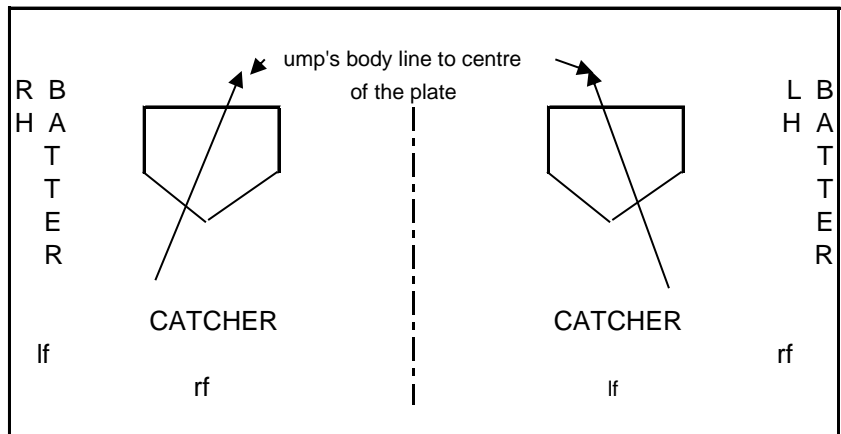


PLATE MECHANICS (Calling Balls and Strikes)

The 'Slot'

To call balls and strikes, the plate umpire must be in the 'slot' position, as shown to the right. Note that the 'slot' exposes part of the umpire to the pitch. The umpire DOES NOT hide behind the catcher. The body is angled toward the centre of the plate, then the umpire must turn the head toward the pitcher.

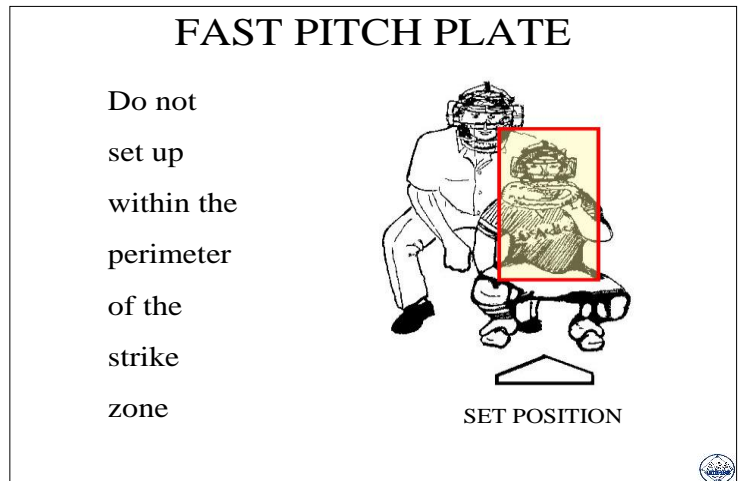
When standing in the slot, the foot nearest the batter is slightly ahead. We refer to this as heel-to-toe, as the heel of the front foot lines up with the toe of the back foot.



The 'Set' Position

While the pitcher is getting ready, be relaxed while in the 'slot'. As the pitcher begins her windup, get into the "set" position. To do this, crouch down, keeping your back as straight as possible, so that your eyes are at the top of the batter's strike zone. Be sure to protect your exposed hands and arms. Watch the ball leave the pitcher's hand and follow it directly into the catcher's glove. While in the 'set' position, there should be no body movement except for a possible slight turn of the head just as the ball reaches the catcher. Follow the pitch through the strike zone or past the plate as you determine whether the pitch is a ball or a strike.

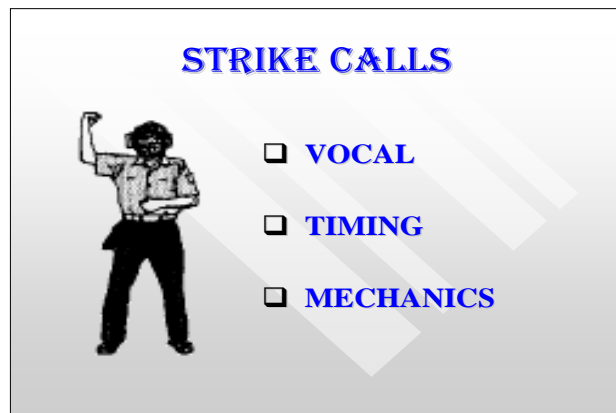
(NOTE: In the picture to the right, the umpire is using an old mechanic. Now he should be angled toward the centre of the plate with his head turned toward the pitcher.)



