

**2023**



# **UMPIRE MANUAL**

[negoa.org](http://negoa.org)

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# INTRODUCTION

Fellow Officials,

**W**e would like to take this time to welcome you to the Northeast Georgia Officials Association (NEGOA)-Baseball division. We hope this season will be rewarding for each umpire and we look forward to a productive season. We thank you for your commitment to NEGOA, and the umpiring profession.

This manual is being provided as a source of information and resources that you will need throughout the season. Please refer to it for answers to questions regarding: Policies, Procedures, Contacts, Meeting Dates, Mechanics, etc.

Our professionalism, attitude and work ethic will set the tone and direction for this association not only this year, but for years to come. Let's work together and continue to make NEGOA the best baseball association in the state!

Respectfully,

## **NEGOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Mike Armstrong | Executive Secretary

Tom Rush

Chris Barnes

Alex Perry

Jeff Christie | Training Officer

Steve Porter | Communications



## 2023 NEGOA BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION

### BOARD:

Jeff Christie . . . Board Member  
1320 Hickory Hill Drive  
Watkinsville, Georgia 30677  
Cell: 706.340.9597 Home: 706.769.4644  
Email: [jchristie512@gmail.com](mailto:jchristie512@gmail.com)

Steve Porter. . . Board Member/Communications  
174 Lauren Marie Drive  
Braselton, Georgia 30517  
Cell: 404.925.2677  
Email: [stevenmporter915@gmail.com](mailto:stevenmporter915@gmail.com)  
[negoa@negoa.org](mailto:negoa@negoa.org)

Mike Armstrong . . . Executive Secretary  
525 Ashbrook Court  
Athens, Georgia 30605  
Cell: 434.579.7084  
Email: [army54@charter.net](mailto:army54@charter.net)

Alex Perry, Board Member  
4281 Moons Grove Church Road  
Danielsville, Georgia 30533  
Cell: 706.870.8321  
Email: [alexperry59@gmail.com](mailto:alexperry59@gmail.com)

Chris Barnes . . . Board Member  
247 Parkway Drive  
Athens, Georgia 30606  
Cell: 706.206.0499  
Email: [chrsbrns@mac.com](mailto:chrsbrns@mac.com)

Tom Rush, Board Member  
1200 Weston Way  
Monroe, Georgia 30655  
Cell: 678.993.9461  
Email: [tom@terush.com](mailto:tom@terush.com)

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If you have a question about Mechanics contact . . . Alex Perry

If you have a question about Rules contact . . . Tom Rush

If you have a question about Uniforms/Apparel contact . . . Chris Barnes.

If you have a question about Equipment contact . . . Mike Armstrong

If you have a question about Background Checks contact . . . Mike Armstrong

If you have a question about Meeting Attendance contact . . . Alex Perry

If you have a question about NEGOA or GHSA contact . . . Jeff Christie

If you have questions about our Website contact . . . Steve Porter

If you have a question or problem with Game Assignments contact . . . Mike Armstrong

## IMPORTANT DATES - 2023

Tuesday, Jan. 3, 7:00pm

The Yard (all meetings)  
111 South Barnet Shoals Road  
Watkinsville 30677

2 Man Instructions  
Balks  
Plate Instructions

Tuesday Jan 10 7:00pm

Rules review

Mon. Jan 16 7:00pm

Rules review  
Game Management

Mon. Jan 23 7:00pm

Rules Review  
Balks  
Plate Instructions  
2 Man Instructions  
Online Rules Clinic 1/23-2/13

Mon. Jan 30 7:00pm

Rules Review  
2 Man Instructions  
Balks  
Plate Instructions  
Online Exam 1/30-2/13

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## HELPFUL WEBSITES

[negoa.org](http://negoa.org)

NEGOA Website.

[reftown.com](http://reftown.com)

NEGOA Assigning Website

[ghsa.net](http://ghsa.net)

Georgia High School Association

[hudson51wear.com](http://hudson51wear.com)

Equipment/Uniforms

[honigs.com](http://honigs.com)

Equipment/Uniforms

[gerrydavis.com](http://gerrydavis.com)

Equipment/Uniforms

[purchaseofficials.com](http://purchaseofficials.com)

Equipment/Uniforms

[mapquest.com](http://mapquest.com)

Field/Clinic Directions

[weather.com](http://weather.com)

Game Day Forecast

## NEGOA VENUES

### GHSA

Athens Academy	Hart County	Oconee County
Athens Christian	Jackson County	Oglethorpe County
Alcovy	Jefferson	Prince Avenue
Cedar Shoals	Lake Oconee Academy	Putnam County
Clarke Central	Lincoln County	Social Circle
Commerce	Madison County	Walnut Grove
East Jackson	Monroe Area	Washington-Wilkes
Eastside	Morgan County	Newton County
Elbert County	North Oconee	
Greene County		

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### GISA/GICAA

Monsignor Donovan  
Westminster Christian Academy  
Loganville Christian  
George Walton

## PAY SCALE/ GAME FEES

- Varsity Single Game: \$95 per umpire
- Varsity Double Header: \$165
- Non-Varsity Single Game: \$80
- Non-Varsity Double Header: \$140

State Playoffs: \$115.00 per umpire, per game (no additional paid travel)  
\$125.00 per umpire per game, Semi finals and finals

## NEGOA FIELD DIRECTIONS (from Athens)

*Athens Academy . . . 1281 Spartan Lane, Athens, GA 30604*

Highway 441 south, school approximately one mile south of loop on left. Field just inside main gate.

*Athens Christian School . . . 1270 Highway 29, North, Athens, GA 30610*

Highway 29 north past Athens Tech. School on right across from gas station. Field around back.

*Alcovy High School . . . 14567 highway 36, Covington, GA, 30014*

☛ *Barrow Academy of Arts and Sciences . . . games are played at Victor Lord Park Field 6.  
206 2nd St. Winder, GA*

*Cedar Shoals HS . . . 1300 Cedar Shoals Drive, Athens, GA 30605*

Cedar Shoals drive, ½ mile from Gaines School Road on right. Field adjacent football stadium.

*Clarke Central HS . . . 350 South Milledge Avenue Athens, GA 30605*

Enter school at Baxter Street entrance, between Milledge Ave. and Rocksprings St.

☛ *Commerce High School Games . . . played at Tiger Field, 204 Carson St., Commerce, GA*

Criswell Park: 1190 Criswell Rd, Monroe, GA, 30655 (Youth MS – some games; & Prince Ave. MS – all games) From Athens: Take Highway 78 West to Hwy 11. Turn left on Hwy 11 South. Go approx. 4.2 miles through downtown Monroe, across RR tracks, and then turn right onto Criswell Road. Park is approx. 0.2 miles on right.

*Elbert County HS . . . 600 Abernathy Circle, Elberton, GA 30635*

Hwy 29 north to right onto Highway 72 just past Athens Tech. Stay on Highway 72 into Elberton.

Turn right onto Jones Street. Field around back of school.

☛ *Elbert Co. Middle School (plays some games at McWilliams Rec Park): From Athens Take Highway 72 east into Elberton. Stay on Highway 72 through Elberton. Highway and Highway 17 split just past Walmart and hwy 72 turns left. Turn left staying on Highway 72 and go 1/2 mile. Turn right on Mobley Hill Road and the entrance to the park is on the right.*

*East Jackson . . . 1435 Hoods Mill Road, Commerce, GA 30529*

Take 441 North to left on Hoods Mill Road. School is on the left about 1/4 of mile.

Take second entrance (by the sign). Take first right. Field will be right in front of you.

*Eastside . . . 10245 Eagle Drive, Covington, GA 30014*

Highway 78 west to Monroe, exit Hwy. 138 south. Highway 138 to left in Walnut Grove on Highway 81.

Left onto Highway 142, becomes Covington Bypass. Go past Wal-Mart, school 1 ½ miles on left.

*Franklin Middle . . . 485 Turkey Creek Road – Carnesville, GA 30521.* Road is off of Highway 59 - traveling toward Lavonia, it is 2 miles from the I-85 Highway 106 exit - Wilco Truck stop, Echo Restaurant, etc.

here. Turn right onto Turkey Creek Road and the school is located on the left, just a small distance down the road.

*George Walton Academy . . . 1 Bulldog Drive Monroe, GA 30655*

Highway 78 west to exit Highway 138 south. Left at 1st stop light; left at 2nd stop light (next to Wal-Mart), right into school.

*Greene County . . . 1002 South Main St. Greensboro, GA 30642*

Highway 441 south past Athens Academy, left onto Highway 15 south (through Watkinsville). Into Greensboro, left (still Highway. 15). Right at traffic light in center of town (Highway 44). School approximately 1 mile on left, field behind school.

*Hart County . . . 59 5th Street, Hartwell, GA 30643*

Highway 29 North into Hartwell. Right at first light (in front of Bell's shopping center). Continue on 29 through town past McDonalds. Turn right on Campbell St. (just past Huddle House) then turn left on Powell Rd, field is on the right.

*Jackson County . . . 1668 Winder Highway, Jefferson, GA 30549*

Prince Avenue/Highway 129 north to Jefferson Bypass. Left onto Highway 11. School 1/5 mile on right. First entrance into school, field around back near livestock barn.

