaluating and Calling the Pitch:**

- The pitching process is cyclical – it goes through the same stages pitch after pitch.
- You may approach this problem by dividing this cycle (the pitch cycle) into phases:
  1. Standing Position,
  2. Set Position,
  3. Pitch-Tracking,
  4. Evaluation,
  5. Signal and Call and
  6. Relax between Pitches.

### **Standing Position:**

The standing position places our feet and bodies in the general location needed for calling the strike zone properly except for the fact PU is still standing.

- Proper positioning starts at the feet and works up from there.
- Ideally you want to drop from your standing position down into your set position.
- Develop a comfortable standing position behind catcher.
- A wide stance encourages more stability.
- Keep your eyes centered on the pitcher.
- Position your eyes to line up with the inside line of the batter's box.
- Set your feet in a heel (of the catcher) to toe (of the slot foot) and heel (of the slot foot) to toe (of the non-slot foot) pattern.
- Keep the slot foot straight and its protection forward.
- The back foot should flair up to 45 degrees for balance and fit behind the catcher.

### **Dropping to a Set Position:**

- Watch as F1 begins his motion, lifts his leg and reaches his arm back to deliver the pitch.
- Then, drop to a set position, like sitting in a chair and lock into position.
- Use your legs (not your back) to adjust your head height.

- Lean forward only enough to keep your balance.
- Drop into your set position by the time F1 releases the pitch.
- The back foot flairs up to 45 degrees to balance and fit you behind the catcher without bumping him with your knee.

### **Set Position Goals:**

- Your eyes should be three (3) or six (6) inches inside of the plate.
- Set your eyes a little (about a ball width) higher than the top of the batter's upper strike zone limit.
- Your chin should not be below the top of catcher's head and never below his ear.
- Lock in your elbows into your body.
- Establishing the stillness of a locked position and open visual field readies PU for the pitch-tracking phase that begins by following the ball well with your eyes.

### **Pitch Tracking:**

- Follow the pitch with your eyes – not your head
- See the ball from the pitcher's release through CATCHER's mitt with both eyes.
- Great observation leads to great evaluation.

### **Evaluation:**

- Maximize data gathering abilities - alignment of your visual field.
- Square your head and body comfortably to the plate
- Your natural tendency is to react immediately upon seeing a pitch.
- Allow your eyes to perceive, process and evaluate all the visual input
- Then, display the result.

### **Signal & Call:**

- After evaluation, make the call.
- If the pitch is a ball, remain in the set position and say "Ball".
- The distance from the zone will dictate how loudly you call the ball.
  - If it is a borderline or marginal (close) pitch, then yell out "ball" as loud as you say, "strike" in order to sell the call.
  - If it is in the dirt or obviously out of the zone, then a soft "Ball" or no call at all may be necessary because everyone in the park knows the pitch is a ball.

- If the pitch is a strike, then stand up, step back and simultaneously do the strike mechanic and say "Strike".
  - Remember, all call strikes must be sold because you are increasing the batter's difficulty in battling the pitcher.
  - If the pitch is swung and missed at, merely give the strike mechanic without voice.
- Everyone in the park can see that the batter has swung at the pitch.
- Remain focused on the ball as you call the pitch.

### Relax Between Pitches:

- After each pitch, step back and relax until F1 is back on the rubber.
- Be sure to watch the ball at all times.

### The Basic Box Stance

The Plate Umpire (PU) shall assume a position partially behind the catcher in which he is able to see the entire strike zone. He shall position his head in some portion of the **SLOT** at all times and ensure that his head height stays above the top of the catcher's head. Ideally, the plate umpire's chin should be even with the top of the catcher's head or slightly higher.

In order to get his head into the proper position, the PU must position his feet properly. He should establish a solid foundation by spreading his legs slightly wider than shoulder width. When assuming his set position, he shall establish the location of his slot foot first and then position his free foot behind the catcher. Positioning the slot foot first will enable you to see the outside corner. Neither the slot foot nor the free foot is actually positioned in the slot. They are set on both sides of it.

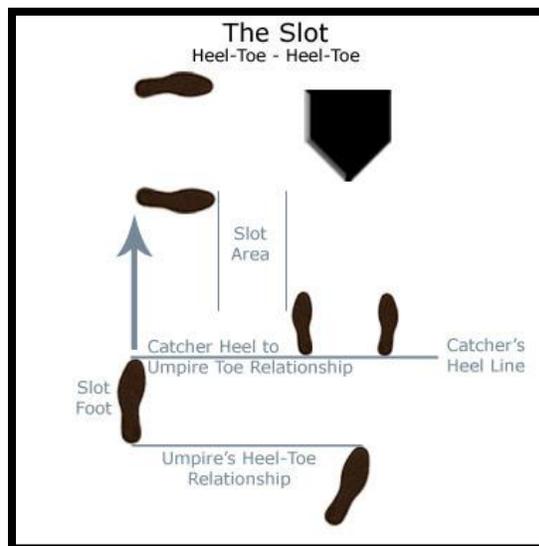
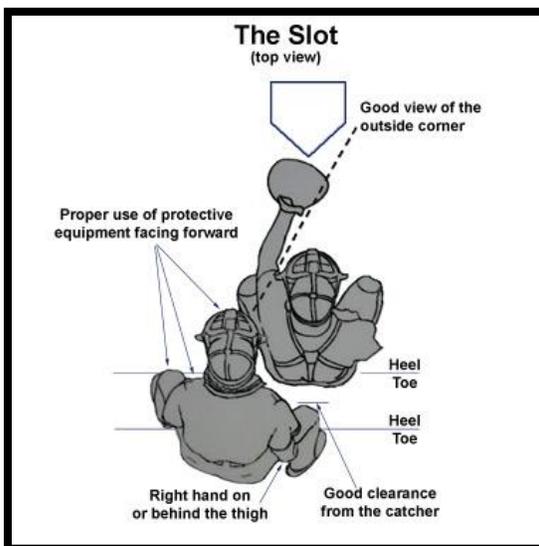
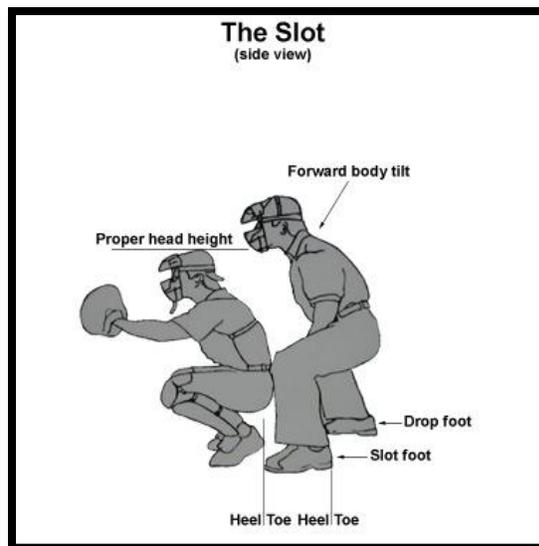
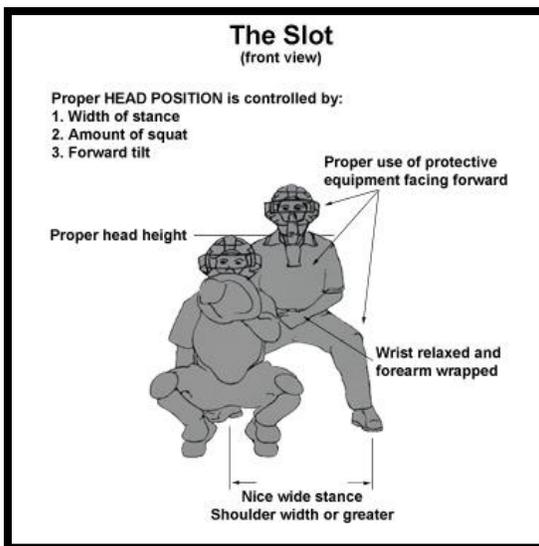
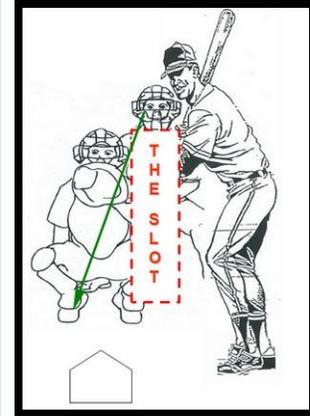
The PU's slot foot will be in line with or slightly in front of an imaginary line extended from the catcher's heels. The toe of the umpire's free foot should be aligned with the heel of his slot foot... referred to as Heel - Toe / Heel - Toe. The slot foot will point directly straight ahead and the free foot will be flared to a maximum of 45-degrees. Using the heel-toe / heel-toe alignment and flaring the free foot will enable the PU to position his head forward in the slot without kneeling the catcher in the back. The foot behind the catcher will be pointed toward the 2nd baseman on a right-handed batter and it will be pointed at the shortstop on a left-handed batter.

Feet position determines the lateral axis of the head position. The vertical axis is determined by (1) the width the feet are spread apart; (2) the amount of squat the umpire introduces into his stance; and (3) the amount of torso lean. As the umpire goes down into his set position, he must make a minor torso adjustment to square his head and shoulders to the plate. Going from the upright position to the set position should be a decisive one-piece move with no drifting back and forth or up and down. (A to B)

As the catcher adjusts to different hitters, the PU must adjust to different catcher positions. If the catcher virtually eliminates the slot by working so far inside, the first adjustment should be to move back and up to regain perspective of the strike zone. It may be necessary to work directly over the catcher's head in some cases. This means you adjust up too. If the catcher is working outside, the PU should shift with him but never beyond the center of the plate.

