

NLICC Umpire's Book

Compiled and written by Head Umpires Jeremiah Both and Joshua Taylor 2021
Updated March 2022, April 2023, August 2023, February-April 2024, **June 2025,**
January 2026

Introduction

This document contains important information for umpires in the New Life in Christ Church Baseball League. This is mainly a guide for all things to do with the NLICC League specifically, not a complete rulebook for baseball in general. General baseball rules that *do* appear have been selected due to their relevance to the League and/or frequency of use. For a full list of baseball rules, please visit the website below:

<https://mktg.mlbstatic.com/mlb/official-information/2025-official-baseball-rules.pdf>

The NLICC Baseball League is a Christian ministry as well as a fun, developmental league. As such, umpires in the League are expected to set a Christ-like example, both on and off the field, to players, coaches, and parents alike. Above all else, the goal of NLICC umpires should be to bring glory to God by officiating fairly and honestly. Umpiring in the NLICC league is a great opportunity to develop leadership skills and to minister the gospel to others through example.

Be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.
1 Peter 3:8, NIV

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.
Colossians 3:12, NIV

Table of Contents

Section 1: Umpire conduct.....	3
1.01: General umpire conduct	
1.02: Accountability	
1.03: Home Plate umpire jurisdiction (Majors)	
1.04: First Base umpire jurisdiction (Majors)	
1.05: Third Base umpire jurisdiction (Majors)	
1.06: First Base umpire jurisdiction (Minors)	
1.07: Third Base umpire jurisdiction (Minors)	
1.08: Foul balls	
1.09: Pitching machine umpire jurisdiction (Minors)	
1.10: Advice for handling conflict	
1.11: Pace of play	
1.12: Hand Signals	
1.13: Length of game	
1.14: Attire	
1.15: Requirements	
1.16: Umpire Interference	

1.17: Obstruction

1.18: Interference

Section 2: Deviations from MLB/Little League Rules.....7

2.01: No base-stealing

2.02: Mercy rule

2.03: No infield fly rule

2.04: No balks (Majors only)

2.05: No balls or walks (Minors only)

2.06: Bunting

2.07: No wooden bats

2.08: Missed bases

2.09: Base ties

2.10: Practice swings

Section 3: Majors-specific Rules.....9

3.01: Mercy Rule

3.02: Excessive hit-by-pitches

3.03: Hit-by-pitch when batter is in the strike zone

3.04: No softball bats

● League Approved Bats

3.05: Intentional walks

3.06: Channel Line

3.07: Pitch counts

3.08: Batter's Boxes

Section 4: Minors-specific Rules.....11

4.01: "Good pitches"

4.02: Mercy Rule

4.03: Ball hitting the pitching machine

4.04: The wire

4.05: Number of outfielders

4.06: Softball bats no longer allowed

4.07: Determining when play ends

Section 5: Miscellaneous.....12

5.01: Touching players

5.02: Out-of-play balls

5.03: Team outs

5.04: Thrown bats - update

5.05: Carrying bats to First Base

5.06: Live ball hitting a runner

5.07: Catching the ball with a hat

5.08: Players should be in full uniform

5.09: Coaching limitations

5.10: Crowd Control

5.11: Technology

5.12: Infield Shift

5.13: Out of the Base Path

5.14: Fly ball striking top of Outfield Fence

Appendix: Hand Signals and Pausing.....21

Section 1: Umpire Conduct

This section contains instructions on how NLICC umpires are to conduct themselves, what responsibilities various umpires have (including jurisdictions), and advice on how to handle challenges/conflict if such should occur.

1.01: General umpire conduct. NLICC umpires are expected to make fair, unbiased calls to the best of their abilities. Umpires should hold themselves and their fellow umpires accountable to maintain a high level of efficiency and objectivity.

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace. 1 Peter 4:10 ESV

There are three important qualities an umpire should have:

- 1. Objectivity.** No umpire should allow emotion or personal bias to influence his/her calls on the field. Judgements should be made based on what actually happens on the field, instead of what the umpire wants to happen.
- 2. Consistency.** Being consistent in calling plays is key to maintaining a good reputation as an umpire. This includes making the same call in the same situation not just throughout a single game, but throughout the entire season. Others will notice inconsistent umpiring, so it is imperative to maintain constancy to the best of one's ability.

For there is no partiality with God. Romans 2:11

- 3. Awareness.** Umpires should maintain general awareness of the game at all times, with special attention to their respective jurisdictions. During a play, it is essential to know where the baseball is at all times, as well as pay attention to details of the play at hand.

