

# California District 54 Baseball and Softball

Minor – Level 1

Two Umpire System

60' Bases

Legend	
Umpire	---▶
Base Runner	—▶
Batter Runner	—▶
Batted Ball	—▶
Thrown Ball	—▶
Fielder	—▶

Little League Baseball®, Incorporated

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## Program Overview:

Umpiring a baseball game is a complex and challenging endeavor. Our dilemma is the amount of information to learn about positioning and working a baseball game. The volume and complexities of information create problems training new recruits to work in a rewarding and positive manner. It is not possible to learn everything before you start umpiring. You will need to build a good foundation to start. Learn enough to get started. Then, continue learning as you umpire through out the season and beyond.

Our goal at District 54 is to create a comprehensive learning program. We will guide you through a program that starts with simple, easily learned responsibilities and progresses gradually around your learning abilities to the two umpire system. We will build over a period of time toward the two umpire system used by tournament umpires during regular season and all stars. The full two umpire system requires greater situational awareness and coverage, but will provide superior coverage and results.

**“Tee-Ball” & “Coach Pitch” Two Umpire System:** First, we start with an easily defined system for the “novice” umpire. Most all of us started with it years ago. Essentially, it requires the plate umpire to call all fair/foul, catch/no catch rulings. It also has the plate umpire rule on all plays at 3<sup>rd</sup> base and home plate. The base umpire calls only plays at 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> bases and starts from Starting Position B (behind the 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman). This system lets “novice” umpires gain game experience from the center of the field and teaches some of the basics to positioning. It also provides a system for reasonable success while learning this craft we call umpiring.

**“Minor – Level 1” Two Umpire System (used for “kid-pitch” divisions):** First, we start with an easily defined system for the “Tee-Ball/Coach Pitch” umpires. Now, we add a plate umpire calling balls and strikes from behind the plate. Essentially all other elements of the umpire system remain the same. The “Minor – Level 1” system still requires the plate umpire to call all fair/foul, catch/no catch rulings. It again has the plate umpire rule on all plays at 3<sup>rd</sup> base and home plate. The base umpire calls only plays at 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> bases and starts from Starting Position B (behind the 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman). This system keeps its simplicity while adding an important element of umpiring – the plate umpire calling balls & strikes.

The key to developing umpires is to start simple and add a couple concepts at a time after previous concepts have been mastered. This provides a system for reasonable success while learning and gaining game experience.

**“Minor – Level 2” Two Umpire System (used for “kid-pitch” divisions):** In the next system, called the “Minor – Level 2” Two Umpire System, we will start positioning the base umpire behind first base with no runners on base or a runner on third base only. The responsibilities remain the same as the “Minor – Level 1” system” discussed earlier, but we teach the base umpire how to work and position for plays around 1<sup>st</sup> base. When the ball is hit to the outfield, the BU pivots into the infield using a special technique taught to umpires. This allows BU to never turn his/her back on the batter-runner (BR) while transitioning between outside to inside the infield. When runners are on 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> base, the base umpire again positions in Starting Position B. The plate umpire still takes all fair/foul, catch/no catch rulings and all plays at 3<sup>rd</sup> base and home plate.

**“Major – Level 1” Two Umpire System:** The “Major – Level 1” Two Umpire System will position the base umpire (BU) like two umpire tournament systems. Starting Position C will be introduced which is a mirror image of the Starting Position B, but behind the shortstop (F6). Starting Position C is used in all runner configurations except no one on base or runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base only. It will lead our base umpires to call some plays at 3<sup>rd</sup> base for the first time.

Umpire responsibilities at 3<sup>rd</sup> base will be divided between umpires by situational needs. This requires both umpires be on the “same page” as they work their game. Plays at 1<sup>st</sup> base called from Starting Position C can be a bit intimidating at first, but this coverage offers the optimal coverage for the two umpire system and spreads responsibilities more evenly as the plate umpire is relieved of almost all infield plays at 3<sup>rd</sup> base. The base umpire will be calling almost all infield and outfield plays at 3<sup>rd</sup> base except for a couple special situations. The umpires will learn some of the complexities of umpiring the two umpire system. The plate umpire will, however, still be responsible for all fair/foul and catch/no catch rulings on the field.

**“Major – Level 2” Two Umpire System:** The next level to progress to is the “Major – Level 2” Two Umpire System. Here we teach all the techniques used in the two umpire system. The 60 foot diamond comes alive with coverage responsibilities, communication and movement. Here you learn that a starting position is not a finishing position. Proper movement enhances perception without harming other responsibilities. This is where you will see the tournament system taught and implemented.

Responsibilities are taught here in their full complexity. What would have seemed over whelming when you started is merely a normal step to achieve now. From Starting Position A, the plate and base umpires will divide fair/foul responsibilities along the 1<sup>st</sup> and right field lines. Umpires learn to read “trouble” balls and discover their importance to coverage responsibilities with no runners on base.

Positioning refinements include discovering how and why positioning is important. Everything we do on the field has a reason. At this level you will discover the purpose of movement – not just moving to spots dictated in a manual. Positioning becomes a game of strategy bounded by advantage/disadvantage of each movement and situation.

**Junior-Senior Two Umpire System:** You will also take many of these techniques learned on the 60 foot diamond and apply them to the 90 foot diamond. The 90 foot diamond is a challenging venue. Its size means more ground must be covered. Umpires cannot just stumble into position. They must move in directions that angle for views of plays. Positioning errors magnify in appearance and results as players are faster and more athletic.

**“Tournament 60” and “Tournament 90” Three Umpire Systems:**


Umpiring systems are built around responsibility divisions. As the systems described above evolve, positioning schemes change as responsibilities change. Responsibilities form the logic or reasoning mechanics positioning systems are built on. Since we cannot take mechanics manuals on the field with us each game, we must learn positioning by its concepts.

We will leave the implementation and timing to this system to your league Umpire-In-Chief. They are closer to the situation and your individual learning abilities. It is important to keep everyone learning, progressing and striving to be better. Always remind experienced umpires how important it is to bring less experienced umpires along just as many have done for each of us. Use a mechanics system they are comfortable in using. Use advancing systems as your partner is ready to advance.


As you can see, this is an ambitious project. But, given time and perseverance, we will build a great teaching model for the art of umpiring the game of baseball. Good luck as you progress through your lessons. If you have questions, feel free to contact any of the district staff umpires or contact me by email at [d54umpgroup@sbcglobal.net](mailto:d54umpgroup@sbcglobal.net) .

## Umpire Signals:

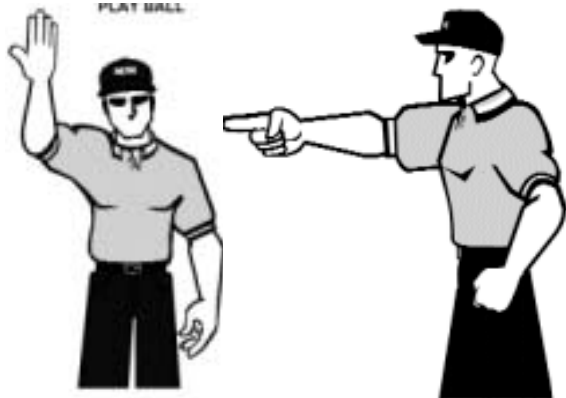
### “Hands on Knees” Set Position:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€ Normal position for the Base Umpire before the pitch approaches the batter</li><li>€ Goal: Develop an athletic position for comfort and quick, productive movement.</li><li>€ Start by squaring your body to the batter and spread your feet slightly more than shoulder width apart.</li><li>€ Bend your knees, squat slightly by dropping your bottom (like starting to sit in a chair – don't just bend at the waist). Keep your head up and load your legs like springs for quick, aggressive movement.</li><li>€ Relax your shoulders and lean slightly forward so your weight is on the balls of your feet.</li><li>€ Put your hands on your knees for comfort and align your elbows with your arms.</li></ul>
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### “Standing” Set Position:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€ A position used after an umpire moves to develop angle and reduce distance to observe play action.</li><li>€ Given the short amount of time available to position during a play, the standing set position is used more often in the real world for play observation. It allows the umpire to steady quickly so the body can act like a tripod and get your eyes still to perceive the play well.</li><li>€ When we position, it's really about moving our eyes laterally in a short span of time to increase angle and reduce distance. When you squat down into a hands-on-knees set position, it doesn't enhance your angle.</li></ul>
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### Play: (Either Style – Wave In or Point At)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€ A hand motion used by the plate umpire that indicates the ball is in play.</li><li>€ The motion may be with the arm extended forward toward the pitcher, the palm open, facing up and the hand then pulled back toward the plate umpire – beckoning, inviting or waving the play to begin.</li><li>€ The motion may also be a simple point at the pitcher.</li><li>€ The signal is accompanied by the verbal command “Play”.</li><li>€ After time has been called, always put the ball back in play</li></ul>
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#### Note: Play may not begin unless:

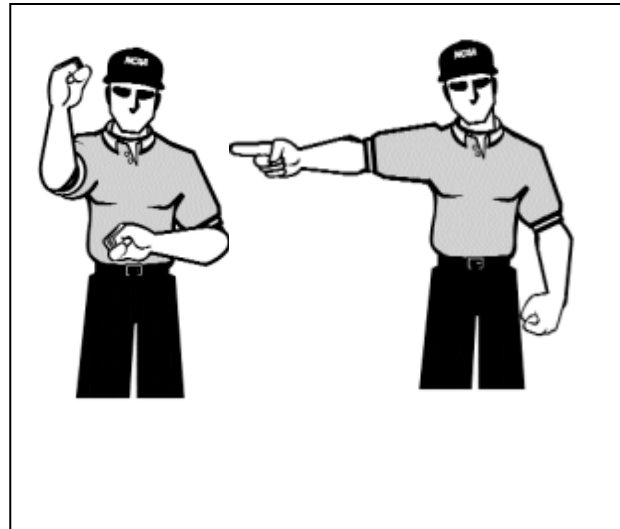
- € (1) The pitcher is toeing (engaged) with the pitcher's plate (rubber)
- € (2) While in possession of the ball and
- € (3) The catcher is ready to receive the pitch.
- € (4) Often the ball is not put back in play until the batter takes his place in the batter's box and is reasonably ready to hit.

## Ball:



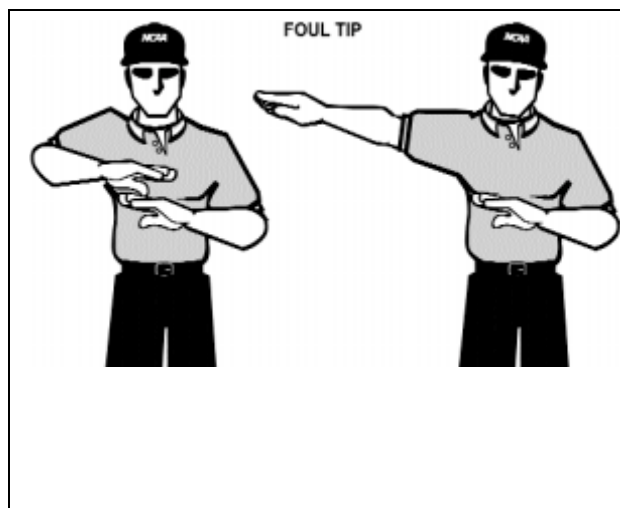
- € “Balls” are always called vocally without a signal while remaining down in the plate set position.
- € Stay down in your stance a little longer to prevent popping up early (“jack-in-a-box” effect) and being misinterpreted by players, coaches or fans.
- € If you come up early, someone will say, “He wanted to call that a strike.” “The umpire was thinking about that one.” Or, “The umpire wasn’t sure on that call.”
- € Voicing “Ball” also helps you develop your evaluation period after tracking the pitch (“timing”).

## Strike: (Either Style – “Hammer” or Point to the Side)




- € A strike signal is always performed with the right arm and voiced while coming out of the plate set position.
- € This signal may be either a “hammer” or a point to the side. Continue watching the ball in the catcher’s mitt.
- € A “called” strike (a pitch which passes through the strike zone without being struck at) is made while simultaneously signaling and voicing “strike”.
- € A swinging strike (a pitch which is offered at by the batter) does not have a voice component, just a more casual signal.
- € Use an appropriate voice with your visual signal. A strike 3 should be more emphatic when retiring a batter than strike 2.
- € Regardless of your strike mechanic, keep your eyes on the ball as you call the pitch.

## Foul Tip:

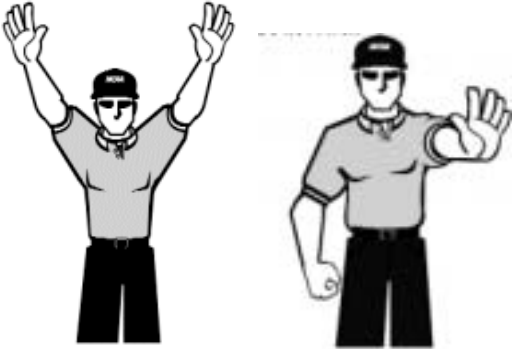


- € A foul tip is a ball hit sharp and direct back. It is caught directly off the bat or touches the catcher’s hand or glove first and then caught before touching the ground, the batter or umpire.
- € Bring the left hand in front of your body chest high or above. Then start the right hand and slide it up the left arm past the hand.
- € The foul tip signal is usually followed by a casual strike signal.
- € A foul tip has sound associated with it, so it is important to signal it – otherwise it could be mistaken for catcher’s interference.

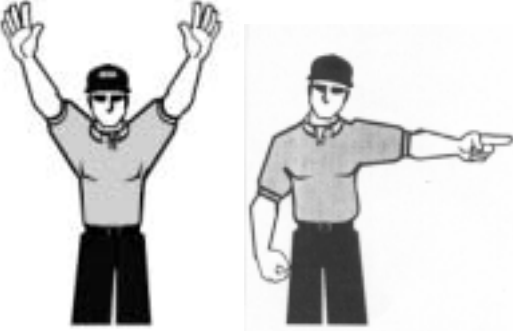
## Count – (i.e. 3 Balls, 2 Strikes or 3-2):

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€ Display the count with your arms comfortably in the air so others can see.</li><li>€ The left hand always displays the number of balls and the right hand the number of strikes.</li><li>€ Always use fingers to give the count. Do not use closed fists to indicate full count.</li><li>€ While displaying the count, also give it verbally (i.e. – 3 balls, 2 strikes or 3-2).</li><li>€ It is a good idea to give the count while the pitcher is looking at you, otherwise he will ask you again.</li><li>€ Repeated voicing and signaling of the count helps the plate umpire keep track of the count as well as everyone else.</li></ul>
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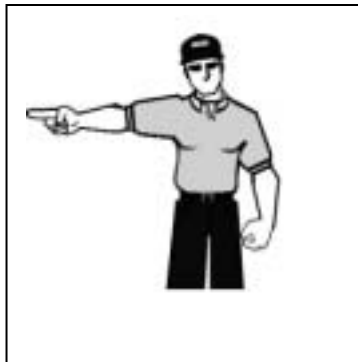
## Time:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€ Time is the signal which suspends play.</li><li>€ Both signals to the left mean “time”</li><li>€ Once time is called, play is suspended until the plate umpire puts the ball back in play as discussed earlier.</li><li>€ It is very important for everyone on the field to know when you have called “time”.</li><li>€ The clearest signal for “time” is both hands above your head with the palms open and facing forward. This signal should be repeated (“echoed”) by your partner whenever you stop play. (Extend your arms 25 to 30 degrees forward from the body.)</li><li>€ The single hand forward is not as obvious, but is used when a batter is getting into the box and get set. It has the same impact as both hands high in the air. Using the hand opposite the batter increases visibility.</li><li>€ Make sure your partner, the pitcher and everyone else knows “time is out”.</li></ul>
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## Foul:

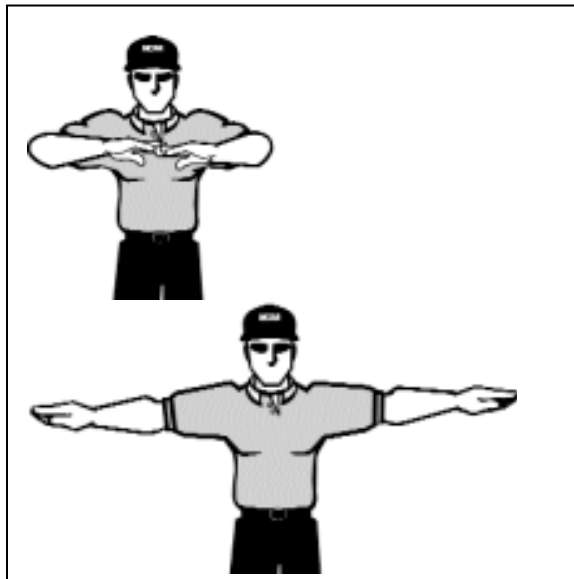
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€ This signal is given while straddling the foul line in a standing set position when possible for superior observation.</li><li>€ First, raise both hands up into the air like signaling “time”, but say “foul” or “foul ball” (the closer the ball is to being fair or foul, the more emphatic you call should be). This kills all play and alerts the runner(s) and coaches.</li><li>€ Then, point toward foul territory to conclude the signal. (Your voice draws the fans and players attention after they watch the ball. They probably will only see you point after your call).</li><li>€ After watching the ball, the sound of your voice will draw everyone to look at you. By then, you will be pointing foul to finish his signal and communicate to them.</li><li>€ When doing the plate, you should remove your mask if practical, for fair/foul decisions. (On balls beat right in front of the plate fielded by the catcher or hard bounding balls over the corner bases, you probably won't have time to take your mask off).</li></ul>
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## Fair:



- € This signal is again performed from a standing set position while straddling the foul line when possible.
- € When a fair ball is signaled, **NO VOICE IS EVER USED!** It is just pointed fair. (The words fair and foul sound too much alike and cause a great deal of confusion when both are used). By pointing into fair territory, the umpire indicates fair ball.
- € Snap a crisp point by throwing your hand straight out to your side.
- € If the ball is close to the line, feel free to snap off a couple to fair signals to sell to the fans.