**Look for the following concepts displayed in the drawings**

- ✓ The feet are placed well and are wide apart
- ✓ Wide foot width helps establish a solid base for your stance and is the most important element to establishing head height
- ✓ The umpire has great squat (the next most important element to head height)
- ✓ There is very little lean forward (best used for balance purposes – too much lean reduces the slot-in by pushing the head back into the plate)
- ✓ The umpire’s head is set up inside of the catcher toward a right handed hitter (slot-in) – establishing vision without being blocked by the batter’s body
- ✓ The head height is correct – umpire’s chin is at the top of the catcher’s head
- ✓ The head height, slot-in and slot forward all are necessary to see above and around the catcher’s head and torso on those down & away pitches
- ✓ Notice the arm placement – bicep & elbow are kept tight against the body
- ✓ See that the protective equipment is mostly forward



## **Plate Umpire Techniques**

The PU should establish a rhythm with the pitcher and catcher. He shall not assume the set position behind the catcher until the catcher has set for the final time. Catchers generally set twice – once to give a signal and then again to set the target.

When the pitcher is off the rubber, the PU shall assume a relaxed position while keeping his eye on the pitcher. After the pitcher steps onto the rubber, gets his sign, and the catcher makes his final adjustments, the PU moves his feet into the exact location for his set position. As the pitcher initiates delivery to the batter, the PU squats into his set position. If the pitcher is working from the set, the PU should not go into his set position until the pitcher is committed to pitch.

The PU shall remain perfectly still as he tracks the flight of the pitch with independent eye movement. Tracking the pitch from the pitcher's release to the bat or the catcher's mitt will provide proper timing and increase the umpire's accuracy and consistency.

## **Plate Umpire Mechanics**

After tracking the pitch into the mitt with his eyes, it is time to make a decision. The PU must call either ball or strike. The actual call is a mental process. The proper use of eyes enables the umpire to collect all the relevant data before making his decision. Once his mental decision has been made, he must signal that decision informing others.

Balls are signaled verbally "Ball!" (voice varying by location of the pitch) while remaining down in the set position. No physical or visual signal is given. A strong voice that can be heard in the dugouts should be used.

Strikes are to be signaled verbally and physically while coming up from the set position. The right arm is used to visually signal strike. A strong voice that can be heard in the nearby stands should be used.

As you develop a more aggressive Strike 3 mechanic, it is important that you keep your eyes focused on the ball and are aware of its status at all times.

## Strike Zone Philosophies

### “New” Umpires Tendencies:

New umpires have a tendency to believe the rule book dictates the strike zone for all levels of play and the strike zone as a "magical space" as defined in Rule 2.00. They tend to “Ball” a pitch that misses the zone by the slightest distance. They are unsure of themselves and lack confidence, leading to “balling” marginal pitches. The problems with these characteristics are they will lead to fewer strikes, fewer swings, miring games in long counts and walks. The solution is merely to adjust your thinking.

### Nature of our dilemma:

Calling the zone is not an exact science. The strike zone was written for professional baseball. Youngsters don't possess the arm strength and accuracy of professional ballplayers. Therefore, we must adjust to the level of play and call strikes outside of the “magical space.”

### Think Strikes - Assume Strikes Until Proven A Ball!

- The strike zone provides the balance between offense and defense.
- View the strike zone as a concept, not an absolute.
- On the questionable pitch, give the benefit of the doubt to the pitcher. THINK STRIKES!
  - Assume the pitch is a strike unless convinced otherwise.
- To advance, batters must hit aggressively.
  - Aggressive strike zones keep teams focused on hitting, fielding & pitching but not walking.
  - Motivate the offense to swing the bat by stretching your zone as liberally as feasible.
- The strike zone becomes much easier to call when batters aggressively swing the bat.
  - Each pitch swung at gets one more strike without PU making a decision.
  - A swing may put the ball in jeopardy – results in action, excitement and outs.
  - Aggressive play greatly reduces the number of decisions at the plate.

### Importance of “Timing”:

- Don't just freeze frame or photograph the pitch at the front of the plate.
- Judging strikes isn't a reaction or instantaneous judgment as the ball breaks through a pane of glass
- It is a time/distance interval process of evaluation.

- Evaluate the area from just in front of the plate through the catcher's mitt - evaluate all the evidence.

#### Teams Need to Adjust to Your Zone:

- Batters and coaches must adjust to your strike zone.
- Experienced coaching staffs will observe your zone and adapt after an inning or two.

#### Continue To Evaluate How The Offense Is Swinging The Bat:

- Monitor how their counts are developing.
- If you find batters taking more pitches that are around the zone, you may be a little tight with your zone – evaluate and determine if you have been "tight" on marginal pitches. If so, then adjust your calls on the marginal pitches. *Note: It is very tricky adjusting an established strike zone during the course of the game. You have to do it gradually. If you've been tight, go slightly bigger and continue to grow. Going from not giving the corners to calling a pitch 6" off the plate will lose all credibility.*
- If, however, the pitching is erratic you will have nothing to work with – it will be a long day.

#### Importance of Finding a Strike on a 2-0 Count:

On a 2-0 count, look aggressively for strikes. If the pitch is "balled", the batter will probably wait for the 3-2 count to hit the ball. That almost certainly adds two more pitches per occurrence to the length of your game. But, if you get a strike to make it a 2-1 count, the batter will be less choosy and more likely to swing the bat on all succeeding pitches.

Encourage game flow and tempo.

#### Positioning for Plays at the Plate

There are five distinct types of plays that can occur at the plate or in the area between home and third:

1. **Collision plays:** These occur when the catcher attempts to block the plate preventing access to the runner.
2. **Swipe tags:** Some catchers prefer not to engage the runner in a collision so they will take the throw in front of the plate and reach out to tag the runner as he advances home. In some situations, the catcher has to move from the immediate area of home plate to field the throw and is not able to get back in time to block the plate. In those cases, the catcher will attempt to extend his arm and tag the runner as he nears the plate.

3. **Steal plays:** Though rare, these can be some of the toughest calls an umpire has to make. As the play is developing and the catcher is moving forward to catch the pitch, the umpire must stay in his original plate stance to call the pitch and watch for **batter** or **catcher interference**. As soon as the pitch is caught, the catcher is going to apply a tag. This is an extremely difficult call for the umpire as he has no time to move into a better position to see the actual tag. Often, he will be blocked by the catcher's body as the tag is being attempted.
4. **Passed ball or Wild pitch:** A runner from third will often attempt to score on a passed ball or wild pitch.
5. **Rundowns:** A rundown may develop after a runner is picked-off at 3<sup>rd</sup>, or, when a runner advancing home decides to retreat back to 3<sup>rd</sup>base.

### Positioning Guidelines

Plays at the plate are often the most exciting that occur in a game. The plate umpire must be in good position for the plays, which are usually very close. He must also be aware of all the possibilities that can occur during those plays.

**Where to start:** The plate umpire should be just off the dirt circle, behind the plate and lined up with the point of the plate. That starting position enables the plate umpire to move toward either the first- or third-base line extended to get the proper angle for the throw as it arrives.

**Establish a good angle:** The umpire should let the throw take him one or two steps in either direction from his starting point. Once a tag has occurred, make the catcher show the ball before calling the runner out.

**Throws from the Outfield:** On throws from the outfield, the plate umpire has time to read the play and then determine whether a **collision play** or a **swipe tag** play is likely to occur. After the ball is hit and a runner is attempting to score, the plate umpire should position himself on an imaginary line extending from the **point of home plate** straight back approximately 10-12 feet. From this position, he reads the throw and the position of the catcher. If the throw is on-line and the catcher has moved into position to block the plate, a collision is imminent. These 2 cues prompt the umpire to move into position 8-10 feet from home plate on the **1<sup>st</sup> base line extended**. From here, he should be able to see the tag attempt and the status of the ball during the play and its aftermath.

If the throw requires the catcher to leave the immediate area of home plate to secure the ball, the umpire may determine that a collision play is not imminent and a **swipe tag** will most likely be attempted. In this case, the umpire should move from his position 10-12 feet off the **point of home plate** to a position 8-10 feet on the **3<sup>rd</sup> baseline extended**. This position should dramatically improve the chances of seeing the swipe tag. In order to avoid a runner sliding past the plate or running through it, the umpire should make a lateral adjustment to the right or left.

**Throws from the Infield:** Throws from the infielders get to the plate much quicker than throws from the outfield and are generally more accurate. This means that the plate umpire will not have sufficient time to move into position off the **point of the plate** to read the play and then make an adjustment to either the **1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base line extended**. So, when the throw is originating from an infield position, the plate umpire should immediately adjust toward the **1<sup>st</sup> baseline extended**. Since it is more likely that the throw will be accurate, the possibility of a **swipe tag** is reduced. Under no circumstances will he position himself directly behind the catcher as he is fielding the throw. He must adjust so that he can see the receiving side of the mitt.

**Steal of Home:** The plate umpire must prioritize his responsibilities. He has to stay in his original plate stance to call the pitch and watch for batter or catcher interference. He then must make an adjustment to his left to get the best possible view of the play. If the play is extremely close, this often becomes an educated guess. It is the toughest call in baseball. The catcher's body is often between the umpire and the tag attempt.

**Passed Ball or Wild Pitch:** On a passed ball or wild pitch, a runner from third will often try to score. The pitcher should be covering the plate on this play. The first priority is to avoid the line of throw. If the throw is coming from the 1<sup>st</sup> base side, move into position on the first base line extended 8-10 feet from the play. If the throw is coming from the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side, initially move into position out of the way of the throw on a line extending from the point of the plate. As the ball is thrown, advance to a position between that line and the 1<sup>st</sup> baseline extended 8-10 feet way for the ensuing play. Always come to a stopped, standing set position before the tag attempt is made. If the throw is coming from a position directly behind the plate, move into position 8-10 feet from the plate on the first base line extended.

