



Dear GSL/USSSA Umpire,

With the approaching of our 2015 softball season, I would like to thank each of you for your commitment to GSL/USSSA softball. We are excited to continue on this endeavor and put to good use the wealth of softball and umpiring experience our association holds. Much of the future success of GSL/USSSA rides on our shoulders, the umpires. Softball is influenced by the standard of umpiring more so than any other sport. The unique role of the umpires in softball causes significant impact on the manner in which the game is played.

Good umpiring enhances the game as a spectacle, adds to the enjoyment and pleasure of players and spectators, and contributes to the safety of players. Poor umpiring detracts from the game as a spectacle, mars the enjoyment of participants, and can put the safety of the player at risk. While the plate umpire plays the leading role, umpiring is a team game. Teamwork is an essential factor in a good umpiring performance.

To the players, coaches, and spectators, the game in which they are participating is the most important game played that day. They look to the umpires to manage it accordingly. While this places great responsibility upon the umpire, it also provides one of the most exciting challenges in sport. That is, to take on a demanding and critical task and succeed!

It is meeting this challenge that provides people with the motive to be an umpire. Umpiring is not for everybody; it is only for those who like to take on challenges and to keep taking them on. Every softball game provides its own unique and special challenges. The importance of the role of the umpire cannot be overstated.

There are a great number of factors that make up a successful umpire. Though GSL/USSSA does not wish to have a "canned" approach regarding umpire preparation, we do wish to have common consistencies and expectations regarding all umpires. These consistencies that we would like all GSL/USSSA umpires knowledgeable and aware of have been outlined in this packet.

With these goals in mind, I wish you a superb and successful 2015 year of GSL/USSSA umpiring.

Regards,

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Section I – ETHICS, GSL PHILOSOPHY, and TECHNIQUES

GSL/USSSA ETHICS:

- Study and understand the rules of the game, observe the work of other umpires, and make an attempt to improve at all times.
- Know and master the mechanics of umpiring.
- Be prepared both physically and mentally to administer the game of softball in a professional manner at all times.
- Dress and maintain your appearance in a manner befitting the dignity of the Global Sports League and USSSA by wearing approved uniform items.
- Honor all contracts and assignments regardless of possible inconvenience or financial loss.
- Enforce the rules of the game being fair and unbiased in all your decisions. Render the rules without regard to the score or to a particular incident that may have arisen during the game.
- Remember that while you work as an umpire, that you conduct yourself in a manner that keeps the game, players and yourself under control.
- Exhibit proper and ethical behavior while interacting with players, coaches and spectators at games.
- Be firm but never overbearing, courteous but not ungrateful, positive but never rude, dignified but never cocky, friendly but not companionable, most importantly calm by always being alert.
- Give your complete cooperation and loyalty to the Global Sports League and USSSA when working sponsored events.
- Cooperate and be professional in your association with your fellow umpires, doing nothing to cause them public embarrassment.
- Make sure you are in good position with good angles making sure that all the plays that occur are covered properly by you and your partner.
- Do not smoke or use foul or abusive language in the vicinity of the playing field, nor drink any alcoholic beverages on the day you are scheduled to work.
- Use your knowledge and judgment to become the most consistent umpire that you can be.
- Always leave the field together.

NOTES:



GSL/USSSA UMPIRE PHILOSOPHY:

GSL/USSSA softball umpires comprise a large group of men and women who find great satisfaction in maintaining direct contact with a sport in which they love. Being a GSL/USSSA umpire is considered a highly refined profession and should be regarded as such by all GSL/USSSA umpires and those who are contemplating entering into it. The ability of GSL/USSSA to make umpiring attractive enough to continue to command the interest of such people with a good personality, sincerity, and good judgment is a very important factor. To be of maximum service, these individuals must be fully informed of the purposes of policies of GSL/USSSA as exemplified by the work of the state, regional and national offices. GSL/USSSA was formed to afford teams a greater opportunity to play softball; so it is with umpiring, GSL/USSSA affords its umpires greater opportunity based on the individual's ability on the field.

Good umpiring is dependent on having plenty of courage and a thorough knowledge of the softball rules. Umpires must have a genuine sense of fair play, be strong both physically and mentally, have the utmost confidence, and use diplomacy well. Most importantly, an umpire must be able to forgive and forget and be able to close the book after every game and make a new start with every future game. Most of the decisions on the field require immediate judgment and must be made so quickly that they come by reflex. The only way the proper reflexes can be perfected is through the continuing study of all possible rules so that the fundamentals and correct interpretations are always clearly in mind. Studying the rulebook each day for about 15 to 30 minutes may be the best way to retain the information that you will need to know.

Tactfulness is a talent, which will pay dividends in umpiring. A diplomatic manner will often prevent ill will and resentment. Tactfulness encourages a cooperative attitude on the part of the players, coaches and spectators. Use of it goes a long way in creating a willingness to accept decisions.

Courtesy is the lubricant for good human relations. Sometimes umpires are afraid that politeness implies softness or politics. This is far from the truth. A polite umpire can be very strict and exacting. Cheerfulness and optimism tend to bring out the same qualities in the players. A good umpire will be courteous, but will avoid visiting with players during the game. The quickest way to lose respect as an umpire is to get the reputation of being a "horse trader". All umpiring actions should reflect strict and total impartiality.

Quick and positive decisions are essential, especially on the close ones. Timidity or hesitation causes a lack of confidence. Self-confidence can be developed. Many decisions can be questioned no matter how they are called. Hesitation in making a decision tends to make everyone waver. The practice of making unhesitated decisions must be habitual.

Loyalty to fellow umpires implies an active, intelligent desire to carry out the intent of the rules by a well-coordinated team. Each umpire must be willing to share the responsibility and must avoid attempts to shift the blame.

An umpire cannot be overly sensitive about criticism. If the umpire has a chip on his shoulder, a surly attitude, or a short temper, umpiring will be difficult. Most player comments during a heated contest are half in jest. It is often a rebellion against authority in general, rather than against an umpire in particular. Everyone connected with a team is somewhat biased and prejudiced in favor of any advantageous call and against any adverse decision.



GSL/USSSA UMPIRE PHILOSOPHY (cont'd):

It is not desirable to show-off in making a call. The umpire should remain in the background. It is not the umpire, but the game itself that is the attraction. An umpire should not be overbearing, but should not tolerate disrespect from any player.

Arguments with a player, coach, or team representative will not settle anything. After a game, if a coach asks what happened on a certain play, your explanation should be to the extent of the conversation. An easy way to end the conversation is to say, "Well, coach, if it happened the way you said it did, I just missed it." Never argue with a player or coach and do not lose your temper.

An umpire must be physically fit to meet all the requirements of a long, hot season especially when working several games a day/weekend. Hustle and energy have no substitutions. An umpire must cultivate the habit of moving quickly and being in position to observe all of the action. One extreme is wild purposeless running. The other is "standing on a dime" and making decisions at long range.

An umpire's word is his or her bond. If you accept a game, be there, and be on time. If there is any doubt, be there at the appointed time. Excuses are a poor substitute for not being there at the appointed time.

A courageous umpire will be quick to call plays when they occur. Do this consistently without regard to the score, position on the field, whom it may be against, or how it may affect future relations with the coach. Regardless of pressure from the coaches, players, or fans, the umpire must go straight down the middle and have the courage to call them as they occur. Your honesty must be above reproach or you would not be an umpire in the first place. It takes real courage to resist pressure and intimidation. To a large extent, the personal reputation of an umpire will be built on this.

Proper field coverage requires a good system of mechanics to ensure the umpires will be at the proper place on the field at all times. The movements must be such that the umpire is constantly in position to observe any action, which falls under his responsibilities. An umpire not in the proper position on the field has committed the "unpardonable sin" of umpiring.

Complete knowledge of the rules is essential. There is no substitute for rules study. The rules should be reviewed well before the opening of the season and this study should be continued up to the final game. Knowing all the phases of the rules at the end of the season is no guarantee that it will carry over to the next season. Discussion of situations in small groups is effective.

NOTES:



GSL/USSSA UMPIRE TECHNIQUES:

JUDGMENT

This may be the inherent factor. No provocation should cause an umpire to lose sight of the fact that his primary responsibility is to keep the game moving and that an angry person is never the master of the situation. Your use of sound judgment in applying the rules to the given situation may even be more important than knowing the rules. Get clear in your mind as the game's enforcer of the rules that it is up to you to handle all the game situations by your interpretation of the rules and ensuring that those interpretations will provide fair competition for the teams involved. Through your experience, self-control, and sound judgment you will be able to manage any situation that occurs enabling you to keep the game on schedule.

