LITTLE LEAGUE®
BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL

2-UMPIRE
MECHANICS CLINIC
PARTICIPANT MANUAL
IMPORTANT NOTE

This publication has been written to assist the Little League Volunteer Umpire to better understand how to apply the proper mechanics of umpiring.

PLEASE NOTE: ANY PLACE IN THIS PUBLICATION WHERE THE TERMS HE, HIM, HIS AND MEN ARE USED, WE ARE ALSO REFERRING TO SHE, HER, AND WOMEN.

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APRIL 2015

15-01-13 2-Umpire Mechanics Participant Manual
**AGENDA**

*Subject to Change*

**Friday, September 18, 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>6:55 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umpire Uniforms/Equipment</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>7:05 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre- and Post-Game Conferences</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate Conference</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Player Equipment Inspection</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game Management</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>8:20 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Six Overview</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>8:50 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Saturday, September 19, 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td>7:15 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Six/Go-Stop-Call It</td>
<td>Field #4</td>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slot</td>
<td>Field #4</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pivot</td>
<td>Field #4</td>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Six/Go-Stop-Call It</td>
<td>Field #4</td>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td>12:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cage Mechanics</td>
<td>Batting Cages</td>
<td>1:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate Mechanics</td>
<td>Field #5</td>
<td>2:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Mechanics</td>
<td>Field #4</td>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td>5:45 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Six/Go-Stop-Call It</td>
<td>Field #2</td>
<td>6:40 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recap</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>7:15 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q &amp; A</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>7:45 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Little League® Baseball and Softball
## 2-Umpire Mechanics Clinic

Little League International  
Williamsport, Pennsylvania  
September 18 - 20, 2015

## AGENDA

*Subject to Change*

### Sunday, September 20, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td>7:15 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Six/Go-Stop-Call It</td>
<td>Field #2</td>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cage Mechanics</td>
<td>Batting Cages</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate/Base Mechanics</td>
<td>Field #4</td>
<td>9:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-70- &amp; 90-foot Diamond</td>
<td>Field #2</td>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Six/Go-Stop-Call It</td>
<td>Field #2</td>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation/Final Thoughts</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>12:00 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Classroom Session #1
Umpire Uniforms

Notes
Additional Information

Of utmost importance to the novice, as well as the experienced umpire, is his or her uniform and equipment. Appearance is a solid attribute to good umpiring. The well-groomed umpire creates an atmosphere of respect and dignity. As of the printing of this publication, Little League has no official, approved umpire uniform. It is up to each local league to decide what their uniform color will be. Whatever the color, all the umpires doing that game should have the same color shirt and pants on. The Little League patch should be affixed to the upper left sleeve of the shirt. A patch from another baseball or softball organization is not appropriate in a Little League game. It is recommended that slacks be either heather of charcoal gray. Caps should be either navy blue or black. To complete the uniform, a black belt, black or black with white accent shoes and black socks should be worn.

It is very important to shine your shoes before every game and to keep both your uniform and equipment immaculately clean. Sloppy dress will give the impression of sloppy work. Your uniform is a reflection of the pride you demonstrate in your umpiring. Proper fit and cleanliness are essential. Generally, the first impression people have of the umpire is his personal appearance. Your decorum is something you can control.

An umpire should have a copy of the rulebook in his gear bag to reference before and after the game. It should not be with you when you walk on to the field.
Classroom Session #2
Umpire Equipment (Plate Gear)

Notes
Classroom Session #2
Umpire Equipment (Plate Gear)

Additional Information

Standard equipment should include plate shoes with instep protector and box toe (no metal cleats), ball and strike indicator, small broom or brush for cleaning home plate, chest protector, protective cup, shin guards and face mask with dangling throat protector. Additionally, ball bags should be either navy blue or black. Your ball and strike indicator was designed for your left hand not your right, and shin guards should always be worn under your slacks.
Classroom Session #3
Pre- and Post-game Conferences

Notes
Classroom Session #3  
Pre- and Post-game Conferences

Additional Information

WORKING WITH AN INEXPERIENCED PARTNER

The pre-game conference, between the veteran umpire and the rookie, should include a discussion of what type of game you like: by the book, common sense, quiet-and-efficient, etc. Relax him with some anecdotes from your career. Make him understand that you and he are a team and that you have confidence in his ability to do the job.