Calling Balls and Strikes

If the pitch is a ball, while still down in the 'set' position make the verbal "ball" call. Do not call it too early. Wait until the ball is at least in the catcher's glove. After the call, then you stand up out of the 'set' position.

If the pitch is a strike, while still in the 'set' position make the verbal "strike" call. Again, do not call it too early. Wait until the pitch at least hits the catcher's glove. After the call, then you stand, followed by the strike signal.

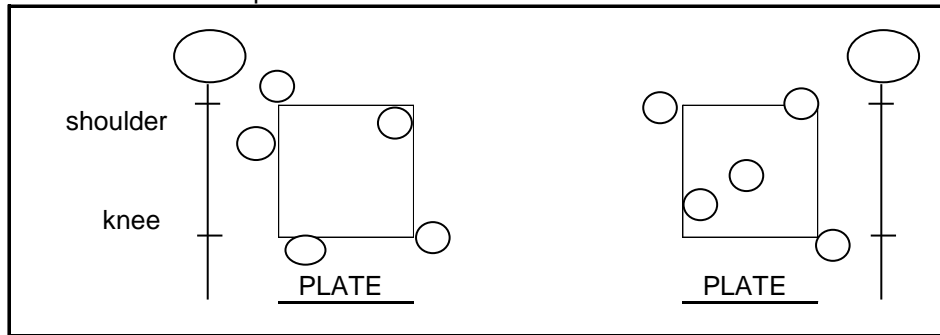


- Ball - 1. Call 2. Stand
- Strike - 1. Call 2. Stand 3. Signal

THE INDICATOR IS ALWAYS IN YOUR LEFT HAND.

The Strike Zone

The ball has to only touch any part the strike zone to be called a strike. A common mistake of young umpires is that they do not call strikes on pitches where only a part of the ball is in the strike zone. Below are all examples of strikes. **DO NOT JUST LOOK FOR THE PERFECT STRIKE.**



REVIEW

TO CALL BALLS AND STRIKES, BE IN THE '**SET**' POSITION WHILE USING THE '**SLOT**'.

NO BODY MOVEMENT AS YOU TRACK THE BALL FROM THE PITCHER TO THE CATCHER.

DELAY YOUR "BALL" OR "STRIKE" CALL. BE CRISP AND DISTINCT WITH YOUR MECHANICS.

BE AWARE OF THE COMPLETE STRIKE ZONE.

INDICATOR IN YOUR LEFT HAND

PLATE MECHANICS (Positioning on Hits)

Infield Hits - No Base Runners or Runner on 1st only

Leave your 'slot' from the **left side** of the catcher, as you remove your mask with your **left hand**, and watch the play as you **run up** the 1st baseline. When you see the fielder throw toward 1st base, **stop and observe** the play at 1st. Be ready to be of **assistance** to you partner. Be aware of your possible responsibility at third.

Infield Hits - With Base Runners (Other than above)