## Safe/No Catch/No Tag/That's Nothing:



- € From a standing set position, bring both arms into your chest at shoulder level with the palms facing down. Then throw your wrists and hands out to the side crisply while verbalizing the appropriate call.
- € This signal looks great when performed properly and will help to convince others of your umpiring.
- € This signal is used for many situations. ("Safe", "No catch", "No tag", "That's nothing", etc.)
- € Signaling is a very important form of communication. (It's a big field out there and players, coaches and fans are a long distance from you. You may think your voice carries well, but when you're facing the outfield, your voice mainly travels there and the people behind don't hear you).

## Infield Fly Declaration:



- € Ordinarily, either umpire may initiate the call of "Infield Fly". However, on balls hit near the foul line, the plate umpire is responsible for the initial call.
- € Point your right index finger in the air and declare, "Infield fly".
- € When the signal is given by one umpire, his partner shall "echo" the call. The call should be given loudly and clearly so there is no confusion for the runners.
- € Must have an infield fly situation (runners on 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> bases or bases loaded). An infield fly must be a fair batted ball that can be caught with ordinary effort by an infielder.
- € If the fly ball will be caught near the foul line, then say, "Infield Fly, if Fair".
- € The ruling should be made after the ball reaches its apex.



## Umpire-to-Umpire Signals:

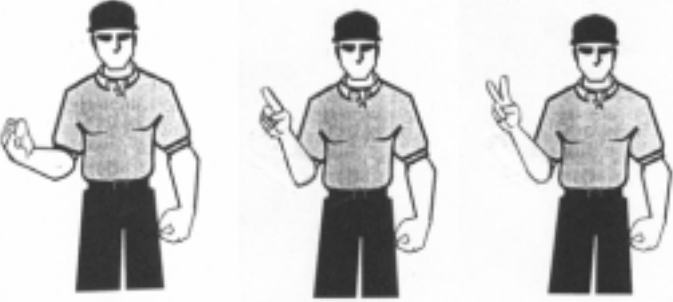
Whereas most signals are used to convey information to everyone in the ballpark, umpire-to-umpire signals are meant to convey information between umpires. These are not secret signals. It does not matter if anyone other than the umpires sees them. It is just that no one else needs to see them other than other umpires.

Because of this difference, unlike most signals that are given up and away from the body, umpire to umpire signals are given lower, closer to the body and in a more casual way.


Like all signals, these signals are vital to good communication within the crew. They help remind crew members of responsibilities and coverage based on runner positioning. The signals are always initiated by the plate umpire with the base umpire echoing them back. They are given as the next batter is coming to bat or quickly after runner advance during an at bat.

These signals are only given when a runner or runners are on base(s). That means they will not be given from behind 1<sup>st</sup> base and only be given when positioned in the middle of the field. Always start with the number of outs and then indicate coverage (going to 3<sup>rd</sup>, staying home or infield fly). These signals should be precise, dignified and used consistently.


### Number of outs:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€ First, make eye contact with your partner.</li><li>€ The plate umpire, steps out from behind the plate and initiates the signals with runner(s) on base(s) as the base umpire alertly watches.</li><li>€ The number of outs is given first by the plate umpire and returned by ("echoed") by the base umpire.</li><li>€ It is then followed by a situation signal based on the number of outs and base runner placement.</li></ul>
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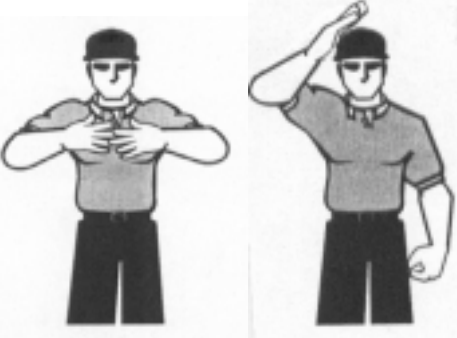
### Infield Fly Situation Signal:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€ The "Infield fly" signal is another situation reminder. (You will see the need for it if you ever forget to call one or call one by mistake.)</li><li>€ An infield fly situation occurs when there are runners on 1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> or bases loaded and there are less than two outs.</li><li>€ There are many ways to signal an infield fly situation. Discuss how you will signal as a crew during your pregame. Here are two common ways.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Hand over your heart</li><li>○ Index finger to your cap bill</li></ul></li></ul>
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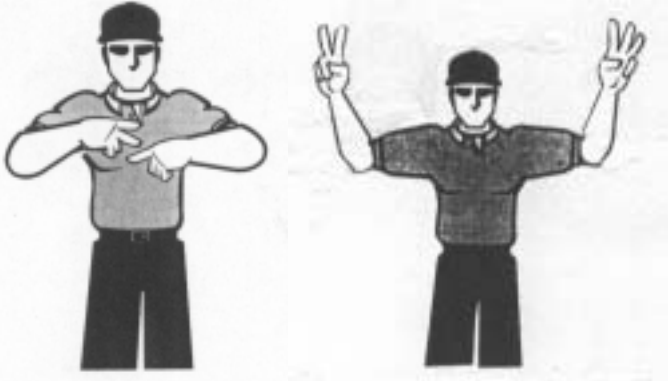
## Infield Fly Situation Removal (Wipe-Off):

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€ It's just as important to know when the situation ends, as when it occurs.</li><li>€ The infield fly may be taken off by a change in bases occupied or number of outs.</li><li>€ Keep your partner on the same page as you are. When you have eye contact, wipe the infield fly off when the situation no longer exists.</li><li>€ This is a good preventive umpiring technique to use. Plus, it keeps the crew alert and thinking ahead of the game.</li></ul>
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## Signal to Request Count:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€ The plate umpire is vested with responsibility of keeping track of the count.</li><li>€ Occasionally, the plate umpire will lose the count - usually when a ball is replaced after going foul or a pitched ball goes to the backstop. Occasionally the base umpire may have a player ask and need the official count.</li><li>€ A couple of signals for requesting the count are:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o Both hands on the chest</li><li>o Tapping the top of your head</li></ul></li></ul>
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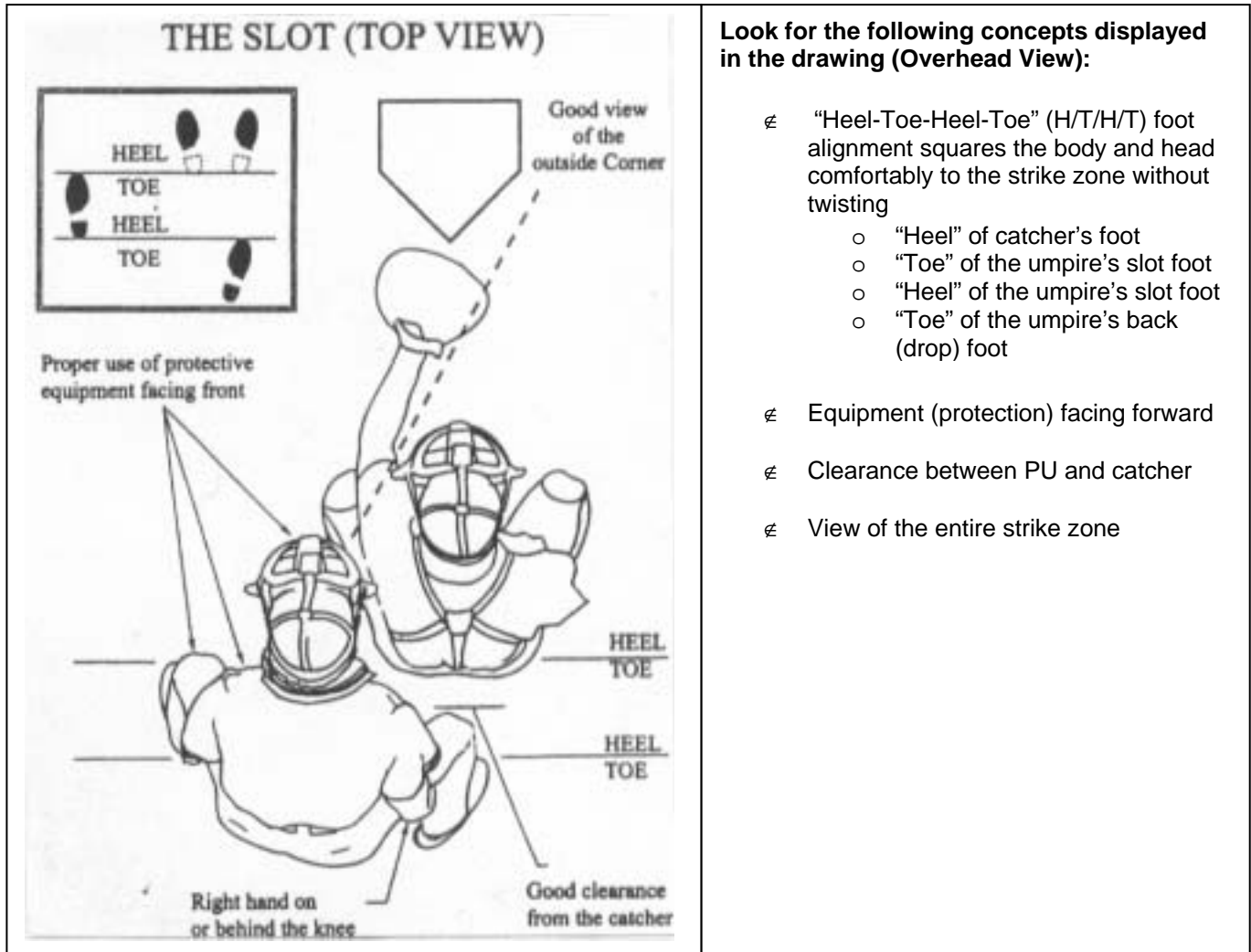
## Give the Count Response:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€ After seeing your partner's request for the count, give it to him visually.</li><li>€ Here are two methods of relaying the count:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o Put the fingers corresponding to the count on your chest</li><li>o Hold your hands up slightly with the count.</li></ul></li></ul>
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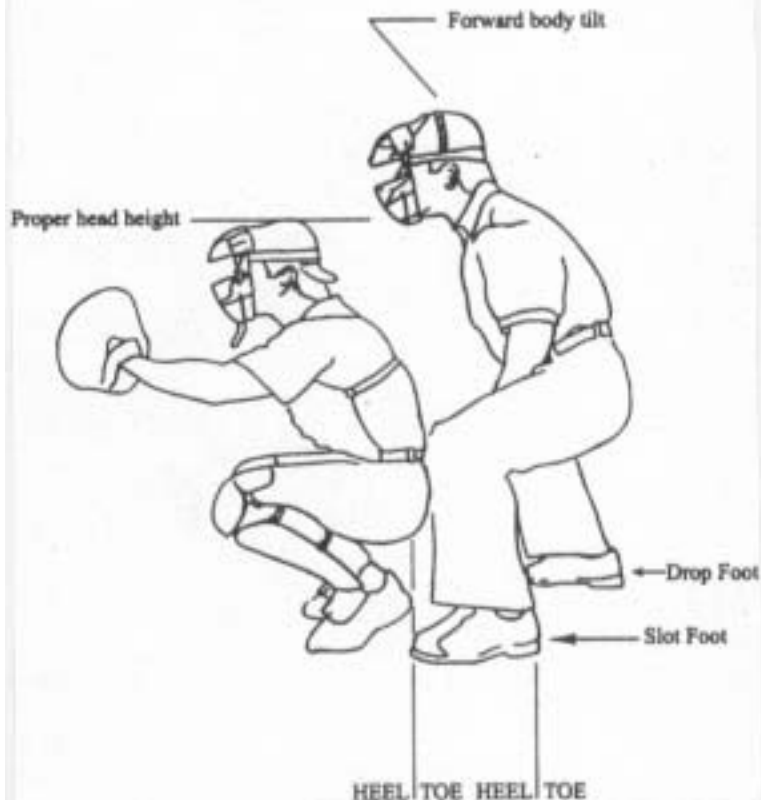
## Plate Mechanics:

The plate assignment is one of the hardest jobs in sports officiating. "Doing the dish" 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 information that follows shows how umpires work behind the plate from three (3) different angles:



## THE SLOT (SIDE VIEW)



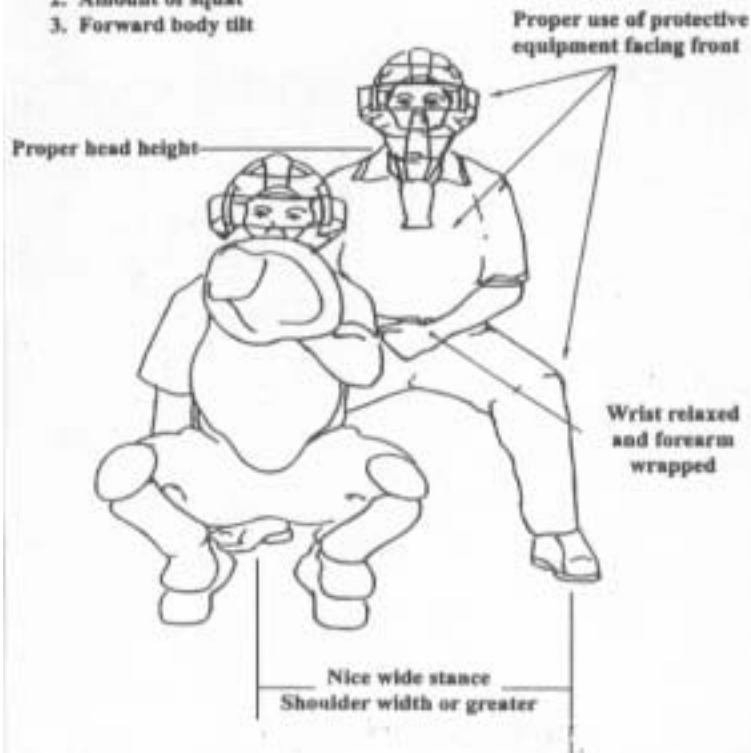
Look for the following concepts displayed in the drawing (Side View):

- € H/T/H/T
- € Head height is umpire's chin at the top of the catcher's head
- € Slight lean forward with upper body
- € Protective equipment is mostly forward

## THE SLOT (FRONT VIEW)

Proper head height is controlled by:

1. Width of stance
2. Amount of squat
3. Forward body tilt



Look for the following concepts displayed in the drawing (Front View):

- € Foot width
- € Equipment facing forward for protection
- € Slot arm is tucked against body and wrist is relaxed
- € The head height is umpire's chin at the top of the catcher's head
- € Head height is controlled by:
  - o Width of stance
  - o Amount of squat
  - o Forward body tilt

# BASIC CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES OF UMPIRING

- € **Pause, Read and React:** The most fundamental concept to remember to force us to look before leaping (or read before we react).
- € **Angle over Distance:** Get your angle first and as much distance as the play will allow.
- € **Watch the Ball, Glance at the Runner:** Keep your eye everlastingly on the ball but make sure you see the runners touch their bases, if possible (remember that umpiring is a function of time).
- € **Umpiring is a Function of Time:** Don't try to get into a position you can't get into. Goes along with get your angle and as much distance as the play will allow.
- € **Timing is the Result of Proper use and alignment of Eyes:** If you're not watching what you're supposed to be watching for, you'll make decisions without all the information you need on a play to make a correct call or decision. (ball vs. strike, safe vs. out, did the fielder have firm and secure possession of the ball, did the fielder even have the ball, etc.)
- € **Fair/Foul, Catch/No Catch:** This is always the order of responsibility. First determine fair/foul and signal, then determine catch/no catch and signal.
- € **Proper use of Voice (Levels of Calls):** Essentially there are four levels of calls from No Call to a Banger. Only sell calls that need to be sold. For example, foul balls smashing off the back stop ordinarily are a "no call". (Never say, "Never.")
- € **Anticipate the play, not the call:** To be a good umpire, you must anticipate where the play will or might happen. Never anticipate what the call will be.
- € **Avoid Happy Feet:** You're not an athlete, you're an umpire. Don't waste steps, don't make unnecessary movements.
- € **What constitutes a Catch:** In establishing a catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove he has complete control of the ball and that the release of the ball is voluntary and intentional.
- € **Baseline:** The runner establishes the baseline. It's not a direct line between bases.
- € **Practice Makes Permanent:** 95% of all calls call themselves, it's the 5% we practice for!
- € **Umpires have a Role to Play:** That's why we wear a specific uniform, like a judge or a peace officer. That's why we handle ourselves in a dignified manner and stay above reproach at all times.



