

# QALL UMPIRES

## Mini Umpire Manual

This mini-manual is meant to supplement the QALL Training Manual and the Rulebook.  
(Contrary to common opinion, it's not a manual for very short umpires.)

- **You are in charge of the game**, don't forget that, but don't let it go to your head.
- An umpire watches and tells **everybody** what just happened, so be LOUD and confident in your calls.
- **It is not the umpire's job to be "fair"**. An umpire's job is to make sure the game is played properly by the rules so that neither team gains an advantage not intended by the rules.
- **Keep the game moving**: encourage coaches to get the catcher out there. Limit warm-ups to 8 pitches.
- **Strikes and Outs** Keep the game moving.
- **Think strikes** behind the plate: everything is a strike until it proves itself to be a ball.
- Develop a **consistent strike zone** and stick with it through the whole game.
  - Get set early and put your head in the same place in the slot.
  - Make sure you can see the whole strike zone.
  - Watch the pitch all the way in to the catcher's mitt but don't move your head.
- If it's a hittable pitch, **it's most likely a strike**.
  - If it's waist-high and a little outside, call that one a strike – it's hittable.
  - If it's high AND a little outside, it's a ball. If it's low AND a little outside, it's a ball.
  - Call those strikes on inside corner – the inside is part of the plate too.
  - Use the how the catcher receives the ball to help you call the pitch.
- **When in doubt, call 'em out**. If you aren't sure, they're out. You will be right almost 100% of the time.
- When in doubt, reward good play. If you **think** they might be out, and the defense made a good play, call 'em out. If you think they **might** be out, and the defense screwed up, call 'em safe.
- **You will be judged by the obvious**: Ball & Strike, Safe & Out. Take your time and get those right, and everything else will go well.
- However: if you don't know the rules, it will show. **Read your rulebook**. Twice. At least.
- **Be confident**: if you pay attention during training and read your rulebook at least twice cover-to-cover, you will know the rules better than anyone else at the game, and you will have no trouble showing it.
- **Expect the unexpected**. The younger the kids, the weirder the plays.
  - Stay focused and stay alert: sometimes that can be hard when it's 98 degrees, and neither pitcher can find the strike zone on a map.
  - Keep your eye on the ball: nothing can happen without the ball.
  - Let the ball take you to the play – don't assume a throw will be made and turn away.
- **Be confident** in your calls: get to the right place, take your time and you'll get it right. Let 'em know.
  - Get in **proper position**: get a better angle on the play rather than getting too close.
  - **Hustle**: try to be stopped when the play happens.
  - **Pause, Read, React**: Take your time and think about what you just saw, pause, and make the call LOUD and clear.
  - **LOUD & PROUD**: tell everyone you know you got that call right.
  - **Get it Right**: Don't argue with coaches, but do discuss if needed. Confer with your partner if needed to get it right.

- o Understand that **umpires will make mistakes**. Don't try to make up for a bad call. Let it go. Call what you see on the next one. No make-up calls, no making calls up.
- o **Support your partner**: try and watch the play if the other umpire has the call. You can't change his call, but you can offer information if he asks. Be a team: back each other up out there.
- What if **something weird happens** and I can't remember the right call?
  - o First, calm down and think. Maybe it will come to you. Don't make stuff up.
  - o Don't think what's "fair" – think what's unfair. Think "if the rule really was that way how could a team take unfair advantage of it?" That may lead you to the right rule, so make the call.
- **Umpiring is a commitment**: be prompt and professional.
  - o Show up on time: 15 minutes before the game and take charge – start on time.
  - o Make sure you get an appropriate replacement if needed.
  - o If you look professional, you'll be treated that way, so wear a neat and clean uniform and hat.
  - o Don't chat with your friends between innings – keep the game moving.
- **Stay safe**.
  - o Wear your gear properly – don't go without mask, chest protector or shin guards.
  - o Wear your cap tight and your mask loose – hang the mask off the brim of your cap.
  - o Wear a cup – always, even if you think you have the bases – you never know if your partner won't show up and it's hard to concentrate when you're worried about getting your bell rung.
  - o Wear proper shoes - cleats so you don't slip.
  - o On hot days make sure to drink plenty of fluids before and during the game.
- No matter what call you make, 50% of the people think you blew it. **Don't listen to the crowd**.
- **Be nice**, but don't put up with nonsense from coaches. Use the 1-2-3 system, and if they get to 3, toss 'em. They earned their ejection, so give 'em what they earned.
  - o 1: left hand up for stop, "Coach, that's enough. The call is X."
  - o 2: right hand up for stop, "Coach, enough. The call is X. It's time to get back to playing baseball, OK."
  - o 3: right hand down, and up with the magic ejection pistol. "That's it, you are out of here."
- One more time: Be loud and clear with your calls and signals? **LOUD. CLEAR.**

*~ Used with the permission of Jeff Buxton and No. Andover (MA) Volunteer & Youth Umpires Assn. and No. Andover Booster Club Little League*