

**Lou Gehrig**  
**BASEBALL UMPIRE HANDBOOK**  
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This handbook is meant to keep baseball umpires up to date on key plays and specific Lou Gehrig rules. It contains rulings and procedures common to all baseball levels, as well as senior-only rules. It is not meant to be all-inclusive. The rule book should be read and understood. Copies of the rule book are available in the umpire room and on the internet. The umpire must be familiar with Lou Gehrig Level Rules and Umpire Procedures. Level Rules always supercede this manual.

### **General Expectations of Umpires**

1. Neat appearance – uniform shirt, hat, equipment
2. Professional, alert demeanor – pay attention, act like you want to be there
3. Dependability – be at the diamond 15 minutes before game time with all equipment needed
4. **Calls** – loud, assertive enough so both dugouts can hear
5. **Hustle** – on every play! Do not get caught in the original position
6. Good mechanics – run to the play, stop to view it, think about the call, make the call with sharp signals.
7. Enforce Zero Tolerance policy
8. Bullpen players must wear helmets and use a spotter at all levels
9. Base umps – watch that runners touch each base – be ready for an appeal!

### **TWO-Umpire System Responsibilities**

This section covers games with a plate umpire and base umpire, not levels that use only base umpires (pitching machine levels). At **the base umpire-only levels**, umpires split the diamond down the middle, from the plate through the mound and all the way to the fence. The 1<sup>st</sup> base umpire covers the 1<sup>st</sup> base side, including down the middle (mound, 2<sup>nd</sup> base, and center field). The 3<sup>rd</sup> base umpire covers everything else, including all plays at the plate. Base umpires are NEVER inside the infield before a pitch on a small diamond.

Any umpire system depends on teamwork - knowing your areas of responsibility, and being confident that your partner(s) are where they should be. Adding more umpires to a diamond does no good if only one of them fails to cover his or her area in a given situation. Lou Gehrig uses a very basic system usually involving two umpires per game, and simple rules of responsibility. These are not necessarily what professional umpires will use. Use these rules in combination with the training you received to cover plays in the right place, at the right time. ALWAYS COMMUNICATE – if any doubt who is covering what, yell to your partner what you intend to do!

#### **Plate Umpire**

1. Be prepared to cover a share of base plays
2. Consistent Balls and Strikes are your 1<sup>st</sup> priority. Strike zone varies with the level of play!
3. Announce the count and outs frequently! At least every TWO pitches, and every time there is a “full” count.
4. Rule on balls that strike the batter in the box, or very close to the plate.
5. Rule on Catcher’s Obstruction where the bat touches the catcher during a swing (delayed dead ball)
6. Rule Fair or Foul *up to 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> base*. Let the base ump rule on hits that go over or past the base *only* if he/she is positioned on the baseline.
7. Rule Fair or Foul on hits beyond the bases (all the way to the fence) if the base umpire is positioned *inside* the diamond.
8. After a hit, bust down the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line to watch the play, unless there is a runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base.
9. Rule on plays involving the LEAD runner if more than one base runner and any play at the plate.
10. Base ump will cover all fly balls hit past the infield. In such cases, the *plate ump must cover plays at all bases*. Get out into the diamond for an angle to a play.
11. Rule on runners leaving base early on a caught fly ball (base ump is concentrating on the catch).
12. Watch all runners touch second and third bases on clean hits where there is no immediate play at a base.
13. Rule on timing plays (a run counts or not) where a non-force third out at a base may determine whether a run scores at the plate.
14. Run Down plays: help cover a base ONLY if this is the lead runner.