A few maneuvers that may help you see your way through a game. First, before every pitch, catch your partner’s eye. If he’s in the wrong position, subtly move him. (Ideally, you discussed that on the way to the game.) Second, communicate out loud, obviously, firmly: “I’ve got third,” “Take it,” “That one’s mine.” All good umpires do that anyway. Third, don’t talk with him between half-innings. Such meetings fuel everyone’s inherent paranoia, especially if you and he confer after he’s made an unpopular call.

Finally, protect him during rhubarbs. An umpire may be entirely right on a call, however because of the situation, he may take a lot of heat. One undeniable law of umpiring is that the amount of heat you take is in inverse proportion to how good you were on the call. In other words, if you were very good, you won’t take much abuse. If you were very bad, you may grow gray listening.

After the game, the new umpire yearns to know what happened and why on certain plays and how he did. Tell him, start with all the calls he got right. Then, with honesty, and understanding, tell him what he did wrong in a positive manner. If a real umpire lurks somewhere beneath the uniform, he won’t resent your constructive criticism.

PRE-GAME CONFERENCE WITH YOUR CREW

Everyone knows that umpires should have a good pre-game conference so each will know his responsibilities. Failing to have a solid pre-game can lead to major problems.

FAIR/FOUL COVERAGE

Calling fair/foul, from home to first and home to third, up to and touching the bag and a bounding ball over the bag should always be called by the plate umpire. With the bases empty, down the line over and past the base at first, the base umpire will have the responsibility for this call, which should and must be discussed at your pre-game conference with your partner. In a two-umpire crew with runners on base, the plate umpire has both foul lines from home to the fence.
TAG-UPS/TOUCHES

The base umpire has all tag-ups and touches at first and second base. The plate umpire has all tag-ups and touches at third base and home plate. The base umpire follows the batter-runner all the way to third base.

FLY BALLS TO OUTFIELD

A. The plate umpire takes all fly balls and/or line drives on a 60-foot diamond.
B. If the base umpire goes out to rule fair/foul, catch/no catch, on a trouble ball, the plate umpire must be prepared to cover all the bases. However, the practice of the base umpire going out on any fly ball is not recommended on 60-foot diamonds.

BATTED BALL HITS BATTER

The field umpire should yell, “TIME” when he sees that occur. For the ball is either foul (the ball hit the batter while in the box) or fair (the ball hit the batter when out of the box and he’s out). In either case, the ball is dead immediately. Signaling “TIME” allows the crew to discuss whether or not the batter was in or out of the box.

CHECKED SWING

When in doubt the plate umpire should check with the base umpire before making his decision. However, if a call is made of “ball,” the plate umpire may still go to the base umpire for help if he deems it necessary (highly recommended). The plate umpire steps to the side of the catcher and points to the base umpire with his left hand when he wants help on a checked swing (half-swing). The base umpire raises his arm in the strike signal if he did swing and gives the safe signal to show no swing. There should also be verbal communications. The plate umpire asks “Did he go?”, the base umpire says “Yes, he did,” or “No, he didn’t go.” If the base umpire responds “Yes, he did,” the plate umpire will signal a strike and verbalize, “Then it’s a strike,” and give the count. The plate umpire may - on his own volition - ask for help from the appropriate base umpire if in doubt on a checked swing. (If the pitch was called a strike there is no appeal.) Always make sure that your mechanics for checking with your partner on a check swing are different from any other mechanic. Secret signals between umpires is not appropriate.