**Rundowns:** If the runner is picked-off at third and a rundown ensues, the plate umpire should advance up the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line in foul territory approximately 10-12 feet off the line. He should be in a position that will enable him to take responsibility for all plays that occur in the home half of the base path. If there is a possibility of a runner advancing to 2<sup>nd</sup>, the plate umpire shall move up the line farther so that he can take responsibility for the entire rundown from the 3<sup>rd</sup> base bag all the way home. When he is in this position, he should communicate to his partner he has responsibility for the entire rundown. He might say, "I've got it all!" for his communication to his partner. The base umpire can then release and advance into position for any subsequent play on a following runner.

**Sacrifice Fly's Inside the "V":** On those plays, the base umpire has the catch, so the plate umpire's responsibility is to line up the tag with the catch. Often, that will take him near the third-base dugout. Once the catch is made, the plate umpire can get back to the plate area quickly enough to make a call.

**Sacrifice Fly's Down Either Line:** In that case, the plate umpire must remember his priorities. Fair-foul and catch-no catch come before either the tag at third or the play at the plate. The plate umpire should almost never take fly balls to the outfield by backing up behind home plate. And if the fly ball is deep, the plate umpire must go up the line as far as possible. The deeper the fly ball, the less likely there will be a close play at home. See the catch and glance to make sure the runner tagged up. Then, it is time to get back to the plate using a cross-step and not backing up or just a running step where you cannot see the release of the throw. Also, on a medium fly ball or a short fly ball, do not go so far that you cannot get back to the play at the plate.

**Time Plays:** The plate umpire must be aware of tag and appeal plays that happen at other bases for the third out. The plate umpire should line up behind the plate along with the base at which the play is being made. The base umpire should not rush making the call, because the plate umpire should have seen when the tag occurred. If the base umpire calls the out, the plate umpire then either scores or waves off the run. This scoring of the run or waving it off must be sold as well as possible. If there is a press box, step out in front of the plate and get the attention of the press box. After you get their attention, point at the plate and yell, "Score that run, score that run, that run scores!" If you are not scoring the run, get their attention and then with both hands above your head and in front of you, signal and say, "No run scores! No run scores!"

## The Two-Umpire System

# MAU Umpire Manual

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## The Two-Umpire System

### Pre-game

Personal mechanics and clear signals are only half of the ingredients for a successfully officiated athletic contest. Teamwork is the other component that enhances the quality of the officiating process.

Getting to the game early is not only essential for individual game preparation, but also an outstanding opportunity to conference with your partner(s). This is the time when teamwork can be reviewed to prevent problems in key situations. Working in sync is the one item that can set apart a great crew from an average one. Umpires committed to teamwork consistently have fewer problems working games, are never out of work, and move up the ladder quickly to do key match-ups. Team players are respected in the baseball community.

The crew chief or home plate umpire should conduct a thorough pregame meeting before each game. There should also be a post-game debriefing during which unusual plays, unusual situations, crew self-evaluation and game assessment takes place.

It is important to keep the pre-game *positive* and *up-tempo* so that the crew goes into the game *confident* and *well prepared*. A good umpiring crew dresses well, moves athletically, and displays discipline at all times. They enter and exit the field as a team moving in unison and with the confidence that says, **“We are in control”**.

An outline of what should be covered in the pregame meeting includes:

### Pregame Conference Outline

1. Notify the home institution that the crew has arrived & confirm the starting time.
2. Discussion topics
  - a. Uniforms
  - b. Points of emphasis (Pace of play, dugout personnel)
3. Pregame conference
  - a. Positioning
  - b. Ground rules by home coach
  - c. PU does all the talking unless otherwise directed
  - d. National Anthem position
  - e. Run to position
5. Check Swing responsibilities and mechanics
6. Swipe tag and pulled foot mechanics
7. Fair/Foul responsibilities
8. Outfield coverage
9. Non-verbal signals
  - a. Infield fly
  - b. Standard rotation
  - c. Umpire going out
  - d. Appeal
  - e. Time play
  - f. Trap/catch by catcher on 3<sup>rd</sup> strike
  - g. Outs and count
  - h. Eye contact
10. Review play situations
11. Appeals: base touches and tag ups
12. Handling dugouts
  - a. Arguing balls and strikes
  - b. Bench jockeying
13. Arguments
  - a. One on one
  - b. When to step in and when to leave them alone
  - c. After an ejection the umpire should turn and walk away
14. Fights
  - a. Try to stop players before the fight starts.
  - b. If you can't stop them, step back and take numbers of participants
15. Closing
  - a. Rule or mechanics questions
  - b. Hustle at all times
  - c. Communicate
  - d. Good eye contact
  - e. Good timing
  - f. Get plays right
  - g. Have fun and enjoy what you are doing.

## Just the Facts

Here are several points to ponder concerning **facts about two man umpiring fundamentals**.

An understanding of these facts will enable you to do your job with confidence.

- ✓ **Authority**...all umpires have equal authority on the field (except in the event of a forfeit).
- ✓ **Responsibilities**...each umpire has singular responsibilities in each situation. There should never be a double call in any situation.
- ✓ **Plate umpire stays home**...with 2 outs and a runner on 2nd base.
- ✓ **Base umpire sets up on the foul line**... and is responsible for fair / foul calls at the bag and beyond.
- ✓ **The base umpire moves into the infield**...whenever there is a runner on base.
- ✓ **When the base umpire is in the infield**... he will never go out to make a catch / no catch call.
- ✓ Remember: **angle is primary to distance**. Go to the edge of the infield grass on a trouble ball to get the best angle but do not cross the baseline.
- ✓ **Being professional at all times as an individual will serve to give the umpiring fraternity as a group respect.**

## Basic Positions

### 1. Principles:

- ✓ Always follow ball with eyes.
- ✓ Always keep your chest to the ball.
- ✓ Always take best possible angle. **Sacrifice distance for angle.**
- ✓ Make every effort possible to get as close to 90 degrees to the ball on a force play and 90 degrees to the slide on a tag play.
- ✓ The base umpire should be in a **Hands on Knees Set Position** any time the pitcher is in contact with the rubber with the ball in his possession.
- ✓ The **Working Area** is that area behind the mound which in many situations the base umpire moves into as his first movement.

### 2. Hands on Knees Set Position:

This position consists of placing the hands on the knees and locking-in the elbows with the feet shoulder-width apart. The umpire will strive to settle into this position naturally, smoothly, and athletically.

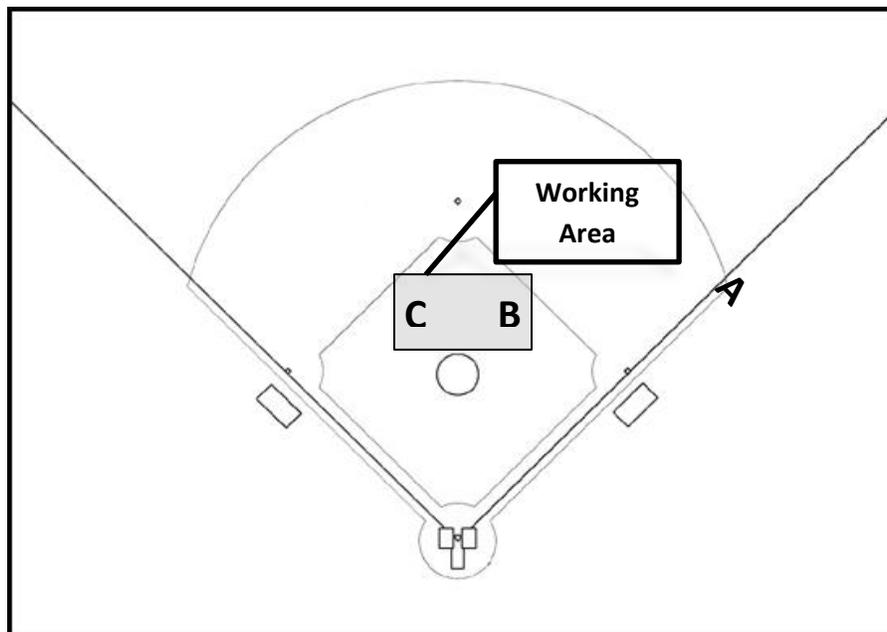
### 3. Base Umpire Field Positions:

**A** – With no runners on base. In foul territory behind first base.

**B** – With a runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base or 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> bases. Within the infield, half the distance between the pitchers' rubber and first base and half the distance between the pitchers' rubber and second base.

**C** – With runner(s) on 2<sup>nd</sup> base, 3<sup>rd</sup> base, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> bases, or bases loaded. Within the infield, half the distance between the pitchers rubber and third base and half the distance between the pitchers rubber and second base.

**NOTE:** The plate umpire has overthrow and base award responsibilities in each situation except when noted.



## Mechanics Philosophy/Basic Concepts

1. Umpire mechanics are a series of compromises.
2. Base coverage and mechanics are based on the most likely play to happen next.
3. Mechanics should not be based on unlikely second or third play developments.
4. Mechanics should not be based on limiting the amount of effort an umpire must exert.
5. The crew needs to work together to cover the entire field of play without limiting the workload of any one umpire.
6. While fair/foul and catch/no catch are the first things that can happen on a play, those calls do not automatically call for an umpire to leave his position. On plays that will be extremely close, the umpire should “go out” to rule.
7. Amateur umpires do not work an entire season with the same partner and therefore mechanics must be kept simple and consistent across the country.
8. These mechanics are indicated for college baseball and are based on the relative ability level of players and umpires. Umpires working other levels of amateur or professional baseball should consult and utilize their mechanics.
9. Crew communication before every new hitter and during play situations is critical.
10. Umpires should regularly glance at their partners to assure expected movement and coverage.

