

## Safety, Safety, Safety

- Coach CANNOT warm up pitcher during practice, games, or in bull pen
- Catcher MUST have a dangling throat protector
- Catcher can warm up pitcher with full mask, including dangler, but need NOT have chest protector and shin guards (and can squat, if desired)
- long vs. short model chest protector; long required in baseball **minors** and below; either is allowed in softball, and baseball majors and above
- Players CANNOT wear any jewelry including wrist bands, hair ties, etc. (exception for medical alert)
- during defense all coaches must stay in dugout – no coaches on the field (a league may allow some exceptions for younger divisions)
- At least ONE coach MUST be in dugout at ALL times for ALL levels
- equipment (bats, gloves, etc), cannot be left laying on the field during game
- no painted helmets, no stickers on helmets except those provided by manufacturer
- bull pen safety (catcher must have mask; bull pen is not a batter on-deck area)

## Common misconceptions (check <http://eteamz.active.com/baseball/rules/obr/myths/index.cfm?> for more!)

- *Tie goes to the runner* – 7.08(e) “A runner is out when... failing to reach the next base BEFORE a fielder tags said runner or the base after that runner has been forced to advance by reason of the batter becoming a runner.” If the runner failed to get there BEFORE the ball, the runner is OUT!
- *The hands are part of the bat* – if a batter is hit in the hands, umpire must judge where hands were at time of contact (in strike zone or not) and whether or not batter was making an attempt to hit the ball
- *The plate umpire can overrule a base umpire’s call* – only the umpire making a call can change his/her call if he/she so chooses
- *Batter must “pull back” on a bunt attempt* when the ball is outside the strike zone – page 50, bunt) “...is a batted ball not swung at, but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly.”, (page 54, strike a) “is struck at by the batter and is missed”; umpire must judge whether or not the batter made an “attempt” to hit the ball.
- *Runner running out of the baseline is automatically out* – see 7.08 (a) 1; runner makes his/her own baseline; comes into play when a fielder has the ball and is attempting to make a tag on the runner.
- *Runner must slide* – 7.08 (a) 3 “...out when... runner does not slide OR ATTEMPT TO GET AROUND A FIELDER who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag”
- *Batter must turn right after passing first base* or can be tagged out; umpire must judge whether runner made an attempt to go to second before runner decided to return to first base
- *Batter is OUT if he/she throws the bat* – There is NO SUCH RULE! Don’t make up rules! If a batter consistently throws his/her bat, all you can do is eject him/her from the game for unsportsmanlike conduct.

## Speed of play

- 60 seconds from last put out until start of play for the next inning – see warm up pitches 8.03
- Hustle players on and off field, tell managers to have catchers ready; another player with full helmet gear may warm up pitcher while catcher gears up; no catcher, no warm-up pitches!
- Plate umpire can hold spare ball during warm ups and toss to pitcher or catcher if ball gets past catcher; also, on foul ball which catcher or fielder is chasing down, throw spare ball to pitcher
- Don’t go talk to coaches/other umpires/manager/spectators during inning change; get a quick drink, clean off the plate, and play ball!

## Umpire Priorities

1. Fair/Foul; must be on the line to call; one umpire ONLY; no voice for fair
2. Catch/no catch; indicate/call **all** catches, but be particularly loud and vocal on any where there may be doubt on part of players and coaches; one umpire ONLY; “I’ve got a catch” or “That’s a catch” (signal OUT), vs “No Catch!” (signal safe)
3. Everything else

Know who is responsible for a call – one umpire, one call; do NOT offer “help” on a call unless asked by the umpire who was responsible for the call!



### **Timing, Timing, Timing**

- Slow it down! There is no need to make a call the instant something happens. “Pause, Read, React”. Tell yourself, “yes that was an out”, or “yes, he/she is safe”, THEN make the call. For balls/strikes, wait for ball to hit glove, say “yes, that was a strike” or “no, that was a ball”, then call it.
- When in doubt on fair/foul, let it play out. If it was foul, you can fix it. If you call it foul but it was fair, you can’t fix it.

