

COMMON MISTAKES MADE BY UMPIRES

Below is a list of tips that will help you to avoid some of the more common mistakes made by umpires.

1. **Act and dress professionally.** - If you act and dress like a professional umpire, you will be treated like a professional umpire. If you give the perception that you are a bush league bum then that is the way that you will be treated. *Perception Is Reality !*
2. **Do not mingle with players, coaches, or spectators between innings.** - The plate umpire should go to the foul line on the side where the team is going onto the field. The base umpire should go into shallow right field. It does not look very professional when an umpire goes to the fence between innings to talk with the fans. Keep the conversations with your partner to a minimum, unless it's relevant to the officiating of the game.
3. **Let the play happen before you make the call.** - Make sure that the fielder held on to the ball before you make your call. If you do this on all of your calls, it won't appear that you are trying to make up your mind, it will just be your normal timing. *Timing- - Timing- - Timing !*
4. **Make all calls from a complete stop.** - Be sure that you are stopped and set before you have to make a call. Your eyes can't focus when you are moving. *Angle is just as important as distance.*
5. **Don't crowd the play.** - Stay 12 to 15 feet away from the play when you make a call. Getting too close creates tunnel vision, this is just as bad as being too far away. Not to mention that if you get too close you could become part of the play!
6. **Set up square with the plate.** - When working the bases you should be set up square with the plate, not facing the runners or the bases. Along with calls at the bases, your responsibilities also include watching the pitcher for infractions, and the batter for half swings. When you set up square with the plate you are better balanced and less likely to be hit by a batted ball.
7. **Develop good plate timing.** - Work on using the same timing for balls and strikes behind the plate. Take your time and make all of your calls with the same timing and you will not be fooled as often. In the rare instance when you are fooled, it won't be as obvious to others.
8. **Don't verbalize a swinging strike.** - Everyone saw the batter miss the ball. A simple hand signal is enough, unless there is a question as to whether or not the batter offered at the ball. If this is the case, you can either go to your partner for help or declare a swing yourself.
9. **Don't verbalize a fair ball.** - Runners are taught to run until they hear the umpire call foul. When an umpire calls a ball fair it can be confusing to the runners.
10. **Don't verbalize a foul tip.** - A foul tip is a live ball and a play can be made on the runners. When an umpire calls foul on a foul tip, he has made the ball dead and no further play can be made on the runners, nor can the runners advance.
11. **Don't call a ball foul until it is.** - A batted ball is not foul until it is touched, comes to rest, or passes first or third base. Nothing looks worse than when an umpire calls a ball foul and it then spins into fair territory. Remember, when you call a foul ball you have to live with it, whether you are right or wrong.
12. **Make the ball live after a dead ball.** - Get into the habit of making the ball live after each and every dead ball, this includes foul balls. When you fail to make the ball live, you put yourself and your partner into a very precarious position. Don't give the coaches ammunition for an argument.

Timing + Angle = Good Judgment