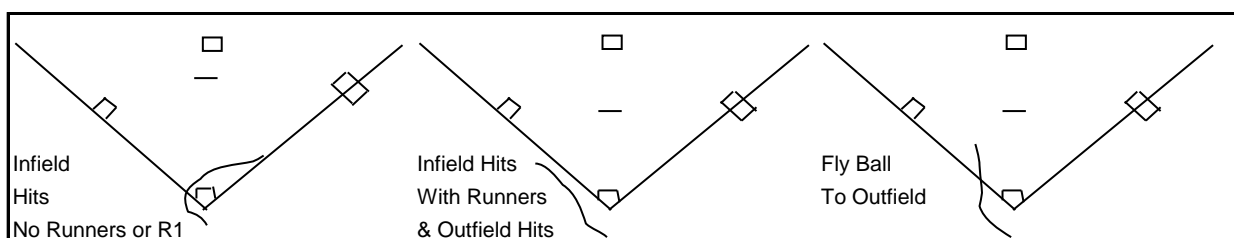
If there is no play on a runner at home plate, watch the play as you move part way **toward 3rd base** with mask removed. If the play develops so that you may have to help your partner by making a call at 3rd base, hustle into position to make that call. If the play develops so that there may be a call at home plate, get back there to make a possible call. Use this same mechanic when there is a runner on 1st only, who is stealing, and the catcher throws the ball. If a poor throw results in the runner trying for 3rd you will only have to hustle a short distance for the call at 3rd. Keep in mind to get to the **leading edge** of a base to make a call. **Watch ALL RUNNERS touch home plate.**

Outfield Hits

Leave your 'slot' from the **left side** of the catcher and remove your mask as you watch the ball. Move partially toward **3rd base** as you may have to help your partner with a call there. Get back to home if the play develops so that a play may be made there. **Watch ALL RUNNERS touch home plate.**

OUTFIELD FLY BALLS

Leave your 'slot' from the **left side** of the catcher watching the ball as you remove your mask. Hustle at a slight angle toward the outfielder making the play. If she catches the ball, give the verbal 'Out' call with the 'Out' signal. Be aware of base **runners tagging up** on the touch of the ball.



REVIEW

THE PLATE UMPIRE MUST BE MOVING ON ALL HITS.

LEAVE FROM THE LEFT SIDE OF THE CATCHER.

ON ALL HITS, REMOVE YOUR MASK USING THE LEFT HAND.

WATCH ALL RUNNERS TOUCH HOME PLATE.(3rd BASE AS WELL)

BE AWARE OF HELPING YOUR PARTNER WITH A CALL AT 3rd. (or anywhere else)

BE AWARE OF YOUR RESPONSIBILITY OF RUNNERS TAGGING ON FIRST TOUCHED FLY BALL CATCHES

PLATE MECHANICS (Miscellaneous Points)

Calling Foul/Fair Balls

Do not call a hit "Foul" until it is **touched** or until it **stops**. Do **NOT** verbalize a "Fair" call; just **point** to fair territory. On hits near the line, position yourself **on the line** (with mask removed) facing the ball to get the proper perspective on the call. The plate umpire makes all fair/foul calls.

The Plate Meeting

This meeting with the coaches and captains is **very important**. Introduce yourself and your partner, who should be standing on your right. Go over any unusual **field conditions** that need to be pointed out. Make sure that everyone is aware of all **amended rules** that pertain to the game. Shake hands before ending the plate conference. Also, this meeting should be held at least **five minutes** before the scheduled start of the game, if possible. This means you and your partner must be ready for the game at least ten minutes before game start.

Between Innings

Keep in **control of the game** between innings. Stand along the **1st base foul line** about 15 feet from home plate. Observe the players, coaches, etc. **Be aware** of what is going on at all times. Count the warm-up pitches.

Communication with Players/Coaches

Always be **polite and respectful** when talking to the players and coaches. Be a **good listener** to be a good communicator. **Remove your mask** if a player or coach, after being granted "Time", approaches to talk to you. Give the count often enough so that you will not have to be asked. Always give the count when two strikes or three balls have been reached. As well, give the count after there has been a delay for any reason.

Check Swing Request

If you give a "Ball" call when the batter has checked her swing, and the catcher appeals to you to check with your partner, **step away** from behind the plate as you **remove your mask, point** to your partner as you **ask** if the batter swung. You have to except whatever decision you get from your partner. Be sure to give the count regardless of the call.

Infield Fly

The plate umpire makes all 'infield fly' calls.

Catch, No-Catch

The plate umpire makes all 'catch/no-catch' calls.

Cleaning Home Plate

Always clean home plate with your mask removed and your back toward 2nd base. Clean it after the warm-up pitches. Keep it clean during an inning. Do not have a coach or player need to have to ask you to clean it.