## **Base Umpire**

1. Keep track of the count and number of outs.
2. With no runners on base, start 10 feet behind 1<sup>st</sup> base in foul territory. Always be in back of the 1<sup>st</sup> baseman.
3. With a runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base only, position is on a line from the plate through the 1<sup>st</sup> base side of the mound dirt (behind the baseline on a small diamond, 10 feet inside on big diamond)
4. In all other base runner situations, position on a line from the plate through the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side of the mound dirt (behind the baseline on a small diamond, 10 feet inside on big diamond).
5. Rule on Fair or Foul on hits down the 1<sup>st</sup> base line *that go over the base, or beyond the base, and ONLY if your position was behind 1<sup>st</sup> base*. You have no fair or foul calls if you are positioned inside the diamond.
6. Rule Catch or No Catch on ALL fly balls. On hits to the outfield, run out as far as you can before the ball drops to make a ruling. The plate umpire must cover the bases on these hits. If a CLEAN HIT to the outfield (obvious gap or down the line) you do NOT go out – stay inside to cover the bases.
7. Generally, make calls at the bases. Exceptions include multiple base runners (plate ump covers the lead runner), long fly balls to the outfield (go out to rule on the catch).
8. Correct angle is a must on any play! Get there before the ball!
9. With only one base runner (the batter), follow the runner and rule on plays at all three bases.
10. With multiple runners on base, you must cover all *trailing* runners (plate umpire covers the lead runner). On a hit, *get inside the diamond* to get the best angle for any play.
11. Observe runners touching 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> base.
12. Rule on runners leaving a base early.
13. Rule on run-down plays (plate umpire may help if this is the lead runner)
14. Base umpires NEVER start inside the infield on a small diamond.

## **THREE-Umpire System Responsibilities**

Occasionally, Lou Gehrig will put three or more umpires on a diamond for various reasons. Naturally, each umpire has to cover less ground, but the goal is to call a better game by not missing plays due to lack of another pair of eyes! All umpires must still move out of their starting positions on any hit to get the best angle on a possible play to their area. Use the guidelines above and adapt using the following.

### **Three Base Umpires (pitching machine levels)**

1. One behind each base on all plays. 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> umpires will always be positioned in foul territory before the pitch.
2. ALL umpires move from starting position on any hit to get the best angle on their base.
3. 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> umpires rule Fair or Foul on their baselines.
4. 3<sup>rd</sup> base umpire must also follow runner home and rule on plays at the plate. In this case, the 2<sup>nd</sup> base umpire will now cover plays at both 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base.
5. On fly balls to the outfield, the closest umpire will run out to be close when the ball drops to rule Catch or No Catch. The other two umpires will then split up the infield between them and cover all plays at the bases.

### **Plate Umpire & Two Base Umpires**

1. Plate umpire stays at the plate unless the 3<sup>rd</sup> base umpire goes out for a fly ball.
2. Base umpires split the diamond in half as in the **Base Umpire Only** levels.
3. 1<sup>st</sup> base umpire starts inside with a runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base only.
4. 3<sup>rd</sup> base umpire starts inside
5. Only ONE base umpire inside the foul lines before a pitch – the other must be in foul territory
6. Fly balls to the outfield: closest base umpire goes out to cover Catch or No Catch. The remaining umpires cover all plays at the bases.