TECHNIQUE

Lack of technique is the difference between the best of amateurs and any professional. The polished umpire is never caught out of position. Umpiring calls for complete attention and energy for the entire duration of the game. Hustle in essence is the application of the principles of good umpiring. Technique consists of being in the right place at the right time, making calls effectively, staying out of the way of the players, and observing strict attention to detail. You can increase your reputation as a highly respected umpire if you can master where you need to be and hustle to get there. Remember that you cannot make a good call until the play has been completed. Someone once said, "Good umpires come to the ballpark to work and not to see the game."

KNOWLEDGE OF THE RULES

A working knowledge of the playing rules is expected of every official. Umpires should devote time reading and studying the rulebook; it will help you be more familiar with the rules and improve your reaction time in making calls. There is no point in committing the rules to memory, as their common-sense application is the stamp of a master of umpiring. The more games you work, the more competent you become in interpreting the rules and the given situations. Each umpire should always attend a yearly GSL/USSSA clinic to keep abreast of the recent rule changes and the recommended interpretations of those rule changes.

PRE-GAME UMPIRE PREPARATION

Most important pre-game preparation is for you to confirm the date, site and game time of your scheduled game. As you meet with your partner(s) in the pre-game preparation make sure you at least discuss the following:

- Any special tournament rules.
- Go over any special ground rules.
- Discuss foul/fair ball coverage and dead ball area coverage.
- Base coverage; out-safe; tags; tag-up responsibility; leaving a base too soon; how appeals will be handled.
- Legal/Illegal bat.
- Pitching rules.
- Communication between umpires.
- Discuss signals.
- Appeal plays.



GSL/USSSA UMPIRE TECHNIQUES (cont'd):

PREGAME MANAGERS MEETING

Five minutes before game time, meet with the coaches introducing yourself and your partner(s). Go over ground rules, the batting order, official scorebook, starting time and time limit if applicable. Make sure during the meeting you and your partner are friendly, answer questions any of the coaches may have and most importantly be professional. Don't let this meeting become an umpiring clinic. Make sure that this meeting is short and handled professionally. Wish everyone present good luck and thanks for playing GSL/USSSA! PLAY BALL!

RESPONSIBILITIES DURING A GAME

Be neat in your appearance on the ball field; the first appearance makes a big impression to everyone at the park. Don't go out on the field with a chip on your shoulder because you can get more out of a player by being human and civil. Umpires should study and know the rules, and then you will be able to interpret them properly on the field. A thorough knowledge of the pitching rules is essential. Umpires are to judge plays and to preserve undeviating neutrality toward all the players. Umpires must decide all plays fairly and impartially and there his/her responsibility ceases. Avoid mingling with the players. Your sole duty is to umpire a ball game as the representative of GSL/USSSA. Keep in mind that your conduct and actions are for settling controversies and not in starting them. Give any rule interpretation quickly and courteously, but refrain from general conversation, and discussion of plays and players. Remember you are there to judge plays, not players. You are there to advertise yourself, your profession, GSL/USSSA and most of all the game itself.

THE PLATE UMPIRE

Will be involved in nearly every play in the game, dictating that you stay alert and hustle on every pitch. Your primary calls will include calling balls and strikes, unfairly delivered pitches, and appeals. Try and develop a rhythm and consistency to the game to keep it moving and exciting. Don't take any guff from the catcher. Do not call balls and strikes too quickly. Follow the ball at all times; meaning keep your eyes on the ball at all times. Be sure that third base is covered in a run-down situation and be certain to cover third base when your partner is properly covering first and second base. Good plate technique can contribute to the players' enjoyment of the game.

THE FIELD UMPIRE

Keep the players hustling at all times. Back up your partner on all rulings of fair or foul balls. Call with him on the infield fly. The plate umpire will make the majority of decisions. Your primary responsibility is first and second base. Be close enough to both plays on a double play, yet stay out of the fielder's way. During a double play situation, since you cannot be on top of both calls, determine which call will be the closest and position yourself closest to that play. Be on your toes at all times, know where the ball is and who had it last. Be on the play at all times, work your angles on the bases. The proper angle will have the ball, the bag, and the runner in view. Watch the tag on a slide; make sure the base is in view. In force outs, let the ball turn you toward the play. Remember everything starts with the ball.

NOTES:



HANDLING OF ARGUMENTS AND GAME PROTESTED

The ordinary grounds for expulsion are well known to players and umpires alike, and any infraction of these results is an automatic expulsion for the players. Expulsion is the umpire's last means of punishment and should be used sparingly. It should never be applied unless a player is delaying the game or attempting to draw the crowd or his teammates upon the umpire. Umpires do not like a player seeking to shift responsibility for his own mistakes to the umpire. Umpires should never hear too much on the field. In fact, he should make it a point to hear only what the player intends for him to hear. Treat any protest upon its merits. Avoid any actions that may show-up a player and never raise your voice so spectators can hear. It's a good rule for an umpire to guide his own actions by the actions he demands toward himself. Most importantly, never argue with spectators over any incidents. Remember you are there to umpire.

The ability of a GSL/USSSA umpire to remain cool and calm in the face of a heated argument or controversy will be further proof of an accomplished, professional umpire. Some thoughts to keep in mind when facing adversity during a heated game/argument:

- Listen to the complaints of the manager/coaches on disputed calls, being firm and calm through it.
- Situations are often defused by letting the individual to air their feeling, usually resulting in a "cooling" off period making it easier to handle.
- Making the individual "write up" a protest on exactly what occurred will usually cool off the situation. (League play only)
- Make sure you limit the time in listening to the controversy making it clear that you made the decision on what had occurred and order the game to be resumed.
- If the game is not immediately resumed, eject the offending individual and then re-start the game. Always remember: Never remove a player unless it's absolutely necessary to maintain order.
- When an argument is started as a result of a rule being misinterpreted, consult with your partner(s) and if the decision was an incorrect one, make sure the proper umpire makes the correct call to avoid any protest of the game.

PROCEDURE AT END OF GAME

When the game is completed, the crew should always leave the field together. The game is officially over once all the umpires have left the field. A good rule of thumb to go by is for the crew to always exit through the winners' side of the field if no other exit is available. If there has been any flagrant irregularity associated with the game, report it at once to the proper people. When applicable, ALWAYS have a post-game conference between you and your partner(s). A good post-game conference may be the most beneficial aspect of umpiring, especially in the event that you and your partner(s) may have had a rough outing. No game is perfect; no aspect of umpiring is perfect, though sometimes you work an outstanding game. There is always some little something that you may pick up in a good post-game conference. Sometimes a post-game conference can be done with a simple handshake, sometimes not. Get in the habit of talking to your partner(s) when the game is over about what just happened out there. A pat on the back if your partner has struggled sometimes goes a long way.



RULES FOR GOOD UMPIRING

- Hustle; out-hustle the players if possible.
- Be neat and clean in appearance, and in the proper GSL/USSSA uniform.
- Whenever possible make decisions at a complete stop.
- Keep the game moving.
- Keep the game, the players, and yourself under control.
- Put some action in calling close plays. SELL THEM!
- Wait until the play is over before making calls, especially on tags.
- See that the runner(s) touch each base and home plate.
- Be on top of all your plays.
- Be as close as you can on all plays without being "too close" to see the whole play.
- Keep your eye on the ball. Remember everything starts with the ball.
- Call interference, obstruction, fair or foul balls with your partner.
- Remember there is no such thing as a crucial game. All games are crucial from an umpiring viewpoint.
- Look right at the play when making a call on a close play. See it, replay it, and then call it." Never look away from your call.
- When you miss one (and you will) bear down and get the next one right. Never try to even them up.
- Think ahead while on the field, it makes "The Art of Umpiring" easier.
- Don't take the field unless you are mentally and physically ready to give the teams your best!
- Watch the whole play until completion – you never know what is going to happen when your back is turned.
- Sell "safe/out" on every call; work as hard as you can.
- When a pitch starts, start moving; this enables you to get a moving start to get to the best position possible to see the play. Even if the play ends up being behind you and goes down the foul lines.
- Move on all pitched, batted, and thrown balls no matter what position that you begin at.
- Don't turn too quickly on a double play, keep your eye on the ball and let the ball turn you. Interference or a dropped ball may occur and to call it you must see it!
- Take positions that will keep you out of the player's view – check with the players when changing position – remember umpires are the players' greatest alibi.
- Never walk from one position to another; hustle and the ball players will follow your example. No player likes to be out-hustled by an umpire.
- Leave the field with your partner(s). Remember the game officially ends when you and your partner(s) leave the playing field.

NOTES:



SECTION II – UMPIRE MECHANICS (Two Umpire System)

HOME PLATE UMPIRE

HOME PLATE MECHANICS

The home plate umpire must develop proper timing and rhythm in making decisions. Develop a certain rhythm in making all calls and that rhythm should not vary. Change only the emphasis of the various calls. The plate umpire sets the tempo and controls the game. In order to do that, he must be in total control of himself, and developing a good sense of timing and rhythm does this. Good plate technique is essential to calling a good game.