*Jasper County MS . . . 1289 College St., Monticello, GA 31064*

Highway 441 South to Madison. Stay on 441-S By-Pass until it ends at light. Straight through light, go approximately 1 mile on Lions Club Road to end. Turn left on Highway 83 South to Monticello. In Monticello, turn right at 1st light. Go 1 mile on Highway 229 North. School and field are on left.

*Jefferson . . . 575 Washington Street, Jefferson, GA 30549\*\*\*\**

Highway 129 north to Jefferson Bypass. Right on Old Pendergrass Road (across from Beef O'Brady's). Field on left.

*Jefferson Middle School will play at the rec fields . . .*

Directions from Athens: Go north on the 129 bypass. Take a left on Old Pendergrass Rd. The rec fields will be on your left.

Directions from Jefferson High School: Go out Old Pendergrass Rd. Go past the baseball field, cross over the bypass. The rec fields will be on your left.



*Lake Oconee Academy . . . 1021 Titan Circle, Greensboro, GA 30642*

From Watkinsville, take Highway 15 South to Greensboro. At first light, turn left on Highway 278. Go into town, turn right on Highway 44 West. Go approx. 8 miles towards Eatonton. Turn right on Cary Station Road. School and field are approx. ½ mile on your right.

*Lincoln County . . . 78 East to 78E/GA10/GA17 to US378/GA47 to left on Lincoln Ave to right on Metasville Road. Last intersection. Field is in back of the school.*

*Loganville Field*

From Monroe: Take Highway 78 towards Gwinnett about 8 miles. Turn right at the Traffic Light at Highway 81. (The Maxie Price Chevrolet is on the left). Then first right. Left at football stadium. Field is down on the left.

*Loganville Christian . . . 2575 Highway 81, Loganville, GA*

From Athens take Highway 78 west toward Monroe. From 78 w take 138 toward Conyers. In Walnut Grove, turn right onto Highway 81 toward Loganville. Loganville Christian is on hwy 81.

*Madison County . . . 600 Madison Street, Danielsville, GA 30633*

Highway 29 north into Danielsville, right onto Madison Street (at courthouse circle in center of town). Field ¾ mile on left, across from school.

*Madison County MS . . . Highway 172, Danielsville, GA 30633*

Highway 29 north to Athens Tech, right onto Hwy 72. Go through Hull, then Colbert. Approx. 1.5 miles past Colbert, turn left onto Highway 172 towards Hartwell. School is approx. 2.5 miles on your left.

*Monroe Area . . . 300 Double Springs Church Rd, Monroe, GA 30656*

Highway 78 west to exit Highway 11, turn left. Approximately 1 mile north, left on Double Springs Church Road. School on right, field around back.

*Monsignor Donovan . . . 590 Lavender Road, Athens, GA 30606*

Prince Avenue/Highway 129 approx. 4 miles to left on Lavender Road. School approx. 1 mile on right.

*Morgan County: 1231 College Drive, Madison, GA 30650 \*\*\*\**

Hwy 441 south to Madison Bypass. Right on East Avenue. Bear right at fork. Field on right, parking across street from field.

*Nathanael Greene . . . 4731 Highway 15, Greensboro, GA 30642*

Highway 441 south to left onto Highway 15. Highway 15 into Greensboro, follow through Greensboro to Siloam. School is in Siloam on right on Highway 15.

*Newton County . . . 1 Ram Way, Covington, GA, 30014*

*North Oconee . . . 1081 Rocky Branch Road, Bogart, GA 30622*

Highway 441 south to right on Hog Mountain Road. Hog Mountain becomes Highway 53. School is on right at intersection of Highway 53 and Rocky Branch Rd. Enter off Highway 53, using entrance for Rocky Branch Elem.

*Oconee County . . . 2721 Hog Mountain Rd, Watkinsville, GA 30677*  
Hwy. 441 south to right on Hog Mountain Road. Hog Mountain becomes Hwy. 53.  
School is on left, follow dirt road beyond outfield and park at batting cages.

*Oglethorpe County . . . 749 Athens Road, Lexington, GA 30648*  
Hwy 78 east into Lexington. School is on right, field is next to football stadium.

*Prince Avenue . . . 2201 Ruth Jackson Rd, Bogart, GA 30622*  
Hwy 78 west to left on Ruth Jackson Rd. in Oconee County. School is on right.

*Putnam County . . . 300 War Eagle Dr., Eatonton, GA (GPS:1200 Madison Road, Eatonton, Ga 31024 )*  
Hwy. 441 south towards Eatonton. Approx. 10 miles south of I-20, school is on left just past the entrance for the Rock Eagle 4-H Center.

*Rockdale County . . . 1174 Bulldog Cir NE, Conyers, GA 30012*  
Take 78 West to 138 West. From Monroe to Conyers is about miles to the turn. After passing Sigman Road look for a right turn at Pine Log Road. Go about 1 mile, the baseball field in on the right at the corner of Pine Log and Bulldog Circle

*Salem . . . 3551 Underwood Rd, Conyers, GA 30013*  
Hwy. 78 west to exit Hwy 138 south. Go into Conyers, left at Waffle House onto Salem Rd.  
Right onto Old Salem Rd. Left onto Underwood Rd. School 1/10 mile on Underwood.

*Social Circle . . . 154 Alcova Drive, Social Circle, GA 30025*  
Hwy. 78 west to exit Hwy. 11, turn left. Go through Monroe into Social Circle, right at traffic light on to W. Hightower Trail. Turn left on Alcova Drive. School and field are down on the left.

*Walnut Grove . . . 4863 Gutherie Cemetary Road, Loganville, GA 30052*  
From Athens take Hwy 78 west toward Monroe. From 78 w take 138 toward Conyers. In Walnut Grove, turn right onto Hwy 81 toward Loganville. Take Gutherie Cemetary Road off of Hwy 81 to school.

*Washington-Wilkes . . . 1182 Tignall Road Washington, GA 30673*  
Hwy. 78 east to Washington, left on Hwy. 17 North. School is 1.8 miles on the right.

*Washington-Wilkes MS . . .* 📍 (MS plays at the “old HS field” next to National Guard Armory)  
Hwy. 78 east to Washington, right on Hwy. 44 into town. Right on Grove Street. Left on Water St.  
Field next to football stadium. (GPS field: 222 Ashley Drive, Washington Ga 30673)

*West Jackson MS . . . 400 Gum Springs Church Road Jefferson, GA 30549*

*West Walton Park (Loganville Legion Field . . . 925 Twin Lakes Rd., Loganville, GA 30052 - Highway 78*  
west through Monroe into Loganville, left on Tom Brewer Rd. (at intersection across from Loganville High School). Immediate right onto Twin Lakes Rd. Park entrance ¼ mile on left. (behind Loganville Ford)

*Westminster Christian Academy* . . . 1640 New High Shoals Rd., Watkinsville, GA 30677  
Take 441 South toward Watkinsville. Stay on 441 Bypass and turn right on New High Shoals Road.  
School is approx. ½ mile on right.

*Winder-Barrow* . . . 272 North Fifth Ave, Winder, GA 30680  
Highway 316 west to right on Hwy. 11. Go approximately 1 mile, Chimneys Golf Course on right.  
Into entrance of Chimneys, fields are on right before golf course.

☛ These teams do not play “at the school” so the GPS address to the school will not take you to where they play. Follow the written instructions.

## NEGOA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**Appearance & Conduct:** NEG OA umpires must keep in mind they are in the public eye. Each umpire should understand they are an official representative of NEG OA both on and off the field. Umpires should dress in a manner becoming his/her profession. NEG OA umpires should not wear any cap, shirt, jacket, or pants that have school logos of any NEG OA school going to or coming from any official duty. An umpire's behavior should always be legal, moral and in conformity with all rules of NEG OA. If an umpire is a spectator at any given game, umpires should not wear any portion of their uniform (hat, jacket, etc.) or identify themselves as an umpire to spectators. Public criticism of other umpires will not be tolerated, and is grounds for removal of NEG OA membership.

**Dress Code:** NEG OA umpires are required to dress in gray pants and Navy blue polo style shirt for travel to and from the game. For travel to playoffs, umpires will be required to wear the NEG OA monogrammed navy blue polo shirt and khaki pants. Umpires are also required to have all the uniforms necessary to work varsity games. The umpire crew must wear identical uniforms during the game (same color shirt and pants). [The NEG OA Navy Blue polo shirt will be made available to all umpires, but only required for those working the playoffs.] The following list is the official uniform adopted by the GHSA, and ratified by the NEG OA Board, and is not to be altered by any umpire.

- Navy hat with GHSA logo
- Black Belt
- Navy undershirt
- Navy Blue or Light Blue shirt w/ GHSA logo, embroidered or sublimated, on the left chest (again, both umpires MUST wear same)
- Navy Blue Pullover (Honig's K17-N is preferred)
- Gray slacks (plate and base)
- Navy Blue ball bags
- Navy Plate Coat (optional)
- Black or Navy gloves
- Black Protective Plate shoes
- Black Base Shoes (New Balance model 950 MLB is preferred)

**Equipment:** Umpires should ensure that they carry all of their equipment and uniforms to every game, including plate gear. Due to unforeseen circumstances, crews may need to reverse positions or change planned shirt and/or hat style. Bring all your gear – every game!