### Starting Positions:

#### PU:

- The plate umpire starts all plays from behind the plate if player pitch division is being worked. (More on plate positioning is covered in another section covering plate work.)

#### BU:

- The base umpire starts all plays from 5 to 10 feet behind the second baseman (F4).
- If F4 is in a normal position, move just to his left to have an unobstructed view of the pitcher (F1), the batter and the runners at 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> base (if applicable). Keep F4 in your peripheral vision in front of you.
- If F4 is shifted more to 2<sup>nd</sup> base, let him move further over into your peripheral vision. Remember you still have responsibilities for the plays at 1<sup>st</sup> base. Prevent F4 from pulling you away from plays at 1<sup>st</sup> base. Balance your positioning needs. Be able to see his movements in front of you so he doesn't blind-side you as you lose track of him outside your vision.
- If F4 is pulled to the hole near 1<sup>st</sup> base, adjust by positioning to his right side and keep an unobstructed view of F1, the batter and the runner(s) (if applicable). Again, balance your positioning needs. Don't take yourself out of position for a possible steal of 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

For the base umpire, Starting Position B requires unobstructed vision of the pitch:

- The batter and pitcher in the center of your vision
- The second baseman (F4) in your peripheral visual field
- Any runners on 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases in your peripheral vision

The base umpire (BU) watches the pitcher (F1) release the pitch. After release, BU focuses on the batter at the plate. If the batter check swings, the BU must be ready if the PU appeals to BU for help. As the pitch is in flight to the batter, watch any runners on 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases for leaving the bases early. Concentrate on the images in your peripheral vision. If you cannot tell the runners left early, consider them legally touching their bases. If you know they left early, drop your red flag and let the play proceed. (The proper ruling is discussed in rule 7.13 of the Little League Rule Book.) If the ball is hit, watch the ball and stay aware of the second baseman (F4) in your peripheral vision. The distance between you and F4 provides you a cushion to read his actions and give you time to move out of his way without hindering his play. Then move to position for impending plays.



The “Minor Level 1 Two Umpire System” provides many absolutes for responsibilities. It is a rigid system with clear cut coverage for beginning umpires.

**PU Responsibilities:**

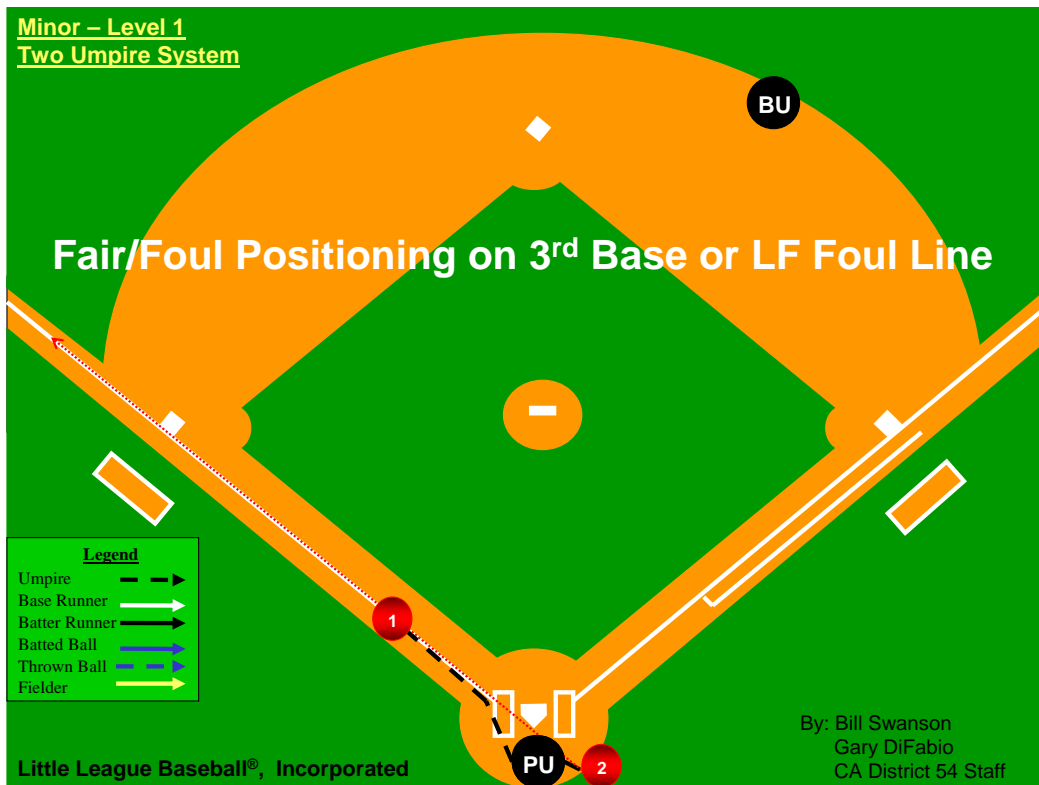
- Makes decisions on all fair/foul, catch/no catch and out of play balls
- Covers all plays at home plate or 3rd base
- Watches all base touches or misses at 3rd base or home plate
- Watches the runner at 3rd (R3) for leaving early

**BU Responsibilities:**

- Covers all plays at 1st or 2nd bases
- Watches all base touches or misses at 1st or 2nd bases
- Watches for runners leaving early at 1st or 2nd bases

Our goal here is to get our beginning umpires comfortable in the field without over-whelming them with confusing specifics of advanced mechanics systems. Unfortunately, this system places a great deal of responsibility on the shoulders of the plate umpire. The plate umpire (PU) has the whole field in front of him/her while the base umpire (BU) must maneuver inside the infield to keep the ball in front when it is hit to the outfield.





## PU:

PU is responsible for all fair/foul calls.  
Position for angle first, then close distance.

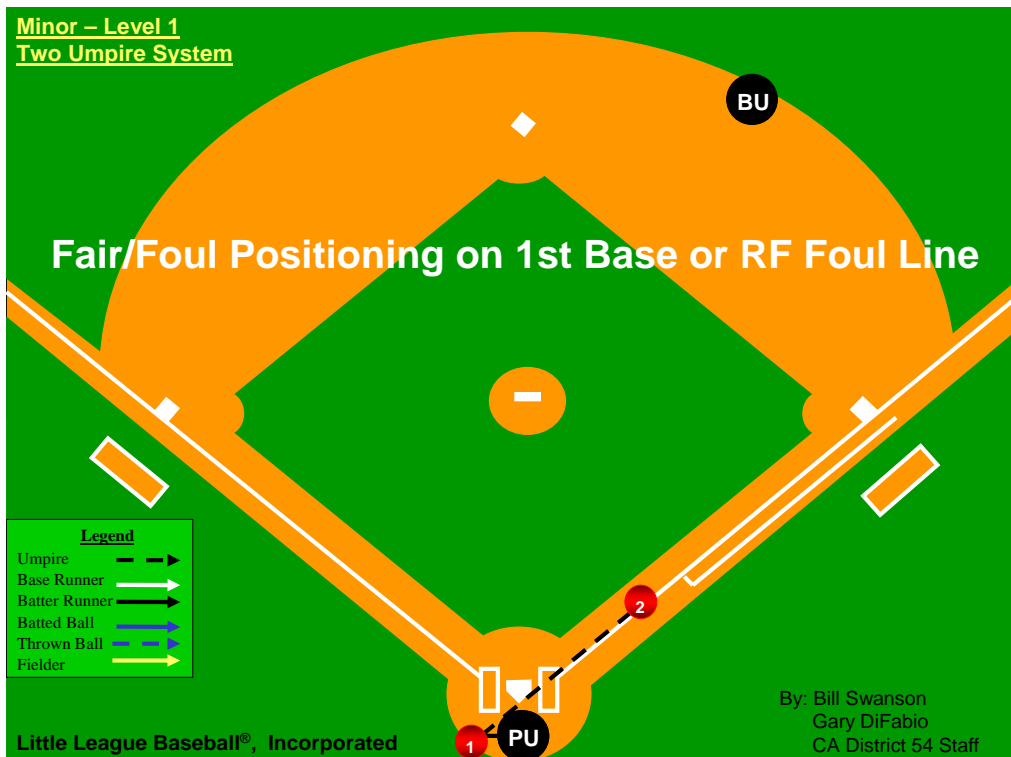
### Option #1 – Straddle 3<sup>rd</sup> baseline:

On a batted ball down the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line, position for angle first by jab stepping behind the batter as he advances to 1<sup>st</sup> to the foul line through the back of the batter's box. Straddle the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line (put your belt buckle directly above the foul line). Next, close distance to the ball as far as the play will allow. Be sure to slow and stop before your judgment is necessary, not moving during that critical time when you need to have your eyes still to take a good picture of the event for evaluation and processing.

### Option #2 – Straddle 3<sup>rd</sup> baseline extended:

On a batted ball down the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line, position for angle first by jab stepping behind the catcher to the back of the left handed hitters' batters box and look through the plate and up the 3<sup>rd</sup> base foul line (this is called 3<sup>rd</sup> base foul line extended). Straddle the imaginary base line (put your belt buckle directly above where the foul line would be). Next, after the batter and catcher clear the area, close distance towards the ball as far as the play will allow. Be sure to slow and stop before your judgment is necessary, not moving during that critical time when you need to have your eyes still to take a good picture of the event for evaluation and processing.

**Note:** Notice that both positions develop the same angle looking up the foul line. PU straddles the foul line with his/her belt buckle directly over the foul line.

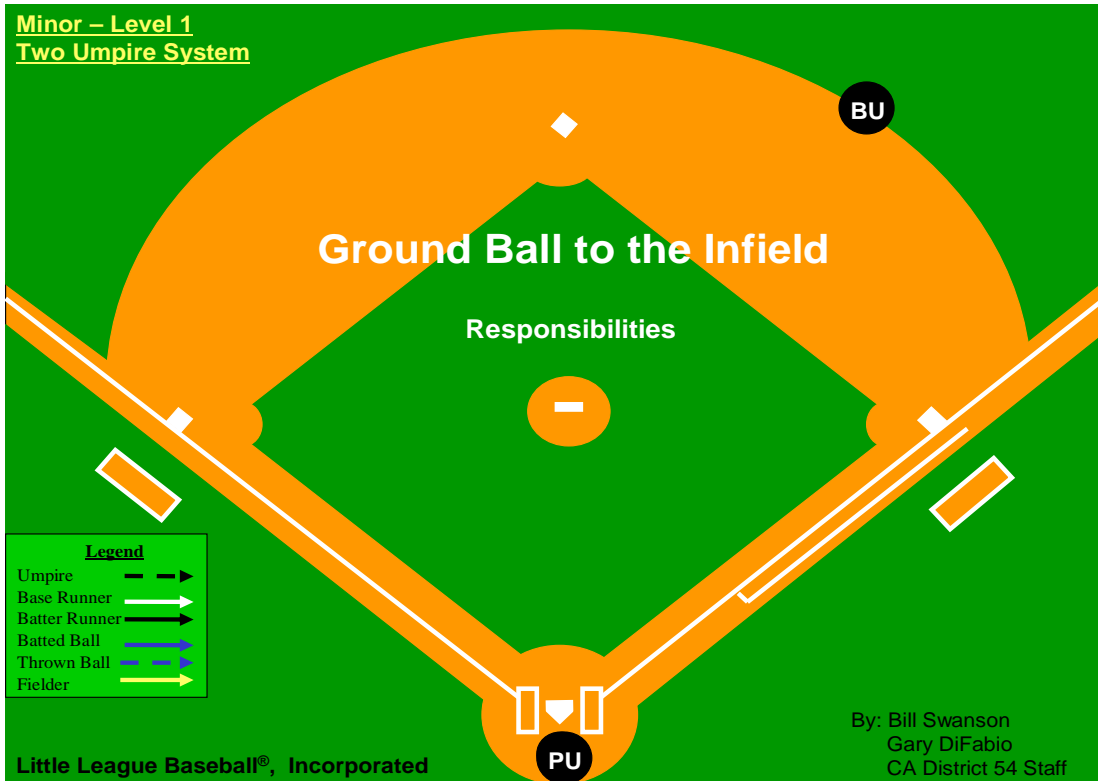


**PU:**

**Straddle 1<sup>st</sup> baseline extended:**

On a batted ball down the 1st base line, position for angle first by jab stepping behind the catcher to the back of the right handed hitters' batters box and look through the plate and up the 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line (this is called 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line extended). Straddle the imaginary base line (put your belt buckle directly above where the foul line would be). Next, after the batter and catcher clear the area, close distance towards the ball as far as the play will allow. Be sure to slow and stop before your judgment is necessary, not moving during that critical time when you need to have your eyes still to take a good picture of the event for evaluation and processing.

**Note:** PU straddles the foul line with his/her belt buckle directly over the foul line while adjusting to prevent players from blocking PU's view.