GSL/USSSA SLOW PITCH PLATE MECHANICS

- You need to position yourself slightly to the right or left depending upon the batter, behind the catcher, in order to determine whether the pitch is legally reaching a maximum height of ten (10) feet and not lower than five (5) feet.
- Position yourself to see the plate and batter without being obstructed or interfering with the catcher. (Slow Pitch Slot)
- Start in an upright position when the pitch is about to be delivered. You can drop to a set position as ball is in flight.
- Do not make a call until the pitch crosses the plate or has been caught by the catcher.
- In calling a pitch, move slightly toward the pitch to see where the pitch was located making a crisp call "BALL" or "STRIKE".
- Raise your right hand above your head with an open hand, with your palm of your hand facing your right ear.
- Make a brisk verbal call "STRIKE" and then raise your arm with elbow at a 90-degree angle to the body while closing your right hand into a fist.
- Drop your arms to your sides and relax between pitches awaiting your next call. NEVER take your eyes off the pitcher or the ball.
- When the ball is hit always leave the home plate area to the left side of home plate and move into the infield.

BALLS AND STRIKES

Always use a count indicator and hold it in your left hand. The plate umpire is responsible for keeping the proper count on the batter. Always give the number of balls on the batter with your left hand and the number of strikes on the right hand. Give the count verbally and always with the number of balls on the batter first and strikes second. When to verbally give the count depends upon the situation. When the field has a scoreboard, it is only necessary to give the count when requested by a player or manager or to correct the scoreboard if it is incorrect. When no scoreboard is available, the count should be given as follows:

- When requested.
- After a delay in the normal flow of the game.
- Whenever the plate umpire feels the next pitch would create a change.

BALL ROTATION PROCEDURE

In keeping with the GSL Official Rulebook, the ball is in play until such time as it goes out of play. Keep in mind, the pitcher does have a choice of balls at the start of each inning. If both balls do not get into play in the first half of the first inning, the pitcher in the bottom half of the first inning MUST pitch with unused ball. In this situation, NO CHOICE is offered. The plate umpire, before he relinquishes the second ball, must make sure that the pitcher hands or tosses the ball presently in the game to him. Then and only then, will the umpire toss the second ball into the game for play.



FLY BALLS

The plate umpire shall call all fly balls, fair or foul, safe or out, except in the event the base umpire should turn his back to the infield and go to make a call in the outfield. Once the base umpire turns his back to the infield, it becomes his call, fair or foul, safe or out. The base umpire should not return until the play is over. *NOTE: No vocal call is given on a fair ball. Only indicate by pointing toward the diamond that the ball is fair.*

On fly balls, especially on possible trapped balls, do not work directly at the play, try to work for a good angle by looping around to get a good view of the ball coming down so you can see if a good catch is made. Give a good signal and use a loud voice to indicate safe or out.

CALLING FAIR OR FOUL BALLS

For fly balls hit near the base lines, the call is always fair or foul then safe or out. Fly-batted balls that are either fair or foul need only to be called out. The calls should be called in a loud and decisive manner, leaving no doubt whether the ball is fair or foul.

Remember in order for a batted ball to be called fair, the ball must be on or bouncing over fair territory including any portion of first or third base. Most importantly, remember that the position of the ball is always and the only determining factor in calling a batted ball fair or foul. *NOTE: No vocal call is given on a fair ball. Only indicate fair ball by pointing toward the diamond that the ball is fair.*

When there is no field umpire positioned at either foul line and the ball is hit into the outfield near a foul line, against or over the fence, the plate umpire should go out as far as possible to get a good look at the ball. In judging balls hit a great distance directly down the foul lines fair or foul, the ball should be judged fair or foul as it passes the point where the outfield fence and the foul pole join. The umpires are not to judge the ball fair or foul before it reaches this point, nor are they to judge the ball by where it lands outside the playing field. Always judge the ball fair or foul, when it leaves the park.

LEAVING THE HOME PLATE AREA

Since the catcher usually leaves the plate area on the right side, the plate umpire should always leave on the left of the catcher and the plate. The main reason to develop this habit is avoiding a collision with the catcher. Usually with no runners on base or a runner at first base, the plate umpire should leave the plate on the left side, proceed about halfway to first base, between the fair/foul line and the pitcher's mound, to observe the play being made at first. Try to get a good angle on this type of play. This type of positioning will assist you in the following:

- Possibly assist on sweep tags made by the first baseman.
- Three-foot line violations.
- Any collisions made by the catcher and runner.
- When a defensive player pulls his foot off the base.
- On any overthrows and when the ball becomes blocked.
- If a catch is bobbled or juggled.
- Should the base umpire go to the outfield, you are in position to make a call on any plays that might take place.
- Any tags made by the catcher or any other infielder on the batter-runner.
- When there is a runner on first base, prepare yourself for a possible play at third on the lead runner. This is the plate umpire's responsibility, so be in position by moving directly toward third base to make the call.



POP FOUL FLIES

The plate umpire's first priority is to avoid a collision with the catcher. Do not watch the ball once it has been popped-up close to the plate area. The catcher must move his shoulders to move in any direction, so watch his shoulders, pivot in the direction of the catcher's shoulders, clear the area and find the ball.

Find the ball, watch the catcher move toward the backstop or the fence area, and observe the catch and look for the trapping of the ball against the screen or fence. On a pop fly near the lines, signal fair or foul first, then whether the catch is out and legal. REMEMBER: If there is a runner at third, your responsibility is the play at home if there is one.

CONFERENCES

It is the plate umpire's responsibility to enforce the rules governing conferences both by the offensive and defensive teams. Once either team holds a conference, the umpire should inform that team that was their first or last charged conference for that inning. The offensive team's conference can include any number of runners, players, coaches or the batter. The defensive team's conference is charged when the manager, coach, or team representative confers with the pitcher. There is no charged conference when there are instructions yelled from the dugout area or talking with the other players, unless those players talk to the pitcher before the next pitch. There is no charged conference if the offensive team confers with a batter or base runner when the defensive team requests a time out for a conference. Nor is it a charged conference when the defensive team takes advantage of the offensive team having a conference. When the umpire calls to play ball, both teams must start to play ball or be in jeopardy of having a charged conference called on them and enforcing the appropriate penalty.

CALLS AT THIRD BASE

In making a third base call, the plate umpire should be in foul territory halfway between third and home plate, watching the play develop. If there is going to be a play at third, the plate umpire should cut inside the infield and move as close to the base to make the call. This position provides the umpire with the best position to make the call and also if there is an overthrow, the umpire being inside, will avoid any interference with the players if the play continues. This position also provides good coverage of the home plate area, if the runner on an overthrow, continues home.

NOTES:



RUN DOWNS

When a rundown occurs, it is important that the umpire moves to get the best perspective of both ends of the play. The best position of the umpire should be at least fifteen (15) feet from the runner and moving parallel to the base line. It is not as important to run back and forth trying to follow the runner, as it is important to follow the ball. When the tag is ready to be applied, move quickly toward the tag getting at the best angle, also watching for an obstruction. Since most rundowns happen quickly, usually one umpire covers the play. When a single runner gets caught in a rundown, the two umpires should work according to the following:

- A runner between first and second base - the plate umpire should take the trail position closest to first base. The base umpire should take the lead position at second base. The plate umpire should be inside the infield while the base umpire should be outside the infield.
- A runner between second and third base - the plate umpire should take the lead position closest to third base, inside the infield while the base umpire takes the trail position closest to second, outside the infield.
- A runner between third base and home plate - the plate umpire will take the lead position nearest home plate, outside the baseline in foul territory if possible.

Important reminder that communication is a MUST between the umpires, telling each other who has the lead or the trail runner. The umpire who has the runner coming back to them will make the call if a tag is applied; this eliminates a possible double call.

3RD OUT (RUN COUNT)

When the situation occurs where the third out of the inning is the result of a tag play, with a runner close to or crossing home plate, the base umpire should realize the situation at hand and make his call loud and clear to aid the plate umpire with his situation at home. The umpires should denote, by tapping on the wrist, a possible timing situation. This is similar to signaling an infield fly situation. It is of the utmost importance that the plate umpire immediately indicates whether the run counts or does not count, and notify the scorekeeper. The sole responsibility for a run counting or not counting is the plate umpire unless rotation on a particular play dictates otherwise.

TAG PLAYS AT HOME PLATE

There are two positions for making calls on tag plays at the plate:

- When returning from third base to make a call.
- When the play is coming from fair territory or a throw from the outfield.