**Partner Communication:** NEG OA umpires are required to have MUTUAL CONTACT with their partners 48 hours prior to the game. You must have direct response (phone, text, or return email). Leaving a message is not sufficient.



The above gear is meant to be for the **Plate Umpire**. All of the items can be purchased from the approved NEGOA vendors.

**A)** Navy Plate Hat with the GHSA logo. **B)** Protective Face Mask. Buy a good one. \* Great idea to attach a throat guard to the mask for extra protection. **C)** Optional Hockey Style Mask **D)** Navy Umpire Shirt with the GHSA logo above the pocket (NO NUMBERS). **E)** Chest Protector. Buy a good one that protects your chest and your ribs (DO NOT buy a softball chest protector). **F)** Navy Blue Undershirt (dress warm with a long sleeve turtle neck as well) **G)** Heavy Navy Jacket with red on the shoulders...\*don't forget some black gloves. (there is a lightweight jacket available as well). **H)** Navy Ball Bags (always use two) **I)** 2" Patent Leather Belt **J)** Charcoal Plate Pants (no cuffs) **K)** Under Armor Leggings (works great under shin guards and extra warmth) **L)** Athletic Supporter and Cup (protect Bob and the Twins) **M)** Plate Brush (keep in your right back pocket) **N)** Indicator (get one like the one shown) **O)** Line-up Card Book **P)** Black Socks **Q)** Red Pen (you'll thank me) **R)** Black Plate Shoes. Get them with steel toes. They don't have to be shiny but, shiny ones make you look very professional.

Keep in mind, you're going to spend some money for this stuff so, keep it clean, pants and shirt ironed, and shoes clean.



The above gear is meant to be for the **Field Umpire**. All of the items can be purchased from the approved NEGQA vendors.

**A)** Navy Plate Hat with the GHSA logo. **B)** Navy Umpire Shirt with the GHSA logo above the pocket (NO NUMBERS). **C)** 2" Patent Leather Belt. **D)** Charcoal Field (or combo) Pants (no cuffs) **E)** Navy Blue Undershirt (dress warm with a long sleeve turtle neck as well) **F)** Heavy Navy Jacket with red on the shoulders...\*don't forget some black gloves. (there is a lightweight jacket available as well). **G)** Warm Gloves (black). **H)** Black Field Shoes. Buy some arch supports. They really help for those long games. **I)** Black Socks

Keep in mind, you're going to spend some money for this stuff so, keep it clean, pants and shirt ironed, and shoes clean.

**Availability:** Umpires are to keep availability calendar on the RefTown web site current at all times. If an umpire has an open date and then declines an assignment(s) you must immediately notify the Assigning Secretary of the reason for declining the assignment. We play baseball six days a week (never on Sunday)! While there are relatively few games on Saturdays, it is still important to mark your calendar for every day you are not available. If the availability calendar says you can work, we expect you to be available to work. **PLEASE! Accept all assignments as soon as possible after being posted.** You will receive an email notifying of your assignments as soon as they are posted. Please be prompt in accepting them. If you have an emergency or situation beyond your control and must decline an assignment contact the Assigning Secretary as soon as possible! As of January 1, 2016, a progressive discipline system has been implemented by the Board of Directors for refused assignments, as follows:

- 1st declined assignment – WARNING from Assigning Secretary
- 2nd declined assignment - \$75.00 Fine, assessed by Assigning Secretary
- 3rd declined assignment - \$150.00 Fine, assessed by Assigning Secretary
- 4th and/or subsequent violations – Immediate suspension and mandatory appearance with NEGOA Board of Directors

**THE CARDINAL SIN OF UMPIRING: NOT SHOWING UP FOR AN ASSIGNMENT!** *The second sin of umpiring is showing up LATE!*

**Failure to Show:** Any umpire who fails to show for a properly assigned game without an immediate emergency will be fined 1 full game fee, and indefinitely suspended. The NEGOA Board will conduct an investigation and the umpire's remaining schedule will be suspended until the investigation is completed.

**Traveling to School:** Umpires must arrive at the school no later than 30 minutes (1 hour for playoffs) prior to the scheduled start time. Once the crew is present, one member should report to the Head Coach of the home school that all umpires are present and confirm the start time. Any travel emergency or issue which would prevent the umpire from arriving at the school on time must be reported to the following immediately:

- (1) Assigning Secretary
- (2) the Head Coach of home school by cell phone.

**Weather Policy:** The Assigning Secretary or his designee will contact by email, text or phone when notified about games canceled or delayed due to weather. On days when the conditions are marginal or on days after a wet period, if you are unsure about whether or not a game is to be played, you are to contact the Assigning Secretary or the school directly to find out if the game is being played. Relay this information to your partner so that both of you will not have to do this. When games are rained out or otherwise canceled, the Assigning Secretary will cancel the game on the RefTown Website as soon as possible.

**Canceled or Forfeited Games:** Coaches are supposed to inform the Assigning Secretary by 1:00 p.m. of a game day cancellation. This is not always adhered to, as some teams will work on the field as long as they can before making a decision. Regardless, if a game is canceled prior to the crew departing for the game site, there is no pay authorized. If a game is canceled after the crew departs to the site, 1/2 game fee plus travel will be paid to the crew. If a game is started and not completed, the crew is to be paid in full, including travel. If a crew arrives at a game site and the game is forfeited for any reason, the crew is to receive full pay.

**Re-assignment:** No umpire shall individually re-assign any of his/her games to any other umpire! If you have an emergency or situation which requires you to decline a previously accepted game, you must contact the Assigning Secretary.

**Payment:** Payment for games worked by NEGEOA umpires, unless otherwise noted, will be by direct deposit into a bank account designated by the umpire. This policy will be waived only in temporary and/or unusual circumstances. Travel will be divided evenly between the two umpires (if you ride with your partner it is your responsibility to properly compensate him/her for driving). IRS 1099-MISC tax forms will be issued to anyone earning \$600.00 or more in funds that pass through the NEGEOA account.

**Registration, State, and Assigning Fees:** All registration fees are non-refundable. Any fees paid to the GHSA, GISA, and/or GICAA from NEGEOA are non-refundable. Assigning fees are refundable on appeal, and on a case-by-case basis only.

**Direct Contact with GHSA Office:** Umpires are PROHIBITED from directly contacting the GHSA office. Any issues concerning NEGEOA or the schools should be brought to the attention of the Executive Assigning Secretary and/or the NEGEOA Board of Directors for resolution.

**Direct Contact with NEGEOA Schools:** Umpires may not solicit work or provide information about the association, or provide any personal or private information about any other umpire in NEGEOA to any school or school representative.

**Non-competition:** Members of NEGEOA baseball are not to solicit, accept or assign other officials to games involving schools, leagues, or teams that regularly use NEGEOA for their varsity and non-varsity games. This also includes middle school games in the counties we cover, as well as non-varsity tournaments or other such games. This also includes GISA contests from schools that we regularly have, or have had in the past, in our working area. This policy is primarily for schools that have declined the services of NEGEOA. Umpires who violate this policy will be suspended indefinitely and must appear before the NEGEOA Board for reinstatement. If there is any question about a potential competitive conflict, contact the Executive Assigning Secretary for clarification.

**Media and Statements:** Umpires are prohibited from discussing any aspect of any game with any form of media. All media requests and questions should be referred to the Executive Assigning Secretary. Umpires are also not to discuss any game or situation with any school personnel or administrators. Please refer the question to the NEGEOA Executive Assigning Secretary.

**NEGEOA Grievance:** If an umpire has a problem regarding pay, game conduct, personnel, NEGEOA policy, etc., he/she should first contact the Executive Assigning Secretary to seek resolution. If this does not provide a satisfactory solution, the umpire may call any board member and request a board meeting. If a full board meeting does not provide a solution, umpire may request permission from the board to contact the GHSA/ GISA/GICAA. Board permission must be given for this action.



**Independent Contractor:** Umpires are independent contractors and are NOT employees of NEGOA, GISA, GHSA, GICAA, or any school district. Umpires are responsible for their own insurance and are not entitled to employee benefits of any kind. Each umpire is responsible for filing tax returns on the earnings from NEGOA. The GHSA requires, and NEGOA provides, an IRS Form 1099-MISC Non-Employee Compensation report to the umpire and to the IRS for annual amounts of \$600.00 or more. These forms reflect only funds passing through the financial records of NEGOA.

**Middle School:** All middle schools that use NEGOA umpires will adhere to the GHSA safety standards. Other differences such as, but not limited to, curfews, league rules, etc., must also be enforced. Every umpire is expected to enforce these rules and regulations uniformly. NEGOA will attempt to secure written rules from the Middle School leagues prior to the season starting.

**Meeting Attendance:** NEGOA by-laws require 90% meeting attendance to be eligible for playoffs. All meetings are considered mandatory. Excused absences may be approved in advance by the Executive Assigning Secretary (emergencies may be approved after the fact). Valid reasons such as health issues, family requirements, job conflicts, working games in other sports for NEGOA, etc., will be considered.