**Infield Fly** – must be catchable with “ordinary effort”. Keep in mind “ordinary effort” differs depending on level of play! Know whether infield fly is in effect before the pitch and indicate as such to your partner (usually finger to bill of hat, or fist to chest)

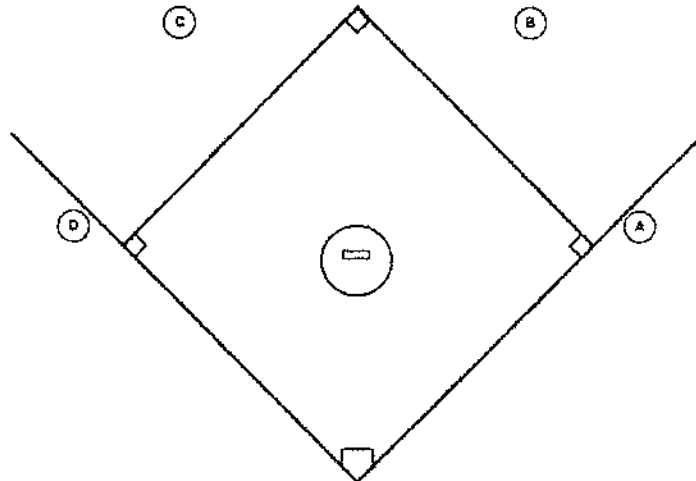
### **Plate Mechanics**

- Get in the SLOT! Stand to left of catcher (for right-handed batter, right side for left-handed batter) between and in back of catcher and batter; make sure you can see ENTIRE plate
- Head NO LOWER than chin just above top of catcher’s head
- There should not be enough room for a person to walk between catcher and plate umpire
- Stance should be fairly wide, depending on your height. You need not squat down very far.
- Don’t lean in, try to squat straight down (you will have a slight lean)
- Hands in FRONT of you. Use hand behind catcher to “lock in”; the other hand should be loose (don’t make a fist or lock it in place)
- Indicator is ALWAYS held in left hand. Take off mask with LEFT hand.
- DO NOT MOVE YOUR HEAD! Follow pitch from pitcher’s hands to catcher’s glove WITH YOUR EYES!
- Call balls while DOWN. Stand up (do not move feet) to call strikes. Then step back and relax between each pitch. No voice needed for swinging strikes, just indicate. For check swing that is an attempt, point at batter and say “Yes he/she did!” then signal strike.
- Indicate count of balls with left hand, strikes with right, and indicate with hands above shoulders, facing toward the pitcher; full count is 3 balls, 2 strikes, not all fingers down!
- Indicate number of outs down to your side; indicate fairly often, especially if no scoreboard, or scoreboard is wrong; base umpire should echo outs
- ALWAYS put ball back into play after foul, time out, between innings, etc.; point at pitcher and say “Play”.

### **Field positioning (one base umpire)**

- A Position with nobody on – make sure you’re in FOUL territory, and NOT straddling line
- B Position with runner on first *only*
- C Position with runners in any other combination of bases
- Watch for runners leaving early (baseball and softball majors and below; softball juniors and above can leave when ball leaves pitcher’s hand)
- Watch for tag-ups on catches
- Watch for balks/illegal pitches
- Infield plays – make sure fielder has secure possession of the ball and has thrown/released the ball before turning to watch the play at the base to which the fielder has thrown
- Know whether play is a force or not; on tag plays, make sure fielder has secure possession of the ball before calling runner out.
- For 60’ diamond, if the ball is hit to the outfield (on the ground or in the air) you’re IN; if the ball is hit to the infield, you’re OUT.
- Assist plate umpire with check swing requests
- Assist plate umpire with foul balls hit off the batter while in the box; plate umpire can’t always see these; give plate umpire a chance to call this, but if not, YOU call it! However, be 1000% sure YOU saw it.
- Chest to the ball; don’t “ball watch” but have an awareness of where the ball is at all times; NEVER turn your back on the ball (or it will hit you in the back of the head!).
- Do NOT signal OUT/SAFE UNLESS you have the ball and a runner; no need to signal if no play was being made on the runner, or if the ball was thrown way past the fielder

## 60-ft Diamond

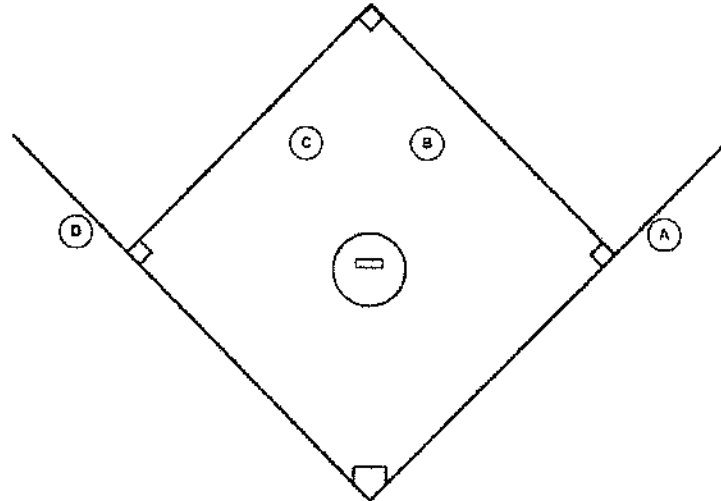


Runners	2-man	3-man	
	U1	U1	U3
No runners	A	A	D
1 <sup>st</sup> only	B	A	C
2 <sup>nd</sup> only	C	B	D
3 <sup>rd</sup> only	C	A	D
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup>	C	B	D
1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup>	C	B	D
2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup>	C	B	D
Bases loaded	C	B	D