GETTING HELP

If you get blocked out of a play or you were not in position to make the call, get help from your partner. The umpire making the decision may ask another umpire for information before making a final decision. No umpire shall criticize, seek to reverse or interfere with another umpire’s decision unless asked to do so by the umpire making it. (See Section 9.02(c) Rule Book.) Remember, you have certain responsibilities. Do not get into the habit of asking for help on each and every close play. We don’t want to see NFL official huddles on the ball field.
Classroom Session #4
Plate Meeting

Notes
Classroom Session #5
Player Equipment Inspection

Notes
Cage Mechanics
Calling Balls and Strikes

Though all phases of umpiring are important, a prospective umpire must prove his ability to call balls and strikes if he is to excel and build a solid reputation as the complete umpire. Good judgment is naturally a prerequisite for accomplishing this task. Judgment alone, however, will not suffice. One must understand the many facets of working the plate. These include a clear understanding of the strike zone, the importance of proper positioning, and the critical need for developing effective mechanical techniques.

THE SLOT

Assume a position behind the catcher looking between the catcher and the batter; you must be able to clearly see the pitcher, the entire plate and the batter’s knees. To see all of those elements, it is important to move into “the slot” — that area between the catcher and the batter. The farther you are into the slot, the better you will see the strike zone. Two additional factors have tremendous impact on your view of the strike zone: head height and stability. Your head should be positioned so the bottom of your chin is no lower than the top of the catcher’s helmet. If you work with your head lower, your view of the knee-high pitch at or near the outside corner of the plate will be restricted. The head is straight ahead looking at the pitcher. Your ear closest to the catcher should be just to the outside of the catcher’s shoulder. These are good starting positions. From the moment the pitcher releases a pitch until the ball arrives in the catcher’s glove, your head should remain absolutely still. If your head moves at all, your view of the strike zone will be blurred and your judgment will be inconsistent.

Assume your stance when the pitcher is about to release the ball. You’ll view the pitch from between the batter and catcher. Don’t go down too early, for you will put unnecessary strain on your muscles. Relaxation between pitches is very important. Many umpires wear themselves out for the late innings by staying in a set position for too long a period of time. The upper body should remain in an almost upright position.

It is important to note that you do not put a hand on the catcher or position yourself against the catcher. Your hands should be kept in front of you. You may have one arm locked on your thigh and the other hang in front of you or have both arms locked on your thighs. Don’t put your hands over your shin guards at the knees or put them on the catcher. This practice always looks bad to the spectators.

LEARNING TO DEAL WITH FLINCHING

Flinching is usually an erratic problem. It can irritate the umpire far more than it will affect his umpiring. It’s doubtful that flinching will make you miss pitches, but the umpire also is concerned and rightly so with his image, if noticed by the fans or players.

Remedies include forcing yourself to wait as long as you can before getting into your stance. This shortens the time of stressful concentration. Also rest your eyes for a fraction of a second shortly before the pitch. Be sure to give yourself time to adjust for the upcoming pitch. It’s a matter of timing, flinching usually does not stay with you for long.

Perhaps one reason for flinching is subconscious or even a conscious lack of confidence in the catcher.
THE SLOT (SIDE VIEW)

Forward body tilt

Proper head height

Drop Foot

Slot Foot

HEEL TOE

HEEL TOE
THE SLOT (FRONT VIEW)

PROPER HEAD POSITION IS CONTROLLED BY
1. Width of stance
2. Amount of squat
3. Forward body tilt
THE SLOT (TOP VIEW)

Proper use of protective equipment facing front

Good view of the outside corner

Right arm locked on thigh

Good clearance from the catcher
PLATE MECHANICS

THE PLATE UMPIRE AT WORK

When working behind the plate or on the bases, use the indicator in your left hand. A little bit of experimentation will show that it was not made for the right. Use of the indicator in the left hand frees the right for use in calling strikes. It is very difficult to change the indicator with the right hand and there is danger of throwing it away while calling pitches.