**Testing/State Rules Clinic:** NEGOA Clinic attendance is mandatory annually, and GHSA Camp attendance is mandatory at least every other year. Tests are required by the GHSA. The GHSA requires all umpires to take an on-line rules exam during a specific time period prior to the season. Failure to complete this clinic will cause the umpire not to receive credit for the year of service and eliminate them from playoff consideration.

**Bereavement Fund:** NEGOA maintains a bereavement fund, funded by Association dues. The purpose of this fund is to provide sympathy cards and memorials to members and their families on the occasions that require acknowledgement. Memorials and flowers, etc., are reserved for members and their immediate families. Cards and other expressions of sympathy or support are utilized for extended family or friends of the association. If you know of circumstances that warrant a benevolent response from the association, please let the Executive Assigning Secretary know.

**Game Reports:** Game reports for ejections, field conditions, and malicious contact must be filed with the Executive Assigning Secretary within 24 hours of the game in which the incident occurred. Game reports for game management, security problems, restrictions to the dugout, and any other issues that did not result in an ejection must be filed to the NEGOA Executive Assigning Secretary within 24 hours.

**Election of Board and Executive Secretary:** NEGOA by-laws call for the election of members of the Board of Directors and Executive Assigning Secretary every two years on even-numbered school years. (Example: School Year 2023-24 election year is 2024). NEGOA uses a 6-person board and the election of said board is governed by the NEGOA by-laws.

**National Anthem:** During the national anthem, all umpires are to stand at attention, heels together, head steady, facing the flag with hat in right hand placed over the heart, and left arm extended downward along the left pants leg. There is to be NO talking during the national anthem. The crew shall stand across the back line of the batter's box facing the flag. It is permissible for the catcher to stand in line with the umpires. After the anthem, the umpires are to jog to their positions to begin the game.

**Proper Positions between Innings:** The proper position for base umpires between innings is a few steps onto the outfield grass, approximately midway between 1st and 2nd base, or 2nd and 3rd base (3-man crew). Umpires should not stand in a position between innings which prompts conversation with players, managers or coaches. The proper position for the plate umpire between innings is on the 1st or 3rd base foul line (to coincide with the team playing defense in that particular half-inning),  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  the way up the line from home plate. The concept for this is for the umpire to be in a “neutral” position between innings which does not encourage conversation or confrontations with players, coaches or managers. If the plate umpire is having trouble during a particular inning, he/ she may go to the opposite foul line from that team’s dugout between innings. The same holds true for base umpires. That is, if trouble can be expected from a player coming onto the field to take his position between innings, the base umpire should position themselves in an area which minimizes a confrontation with that player. As a general rule, crew discussions between innings are not considered professional. Post-game briefings are a more proper way to discuss mechanics and rules issues. There are times when some minor issues can be addressed and a brief conversation with the BaseUmpire coming to the Plate Umpire’s between-inning position is acceptable (but NEVER immediately after a controversial call). An exception to this general rule is mentoring, especially in non-varsity contests. Sometimes it is best to go over a mechanic or rule situation when it is fresh. Varsity expectations are higher in the area of professionalism, so conversations between innings by the crew are not normally appropriate.

**Fraternization:** Umpires are not to carry on idle conversation with managers, coaches, players, fans, etc., during the progress of a game, or with other umpires of the crew unless proper officiating of the game requires it.

**Official Time Piece:** When a game is to be played under curfew or time limit, or when inclement weather is forecasted, the base umpire should carry a watch, and his watch shall be considered official. (Do not wear the watch on your wrist, and do not look at it every inning unless needed for official purposes.) **CELLULAR PHONES MAY NOT BE TAKEN ONTO THE FIELD UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES AND CANNOT BE USED AS THE OFFICIAL TIME PIECE.**

**Profanity:** Any profanity of any kind, audible to the stands, players or coaches will not be tolerated. Umpires should not use profanity on the field. Umpires should never use any language to a player or coach which would result in disciplinary action if used to the umpire.

**Tobacco:** NEG OA has a zero tolerance policy for tobacco on the field when umpiring any contest. It would be hypocritical for us to do that which the players and coaches are not allowed to do. Coaches and players should be told (before the game) to remove tobacco if they have it. If it is discovered during the game, the offender is to be ejected from the contest.

**After the Baseball Game:** The plate umpire shall return the unused supply of baseballs to a responsible member of the home team or place them in the dugout (Do not toss/role/throw them across the field to the attendant, coach, player or near the game bag). At the conclusion of the game, the umpire crew shall quickly exit the field and should refrain from excessive conversation with coaches, players, and fellow umpires while still on the field.

**Playoff Selection and Ranking:** Recommendations for the playoff umpires will be advanced from the NEG OA Board of Directors to appropriate GHSA District and State Staff. Playoff assignments will be made and communicated by GHSA District and State Staff. Recommendations by NEG OA will be based, in part, on the numerical ranking system described on pp. 18-21 of the current NEG OA Umpire Manual. This system will serve as a guide, in addition to other criteria set forth by GHSA and the NEG OA Board of Directors.

Before an NEGOA umpire can even be considered for GHSA playoffs, he/she must be ELIGIBLE for playoffs by meeting the following GHSA criteria:

- Recorded completion of the GHSA on-line Rules Clinic for the current season
- Recorded completion and passing grade on the GHSA on-line Rules Exam for the current season
- Recorded attendance at a GHSA Baseball Playoff Camp during the current season
- Only umpires designated as Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 by GHSA standards, will be assigned to GHSA playoffs

## EVALUATION SCALE

EVALUATIONS : NEGOA evaluation and or GHSA evaluation = 40%

Meeting and NEGOA clinic attendance = 40%

Assignability and attitude = 20%

## NEGOA EVALUATION STANDARDS

### *Plate*

- Stability of Head and Body Position during the pitch
- Establishes “lock in” position, does not drift side to side/ up or down with pitch
- Does not flinch on swings or foul tips
- Feet remain stable throughout, providing a solid base
- Maintains proper spacing from the catcher, so as not to become entangled if the catcher moves unexpectedly
- Works in the “slot” and does not drift with the catcher, and does not work straight over the catcher’s head or to the outside
- Head and eyes are level and at the top of the catchers helmet and does not dip as the game progresses

### *Timing*

- Does not anticipate the pitch
- Allows everything to happen that can happen before making a decision
- Gives every pitch the same opportunity to become a strike, does not give up on pitches

### *Style / Mechanics of Call*

- Gives clear/crisp authoritative signals
- Possesses smooth and relaxed styles that projects confidence
- Coordinates voice and signals to give a professional appearance
- Mechanics are consistent and crisp throughout the course of the game
- Voice is loud enough to be heard, but does not draw undue attention

### ***Consistency of Strike Zone***

- Maintains the same zone throughout the course of the game
- Does not adjust the strike zone during a one-sided game

### ***Bases***

- Proper Angles/ Stable Position as Plays Occurs
- Establishes good angles and distance on all plays
- Hustles into the proper position and is prepared to move for other plays at other bases
- Stopped and set to view all plays; not running when plays happens

### ***Timing***

- Does not anticipate the play; allows everything to happen
- Does not give up on plays and keeps focus at a high level over the course of the game
- Follows the ball well and lets the ball take the umpire to the play

### ***Judgment Calls***

- Is correct on the majority of calls and does not show any signs or poor body language when a call is missed

### ***Crew Mechanics***

- Has a good working knowledge of the proper mechanics
- Rotates in the proper situations and is alert by adjusting if partner misses or fails to cover their assignment
- Read partners well on outfield coverage and goes out on fly balls as needed
- Is alert and aware of situations throughout the course of the game

### ***Crew Communications***

- Proper use of verbal and non-verbal communications and eye contact with partners between hitters and during developing plays

## **GENERAL**

### ***Appearance/ Presence***

- Proper wearing of uniform and all equipment
- Uniform is cleaned and pressed, shoes are cleaned and shined
- Has good posture and professional in mannerisms, and body language
- Has a confident and in-control look

### ***Hustle***

- Gets into position quickly and with a purpose to make calls
- Has good agility, coordination, and fluidity of movement
- Does not over hustle to draw undue attention to the umpire
- Moves back into position and with purpose after plays

**Game Control/ Demeanor**

- Is in control of the game while being calm, firm and assertive
- Not overly aggressive during arguments but knows when and how to keep control of the situation
- Is not eager to eject players or coaches but will do so when necessary
- Before/ during/ after ejections is able to remain in control of him/her self and keep control of the game

**Game Administrators/ Personnel**

- Maintains a courteous and authoritative manner in dealing with all people involved in the contest
- Does not try to impress others with his position of power
- Does not try to take advantage of this position by asking for favors or special treatment by teams or schools

**Focus/ Alertness/ Intensity**

- Concentrates on the action and is able to anticipate where plays or problems may arise
- Do not talk or converse with fans during the course of the game

**Off- Field Conduct**

- Always maintains proper decorum and professional manner while in any public situation
- Is a good reflection on NEG OA before/ during/ after the baseball game
- Possesses a willingness to learn and improve

## NEGOA 2-MAN MECHANICS

### **NO RUNNERS ON BASE**

#### **Positioning:**

- A. Base umpire 10-12 feet behind first baseman
- B. Never any closer than 8 feet from first base