## Umpire Mechanics & Communication

1. Pre-game with partner-1/2 hour before game time or earlier (could be the night before if you will both not be at the game site in time for a thorough pre-game).
2. Pre-game meeting with managers, coaches, captains – be brief. Do the lineups first and then ground rules. Initial your copy of the lineup cards. Remind them about good sportsmanship and ask if everyone is properly equipped in high school baseball.
3. National anthem – no talking or chewing seeds during this time. Be respectful and stand at attention during the playing of the anthem. Do not put your cap on until the last note has been played.
4. Preparation to begin the game begins with the following:
  - a. Introduce yourself to your home team catcher and ask about what his pitcher throws. Begin a dialogue about how you operate. This is not a lengthy dialogue but a get to know the catcher dialogue. Develop a rapport while the pitcher warms up. Watch at least 4-6 pitches. Stop observing after 5 or 6 and let the 1<sup>st</sup> batter know there are 2 pitches left with voice and a signal. Make sure this is done loud enough so the catcher and pitcher here it too. Why do you look at these pitches? To prepare yourself in a professional manner for your game. You are not only establishing a relationship with the catcher but observing the types of pitches you will see, the background the pitches are coming from, the arm angle the pitch is released from and a myriad of other possible reasons.
  - b. Do this for the visiting team's catcher too in the next ½ inning.
  - c. Base umpire do the same thing with ground balls. The 1<sup>st</sup> baseman is throwing ground balls to the other infielders. You can observe a lot of things so you are preparing for the first play of each of the first two ½ innings. Bust from the line to the correct angle on a throw from the 3<sup>rd</sup> baseman. Now go back to the line while the 1<sup>st</sup> baseman throws a ground ball to the shortstop. You are now ready for the next ground ball to the 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman. During this time you should be able to get about 5 – 6 ground ball plays at 1<sup>st</sup> base by alternately busting from the line. You usually end up with 2 throws from each of the infielders this way. Don't forget to do it in the top of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the bottom of the 1<sup>st</sup>. This is to not only prepare yourself but to not show favoritism to either team

and also to observe how each 1<sup>st</sup> baseman handle throws and their footwork too. You can observe which fielders have strong arms too.

5. Starting the game - The plate umpire signals with a snappy point and a verbal "PLAY!"

## No runners on base

1. Positioning—A
2. The base umpire does the following on fly balls and line drives to the outfield (pause, read, & react)- "Going out" or "I'm going out"
3. The plate umpire will often say the following: "I'm home, I'm home" or "I'm home, I'm home" "No catch, no catch" "That's a catch, that's a catch" However, he won't always say these things in this situation.
4. Pause, read & react means the base umpire will hesitate momentarily ("pause") actually take his eye off the ball, and focus his attention on the reactions of the outfielder ("read"). The outfielder's reactions will tell the base umpire whether or not he should go out on the ball or come in and pivot ("react").
5. "Trouble ball" means a ball such as 1) fair/foul decisions down the right field line, 2) home runs, 3) balls off the outfield wall, 4) diving catches by the outfielder, 5) catches at the warning track or at the wall, 6) catches made by the outfielder with his back towards the infield, 7) catches made by the outfielder below his waist on a full run, 8) two or three players converging on a fly ball, etc.
6. Base hits-pivot
7. Rundowns-third and home-"I've got this half, Bill, I've got this half" or "Half and half, half and half" Others-"I've got this end, I've got this end"
8. Fly balls to the infield – most of the time the base umpire will come in and pivot while the plate umpire will get the catch or no catch -"That's a catch!" or "No catch, no catch"
9. Ground balls to the infield-Getting help - "Bill, did he tag him?" or "Bill, do you have a tag?" "Yes, he's out on a tag" or "No, he missed him" or substitute "is he on the bag?" for a possible pulled foot. Doing the call yourself—"On the bag" "He's out" or "Safe, he's off the bag, safe" "Safe, no tag, safe" or "Safe, missed the tag, safe"
10. Foul popups-pivot or "going out"

## Runner on first base only

1. Positioning – B
2. Fly balls and line drives to the outfield-Using the V-Working Area- “I’m on the line, Bill” “I’ve got the ball, Bill” or “That’s my ball, Bill!” The base umpire can point to himself and say, “I’ve got the ball”
3. Base hits to the outfield-first-to-third responsibilities—“I’ve got third, Bill, I’ve got third” “I’m at third, I’m at third” or “I’ve got third if he comes” and when there is a play, “I’ve got 3<sup>rd</sup>, I’ve got 3<sup>rd</sup>!” and sometimes the plate man has to say, “Going home, Bill, Going home”
4. Fly balls and line drives to the outfield— the plate umpire may say “I’m on the line” and that means he cannot cover 3<sup>rd</sup> base. He also may say, “I’ve got the ball because it is near the 3<sup>rd</sup> baseline and now the plate umpire is in position to continue to cover 3<sup>rd</sup> base.
5. Ground balls to the infield with a runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base only —“I’ve got third” or sometimes “I’m on the line”. Many of our more esteemed umpires have decided for amateur umpires that we are more valuable by not covering 3<sup>rd</sup> base in this situation. Why? Because the likelihood of R1 trying for 3<sup>rd</sup> here is very remote and the plate umpire is more valuable up the 1<sup>st</sup> baseline where he can help his partner on a pulled foot or swipe tag. So, our recommendation is not to cover 3<sup>rd</sup> on these situations. A good reminder in your pre-game conference is to say to your partner, “I won’t cover 3<sup>rd</sup> if the ball stays in the infield.” Red book mechanics says to cover 3<sup>rd</sup> but it really is something most amateur umpires should not do because there is very little possibility in having a play at 3<sup>rd</sup> base. Definitely do not cover 3<sup>rd</sup> base on any bunts in this situation.
6. Steals of second—Plate man on possible interference says either “That’s interference” and wait for the results of the throw or kill the play with “Time” “Batter is out on the interference” or he might say, “That’s nothing” with a safe sign.
7. Pick-offs at first base; rundowns—Footwork by the base umpire and plate ump saying, “I’ve got this end” in a run down. This means the plate umpire is coming up the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>baseline and will announce once he arrives near the coaches box (Library – where he reads the runner going back to 1<sup>st</sup> or advancing to 3<sup>rd</sup> when he announces, “I’ve got this end!”

## Runner on second base only

1. Positioning—C
2. Fly balls and line drives to the outfield—Using the V-Working Area—“I’m on the line, Bill” or “I’ve got the ball, Bill” or “That’s my ball, Bill”. This is for the plate umpire when he has the left fielder or right fielder moving toward the ball.
3. Base hits to the outfield—“Staying home, Bill”
4. Fly balls and line drives to the infield – base umpire has all except to the 1<sup>st</sup> baseman and 3<sup>rd</sup> baseman when moving toward the foul lines. Also, sometimes the shortstop and/or the 2<sup>nd</sup>baseman catch a fly ball moving toward the foul lines and their back is to the base umpire. The plate umpire should call for these balls. For instance he would say, “I’ve got the ball” when it is down the 3<sup>rd</sup> baseline and “I’m on the line” if it is down the 1<sup>st</sup> base line.
5. Ground balls to the infield—base umpire must be able to “bounce back” and cover all plays in the infield.
6. Steal at third base—listen for “Going” for base umpire. The base umpire will also here the runner’s footsteps as he breaks for third base. The base umpire must take his first step toward the 45-foot line on the 3<sup>rd</sup> baseline to enable him to get an angle for the play at 3<sup>rd</sup> base. This is why he must be in the normal C position. Plate umpire on possible interference—“That’s nothing” or “That’s interference” watch the remainder of the play and then call “Time” and make awards of bases or outs.
7. Pickoffs at second base, rundowns— On the pickoff, the base umpire must take a drop step toward 2<sup>nd</sup> base to enable him to get some distance toward the play. If he just turns, he ends up too far from his play. “I’ve got this end”
8. Time plays— Initially before the play begins, the plate and base umpire will signal to each other visually the “Time” play signal (2 fingers of the right hand touching the wrist area of the left hand where a wrist watch might be used. During the play, the plate umpire will say, “Staying home, Bill,” or “I’m home, Bill!” If the run scores before the 3<sup>rd</sup> out on the bases, “That run scores, that run scores” while pointing at the plate so the official scorer can see you. Alternative terminology would be “Score that run” or “The run scores, the run scores, score the run!” If the run does not score, “No run scores, no run scores” or “No run, no run.” Face the press box and wave arms in a cross-wise fashion above your head and in front of you. Sometimes you won’t

have a press box. Instead, you would make eye contact with the home team dugout because they are the official scorers and say the same things as above but directed at that dugout.