The mask is removed as often as possible when the plate umpire is not actually engaged in calling balls and strikes. The left hand is used in removing the mask, shift the indicator so the thumb is free. Grasp the mask so that the thumb is at the side of or under the jaw and the index and middle finger are gripping the frame. Remove the mask by lifting out first, then up. By using this method, you can be sure that your cap will remain on your head. By keeping the mask in your left hand you will avoid the danger of hitting a player with it or throwing it while calling a runner out.

In calling a batted ball hit down the baseline, the plate umpire should remove his mask as soon as the ball is hit. Hustle up the baseline as far as possible (30/45 foot line is recommended). Be sure to stop before it is time to make your decision. On a hard hit ball the umpire may not have time to remove his mask or get to the baseline. Do the best you can.

The plate umpire should make the decision on the batter running inside/outside the three-foot line and interfering with the first baseman taking the throw. This play could occur when a ball is bunted, there is a slow roller down the first baseline, or there is an uncaught third strike. Therefore, he should be in good position while the base umpire probably will not.

As the plate umpire, be sure to give the batter a chance to get set in the box before the pitcher pitches the ball. If the pitcher begins his motion while the batter is not ready and it is unintentional, call “Time.” If he does it on purpose, call “Time” and warn him. Each such pitch after a warning will result in an illegal pitch being called in Majors and below (with runners or bases empty) and a balk (Intermediate (50-70) Division/JR/SR/BG Baseball only) with the bases occupied. A quick pitch may be called without warning, but it is good mechanics to stop play the first time because of possible physical danger.

Under normal conditions, the plate umpire will have to go to third base to cover a play anytime a runner goes from first to third on a batted ball. He should go down the line in foul territory, then cross into fair territory and set up in front of the cut out when a play is imminent (fielder, ball, and runner converge). If there is an overthrow, the umpire (remaining in fair territory) must quickly move to a position in front of home plate so he can call the play.

The plate umpire should leave his place behind the catcher on every batted ball. He should come out in front of the plate so he can get a better view of the plays taking place on the field. If there is a possible play at home, the plate umpire will need to move into position for the best possible view of the play.

BRUSHING THE PLATE

Every gesture and motion of the umpire means something. There is even a correct way to dust the plate. The umpire should assume a position (as a courtesy to the fans) with his back to the
pitcher’s mound. The feet should be spread apart about the width of the shoulders. Bend at both the knees and hips. Brush with a vigorous motion toward and away from the umpire. The plate should be brushed before each half inning and as needed during play. Above all, do not allow the catcher (or other players) to brush the plate with hand or glove. Ask him to request that you do the brushing.

**BETWEEN INNINGS**

The first duty of both umpires between innings is to keep the players hustling on and off the field. He will then stay on that side of the plate to be out of the player congestion which may occur on the side of the field of the team coming to bat. A good spot to stand is just off the foul line, even with the plate. While at that spot, the umpire should attend such duties as counting warm-up pitches, replenishing his ball supply, inspecting the baseballs in his ball bag, and seeing that there is no equipment such as gloves or bats left on the field. The umpire should never lay his equipment on the ground between innings. (i.e., mask, chest protector, etc.)
BASE MECHANICS

The same as working the plate, remember, PAUSE, READ and REACT!!—on every play. Chest to the ball...watch the ball/glance at the runner(s). Umpire must READ (1) Ball, (2) Fielder, (3) Runner(s) and (4) Partner.

Before calling any play, it is absolutely necessary for you to stop and get set. Do this before the play happens. Never call a play when you are running to get into position; stop and get set, this way your eyes will not be moving and you will take a better picture of the play.

In getting set, bend at the knees and hips. Try to keep your upper body straight from the waist up. If you will put your hands on your knees it will help maintain balance as well as lock you into position. If possible, you should start all your calls from this set position.

As the game begins, the base umpire should hustle from the home plate area down the first base line to his between innings position. The between innings position is down the first baseline in the outfield grass in fair territory. All umpires should avoid visiting with anyone between innings unless there is a problem between umpires which needs attention.

