

HUNTINGTON WEST LITTLE LEAGUE UMPIRE QUICK REFERENCE

For complete rules and details, please refer to the Little League Official Rule Book, the Little League Rules Interpretation Manual and Your leagues Local Rules

PRIORITIES: Fair/Foul, Catch/No Catch, Out/Safe, Ball/Strike

UMPIRE MEETING: Before game in the parking lot or outside the field, discuss responsibilities for catch/no catch, fair/foul and who is responsible for calls on each base. Discuss umpire communication signals for Infield Fly Rule, coverage of bases, Timing Play, etc.

Enter the field through the home team dugout together as a team. Exit the field together as a team through the winning teams dugout.

CHECK BATS AND HELMETS: For each team, look for cracks in helmets, illegal or big barrel bats, cracks or dents on bats, BPF 1.15 must be visibly stamped on all non-wood bats. **(Do this when you arrive on the field 10 minutes prior to game time)**

Plate Meeting: 5 minutes prior to game time, plate and base umpires stand with home plate between them with plate umpires' back to the backstop and base umpires' back to the outfield. Plate umpire then declares, "Managers...Plate Meeting!"

When managers arrive, introduce yourself and your partner, get the line-up cards from the home team first and make sure each team and the scorekeeper has a copy of each line-up. Then ask, "Are your teams properly and legally equipped to play this game according to Little League Rules and Regulations?" Make sure you get a YES from both coaches. Tell coaches to have their teams hustle between innings. Tell coaches that you will work hard for them and will do your best. Tell coaches you expect good sportsmanship from both of their teams and that they, as the managers, are expected to be the examples of good sportsmanship for their teams.

Ask the home team manager to go over any ground rules. Then shake hands and wish everyone good luck.

BASE UMPIRE: Pause/Read/React. Timing, Timing, Timing... Priority is the lead runner. Wait for the complete play and then make the call. Timing is very important! No need to rush your call. Be stationary when you READ the play, then process that information in your mind (while making sure the ball has not fallen out of a glove, pulled foot, missed tag or something) and then make your call using proper mechanics and vocal declaration. If it is not a close play, no vocal is needed. Volume of your call should go up in direct proportion to the closeness of the play! SELL IT!

(3) POSITIONS OF THE BASE UMPIRE IN a 2-UMPIRE GAME

A POSITION: Stand in foul area 10-12 ft. up the fair/foul line from 1'st base.

(ONLY USE THIS POSITION WHEN NO ONE IS ON BASE / NO BASE RUNNERS)

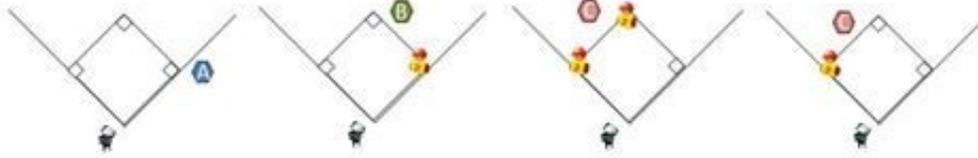
Hands on front thigh square to the plate in athletic position to be able to rule on any check-swing requests from the plate umpire.

B POSITION: Stand on grass edge outside of infield dirt between 1'st & 2'nd base.

(Cheat toward 2'nd a step or two)

(ONLY USE THIS POSITION WITH A BASE RUNNER ON FIRST ONLY)

C POSITION: Stand on grass edge outside of infield dirt between 2'nd & 3'rd base. (Cheat toward 2nd a step or two) **(USE THIS POSITION FOR ALL OTHER BASE RUNNER SITUATIONS)**



MOVEMENT FROM POSITION A ON A BATTED BALL TO INFIELD

(Umpire angle on the play is more important than the distance to play. Try for a 90 degree angle on the play.) **ANGLE OVER DISTANCE!**

Ball hit to 3rd baseman...take 3 steps in fair territory towards 2nd base.

Ball hit to shortstop...take 2-3 steps in fair territory towards 2nd base.

Ball hit to 2nd baseman...take 1-2 step in fair territory towards 2nd base.

Ball hit to 1st baseman...take 1 step in fair territory towards 2nd base or stay in foul territory moving toward base coach box to make your call.

BASE UMPIRE MOVEMENT GUIDELINES FOR a 2-UMPIRE GAME

1) If a batted ball goes through to the outfield, move your position to the infield grass area so that you can keep the batter and any base runners between you and the baseball.