### Runner on third base only

1. Positioning—C
2. Fly balls and line drives to the outfield-Using the V-Working Area-Plate man—"I'm on the line, Bill" or "I've got the ball, Bill" or "That's my ball, Bill"
3. Base hits to the outfield- The base umpire must understand and use the idea of "Shading" toward the batter-runner since he is the only runner that he has responsibility for in this scenario.
4. Ground balls to the infield – Plate umpire stays home unless, with 2 outs you might be able to do it just like you do with a runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base only. That means you read that the defense is not coming home and they are going to 1<sup>st</sup> base, you can vacate the plate area and come up the 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line and help on a pulled foot, swipe tag, etc. You can check over your shoulder to determine if necessary if R3 touches home plate or not.
5. Pick-offs at third base, rundowns—"Half and half"

### Runners on first and second

1. Positioning—C
2. Fly balls and line drives to the outfield-Using the V-Working Area-Plate man—"I've got third if he tags" or "I've got third, Bill, I've got third" "Staying home, Bill, staying home" or "I'm on the line, Bill" "I've got the ball, Bill," or "That's my ball, Bill" "Going home, Bill, going home"
3. Base hits to the outfield—"Staying home, Bill"
4. Fly balls and line drives to the infield-Using the V
5. Infield fly situations—"Infield fly, batter is out" or "Infield fly, if fair". The plate umpire is the only one that would say, "Infield fly, if fair!"
6. Ground balls to the infield – plate umpire will stay home.
7. Steals with runners at first and second – base umpire must again take his first step toward the 45 foot line if the play is at 3<sup>rd</sup>. We caution the base umpire here because the catcher's throw might be to 2<sup>nd</sup> base instead of 3<sup>rd</sup> base. So, he cannot start toward 3<sup>rd</sup> too early. He must be able to read the cue of the catcher's footwork to determine where the ball will be thrown.
8. Pick-offs, rundowns

9. Time plays-“Staying home, Bill, staying home”

### Runners on first and third

1. Positioning—B
2. Fly balls and line drives to the outfield-Using the V- Working Area-“I’m on the line, Bill” “I’ve got the ball, Bill” or “That’s my ball, Bill” “Going home, Bill, going home” “I’ve got third, Bill, I’ve got third”
3. Base hits to the outfield-“I’ve got third, if he comes” and when a play develops at third, “I’ve got third, Bill, I’ve got third”
4. Fly balls and line drives to the infield – Again we use the V principle.
5. Ground balls to the infield – PU looks for front end of DP at 2<sup>nd</sup> base for illegal slide. You do need to check on what R3 is doing and also what the infielders are doing before you leave the plate unguarded.
6. Steals with runners at first and third-do not over commit to any one play.
7. Pick-offs and rundowns-“I’ve got it all, Bill, I’ve got it all” “I’ve got this half, Bill, I’ve got this half” or “Half and half”

### Runners on second and third

1. Positioning—C
2. Fly balls and line drives to the outfield-Using the V – Working Area-“I’m on the line, Bill” “I’ve got the ball, Bill” or “That’s my ball, Bill” or “Staying home, Bill, staying home”
3. Base hits to the outfield-“Staying home, Bill, staying home”
4. Fly balls and line drives to the infield – We continue to use the V principle here.
5. Ground balls to the infield – PU stays at home.
6. Pick-offs and rundowns-“I’ve got it all, Bill, I’ve got it all” or “I’ve got this half, Bill, I’ve got this half”
7. Time plays— “Score that run, score that run, that run scores”
8. If the infield is playing in, you can go behind the SS position somewhat to avoid him.

### Bases loaded

1. Positioning—C

2. Fly balls and line drives to the outfield-Using the V – Working Area-“Staying home, Bill, staying home”
3. Base hits to the outfield-“Staying home, Bill, staying home”
4. Fly balls and line drives to the infield – We are still using the V principle.
5. Ground balls to the infield – PU stays at home and also needs to observe if there is an illegal slide or not on a force play on R3.
6. Pick-offs and rundowns-“I’ve got it all, Bill”
7. Time plays— “Score that run, score that run, that run scores”
8. Positioning for plays at the plate – from the outfield stay mostly on the point of the plate and then adjust based on the quality of the throw. For almost all plays you will probably end up on the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line extended. The collision type play you will want to be on 1<sup>st</sup> baseline extended. Please do not get above the 1<sup>st</sup> baseline extended ever.

### Miscellaneous Mechanics

**Hands on knees** – most plays for the base umpire. Almost never for the plate umpire because you have a mask in your hand. Note that the plate umpire will almost always remove his mask on any batted ball and definitely on a wild pitch, passed ball and hit batsman as he moves to get into a best position for his possible play.

**Signaling “no trip”**—“No trip”, after injury time out to the mound. Wave closed fist back and forth to inform both managers.

**Procedure for lineup changes**—changes must be confirmed by the manager. Point to the press box the change. As a courtesy, inform the other manager but do not go to their dugout. Meet halfway to the dugout or just let them know from the plate unless there are multiple changes. Why not go to the dugout? The dugouts belong to the teams. The home plate umpire is your office umpires, conduct almost all of your business in that area.

**Procedures for pitching changes** – how do you handle this when going to the mound? When you know they have to make a change because of the number of trips has been used up, go right away and ask for the new pitcher’s name and number. If you aren’t sure they are changing or not (1<sup>st</sup> trip in pro rules), wait until they inform you or if you end up going out to the mound, ask the coach or manager, “What are going to do?” If they say they are changing, get the pitcher’s number and name and then point to the press box and/or the other dugout and inform them of the change. Again, there is no need to go to the dugouts to do this.

**Position between innings** – neutral position in outfield for BU. You should normally go to the opposite side of the last batter. Why? You do not want to follow a batter in the direction he is going because that will give him a chance to say something he shouldn't say and that ends up looking like you are the aggressor and if he gets ejected, you end up being the bad guy. Go opposite that team's dugout and you will probably not have to hear bad behavior and thus avoiding the ejection. However, if you had the pitcher question a pitch or two during that ½ inning, it might be best to walk away from him at the end of that inning. So, there is no hard and fast rule but there is a reason for where you go each ½ inning. Do not get close to the dugouts at all. Don't leave a water bottle in the dugout. Carry one in your ball bag or someplace near the fence and out of the way.

**Procedure for calling ball when the pitcher goes to his mouth**—“That's a ball, you went to your mouth” while pointing at the pitcher. “Time” and then announce to the press box, “Pitcher went to his mouth” (indicating with a wiping motion of the hand in front of the mouth), and then giving the new count.

**Procedure for practice swing hitting the catcher's mitt**—“Time!” “Backswing hit the catcher!” The same mechanic can be used when it occurs on the follow through and you will not be awarding any bases or calling any outs. You might be returning runners.

**Procedure for check swings**—“Ball, no he didn't go” or “Yes, he went”, while pointing directly at the batter, followed by the strike signal. If you are asked after calling it a ball you can say, “Bill, did he go?” It is preferable to ask with a point of the left hand so as not to confuse with the strike signal. Your partner may say, “Yes, he went” with the appropriate strike signal or “No, he didn't go”, while giving the safe signal. The plate umpire will follow by giving the correct count. If it results in a strike three, the base umpire should be very emphatic to help protect the base runners as much as possible. It is their responsibility to be aware, however. When you make your own call, you point with your left hand at the right-handed batter's bat and then give the mechanic. With a left-handed batter, you point at the LHB's bat and then give the strike mechanic with the right hand. In other words, do not cross over.

**Procedure for calling balks**—1) either umpire may call a balk, although the plate umpire has the best look at a step-balk in the two-umpire system. 2) The call of “That's a balk” is to be made loudly and emphatically. 3) When one umpire calls a balk, his partner should follow with the same call. 4)

At the proper moment for calling “Time” after a balk, both umpires shall call “Time” loudly and emphatically. 5) Before the next pitch the plate umpire will give the correct count and put the ball back in play. 6) Don’t forget that in Federation rules the ball is immediately dead. In pro and NCAA the ball is delayed dead and if a play follows the balk, do not call time without letting the play continue for at least some time period to determine when you need to call time.

**Explaining unusual plays to the press box**—Plays of this nature include catcher’s interference, batter’s interference, a balk followed by a batted ball which nullifies the balk, spectator interference, etc.

**Foul balls in the batter’s box**—“Foul” or “Time” or “Dead ball” and signal an out if he is hit outside the batter’s box.

These are real life actions that you need a PLAN so you can succeed. Don’t try to make it up as you go. Develop a PLAN for these types of situations so you at least look like you know what you are doing?

When should you clean the plate? Again, here is something you need to develop a plan so you look like you know what you are doing.

How do you clean the plate? Do you need to call time to clean the plate?

Additional  
Information

# Mid-America Umpires

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## Additional Information

### Expectations & Instructions to Umpires

**Appearance and Conduct:** Mid-America Umpires members are reminded that they are in the public eye. Each umpire should be reminded that he/she is an official representative of the Association, both on and off the field. An umpire should dress in a manner becoming his/her profession.

Going to or coming from a game, umpires are not allowed to wear any cap, shirt, jacket, or pants that identify themselves as an umpire or have an NCAA, NAIA, NJCAA, or High School institutions logo, whether they are a school we service or not. An umpire's behavior should always be within legal limits and in conformity with all rules that govern NCAA, NAIA, National Federation, and MSHSAA standards.

Under no circumstances should a member consume an alcoholic beverage any time prior to participating as an official of any ball game. Violations of this policy will be dealt with directly by the Executive Board. Such occurrences may result in the loss of the remainder of an umpire's assignments and suspension or dismissal from the Association.

All umpires should take pride in being an umpire for the Association. Uniform slacks and shirts should be neat and pressed, caps should be clean, and shoes shined. Your other uniform items should be neatly kept. Hair length and facial hair should be in a manner consistent with your profession.

**Rule Book:** You should read some portion of your rulebook each day. Good umpiring requires knowledge of the rules, application of good common sense, and constant review of NCAA, NAIA, and National Federation baseball rules and interpretations. Referring to the NCAA, NAIA, and National Federation web sites will help all umpires stay up to date in this regard.