#### **Fly Ball Responsibility – Fair/ Foul:**

- A. Up to the front edge of the base – Plate Umpire
- B. Over and beyond the base - Base Umpire
- C. Entire left field line – Plate umpire

#### **Catch/ No Catch:**

Remember: Plate umpire will take all routine fly balls

(Pause, Read, React) if base umpire goes out Plate Umpire has batter all the way to home if the Base Umpire cannot get back to cover the plate

#### **Principles for going out: (trouble ball)**

- 1. Fair/ Foul Decision
- 2. Ball may be caught below the fielders waist
- 3. Fielder is runner hard with his back to you
- 4. Fielders converging on the baseball

- CF straight in/ back or towards the line – Base Umpire
- CF towards LF line – Plate Umpire
- Routine Fly ball – Base Umpire come in to pivot with runner

#### **Line Drives:**

- A. Line drives to 1st basemen in front of base- Plate Umpire
- B. Line drives to 2nd Basemen towards second base- Plate Umpire
- C. All line drives to 3rd basemen- Plate Umpire
- D. Line drives to SS towards 3rd base- Plate Umpire
- E. Line drives to SS towards 1st base- Base Umpire
- F. Line drives to 2nd Basemen towards first base- Base Umpire
- G. Line drives pass 1st basemen beyond base- Base Umpire

#### **Ground Balls:**

- A. Base umpire- set up for play
- B. Plate Umpire- move up the 45ft line for
  - Overthrow, 3ft Running lane Interference, Swipe tag
  - Batter/ Runner tag before 45ft line – Plate Umpire
  - Batter/ Runner tag after 45ft line – Base Umpire

#### **Base Hit/ pop-up to Infield:**

- A. Base Umpire – Pivot, stay ahead of runner
- B. Plate Umpire – Fair/ Foul, Catch/ No Catch

## **RUNNER ON 1ST**

### **Positioning:**

- A. Base Umpire – 1st base side of infield in working area; not too deep

### **Fair/ Foul Catch/ No Catch – Line Drives to Infield**

- A. Plate Umpire - Left fielder towards line / Right fielder towards line
  - B. Plate Umpire - 1st / 3rd basemen towards line, pitcher
  - C. Base Umpire - Left fielder straight-in / Right fielder straight-in and everything else in the “V”
  - D. Base Umpire - Line drives directly at 1st/3rd baseman
- Remember:* Base umpire never leaves the infield to cover fly balls

### **Ground Balls/ Base Hits:**

- A. Plate Umpire - moves in the direction of 3rd base for possible 1st to 3rd rotation if ball goes into the out field
- C. Plate Umpire – must have Ball and runner at 3rd to cover the play
- B. Base Umpire – has all plays and at 1st, 2nd and 3rd if ball stays on the infield

### **Pick off at 1st/ Steal of 2nd**

- A. Pick off - Step toward the 45ft line to improve angle
- B. Steal - Drop back, turn with the ball coming over left shoulder. Be stopped

## **RUNNERS ON 1ST AND 2ND BASE**

### **Positioning:**

- A. Base Umpire – on 3rd base side of infield in working area not too deep

### **Fair/ Foul Catch/ No Catch**

- A. Same as with runner on 1st base only

### **Line Drives in Infield:**

- A. Same as with Runner on 1st

### **Ground Ball:**

- B. Base Umpire – all plays at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd base, split difference in working area keeping ball in front of you at all times.
- C. Plate Umpire – will stay home line up any overthrows, watch the touch of 3rd if ball goes through the infield for base hit
- D. Plate umpire will never go to 3rd base with a runner on 2nd and a base hit

### **Fly Ball to outfield:**

- A. Tag up with less than 2 outs Plate umpire will take runner on 2nd into 3rd

### **Steal Play at 3rd:**

- A. Step to imaginary 45ft line to improve angle

### **Timing Play:**

- A. Plate Umpire – with 2 out, line up any possible time plays with the runner coming home and the base of any potential 3rd out.

### ***RUNNERS ON 2ND ONLY – 3RD ONLY OR BASES LOADED***

- A. Positioning is the same as with runners on 1st and 2nd
- B. Fair/ Foul Catch/ No Catch coverage is same anytime runners are on base
- C. Tag up at 3rd – Plate Umpire
- D. Play back into 3rd – Base Umpire
- E. All touches of 3rd belong to the plate umpire except batter-runner
- F. All touches of 1st, 2nd and batter-runner touches of 3rd – base umpire
- G. Base Umpire – will take 1st plays on the infield

### ***RUNNERS ON 1ST AND 3RD***

- A. Positioning is same with runner on 1st base only
- B. Base hit to outfield: Plate Umpire – has runner going from 1st to 3rd if ball and runner take him into cutout
- C. Check over shoulder for the touch of home by the runner on 3rd

### ***RUNDOWNS***

- A. Plate Umpire – will move into position while play is going away, then communicate to his partner when he is in the cutout.
- B. Base Umpire – will have all tags until plate umpire is in position



## GAME MANAGEMENT

An umpire team must manage the game and know which key principles are vital and how to apply them.

### *Principles / Values*

#### ***Be Professional***

When you walk onto a ball field, carry yourself professionally and confidently. Look the part of a confident umpire. Your clothes are clean and pressed, and your shoes are clean and shined. If your shoes have white on them, it is white. Remember, someone is always watching. We live in a “YouTube” society, so remember, you may be videoed on someone’s phone and possibly be posted on a social network.

Umpires are expected to project a professional and rational demeanor. They should keep high standards and don’t lower them no matter what the circumstances. Have your own standards and stick to them. Fans expect players and managers to act Irrationally sometimes. Respect is not earned just because you have a uniform and have passed a test!!

#### ***This is Umpiring Baseball, not Politics!***

If you want to be political, run for office and forget umpiring. Politics won’t work. Participants in the ball game see through a “brown nose”. Don’t be insecure. Learn and know what you are supposed to do. Communicate and be courteous. Act professional. NEVER compromise your integrity. NEVER EVER be intimidated. Remember, everyone is watching you in the fishbowl. Be fair but firm. You should not indulge in conversation with players. Keep out of the coaching box, and do not talk to the coach on duty. Be active and alert on the field. Be courteous. Keep the balls and strikes count in your head to help assist the PU, just in case.

Players want to win respect. Your job as the umpire is to make the call. Forget passing judgment. Respect players. Exceptional players have earned the right to be where they are because of hard work and their skills. Do not dwell on player and coach personalities. Umpire the baseball game. Control the game. Take charge. It is yours to control. People understand things differently. Trying times are an opportunity to prove how professional and good you are. Tough situations are opportunities; think of them as such.

#### ***Learn from your mistakes and build on experiences.***

Mentally it is impossible to leave a game and never think about that game. Not only is it impossible, but it is ineffective to learn that way and to grow as an umpire. Go over your good and bad qualities but don’t beat yourself up over mistakes. Learn from your mistakes. We all make them. Don’t exaggerate a sense of greatness. Give yourself honest and humble critiques. Umpiring can be a humbling experience. Even the most experienced umpires make terrible mistakes. We are all human. Aren’t we? An unrealistic critique of yourself as an umpire can cause you real problems. Always be learning and improving. Be able. Be confident by learning. Belly up to a veteran, exchange phone numbers and never hesitate to call him with questions about a situation.

## ***Work Hard***

Each pitch and play means something to someone!! Never let up. Keep your guard up or you will get in trouble. Do not let your intensity diminish. Expect the “what if” or unexpected. Be assured that is what will happen on the ball field. Remember as Yogi Berra said: “it isn’t over till it’s over.” Don’t keep track of the score. Be prepared on every pitch and every play.

## ***Getting the Call Right.***

Discuss your mechanics for getting together if you have a questionable call or a coach’s appeal of an error in applying a rule. Never conference on judgment calls unless you’re pretty sure you screwed up and want some cover to reverse the call.

“I have information for you”. Occasionally you will see something on a partner’s call that might help him on a disputed or controversial call. If so, never intrude on your partner’s handling of the call. However, you can have a prearranged signal to indicate (subtly) that you’ve seen something he might like to hear about. If you make eye contact and flash the signal and then your partner can decide whether to conference with you.

## ***Umpires are Communicators***

Umpires must be able to explain rulings because judgment is relative. Ten people can see a play and judge it ten different ways, but the rules are explained correctly by wisdom and experience within the spirit of the game. An example would be the phantom rule on a double play. Most second baseman don’t touch second. The runners still are called out unless the foot of the infielder is way off the bag. Understand distances and angles. They are very important to your credibility. Common sense and fair play are important. Also, know the advantages/disadvantages principles. The pace of Play “keep the ball game moving.” Understand live and dead ball rules and whether it is immediately dead or delayed dead ball.

## ***Prior To The Game***

Game management starts 48 hours before the game. Check-In either by email, text, or by phone. Connect with your partner one or two days in advance of the game. Confirm game time, field, parking location, and colors. NEG OA does not assign positions or arrange who takes the plate and base positions. Arrange to park together so you can conduct your pregame meeting while preparing for the game.