When the plate umpire is returning from third base, the plate umpire should stay inside the infield, moving parallel to the base line and getting into a position ten (10) feet from home plate and ninety (90) degrees from the path of the runner. When making the call, don't plant your feet. Make sure the weight of your body is on the balls of your feet, move toward the play as it develops, find the ball after the tag, and then make your call with authority. The inside position is important on this situation because all four elements remain in front of you - the ball, the defense, the runner, and the base. When the plate umpire has a play where the ball is coming from fair territory or a throw from the outfield, the plate umpire should assume a position in foul territory ninety (90) degrees from the path of the runner, just outside the deepest corner of the right hand batter's box. Hustle is important as more than likely you are already on the inside of the diamond. Make sure the weight of your body is on the balls of your feet, move toward the play as it develops, find the ball after the tag, and then point at the ball with your left hand making your call with authority.



APPEAL PLAY AT HOME

When a runner misses home plate and if the catcher misses the tag, the umpire needs to hesitate momentarily to allow the players to complete the play. The reason for the hesitation is to not give either team any indication that the play may not be over. Also, the runner is always assumed safe in this situation until being put out. In order for the runner to be declared out, a proper appeal must be made.

DEAD BALL SITUATIONS

The most important element in calling a dead ball situation is the proper mechanics. When calling a dead ball give an emphatic call, arms held high in the air and calling loudly DEAD BALL. The proper dead ball call serves two purposes:

- It kills the play and avoids further confusion.
- Gives you the umpire the opportunity to make the proper call.

TIME OUT

To indicate the pitcher not to start a pitch, the plate umpire should raise his right hand if there is a right handed batter and the left hand if there is a left handed batter, with the palm facing the pitcher. A "NO PITCH" shall be declared if the pitcher pitches while the umpire has signaled in this position. Time out shall be called for the purpose of suspending play. The proper signal is both hands, extended high above the head along with a verbal call. The time out call should be forceful, distinct, and very apparent to the fact that play has been suspended. Time out is ALWAYS granted, not assumed given when requested.

CATCHER OBSTRUCTION

Catcher obstruction occurs when the catcher hinders or prevents a batter from swinging at or hitting the ball. The penalty for catcher obstruction is that the offensive team shall be given the option of accepting the play or the award for catcher obstruction. If all runners (including the batter-runner) have advanced one base, the catcher obstruction is ignored and the option not granted. Catcher obstruction can occur during the back or the front swing and is ruled upon as a delayed dead ball. If catcher obstruction occurs prior to the pitch, anytime the contact is prior to the pitch, call DEAD BALL, move around in front of the plate and give everyone a chance to reset.

ILLEGAL/UNFAIRLY DELIVERED PITCH

In keeping with the GSL Official Rulebook, the plate umpire does not have to indicate either by voice or use the delayed dead ball signal to call an illegal pitch.

HOMERUN BALL

When the batter passes third (or chooses to go directly to the dugout – "Hit and Sit"), get the next game ball out of your bag and throw out the next ball to the pitcher or request a ball to be entered from the offensive team. Then swing around to dust home plate, resume your position behind the catcher ready to play ball.

REMEMBER AS THE PLATE UMPIRE:

- Hustle.
- You should have control of the game at all times.
- Go over the ground rules.
- Introduce all other umpires to the managers.
- Always keep home plate clean, using a lot of snap, with your back to the pitcher.
- When brushing off the plate, call time and warn the batter or catcher whenever necessary.
- Say ball or strike only; don't locate the pitch; and don't point to first base on ball four.
- Do not verbally describe a pitch or use a hand signal.



BASE UMPIRE

MECHANICS ON THE BASES

When umpiring the bases you are responsible for:

- Calling plays at or between the bases.
- Help in calling plays in the outfield that the home plate umpire may have difficulty in seeing and calling.
- Help in determining checked swings and illegal pitches.
- Assisting your partner(s) when called upon.

The plate umpire makes most of the decisions during the game. The base umpire has fewer decisions to make and since all are rendered upon base runners, their importance increases as those potential scores progress around the bases. The base umpire must be sharp on every pitch and be ready for any situation that occurs on the field. Remember that umpiring demands complete concentration, your undivided attention and all your energies, until the final out is made. Be ready to make a call on every play before it happens.

Hustle to be on top of the play at all times, remembering to work your angles on the bases. Being in position to call the plays will eliminate leaving yourself open on a play and most importantly, letting a player or coach call your play. Be consistent on your calls. On a close play use emphatic signals and words; on plays that are obvious use a routine signal. Remember, no matter where you start or where you may wind up after making the initial call, always make sure that you are in position to make any additional calls. If you have to move on a play, keep the ball, the players involved (both offensive and defensive) and where the call will be made in clear view.

Like the players, be on top of the situation at all times. Don't get caught out of position by being flatfooted. Don't call your plays running; come to a stop position and make your call emphatically. The most important thing to remember is to never lose sight of the ball - know where the ball is and who had it last.

Base umpires are likely to use the upright and set position in umpiring the bases. When there are no runners on base, the umpire should be in an upright position off the shoulder of the 2nd baseman being balanced on both feet ready to move in any direction and always keeping your arms at your sides. As the pitcher starts his/her motion, the umpire should start moving, this avoids you from starting flatfooted. Always avoid crossing your arms across your chest or putting your hands on your hips. On a ball hit to the outfield that appears to be trouble, turn your back and go out to it. If the ball becomes a home run make sure as the umpire that you know as exact as possible where and when the ball left the park.

REMEMBER AS THE BASE UMPIRE:

- What is the count on the batter and how many outs there are?
- Where are the runners and who is responsible for each runner?
- What is likely to happen if the batter hits the ball?
- Where are the fielders positioned? (Are they playing a 5-man infield?)
- Most importantly, do not lose sight of the ball.



CALLING THE BASES

Calling an out on a routine play the following should occur:

- Give a brisk verbal call of “Out” while raising your right arm to a 90 degree angle to the body and closing your right hand into a fist.

Calling a routine play safe the following should occur:

- From an upright position bring both arms and hands, keeping them open with the palms facing down, up to your chest with the fingers touching.
- Give a brisk verbal call of “Safe” extending your arms outward so they are pointed sideways, being away from your body and parallel to the ground with your palms facing downward.

Calling close play the following should occur:

- Observe the above routine safe/out play procedures.
- Sell the call by intensifying the verbal call and using a more powerful hand signal.
- For a close tag play use a forceful overhand out signal using the basic set position, planting your feet and “selling” your call. The closer the play the need for more emphasis on making the call is important in order for you to “sell” the call.

The base umpire makes known his decisions by using both the vocal and manual expression. Indicate “safe” when the runner beats the throw, and “out” when the play beats the runner. When there is a close play, it deserves the entire vocal force and power of gesture at hand. An easy or routine out should be given by the hand making it obvious that the runner is out or safe. For fairly close plays, wide-open tag plays and run-downs, the easy decisions, call with medium emphasis as to voice and gesture that is called for. Keep full power in reserve for the really close ones.

The “safe-out” or “out-safe” calls are the result of poor timing. If the base umpire (or any umpire calling a player out or safe) would give a “slight hesitation” and replay over in your mind what you saw, you as an umpire will never have another “out-safe” call. On the close plays “SEE IT, REPLAY IT, AND THEN CALL IT”. If you will hesitate for the length of time it just took you to read that last quote, your timing will automatically improve. Your judgment will improve as well and you will become a more consistent umpire because you have just seen the play twice. Remember your judgment can't do you any justice without good timing. Judgment and timing go hand in hand. On these calls or any other call always hold it and sell it.

Anytime the base umpire’s back is turned away from the plate umpire for the deep fly ball or the possible trap play, the base umpire has all the responsibility for out/safe decisions on the ball. When the base umpire has the proper angle on the play, the ball, the defensive player and the runner are all in one view. When calling the tag play make sure you have a good view of the base. In force outs, keep your eyes on the base and look and hear the ball come into the glove. As a field umpire make sure you know where the ball is being thrown from and never take your eyes off the thrower until the ball is released.

The most important part of umpiring is to hustle on all the plays that occur. When you run just to run it is not hustling, or at least productive hustling. The good umpire quickly finds the position for the best possible angle and makes the call.

NOTES:



THE FORCE AND TAG PLAYS

The two basic calls for the base umpire that he must master are as follows:

- Force play
- The tag play

*NOTE: We will use the principles of the force play at first base.

When the ball is hit and the fielder is getting into position to field the ball, the base umpire should also be getting into position. As the fielder releases the ball, then and only then should the umpire turn into the base. Watch and let the ball take you into the play for a play cannot be made without the ball.

Concentrating on the base, the umpire should be looking for the following:

- The runner touching the base.
- The first baseman catching the ball and staying on the base.
- If the fielder is juggling the ball.