## Selected Rules and Calls – All levels

1. **Putting the ball in Play and calling “Time”** – A game can not be started until the umpire motions to the pitcher and calls “Play.” The same call must be made after every dead ball for play to resume.
  - a. **Time is ‘out’ only** when an umpire calls it, not because a coach or player calls it.
  - b. **The ball can only be back in play when the pitcher:**
    - i. Has the ball in hand AND
    - ii. Steps on the rubber AND
    - iii. The plate umpire calls “Play.”
  - c. **“Hidden Ball Trick”** - If the umpire thinks the pitcher has the ball and calls “Play,” then realizes someone else has the ball, no play can be made, since the ball was not legally in play yet! The only way a Hidden Ball Trick can work is if Time was never called in the first place.
  - d. **No umpire should call Time when a play is still in progress.**
2. **Warm-up Pitches** – before the start of each inning, and when a pitcher relieves another, he shall take no more than eight preparatory pitches before the ball is put in play. If an injury or other sudden emergency causes a new pitcher to enter the inning, he shall be given as many warm-up pitches as the umpire deems necessary.
3. **Interference** – runner hinders, or fails to avoid a fielder who is in the act of making a play; fielding the ball, throwing to a base, catching a thrown ball.
  - a. **Mechanic:** Immediate dead ball! You have to recognize it and call it quick!
  - b. **Runner who interfered is out**, batter is awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base.
  - c. **Other runners** return to last base legally touched at the time of the interference
  - d. **If runner was attempting to prevent a double play**, the batter is also out
  - e. **If batter steps outside the three-foot lane** on the way to 1<sup>st</sup> base to influence a throw to put him out, it’s interference.
  - f. **Incidental Contact** is allowed between a fielder and runner during a tag attempt with no penalty. However, the runner must slide or make an attempt to avoid contact. Otherwise, call interference.
  - g. **Batted ball hits runner** (grounded, line drive, or fly ball): runner is out ONLY if the ball touches him without being contacted by a fielder AND no other infielder still has a reasonable chance to make a play on the ball. Once the ball is deflected by an infielder, the runner can not be called out unless he makes a deliberate attempt to interfere with the ball.
  - h. **Runner is NOT protected while on base!** If he is hit while on base AND a fielder has a chance to make a play, he is out, unless an infield fly has been called.
  - i. **Catcher contact with the batter** or bat during a swing is NOT interference – it’s obstruction, and a delayed dead ball.
  - j. **Batter may stay in the batters box** without chance of being called out on a catcher’s attempt to throw out a runner. If he steps out of the box and interferes with such a throw, batter is out and runners return to base.
  - k. **Batter must clear the area** (and batters box) when a play at the plate occurs with a runner attempting to score and a fielder attempting to make the tag. In this case, the runner is called out, not the batter.
  - l. **Batter & Catcher collide in fair territory** – when batter is running to 1<sup>st</sup> base and catcher tries to field the ball, it is incidental contact and not interference or obstruction, unless one or the other deliberately makes contact.
  - m. **Thrown Bat striking a fielder** in fair territory is interference; intentional or not! Thrown bat contacting a catcher in the catcher’s box is also interference. Contact with cracked or broken bat is not interference and ball is live.
  - n. **Helmet accidentally contacts a batted ball** – no interference and live ball if in fair territory. Contact in foul territory is an immediate foul ball. Intent to interfere by directing a helmet at the ball, fair or foul, is interference!
  - o. **Batted ball accidentally strikes a dropped bat** in fair territory (no attempt to throw the bat at the ball) – no interference and live ball. If ball strikes the bat in foul territory it’s an immediate foul ball.
  - p. **Thrown bat, intentional or not, strikes a batted ball** (bat is still moving when contact is made) in fair territory – interference and batter is out, runners return. Thrown bat accidentally contacts a ball in foul territory is an immediate foul ball, but interference if intentional.
  - q. **Umpire interferes with catcher’s throw** – dead ball and runners do not advance. Pitch counts.
  - r. **Umpire contacts a batted ball in fair territory BEFORE the ball touches a fielder** – dead ball, batter awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base, other runners advanced only if forced.
  - s. **Umpire contacts a batted ball AFTER** the ball passes a fielder other than the pitcher, or having touched any fielder or pitcher - the ball is live and play continues.