## ***Arriving At The Field***

Arrive at the field at least 30 minutes before game time. NEG OA recommends that you arrive an hour before game time. Check-In with coaches or the athletic director to ensure that the person in charge of the game knows you have arrived. Walk the field before the game to see if there are any potential problems. Check the condition of the field if the weather is a factor to ensure playability. If there are issues, discuss this with the person in charge (likely a coach). When the umpires first enter the ballpark, they should get there early enough to walk the perimeter of the ball field. This way, you can determine the flaws of the field. For example, are there holes in the fence where the ball could get out? Are there overhanging trees that could stop a ball in flight, etc?

Once you are finished walking the field, head toward the home plate area of the ball field. If you pass a dugout full of players and coaches, acknowledge them. You may say “hello” however that’s as far as it should go then, head to the home plate for the plate meeting.

### ***Pregame Meeting With The Crew***

The plate umpire typically drives the plate meeting. This is not always the case. In some cases, the more experienced umpire should guide and direct the pre-game to allow the young umpire(s) the opportunity to hear what is covered and to become familiar with the structure of a Pregame crew meeting.

This list is a checklist and a glossary of sorts. It is important and recommended that you become familiar with the terms and their meaning.

***At Home Plate Before Game:*** All umpires assigned to work a game shall walk together as a crew to the plate meeting 5 minutes before the start of the game. The crew should arrive at the plate early enough to permit ground rule discussion and line-up card verification and exchange. This meeting should be completed in a professional manner and so that the game begins within a few seconds of the official start time. Start games on time! (Crews should be standing next to field no later than 10 minutes prior to game time, and officials should enter the field as soon as teams complete infield/outfield warm-ups and field preparation.)

### ***Catch/No-Catch Coverage & “Going Out”***

Go over your catch/no-catch coverage scenarios – that is... with U1 in A versus U1 in B or C. Discuss U1 going out from A. Signal a catch using the Out sign: raised right arm with a clenched fist. No verbalization is necessary. For no-catch, use the Safe sign; be sure to verbalize “No catch!” or “On the ground” loudly and clearly. The verbal call needs only to be given on a trouble ball. In cases where the no-catch resulted from the fielder juggling the ball and not securing possession, you can provide a juggling motion to indicate this. When the no-catch results from the ball touching the ground (on a close or trouble ball), point to the ground after signaling no-catch.

***Fair/foul Coverage*** - U1 has fair/foul coverage only from A, from the leading edge of the bag, and beyond.

***Signals & Eye Contact*** - Cover the umpire-to-umpire signals you’ll use throughout the game to ensure you’re all on the same page.

***Checked Swings*** - Discuss handling checked swings. Cover handling RH batters when U1 is in C. First-to-third rotation. With R1, or R1 and R3, you’re in the first-to-third rotation, so on batted balls to the outfield, PU has R1 going into 3rd if he goes. Be sure you’re on the same page about this and that you’re in sync on the signal (PU points to 3rd).

***Check swing/called Strike*** - Point at the batter with the left hand, then signal the strike with your right while verbalizing, “Yes, he went.”

***Check swing / Appeal*** - Step back from the plate and, with your left arm, gesture to the base umpire and ask, “Did he go?” If the answer is yes, the base umpire gives the strike signal while saying, “That’s a strike” If the answer is no, the base umpire gives a safe sign with “No, he did not!”

***Touches and tags at 3rd (with runners on)*** - With runners on, PU has all touches and tag-ups at 3rd base. PU rotations. Cover PU rotations -- that is, when he goes up to third and when staying home, and signals for each. U1 going out. Discuss U1 going out from A and that PU has BR "all the way."

***Covering Rundowns*** - Discuss covering rundowns. When and how does a partner join a rundown? When should U1 stay with a trailing runner instead of joining the rundown? Be in a position to see a swipe tag because it is crucial in a rundown. To have the proper angle, move laterally with the play. This will help!

If you can't see the tag, look for clues but don't guess. Look for the runner's reaction and look for the fielder's outstretched glove to appear to meet some resistance. The plate umpire should hustle out to help his partner if no one is in a position to score. One umpire takes one end of the play, and the other umpire takes the other. Coaches and players like to see an umpire hustle out to help make a call for his partner

***Remember*** – never call your partner off until you are in a position to make a call.

***Calling Balks.*** Discuss the level-appropriate approach to seeing and calling balks. Ensure you're both using the same rules for balks.

***Balk Call Clearly:*** "That's a Balk!" Call balks concerning the action. If the pitcher completes the delivery of the ball or throws to a base, you are in a delayed dead ball situation. So, point at the pitcher and say, "That's a balk". The ball is immediately a dead ball.

***Foul Ball off Batter (in the box).*** Technically, PU's call, but often seen more easily by U1. Discuss "see it, call it." Do not hesitate to verbally call "in the box".

***Overthrows out of play.*** Technically PU's call, but either umpire can call it.

***Awarding Bases*** - Point to the affected base runner and state, "You, second base" or "You, third base", etc. Move the lead runner first, then follow the runners in order.

***Home Run*** - Signal a home run by pointing at the sky with the right arm and twirling the index finger.

***Ground-Rule Double*** - Signal a ground-rule double by holding two fingers up and by verbalizing, "That's a ground-rule double." All runners move two bases from the time of the pitch, and the ball is dead.

***Running Lane Interference.*** Again, the PU owns this call; however, especially with R3, U1 might grab the call. Cover communicating that "I've got this one."

***Force-Play Slide/Illegal Slide/Interference.*** Discuss the force-play slide rule for your league (this rule varies) and emphasize that PU needs to have eyes on the runner going into 2nd base when there's a double-play in progress.

***Swipe Tag/Pulled Foot at 1st.*** Discuss PU trailing batter-runner (unless runner in scoring position), or watching from 1st baseline extended to help with swipe tag and pulled foot at first base.

**Touches, tags, appeals.** Discuss who owns touches and tags at the bases in all scenarios. The owner of a given base also owns appeals at that base. While U1 typically own all runners at all bases, there are situations where the PU has 3rd base, or, if U1 goes out, PU has the batter-runner all the way.

PU initiates signals, and base umpire returns the signal to ensure you're both in sync.

## UMPIRE SIGNALS

Some of these are familiar and are associated with the Rules of Baseball, like safe, out, foul, etc. Following is a summary of three sets of signals. This list is a checklist and a glossary of sorts. It is important and recommended that you become familiar with the terms and their meaning.

The right hand is the “action” hand and the plate umpire uses the action hand to signal things like play, strike, out, fair ball (i.e., live ball), infield fly, and so forth. He uses his left hand for controlling the game or when pointing to a partner, when controlling the pitcher, and for holding the indicator and the mask.

**Ball** - There is no signal for a called ball. Instead, verbalize the call, “ball”. Call the ball while still down, then come up. On ball four, don't point to first base; just say “ball.” If the batter doesn't head toward first base, you can say to him, “that's ball four.”

**Strike** - Signal strikes with your right hand. Use the traditional clenched fist (“pounding the door”), or signal with your hand/finger shot out to the side. On a called strike, verbalize sharply; everyone should hear. On a swinging strike, do not verbalize; give the signal.

**Safe** - Extend both arms out together in front of you parallel to the ground and then extend both arms outward, roughly parallel to the ground, palms down. On close plays, you can also verbalize the call, “safe” or “he's safe”. This helps sell a close call. You can also verbalize information to help sell an extremely close call, things like “Safe - he's under the tag” or “Safe - he pulled his foot.” “Off the bag.” On obvious calls, don't verbalize the call.

**Out** - Extend your right arm straight out, palm out the side. When your arm is parallel with the ground, continue moving your wrist and forearm back, stopping at your ear. When you get your hand near your ear, make a fist and extend your fist out and stop when your forearm is just pasted 90 degrees. Some degree of personal style is allowed on the “Out” call as long you are not distracted from seeing any continuing action. If necessary, verbalize and signal additional information to sell a close call.

**Fair Ball** - Point the right hand toward fair territory. Never verbalize “fair ball.” On a close call, to emphasize the call, stab your arm into fair territory multiple times emphatically.

**Foul Ball** - The signal for a foul ball is the same as for “Time” or other dead ball situations: Raise both hands and call loudly “Foul.” Make the call loud and sharp so everyone hears. Note that, once verbalized, you cannot reverse a call of a foul ball.

**Time** - Raise both hands and call “Time” in a loud voice. Make the call loud and sharp. It is essential that everyone on the field hear you. “Time” Note: When any umpire calls “Time,” all other umpires should echo the call by also signaling and, if there is play in progress, also verbalizing “Time.”(Time with a small “t”). There are occasions when time is out, but “Time” has not been called. An example is when the pitcher is ready, but the batter is not yet set; in this case, the plate umpire might put up his hand as a stop sign to the pitcher, signaling him to wait. It is important to understand that when you put up a stop sign like that, you have called time. So you must put the ball back in play. Be very careful with this small-”t” Time. Be certain, for example, that all continuous play has stopped, that runners are back to their bases, and that no sudden actions are imminent. You’re in a world of hurt if you’ve got a hand up signaling time; just as a runner breaks and a bang-bang play develops, an overthrow occurs, run scores, and THEN you have to get everyone’s attention to bring it all back.