Proper positioning, at least fifteen (15) feet from the bag is most important because a position too close to the bag restricts the angle, closes the range of vision, and may cause the umpire to interfere in the play.

Sound is another important element in making your calls. While concentrating on the base and allowing peripheral vision to aid you in seeing the play develop, the sound of the ball hitting the glove will help determine which arrived first -- the ball or the runner. It is always important to never take your eyes off the ball, but equally important, never depend on sound alone to make a call. There may be crowd noise, infielders or the coach yelling, that may interfere with your hearing the ball hit the glove. In making the call, the only consideration left to ensure proper timing, is the slight hesitation to allow a clear mental picture to develop in your mind. This technique shows that you are in control of yourself and it is the manner in which you handle yourself that is more convincing.

Always try and show consistency in making your calls. If you are too quick on every call and then use the "slight hesitation", the players will think you may be guessing or undecided on that play. So it's important that you try and be consistent in all your calls, the easy ones as well as the hard ones. Remember that by positioning yourself at the proper distance at least fifteen (15) feet from the base, your peripheral vision will allow you to see the entire play.

TAG PLAYS

As the play develops, positioning, angles and peripheral vision play an important role in tag plays, just as they did in force plays. The major difference on a tag play is the fact that the umpire should complete his call with his "nose" as close to the tag as possible.

As the tag play develops, make sure you keep all the elements in front of you - the ball, the defense, the runner, and the base, as well as the area where they all come together. As the runner and the ball near the tag area, start to move in. Come towards the play, positioning yourself at the best angle to see the tag. Usually the best, unobstructed angle is 90 degrees from the path of the runner, just short of the base at the point of contact.

The unobstructed angle is the most important thing to remember and that not letting the defensive player or the runner get between you and the tag being made. Remember, the best angle may move as the tag and the runner's slide is being made. The umpire must also move to keep an unobstructed view of the play.



As you watch the play develop and start to move in, turn your concentration on whether the tag was made prior to the runner reaching the base or the runner beating the tag to the base. If the runner beats the throw and the tag, indicate safe providing the runner doesn't slide past the base. If on the other hand, the ball beats the runner and the tag is made, making sure the fielder has the ball in his possession, point to the ball with your left hand and declare the runner out. In both of these plays, remember, it's best to "hesitate slightly" before making your call of safe or out.

On a play where a good hard slide causes a collision making you lose sight of the ball, tell the defensive player immediately to show you the ball as you are pointing at him and moving around the play. When you see the ball, keeping your head right on the play, call the runner out. It is important to remember as the umpire to not stand still, but move around the play to watch the tag and find the ball.

PULLED FOOT

When the ball arrives before the runner at a base and the fielder pulls his foot, you as the umpire do not want anyone to think the runner has beaten the throw. As the umpire, move toward the base, pointing with your left hand at the base or the fielder, and vocally and visually telling everyone he pulled his foot off the base.

SWIPE TAG

When a throw pulls a fielder off a base and it is necessary for the fielder to make a swipe tag, the umpire should move toward the base, point with his left hand and indicate vocally that the fielder has made a "tag", calling the runner out.

THREE-FOOT LINE

A violation of the three (3) foot line is interference and calls for the umpire to take charge. The umpire should step into the play, throwing his arms high above the head, shouting "DEAD BALL". Step toward the point of interference with the left hand and give a strong out signal. Runners must be instructed to return to the last legally touched base at the time of interference.

RUNNING OUT OF THE BASE LINE

Running out of the base line to avoid a tag is also a violation, but does not result in a dead ball. The umpire should point with his left hand indicating that the runner ran out of the base line and follow with a strong over-head signal. Other runners may continue to advance at their own risk and the umpire should react accordingly.

INTERFERENCE (Offensive)

For interference calls, a vigorous dead ball signal should be given with both arms extended high in the air above your head with a vocal call of "DEAD BALL". Halt any further play as soon as possible, as continued play only adds to the confusion. Three things must occur on an interference call:

- 1) The ball becomes dead
- 2) An out is called
- 3) All runners must return to the base they were at, at the time of the interference.

NOTES:



OBSTRUCTION (Defensive)

There are three types:

- 1) Obstruction on a runner who is not being played on (DELAYED DEAD BALL)
- 2) Obstruction on a runner being played on (DEAD BALL)
- 3) Catcher obstruction (DELAYED DEAD BALL).

For obstruction on a runner who is not being played on, it requires a delayed dead ball signal. Remember, you are only going to protect that runner to the base he would have reached had there been no obstruction. Once the runner has reached the base he would have reached, there is no obstruction. If the runner is put out prior to reaching the base he would have reached had there been no obstruction, it should be treated the same as a runner being played on, DEAD BALL. Award that runner the base he would have reached and award ALL other runners the base they would have reached had there been no obstruction.

If obstruction is called on a runner being played on, throw your arms high above your head giving the dead ball signal, and call "DEAD BALL." Stop play, point to the violator and award the bases accordingly.

Catcher obstruction is a DELAYED DEAD BALL call, with the plate umpire waiting to see the result of the play, prior to enforcement. The reason why catcher interference has changed to catcher obstruction, is that none of the three interference requirements exist -- 1) an out may not be called, 2) the ball is not dead, 3) nor are the runners required to return to the base held prior to the interference call.

COLLISION

When there is contact between an offensive and defensive player, it doesn't necessarily mean that either interference or obstruction has occurred. This is definitely not the case. The field is laid out in such a manner that it, in itself puts the defensive and the offensive players on a collision course.

If a batter hits or tops the ball on a slow roller toward first base close to the foul line, and the batter-runner, running in a direct line to first base, can be on a collision course with the first baseman or the catcher -- so each player has the legal right -- the batter-runner running at a direct line to first base; the catcher coming out from behind home plate to field the ball; or the first baseman coming toward the ball to field it.

The umpire has three questions to answer before interference or obstruction can be called:

- 1) Did the batter-runner alter his direction in any way to draw contact in an attempt to get an obstruction call?
- 2) Did the catcher or first baseman alter their attempt to field the ball in any way to draw the interference?
- 3) Could the catcher or the first baseman actually make an out on the play?

Another example that may cause a collision is the errant throw up the line at first base. The batter-runner collides with the first baseman while attempting to make a play on an errant throw up the line. The runner certainly has the right to the base line in this case and equally so, the first baseman should have the right to field an errant thrown ball. It is the result of the normal flow of the game and should be ruled as incidental contact with no effect or penalty on the play.

What adds to the pressure of making the call is that the umpire must make a decision immediately. The umpire has to react, and not have the time to think about it. That's why the umpire must have a thorough understanding of the situation so that an immediate decision can be made with authority and decisiveness. Only react if you're certain interference or obstruction has occurred.



CHECK LIST FOR BASE UMPIRES

- Always hustle.
- The base umpire should start on the infield off the shoulder of the 2nd baseman in a normal position.
- Move on all pitched, batted and thrown balls.
- Call all your plays from fair territory.
- On a double play ball, take two steps toward second base then quickly run parallel to first base-second base line. Don't take your head and eyes off the ball and let the flight of the ball turn your head and body into the play at first base.
- Don't make a call until the catch and/or the play is completed. Don't be forced to make two calls on the same play.
- Always keep your eyes on the ball.
- Don't ever let players or coaches call plays for you.
- Check to make certain the bases are secured and keep the pitcher's rubber clean.
- Move forward one or two steps with each pitch and then return.
- Line up runners on all fly balls to the outfield so you can view the timing of them leaving the base on a ball that is caught.
- Keep the game moving.
- Always hustle to be on top of your plays.
- Position yourself not to interfere with the players. Every time you move, check with the players to see that you are not obstructing their view. (Very important with a 5 man infield)
- Hustle out on fly balls to the outfield and stay out until the play is completed.
- Never walk from one position to another - hustle and the ball players will follow your example.
- Make your close calls with a lot of voice and enthusiasm.
- Base Umpires cardinal rule: Keep the ball, the runner, the base and the fielder in your sight, never losing sight of the ball.

NOTES:



SECTION III – UMPIRE MECHANICS (SINGLE UMPIRE SYSTEM)

**NOTE: For the veteran GSL/USSSA umpire, the starting positions listed are “recommended” starting positions. For the experienced umpire these starting positions may dictate an adjustment based upon a given situation. For the inexperienced GSL/USSSA umpire make sure that you MASTER these “recommended” starting positions that will enable you to handle any new situations or surprises that may occur during the playing of the game.*

The two things that will enable you to work the game successfully are hustle and angles. However,

- Be prepared to hustle the entire game.
- Always work behind the plate.
- Once the game begins be alert and try to anticipate where the ball is going.
- Once the ball is hit, come out left of the catcher moving towards the pitchers mound (unless the ball is hit down the lines) and hustle to obtain the best angle to call a play at any base. IMPORTANT – watch the feet of the players; most of the time he will step in the direction he will throw the ball.
- Hustle and be as close as possible the entire game to make any call.
- Make all of your calls inside the infield, except at a play at home plate.
- Remember the angles to make sure you are able to see the ball, base, and base runner.
- Make sure to watch the runners tag all the bases.
- Make sure you call “TIME” after a base hit, a play at a base, when the ball is held by an infielder, or in your opinion all play has ceased.
- MOST IMPORTANT – Try to never take your eyes off the ball unless you are forced to. You may need to on occasion such as watching a runner touch a base, re-tag a base or to tag-up or most common, throwbacks.

