

Kimball's List of Umpire Fundamentals:

Things you need to know and be able to do before going on the field.

- ❑ Look and act like an umpire who deserves respect. Your hard work, rule knowledge, and commitment will command respect.
- ❑ Have "**slow timing**" that allows for you to witness the play in a relaxed manner, briefly run it again in your mind, and make the call.
- ❑ Watch the ball and glance at the runners. It's about concentration and focus.
- ❑ One runner, stay with the runner; Two or more runners split the difference. Sometimes you should be close, other times you cannot be close. Know the difference!
- ❑ Be ready to move. Just like a defensive player, have the weight on the balls of your feet when action may be about to occur.
- ❑ Baseball somewhat unlike other games requires its arbiters to make and announce a decision when rule infractions. Doing nothing casts doubt on your abilities.
- ❑ Don't take any call for granted. A surprise of any kind will mess up your timing and you are capable of kicking the play.
- ❑ NEVER forget that you are part of an umpiring crew. NEVER express negative remarks about your partner to game participants. Support (moral & active) for your fellow umpire will help him and the game in general.
- ❑ Have a quality and thorough pre-game conference. Know how your team is going to carry out its duties.
- ❑ Do your job and only your job. You have enough to do without getting involved in other people's business.
- ❑ Evaluate your own performance after each game. Were you ever out of position? Have poor timing? Your judgment and mechanics will not improve unless you reflect on your work.
- ❑ Learn from your partners' mistakes. Be a good partner and offer "food for thought" as appropriate.
- ❑ Be a positive role model for players, coaches, and fellow umpires.
- ❑ Have fun! Have the desire to be a great umpire. Take advantage of the opportunity to exercise and interact with tomorrow's leaders.
- Sports officiating is a very humbling activity! As soon as you think you can do it all, you will be brought back to Earth.
- ❑ Be confident, use crisp/proper mechanics, hustle and keep the game moving. The rulebook requires it.

Umpiring Commentary (Some do's and don'ts)

- Set high expectations! Work to please yourself and demonstrate confidence in your abilities. By doing so, you will earn respect and the next umpire that works that team's games will be more believable. The effort and performance of the last umpire crew can make it easy or difficult for the next crew.
- Keep the ball alive. Baseball is the greatest of the ball sports because the ball is alive even during times of little action. Rules govern what everyone must do during live ball situations.
- If the ball is alive, watch it closely – DO NOT look away! Don't rest until time is out! Sweeping the plate is a good time to take a deep breath and mentally gear up for the next chunk of time that you will be focused.
- In the B & C positions, square your body to both the plate and the pitcher. In the "A" position, be square to the plate for check swings and pitched/batted balls striking the batter
- Look over your shoulder with a runner on 2nd or runners on 1st and 2nd base when the pitcher commits to home. It will help you with one of the game's most difficult and important calls—the steal of third.
- Keep yourself busy out there. It is much easier to focus when you have that inner mental and physical energy. There is plenty to do. Be a hawk, but know when to interrupt play. Often it is better for your board interpreter/secretary to communicate with the school/coach than you being "the enforcer".
- Use your loud voice, "Did he go?," when you signal ask your partner to rule on a check swing.

- Plate men run up the baselines one-third or half the way with no runners on base and then run back to your position, stop, put on your mask, communicate with your partner(s), and take your position.
 - Practice your calls and stances (and putting on your mask) in front of a mirror.
 - If you ask to see the ball on a tag play, you'd better be calling an "out".
 - Have real slow timing on tag plays! See the ball, the possession by the fielder, the tag, and the voluntary release of the ball.
 - Have slow timing when judging the catch of the batted ball. Often times by seeing it all and having slow timing, you can go by the player's reaction if you have to guess. Yes, guessing, rather I should say experienced and educated guessing, is part of a two-man crew's job.
 - Dead heats at 1st base are outs. Close does not constitute safe! The runner must beat the ball to a base when forced and avoid being tagged. Outs are good for the game (and you!).
 - Umpiring is a lonely job, but you have the best seat in the stadium. Getting together 2-3 times between innings should be plenty.
 - Critique yourself after every game, not after every call! You need the confidence and positive energy to survive the game!
 - If you feel anxious as a play is unfolding, this emotion will effect your timing and lead to missed calls.
 - If a coach/spectator gets in your head, you cannot do your job to the best of your ability. Deal with the situation if necessary for the good of the game.
 - Use your voice and signals to communicate. Mechanics sometimes require both voice and signals, other times just one or the other.
 - Everyone makes mistakes! Whether or not you choose to learn from those mistakes is what matters most!
 - Catalog close plays at first in your mind so you have that continuum (easy out → less than a step → extremely close → banger/dead heat → close safe → easy safe) giving you something to compare too when you judge every close call in the future.
 - After calling a play, bounce out of that area to cover other runners at other bases or quickly return to your "home" position.
 - Be aware of obstruction and interference and know how to rule on them appropriately.
 - Have simple straightforward answers for players and coaches who ask about your calls and use rulebook language whenever possible.
 - You are only as good as your last call. Make sure that your last call(s) were good ones!
 - Coaches, Players and fans don't care about the last game you called just the one you're about to.
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- DO NOT bring attention to yourself. With each batter approaching the plate, communicate with your partner enough to do be prepared to do your job properly.
 - DO NOT cross your arms on safe calls.
 - DO NOT point to first when a batter gets his fourth ball. If he doesn't know enough to go there, he should stay at the plate longer. (Just kidding! Use your voice!)
 - DO NOT work the bases from the B & C positions as though you could be sitting on a stool and simply spin around to make calls.
 - DO NOT react to fan's comments verbally or physically. This is not always easy. If absolutely necessary, use the rulebook to remove crazed parents/fans.
 - DO NOT take your eyes off the pitcher when he has the ball.
 - DO NOT be too quick to rule on a batter being struck by a batted ball when you are the base umpire. Use slow timing to let the player help you make the call. It is tough to be positive to rule that any ball strikes a batter/runner.