**Assignments:** The Executive Board, in accordance with the approved process of the Association makes all Association assignments. The rotations are set by the Executive Board and are not to be changed except in the event of any injury or rare emergency. Crews are not allowed to randomly change assignments or rotations. The rotation during a three-man, three game series will be Plate to Third Base

to First Base. Crew chiefs are to notify the Executive Board of any changes deemed necessary for any reason. These changes are subject to review by the Executive Board.

**Illness or Injury:** Each umpire is required to contact the Secretary/Treasurer to inform him/her of illness or injury as soon as it occurs. The Executive Board shall assign a replacement. Any cancellation for an unacceptable reason will be reviewed by the Executive Board.

**Tobacco Products:** The use of all tobacco products by umpires is prohibited at all times in the locker room and on the playing field. Violations of this rule will be dealt with directly by the Executive Board of the Association. In addition, umpires will be directly responsible for enforcing the NCAA, NAIA, and National Federation prohibitions of tobacco use by participants before and during the game. All tobacco violations should be penalized immediately without warning. Reports of failure to enforce the tobacco policy will result in penalty(s) the Executive Board deems necessary. Consult your NCAA rule book for applications and penalties.

## **Prior To Game**

**Inclement Weather:** If there is any chance of a cancellation or delay due to weather, it is the responsibility of each umpire to contact the home institution's athletic office or head coach before traveling to the game site. If you are unable to confirm a cancellation from a designated official, you are to travel to the game site.

The head coach of the home school is responsible for the starting game time and it is his/her right to delay that start time due to inclement weather or the threat of inclement weather.

**Arrival at Game Site:** Mid-America Umpires members should arrive at a college game assignment no later than one hour before the scheduled game time. For high school game assignments, Association members should arrive no later than thirty minutes before the scheduled game time.

Upon arrival at the game site, the crew chief should notify the home team's head coach that the umpires have arrived in accordance with the Crew Chief Responsibilities section of this manual.

**Umpires Locker Room:** All umpires are required to use the dressing room whenever it is made available by the home team. Failing to use these accommodations when made available will not be tolerated. The locker room is for the exclusive use of the umpiring crew. Visitors are allowed for a brief period of time and only after the crew chief has approved any visitors. The only visitors that are allowed

in the locker room for the pre-game meeting are authorized Association members. The crew chief will obtain the locker room keys if available. It is recommended that valuables not be left in the locker room, as the institutions cannot be held responsible for valuables that could have been left elsewhere or taken with you. Always be respectful of the school's facilities, keep the locker room clean and in good order. Be respectful of your partners. There is no tobacco allowed in the locker room.

**Crew Chief Responsibilities:** The crew chief is responsible for the final resolution of any conflict during a game and he/she has the final judgment in postponing or suspending a game as well as removing the players from the playing field for rain or other conditions. In no way does this relieve the other crew members of the responsibility to provide clear and adequate information and opinions before a decision is made.

As a crew chief for the Association, you will have certain responsibilities to insure that the internal operations of the Association umpire program run smoothly. Communication is vital to our professional handling of the schedule. Professional handling means that there are no mistakes or missed assignments.

Each umpire will receive a schedule for the season at an organizational meeting. This schedule can and may change frequently so if there is ever any questions in your mind call the Executive Board and your assigned partners to reconfirm. The crew chief will be held responsible for making certain that the duties below are performed. If you are confused as to who has been assigned as crew chief, assume the plate man is the crew chief and start the communication process.

1. The crew chief should contact the home team's head coach no later than 24 hours prior to the scheduled game time. At this time the crew chief should confirm game time(s), number of games, number of innings of each game, verify if there is a dressing room, discuss any inclement weather concerns, and verify hotel situation (if applicable).
2. The crew chief should contact his/her assigned partners no later than 24 hours prior to the scheduled game time. At this time the crew chief should confirm everyone's assignment(s) and agree where and at what time to meet at the ballpark if they are not riding together. Any problems or confusion that surfaces during this process should be immediately reported to the Executive Board for clarification.

3. Upon arrival at the game site, the crew chief will notify the home team's head coach of the umpires arrival, confirm game time(s), number of games, number of innings of each game, find out if there are any special events (first pitch, color guard, etc.), discuss any inclement weather concerns, and pick up checks (if available).
4. Insure general appearance and conduct of the crew. Maintain compliance with Association policy.
5. Conduct the pre-game conference.
6. Insure that the umpire ejecting a participant has filed a written report with the Association Secretary and the offending team's Athletic Director.
7. Handle with dignity and courtesy any matters with institution officials or press.
8. When partner(s) are late, get on the phone immediately and contact the Executive Board. A replacement may be needed. If a replacement cannot be located quickly, let the coaches make the decision to do the following: use or start with one umpire, use players to assist, wait for a replacement, or postpone the game. This is a rare emergency situation. Remain calm, be positive, and make the best of a bad experience.

### **During the Course of the Game**

**Baseballs:** Baseballs are the single most costly item of playing equipment for a team. Every effort should be made to get as much use of a baseball as possible before discarding it as unfit.

**Between Innings:** Between innings during the game, base umpires are to go to the shallow outfield near their base. The plate umpire is to go to the line of the team that is in the field, unless there has been a particular problem with the other team. Always be sure to stand. Resting on a knee is not permitted. Never go into the dugout unless you need to use the restroom or are ill. Entering the dugout for water is not acceptable or professional. It has been the policy of most institutions to provide liquids at regular intervals. If you should desire liquids, summon the dugout to bring it out to you. If it is an extremely hot and humid day, you should arrange, prior to the game for the home team to provide liquids at scheduled intervals. Never go to the stands to converse with spectators.

**Fraternization:** Umpires are not to carry on idle conversations with coaches or players during the progress of the game or with other umpires, unless the proper officiating of the game requires it.

**Hustle:** Hustle should be maintained on every play. An umpire should never be out of position because of poor hustle.

**Substitutions:** When an offensive or defensive substitution is made, you need only write down the proper substitution and then point to the official scorer. Do not go to each dugout to give substitutions. If a head coach has a question, he/she will come to you. This should go a long way in avoiding problems and speeding up the game.

**Pitching Changes:** If the coach goes to the mound and does not make a pitching change, you should always stand on the opposite foul line that he/she will cross. If he/she asks how many trips he/she has, tell him/her from there. Always umpire ahead of the game. Avoid simple errors that can lead to major problems or ejections. You are not there to make friends, only to umpire the game to the best of your ability. When a coach makes a pitching change, it is not necessary or proper for an umpire to go to the mound to obtain the pitcher's name. If you are not certain, point the player in the game and then ask the catcher or wait for the announcement. If you still do not get his/her name, use his/her number instead until you can obtain his/her name.

You are not to go to the mound to inform the pitcher of the counts or outs. You may simply inform the catcher if the new pitcher inherits a count or you can signal the count and outs. This will go a long way in avoiding trouble and speeding up the game. After the completion of an inning, if a player tosses you the ball, you are to check the ball for damage and then immediately roll the ball towards the mound. You are not to wait and throw the ball to the pitcher or another player, unless the ground is extremely wet or it is raining.

**Rain Situations:** After the plate umpire has received the home team's lineup cards, the umpires are in charge of the game. Use extreme caution when dealing with rain. If you remove the players from the field because of heavy rain the recommended waiting time before postponing a game is 30 minutes. Lightning in the area is immediate cause for delaying a game. Remember: It is the crew's responsibility to make every effort to complete a game. Never make a decision prematurely or discuss your plans with players or coaches. By rule, the crew chief is the only person that may remove players from the field, postpone, or suspend the game. However, the crew chief should always seek input from the crew before making a decision. Do not try to predict the weather. Get in touch with the weather service radar or the airport before making a final decision to postpone or suspend a game.

**Official Watch:** The crew chief will carry the official watch if he/she is not working the plate, in the event the crew chief is working the plate, one of the other crew members will carry the official watch. Remember; once the umpires are in control the recommended waiting time before canceling a game is 30 minutes.

**Turning on Lights:** The crew chief, at the request of the crew, or on his/her judgment, shall order the playing field lights turned on whenever in his/her opinion darkness makes further play hazardous. After a game has been started, the crew chief is to be the sole judge as to when field lights are to be turned on. In the event that the crew chief is not the plate umpire and if the plate umpire so needs the lights turned on to avoid hazardous play, he/she may do so. Turning on the lights should be done before the beginning of a full inning unless some extraordinary condition or abnormally long inning prompts otherwise. Umpires are instructed to use good judgment when asking for the lights.

**Injury to Umpire:** If an umpire working a game or series is injured or becomes ill and is unable to continue, the following procedures will be followed:

1. If an umpire is injured or becomes ill while working a three-man system, the remaining umpires will work a two-man system. If this occurs during a scheduled three game series and it is the home plate umpire who cannot continue, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Base Umpire will complete the game behind the plate, unless the injury occurs in the last game of the series or during a single game three-man assignment. At this time, the 1<sup>st</sup> Base Umpire will complete the game behind the plate.
2. If an umpire is injured or becomes ill while working a two-man system, the remaining umpire will complete the game from the best position available.

In both scenarios the crew chief should immediately seek the assistance of the head coach of the hosting institution to notify the Executive Board of the injury and inquirer of the possibility of providing a replacement.

## Handling Situations

**Overview:** Handling situations on the field presents one of the most challenging aspects of the job. Almost anyone can learn to call balls and strikes and use good judgment on plays on the bases. How you handle situations can make you stand out in the profession or make you an umpire that both teams and other umpires do not want to work with.

Umpires should keep the game under control and not make situations worse. Do not “throw fuel on the fire.” Every situation is unique and discretion is a very important element of the job. However, the following guidelines provide a basis which you can rely on while handling situations on the field.

