

Volunteer Umpire Tip of the Month – October 2006

Here are the “must-cover” subjects to be discussed when the umpires get together before a game:

- **Outfield coverage:** The differences between a 60-foot diamond and the 90-foot diamond are significant. Who is going to go to the outfield, and when, needs to be covered.
- **Fair-foul coverage:** With no runners on base, the base umpire can help when he/she is positioned behind the first baseman. But with runners on, the home plate umpire has everything on both lines.
- **Who takes third:** With a lone runner on first base going to third on a base hit, the plate umpire has to cover third while the base umpire has the batter-runner no matter where he/she ends up. On an overthrow at third, the plate umpire will bring the lead runner home and the base umpire will continue to stay with the batter-runner.
- **Check swings:** A good idea is to tell each catcher he/she can check as many swings as he/she wants. They will appreciate it. Also, tell your partner you will be checking with him/her, and that all you want is the truth. A plate umpire’s feelings should not be hurt by the base umpire calling a strike. If the base umpire has to argue with a coach, he or she will want to argue about their own judgment, not a decision to support another umpire.
- **Pulled foot at first:** How many games have you seen go bad because the base umpire calls the runner "out" then after much yelling discusses the call with his/her partner and then changes the call, only to be barraged again from the other side? Try hard to avoid that kind of situation. If you want help with a pulled foot, ask before you make a call.
- **Arguments and ejections:** Each umpire should handle his/her own disputes with managers and coaches. As long as the discussion stays one-on-one, the partner should keep his/her distance. In fact, the partner should be busy observing players and dugouts.
- **End of the game:** When a game is over, meet your partner immediately and leave the field together, ideally through a gate on the winning team's side. Do not get yourself in trouble by stopping to talk to a player or manager/coach thus giving someone an opportunity to discuss a call made during the game.

Remember, umpires can get rule updates, interpretations, useful tips like these and much more, by signing up for the Little League Umpire Registry. Click here for more details:
<http://www.littleleague.org/umpires/index.asp>

Also, chartered Little Leagues can order a copy of the Little League E-Rules CD, which now includes videos of selected rules. Click here for more details:
http://www.littleleague.org/media/rule_example.asp