**Play** - Point at the pitcher with the right hand with a stabbing motion and call it “Play.” Say it, so the center fielder hears you. Play Note: You must put the ball back in play following every time the ball goes dead, whether foul ball, hit-by-pitch, called “time” or other reason. When the pitcher has the ball and is ready (he must have engaged the rubber), and the catcher is in the catcher’s box and is also ready, point and call “play”. Under no circumstances should you allow the pitcher to go into his windup until you have called “Play”.

**Foul Tip** - Extend your left arm and brush the back of your left hand with your right hand, then signal the strike with the right hand. Never verbalize “foul tip” because this could be confused with a call of “foul.” Remember, a foul tip is a live ball.

**The Count** - Indicate pitch count using the left hand for balls and the right hand for strikes. On fields that do not have scoreboards, give the count frequently; always give the count on an “action” pitch (with three balls and/or two strikes). Call the count loudly, so both benches (and base coaches) can hear it clearly. Finally, don’t abbreviate the count by verbalizing things like “twenty-two” for two and two or saying “full count” when the count is three and two.

**3rd Strike Not Caught** - Give the strike sign, but do not call or signal the batter out. Instead, clear the catcher and give the safe sign.

**Infield Fly** - Point into the air with the right hand and verbalize “infield fly, if fair, batter’s out!” Verbalize in your loudest voice. All umpires on the field should echo the call.

*Infield Fly Note: Umpires must remember that the ball remains live. The batter is automatically out and there are no runners forced to a base. Runners need to know that they need not run. Runners may advance at their own risk. If there is a play on a runner, it will be counted. The ball must be able to be caught with ordinary effort. The ball must remain in fair territory.*

**Run Counts/Doesn’t Count** - The only time you should signal that a run scores is on a timing play to indicate that an advancing runner did (or did not) cross the plate before a 3rd out was made on the bases. In this case, signal and verbalize: Point to the plate emphatically and shout in the direction of the scorekeeper: “Run scores; score the run!” Sweep your open palms across (much like the safe sign) and shout in the direction of the scorekeeper: “No run; no run scores!”

**Staying Home** - With a runner in scoring position (except for the first-to-third situation), PU should signal that he's staying at home – that is, will not rotate to other bases for a play.

**We Need to Talk** - It's useful to have a signal that says to your partner, "We need to talk." Some crews use the arms crossed like an "X" in front of the chest, but this might be too obvious. This signal is very useful when your partner is arguing with a manager over a call, and you have useful information for him. You never insert yourself in the middle of another umpire's call unless that umpire asks for help. But if you have information that could help him, a subtle signal can be a lifesaver for him.

**Timing play** - With two outs and a runner in scoring position, tap the wrist on the left hand (where a watch is normally worn) with two fingers of the right hand to indicate a potential timing play. You could then point to home plate with two fingers to indicate that you're staying home on the play. Note, however, that a timing play can occur on plays that begin with fewer than two outs, so you must be alert to the possibility of runners scoring and plays at other bases that could possibly end the inning .

### ***The Plate Meeting***

The plate meeting should be short and to the point. You should cover the following:

Review each manager's lineup and confirm there are no final changes. If there are changes, ensure the change gets onto both managers' copies and the changes go to the scorekeeper. Then, ensure that lineups are exchanged. At this point, the lineups are official.

Once you have exchanged lineups at the plate meeting, however, the game belongs to you, and you are the sole judge of the field's playability.

Ask coaches to confirm that their players are "legally and properly equipped" and that all equipment is regulation. Go over the ground rules for the field. Typically, you'll ask the home team manager to review the ground rules. In some cases (for example, on neutral fields), the umpires may receive the ground rules in advance from the tournament director. In this case, you should go over the ground rules yourself at the plate meeting. If your field is not fully enclosed, be sure to clarify boundaries for the field of play and where dead-ball territory begins.

Cover special rules, if any. Insist that both teams play with the highest regard for sportsmanship. Remind the coaches that they, and only they, can call on the umpire to discuss a call and that they should wait for the action to stop and then ask for time before doing so.

Answer questions, if any, but do not let your plate meeting turn into a rule's clinic.

## ***After the Plate Meeting and Starting the Game***

### ***The Plate Umpire***

The plate umpire should introduce himself to the catcher and glance around the infield to see if there is anything that could possibly affect the beginning of the game. There could be a baseball or two lying around they must be picked up. Is there someone in the dugout that should not be there, the coach may have one of his children in the dugout; if that's the case, ask the coach about the child and if the child is indeed staying in the dugout and if they instruct the coach the child must be wearing a helmet for his own protection?

The plate umpire may also look to the box office where they keep the score or ask the coach who will keep the playbook. He may also glance around to see where the American flag is to point that out to his partner for the playing of our national anthem.

### ***The Field Umpire***

A field or base umpire may take any position desired and shall aid the PU in administering the rules.

The base umpire shall make all decisions on the bases except those reserved to the PU and shall have concurrent jurisdiction with the PU in calling time, balks, foul balls, defacement or discoloration of the ball by the pitcher, use of an illegal pitch, when a fly is caught or in ejecting any player for unsportsmanlike conduct or infractions as prescribed by the rules. If there is only one field umpire, this individual shall make all decisions at first and second base, and such decisions at third base cannot be made more conveniently by the PU. If additional field umpires are used, they are referred to as base umpires; and their normal positions are behind third and second bases. They have concurrent jurisdiction with the first-base umpire. Umpires shall require coaches and all personnel to remain in the dugout or dead-ball territory while the ball is in play. No coach or team personnel shall leave the dugout until the ball is dead.

## ***Common Rules and Rules of Thumb for Umpires to Know***

### ***Interference***

When interference is adjudged by the Point at the player committing the interference and verbalize loudly and clearly, "Time! That's interference!" Ensure that all play stops and then enforce penalties as appropriate.

### ***Obstruction***

First, note whether you have Type (a) or Type (b) obstruction. Type (a) obstruction occurs when a play is being made on the obstructed runner and results in an immediate dead ball. Type (b) obstruction occurs when a play is not being made on the obstructed runner, and this is a delayed dead ball.

In both cases, point to the offending player and verbalize loudly and clearly, "That's obstruction". If this is Type (a) obstruction, immediately call time and award bases as appropriate. If Type (b), wait for the conclusion of continuous action on the play, then call Time and enforce penalties as appropriate.



## ***Base runner run downs. Interference or obstruction?***

### ***Obstruction***

Seems to be more likely to happen. If a fielder does not have the ball, he must yield the base path to the runner. If there is contact, even unintentional, obstruction should be called. Call “that’s obstruction” and let the play continue without stopping the action. If a runner tries to advance a base, he is doing so at his own risk. If tagged out if attempting to advance beyond the base he would have achieved had there been no obstruction, the out would stand and the obstruction would be ignored.

### ***Interference***

Not likely in run downs but it can happen. Probably will happen by an intentional action on the part of the runner being put out. Knocking the ball out of the glove. Using the body or part of to intentionally interfere with a ball in flight (thrown). When this happens the umpire needs to call time and immediately call “that’s interference” and declare the base runner out. Other runners who may have been attempting to advance at the time, either in front of or behind the play, will be required to return to the base last occupied at the time of the interference. If you, as the umpire, call interference, make sure it was intentional. A runner who interferes unintentionally has not violated any rule.

### ***Base Runner Passes Another***

If a runner passes another runner that was not obstructed on the bases. The runner who passes is out. Umpires should let the play continue.

The baseball remains live. The out is immediate. An obstructed runner that is passed is ignored. The play continues. Play is sorted out when the obstruction award is made by the umpire.

### ***Base Coach***

What if a base coach comes in contact with the ball or a runner? There are three different situations that a base coach can interfere!

### ***Thrown ball***

If contact is intentional, the runner is out. If contact is not intentional, the ball is live and in play. Whether he is in the coach’s box or not does not matter. If contact is in fair territory, it is considered intentional.

### ***Coaches’ Contact with a Fielder***

Coaches must avoid a fielder in the act of fielding, a batter, or thrown ball. Interference in fair territory is considered intentional. With multiple runners, the umpire shall call out the runner that benefited the most from the interference, most likely the lead runner.

### ***Coaches' Physically Assisting Runners***

The runner is out if a base coach physically assists a runner in returning to or leaving a base. The ball remains live until the playing action ends (delayed dead ball). Advancing runners will be allowed. Physical assistance means doing something to improve the chance of attaining his goal. Touching alone is not physical assistance. If touching or collision outside the coach's box is not interference.

### ***Coaches' Verbal Interference***

Offensive teams may not say anything to confuse the members of the defense. By the rule of verbal interference, the baseball is dead immediately.

### ***What if the Batter Steps on the Plate?***

Both feet of the batter must be in the batter's box at the time of the pitch. The batter's box lines are part of the box. Before a pitch is thrown, the umpire should insist that both feet are entirely in the batter's box. Part of the foot can be touching the line (the key here is the foot completely out of the line). The batter is out if he hits the ball fair, foul, or foul tip and has a foot completely on the ground outside of the batter's box.

If the batter's foot steps onto the plate when he hits the ball, he is out if his foot is completely out of the batter's box. Keep in mind, a batter that steps on the plate is out even if part of his foot is still in the batter's box. When a batted ball goes directly to the plate, the call of fair or foul is determined by what subsequently happens.