### Responsibility Priorities

1. Fair/Foul
2. Catch/No catch
3. Touches/Tag-ups
4. Subsequent plays on runners

**90-ft Diamond**



Runners	2-man		3-man	
	U1		U1	U3
No runners	A		A	D
1 <sup>st</sup> only	B		A	C
2 <sup>nd</sup> only	C		B	D
3 <sup>rd</sup> only	C		A	D
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup>	C		A	C
1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup>	C		A	C
2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup>	C		B	D
Bases loaded	C		A	C

**Responsibility Priorities**

1. Fair/Foul
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## Little League Baseball and Softball Online

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### Rule 4.04

**1. League uses the continuous batting order and a player gets hurt, sick, or ejected while at-bat. What do we do now?**

Answer: The batter or runner who made the most recent out in that inning, or the runner who scored the most recent run in that inning, (whichever is more recent) takes the place of the injured/ill/ejected batter, assumes the count, and the game continues. If no outs or runs have been recorded in that inning, the batter who completed the final at-bat of the previous inning takes the place of the injured/ill/ejected batter. If the injury/illness/ejection occurs in the first inning, and no outs or runs have been recorded, the batter who is next in the lineup assumes the count and the game continues. However, the replacement batter would only be used in that lineup spot once. If the injured/ill/ejected player is unable to continue in the game, his/her spot is merely skipped over on each subsequent at-bat.

**2. League is using the CBO and a player is at bat, hits the ball and is hurt while running the bases. Who takes his place on the base?**

It is recommended that the last out of the previous inning is the player who is substituted to run for the injured player. Or you can even use the last out of that offensive inning. What you need to watch out for is getting in a situation where the offensive team needs a run and all of a sudden they need a runner and "they" select the team's fastest runner. Make it clean and in writing so there will never be any questions.

**3. League is using the CBO at the Junior/Senior/Big League level and wants to take its pitcher off the mound put him/her in the dugout for a rest and bring him/her back later because he/she is still in the line up. Can they do that?**

No, not really. While admittedly the player is still in the batting order, however, when they took the pitcher off the mound and moved him/her to the dugout they lost their chance to bring the pitcher back. The rule was written to keep the pitcher in the lineup both offensively and defensively.

Hope these help.

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## Little League Baseball and Softball Online

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### Rule 7.09

Rule 7.09 - It is interference by a batter or runner when - (i) in the judgment of the umpire, the base coach at third base, or first base, by touching or holding the runner, physically assists that runner in returning to or leaving third base or first base.

**Play** - Batter crushes a belt high fast ball and clears the centerfield fence for a home run. While circling the bases the 3rd base coach gives the home run hitter a congratulatory high five. Should the umpire call the runner out for touching the 3rd base coach?

**Answer:** As you can see by the wording above, it is NOT assisting the runner leaving third or returning to third, it is a happy moment and nothing should be done and certainly don't call the runner out.

**Play** - Runner on 3rd base with less than two outs; the batter skies one to deep left field, the base coach puts his/her hand on the runners back and gives a little push to the runner when the ball is touched. You are the umpire, what do you do now?

**Answer:** Call the runner out for the interference by the base coach.

**Play** - Runners on 1st and 3rd less than two outs and there is a base hit to the outfield. The runner on 3rd scores easily, but the runner coming from 1st is going to be a dead duck at home. The base coach at 3rd steps in front of the runner rounding 3rd to physically (with contact) hold him/her at 3rd base. The throw comes into 2nd base in attempt to get the batter-runner who is trying for a double. You are the umpire and you see all this happening, what do you do now?

**Answer:** The old delayed dead ball. You have seen the interference at 3rd base and you have that runner out, but you want to delay your call until you see if the defense is able to get an additional out at 2nd base. When all play has ended, call time and signal that the runner now at 3rd base is out and tell the world why he/she is out.

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# Follow the Bouncing Ball

The ballgame is proceeding with no problems. The pitcher winds up and throws a 44 foot pitch (or a 58 foot pitch on the 90 foot diamond.), the ball bouncing in front of the catcher. Lots of things can happen then, and lots of people have different ideas of the implications.