In getting into position at first base with no runners on base, the umpire should be about ten to fifteen feet behind the first baseman. Never allow the fielder to stand behind you. Another important point is on every pitch be in the set (hands on knees) position. When positioning yourself before the play, place your hands on your knees, thumbs on the inside, locked in to the set position; or let your arms hang loose at your sides. Do not fold your arms on your chest as this makes you look like you are loafing or bored.

When the ball is hit to the infield, with no runners on base, the umpire should assume a position to first base and then to the fielder making the throw, so that a right angle (90-degree angle) would be formed. (See Figure 1.) Don’t be lazy; hustle out there, maintain your original distance away from the base so you will have a good view of the fielder reaching for a high throw. If the ball is hit to the third baseman, run toward him until you have your angle. Do the same toward shortstop. When a ball is hit to the second baseman’s right, move into fair territory so the angle will be as close to ninety degrees as possible. If the ball is hit to the second baseman’s left or the first baseman, do your very best to establish an angle while in fair territory. Only on rare occasions will you be making a call in foul territory. Be sure to stay out of the runner’s path even though it means distorting the angle slightly. Be sure to get set to call the play. Very important as you move to your position and get set, (keep your eyes on the ball) keep watching as the fielder throws the ball. Be sure to judge the quality of the throw. Take your eyes from the ball as it passes the mound and focus your attention on the base. Watch the runner tag the bag and the fielder’s foot to make sure he keeps contact. Listen for the sound of the ball as it hits the first baseman’s glove. Remember, you judge the runner safe or out when the first baseman has secure possession, not when the ball first reaches him when he makes a jugged catch. To prevent calling the play to quickly, you must remember to use your eyes properly. After the play is complete, pause (develop the picture of the play), then call it. Practice will aid you in adapting and keeping the proper timing interval between the play and the call. TIMING, TIMING, TIMING. If the throw goes through the first baseman, don’t make a call as there is not a play to be called.
THE PIVOT AT FIRST BASE IS SO IMPORTANT THAT IT MERITS SPECIAL DISCUSSION

With no runners on, a ball hit through the infield or a fly ball to the outfield which doesn’t require that the base umpire go out, you should take a pivot across the baseline into the infield to get into better position to follow the action. (See Figure 2) As the ball is batted, run toward a spot on the baseline between first and second base which is approximately the same distance from the base as the between pitches position of the first baseman. Time your movement so that you will execute your pivot when the batter-runner is ten (10) to three (3) feet away from touching first base. The pivot is executed across the baseline. The movement should be timed so that the left foot is planted just after reaching the baseline. The umpire pivots on the left foot so that he is watching first base as he executes his turn to the left. Take your eyes off the ball as you approach your pivot spot and watch for the batter-runner touching first and that there is no obstruction on the first baseman and then pick up the ball again while glancing at the batter-runner to see if he/she is advancing or not.

Do not do anything to give away the fact that the runner has missed a base. When you have entered the infield, move in either direction to call a play. You will find that it is easy to beat a runner to second base from this position. Some umpires allow the runner to pass in front of them. That umpire will then be behind the runner at second base. It is very difficult to call the play from behind the runner.

There are times when the base umpire should go into the outfield to rule on certain trouble ball situations. The umpires must reach an agreement so that they will know their responsibilities (pre-game conference). Some umpires agree that the base umpire will go out when he senses trouble on any fly ball. Rule of thumb: On a 60-foot diamond, the base umpire will not go out on any fly ball.

The plate umpire should watch the base umpire, if he goes out, the plate umpire covers for him on the bases. If the base umpire stays in, the plate umpire must make the decision on fly balls, while the base umpire follows the batter-runner to second and third base.