- t. **Base Coach contacts a runner** during a play with the intention of holding the runner on the base, or gets him to leave the base. Runner is out. Other runners go back to last legally touched base.
  - u. **Base Coach acts in any manner to draw off a throw** to advance his runner. Runner is out. Other runners return to last legally touched base.
  - v. **Base Coach contacting a Thrown Ball** – when accidental (non-intentional) contact, the ball remains in play. If the coach makes intentional contact, the lead runner is out; other runners return to the last base legally touched.
4. **Obstruction** – an act of a fielder (including the catcher) who, while NOT in possession of the ball or in the act of fielding the ball, impedes a runner. It doesn't matter if it was intentional or not. Two different types of obstruction:
- a. **Runner obstructed while a play is being made on him.** This can occur during a rundown, while a fielder is trying to put him out, during a ground ball before the batter reached first base, or other example where a play is being made directly on a runner at the moment he is being obstructed.
    - i. Mechanic: Call Time (unless a fly ball is still in the air), and point at the play, calling “that’s obstruction.” After a fly ball is caught or dropped, call Time. Impose penalties, if any.
    - ii. Award: direct all runners to the base, in the umpire’s sole judgment, to which they would have reached had the obstruction not occurred. Runners do not get awarded bases automatically! In addition, the runner who was obstructed gets one additional base past the last one he legally touched.
  - b. **Runner obstructed while no play is being made on him.** This can occur when a runner is obstructed while the ball is in the outfield, a play is being made on another runner, a wild throw was made and the runner obstructed, the catcher obstructed the swing (catcher’s interference), or other example where no play is being made on the runner at the time he is being obstructed.
    - i. Mechanic: Left hand points laterally at the obstruction, and call “that’s obstruction” but the ball remains live until the play is over (delayed dead ball). Then call Time and impose penalties, if any.
    - ii. Award: direct all runners to the base, in the umpire’s sole judgment, to which they would have reached had the obstruction not occurred. Runners do not get awarded bases automatically! Obstructed runner does not get an extra base. If an obstructed runner safely reaches a base you think he would have without the obstruction, there is no further award. Awards can range from one, two, three, or four bases, or an out!
  - c. **Batter-Runner does not always get awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base.** If a batter hits a pop fly and gets obstructed before 1<sup>st</sup> base, the umpire signals obstruction and play continues. If the ball is caught, the obstruction made no difference, and the batter is out. Other runners return to base. If dropped (and is a fair ball), Time is called and the batter gets awarded at least 1<sup>st</sup> base.
  - d. **If obstruction occurs during a play in which the batted ball is ruled foul**, there is no obstruction and is simply a foul ball.
  - e. **Catcher’s Interference – correctly called Catcher’s Obstruction**, is when the catcher, intentionally or not, obstructs the batter or bat during, or after the pitch. It is most commonly called when the batter’s bat touched the catcher’s glove during the swing. It is a delayed dead ball case, since no play was being made directly on the batter at the time. The batter is awarded at least 1<sup>st</sup> base after the play is dead.
5. **Appeals (runner misses a base, check swing, etc)**
- a. **Must be made before** the next pitch, any subsequent play, or any attempted play
  - b. **The ball must be in play** to request an appeal
  - c. **If Time has been called**, no appeal may be made until the pitcher touches the rubber with the ball in hand, and Play is called.
  - d. **An appeal should be clearly intended as an appeal**, either by a verbal request or an act that indicates an appeal to the umpire.
  - e. **Appeal to a missed base** – fielder touches the base with ball in hand. Declare the runner out.
  - f. **Runner misses home plate** and continues to the dugout – catcher needs only to touch home plate with the ball in hand. If the runner immediately tries to touch the plate after missing it, he must be tagged.
  - g. **Check Swing Appeal** – granted only if a pitch is ruled a “ball”. Grant the appeal immediately, no matter who requests it. Base umpire must rule immediately.
6. **Missed Bases** – runner misses a base, realizes it, and tries to go back to touch it.
- a. **Runner who missed a base must retouch** all bases in reverse order to reach the one he missed.
  - b. **If the runner has touched a base beyond the one he missed**, he can return to the missed base only if the ball is still in play.
  - c. **If the ball is dead, the runner can not touch a missed base** after he has touched a base beyond the missed base. He is out on appeal, if requested.
  - d. **If the ball is dead, the runner can only return** to a base if he has not yet reached the next one.
7. **Detached Equipment** (defensive player) touching a pitched or batted ball (mask, cap, thrown glove, etc)