(IF THE BALL GOES OUT TO THE OUTFIELD, GO IN...IF THE BALL STAYS IN THE INFIELD, STAY OUT)

STRIKE ZONE: Officially this is from the armpit to top of knees and the width of the plate. Any part of the ball in that zone is a strike. For lower divisions, expand the strike zone so the batter swings at the ball, instead of waiting for a walk. The key is to stay consistent on your strike zone throughout the game. (1 ball width on the inside pitch and 2 ball widths on the outside pitch is a good reference for all levels of play) The top and bottom of the strike zone is based on the batters position while they are in their normal batting stance.

FAIR/FOUL: For a foul in the infield, the ball must be touched by a player or object in foul territory or the ball must STOP in foul territory between home and first base or home and third base.

An outfield foul fly can start in fair territory (without contacting the ground), and then be touched by a player or the ground in foul territory. Umpires call "FOUL" and point to foul territory on all fouls, but do not say anything on fair balls, while pointing to fair territory. **ANY BATTED BALL THAT TOUCHES ANY PART OF A BASE IS A FAIR BALL.**

IF A BATTED BALL BOUNCES ON THE GROUND (BOUNDING BALL) AND THEN TRAVELS OVER (in the air) ANY PART OF 1ST OR 3RD BASE IMMEDIATELY BEFORE TOUCHING THE GROUND OR PLAYER IN FOUL TERRITORY BEYOND THE BASE, THE BALL IS FAIR!

FOUL TIP: A sharp and direct (no arc) hit ball that is caught by the catcher. The play is live and base runners can advance. If caught after 2 strikes, the batter is out.

WARMING UP PITCHERS: Only team players (not adults) can warm up pitchers. Catchers must be equipped with a chest protector, catcher's glove, helmet, cup and dangling throat guard.

DUGOUT: There must be one adult in the dugout at all times. (No more than 3 adults)
No on-deck batters.

APPEALS:

1. Failure to retouch properly
2. Missed base

3. Failure to return to 1 base
4. Failure to touch home base
5. Batting out of order

A player must make all appeals though a coach or manager can verbally assist the player.

Appeals must be made while the ball is live.

Appeals must be made before the defense leaves the field, or before the next pitch or play is made.

BATTING OUT OF ORDER: If the improper batter (batter out of order) completes his turn at bat, and an appeal is made, the proper batter is out. If the improper batter is still batting, the proper batter takes his place and assumes the ball and strike count without an out.

BUNT: It is ok to be in the bunt position. It is a strike if the batter tries to contact the ball (offers at the pitch). This is only an issue if the pitch is out of the strike zone; otherwise it's a standard strike. A bunt that goes foul with 2 strikes is a strikeout.

INFIELD FLY RULE: This rule is to prevent "cheap" double or triple plays. There must be less than 2 outs (0 or 1 out), runners on 1st and 2nd or bases loaded.

When umpires see this situation, they communicate by a tap on their cap brim to make sure both umpires know a potential Infield Fly Rule can happen. The hit must be a fly ball (no line-drives) and the defender must be comfortably settled under the ball (no running/diving catches – couple steps to catch the ball is ok) and judged to be able to make the catch with ordinary effort. When the ball is at its top peak, the umpire declares, "Infield fly!" (If close to a fair/foul line, declare, "Infield Fly if Fair!" (Either umpire can initiate the infield fly call) (The non-initiating umpire is to 'mirror' their partners' call by making the same declaration after the initial call is made)

When an Infield Fly is declared, the batter is always out if fair even if the defender misses the catch.

If the declared infield fly goes foul uncaught, it's just a regular foul ball.

Runners can advance to another base during a declared Infield Fly at their own risk. Runners must still tag-up if the ball is caught during a declared Infield Fly.

AWARDING EXTRA BASES: Batter running to first and the fielder immediately throws the ball out of play. (Ex: thrown into the dugout) Award the batter 2nd base (2 bases from time of pitch).

Award 2 bases **from time of pitch** to the batter and all base runners when a first throw from an infielder goes out of play.

Award 2 bases to any batter and base runners from any throw that goes out of play from an outfielder or second throw from an infielder **from the time of throw**.

The ball is dead when the ball goes out of play.

INTERFERENCE: Any base runner is out if struck by a batted ball.

Any runner is out if he/she interferes with a fielder making a play on a batted ball.

The base runner must allow the defensive fielder to make a play on a batted ball.

The base coach cannot push, stop, or physically assist a base runner in any way. If it happens, the runner is out. This is coaches' interference.