With a runner or runners on base, the base umpire should position himself on the outside edge of the infield behind the infielders. His position depends upon which base or bases are occupied. Examples: With a runner on first, he should be stationed behind the second baseman on the first base side of second base. With a runner on first and second, second only, second and third, third only, or first, second and third, he should position himself behind the shortstop on the third base side of second base. (See Figure 3 & 4) From those positions with any ball hit through the infield or a fly ball to the outfield, he should move into the infield grass so that he will be able to see the ball, runner and the bases from this position.

Never position yourself on the infield in a 60-foot diamond before the pitch.

HELPFUL HINTS WHEN WORKING THE BASES:
1. Always know where the ball is.
2. Never make a call on the move, get set and wait until the play is over before you make the call.
3. How close you want to be to a developing play depends on several variables, including: the type of play, your mobility, your peripheral vision. Begin by moving to a position 9 to 12 feet from a tag play; 12 to 15 feet from a force play. As you gain experience, adjust those distances to fit your own ability.

4. Hustle to be in the best position to make all of your calls.

The following positions are for a two-umpire system. For more information, see the diagrams listed in the Little League 60-foot Diamond Field Mechanics Manual.
When the ball is hit to the infield, the umpire should assume a position to first base and then to the fielder making the throw such that a right angle (90 degrees) is formed. Don't be lazy; hustle out there, maintain your original distance away from the base (10-12 feet) so you will have a good view of the fielder reaching for a high throw. If the ball is hit to the third baseman, run towards him until you have your angle. Do the same toward the shortstop. When a ball is hit to the second baseman's right, move into fair territory so the angle will be as close to ninety degrees as possible. If the ball is hit to the second baseman's left or the first baseman, do your very best to establish an angle while in fair territory. Only on rare occasions will you be making a call in foul territory. Be sure to stay out of the runner's path even though it means distorting the angle slightly.
THE PIVOT

The three-step movement used by the base umpire as he moves into the infield from Position A. When a batted ball is hit to the outfield, the base umpire will pivot to observe the batter-runner’s touch of first base, anticipating the batter-runner’s advance toward second. A proper pivot occurs on the infield grass, one or two steps from the edge of the first base cutout; it includes planting the left foot, turning the body counter-clockwise (to the left) on the right foot as the batter-runner reaches first base, and stepping briskly with the left foot towards second base, while reading the play, as the batter-runner continues around first.
RUNNERS ON BASE
RUNNER ON FIRST BASE ONLY

With a runner on 1st base only, the base umpire will position him/herself midway between the 1st and 2nd base bag approximately 25 to no more than 35 feet from the 1st base bag. The umpire’s body should be square to the front edge of home plate. From this position he will be in a good starting position for help on half-swings and for checking to see if the runner leaves early. This initial positioning with a runner on 1st base only is very important, and umpires should make sure that they are not too deep towards the outfield or too far to the first base side so as to be blocked from seeing the plate by the second baseman. If the umpire is positioned as described in the previous sentence, he will be in a good starting position for the runner leaving early as well as for double plays.
RUNNERS ON BASE
RUNNERS ON SECOND OR THIRD OR BASES FULL

With a runner on either second or third base (no matter whether a runner is on first or not), position yourself two to three steps behind the shortstop and two to three steps off of the shortstop’s left shoulder. Never more than 30 feet from 2nd base and never closer than 15 to 20 feet to 2nd base. From this location you will be able to easily get into position for any play on a lead runner. From this position, with any ball hit through the infield or a fly ball to the outfield, you should move into the infield grass so that you will be able to see the ball, runner, and bases. Note that with runners on base, the base umpire should make all of the calls on all of the bases (including 3rd base). The plate umpire may be called upon for assistance on a close play but it should be your call.
TIMING AND PROPER MECHANICS

Timing and mechanics are very important in umpiring.

TIMING

Timing can best be described as the proper use of your eyes. Each player and fan watches the play then looks to the umpire to see his or her call. If the call is made too soon, the fan is sure to know. It is impossible for the umpire to call a play as it is happening without guessing what is going to happen, before it does. Anticipating the call is one of the umpire’s worst mistakes. If each umpire were to analyze each questionable call, that umpire would realize that poor timing was the cause of the poor call.