- a. **Pitched Ball** – all runners (and batter) advance one base from time of the pitch. Ball is still in play.
  - b. **Batted Ball over fair territory** OR foul territory where the ball has a chance to become fair – all runners (and batter) advance three bases from the time of the touch.
  - c. **Batted Ball over foul territory** that can't become fair – ruled a foul ball and no runners advance.
  - d. **Equipment thrown and missed the ball** – no penalty and the ball remains in play.
8. **Infield Fly**
- a. **In effect** when 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases are occupied with less than two outs
  - b. **Fly ball (not a line drive)** that could be caught in fair territory by an infielder with ordinary effort.
  - c. **Bunted fly ball is never an infield fly** – just a regular fly ball (runners are not protected).
  - d. **Call must be made** when the ball is in the air
  - e. **Batter is automatically out**, but runners are protected as long as they stay on base.
  - f. **Runners may leave base** or advance at their own risk.
  - g. **Ball remains in play.**
  - h. **If the ball is not caught, drops and stays in foul territory**, a simple foul ball is ruled.
  - i. **If the ball is not caught, drops and rolls fair**, an Infield Fly is ruled.
9. **The Batter**
- a. **Time to get set** - Although the ball may be in play, the umpire must give the batter reasonable time to get “set” in the box before he allows the pitcher to deliver a pitch.
  - b. **Batted Ball hits home plate** – fair ball! (no call – let play continue)
  - c. **Batter’s Box** starts six inches on either side of the plate, and extends three feet toward the pitcher and three feet back toward the catcher from the center of the plate (six feet long)
  - d. **Batter must get set** entirely within the batter’s box. The lines themselves are “in” the box.
  - e. **Lines get erased** – call a violation only if flagrant
  - f. **Batter can not hit the ball with any foot on the ground completely outside the lines** of the batters box **at the time of the hit.**
  - g. **Batter is out** in such case.
  - h. **The batter’s foot CAN be in the air** outside the box and legally hit the ball
  - i. **A batted ball hits the batter or bat** while still in the box – foul ball
  - j. **Bunting foul with two strikes** on the batter is an out.
  - k. **If a batter swings and the pitch touches him**, it is ruled a strike and a dead ball
  - l. **If a batter is hit by a pitch which was in the strike zone**, it is ruled a strike (batter does not get first base) and a dead ball
  - m. **Hit By Pitch:** If a batter deliberately remains in the path of a pitched ball and gets hit outside the strike zone (does not attempt to get out of the way), it is ruled a “ball” and the batter does not get first base. In the umpire’s judgment, if the batter simply “freezes up” with a pitch coming at him (not an attempt to get a free base), the umpire should rule “Hit By Pitch” and award the batter first base.
10. **Foul Tip**
- a. **Where a pitched ball deflects off the bat directly** to the catcher’s glove and is caught
  - b. **Call a strike** and indicate the Foul Tip signal (brush off signal)
  - c. **The ball remains live!** Runners can steal.
  - d. **Do NOT call Foul Ball!** It is just a strike
11. **The Runner**
- a. **Two runners on one base** – preceding runner (trailing runner) is out when tagged or the base is touched by a fielder with the ball.
  - b. **Three Foot rule** – runner is out when he is more than 3 feet from the direct line between bases in an attempt to avoid a tag UNLESS he is trying to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to make a play.
  - c. **Abandoning the bases** – a runner who reached first base and, believing he is out or there is no further play, heads for the dugout, is declared out for abandoning the field of play.
  - d. **Runners may overrun first base**, and turn to second base (rounding the base) without possibility of being tagged out UNLESS they make a definite move to start toward second base. If he fails to return to first at once, he can be tagged out.
12. **The Fielder**

- a. **Intentionally dropped ball:** if less than two outs and any runners are on base in a force situation, a dropped fly ball or line drive (to attempt a double play) is treated as an infield fly; the batter is out and runners return to base. The difference here is that the ball is dead. This rule is in effect at all levels (it is not an infield fly).
- b. **Ball is Thrown, Kicked, or Deflected Out of Play:** over a fence, in the dugout, beyond ground rule lines, etc.
  - i. Always an immediate Dead Ball
  - ii. First thrown ball by an infielder in a play – award 2 bases to each runner and the batter from the time of the pitch.
  - iii. Second thrown ball by an infielder, or any throw by an outfielder – award 3 bases to each runner and the batter
  - iv. Pitched ball deflected by a fielder or catcher directly out of play – award one base
  - v. Pitched or Thrown ball remains on the playing field and is then kicked or deflected out of play – award 2 bases

## Senior Baseball Rules and Calls

**Balk** – an illegal act by the pitcher with runner(s) on base. The rule is meant to protect the runner against being deceived by the pitcher. A balk is actually the call made when a pitcher makes such an illegal act. In short, a pitcher can not feint a throw in one direction and throw in another direction in order to deceive the runner.