### ***What if a Runner Steals Home?***

The batter is entitled to an unhindered swing, but once he swings, the batter is responsible for avoiding the catcher if he is attempting to make a play. If a runner attempts to steal home and the batter interferes, then the runner is out unless there are two outs, then the batter is out. If the batter is out on strike three and there are less than two outs, the runner being played on is also out. If there were several steal attempts and the umpire cannot determine which runner the catcher would have attempted to throw out, the runner closest to home is out.

### ***A Runner Misses the Plate***

Runners missing a base or home plate may return to touch it unless a following runner has scored. No runner is out unless there is a proper appeal made. A runner who misses the plate can return to retouch after a third out is made.

### ***Ready plays at home plate***

If the fielder does not have the ball when the runner arrives, it is obstruction. The catcher can block the plate when he has the ball.

### ***Batter Interferes with the Catcher***

If the batter interferes with the catcher when a runner is trying to steal, the batter is out, and the runner returns to the previous base. If the swing is also the third strike, the batter, and the runner are both out.

### ***Catcher Interference with a Batter***

If the catcher catches the pitch before the batter has a chance to swing, it is interference, and the ball is dead. No matter if the batter desires to take the pitch. There need not be contacted. The batter gets first base. A balk is charged to the pitcher.

### ***Mutual Contact***

If the batter and catcher collide and they are doing what they are normally supposed to do, the contact is incidental. Neither interference nor obstruction is called.

### ***Rundowns in the Base Path!***

The runner cannot run more than three feet left or right of a direct line between the base and his location at the time of a play being made on him. When a runner changes direction and heads for another base, he establishes a new baseline. He is, however, locked into a three-foot wide zone (on each side) of a direct line between HIS POSITION and the base he is advancing to. Watch for an evasive movement when the tag is being attempted.

### ***Two Runners on the Same Base***

The lead runner is entitled to the base. The trail runner is always out. Be ready to make the correct awards if a wild throw goes into dead-ball territory in a rundown.

## **EJECTIONS**

In most cases, an umpire should warn a player before ejection. Any umpire can eject any player, coach, or manager at anytime. As far as ejecting spectators, you may, however, refer them to management.

### ***Always Be in Control***

Know the fine line between allowing too much to happen and being trigger-happy or too quick to eject. Experience will help you to know when to draw the line, and you don't learn that overnight. Umpires need to be able to communicate and be approachable. Avoid confrontation if possible. Never give the perception that you are the aggressor. If all else fails, take care of the situation. If nothing works, do what you must do. Don't be quick to eject them – let them run themselves. Remember, image is everything. Don't get caught up in the heat of the moment. Be above the fray and in command of the situation yourself, and look as though you are in complete control. Always try to avoid confrontation. Be firm but reasonable. Earn respect by being long-suffering and don't look as though you are looking for trouble. Keep your voice under control when being challenged. Never yell and scream. Never threaten or tell participants to shut up. When you do raise your voice, they will pay attention if you have earned their respect, and it will be out of character, and they will understand you are serious.

## ***When to Eject***

Certain magic words. Anything derogatory preceded by “YOU”. If a coach persists, let him know he has made his point and to stop. Tell the coach if you hear it again it will be “GOODBYE”. Assistant coaches should be seen and not heard. When a batter draws a line in the dirt – their immediate ejection. Never be shown up!

No need for showmanship – just a statement. If you don’t eject, you will not be respected and get a reputation that they can walk all over you. Arguing balls and strikes, don’t just take off the mask and tell them no more comments – eject them. If you invade their territory and return to the plate, you will surely hear a rejoinder. Look over, put your hand up and tell them firmly, “THAT IS ENOUGH”.

## ***Objection to Decision***

Decisions on rules may be appealed; however, many umpires’ judgment decisions are final. Arguing balls and strikes are prohibited. Coaches and players cannot leave the dugout or their position to protest a decision by an umpire. No one may protest a ball or strike call on the pretense they are asking an umpire for information about a half swing. Eject any player or coach who leaves his position to argue.

## ***Unsportsmanlike Conduct***

Act not in the spirit of fair play. Minor offenses can be handled with a warning. Two unsportsmanlike acts are sure to cause ejection. Fighting. Intentionally throwing at a batter. An unsportsmanlike act can and most often is verbal. Malicious contact is if a runner flagrantly contacts a fielder and is obstructed or is otherwise safe in the play. He is still safe but ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct.

## ***Arguing Balls and Strikes***

Few things are as calculated to make a coach take control of his players as warning him when you don’t know who the culprit is. Another option is to find the culprit and make an example out of him. If you hear “where was it” from the dugout, a couple of times is one too many. Depending on who is asking. If a coach is reasonable and not a jerk, it doesn’t hurt to acknowledge it was in or out or high, etc. Never acknowledge players. They will all start and join in. If it persists, take down numbers and tell them you are giving them a warning. Make sure everyone knows that a warning has been given. If it still persists, ejection is in order. Everyone has been warned and knows it. Again, not a Hollywood production; say #22 has been ejected from the game. Then hopefully, they won’t charge out off the bench. If you don’t know who is jabbering, direct your message to the coach. If you do talk directly to them, “#22 I’ve heard enough”.

Never allow a pitcher to come off the mound raising his arms and letting everyone know of his displeasure with your calls. Don’t run out toward the pitcher. He is the aggressor, not you. Warn him quickly or eject him. If not too flagrant, tell the catcher to talk to the pitcher and calm him down.

Don’t allow a catcher to frame or hold a called ball to show you up. Tell him to get the ball back to the pitcher. Don’t allow the catcher to jerk pitches back into the strike zone. Talk to the catcher. If it persists, eject him. Dust off the plate and look him in the eye and tell him to knock it off. Take care of this without anyone knowing it. Let the manager or coach know in between innings that he is liable to be ejected.

### ***Close Play on the Bases***

If the runner or fielder is upset with your call way too much. Never stand around like you are proud of your call. Walk or jog away, so the fielder or base runner comes after you, then they look like the aggressor. Sometimes they won't pursue the issue. Make sure they don't become adamant. Tell them to stop, calm down, and then you can talk. If they are heated, look them straight in the eye and wait 20 seconds before saying anything. If it is a coach, let him run out of gas. When they calm down, ask them, "now do you want to listen to me". You usually will be able to have a conversation.

### ***Calling a Hitter out on Strikes***

If you call a hitter out on strikes and he has to walk to the first base dugout, take a step toward the third base dugout or vice versa. If he comes after you, he looks like the aggressor, and you look like you are trying to avoid a problem. If the batter makes a comment about a third called strike under his breath, ignore it at first. If he persists and is in your face, run him. If he comments twice, tell him you heard him the first time, and that's enough. If he persists, eject him. Everyone knows he got himself ejected.

### ***Coaches Bringing Up Old Calls***

What if a coach brings up a call that happened the game before? Stop him in his tracks. Let him know you will not talk about a call from the past. This is another game, and that game and play are over. If he wants to talk about a play in the present game – fine; otherwise, the conversation is over. If he persists, walk away. If he continues give him a warning. If that doesn't work, eject him from the game!

### ***Partner Needs to Intervene***

If two players, coaches, etc., are arguing with your partner, intervene. You take one, he takes the other. The partner needs to get the offender off the field. The ejecting umpire clears the scene. You must think in the heat of the moment, it is not easy. You need to get in between and ease the offender away.

### ***You Have Ejected Someone; Now What?***

Once a player (or coach) has been ejected from the game, he must leave the confines of the field however, that is not the responsibility of the umpire(s). That is the sole responsibility of the head coach. Once you eject the player, walk away.

## UMPIRE DO'S AND DONT'S DOWN THROUGH HISTORY

When you enter a ballpark, your sole duty is to umpire a ball game as the representative of NEG OA.

Do not allow criticism to keep you from studying out bad situations that may lead to protested games. Carry and read your rule book.

It's better to consult the rules and hold up the game for ten minutes to decide a knotty problem than to have a game thrown out on protest and replayed.

Keep the game moving. The energetic and earnest work of the umpires often helps a ball game.

You are the only official representative of baseball on the ball field. It is often a trying position that requires the exercise of much patience and good judgment, but do not forget that the first essential in working out of a bad situation is to keep your own temper and self-control.

You no doubt are going to make mistakes, but never attempt to "even up" after having made one. Make all decisions as you see them and forget which is the home or visiting club.

Keep your eye everlastingly on the ball while it is in play. It is more vital to know just where a fly ball fell or a thrown ball finished up than whether or not a runner missed a base. Do not call the plays too quickly or turn away too fast when a fielder is throwing to complete a double play. Watch out for dropped balls after you have called a man out. Timing on every play is paramount.

Do not come running with your arm up or down, denoting "out" or "safe." Wait until the play is completed before making any arm motion.

The most important rule for umpires is always "**BE IN POSITION TO SEE EVERY PLAY AND HUSTLE TO THAT POSITION.**" Even though your decision maybe 100% right, players still question it if they feel you were not in a spot to see the play clearly and definitely.

Finally, be courteous, impartial, and firm, and so to compel respect from all.



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