Hesitation, in calling plays, is just as bad as calling them too soon. If you wait too long, people will think you can’t make up your mind. Many major league umpires seem to take a long time in calling plays. They call all plays with this same timing so they are not suspected of guessing. Practice your timing. You owe it to yourself to be at your best in this phase of umpiring. Proper use of your eyes promotes good timing.

BALLS AND STRIKES

In calling balls and strikes, watch the ball as it crosses the plate. Track the ball all the way to the catcher’s glove. Make your decision after the ball crosses the plate, and above all do not call the pitch until the catcher has caught the ball. It is very embarrassing to call the pitch and then have the batter swing at it. Above all, don’t anticipate.

Practice in calling the pitches with proper timing will help your judgment. Again the proper use of your eyes will improve your plate work. Deciding what the pitch will be before it crosses the plate will result in guessing. In calling strikes, a vigorous motion of the right hand is used, while no signal is given in calling balls. It is important that the strike motion be decisive and clear to everyone. The use of a decisive strike signal can help an umpire to convince the fans of his competence. Some umpires call balls so that they can be heard by both dugouts and strikes loudly so the stands can hear the call. Others call strikes loud, but not balls. There is a definite advantage to calling both balls and strikes loudly. If no voice signal is used in calling balls, the timing factor will change. Players and fans will also get the idea that the umpire missed a strike call because of his hesitancy.

In calling balls and strikes, the difference in tone should be audible to the stands. A good system is using a deep snappy voice on balls and a higher voice with longer sound on strikes. Strike three, ball four and pitches close to the edge of the strike zone should be more emphatic than the rest. There is a difference in being emphatic and being a showboat. When the umpire gives the ball strike count is at their discretion. However, the umpire should give the count prior to every pitch when there are three balls or two strikes. The balls are indicated with the fingers of the left hand, while the strikes are indicated by the right. Never use your two closed fists to indicate a full count, use the correct number of fingers.

If the batter swings at a pitch, the strike motion should be given, but no audible sound. On a half swing situation, if the batter strikes at the pitch, point at the batter with the hand that is on the same side as the batter and verbalize, “Yes, he did!” then drop the arm and signal a
swinging strike. If you adjudge that the batter didn’t swing, verbalize, “Ball. He didn’t go.” It is a mistake to say “No. He didn’t go.”

Call’em, don’t explain’em. Your ball and strike calls are not to be routinely explained such as “ball, low,” “ball, inside,” or “strike, caught the corner.” If the catcher asks where a certain pitch was, tell him. The catcher should not ask repeatedly, “Where was the pitch?” If he does, you should tell him that you’re not going to explain every pitch to him. Agree with the catcher if he should ask, for example, “Was it low?” Answer, “Yes,” without comment.

A batter from time to time will inquire if what he swung at and missed was a strike. Give him the information he asks for, such as, “No, I thought it was a little high,” if that is what you thought. Make it short and don’t editorialize.
THE SAFE CALL

The umpire begins by bringing his/her arms straight up, from his hands on knees set position to a position straight out in front of his/her chest and then brings them straight out to the side. The palms should remain down throughout the motion. The hands should be kept at shoulder level. The hands should be pointed and in a straight line with the arms with no bend at the wrist.

With every safe call the umpire should give the safe sign and say loudly and clearly “SAFE.” Terms such as “YOU’RE IN THERE” and “NO, NO” should not be used. Do not call the runner safe unless there is an actual play on him. If there is an actual play, make the call, but again, do not demonstrate unless it is close. When there is a play and the umpire doesn’t make a call, it looks as if he wasn’t watching the play.