In interference situations, three things happen:

1) A runner is out. **2)** All other runners return to the base they had before the interference. **3)** The ball is dead.

Call it when you see it!, "That's Interference!"

PROTEST: Protests can only be based on a misapplication of a baseball rule or baseball rule interpretation. Only the manager can protest a play. Protests must be made before the next play. If it's the last play of the game, the protest must be made before the umpires leave the field of play. (No protests can be declared in the spectator area or parking lot! Too Late!)

No protest can be based on an umpires' judgment call. (ex: strike/ball, fair/foul, safe/out).

Once a protest is made, meet with the other umpire to discuss and either reverse the decision or communicate to the scorekeeper to mark the play when the protest was made and declare that play will resume “under protest”. The manager needs to report the protest in writing to the league President within 24 hours. Umpire must do a report also.

INJURED OR PLAYER LEAVES GAME: If a player is injured, becomes sick or must leave the game site, no outs occur. Collapse the batting order and continue play.

GROUND RULE DOUBLE: If a batted ball bounces in the outfield and then goes over the home run fence, the batter is awarded a double. This is the same award if the batted ball goes thru or under the home run fence.

BATTER HIT BY PITCHED BALL: Always call, “Time!”

If the pitch hits a batter outside the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base.

If a ball in the strike zone hits the batter, call a strike.

If the batter swings at a pitch while getting hit by same pitch, call a strike.

The hands are not part of the bat. The batter shall attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch.

BATTERS BOX: The batter must be entirely in the batters box once the pitcher is set or starts the pitch, otherwise a forced strike.

The batter is out if he/she makes contact with the ball while a foot is entirely out of the box **while touching the ground**. (If a foot is **off the ground** outside the box on contact, it’s ok)

During a catchers’ throw to “pick-off” a runner, the batter can remain in the box.

During a steal to home, the batter should vacate the box if he/she knows the runner is coming into home.

OBSTRUCTION: A fielder must allow a runner a clear path to a base if the fielder does not have the ball. A runner should have a “clear pathway” thru first base.

If a fielder has a foot or any part of his/her body in front of a base without possession of the ball and causes the runner to deviate their path, slow down or collide with the fielder, the umpire shall declare, “That’s obstruction!” and let the play continue.

If the obstructed runner could have reached another base if he/she was not obstructed, allow the runner the next base (judgment call). This is not appealable.

If the runner is obstructed while the defender is making a play on the runner (Example: just prior to receiving the ball), award the runner the base.

NOTE: If the defender making the play on the runner has the ball, there is no obstruction.

BASE LINE: The runner can run at any path or arc he/she chooses, unless the defender has the ball and is ready to make a play on the runner – in which case, the runner must run straight to either base with an established 3 foot base line.

A runner has to attempt to avoid a collision with a defender who has the ball ready to make a play or tag. There is no “must slide” rule – it’s “must attempt to avoid”.

RUNNERS ARE ASSUMED TO HAVE TOUCHED EACH BASE: While base runners are running bases, the umpires watch all base touches (or missed touches). Keep the play going and do not say anything if a base is missed. This is an opportunity for an appeal. If an appeal is made, the player can be called out if the defense takes the ball to the missed base or tags the runner out. Remember, the ball needs to be live for an appeal.

HEADFIRST SLIDES: A runner is called out for sliding headfirst in Little League.

A runner is only allowed headfirst slides if returning back to a base.

TWO RUNNERS ON THE SAME BASE: If a play is made on the two runners, the original runner is

safe and the second player to the base is out if the second player was not forced to the base. If the second player to the base was forced there, then he/she is safe and the original player is out.

BASE RUNNER LEAVES BASE EARLY: The runner cannot leave their base until the pitched ball is hit-able by the batter. If a runner leaves early, then the umpire throws his red flag or cap down and lets the play continue. If the runner leaving early is thrown out, then the out remains. If there was not a hit ball or forced walk, then the runner leaving early must go back to the original base without penalty. If the runner leaves early and the batter hits safely, forcing the runner to the next base, then no penalty on the runner. If the batter reaches base while any base runner leaves early, the base runners can only advance a base if forced to do so. If not forced, base runners are to stay at their base or return to any unoccupied base. Runners must be on the base when the pitcher is ready to pitch.

Hope this quick reference helps you be more prepared and confident to umpire. Read the Little League rulebook and rules interpretation manual to deepen your knowledge of the game. Thank you for the time and service you give to our baseball program. You are truly appreciated!