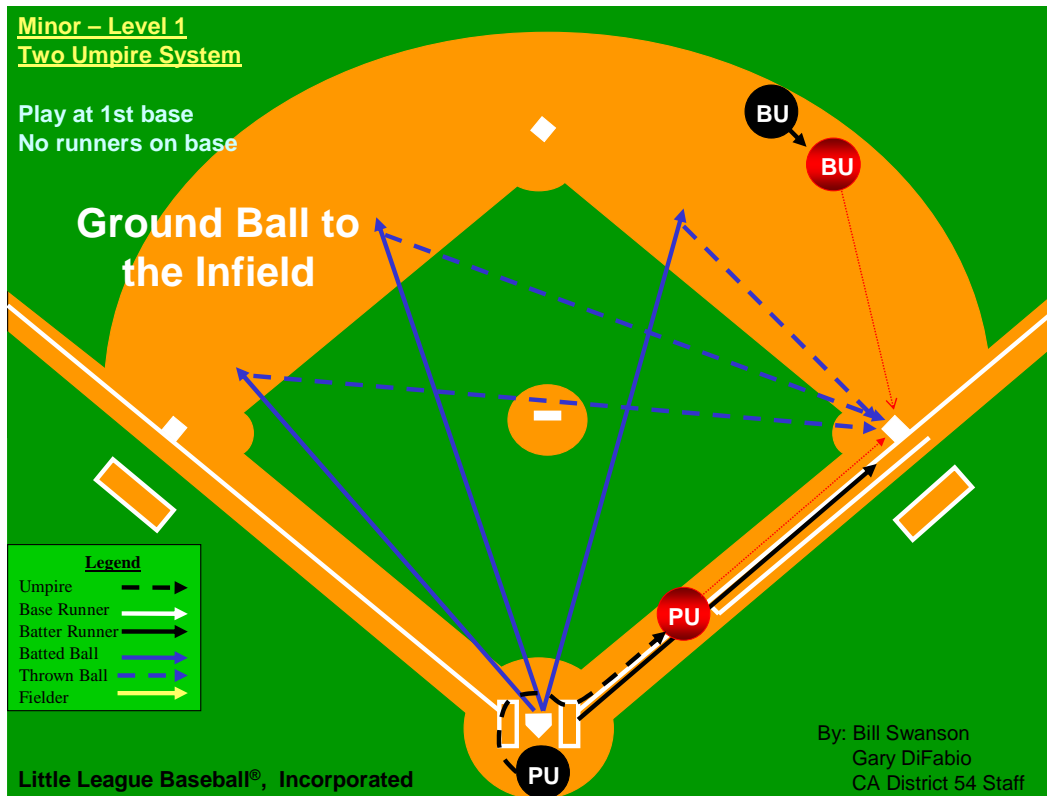
### Responsibilities on Ground Ball in the Infield:

#### PU:

- Fair/foul (1st priority)
- Catch/no catch (2nd priority)
- Responsible for all plays at 3rd base & home plate
- Also responsible for these “primary” responsibilities :
  - swipe tags before the “run-lane”
  - “run-lane” violation
  - ball going “out of play”
- Helps BU if asked on (these are called “secondary” responsibilities):
  - swipe tags beyond the start of the “run-lane”
  - pulled foot calls by the 1st baseman (F3)

#### BU:

- Responsible for all plays at 1st or 2nd bases
- Also responsible for these “primary” responsibilities:
  - swipe tags beyond the start of the “run-lane”
  - pulled foot by first baseman (F3)
- Helps PU if asked on (these are called “secondary” responsibilities):
  - swipe tags before the “run-lane”
  - “run-lane” violation
  - ball going “out of play”



**BU:**

BU develops angle for the play at 1st base by moving directly towards (perpendicular) to the foul line. This primarily opens angle as a primary objective while reducing distance as a side benefit (the dotted red line is the line of sight BU achieves). Our goal for base positioning is always concentrate on opening angle for superior line of sight and perception of field action.

**PU:**

Positions for:

- Fair/foul
- Catch/no catch
- When no runners are on base, PU moves up 1st base line near the start of the “running-lane”.

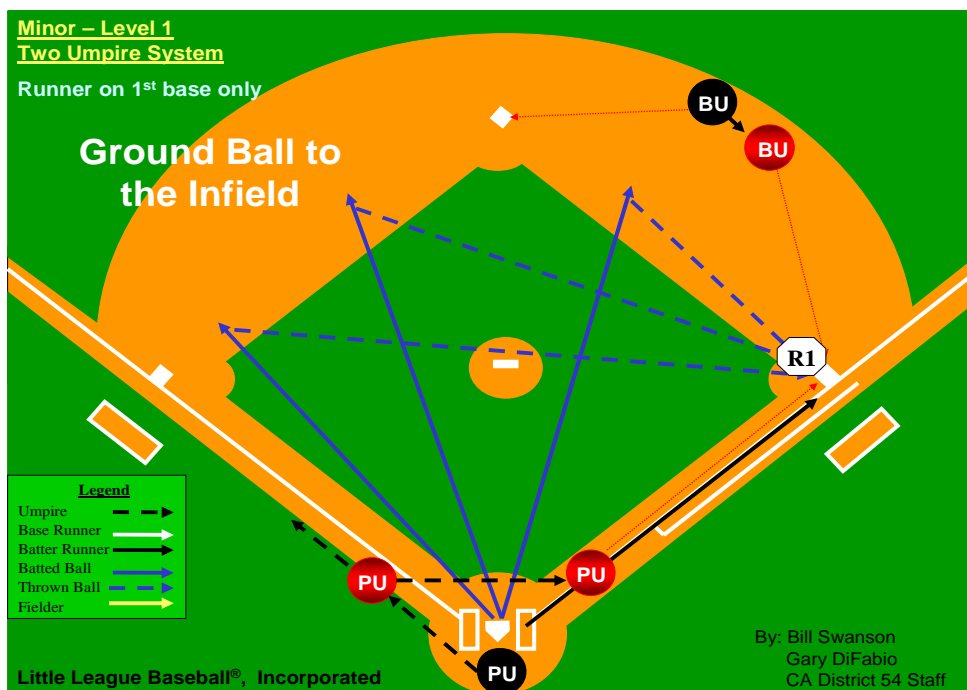
A fundamental concept for umpiring is **priority of plays:**

- Most important – Fair/foul ruling
- Next in importance – Catch/no catch
- Then – Plays in responsibility area
- Finally – Base touches in responsibility area

Always get position for a fair/foul ruling. Attempt to straddle the foul line or extended foul line to establish proper angle for this evaluation/judgment. Proper positioning is everything on this call. Another way of thinking of this is –Did you get your belt buckle directly over the foul line when positioning for this call?

If the ball is obviously fair or foul, then angle for the catch/no catch evaluation/judgment. Take a hard step sideways away from the gloving of the ball and set before the play occurs. This will develop angle quickly to observe a possible short hop in front of a fielder’s glove.

Finally, PU moves up the 1<sup>st</sup> base line and positions closer to “run-lane” violations or ball thrown toward “out-of-play” areas. This hustle may help sell your efforts and develop a superior look on questionable rulings.



### BU:

**Pause, read and react** – Pause and read the action in front of you, interpret it and react with movements to better evaluate the developing play. Read the body language of the fielder and runners to better tip you to future actions. In the umpiring world, this is called learning to “anticipate” the play. Remember, anticipating the play action is different from anticipating the result of the play. All plays take preliminary actions to develop. A runner must break for a base. A fielder must step and throw to a base. A catcher must turn, step and throw for a back pick. All these actions require preliminary motions that tip what is about to happen. Read their actions and react immediately. Proper reads will get you a couple more steps where others merely turn and face a play because they only react to the actual flight of the ball somewhere.

If the play is at 2<sup>nd</sup> base, BU either stays in starting position B & views the play or steps toward the right field foul line to better set up for the impending play at 1<sup>st</sup> base (the red dotted line shows the line of sight angle BU has for the play at 2<sup>nd</sup> base). Little movement is needed for the play there. If the play is at 1<sup>st</sup> base, BU moves a couple of steps perpendicular to the foul line to develop position by opening an angle for the play at 1<sup>st</sup> base. Again, some distance reduction is an ancillary benefit from our positioning.

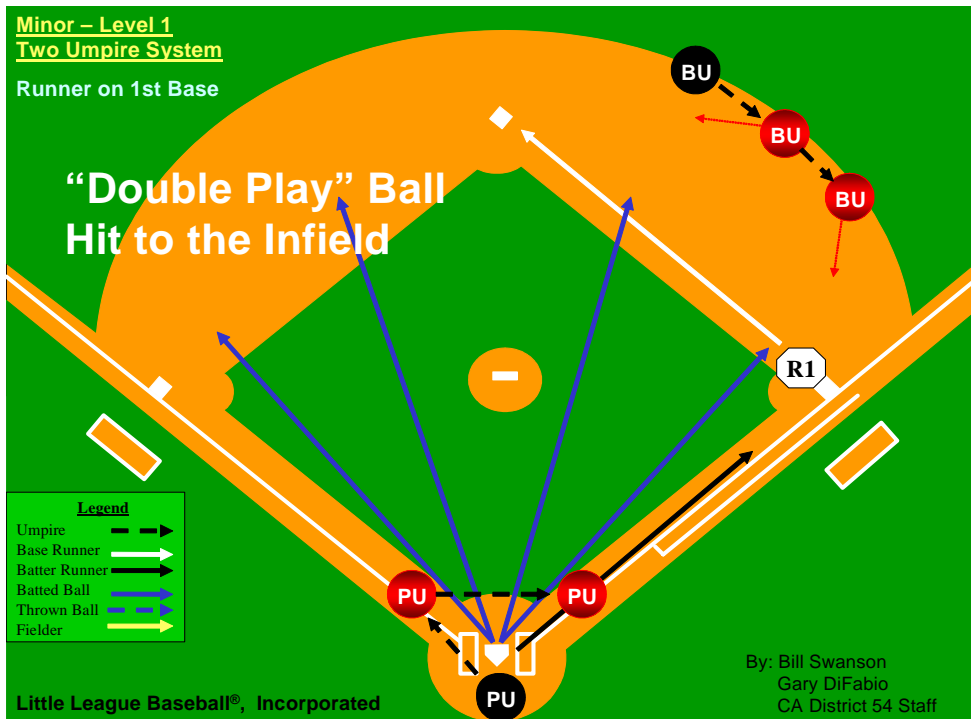
Since there are multiple runners (R1 & BR), BU must reduce the size of the “working area” for this play. Prevent from moving too close to the play at 1<sup>st</sup> base by only moving what is necessary for adequately viewing the play. Remember, BU is also responsible for any play which occurs at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. Over-committing to the play at 1<sup>st</sup> base can often reduce viewing of additional responsibilities (in this case R1 going to 2<sup>nd</sup> base) proportionately.

### PU:

Again PU develops positions for:

- Fair/foul
- Catch/no catch
- Observes “run-lane” violations & watches for over-throws to “out-of-play” areas

Notice that PU doesn’t move up the line with runners on base. PU moves to 1<sup>st</sup> base line extended & keeps the whole field in front of him for plays at 3<sup>rd</sup> or home or even a runner from 1<sup>st</sup> base attempting to advance to 3<sup>rd</sup>. If this R1 to 3<sup>rd</sup> base play develops, PU is responsible for this play at third in case it develops. PU must maintain situation awareness and be ready to move immediately to gain proper position.



### Responsibilities in Priority Order:

**PU:** All fair/foul calls  
All catch/no catch plays  
Plays & base touches at 3<sup>rd</sup> base or home plate as necessary

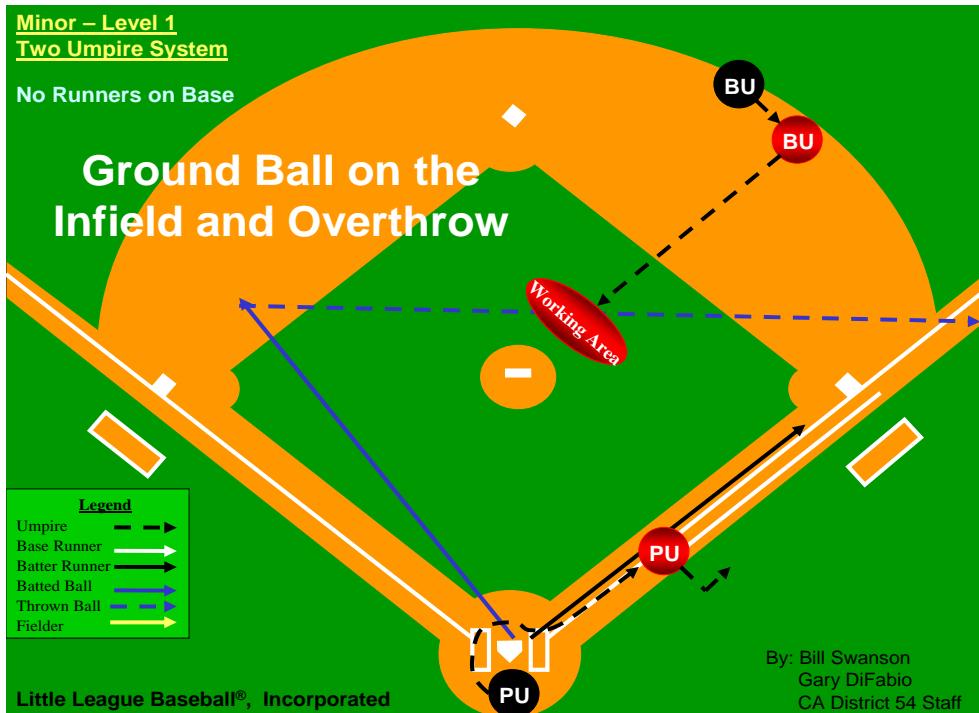
**BU:** All plays and base touches on runners at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases

### PU Play Actions:

- PU first looks for fair/foul and then catch/no catch responsibilities.
- PU then moves up the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line until R1 is retired at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. PU ensures there is no malicious contact at 2<sup>nd</sup> base while he moves toward the 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line.
- PU positions on the 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line for (primary responsibilities): a “run-lane” violation or be in better position to cover an over throw to “dead ball” territory. If asked for help, PU will rule on a pulled foot at 1<sup>st</sup> base or a swipe tag in front of 1<sup>st</sup> base (secondary responsibilities).

### BU Play Actions:

- BU takes a couple of steps toward 1<sup>st</sup> base, stops and watches the play from a stopped, still observation position.
- Then when the play is completed by the turn man voluntarily releasing the ball from the glove, BU will begin moving directly toward the 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line (not 1<sup>st</sup> base) to develop a better angle on the back end of the double play and signal/voice the result of the play at 2<sup>nd</sup> on the move.
- As the throw to 1<sup>st</sup> passes even with BU, BU settles into a set position for the play at 1<sup>st</sup> before it occurs.



**BU:**

BU begins this play normally by moving perpendicular to (straight towards) the foul line and opening angle for the developing play at 1<sup>st</sup> base. When the ball becomes over thrown, the ball goes outside the infield. BU should react according to the “Outside-In” concept – BU moves into the infield as the ball goes outside and establishes a working area near pitcher’s mound. The closer BU is to the mound, the less movement is necessary to develop angles at either end of the play – 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> base. This area of movement becomes what is known as a “working area” for the base umpire.

**PU:**

PU positions for his priorities as necessary

- Fair/foul
- Catch/no catch
- Moves up 1st base

Upon the over-throw, PU moves to line up the possible ball “out-of-play” judgment/ruling without further hindering positioning for any plays at 3rd base or home plate. PU must stay with the ball without entirely losing ability to rule on additional plays within his/her jurisdiction area if the ball stays in the field of play. If the ball goes “out-of-play”, the PU merely calls, “Time” and makes the necessary base awards to all runners.



Again, responsibilities are kept simple and clear cut. Responsibilities are all or nothing with one umpire or the other.