- ✓ Remain calm, confident and non-confrontational, always maintaining an appearance of fairness and impartiality.
- ✓ Be a steadying influence on the game. Umpires must be able to sort out complex and important situations and should not hesitate to make unpopular decisions.
- ✓ Do not ignore occurrences on the field that, in their judgment, require their attention to maintain control and order. However, not every comment on the field deserves acknowledgment. When difficult situations arise, stay “above the fray” and do not adopt the emotional level of a particular player or manager. Use common sense and knowledge of the rules at all times.
- ✓ Attempt to listen to players and managers if their comments and demeanor are reasonable. Never initiate an argument, always avoid profanity and do not insist on the “last word” or follow someone who is walking away. However, do command respect and do not tolerate abuse.
- ✓ Do not use language that, if used by a player or manager toward an umpire, would result in discipline.
- ✓ Do not initiate physical contact. Avoid finger pointing or aggressive gestures during an argument.
- ✓ Keep control of the game and attempt to defuse any potential confrontation between representatives of opposing teams. If a fight does develop, stay clear and let coaches break up the fight. Identify offenders and take action as necessary after things have calmed down.

**Arguments:** Each umpire will handle his/her own discussions and arguments. It is recommended that the crew chief stay within hearing distance. Umpires should keep conversations one on one, stay calm, keep your comments to a minimum, and refrain from making hand gestures (example illustrating a balk). Partners should see to it that all others are escorted from the area and do not, under any circumstances, get involved in a conversation with any other participant. Stay focused on the umpire involved in the argument and be ready to assist if necessary.

**Arguing Judgment Calls:** The NCAA, NAIA, and NJCAA prohibits coaches and players from leaving their position on the field, coaches box, or dugout to argue judgment calls, including but not limited to

checked swings, balls and strikes, and balks. If after warning by the umpire a coach or player persists in arguing such calls they will be ejected.

**Warnings:** Warnings apply only for that specific day of the series, whether that day has one game or two, and the offending team's head coach will be specifically told. In the case where a contest is suspended and carries over from one day to the next, all warnings also carry over to the conclusion of that contest.

**Fights:** Try to stop the initial charge. Never grab anyone from behind. If the fight continues, back up, find your partners, and get help from game management. Take numbers and identify individuals involved in order to properly in force ejections and suspensions.

**Ejections:** The responsibility of ejection is not one to be taken lightly. Consider the following principles when deciding whether to eject someone from a game.

- ✓ Use of profanity specifically directed at an umpire or vulgar personal insults of an umpire.
- ✓ Physical contact.
- ✓ Refusal to stop arguing, and further delaying a game after the umpire has given adequate opportunity to make a point. Warn the player or manager that he has been heard and should return to his position or be ejected.
- ✓ If a player, manager or coach leaves his position to argue balls and strikes (including half swings), he should be warned to immediately return or he will be automatically ejected.
- ✓ Use of histrionic gestures (jumping up and down, violently waving arms or demonstrations) while arguing or stepping out of the dugout and making gestures toward an umpire. Throwing anything out of a dugout (towels, cups, equipment, etc.) is an automatic ejection.
- ✓ Actions by players specifically intended to ridicule an umpire such as drawing a line in the dirt to indicate the location of a pitch or leaving equipment at the plate after striking out with less than two outs.
- ✓ Throwing equipment in disgust over an umpire's call may be grounds for ejection.
- ✓ Any player or manager who fails to comply with an order from an umpire to do or refrain from doing anything that affects administering the rules and regulations governing play is subject to ejection in accordance with OBR 9.01. Examples include failure to stay within the lines of the batter's box after a warning or refusal to submit equipment for inspection, etc.

While the above examples may justify ejection, OBR 9.01(d) also grants umpires discretion to eject any participant “for objecting to decisions or for unsportsmanlike conduct or language.”

Make sure that you work as a team during an argument, ejection, or fight. Keep coaches and players who are not in the argument away. Do not attempt to physically break up a fight once it has broken out. You will only run the risk of injury and the coaches and players will usually help you restore order.

**Reporting Trouble:** Anything that is not “routine” should be called in to the Association Secretary/Treasurer the night of the incident or early the next morning. Examples include fights, bumping incidents, bean ball incidents, protested games, etc. The identical report should then be mailed or faxed to the Association Secretary/Treasurer within the time frame established in the Association Constitution and By-Laws. Extreme care should be taken in preparing the report.

**Umpire Reports:** In writing your reports, remember that they are actually legal documents and that others may be privileged to examine them. Tell precisely what happened and the exact language that was used. Be sure of your facts and confine your report to the facts only. Do not “editorialize.” Give facts and the situation will take care of itself.

Take extreme care in writing your reports. Make sure spelling and punctuation are correct. Always proofread the report to make sure it is free of errors and clear to the reader.

Always keep a copy of the report for your own records.

Mail or fax your report to the Association Secretary/Treasurer within the time frame established in the Association Constitution and By-Laws.

**Off the Field Problems:** Any problems that occur that are not related to actual game play should be reported to the Executive Board of the Association immediately. Do not try to solve problems including but not restricted to: parking, dressing rooms, security, crowd control, game fees, press or media relations, game management personnel, or others. Please share any concerns you might have or have experienced at our meetings.

The Executive Board is committed to addressing any and all concerns on behalf of the entire Association. Your intervention into these problems could cause a lot of confusion and some hard feelings.

## Following the Game

**After the Game:** After the completion of the game, the umpires will immediately wait for all crew members and leave the field together. The plate umpire should return the remaining supply of baseballs to a team representative, preferably not a coach or player. If the hosting institution provides a dressing room facility it is acceptable for the plate umpire to take the remaining baseballs to the dressing room, where they will be left for a team representative to pick up or use the next day if applicable. At no time will the plate umpire stop and return the baseballs to the dugout or toss them across the field.

**Post Game Meeting:** Following the game the crew chief should take a few minutes to review any unusual plays or situations that occurred during the game and how they might have been handled differently.

**Dressing Room:** Umpires should leave the dressing room as they found it if not better. Taking any items from the dressing room is unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the Association.

## Uniform Standards

Members are expected to maintain a professional appearance while in uniform and keep in mind that they are representing the Association both on and off the field.

**Hats:** Umpires are to wear the Association hat (MAU) while working all Association assigned games. The hat has the letters MAU embroidered in white, set at a diagonal, in a serif font. Contact the Secretary/Treasurer for locations where the hat can be purchased.

**Jerseys:** The Association does not have specific uniform color requirements. Here are some of the jersey color combinations:

- Navy with red or navy undershirt. **National Federation Recommended**
- Lt. Blue with navy undershirt.
- Red with navy or red undershirt.
- Black with black or cream undershirt. **NCAA Recommended**
- Polo Blue-black collar with black or white undershirt. **NCAA Recommended**

- Cream with black or cream undershirt.
- Gray with black or white undershirt.
- White with navy or black undershirt (depending on collar color – navy or black).

Crew members should be dressed alike. Base umpires may choose to dress different from the plate umpire in a three-man crew.

**Jackets:** During inclement weather plate umpires should wear a plate coat, long sleeved navy or black jersey, or a navy or black jacket. Base umpires should wear a navy or black jacket. Umpires are not to wear a short sleeved jersey with a long sleeved shirt underneath.

**Pants:** Umpires are to wear gray umpire slacks, neatly pressed.

**Belt:** Black leather belt.

**Socks:** Black socks.

**Shoes:** All black shoes or mostly black shoes with white trim.

MAU  
Umpire Manual

ArbiterSports  
Information

# MAU Umpire Manual

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## ArbiterSports Information

### Availability and Other Constraints

From your account you can set dates and times you are unavailable, select teams for which you prefer not to officiate, set the sites you prefer not to visit, choose postal codes to which you prefer not to travel, select partners with whom you prefer not to officiate, and set a general travel limit you prefer to stay within. Generally, assigners will not assign you to games that conflict with your settings without contacting you first.

To use any of these options, you must first be given permission by your assigner. Otherwise, you may not see some of these options.

### Block Dates

Begin by clicking the BLOCKS tab. Blocking dates allows you to set dates and times you are NOT available. Make sure you are on the DATES sub-tab. This screen will display a calendar of the current month. You may move to other months by clicking that month's name to the left or right of the current month or by using the drop-down menu located just above the right side of the calendar. Set when you are unavailable by using the different options under the "Action" section on the top left side of the screen. Also, if you are an official in more than one group, you need to check the box next the group number that you're setting blocks for. More than one group can be selected. This option is useful for making blocks that will apply to all of your groups.

### Block All Day

Click the "Block All Day" button if you want to block an entire day. Next, click the date on the calendar that you want to block. The day you have blocked will then appear on the calendar. Continue clicking additional days that you want to block. You can also use the Date Range function to apply blocks to multiple days at once. Click the calendar icon next to each field to set the start and end dates for the date range. Then check the boxes for each day of the week within the date range. For example, if you want to block every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday in the month of February, select the entire month in the date range, then check the boxes for Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Now click the "Apply" button.

## Block Partial Day

Click the “Block Partial Day” button, adjust the time range you want to block, and then follow the same procedure as above to block partial days. For example, if you work 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday, set 8:00am to 5:00pm as the time range, set the date range accordingly, and click every box for Monday through Friday, then click the “Apply” button. Do not try to incorporate travel time into when you’re available. That will be included elsewhere.

Dates can have more than one blocked time. For example, you may set blocks from 8:00am to 12:00pm and from 7:00pm to 11:00pm which would still allow you to work an afternoon game between 12:00pm to 7:00pm. To do this, set the first blocked time (8:00am to 12:00pm) as instructed above and click the date. Then set the second blocked time (7:00pm to 11:00pm) and click the date.