- a. **Only in effect with runners on base**
  - b. **Penalty is always one base for each runner**
  - c. **No Pitch** – the count does not change.
  - d. **Mechanic:** announce “Balk” and let the play continue (delayed dead ball.)
  - e. **Usually play will stop immediately**, but if the pitcher delivers a pitch, the batter may swing. If the batter makes contact, continue until the play is over. The offense may elect to take the play, or accept the balk award, whatever works in their favor. If the batter misses, there is no pitch, and assess the balk penalty.
- 1) **Pitcher – Windup Position:** pitcher stands facing the batter, both hands in front of his body, his pivot foot on (not off the end) the rubber, his other foot on the rubber or free. From this position, any natural movement associated with his normal delivery of the ball to the batter commits him to the pitch (to the batter) without interruption.  
**May step back off the rubber** (before any normal pitching motion) with his **pivot foot first**, followed by his free foot. He is then considered an infielder until he steps back on the rubber.  
**In the course of the pitch**, the pitcher may take one step back, and one step forward toward the batter with his free foot. Pivot foot must remain in contact with the rubber.  
**May step toward a base** (before any normal pitching motion) and throw in an attempt to pick-off a runner.  
**May NOT switch to the stretch position** while still in contact with the rubber. He must step off the rubber (pivot foot first), then step back on in the stretch position.  
**A violation with no runners on base is simply “no pitch.”** Count does not change. With runners on base, penalty is a balk.
- 2) **Pitcher – Stretch Position:** most common with runners on base, but may be used with no runners on; pitcher stands sideways to the batter, pivot foot in contact with the rubber, free foot in front of the rubber, hands down to his sides, one hand holding the ball. From here the pitcher may take his sign from the catcher. Pitcher must then bring both hands together on one continuous motion and make a **discernable stop in order to pitch to the batter**. He is then considered “set.” From the set, he can:  
**Step back off the rubber** using the pivot foot and immediately become a fielder.  
**Step toward the batter** with the free foot and deliver a pitch to the batter.  
Once a pitcher brings his free foot past the back edge of his pivot foot, he is committed to delivering a pitch to the batter, **unless** he continues that motion and steps to second base for a throw or fake throw to second base.  
**Step toward a base with the free foot** and throw to that base in an attempt to pick off a runner.
  - i. “Jump Turn” where the pitcher, in one continuous motion, leaves the ground with both feet, comes off the rubber, and lands with feet lined up to first base is considered “on the rubber” for purposes of the balk rule.
  - ii. A pitcher may never fake a throw to 1<sup>st</sup> base from the rubber.
  - iii. A pitcher can fake a throw from the rubber, to 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base.
  - iv. If a pitcher fakes a throw to 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base, he must come completely off the rubber before throwing to a different base (as a fielder).
  - v. The pitcher may not throw to a base that is not occupied by a runner, except to put out a runner advancing to that base.
  - vi. A pitcher’s shoulder turn towards a base is considered a “move” to that base, and commits the pitcher to throwing to that base. The step towards that base with the free foot before the throw is still required (the pitcher can not turn a shoulder towards a base, then back to the batter).**The pitcher does not have to wait to get “set” before throwing to a base**, but DOES have to set in order to throw a pitch home. The pitcher can throw to any base from the moment he touches the rubber, as long as he first steps with his free foot in the direction of the base.
- 3) **Other Balks**  
**Near the Rubber Without the Ball** – pitcher must retrieve the ball before nearing the rubber.  
**Dropping the ball** – pitcher can not drop the ball while in contact with the rubber.  
**Stepping off the rubber with his non-pivot foot** from the Windup Position.

### The 13 different ways to balk in official MLB rules:

1. The pitcher makes his natural pitching motion but fails to pitch to home.
2. The pitcher feints (fakes) a throw to first base, while touching the rubber, but fails to make the throw. The pitcher may, however, fake a throw to second or third base as long as there are runners on those bases. If the pitcher steps BACK off the rubber, they are not obliged to throw.

3. The pitcher fails to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base. Note that you cannot throw THEN step. Umpires judgment is the determining factor as to whether they stepped towards the base. The general rule of thumb is did they step within a 45 degree angle to first, for example.
4. The pitcher throws or fakes a throw to an UNOCCUPIED base, except for the purpose of making a play. For example, if a runner breaks for second, it is acceptable to throw to second base even though he turned toward first as long as it is a continuous motion toward second.
5. The pitcher makes an illegal pitch. A quick pitch is illegal, pitching from off the rubber is illegal (see below).
6. The pitcher delivers the ball to the batter while they are not facing the batter.
7. The pitcher makes any motion naturally associated with the pitch while they are not touching the rubber.
8. The pitcher unnecessarily delays the game.
9. The pitcher fakes a pitch without the ball; it does not matter whether her is on the rubber or not.
10. The pitcher, after coming to a legal pitching position, (usually sets), removes one hand from the ball (other than releasing the ball on the throw).
11. The pitcher accidentally or intentionally drops the ball while on the rubber.
12. The pitcher, while delivering an intentional base on balls, pitches when the catcher is not in the catcher's box. Catcher has to start in the catcher's box and then move outside after the pitch leaves the pitchers hand to catch the ball. This has been referred to in the past as a "catcher's balk".
13. The pitcher delivers from the set position without coming to a discernible stop. A change in direction is not a stop (called rolling through the pitch).

