

# THE BASE UMPIRE

## STARTING POSITIONS

- A. With no one on base; 12 - 15 feet past first base, and about 2 feet in foul territory
- B. With a runner on first only; about 6 feet behind the second baseman, 3 feet to her left
- C. With any other possible base runner situation; about 6 feet behind the shortstop, 3 feet to her left.

## SET POSITIONS

From starting position A: While waiting for the pitch, stand relaxed. When the pitch is on the way, shift to the balls of your feet being ready to move.

From starting position B: While waiting for the pitch, stand relaxed. Just before the pitch is released, bend at the back slightly and place your hands on your upper thigh. Be on the balls of your feet ready to move.

From starting position C: Same as B.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The base umpire has other duties than just to call 'safe' or 'out' at the bases. These include:

- Checking for leadoffs
- Checking for illegal pitches
- Assisting the plate umpire on a check swing appeal
- Looking for obstruction/interference
- Looking for missed bases
- Looking for runners who leave early on fly balls that are caught
- Batter-runners making an attempt for second after over-running first base

Notice that all three of the starting positions have the base umpire in the outfield side of the bases. There is an easy rule-of-thumb that we can follow to make sure we get into the proper position to make calls after pitch is hit.

### **BALL IN – UMP OUT**

### **BALL OUT – UMP IN**

It is very simple. When the ball is hit to an infielder, the base umpire remains in the outfield side of the bases. (BALL IN-UMP OUT) If the ball is hit to an outfielder, the base umpire moves inside the bases. (BALL OUT-UMP IN) However, there are proper positions for the base umpire to be whether they are IN or OUT after a hit.

### **BALL IN – UMP OUT**

- A. From the first base starting position the base umpire hustles two steps into fair territory to make the safe/out call.
- B. From the second base starting position the base umpire may have to make the call at second, first or both. It is important not to anticipate where the play will be, but to wait until the fielder commits to one of the bases.
- C. From the shortstop position the base umpire could be making a call at any of the three bases. Again, do not anticipate.

## BALL OUT – UMP IN

- A. The base umpire runs into the infield while observing where the ball is, button-hooks toward first to see whether the batter-runner touches first.
- B. The base umpire runs into the infield while observing where the ball is, turns to face the ball and lets the play direct him/her to the proper position. Be aware of the base runner from first as you move into the infield to make sure you do not collide.
- C. Same as #2 above, but it will be the runner from second that will have to be avoided.

In all situations the base umpire must not be moving when making a call. The base umpire must come to a complete stop and get into the set position. Do not hurry the call.

## **READ...PAUSE...REACT**

It is important to remember to be the proper distance away to make a call. An umpire can be too close or too far away. Try to be 10 -12 feet away when making a call. However, do not keep running to try to get closer; get as close as you can, then stop and get set.

To make good calls an umpire keeps these four elements of the play in front of him/her:

**BALL BASE RUNNER FIELDER**