NO RUNNERS ON BASE – GROUND BALL TO INFIELD

- Move out from behind home plate on the left side.
- Position yourself about 15-20 ft from home plate and about 10 ft inside the 1st base line to make your call.
- Priorities: fair/foul, contact with base, tags swipe tag, obstruction/interference, pulled foot, read/react, adjust/re-adjust.
- Make all calls from a set position.

FLY BALL / BASE HIT

- Move out from behind home plate on the left side, position yourself to determine fair/foul.
- On fly ball make call signal for out; signal safe if not caught.
- On base hits, move out near the pitcher’s mound, read and react for possible play at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or home.
- Priorities: fair/foul, contact with base, tags, swipe tag, obstruction/interference, pulled foot, read/react, adjust/re-adjust.
- Make all calls from a set position.

NOTES:



RUNNERS ON 1ST BASE – GROUND BALL TO INFIELD

- Move out from behind home plate on the left side.
- Position yourself about 15- 20 ft. from home plate and about 10ft inside the 1st base line to make your call. Note: If ball is bobbled and only play is at 2nd, move toward 2nd to make your call.
- If play is at home plate position yourself in the holding area 10-15 ft. up the 3rd base line, 10-15 ft from the base line in foul territory.
- Priorities: fair/foul, contact with base, tags, swipe tag, obstruction/interference, pulled foot, read/react, adjust/re-adjust.
- Make all calls from a set position.

FLY BALL/BASE HIT

- Move out from behind home plate on the left side and position yourself to determine fair/foul.
- On fly ball make call signal for out, signal safe if not caught.
- On base hits move out near the pitcher’s mound, read and react for play at 1st, 2nd ,3rd.
- If play is at home plate position yourself in the holding area 10-15ft up the 3rd base line, 10-15 ft from the base line in foul territory.
- Priorities: fair/foul, contact with base, tags, swipe tag, obstruction/interference, pulled foot, read/react, adjust/re-adjust.

ALL OTHER SITUATIONS WITH RUNNER ON

GROUND BALL TO INFIELD

- Move out from behind home plate on the left side.
- Position yourself 15-20 ft. from home plate near the pitcher’s mound to make your call. NOTE: If ball is bobbled and there is only one play, move toward that base to make your call.
- Priorities: fair/foul, contact with base, tags, swipe tag, obstruction/interference, pulled foot, read/react, adjust/re-adjust.
- Make all calls from a set position.

FLY BALL/BASE HIT

- Move out from behind home plate on the left side, position yourself to determine fair/foul.
- On fly ball make call signal for out, signal safe if not caught.
- On fly balls that are caught watch lead runner for tag, move into position for a play at any base.
- On base hits move out near the pitcher’s mound, read/react for possible play at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or home plate.
- Priorities: fair/foul, contact with base, tags, swipe tag, obstruction/interference, pulled foot, read/react, adjust/re-adjust.
- Make all calls from a set position

NOTES:



SECTION IV – UMPIRE POSITIONING (TWO-UMPIRE SYSTEM)

**NOTE: For the veteran GSL/USSSA umpire the starting positions listed are “recommended” starting positions. For the experienced umpire these starting positions may dictate an adjustment based upon a given situation. For the inexperienced GSL/USSSA umpire make sure that you MASTER these recommended starting positions that will enable you to handle any new situations or surprises that may occur during the playing of the game.*

The game of slow pitch has changed so dramatically. The base mechanics for umpiring in a two-man system are archaic, dangerous and just not adequate for what is going on in the field. We are doing the players a disservice by using mechanics that were put in place over 50 years ago. The infielders are starting 15 or sometimes 20 feet behind the base paths as the ball is coming at them so fast. It does not matter whether it is the ball, bat, or both; it just is. They are also using a deep 5-man infield many times. Our job is to give them the best game we can but also be “safe”.

The premise is this: You just cannot get inside like we all think you should. You definitely should not be “cheating” by standing next to second base in front of the fielders. The only things that come of trying to do either is:

- You getting blasted,
- You do not get inside like you think you should be; and have a straight on angle
- You get in the way.

All of these scenarios are doing a disservice to the game, players, and yourself. The game has morphed, where our priority should be outfield plays. The game has evolved dramatically and the fielders are playing so deep, the outfield is where most of the action is.

The outside field umpire mechanic has been utilized in GSL since its conception. Someone has somewhere to go and something to do all the time. The main ideas are first. Details are in the following paragraphs.

PLATE UMPIRE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Most of the tag-ups.
- Covers third and takes the runner home.
- Watches batter/runner and more runners touch bases.
- Fly ball coverage to the lines.
- Has to move out from behind the plate more and assist with swipe tags, down the line and get up to third.
- Be ready if your partner goes out.
- Have all line drives to infielders. May look for help if partner has any angle but the call is yours

FIELD UMPIRE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Stays outside the diamond.
- Always starts somewhere behind the second baseman.
- Has much more fly ball responsibility.
- Makes calls on the bases from the outside angle.
- When partner has catch/no catch to the lines, you must be aware of tag ups. As before, do not call outs unless you are sure.
- You can turn your back and call a catch and turn around and call the runner coming into second or back to third. Plate umpire will communicate and take the tag ups



PLATE UMPIRE

NO RUNNER ON BASE – GROUND BALL TO INFIELD

- Move out from behind home plate on the left side; position yourself to determine fair/foul
- Move up the 1st base line 12-15 ft on the infield. Help with swipe tag and pulled foot.
- On overthrow on play move to holding area at 3rd base for possible play.
- Priorities: fair/foul, swipe tag, obstruction/interference, pulled foot, read/react, adjust/readjust.
- Make all calls from a set position.

**NO RUNNERS ON/ RUNNER ON 1ST BASE
FLY BALL**

- Move out from behind home plate on the left side; position yourself to determine fair/foul.
- Observe batter/runner touch first base
- Observe tag up of runner.
- On fly ball assist base umpire if requested, signal to reiterate your partners call. This allows base runners to know what is going on so they are not in jeopardy.
- You are responsible for catch or no catch with fielders heading towards the lines.
- If fly ball is not caught move to holding area at 3rd base for possible play. Communicate with partner. You may probably need to take the runner home and be prepared to make that call on an overthrow. If your partner can make it, he will call you off and you rotate to bases.
- Priorities: fair/foul, tag up, obstruction/interference, lead runner touching bases, read/react, adjust/readjust.
- Make all calls from a set position.

BASE HIT

- Move out from behind home plate on the left side; position yourself to determine fair/foul.
- Move to holding area at 3rd base for possible play at 3rd; follow play to home plate in foul territory 10- 12 feet off foul line for play at plate.
- Priorities: fair/foul, swipe tag, obstruction/interference, lead runner touching bases, read/react, adjust/readjust.
- Make all calls from a set position.

NOTES:



RUNNERS ON 1ST AND 2ND / 2ND ONLY – GROUND BALL TO INFIELD

- Move out from behind home plate on the left side; position yourself to determine Fair/Foul.
- Move to holding area at 3rd base make all calls at 3rd. It becomes a one man game and you are also responsible for the call at the Plate.
- Make all calls at home plate 10 – 12 ft off foul line 90 from the base runner and the throw.
- Priorities: Fair/Foul, Tag up, Swipe Tag, Obstruction/Interference, Lead Runner Touching Bases, Read/React/Adjust/Re-adjust
- Make all calls from a set position.

FLY BALL

- Move out from behind home plate on the left side; position yourself to determine Fair/Foul.
- You are responsible for catch or no catch with fielders heading towards the lines.
- On fly ball assist Base umpire if requested, signal to reiterate your partners call. This allows base runners to know what is going on so they are not in jeopardy.
- Watch tag for all runners.
- If fly ball is not caught move to holding area at 3rd base for possible play.
- Priorities: Fair/Foul, Tags, Swipe Tag, Obstruction/Interference, Lead Runner or other Runners Touching Bases, Read/React/Adjust/Re-adjust
- Make all calls from a set position.