CATCH OR NO CATCH

If the catch is made, a raised arm with closed fist is the only needed sign. No sign is needed when the batted ball is not caught except in a case of doubt as to whether it hit the ground first or was legally caught. If the ball is not caught, give the safe motion with a couple of waves of the arms. Say “NO CATCH” rather than “SAFE,” as the fact that the catch was not made does not insure the batter being safe.
FAIR AND FOUL CALLS

When the ball is foul, raise your hands to shoulder height with palms facing forward and fingers together while simultaneously verbalizing in a loud and clear voice “Foul!” Next, drop your hands to your sides and then sharply point in the direction of foul territory. If the ball is fair, merely point toward fair territory. Signal vigorously several times if the players are in doubt or if the call is close. If some unusual play happens, where the ball is “Fair,” but everyone assumes its “Foul,” do not yell “Fair!” Continue to point toward fair territory. You never verbalize “Fair ball.”

THE OUT CALL

A good umpire always develops a rhythm and signal on every out call. The closer the play, the more vigorous may be the signal of the umpire. On obvious plays do not demonstrate, but make the call. In all out calls the umpire should give the out signal and say loudly and clearly “OUT” or “HE’S OUT.”
TIME CALL

When the umpire calls time the ball is dead. The umpire should raise both hands to shoulder-height while calling loudly and clearly “TIME.”

NOTE: Know How and When to Call Time Out.

Don’t overdo time-outs. Let them play unless there is a valid reason for calling “Time.” Don’t call time too quickly when it would prevent the completion of play. Don’t grant a player’s request for time out unless he has a bona fide reason. For instance, if a relay-man wants “Time” so he can throw the ball to the pitcher, don’t grant it. The offensive team has a right to any error made on the throw. An injury is not an automatic time-out. As soon as the play is completed call “Time.”

FOUL TIP

When a foul tip is legally caught, the umpire should give a foul tip signal. The signal is to brush the left hand over the top of the right hand in a 45-degree angle, drop the arms and signal a swinging strike. Most of the foul tips can’t be detected at a distance. If the foul tip is not caught it becomes a foul ball. (Use foul signal)
PROPER MECHANICS ARE VERY IMPORTANT

Good mechanics will go a long way in creating a good impression. But remember that there are basic principles of umpiring and that sometimes even the professionals, due to their experience or the fact they are working 4-umpire crews, may not follow the basics a less experienced umpire should follow. Also, don’t learn to umpire by using the guru theory. Develop a mental check list similar to what a pilot might use, then when you find yourself getting off track you can return to that check list and correct your problem.

One of the most profitable means of practice is with the use of a full-length mirror. Study your own actions from as many angles as possible.
**Little League® Baseball and Softball**  
2-Umpire Mechanics Clinic Evaluation  
September 18-20, 2015

**Instructions:**  
- For questions 1-5, please use the following rating scale:  
  
  1 = strongly disagree  
  10 = strongly agree  

- Please circle the appropriate rating to indicate to what degree you agree with each statement.  
- Please provide comments to explain your rating.

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<th>Rating</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
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<td>1. I was engaged with what was going on during the clinic.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>Comments:</td>
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</table>

| 2. The information in this clinic is relevant and applicable. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | Comments: |

| 3. I believe it will be worthwhile to apply what I learned. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | Comments: |

| 4. I feel confident about applying what I learned. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | Comments: |

| 5. I will recommend this program to others. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | Comments: |
Little League® Baseball and Softball
2-Umpire Mechanics Clinic Evaluation

Instructions:
• For questions 6-8, please use the following rating scale:

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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
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<td>Very high level</td>
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• Please circle the appropriate rating before the training and now (after the training).
• Please provide comments to explain your ratings.

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<th>After the Program</th>
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<td>6. Assess a play and use the required mechanics to make calls as a Base Umpire.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>Comments:</td>
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<td>7. Assess a play and use the required mechanics to make calls as a Plate Umpire.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Establish a consistent strike zone for calling balls and strikes by using the required mechanics.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
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<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
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9. How can this clinic be improved?

10. Please share any additional comments you may have.