The Little League rule book says:

1. The batter swings and misses the bouncing ball. Ball is alive, umpire calls a strike. Rule 2.00, "Ball", "In Flight."
2. The batter does not swing at the bouncing ball, but it goes through the strike zone on the bounce. Ball is alive, umpire calls a ball. Rule 2.00, "Ball", "In Flight."
3. The batter does not swing at the bouncing ball, and it does not go through the strike zone. Ball is alive, umpire calls a ball. Rule 2.00, "Ball."
4. The pitch bounces and hits the batter. The ball is dead, and the umpire awards the batter first base. Rule 2.00, "Ball", "In Flight," 5.09 (a).
5. The batter swings and hits the bouncing ball. Ball is alive, play it as if it didn't bounce. Rule 2.00, "In Flight."
6. The Junior, Senior or Big League division batter swings and misses, strike three with first base empty or with two outs. The catcher catches the bounced pitch, but the batter can *STILL* attempt to reach first base on the "dropped" third strike. See Rule 2.00, "Ball", "In Flight" "(Because the pitch hit the ground, it is no longer "in flight" and therefore, no longer a "catch.")"
7. The pitcher accidentally throws the ball straight down; it hits the ground and dribbles to a stop *BEFORE* crossing the foul line. The umpire calls "time" and on the 60 ft., calls Illegal pitch (or on the 90 foot diamond with runners on, Balk). See Rule 8.01(d).
8. The pitcher accidentally throws the ball straight down; it hits the ground and dribbles to a stop *AFTER* crossing the foul line. Ball is alive, umpire calls a ball. See rule 8.01(d).

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## Little League Baseball and Softball Online

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# Infield Fly? Easy!

If any rule will cause problems, it's the Infield Fly Rule. There are so many wrong interpretations, misunderstandings, etc. with this rule. In the first place, the only place to check the definition of the rule is in the Little League Rule book. Chat rooms, Wikipedia, etc. can all be crazy with their interpretations. OK, here we go.....

If there are runners on first and second, or first, second and third with less than two out, there is an infield fly possibility.

If the batter then hits a fair fly ball (not a line drive or bunt) that COULD be caught by a defensive player stationed in the infield with ORDINARY EFFORT, an Infield Fly should be called. Keep in mind, "ordinary effort" can be very different between a 9-year-old and an 18-year-old. One way to think of it is, "Is the fielder comfortable under the ball?" If so, you've got ordinary effort. (Jim Evans gets the credit for that one!)

The umpire must watch the ball and the fielders, and decide if the batted ball qualifies as an infield fly. If so, when the ball reaches the apex of its flight, in other words, its highest point, the umpire should point at the ball, and holler, "Infield fly, the batter's out!" If the ball is close to the foul line, say "Infield fly, if fair!" (Either/any umpire can call it.) The umpires have to watch the ball, watch the reaction of the fielders, back and forth until the ball is at the apex, then make a decision.

As soon as the umpire says "Infield fly", the batter is out AND THE FORCE IS REMOVED FROM THE RUNNERS. Of course, that's the purpose of the rule, to keep the defense from getting a cheap double play. THE RUNNERS DO NOT HAVE TO RUN if the umpire says "Infield fly, the batter's out!"

Now, the call of "Infield fly" only affects the batter-runner....the batter-runner is immediately out which removes the force, REGARDLESS of whether the ball is caught or not. The other runners are subject to the rules regarding tagging up just as if the ball had been hit into the outfield. If it's caught, they must tag up before they advance. But if it's not caught, they do not have to tag.

**Don't think of the "Infield fly" call as a "catch" because it's not. The ball has just been ruled an Infield Fly which makes the batter-runner out instantly, but the ball may or may not be caught. Whether it's caught or not does NOT affect the Infield Fly call. Check Rule 2.00, Catch definition. This applies to an infield fly situation, too.**

Also remember a few other things:

**The ball stays alive during an Infield Fly play. It's not dead, so runners off base may be tagged, etc.**



An infield fly is a fair fly ball which **CAN** be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort. That doesn't mean it **HAS** to be caught by an infielder. Imagine a shortstop playing deep, backing up into the outfield grass to catch a fly with, in the ump's judgment, ordinary effort. The umpire points up and calls "Infield fly, the batter is out!" But the left fielder charges in, and calls him off and catches the ball.....or doesn't catch it, either way. That is **STILL** an infield fly, by definition.

If the umpire calls "Infield fly, the batter's out!", or "Infield fly, if fair!" and the ball drops **untouched and rolls foul**; it is **NOT** an infield fly....just a foul ball. If it lands **untouched** foul, and **rolls fair**, it's an infield fly.

Last but not least, don't get confused with Rule 6.05k, the intentional drop. If you read that rule, you will see the differences between it and an infield fly. The infield fly rule always takes precedence. (Besides, you'll almost never see these kids intentionally drop a fly ball, they have a hard enough time catching them!)

**Good luck!**

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