BASE HIT

- Move out from behind home plate on the left side; position yourself to determine Fair/Foul.
- Move to the holding area between 3rd and Home 10 – 15 ft from foul line.
- Watch lead runner touch all bases.
- If play at 3rd is on the lead runner move into position to make call. Note: You will basically take calls at third. Your partner is starting from an outside, far back position and will not be able to be there.
- Priorities: Fair/Foul, Tags, Swipe Tag, Obstruction/Interference, Lead Runner Touching Bases, Read/React/Adjust/Re-adjust
- Make all calls from a set position.

RUNNERS ON 1ST, 2ND, & 3RD / 1ST & 3RD / 2ND & 3RD / 3RD ONLY – GROUND BALL TO INFIELD

- Move out from behind home plate on the left side; position yourself to determine Fair/Foul.
- Move to the holding area between 3rd and Home 10 – 15 ft from foul line.
- Watch lead runner touch all bases.
- If play at 3rd is on the lead runner move into position to make call. Note: You will basically take calls at third. Your partner is starting from an outside, far back position and will not be able to be there.
- Priorities: Fair/Foul, Tags, Swipe Tag, Obstruction/Interference, Lead Runner Touching Bases, Read/React/Adjust/Re-adjust
- Make all calls from a set position.

NOTES:



FLY BALL

- Move out from behind home plate on the left side; position yourself to determine Fair/Foul.
- You are responsible for catch or no catch with fielders heading towards the lines.
- On fly ball assist Base umpire if requested, signal to reiterate your partners call. This allows base runners to know what is going on so they are not in jeopardy.
- Watch tag for all runners.
- Move to the holding area between 3rd and Home 10 – 15 ft from foul line.
- Watch all runners touch Home and 3rd.
- Read play move into position take the first play if it's at Home or 3rd.

- Priorities: Fair/Foul, Tags, Swipe Tag, Obstruction/Interference, Lead Runner Touching Bases, Read/React/Adjust/Re-adjust
- Make all calls from a set position.

BASE HIT

- Move out from behind home plate on the left side; position yourself to determine Fair/Foul.
- Move to the holding area between 3rd and Home 10 – 15 ft from foul line.
- Watch lead runner touch all bases.
- Read play move into position take the first play if it's at Home or 3rd.
- Priorities: Fair/Foul, Tag, Swipe Tag, Obstruction/Interference, Lead Runner Touching Bases, Read/React/Adjust/Re-adjust
- Make all calls from a set position.

BASE UMPIRE

In all situations, help with illegal pitching actions, pitching plate contact, runners leaving early on the pitch and a "throw behind" the runner going back into third.

We use one main starting position. YOU WILL ALWAYS BE BEHIND THE SECOND BASEMAN. NO EXCEPTIONS. You will go deeper when they go deeper and be behind their right or left shoulder depending on where they are positioning themselves or if they are in a 5 man; and you should know what they are trying to accomplish. You should be a student of the game. We will at times move over one way or the other if we are blocking an outfielder's view. *You are responsible for all catch / no catch (WHEN THE BALL IS NOT HEADING TOWARDS A FOUL LINE)* even when you do not go out.

NO RUNNERS ON / RUNNER ON 1ST – GROUND BALL TO INFIELD

(All your calls will be from outside the diamond)

- Start behind the second baseman. On the hit you will position yourself for the "outside" angle by reading the fielder, ball, etc., and move to get the best angle. Sometimes you even head away. It is sort of like making the second call at first on a double play.
- Make all calls at 1st base. If there is an overthrow, you are right there to make the call at second from outside the diamond. Your partner will be picking the runner up at third.
- Priorities: Swipe Tag, Obstruction/Interference, Lead Runner Touching Bases, Read/React/Adjust/Re-adjust
- Make all calls from a set position.



FLY BALL

- Start behind the second baseman
- Definitely go out and obtain an angle if there appears to be a tough catch / no catch situation.
- You can turn and call the fly ball, turn back around and be right there when the runner comes into second on a dropped ball. Your partner will have the runner at third. (If you are able, you can hustle and help your partner at home on a potential play after you call him off.)
- Take all calls at 1st or 2nd; the plate umpire will take the call at 3rd for batter/runner with no one on.
- Priorities: Catch / No Catch, Obstruction/Interference, Runner Touching Bases, Read/React/Adjust/Re-adjust
- Help with Tag-up
- Make all calls from a set position.

BASE HIT

- Start behind the second baseman in your position.
- On a base hit to left or center field work 12 – 15 ft outside the base path, move parallel to the base path to a position 6 – 10 ft from the base, 90 degrees from the runner and the throw.
- Take all calls at 1st or 2nd; the plate umpire will take the call at 3rd for lead runner. Base umpire will not come inside the diamond and take calls at 3rd base.
- For base hits to right center and right, stay outside the diamond. Make calls at second or first from the outside. After the batter runner clears you and there is no play at second, you may hustle inside to help your partner possibly at home. This must be communicated.
- Priorities: Obstruction/Interference, Runner Touching Bases, Read/React/Adjust/Re-adjust
- Make all calls from a set position.

RUNNERS ON 1ST, 2ND, & 3RD / 1ST & 3RD / 2ND & 3RD / 3RD ONLY – GROUND BALL TO INFIELD

(All your calls will be from outside the diamond)

- Start behind the second baseman. On the hit you will position yourself for the "outside" angle by reading the fielder, ball, etc., and move to get the best angle. Sometimes you even head away. It is sort of like making the second call at first on a double play.
- Make all calls at 1st base. If there is an overthrow, you are right there to make the call at second from outside the diamond. Your partner will be picking the runner up at third.
- Priorities: Swipe Tag, Obstruction/Interference, Lead Runner Touching Bases, Read/React/Adjust/Re-adjust
- Make all calls from a set position.

FLY BALL

- Start behind the second baseman
- Definitely go out and obtain an angle if there appears to be a tough catch / no catch situation.
- You can turn and call the fly ball, turn back around and be right there when the runner comes into second on a dropped ball. Your partner will have the runner at third. (If you are able, you can bust a hump and help your partner at home on a potential play after you call him off.)
- Take all calls at 1st or 2nd; the plate umpire will take the call at 3rd for batter/runner with no one on.
- Priorities: Catch / No Catch, Obstruction/Interference, Runner Touching Bases, Read/React/Adjust/Re-adjust
- Help with Tag-up
- Make all calls from a set position.



BASE HIT

- Start behind the second baseman in your position.
- On a base hit to left or center field, work 12 – 15 ft outside the base path, move parallel to the base path to a position 6 – 10 ft from the base 90 degrees from the runner and the throw.
- Take all calls at 1st or 2nd; the plate umpire will take the call at 3rd for lead runner. Base umpire will not come inside the diamond and take calls at 3rd base.
- For base hits to right center and right, stay outside the diamond. Make calls at second or first from the outside. After the batter runner clears you and there is no play at second, you may hustle inside to help your partner possibly at home. This must be communicated.
- Priorities: Obstruction/Interference, Runner Touching Bases, Read/React/Adjust/Re-adjust
- Make all calls from a set position.

BETWEEN INNING POSITIONING

PLATE UMPIRE

- Position yourself about 8-10 feet from home plate and a step back from the foul line, facing the team coming to bat.

FIELD UMPIRE

- Position yourself facing the plate in fair territory no more than 15 feet off the foul line at approximately where the grass starts.
- Clean the pitching rubber and any other needed sweeping at this time, after sweeping the pitcher's plate.
- If teams are warming up in the area of your position, move into the diamond, in foul territory, no more than 15 feet from first base. Face the infield. You may be off the line slightly. Do not go deeper into the outfield or behind the players.