**BU Responsibilities:**

- No fly ball responsibilities
- All plays at 1st or 2nd base
- All base touches (or retouches) at 1st or 2nd bases

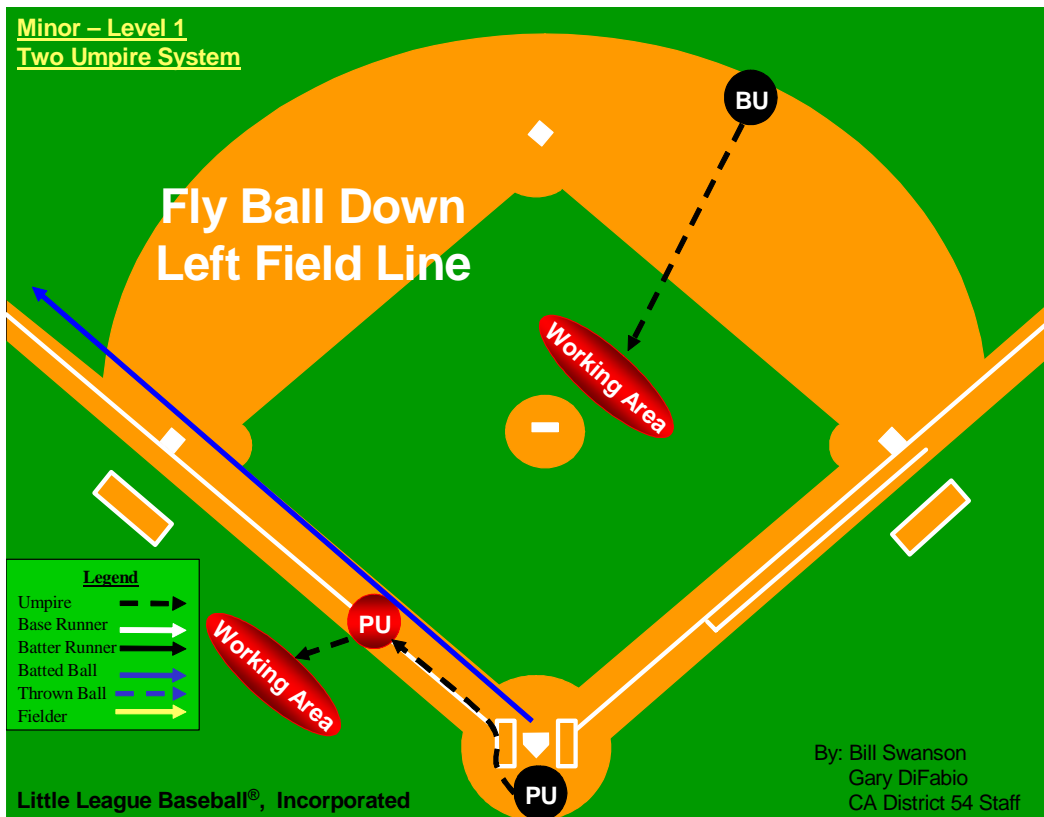
**PU Responsibilities:**

- Fair/Foul (1st priority)
- All catch/No Catch (2nd priority)
- All ground ruling on batted or thrown balls “out-of-play”
- All plays & base touches at home plate or 3rd base

The PU is given all fly ball calls to keep the system simple. The 60 foot diamond brings many inherent problems for umpires. First, the BU Starting Position is outside the infield. Second, the distances are short and result in less time to pause, read and react to fly balls. Third, BU must turn all the way around and have his back to the infield and any runners to read the fly ball. Finally, if BU goes out from Starting Position B with runners on base, PU will be covering the whole infield and all runners scampering about.

Right now, our priority is getting BU from outside to inside the infield without disrupting play, establish a “working area” and learn to read the entire field for developing plays.





### **BU:**

The base umpire has no fly ball responsibilities under the “Minor Level 1 Two Umpire System”. The BU merely transitions from outside to inside according to the “Outside-In” concept. BU establishes a “working area” near pitcher’s mound to easily position for plays at either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

### **PU:**

PU moves around the batter-runner (BR) and catcher (F2). PU then moves up the foul line as far as the play will allow. That is, PU moves only as far as he can still stop and set in time to observe the play from a standing set position. PU will position straddling the foul line – place his belt buckle directly over the foul line. If the ball is fair, PU will then point the ball “fair” only – no voice is used. If the area down the line is unfenced as many multi-purpose fields are these days, PU may need to move further into foul territory to observe the ball going into “out-of-play” area.

Short-hops or diving catches with a possible trapped ball are extremely difficult calls anytime they occur – especially for a plate umpire from behind the plate. If you cannot tell and the player comes up cleanly with the ball, it probably was a catch if the player caught the ball with his glove open toward the sky - error on the side of the fielder if your eyes don’t tell you differently. If the fielder catches the ball with the glove open towards the ground, then the ball probably skipped into the glove unless you can see “daylight” between the ball and the ground and the ball has not bounced on the ground.

Use proper “timing” – read the whole play. Interpret the actions in front of you. Don’t just react to them. After hitting the ground, a fence or another defensive player, a fielder must maintain control of the ball. Let the fielder show you “control” and a “voluntary” release before you signal an out. Read the entire play. If you don’t, you won’t be the first umpire to learn about “timing” the hard way.



### Responsibilities in Priority Order:

**PU:** All fair/foul calls  
All catch/no catch plays  
Plays & base touches at 3<sup>rd</sup> base or home plate as necessary

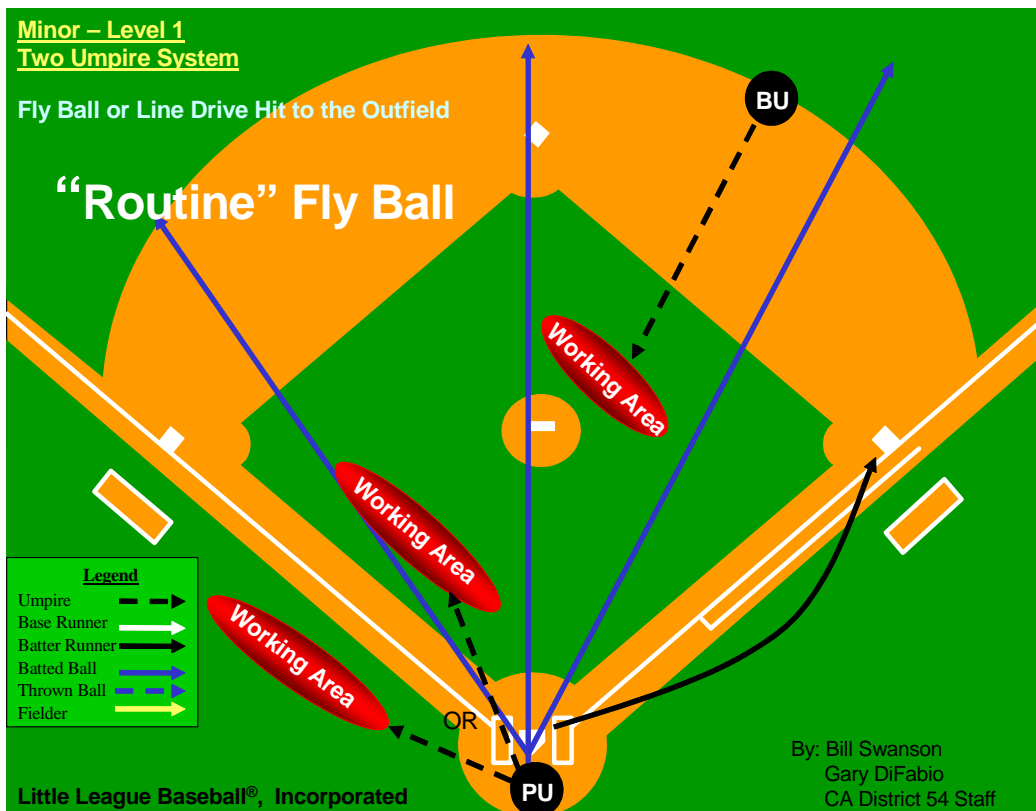
**BU:** All plays and base touches on runners at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases

### PU Play Actions:

- **Fair/Foul:** PU moves out from behind the plate moving through the right-hand hitter batter's box and trails BR up the foul line (prevents collisions with BR or the catcher). PU straddles the 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line while moving as far as the play allows (obtaining a standing set position before the play occurs). PU first rules on the fair/foul call by pointing "fair" without a voice or raising both hands above his/her head and loudly saying "foul" and then finishing the signal with a point toward foul territory.
- **Catch/No Catch:** Next, PU rules on the catch/no catch by the right fielder (F9). A fielder needs to demonstrate "secure" possession and a "voluntary" release before PU can rule the ball "legally" caught. This requires that PU not react quickly to the play, but read the entire sequence of events before ruling on the play.
- **Positioning for Plays and Base Touches:** After these first two priorities have been covered, PU needs to develop a working area for plays at 3<sup>rd</sup> base or home plate.

### BU Play Actions:

- **Positioning for Plays:** BU transitions from "Outside-in" to keep the runners and ball in "front" of him. BU develops a working area deep into the infield near pitcher's mound to cover plays at either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases. This depth equates into less movement by BU to cover both ends of plays at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases without extreme movements to create proper angles for the plays. A 45 degree angle is optimal for plays at both bases. Less positioning movement for play coverage means BU can easily move and set for plays before runners may cover the distance between bases.



### Responsibilities in Priority Order:

**PU:** All fair/foul calls – (not applicable in this situation)  
All catch/no catch plays  
Plays & base touches at 3<sup>rd</sup> base or home plate as necessary

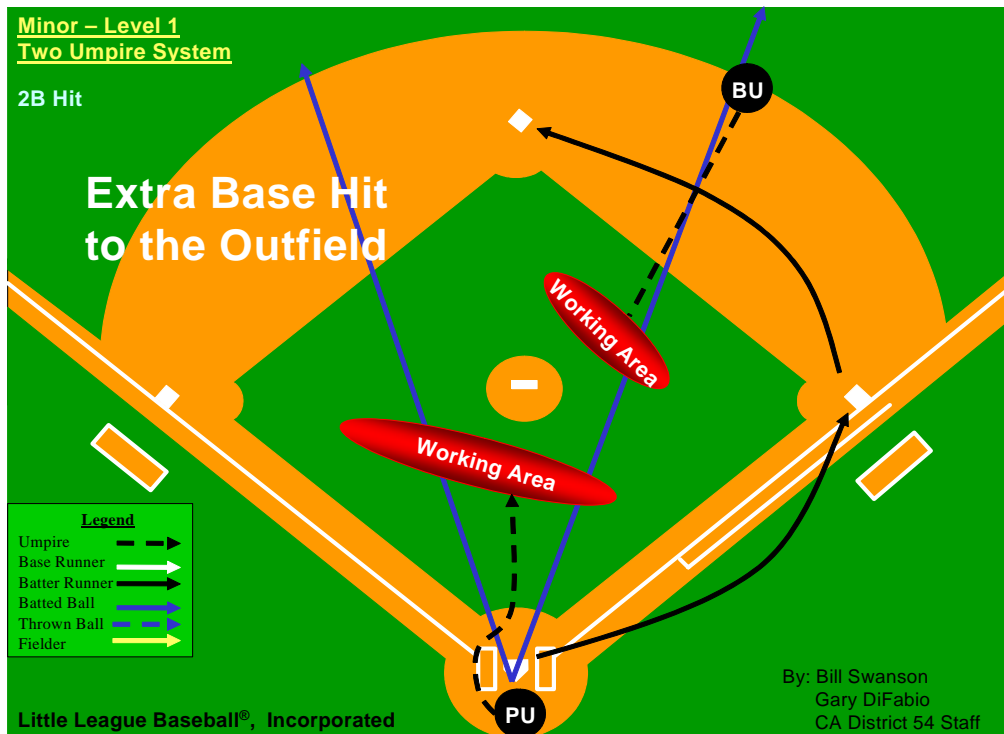
**BU:** All plays and base touches on runners at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases

### PU Play Actions:

- **Fair/Foul:** (not applicable in this situation)
- **Catch/No Catch:** PU rules on the catch/no catch by an outfielder. A fielder needs to demonstrate “secure” possession and a “voluntary” release before PU can rule the ball “legally” caught. This requires that PU not react quickly to the play, but read the entire sequence of events before ruling on the play. Be careful the routine play does not lull you into thinking it is automatic. A “routine” play has just as much potential to turn nasty as a “trouble” play. Play attention and concentrate on every play.
- **Positioning for Plays and Base Touches:** After these first two priorities have been covered, PU needs to develop a working area for plays at 3<sup>rd</sup> base or home plate.

### BU Play Actions:

- **Positioning for Plays:** BU transitions from “Outside-in” to keep the runners and ball in “front” of him. BU develops a working area deep into the infield near pitcher’s mound to cover plays at either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases. This depth equates into less movement by BU to cover both ends of plays at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases without extreme movements to create proper angles for the plays. A 45 degree angle is optimal for plays at both bases. Less positioning movement for play coverage means BU can easily move and set for plays before runners may cover the distance between bases.



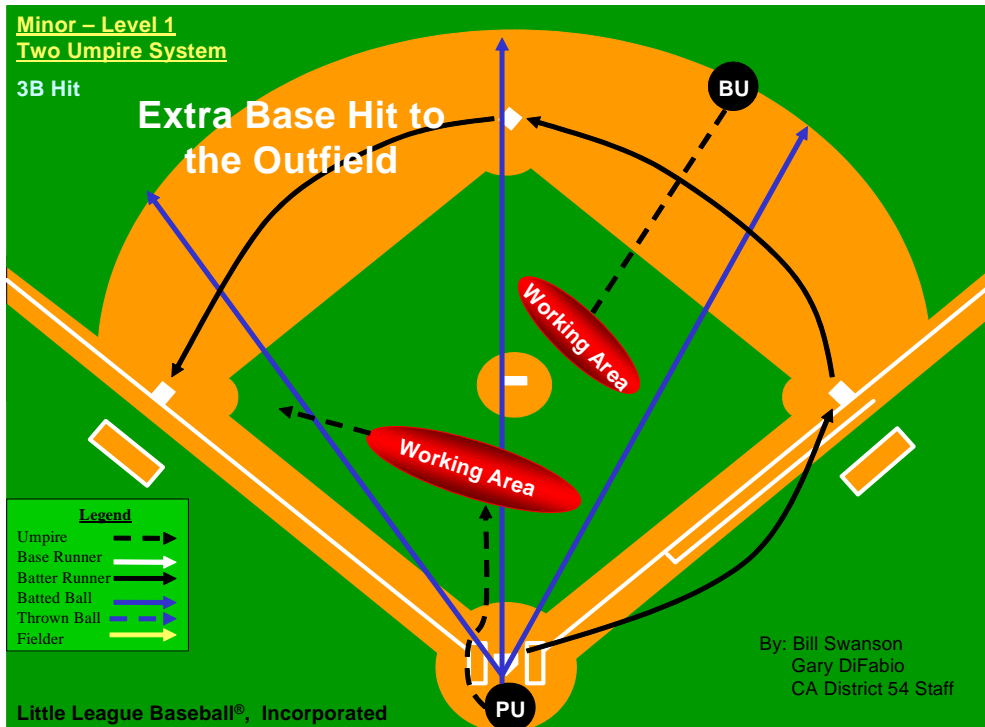
### Responsibilities in Priority Order:

**PU:** All fair/foul calls – (not applicable in this situation)  
All catch/no catch plays  
Plays & base touches at 3<sup>rd</sup> base or home plate as necessary

**BU:** All plays and base touches on runners at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases

**PU Play Actions:** First, ensure the fair/foul decision is made. Second, evaluate the catch/no catch play is covered. Then, as the BR is advancing to 2<sup>nd</sup> base for a double, PU skews his working area towards 3<sup>rd</sup> base in case BR attempts to stretch his extra base hit into a triple. All plays at 3<sup>rd</sup> base are the responsibility of the PU.

**BU Play Actions:** BU continues normal coverage responsibilities and transitions from “Outside-in” to keep the runners and ball in “front” of him. BU develops a working area deep into the infield near pitcher’s mound to cover plays at either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases. This depth equates into less movement by BU to cover both ends of plays at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases without extreme movements to create proper angles for the plays. A 45 degree angle is optimal for plays at both bases. Less positioning movement for play coverage means BU can easily move and set for plays before runners may cover the distance between bases.



### Responsibilities in Priority Order:

**PU:** All fair/foul calls – (not applicable in this situation)  
All catch/no catch plays  
Plays & base touches at 3<sup>rd</sup> base or home plate as necessary

**BU:** All plays and base touches on runners at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases

**PU Play Actions:** Again, observe for the fair/foul decision and evaluate for the catch/no catch responsibility. Then, as the BR is advances past 2<sup>nd</sup> base, PU's skewed working area towards 3<sup>rd</sup> base establishes angle/distance positioning for observing the play into 3<sup>rd</sup> base. All plays at 3<sup>rd</sup> base and home plate are the responsibility of the PU.