To change a blocked date simply delete the existing block (see below) and then add the correct block.

## Making Blocks “Firm” and Making Notes on Blocks

A “firm” block is one that your assigner cannot override when making assignments. Normally, an assigner can still make an assignment even if you have a date blocked. They simply are notified that you’ve set a block, but they can still assign you. Making blocks firm prevents them from doing so.

After you have blocked a date, click the View Schedule option in the “Action” section. Click on a date and the lower portion of the screen will show you the blocks that have been set on that date. You will see what group (or groups) it applies to, what kind of block it is (All Day or Part Day) and whether the block is firm or not.

To make a block firm, click the edit pencil to the left of the block. Simply check the box in the “Firm” column. Now click the blue disk icon to save.

Follow the same procedure to make a note on a block. Instead of checking the box, simply type your note in the field provided and click the blue disk icon to save. To make a note that applies to all blocks in a date range, simply check the Add Notes box in the “Action” section before you proceed with blocking dates. A small window will appear that will allow you to type a note that will be applied to all dates in the date range.

## Deleting Blocked Dates

Click the “Clear Blocks” button, and then click the dates you want to remove blocks from. You can also use the procedure described above to clear blocks from a date or time range. Make sure that any Firm blocks have been removed before proceeding.

## Reports

On the left of the screen, below the “Action” section you will see the “Reports” section and the word “Calendar” in blue. Clicking that word will take you to a screen that will allow you to save a copy of your calendar with your blocks. Use the drop-down menus to choose the date range you want and the export format, and then click the Print Preview button. Depending on the export format you chose, one of two things will happen. If you chose \*.pdf, \*.txt, or \*.htm you will go to a new web page that will display your calendar information. If you chose \*.xls, \*.rtf, or \*.tif a small window will open and prompt you to save the file.

## Block Sites

Click the SITES sub-tab. Check the “Show All” box on the right to display all possible sites. Navigate to other pages by clicking on the numbers along the bottom of the list or click on the letters to navigate alphabetically. Choose which sites you want to block by checking the box to the left of the name of the site. Click the Save button to finish.

## Deleting Blocked Sites

Uncheck the box next to any site you want to remove a block from and click the Save button.

## Block Teams

Click the TEAMS sub-tab. Blocking a team differs from blocking a site in that you can block a specific team when it’s home or away or both. This is important because blocking a site only blocks you from all that school's teams at home. Check the “Show All” box on the right to display all possible teams. Navigate to other pages by clicking on the numbers along the bottom of the list or click on the letters to navigate alphabetically. Check the box to the left of the teams that you want to block, then check the corresponding boxes in the Home and Away columns and click the Save button.

## Deleting Blocked Teams

Uncheck the box next to any team you want to remove a block from and click the Save button.

## **Block Partners**

Click the PARTNERS sub-tab. Check the “Show All” box on the right to display all possible partners. Select the officials you wish to block by checking the box next to their name. Click the Save button when all appropriate partners have been blocked.

## **Deleting Blocked Partners**

Uncheck the box next to any partner you want to remove a block from and click the Save button.

## **Set Travel Limits**

Click the TRAVEL LIMITS sub-tab. By default, the postal code shown on your personal information screen will be selected for each day of the week and will have a travel limit of 999. This means that your travel distance will be calculated from this postal code. However, if on any day of the week you leave for game assignments from a postal code different than your home postal code, you will want to change it. DO this by putting the new postal code in the provided field, checking the boxes for the appropriate days of the week (checking the top-most box will select all days) and clicking the Apply button. You can change the distance you are willing to travel by putting that number in the provided field, checking the boxes for the appropriate days of the week and clicking the Apply button. Click the Exit button once all your information is complete.

## **Block Postal Codes**

Click the POSTAL CODES sub-tab. Click on the green plus icon on the left. In the text field, enter the postal code you want to block then click on the blue disk icon to save or the red X icon to cancel. Repeat this procedure for all postal codes you want to block.

## **Deleting Blocked Postal Codes**

Click the red X next to the postal code you want to delete.

## **Viewing Your Schedule**

Click the SCHEDULE tab that appears along the top of your screen.

## **Accepting/Declining Games on Your Schedule**

Check the appropriate box for each game on your schedule and then click Submit. Games must be accepted by the date posted in the far-right column. If the games have not been accepted (or declined) by this date they will automatically be removed. Be aware that once you have accepted a game you can no longer decline the game from your account, but must contact the assigner to turn the game back.

Similarly, once a game has been declined it is removed from your schedule and you can no longer accept the game without contacting your assigner. Once a game has been accepted you can click on the game number of any game for further details regarding the game (including partners if allowed). You can also click on the name of the site to view a new screen with its details, including school contacts and a link to the school's location on Google Maps.

## **Printing Your Schedule**

Click the Schedule link in the "Reports" section on the top left area of your screen. Select the date range of games the schedule should include. Click the calendar icon to the right of the date fields to display a calendar to assist in selecting the date range and simply click two dates on the calendar.

Next, select the format you would like the schedule to print in. Current formats include Adobe Acrobat Format (\*.pdf), Microsoft Excel Sheet (\*.xls), Microsoft Word/Rich Text Format (\*.rtf), Plain Text File (\*.txt), HTML Web Page (\*.htm), and Tagged Image File (\*.tif). If you choose \*.pdf, \*.txt, or \*.htm you will go to a new web page that will display your calendar information. From there, you can choose to save the file to a location on your computer. If you choose \*.xls, \*.rtf, or \*.tif a small window will open and prompt you to save the file. Please note that you must have Adobe Acrobat installed in order to display or print your schedule in this format. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat installed you can do so on the Arbiter website. Similarly, Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word need to be installed to display your schedule in either of those formats.

By default, only games with a Normal status will appear on the schedule you print. Check the Print All Status box if you want all other games to appear as well. This includes games with a Canceled, Rainout, Forfeit or Suspended status.

Click the Print Preview button once you've selected your date range and format. Your schedule will display in whatever format you selected. Use the print option from this formatted report to print a hard copy.

## **Changing Your Personal Information**

Click the PROFILE tab. From this screen you can edit all your personal information.

Click the Phones link in the "Account" section to edit your phone numbers. To add a new phone number, click the green plus sign. Choose the type of number, and then enter the actual number in the proper

field. Add an extension if applicable. Check the Public box if you want this phone number to be available to other officials and schools. Otherwise, the phone number can only be viewed by your assigner. A small note field is available if necessary (such as SPOUSE WILL GENERALLY ANSWER or USE AS LAST RESORT ONLY). These notes are for your assigner to view only. Click the blue disk icon to save your number or the red X to cancel. Repeat this process for as many numbers as you want to enter. Click the Exit button when you're done.

## Driving Directions

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## Driving Directions

### Aurora HS

**1104 E. High St., Aurora, MO 65605**

Park by small ball field SW of concession stand. Dress inside equip. room on west side of concession window.

### Billings HS

**118 W. Mt Vernon Rd., Billings, MO 65710**

Park in the back of the parking lot by an old concession stand. Or park behind the left field fence. Contact partner for preferred location.

### Bolivar HS

**1401 N Hwy. D, Bolivar, MO 65613**

Dress in umpire dressing room upstairs in the press box.

### Buffalo HS

**315 S. Hickory Street., Buffalo, MO 65622**

Enter on north side of elementary school parking lot. Drive through parking lot.....park and dress in area adjacent to batting cages next to softball field.

### Branson HS

**308 Cedar Ridge Dr., Branson, MO 65616**

Ball field on the left as you top the hill. Dress inside locker room/storage area.

### Camdenton HS

**662 Laker Pride Rd., Camdenton, MO 65020**

Sports complex is down the hill from the school. You can dress in the storage room behind the concession stand if it is unlocked.

### Camdenton City Park

**109 S. City Park Rd., Camdenton, MO 65020**

Dress in parking lot @ your car.

## **Climax Springs HS**

**119 Nort Drive, Climax Springs, MO 65324**

Ball field is behind the school, dress in your car.

## **Hermitage HS**

**302 E. Polk St., Hermitage, MO 65668**

Ball field is behind the school, enter from the south on Jenkins St. Dress in your car.

## **Humansville HS**

**300 N. Oak St., Humansville, MO 65674**

Ball field is behind (East) the school. Park and dress in parking lot or bathroom.

## **Lebanon HS**

**777 Brice St., Lebanon, MO 65536**

Oley Scott Stadium behind the school. Dress in your car or in the coaches office (ask first) next to the batting cages down the left field line.

## **Pleasant Hope HS**

**303 N. Main St., Pleasant Hope, MO 65725**

Ball field behind the school. Park by the greenhouses and dress in your car or in the bus barn.

## **Republic HS**

**4370 RepMo Dr. (Junction of M & ZZ), Republic, MO 65738**

## **Reeds Spring HS**

**175 Elementary St., Reeds Spring, MO 65737**

Ball field located between the Elementary and Intermediate Schools. Dress in the parking lot.

## **Stoutland HS**

**7584 State Road T, Stoutland, MO 65567**

Ball field is located down the hill (1/4 mile) from the school on Hwy T. Dress in the parking lot or in player's locker room next to field. w/permission. Tip...you will not have phone reception at the ball field.

## **Walnut Grove HS**

**300 E. College, Walnut Grove, MO 65770**

Ball field is behind the school. Dress in your car or the bathrooms in the school.

## **Weaubleau HS**

**509 Center St., Weaubleau, MO 65774**

Ball field behind the school. Park and dress in your car.

## **Willard HS**

**409A Farmer Rd., Willard, MO 65781**

Ball field (Greenwade) is located @ North Elementary. Park and dress behind the school building or next to the fence by the storage building along the frontage road.