SECTION V – MAJOR POINTS IN SLOWPITCH SOFTBALL

- **ALTERED BAT:** When the physical structure of a legal bat has been changed, or an illegal or non-approved bat has been changed to resemble a legal bat.
 - EFFECT: *The ball is dead, the batter is declared out, and base runners may not advance. In adult slow pitch play the batter is ejected from the game. In the slow pitch youth divisions, the batter and coach are both ejected.*
- **ILLEGAL PLAYER:** A player who enters the line-up without the right to the offensive or defensive position.
 - Examples of an illegal player:
 - Illegal use of the courtesy runner rule.
 - Using a player to pitch who was removed from the pitching position.
 - Unreported substitute.
 - EFFECT: *Handled as a protest and can be made at any time while the player is in the game.*
- **INELIGIBLE PLAYER:** A player who is unregistered or who does not meet requirements to register.
 - Examples of an ineligible player:
 - Playing under an assumed name.
 - Players not on the team roster.
 - Violating residence requirements.
 - Violating divisional age requirements.
 - Player(s) listed on two separate official GSL/USSSA rosters without an official release from the State Director.
 - EFFECT: *Result in a forfeited game if appealed properly.*



- **SHOES:** Offensive player wearing metal cleats will be declared out and ejected from the game. Defensive player will be ejected from the game. Baserunner(s) must return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch.
- **PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:** Players are permitted to wear any approved protective equipment. Protective equipment cannot be detached/can cause obstruction. Repeated acts could cause ejection from the game.
- **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROCEDURE:** A player bleeding or has an open wound, the bleeding must be stopped and the open wound covered with a covering strong enough to withstand the rigors of competition. Treatment must be immediate with the game being suspended for a "reasonable amount of time". Player must be substituted for if the time becomes unreasonable.
- **FITNESS OF FIELD:** Shall be decided by the Tournament Director, Tournament UIC and the Home Plate Umpire.
- **RUN SCORES:** A run shall not be scored if the third out of the inning is the result of:
 - The batter being put out before legally touching first base.
 - A base runner being forced out due to the batter becoming a base runner.
 - A base runner leaving base before a pitched ball reaches home plate or before the pitched ball is batted.
 - An appeal play at first base on the batter/runner for the third out of the inning.
- **BATTING OUT OF BATTER'S BOX:** To be called out of the box, one or both feet must be completely outside the lines of the box when contact is made with the ball.
 - The lines are considered inside the box – batter is not out if any part of the batter's foot is touching the lines.
 - The ball must be hit; and the foot must also be on the ground at the time the batter hits the ball.
 - The batter is out if his/her foot is touching home plate while batter is making contact with the ball.
 - Batting out of the batter's box is not an appeal play.
 - Call "Out of the Box" immediately whether the ball is fair or foul.
 - If there are not batting box lines evident, use good judgment and give the benefit of doubt to the batter.
- **DELIBERATELY CRASHING INTO A FIELDER WITH THE BALL:**
 - The ball becomes dead.
 - If it was an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the succeeding runner shall also be declared out.
 - If the collision occurs after the runner was declared out, the runner closest to home plate is declared out.
 - NOTE: *Keep in mind that a player DOES NOT have to slide. He/she may not deliberately (with great force) crash into a fielder WITH the ball.*
- **EXTRA PLAYER(S) (EP):**
 - A team provided it is made known prior to the start of the game may use one or two extra player(s).
 - The extra player(s) must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game.
 - The extra player(s) can play defense at any time – may go in and out of the defensive lineup as long as he keeps his position in the batting order.
 - One or both extra player(s) may be substituted for at any time. The substitute must be a player who has not been in the game. The substitute becomes the EP.



- **REQUIREMENTS FOR THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**
 - A team may play a maximum of ten (10) players on defense and a minimum of nine (9) players. If a team starts with nine (9) players the vacant tenth spot in the batting order is subject to the "automatic out" and shall be declared an out the entire game. If the tenth player arrives, he/she may not enter the game in the tenth spot. *EXCEPTION: In league play only.*
 - A team may play with eleven (11) or twelve (12) players if the EP(s) is used.
 - If the EP or any other player is removed or ejected from the game with no substitute to replace him or her, the vacated spot in the batting order will be scored as an out.
 - If the EP or any other player is removed because of an injury and no substitute is available to replace him or her, the vacated spot in the batting order will be an out.
 - If a team using an EP has a player removed because of an injury or ejection with no substitute available, the team may finish with ten (10) players, but is still subject to the penalty having the vacated spot being scored as an out.
- **FAKE TAG:** Occurs when a fielder deceives the runner, causing him to slide or stop running when no play is being made on him.
 - Obstruction is called when a fake tag is made as mentioned above. The Umpire gives the delayed dead ball signal and lets the play continue to its completion. The Umpire awards the base(s) the runner would have gotten had there been no obstruction.
 - When the obstruction occurs on a fake tag, the fielder will be automatically ejected from the game.
- **FALLING OVER THE FENCE ON A CATCH:** When a fielder catches the ball in the air and his momentum carries him through, or over the fence, the catch is good, the batter is out, and with less than two (2) outs all runners advance one base without liability to be put out.
 - When the fielder catches the ball *before* he touches the ground outside the playing area, the catch is good.
 - When the fielder catches the ball *after* he touches the ground outside the playing area, the catch is not allowed.
- **FORFEITS:** Only the plate umpire may forfeit a game.
 - Team fails to appear on the field, or refuses to begin the game when it has been scheduled to start.
 - When the game is being played, a team refuses to play or resume play when instructed to by the umpire.
 - Team uses tactics to delay or hasten the playing of the game.
 - Player/manager who has been ejected fail to leave the field immediately when ordered to do so.
 - Team does not have the designated number of players to begin or continue a game.
 - When the base umpire forfeits a game and the plate umpire agrees, the plate umpire should announce the forfeit to prevent a protest from being filed.
 - If the plate umpire disagrees with the called forfeit by the base umpire, the plate umpire can and should reverse the forfeit decision.
 - The umpire may forfeit the game if physically attacked by a player/coach or spectator.
- **ILLEGAL PITCH:** Is a pitch that does not reach a minimum height of five (5) feet FROM THE GROUND or exceeds ten (10) feet at its highest point above the ground.
 - The umpire shall not or will not give a vocal warning or a delayed ball signal to the batter or the pitcher on an illegally pitched ball.
- **INTERFERENCE:** The types of interference are:
 - An act of the offensive player or coach who impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. Including vocal interference.
 - When a spectator interferes with a defensive player who, in the judgment of the umpire, could have caught a live ball.
 - When an umpire causes offensive interference



- **OBSTRUCTION:** The three major types of obstruction are:
 - An obstructed runner being played on – the ball is dead and all runners are awarded the bases they would have gotten had the obstruction no occurred.
 - An obstructed runner not being played on – umpire signals delayed dead ball – other runners may be put out; the obstructed runner may not be put out unless he advances past the base he would have gotten if her were not obstructed.
 - When a defensive player hinders or prevents a hitter from striking or hitting a pitched ball.
- **INTENTIONAL COLLISION:** The base runner must be called out if he remains on his feet and deliberately (with great force) crashes into the defensive player who has the ball. The ball becomes dead and all runners must return to the bases last touched when the collision occurred. If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected. NOTE: *Runners DO NOT have to slide; the runner just can't deliberately cause a collision.*
- **OVERTHROWS:**
 - Runners are always awarded two (2) bases on overthrows that become blocked.
 - When it's the first throw from an infielder, two bases are awarded from the last base possessed at the time of the pitch.
 - When all runners, including the batter-runner have advanced at least one base when an overthrow occurs, the two bases will be awarded from where the runners were at the time of the throw.
- **TIME:** When a ball is held in the infield after a hit, and in the judgment of the umpire, all is play is completed the umpire shall call time. Players should realize that time is not automatic, nor is time out until the umpire calls time.
- **FOUL BALL:** Base runners may not advance on a third strike foul ball including a legally caught foul fly. Prior to the third strike all foul balls are playable and runners may advance.

NOTES:



SECTION VI – OFFICIAL GSL SLOW PITCH UMPIRE UNIFORM

All GSL Umpires must be registered and have a valid registration number. All GSL umpires must wear an Official GSL umpiring uniform consisting of the following:

- Official GSL umpire shirt w/embroidered logo.
 - NOTE: Any clothing worn under the official umpire shirt must be plain white with no writing or graphics of any kind.
- Black trousers with belt loops.
 - NOTE: Trousers do not include jeans, sweatpants, jogging pants, or other pants or slacks that would not be considered dress trousers.
- Black shorts with belt loops.
 - *NOTE: Black shorts, with belt loops, may be worn at all levels of GSL sanctioned play. It is up to the discretion of the Tournament Director or UIC to allow umpires to wear shorts or trousers during all post-season play. It is recommended that umpires, in cooperation with the league/tournament Umpire-In-Chief, coordinate their uniforms to look alike, i.e. one Umpire wears shorts, both wear shorts. This is the same for trousers. In Tournament play, all umpires must dress alike. If the UIC declares shorts or long pants for the day, **EVERY** umpire must comply or they will be replaced.
- Black Belt.
- Black socks with trousers and black socks that cover the ankle with black shorts.
- Black shoes. Shoes may have a logo of white, gray, or orange.
- NOTE: Black official (umpire) shoes bearing the white logo, trademark or manufacturers name is legal. NO WALKING BOOTS OR CASTS PERMITTED.
- GSL cap w/official GSL Logo. Caps are not an option and MUST be worn for the duration of every GSL sanctioned game.
- Black ball bag w/official GSL logo.
 - NOTE: Ball bag must be worn on the hip or slightly to the rear of hip.
- *NOTE: Any umpire apparel (hat, jacket, etc.) that is issued to an umpire for being assigned to a special event may NOT be worn after the conclusion of said special event as a part of the official GSL Umpire uniform.

NOTES:
