

Umpire Evaluation Standards (revised 3 15 2025)

These standards are adapted from the National Federation umpiring standards for softball. Please use these standards as a guide when completing the umpire evaluation form provided.

PLATE WORK

Timing

Makes the pitch call after the catcher has caught the ball, not as the ball is approaching or crossing the plate. Listen for the “pop” of the ball hitting the catcher glove compared to the voice of the umpire to know when the pitch decision was made.

Body in Position

Works in the “slot” between the catcher and batter with head higher than the catcher’s mask to allow for an unobstructed view of the entire plate. Eyes remain horizontal with ground and watch the ball from the pitcher’s hand into the catcher’s glove. Establishes a “locked” position, does not drift side to side or up and down with the pitch. Does not flinch on swings or tips.

Style / Mechanics of Calls

Gives clear authoritative signals; possesses smooth, relaxed styles that projects confidence but does not showboat. Voice is loud enough to be heard but does not draw undue attention.

Rotation into infield for calls

Plate umpire is Not stationary behind home plate on plays. Follows batter-runner up first base line looking for pulled foot, interference, obstruction, or swipe tags. Rotates into infield to cover runners when base umpire goes to outfield to cover fly balls. Properly rotates up to 3rd base for 2nd plays and other calls as required.

Consistency of Strike Zone

Maintains the same zone throughout the game regardless of the team or inning, in accordance with the strike zone as defined in the rulebook.

BASE WORK

Timing

Do not rush or anticipate the play. Allow everything that can happen to happen before making the call. Don’t think – react!

Positioning

Generally, aligns oneself to form a 90-degree angle to the throw coming into a play. Moves to a position to be able to see swipe tags. Establishes a “set position” with feet solid and HEAD NOT MOVING when deciding an out/safe call. Should watch the ball into the fielder’s glove and look for catch or tag before making a call. Properly aligns themselves in the “B” or “C” positions with runners on base. Fielders at time will generate a different base position – not all infielders set up alike.

Style / Mechanics of Calls

Gives clear, authoritative signals and possesses smooth, relaxed styles that project confidence but does not showboat. Voice is loud enough to be heard but does not draw undue attention.

Rotation into infield for batted balls

The base umpire, when responsible for runner, does not watch the ball, but observe the runner, moving into the infield watching the batter-runner touch first base and each base thereafter unless the plate umpire takes the runner.

Judgment

Get the call right.

CREW MECHANICS & COMMUNICATION

Prior to game and Pregame conference

The crew communicate to each other at least 24 hours in advance of game time. Arrive at field 30 minutes before game time. Pregame conference about duties and responsibilities. *One umpire should be watching the ball and one umpire should be watching runners!*

Proper ball coverage during the game

Crew communicates to each other about who is taking the ball for catch / no catch. The plate umpire has primary responsibility for all infield fly calls. The call should be made when the fly ball reaches its apex of flight and signal with the arm straight up. The base umpire echoes plate umpire's call. The base umpire will signal and vocalize infield fly situations if plate umpire does not. The plate umpire, when the base umpire is in the "B" or "C" positions, has all foul/fair balls hit towards the foul lines. *One umpire should be watching the ball, and one umpire should be watching runners!*

Proper base coverage during the game

The umpire who is not responsible for the ball is watching the base runners looking for interference, obstruction, touching bases, etc. Don't forget the mechanics. Generally, the plate umpire has base runners coming into 3rd base and home, with field umpire watching runners come up first base line and around 2nd base. Again, this may change based on the batted ball situation, but *one umpire should be watching the ball and one umpire should be watching runners!*

Tag-up coverage communicated

Umpires are talking to each other during the flight of a fly ball to indicate who has the tag-up, catch, and subsequent possible play. This should be done verbally during the flight of the ball and discussed at the pre-game meeting

EFFORT & PROFESSIONALISM

Focus / Concentration

Consistent concentration and not distracted. Ready for every pitch and play.

Hustle

Movement with a PURPOSE during a play to get into a PROPER POSITION to cover plays. Walking on the field is not appropriate when obtaining a position on the field.

Demeanor

Displays a conscientious and earnest desire to carry out on-field duties without showboating or becoming too involved in the game. Appears relaxed but shows interest in the game. Treats players and coaches with respect and be approachable.

Appearance

Proper display of uniform, pressed clothes and dressed same as partner. Shoes are predominantly black and clean. Hat properly worn.

No Fraternalization

Avoids *excessive*, casual and/or unnecessary conversation with uniformed personnel or spectators during the game.

Time management of game

Procedures in place to monitor 1-minute between inning and pitcher 20 second rule to deliver pitch. Use of stopwatches for consistency of time is recommended. Proper use of line-up cards, reporting substitutions efficiently, effectively and efficiently puts ball in play after dead ball situations. All timing rule penalties applied effectively.

Knowledge of rules

Umpires apply ALL national federation rules. Umpires held a pre-game coaches and captains conference. Officials should be able to explain rules to coaches when asked for interpretation.

PLEASE KEEP AND USE THESE STANDARDS WHEN EVALUATING UMPIRES!