**BU Play Actions:** BU continues normal coverage responsibilities and transitions from "Outside-in" to keep the runners and ball in "front" of him. BU develops a working area deep into the infield near pitcher's mound covering BR's. BU is responsible for base touches a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> bases by BR. BU is also responsible for a dive back into 2<sup>nd</sup> base if BR stops and retreats to 2<sup>nd</sup> base. Don't give up on the play – continue umpiring for this contingency.

Minor – Level 1  
Two Umpire System

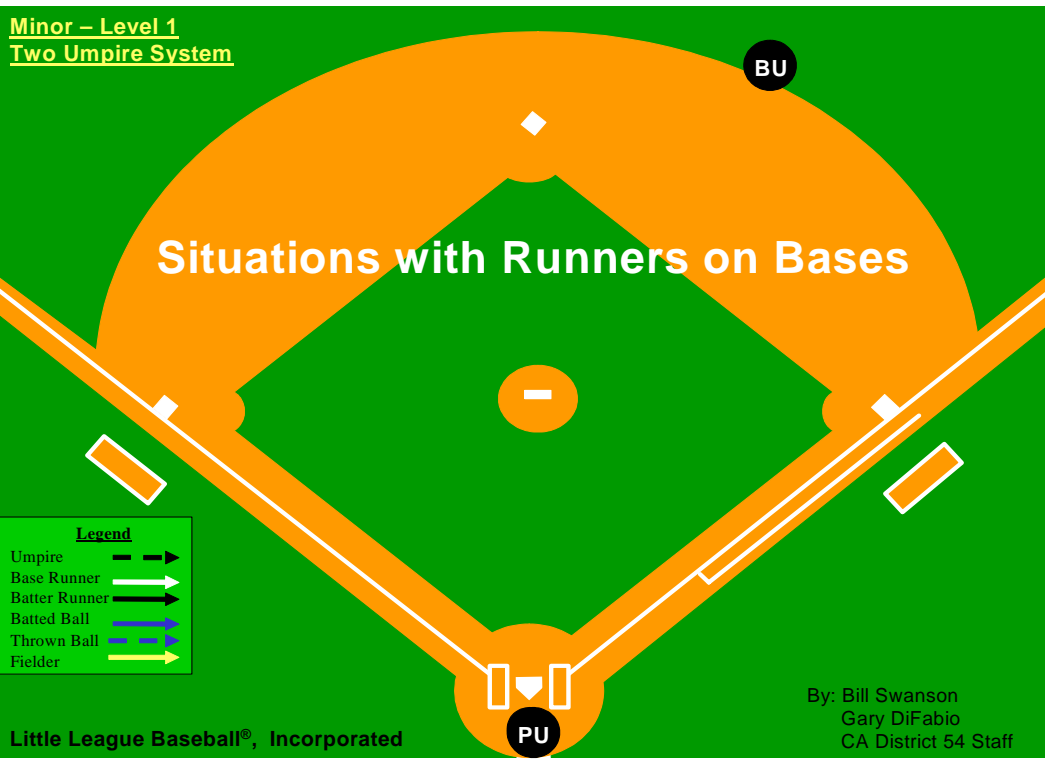
# Situations with Runners on Bases

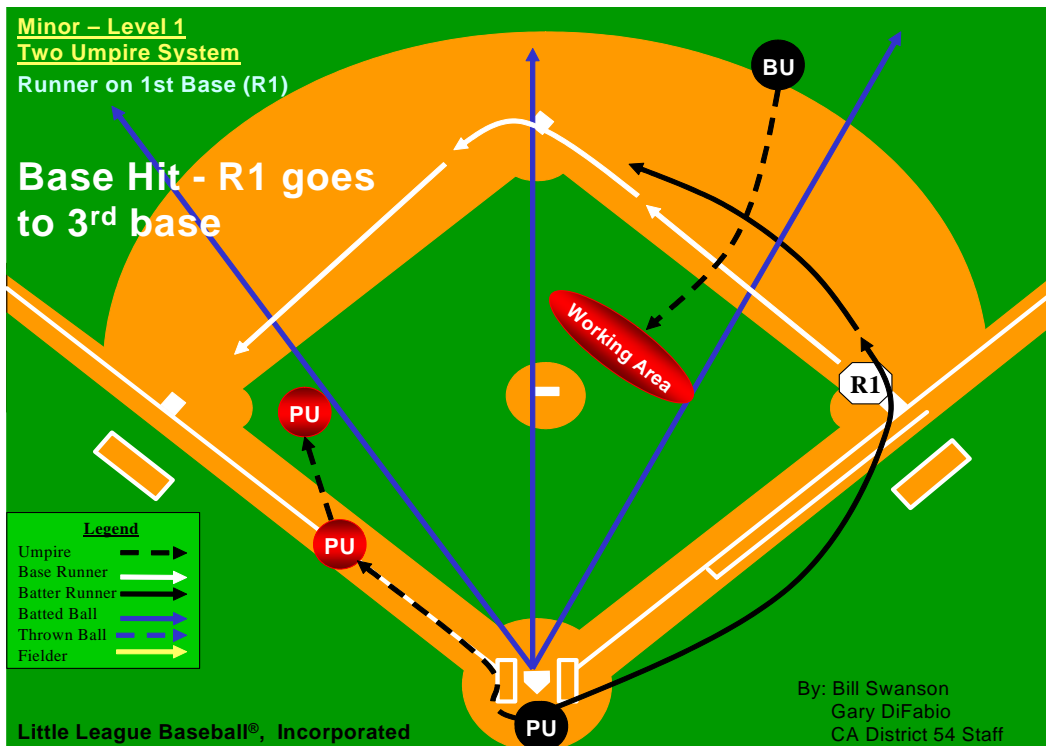
**Legend**

- Umpire (dashed black arrow)
- Base Runner (white arrow)
- Batter Runner (black arrow)
- Batted Ball (blue arrow)
- Thrown Ball (purple arrow)
- Fielder (green arrow)

Little League Baseball®, Incorporated

By: Bill Swanson  
Gary DiFabio  
CA District 54 Staff





### Responsibilities in Priority Order:

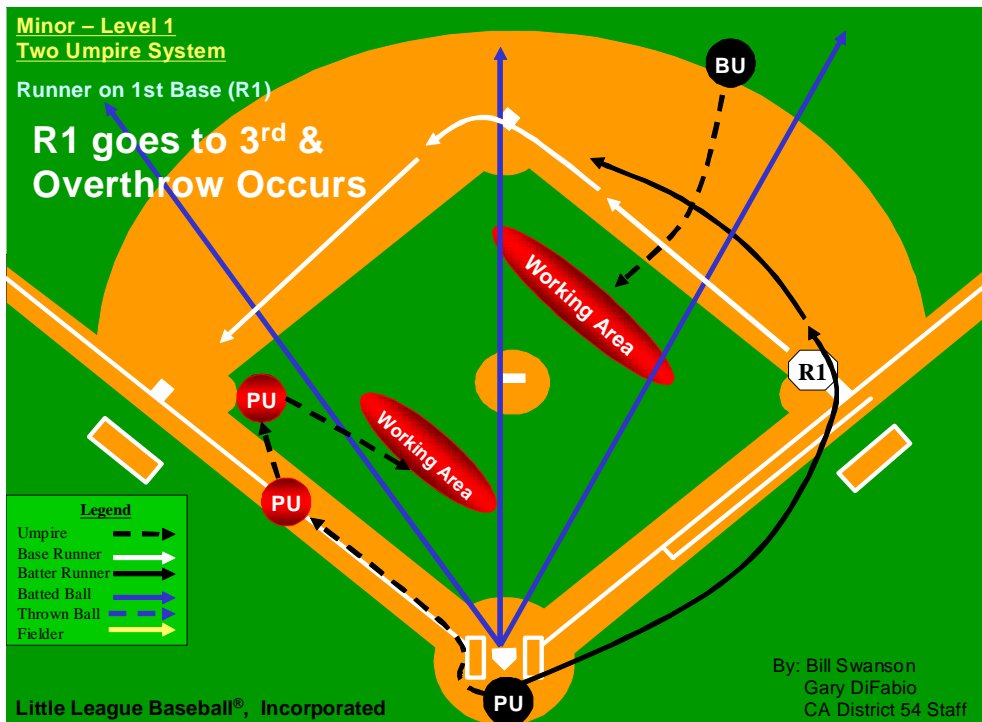
**PU:** All fair/foul calls – (not applicable in this situation)  
 All catch/no catch plays  
 Plays & base touches at 3<sup>rd</sup> base or home plate as necessary

**BU:** All plays and base touches on runners at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases

**PU Play Actions:** On a “routine” base hit to the outfield, the fair/foul and catch/no catch responsibilities are not material. As R1 approaches 2<sup>nd</sup>, PU much anticipate R1’s advance to 3<sup>rd</sup>. PU moves between half way and two-thirds the way to 3<sup>rd</sup> base and reads the play from the “library”. As R1 rounds 2<sup>nd</sup> base, PU moves into the cutout at 3<sup>rd</sup> and prepares for R1’s advance. PU establishes a 45 degree angle to the play at 3<sup>rd</sup> to evaluate the play.

### BU Play Actions:

- **Positioning for Plays:** BU transitions from “Outside-in” to keep the runners and ball in “front” of him. BU develops a working area deep into the infield near pitcher’s mound to watch R1’s advance and cover plays on BR at either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases. (This depth equates into less movement by BU to cover both ends of plays at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases without extreme movements to create proper angles for the plays.) A 45 degree angle is optimal for plays at both bases.



### Responsibilities in Priority Order:

**PU:** All fair/foul calls – (not applicable in this situation)  
All catch/no catch plays  
Plays & base touches at 3<sup>rd</sup> base or home plate as necessary

**BU:** All plays and base touches on runners at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases

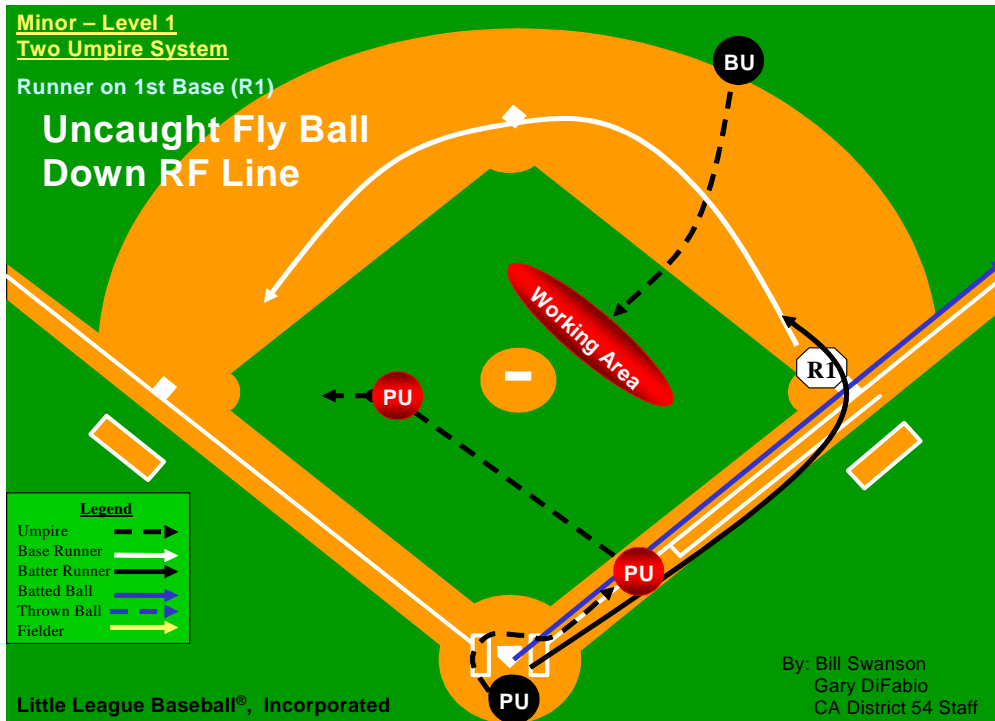
**PU Play Actions:** On a “routine” base hit to the outfield, the fair/foul and catch/no catch responsibilities are not material. As R1 approaches 2<sup>nd</sup>, PU much anticipate R1’s advance to 3<sup>rd</sup>. PU moves between half way and two-thirds the way to 3<sup>rd</sup> base and reads the play from the “library”. As R1 rounds 2<sup>nd</sup> base, PU moves into the cutout at 3<sup>rd</sup> and prepares for R1’s advance. PU establishes a 45 degree angle to the play at 3<sup>rd</sup> to evaluate the play.

If an over throw occurs, PU stays in fair territory and develops a working area between 3<sup>rd</sup> base and home plate as shown above. PU never re-crosses the foul line again into foul territory in front of R1. This leads to tangling with R1, poor angle development on the play at the plate or less than adequate observation for any play on BR at 3<sup>rd</sup> base (PU’s responsibility as well).

**BU Play Actions:** BU transitions from “Outside-in” to keep the runners and ball in “front” of him. BU develops a working area deep into the infield near pitcher’s mound to watch R1’s advance and cover plays on BR at either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases. (This depth equates into less movement by BU to cover both ends of plays at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases without extreme movements to create proper angles for the plays.) A 45 degree angle is optimal for plays at both bases.

On the over throw at 3<sup>rd</sup> base, BU stays with BR’s advance to 2<sup>nd</sup> or retreat to 1<sup>st</sup> base. If BR attempts to advance to 3<sup>rd</sup>, the play at 3<sup>rd</sup> will be covered by PU.





### Responsibilities in Priority Order:

**PU:** All fair/foul calls  
All catch/no catch plays  
Plays & base touches at 3<sup>rd</sup> base or home plate as necessary

**BU:** All plays and base touches on runners at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases

### PU Play Actions:

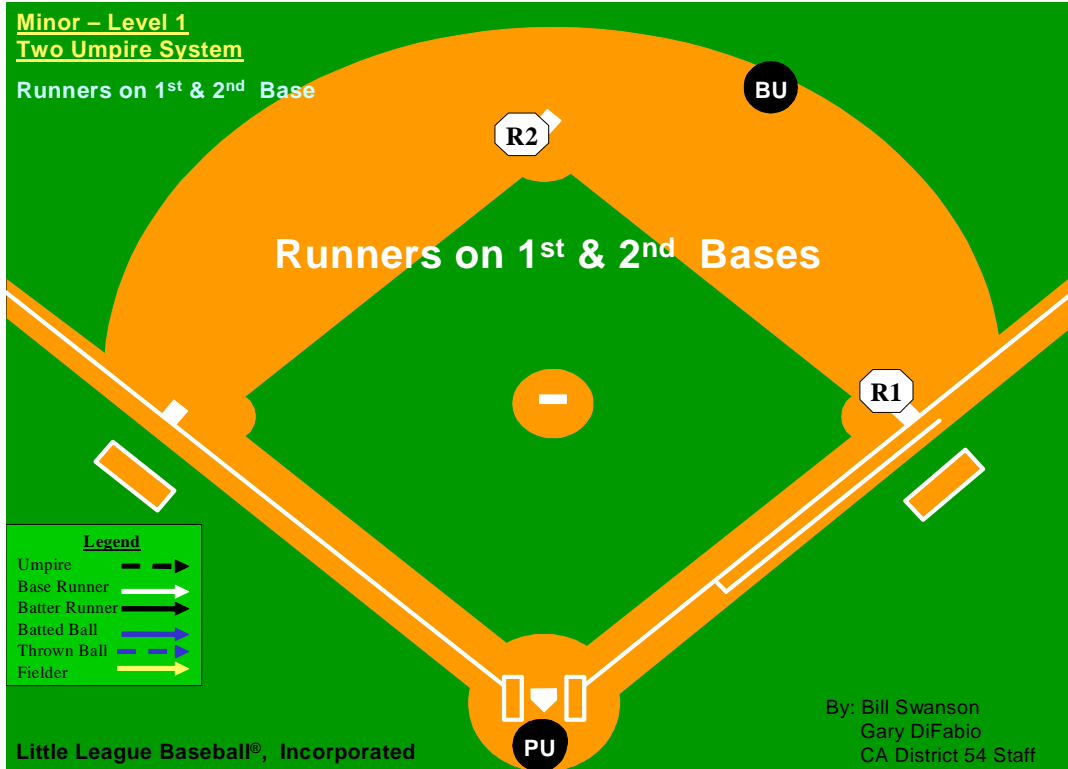
- **Fair/Foul:** PU moves out from behind the plate moving through the right-hand hitter batter's box and trails BR up the foul line (prevents collisions with BR or the catcher). PU straddles the 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line while moving as far as the play allows (obtaining a standing set position before the play occurs). PU first rules on the fair/foul call by pointing "fair" without a voice or raising both hands above his/her head and loudly saying "foul" and then finishing the signal with a point toward foul territory.
- **Catch/No Catch:** PU rules on the catch/no catch by an outfielder. A fielder needs to demonstrate "secure" possession and a "voluntary" release before PU can rule the ball "legally" caught. This requires that PU not react quickly to the play, but read the entire sequence of events before ruling on the play.
- **Positioning for Plays and Base Touches:** After these first two priorities have been covered, PU needs to develop a working area for plays at 3<sup>rd</sup> base or home plate.

### BU Play Actions:

- **Positioning for Plays:** BU transitions from "Outside-in" to keep the runners and ball in "front" of him. BU develops a working area deep into the infield near pitcher's mound to cover plays at either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases. This depth equates into less movement by BU to cover both ends of plays at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases without extreme movements to create proper angles for the plays. A 45 degree angle is optimal for plays at both bases. Less positioning movement for play coverage means BU can easily move and set for plays before runners may cover the distance between bases.

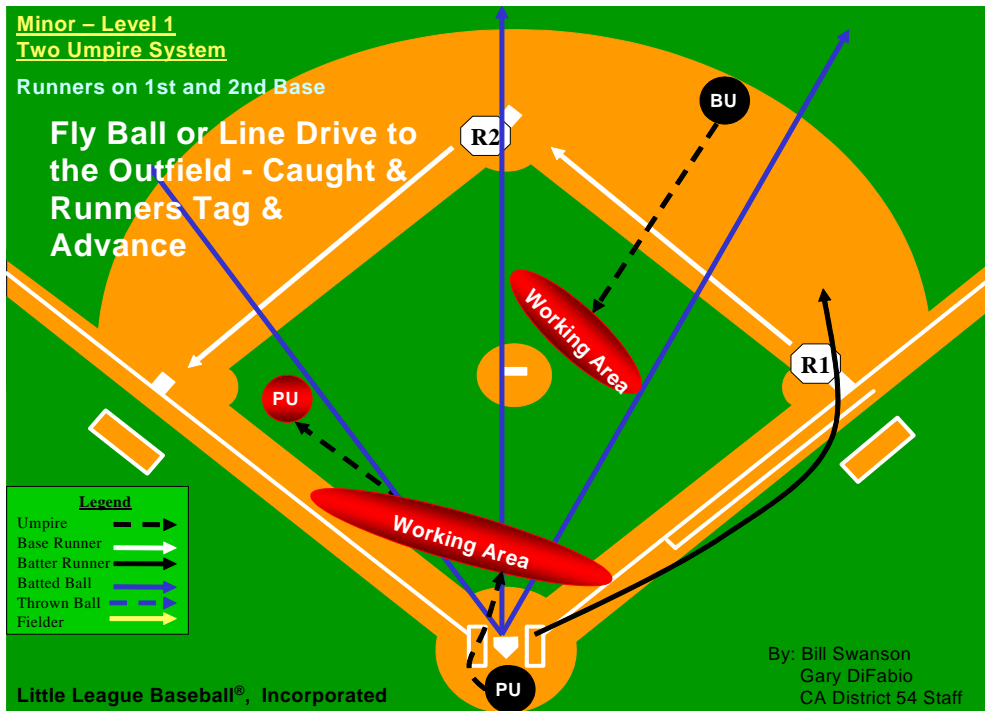
Minor – Level 1  
Two Umpire System

Runners on 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Base



Little League Baseball®, Incorporated

By: Bill Swanson  
Gary DiFabio  
CA District 54 Staff



### Responsibilities in Priority Order:

**PU:** All fair/foul calls  
All catch/no catch plays  
Plays & base touches at 3<sup>rd</sup> base or home plate as necessary

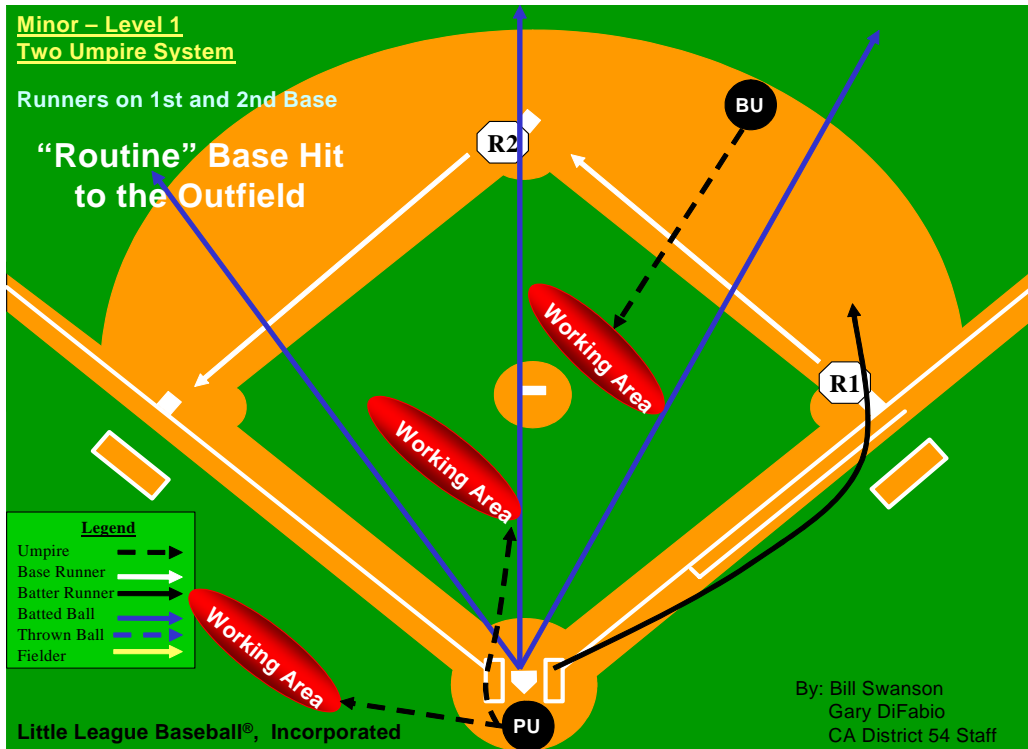
**BU:** All plays and base touches on runners at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases

### PU Play Actions:

- PU first looks for fair/foul and then catch/no catch responsibilities.
- PU then moves from the working area to the 3<sup>rd</sup> base cutout for R2's advance from 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

### BU Play Actions:

- **Positioning for Plays:** BU transitions from "Outside-in" to keep the runners and ball in "front" of him. BU develops a working area deep into the infield near pitcher's mound to cover plays at either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases. This depth equates into less movement by BU to cover both ends of plays at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases without extreme movements to create proper angles for the plays. A 45 degree angle is optimal for plays at both bases. Less positioning movement for play coverage means BU can easily move and set for plays before runners may cover the distance between bases.
- BU must continually "watch the ball & glance at the runners (R1 & BR). Keep track of where the ball is being throw or you may discover a rude surprise as it unexpectedly strikes you. The ball is extremely important as it leads you to plays and help you determine what plays can be expected or anticipated.



### Responsibilities in Priority Order:

**PU:** All fair/foul calls  
All catch/no catch plays  
Plays & base touches at 3<sup>rd</sup> base or home plate as necessary

**BU:** All plays and base touches on runners at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases

### PU Play Actions:

- PU first looks for fair/foul and then catch/no catch responsibilities.
- PU then moves up the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line until no play on R2 is occurring at 3<sup>rd</sup> base. PU retreats to the plate area while continuing to observe R2 at 3<sup>rd</sup> for a possible back door contingency.
- PU positions may develop a working area either inside the infield midway between pitcher's mound and the 3<sup>rd</sup> base foul line or in foul territory between the foul line and the fence/backstop. (If PU works inside the infield, be aware of throws to the plate coming from the outfield or cut-off men from many directions. If PU works in foul territory, watch for impeding runners rounding 3<sup>rd</sup> base and attempting to score.)

### BU Play Actions:

- **Positioning for Plays:** BU transitions from “Outside-in” to keep the runners and ball in “front” of him. BU develops a working area deep into the infield near pitcher's mound to cover plays at either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases. This depth equates into less movement by BU to cover both ends of plays at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> bases without extreme movements to create proper angles for the plays. A 45 degree angle is optimal for plays at both bases. Less positioning movement for play coverage means BU can easily move and set for plays before runners may cover the distance between bases.
- BU must continually “watch the ball & glance at the runners (R1 & BR). Keep track of where the ball is being throw or you may discover a rude surprise as it unexpectedly strikes you. The ball is extremely important as it leads you to plays and help you determine what plays can be expected or anticipated.

# Umpire Terminology:

The following are examples of communications that umpire crews should use to effectively communicate their responsibilities on the field. Regardless of the exact terminology, you and your partner choose, make absolutely certain that you communicate routinely.

Regardless if you are working the plate or the field, you should acknowledge your partner. Most of the situations that will be discussed are what one umpire should say in a certain situation. Each situation usually is accompanied by a reply from your partner. In cases where no formal reply is necessary, a simple "I hear you" will suffice.

## PLATE UMPIRE:

### Half-Swing

PLAY	VERBAL COMMUNICATION
Checked swing/Plate Umpire does not need help	"BALL! NO, HE DID NOT GO!"
Checked swing/Plate umpire does not need help	"YES! HE WENT!"
Check swing/Plate Umpire gets help from field umpire upon request	"DID HE GO?" "THEN IT'S A STRIKE" or "THEN IT'S A BALL" "THE COUNT IS"

### Routine Terminology

PLAY	VERBAL COMMUNICATION
Infield fly	"INFIELD FLY! BATTER IS OUT!"
Infield fly near foul line	"INFIELD FLY, IF FAIR!"
Dropped fly ball	"NO CATCH! NO CATCH!"
Caught fly ball	"THAT'S A CATCH! THAT'S A CATCH!"
Accidental collision or other non-play	"THAT'S NOTHING!"

**FIELD UMPIRE:****Plays at 1<sup>st</sup>**

<b>PLAY</b>	<b>VERBAL COMMUNICATION</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> baseman makes tag on batter/runner	"ON THE TAG! HE'S OUT!"
1 <sup>st</sup> baseman misses tag on batter/runner	"SAFE! NO TAG! SAFE!"
1 <sup>st</sup> baseman pulls foot on throw	"SAFE! HE'S OFF THE BAG! SAFE!"
Getting help on tag attempt	"DID HE TAG HIM?"

**Half Swing**

<b>PLAY</b>	<b>VERBAL COMMUNICATION</b>
Asked for help by Plate Umpire	"NO, HE DIDN'T GO!"

**Routine Terminology**

<b>PLAY</b>	<b>VERBAL COMMUNICATION</b>
Infield fly	"INFIELD FLY! BATTER IS OUT!"
Infield fly near foul line	"INFIELD FLY, IF FAIR!"
Dropped fly ball	"NO CATCH! NO CATCH!"
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Accidental collision or other non-play	"THAT'S NOTHING!"

# Strike Zone Philosophies:

## “New” Umpires Tendencies:

- € Believe the rule book dictates the strike zone for all levels of play.
- € Think the strike zone as a "magic space" as defined in Rule 2.00.
- € Believe in literal interpretation of the strike zone.
- € “Ball” a pitch that misses the zone by the slightest distance.
- € Have a tendency of “balling” marginal pitches when unsure.
- € They lack confidence in their officiating.

**Problem** – These characteristics lead to fewer strikes, fewer swings and fewer bat-ball contacts, 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.

## 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!
  - o Assume the pitch is a strike unless convinced otherwise.
- € To advance, batters must hit aggressively.
  - o Aggressive strike zones keep teams focused on hitting, fielding & pitching but not walking.
  - o 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.
  - o Each pitch swung at gets one more strike without PU making a decision.
  - o A swing may put the ball in jeopardy – results in action, excitement and outs.
  - o 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.
- € 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 ring 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.

# Handling Disagreements

The first step in handling disagreements is being able to recognize when you are most likely to encounter them.

- Keep all personalities out of your work. You must be able to forgive and forget. Every game is a new game.
- Cooperate with your partners and help each other. Don't hesitate to ask for assistance if you are blocked out on a play. The main objective is to have all decisions ultimately correct.
- Avoid sarcastic comments. Don't insist on the last word. If, after an argument, a manager is walking away, let him go.
- Never charge a manager or follow him if he is moving away; and do not point your finger or use violent gestures during an argument.
- Keep your temper. A decision or an action taken in anger is never sound.
- Watch your language. Never use language toward a player, coach or manager which, if directed at the umpire, would result in the player, coach or manager being disciplined.
- If the manager has a legitimate point to argue under the rules, it is your duty to listen to him. An umpire can do this with dignity and no loss of respect. Be understanding – remember, the players are engaged in a heated contest. You are impartial judges and should maintain a calm dignity becoming the authority you have.
- Keep active and alert on the field at all times.
- Keep the game moving, a ball game is often helped by energetic and earnest work of the umpire.
- Be courteous, impartial and firm and so compel respect from all.
- Remember that you are the only representative of Little League Baseball on the field. Act accordingly.
- Don't think your blue umpire's shirt grants you immunity from having to take a little criticism. It's part of umpiring. Plan on it. Successful umpires know how much to take.
- If a manager is on your back, but not enough to warrant an ejection, then stay away from him. This is especially true between innings. Standing near an unhappy coach, just to show him will only lead to further tensions.



# Essential Baseball Rules

## OBJECTIVES OF THE GAME.

Rule 1.01: Baseball is a game between two teams of nine players each, played on an enclosed field, **under the jurisdiction of one or more umpires.**

The term "umpire" comes from an early French word meaning "**not equal to**" or a "**non-peer.**" This accurately defines the role of the umpire in relation to the game. You are a skilled observer of the game, entering only when an impartial decision or interpretation of the rules must be made.

**THE PLAYING FIELD:** The field shall be laid out according to the instructions below with all measurements being taken from the back of home plate. The distances to the fence are recommended guidelines.

	Base Paths	To Mound	To 2 <sup>nd</sup> Base	To Fence
Major and under	60'	46'	84'-10"	200' min

The **INFIELD** shall be the square defined by the base paths. The infield shall be graded so that the base lines and home plate are level.

The **OUTFIELD** shall be the area between two foul lines formed by extending two sides of the square from home plate.

The **PITCHER'S PLATE** (or RUBBER) shall be 6 inches above the level of home plate in Majors. The degree of slope from a point 6 inches in front of the pitcher's plate to a point 6 feet toward home plate shall be 1 inch to 1 foot, and such degree of slope shall be uniform. The infield and outfield, including the boundary lines, are fair territory and all other area is foul territory.

All **BASES** are positioned entirely in fair territory. The distance from home plate to first or third base is measured from the back tip of home plate to the farthest or back edge of the base. Distances to second base are measured to the centre of the base.

The **BALL** is a sphere formed by yarn wound around a small core of cork, rubber or similar material, covered with two stripes of white horsehide or cowhide, tightly stitched together. It weighs 5 1/4 ounces avoirdupois and is between 9 and 9 1/4 inches in circumference.

The **BAT** is a smooth, round stick not more than 2 1/4 inches in diameter at the thickest part and not more than 33 inches in length in Majors and under.

"The hands are never part of the bat" despite what coaches will attempt to tell you. No bat has ever been offered for sale which includes hands.

A **FIELDER** is any defensive player. Each fielder, may use or wear a leather glove. Only the catcher may use a catcher's mitt and at first base the player may use a first base glove.

At the start of each inning count the number of players on the field. If there are not nine defensive players and a coach at first and third base do not allow the inning to start.

An **INFIELDER** is a fielder who occupies a position in the infield. (Pitcher, Catcher, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> base and Shortstop) Similarly an **OUTFIELDER** occupies a position in the outfield. (Left, Center and Right Field)

The objective of each team is to **WIN** by scoring more runs than the opponent.

A **RUN** (or **SCORE**) is the score made by an offensive player who advances from batter to runner and touches first, second, third and home bases in that order. The order of the bases is in a counter-clockwise direction around the square from home to first, etc.

A **BATTER** is an offensive player who takes his position in the batter's box and attempts to hit a ball thrown to him by the pitcher.

A **PITCHER** is the fielder designated to deliver the pitch to the batter.

The pitcher pitches the ball to the batter and the batter attempts to hit the pitch and become a runner. The defense attempts to catch the ball after it is hit and put the batter and/or runners out.

A **PITCH** is a ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher.

The **CATCHER** is the fielder who takes his position back of the home base and catches the pitcher's pitch when the batter does not hit the pitch.

A **RUNNER** is an offensive player who is advancing toward, or touching, or returning to any base.

The winner of the game shall be that team which shall have scored, in accordance with these rules, the greater number of runs at the conclusion of a regulation game.

A regulation game consists of a set number of **INNINGS**, unless extended because of a tie score, or shortened (1) because the home team needs none of its half of the final inning or only a fraction of it.

In Majors division and under, the game usually consists of SIX innings.

Games are often played with **TIME LIMITS**. A typical limit may be that "no inning may start after 2 hours (120 minutes) of play." As the umpire you are responsible for tracking the start and end time of the game and notifying the coaches of this rule. These games can end in a tie if the time limit has been reached.

If the score is tied after the regulation number of completed **INNINGS**, play shall continue until (1) the visiting team has scored more total runs than the home team at the end of a completed inning, or (2) the home team scores the winning run in an uncompleted inning.

An **INNING** is that portion of a game within which the teams alternate on offense and defense and in which there are three **OUTS** for each team. Each team's time at bat is a half-inning. A new inning or half-inning begins the moment the third out is made.

Once underway, games may be **CALLED** or **SUSPENDED**. A **SUSPENDED** game is resumed at a future time from the exact point at which the game was suspended. If a game is **CALLED**, it means sufficient innings have been played to make the game an official game. In Majors and under, play is terminated if four (4) complete innings have been played and the score is not tied (or 3 ½ innings if the home team is winning).

An **OUT** is one of the three required retirements of an offensive team during its time at bat.

When three offensive players are legally put out, that team takes the field and the opposing team becomes the offensive team. There can be four or even more outs in an inning.

You have heard the old expression "tie goes to the runner".... **Don't believe it!** In baseball there are no ties. The runner must beat the ball to the base. If the runner and the ball arrive at exactly the same moment then the runner did not beat the ball. The runner is **OUT**.

"**SAFE**" is a declaration by the umpire that a runner is entitled to the base for which he was trying.

## HOW A TEAM SCORES

One run shall be scored each time a runner legally advances to and touches first, second, third and home base before three men are put out to end the inning.

EXCEPTION: A run is not scored if the runner advances to home base during a play in which the third out is made (1) by the batter-runner before he touches first base; (2) by any runner being forced out; or (3) by a preceding runner who is declared out because he failed to touch one of the bases.

## HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

The players of the home team shall take their defensive positions, the first batter of the visiting team shall take his position in the batter's box, the umpire shall call "**PLAY**" and the game shall start. The ball is now **LIVE** or "in play."

A **DEAD BALL** is a ball out of play because of a legally created temporary suspension of play.

Make a special point of signalling and saying "PLAY" every time the ball is put back into play. This is a very important signal to the teams and to every member of the umpire crew. Nothing can happen on a DEAD ball except for the ordered results of the previous play that happened when the ball was LIVE.

When the ball is put in play at the start of, or during a game, all fielders other than the catcher shall be on fair territory.

After the ball is DEAD, play shall be resumed when: (1) the pitcher takes his place on the pitcher's plate with a new ball or the same ball in his possession, (2) the catcher is in position ready to receive the ball, and (3) the plate umpire calls "PLAY." (The plate umpire may call "PLAY" as soon as the pitcher takes his place on his plate with the ball in his possession. Many times, however, the plate umpire will wait until the batter enters the batter's box and is ready for delivery of the pitch).

The batting order shall be followed throughout the game unless a player is substituted for another. In that case the substitute shall take the place of the replaced player in the batting order.

Each player of the offensive team shall bat in the order that his name appears in his team's batting order.

The first batter in each inning after the first inning shall be the player whose name follows that of the last player who legally completed his time at bat in the preceding inning.

A batter has legally completed his time at bat when he is put out or becomes a runner.

### A batter may be put out in any of the following ways:

- € His fair or foul **FLY BALL** is legally caught by a fielder (catch);
- € A **FLY BALL** is a batted ball that goes high in the air in-flight straight from the bat without first touching the ground.
- € A **CATCH** is the act of a fielder in getting secure possession in his hand or glove of a ball in flight and firmly holding it; providing he does not use his cap, protector, pocket or any other part of his uniform in getting possession.

In signalling a **CATCH**, the umpire will always watch and determine the validity of a catch but will only say "That's A Catch" and give the **OUT** signal if the catch was difficult (usually diving or made below the knee).

- € After he hits a fair ball, he or first base is tagged before he touches first base;

A **TAG** is the action of a fielder in touching a base with his body while holding the ball securely and firmly in his hand or glove; or touching a runner with the ball, or with his hand or glove holding the ball, while holding the ball securely and firmly in his hand or glove.

€ A third strike is legally obtained against the batter;

In Majors and lower divisions this DROPPED THIRD STRIKE rule does not apply. The batter would be called out regardless of the catch being made by the catcher.

A **STRIKE** is a legal pitch when so called by the umpire, which

- Is struck at by the batter and is missed;
- Is not struck at, but any part of the ball passes through any part of the STRIKE ZONE

The **STRIKE ZONE** is that area over home plate the upper limit of which is the bottom of the arm pits and the lower level is a line at the top of the knees. (Often umpires use a slightly shifted strike zone. It is shifted slightly down and is a horizontal line at the midpoint between the top of the shoulders and the top of the uniform pants and the bottom of the knees). The Strike Zone shall be determined from the batter's stance as the batter is prepared to swing at a pitched ball.

**Every PITCH is a STRIKE until you are convinced otherwise.** In the youngest leagues your personal strike zone may be defined by something as simple as "could the batter have hit the ball." As you progress to higher quality of play you begin to refine your strike zone to the expectations and balance of the game.

€ An **INFIELD FLY** is declared.

The INFIELD FLY is a game situation whose purpose is to prevent the defense from making more than one out when a fair fly ball could be caught by an infielder. There **must** be runners on first and second, or first, second and third base. Once called the BATTER is OUT regardless of whether or not the ball is caught and all runners are no longer forced to leave their bases, but may elect to do so at their own peril. The runners must tag up as they would on a normal fly ball. This is a **JUDGEMENT** call.

Umpires must be careful to always signal OUT when required. A quick relay throw over to first to easily retire the runner will not be signed with as much enthusiasm as a "bang-bang" tight double play but a crisp OUT signal must be given nonetheless.

**The batter becomes a runner and is entitled to first base without liability to be put out when:**

€ Four "balls" have been called by the umpire;

A **BALL** is a pitch which does not enter the strike zone in flight and is not struck at by the batter.

A **BASE ON BALLS** is an award of first base granted to a batter who, during his time at bat, receives four pitches outside the strike zone.

He is touched by a pitched ball which he is not attempting to hit unless (1) The ball is in the strike zone when it touches the batter, or (2) The batter makes no attempt to avoid being touched by the ball;

A good umpire clearly says STRIKE or BALL after each pitch whenever appropriate. It is appropriate to say BALL on every pitch that is being so called. It is important to say STRIKE only on pitches that are not swung at. The appropriate STRIKE motion should be used on every STRIKE whether called or swinging.

**The batter becomes a runner and is liable to be put out when -**

€ He hits a **FAIR BALL**:

A **FAIR BALL** is a batted ball that settles on fair ground between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that is on or over fair territory when bounding to the outfield past first or third base, or that touches first, second or third base, or that first falls on fair territory on or beyond first base or third base, or that, while on or over fair territory touches the person of an umpire or player, or that, while over fair territory, passes out of the playing field in flight.

A **FAIR FLY** shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time he touches the ball.

If a fly ball lands in the infield between home and first base, or home and third base, and then bounces to foul territory without touching a player or umpire and before passing first or third base, it is a foul ball; or if the ball settles on foul territory or is touched by a player on foul territory, it is a foul ball. If a fly ball lands on or beyond first or third base and then bounces to foul territory, it is a fair hit.

**FAIR TERRITORY** is that part of the playing field within, and including the first base and third base lines, from home base to the bottom of the playing field fence and perpendicularly upwards. All foul lines are in fair territory.

**A good umpire gives the count after every pitch.** The count is given as “# Balls, # Strikes” with the fingers used to reinforce the signal. **On a full count the umpire would say “3 Balls, Two Strikes”** On the fourth ball clearly say “Ball Four:”

## THE RUNNER

A runner acquires the right to an unoccupied base when he touches it before he is put out. He is then entitled to it until he is put out, or forced to vacate it for another runner legally entitled to that base.

In advancing, a runner shall touch first, second, third and home base in order. If forced to return, he shall retouch all bases in reverse order, unless the ball is dead under any provision of Rule 5.09. In such cases, the runner may go directly to his original base.

Two runners may not occupy a base, but if, while the ball is alive, two runners are touching a base, the following runner shall be out when tagged. The preceding runner is entitled to the base.

Therefore, if you somehow had three runners stack up at third base and the fielder tagged all three the runner who should have been at first and the one who should have been at second would be called out. The order of the tag is irrelevant.

Each runner including the batter-runner may, without liability to be put out, advance -

To home base, scoring a run, if a fair ball goes out of the playing field in flight and he touched all bases legally; this is called a **HOMERUN**

**Any runner is out when:**

€ He is tagged, when the ball is alive, while off his base.

**EXCEPTION:** A batter-runner cannot be tagged out after overrunning or over-sliding first base if he returns immediately to the base;

A **TAG** is the action of a fielder in touching a base with his body while holding the ball securely and firmly in his hand or glove; or touching a runner with the ball, or with his hand or glove holding the ball, while holding the ball securely and firmly in his hand or glove.

- ⊘ He fails to retouch his base after a fair or foul fly ball is legally caught before him, or his base, is tagged by a fielder. He shall not be called out for failure to retouch his base after the first following pitch, or any play or attempted play. This is an appeal play;
- ⊘ He fails to reach the next base before a fielder tags him or the base, after he has been forced to advance by reason of the batter becoming a runner. However, if a following runner is put out on a force play, the force is removed and the runner must be tagged to be put out. The force is removed as soon as the runner touches the base to which he is forced to advance, and if he over-slides or overruns the base, the runner must be tagged to be put out. However, if the forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason towards the base he had last occupied, the force play is reinstated, and he can again be put out if the defence tags the base to which he is forced;

A **FORCE PLAY** is a play in which a runner legally loses his right to occupy a base by reason of the batter becoming a runner.

EXAMPLE of when a runner is forced to run:

When the batter hits a fair ball he must run to first base. If a runner is on first base, that runner is forced to run to second. If a runner is on second and no runner is on first, the runner at second is NOT forced to run when the batter hits a fair ball, because first base is vacant.

- ⊘ He is touched by a fair ball in fair territory before the ball has touched or passed an infielder. The ball is dead and no runner may score, nor runners advance, except runners forced to advance.
- ⊘ He passes a preceding runner before such runner is out;
- ⊘ He fails to return at once to first base after overrunning or over sliding that base. If he attempts to run to second he is out when tagged. If, after overrunning or over sliding first base he starts toward the dugout, or toward his position, and fails to return to first base at once, he is out, on appeal, when he or the base is tagged;
- ⊘ In running or sliding for home base, he fails to touch home base and makes no attempt to return to the base, when a fielder holds the ball in his hand, while touching home base, and appeals to the umpire for the decision.

First base and home may be overrun, second and third may not. A runner can overrun first base on a **BASE ON BALLS** without being in jeopardy.

**INTERFERENCE** is an act made by an **offensive** (runner or batter) player that hinders or impedes a defensive player from making a play.

**OBSTRUCTION** is the act of a **defensive** (fielder) player who impedes the base running of an offensive player.

## THE PITCHER

There are two legal pitching positions, the **WINDUP POSITION** and the **SET POSITION**, and either position may be used at any time.

**THE WINDUP POSITION:** The pitcher shall stand facing the batter, his entire pivot foot on, or in front of and touching and not off the end of the pitcher's plate, and the other foot free. From this position any natural movement associated with his delivery of the ball to the batter commits him to the pitch without interruption or alteration. He shall not raise either foot from the ground, except that in his actual delivery of the ball to the batter, he may take one step backward and one step forward with his free foot.

**THE SET POSITION:** Set Position shall be indicated by the pitcher when he stands facing the batter with his entire pivot foot on, or in front of, and in contact with, and not off the end of the pitcher's plate, and his other foot in front of the pitcher's plate, holding the ball in both hands in front of his body and coming to a complete stop. From such Set Position he may deliver the ball to the batter, throw to a base or step backward off the pitcher's plate with his pivot foot. Before assuming Set Position, the pitcher may elect to make any natural preliminary motion such as that known as "the stretch." But if he so elects, he shall come to Set Position before delivering the ball to the batter. After assuming Set Position, any natural motion associated with his delivery of the ball to the batter commits him to the pitch without alteration or interruption.

In the Major division and lower, the pitcher: (1) may windup from a set position, (2) need not come to a complete stop in a set position and (3) may remove his hand from the ball other than in a pitch or throwing to a base.

Once on the PITCHER'S PLATE from either position the pitcher may:

- (1) Deliver the ball to the batter, or
- (2) Step and throw to a base in an attempt to pick-off a runner
- (3) Disengage the rubber (if he does he must drop his hand to his sides).

In disengaging the rubber the pitcher must step off with his pivot foot and not his free foot first.

The pitcher may not go from one position to the other without disengaging the rubber. If he does it with runners on the bases it is an **ILLEGAL PITCH** in Majors or below.

Only when there are runners on base can a pitcher commit an **ILLEGAL PITCH in Majors or below**. The **ILLEGAL PITCH** is the delicate line between what a pitcher can do to hold the runner close to a base, the moves by which a pitcher may legally attempt to pick the runner off, and the proper delivery of the ball to the batter.

The **ILLEGAL PITCH** (in Majors or below) is an advanced rule study beyond the scope of this article. If your league requires you to call **ILLEGAL PITCHES**, then you should devote a considerable amount of study to this rule section and its interpretation. One thing remains clear ... if you do call "**ILLEGAL PITCH**" call it loud and then the moment the play ends you must also call, with equal force, "**TIME**"

## **THE UMPIRE**

The role of the umpire requires **JUDGEMENT**. Anything that requires you to apply your judgement to a situation should not normally be questioned: **OUT, SAFE, FAIR, FOUL, STRIKE, BALL** are examples of things of this.

As a result you want to strive to make one call and only one call in every situation you encounter. The keys to achieving this are **CONCENTRATION, TIMING** and **COMMUNICATION**.

Umpires have the power to **DISQUALIFY** and then **EJECT** any player, manager, coach or substitute who displays unsportsmanlike conduct or language. This also applies to any person whose duties place him at the park or to spectators.

If an umpire makes a mistake in applying or interpreting the rules, a team may **APPEAL** your decision and ultimately **PROTEST** the game to league authorities.

The simplest **APPEAL** occurs when you have said **BALL** and the catcher believes the batter has attempted to hit the ball. This is the **CHECKED SWING APPEAL**. The catcher will ask you to "Get help on the Blue" or "Check to see if he swung" or any other similar phrase. If anyone is asking for this appeal, go for assistance to your field umpire immediately.

Above all **ERROR ON THE SIDE OF SAFETY**. This is the prime directive for umpires at all levels. Nothing should be permitted to take place which compromises the safety and enjoyment of the game by everyone.

Minor – Level 1  
Two Umpire System