**Dropped Third Strike** – another reason not to call the batter “out”! Call it a strike only! If a batter swings or a pitched ball is ruled a strike and the catcher does not cleanly catch the ball, the batter may legally try to reach first base before being either tagged out, or a fielder touches first base with the ball.

- f. **Only in effect with two outs OR less than two outs and 1<sup>st</sup> base unoccupied** (no runner on first – leading off or not).
- g. **A legal catch** is one where the ball travels directly from the pitcher to the catcher's glove. The ball may not hit the ground first, be trapped on the ground, or hit any other part of the catcher or umpire first before being caught. If the ball strikes the catcher's glove directly, is bobbled momentarily, then caught, it is a legal catch and the batter may not advance.
- h. **This is a force out**, if the base is touched in control of the ball and runs can not score if a dropped third strike results in the third out.
- i. **If runner is tagged**, it is not a force out, and runs may count with two outs if scored before the tag.
- j. **If a foul tip strikes the umpire** on the 3<sup>rd</sup> strike, the ball remains in play
  - i. If a catcher or fielder catches it on the rebound, it is not a legal catch, and the batter is not out
  - ii. The defense must still tag the batter or touch 1<sup>st</sup> base to get the out
- k. **If the batter, believing he is out, heads to the dugout** instead of first base and reaches it, can be declared out for abandoning the field of play. Until he reaches the dugout however, the batter may change his mind and attempt to reach first base safely, even though he had left the base path.

## Umpire Crew Signs

At some point, all umpires have realized they are not sure of the count or the number of outs. We want to notify our partner that we are ready for play to start, or are watching for a certain play. Umpires have devised a set of simple, unofficial signals to communicate in a way that is not obvious to the players and fans. These or others should be reviewed by the umpire crew before the game. If one can not get another umpire's attention, he should call time, and then signal the umpire. Should an umpire conference be needed to sort out any confusion, call time first, then get together away from players or coaches.

1. **Ready to Play?** The plate umpire should point at his base umpire(s) one by one before "PLAY" is called to start an inning, or put the ball in play after a time out. This makes sure that all umpires are ready and their attention is on the game.  
Response: base umpires point back to the plate umpire that they are ready.
2. **How many outs?** Request is made by tapping a fist on the thigh or making a cutting motion to the throat. The response is to signal the number of outs against one leg (clenched fist for no outs)
3. **What is the count?** Request is made by tapping the top of the head. Response: signal the number of balls in the left hand and strikes in the right against your body near the belt area or above the shoulders.
4. **Infield Fly Situation:** (less than 2 outs with a runner on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>). Notify your partner before the pitch that this situation exists and to watch for it. Tap your open right hand against your left shoulder and then point to your cap to indicate one out, or with a closed fist to indicate no outs. Response: an identical signal to indicate you agree with the situation and number of outs.
5. **Timing Play:** (2 outs with a runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> base or beyond). Plate umpire is staying at the plate to be able to rule if a run counts on a possible non-force third out. The plate umpire holds up two fingers to the base umpire then points to the plate indicating he is "staying home" and the base umpire must cover possible plays at the three bases. Response: Back & forth motion to first & third base to indicate that you will cover plays at the bases.
6. **Plate Umpire Covering Third Base:** (less than 2 outs and a runner on 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>). Plate umpire taps his wrist and points to third base to indicate he will cover the lead runner on a play to 3<sup>rd</sup> base. Response: base umpire point to the plate umpire then to third base that he understands third is covered. The base umpire will only have to cover 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> base.