1.02: Accountability. In the event that another umpire makes a call that is blatantly incorrect due to misunderstanding, lack of awareness, or some other reason, it is the responsibility of his/her fellow umpires to call the umpires together to discuss the play and make a correction, if necessary. Any umpire, regardless of level of experience, might make a mistake, and it is important for him/her to recognize that mistake to prevent similar errors in the future. Any umpire may call the umpires together at any time; however, discretion is encouraged to prevent overly frequent meetings due to trivial incidents or wrongly-perceived errors.

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:2

1.03: Home Plate umpire jurisdiction (Majors). The Home Plate umpire is responsible for calling balls and strikes behind the plate, as well as calling fair/foul along the First Base and Third Base lines up to the First Base and Third Base bags. The First Base and Third Base umpires may assist the Home Plate umpire in the latter duty if necessary. Additionally, the Home Plate umpire is responsible for calling plays at Home

Plate, is the Crew Chief for the game, **calling tossed bats, inspecting legal bats**, and is responsible for securing game balls ahead of time.

1.04: First Base umpire jurisdiction (Majors). The First Base umpire's primary responsibility is calling plays at First Base and Second Base. The First Base umpire is also responsible for foul balls past the First Base bag into the outfield, as well as judging checked swings for right-handed batters. The First Base umpire's initial position should be a few feet behind First Base in foul territory; if a runner is on First Base, the First Base umpire should move to the edge of the outfield grass halfway between First and Second Base.

1.05: Third Base umpire jurisdiction (Majors). The Third Base umpire is responsible for calling plays at Third Base, as well as calling foul balls past the Third Base bag into the outfield. Additionally, the Third Base umpire is responsible for judging checked swings for left-handed batters.

1.06: First Base umpire jurisdiction (Minors). The First Base umpire is responsible for calling plays at First and Second Base, calling all fair/foul balls along the First Base line, calling strikes, and judging the height of "good pitches" (see 4.01) for right-handed batters. Additionally, the First Base umpire is responsible for judging checked swings for right-handed batters and has Home Plate jurisdiction when there are no runners on base. The First Base umpire's initial position should be a few feet behind First Base in foul territory; if a runner is on First Base, the First Base umpire should move to the edge of the outfield grass halfway between First and Second Base. He is the Crew Chief for the game.

1.07: Third Base umpire jurisdiction (Minors). The Third Base umpire is responsible for calling plays at Third Base, calling all fair/four balls along the Third Base line, and judging the height of "good pitches" (see 4.01) for left-handed batters. Additionally, the Third Base umpire is responsible for judging checked swings for left-handed batters.

1.08: Foul balls. Unlikely as it may seem, foul balls are historically some of the most controversial calls made in NLICC Baseball. As such, it is important to be familiar with all rules pertaining to a ball being called fair or foul. There are two main categories:

1. A hit ball landing on the ground at least once before leaving the infield.
 - If a live ball is first touched by a fielder in fair territory or directly on the foul line, it is a fair ball. This includes a ball starting in foul territory and rolling or bouncing into fair territory.
 - If a live ball is first touched by a fielder in foul territory, it is a foul ball. This includes a ball starting in fair territory and rolling or bouncing into foul territory.
 - If a live ball leaves the infield in fair territory or directly along the foul line before being touched by a fielder, it is a fair ball.
 - If a live ball leaves the infield in foul territory before being touched by a fielder, it is a foul ball.
 - If a live ball strikes First Base, or Third Base, it is a fair ball, regardless of the ball's trajectory after hitting the base.

- If a live ball is first touched by a fielder over any part of Home Plate, it is a fair ball.
- 2. A hit ball leaving the infield without touching the ground.
 - A ball that leaves the infield on the fly is judged fair or foul based solely upon where the ball lands or is touched by a fielder. If the ball lands in fair territory or directly on the foul line, it is a fair ball; if the ball lands in foul territory, it is a foul ball.
- 3. A batter is hit by his own batted ball while still in the batter's box.
 - The two scenarios for this are (1) the batter is still in the batter's box when the ball rebounds and hits him or the bat, or a batted ball hits him directly on the foot or ankle, or (2) the batter is touched by a fair batted ball after he has left the batter's box.
 - In the first scenario, where the batter is hit by his own batted ball while still in the box, this is simply a foul ball. Sometimes it is difficult for the plate umpire to see this, so the base umpire(s) should immediately call "Foul" if they see it.
 - In the second scenario, where the batter is touched by his *fair* batted ball *after* he has left the batter's box, you have an interference. The batter is out, the ball is dead, and runners, if moving, must return to their time-of-pitch base. *This is no different from other base runners touched by a fair batted ball.*

1.09: Pitching machine umpire jurisdiction (Minors). The pitching machine umpire is responsible for pitching the baseball in a consistent manner and judging the lateral position of "good pitches" (see 4.01), i.e. whether or not the baseball is over the plate. Additionally, the pitching machine umpire has jurisdiction for Home Plate when there are runners on base. He should move toward Home Plate when a runner is on base advancing to the right side if the ball is in left field or the left side if the ball is in right field, so as to not impede the throw and have the best angle. He/she is responsible for securing game balls and calibrating the machine prior to game start time. **This umpire should also pay attention to the batter's release of the bat before shifting attention to the hit ball.**

*All umpires should be prepared to also back up calls of other umpires, or make calls in other umpire's jurisdiction if the umpire in question is occupied elsewhere.

1. **1.10: Advice for handling conflict.** Situations may arise in which a coach or player might wish to contest a controversial call. If a player is contesting the call, a simple explanation may be given; however, general practice is to discuss the matter with the player's Head Coach. Remain calm and explain the situation and ruling to the coach clearly. In *some* instances, conferring with your fellow umpires is necessary. Coaches are allowed to ask umpires for clarification on rules or the specifics of a play, but official challenges (i.e. a coach requesting that the umpires come together and uphold or overturn a call) are no longer allowed in NLICC Baseball.

* If the situation worsens, the Crew Chief has the ability to warn **belligerent coaches** and sit them on the bench. This means they can say nothing about any remaining calls nor can they be base coaches; they have lost that privilege. If the coach's bad behavior persists, the Crew Chief is allowed and encouraged to expel the coach from the field. A bad attitude can taint the field and your witness. If the franchise GM was not present, then he needs to be made aware of the situation first from the Crew Chief; the GM will then speak to the coach. Then, if necessary, the opposing GM may be called in, and finally the four GMs and the Baseball Commissioner. League Operations and the Head Umpire may also be asked for input in order to resolve the situation. Grace should be extended for repentant coaches, but repeat offenders may need to step down or be removed from the role.

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise adorns knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.

Proverbs 15:1&2

1.11: Pace of play. Umpires are responsible for keeping the game running in an efficient manner. Once all fielders and the batter are in their respective positions on the field, the Crew Chief should call "balls in" and begin play. If a fielder(s) is slow to arrive, umpires are encouraged to speak to the appropriate coach to facilitate the start of the next play. If a batter is slow to arrive, the Crew Chief should call "batter up". If a ball is hit or thrown far out of play, the umpires should provide a new baseball immediately to continue play. In Minors, the pitching machine umpire should start the sequence for the next pitch as soon as the batter and catcher are ready. In Majors, a new pitcher should be allowed five warm-up pitches with the catcher before the game continues. A returning pitcher may have up to three warm-up pitches. For both divisions, encourage the coaching staff to have their catchers ready as quickly as possible.

1.12: Hand Signals. The umpire crew employs signals for fair/foul balls, strikes, pitched balls, out, safe, walk, homerun, and ground rule doubles (New Life has developed a unique signal for when hits bounce over or roll under the outfield fence). See attached pages.

1.13: Length of game. Our Minor League games run about 2 hours and our Major League games about 2 ½ hours. **The Minors need to play four innings for the game to count, and the Majors need to play five.** As that time guideline is approaching and the maximum innings have not been reached, the Crew Chief will make a determination whether another inning is started or not based on the flow of the game and weather conditions, after consulting the League Scorekeeper and possibly the rest of the umpire crew. **Because of fair play rules, every effort will be made to play entire games. With that in mind, do all you can to move the game along – encourage coaches to have their catchers ready and to get fielders quickly onto the field, do not allow more warm-up pitches than prescribed, and do not dally between half-innings. Also, we encourage breaks on hot days; work with the score table to subtract those break minutes from game time even if it causes the game to run over a few minutes. Game length guidelines, are just that...guidelines; not hard fast rules.**

1.14: Attire. All umpires will wear their hat and League shirt along with gray pants and close-toes shoes. Crew Chiefs and Home Plate umps have to always wear pants, but the other positions are permitted to wear modest gray shorts if wanted.

1.15: Requirements. All umpires need to attend an Umpire Clinic. New umpires are encouraged to attend both clinics in order to process and absorb all the new information better. They also are required to practice with the teams at least twice during pre-season using the pitching machine or being behind Home Plate if they will be there during the season. They are also encouraged to participate in the pre-season games to practice. Plus, additional watching of training videos and visiting the Umpire Bible site is recommended. <https://www.umpirebible.com/>

1.16: Umpire Interference.

- If an umpire on the bases is touched by a batted ball **before** the ball touches or passes an infielder (except the pitcher – just ignore the pitcher for now), you have umpire interference. In general, we are talking about the umpire getting hit while positioned in the infield. Call interference on yourself immediately. Call "Time! That's interference!"
- Award the batter-runner First Base.
- Other runners advance if forced. (Your partners are laughing by now. Do what you can to recover your dignity and move on.)

Important: If the ball touches the pitcher before touching the umpire in this scenario, then you do **not** have umpire interference. Live ball. Play on.

- If the batted ball touches an infielder or passes an infielder (again, except the pitcher) and then an umpire on the bases is touched by that ball, you have nothing – live ball, play on. In this case, the umpire is positioned behind the infielders.
- In all other situations where an umpire inadvertently contacts a base runner, a defensive player, or the ball itself, you have nothing. Live ball. Do what you can to minimize your impact and let play continue.

1.17: Obstruction

Official definition:

• Any act of a fielder who, while NOT in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. Examples: Fake tags, blocking a base, base path or home plate when not in possession of the ball.

*Obstruction is caused by the defense.

Concepts to understand when determining if obstruction has occurred

- Fielders have a right to be where needed to field **a batted ball**. Therefore, even if they do not yet have possession of the ball, but are moving to or in a position to field a batted ball, they have first right of position. The runner needs to move around or avoid the fielder in this

case (otherwise they risk being called for interference).

- The above concept does not apply to fielders who are fielding **a thrown ball**. A fielder cannot be in a position or moving to a position that impedes a runner or blocks a base, home plate, or the base path, even while a thrown ball is in-flight and the fielder is preparing to make the catch (i.e., the catch is eminent).

If an umpire is hit by a batted ball before it passes a fielder, the ball is dead. On any other batted or thrown ball, the ball is alive when the umpire is hit with the ball. Umpire interference also occurs when the plate umpire interferes with the catcher's attempt to prevent a stolen base.

1.18: Interference

Interference can be caused by the offense, the defense, an umpire, or a spectator. It is mostly caused by the offense.

Interference is defined as the act of an offensive player or team member which impedes, hinders or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. It may be in the form of physical contact, verbal distraction, visual distraction, or any type of distraction which would hinder the fielder in the execution of the play. Defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball anywhere on the playing field or throw the ball without being hindered.

EXCEPTION: If the throw is from the foul side of first base or the fielder is receiving the throw from the foul side, and it pulls them to the white portion and collides with the runner, this would not be interference.

A. Runner interference includes:

1. A runner or batter-runner who interferes with a fielder executing a play (including the batter-runner touching the white part of double base at first and colliding with the fielder trying to catch a thrown ball from an infielder),
2. A fair-batted ball contacts the runner before it touches or passes an infielder, or after it passes any infielder, except the pitcher, and the Umpire judges that another infielder has a play,
3. Intentionally interfering with a batted ball,
 - a. When a runner interferes with a fielder, the umpire must determine if the interference occurred before or after the runner who interfered was put out and then apply the proper rule.

b. When a runner is hit by a fair batted ball, it is interference if it occurred before it passed an infielder (excluding the pitcher) and provided the runner was not in contact with the base.

c. A runner could be standing on a base and a defensive player bumps the runner while watching the flight of the ball. If the defensive player fails to make a catch on a catchable ball, it is the umpire's judgement whether interference should or should not be called. The rule provides that a runner must vacate any space needed by a fielder to make a play on a batted ball, unless the runner has contact with a legally occupied base when the interference occurs. In this case, the runner should not be called out unless the hindrance is intentional.

d. If interference occurs by the runner on a foul fly ball not caught, the runner is out, a strike is called, the ball is dead, and the batter remains at bat.

e. Crashing into fielder with the ball (INTERFERENCE)

4. In order to prevent injury and protect the defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, the runner must be called out if he remains on his feet and crashes into a defensive player holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag, or if the defensive player is about to receive a thrown ball. In order to prevent the crash ruling, the runner can slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender (if outside the three-foot lane, the runner would be called out), or return to the previous base touched. NOTE: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender will be ejected. A runner may slide into the fielder.

a. When a runner is called out for crashing into a fielder holding the ball, the ball becomes dead. Each runner must return to the last base touched at the time of interference.

b. If, in A above, the runner crashed into a fielder holding the ball before he was put out and, in the judgment of the umpire, it was an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the immediate succeeding runner will also be declared out.

c. If the crash occurs after the runner was called out, the runner closest to home plate will be declared out.

d. If an obstructed runner crashes into a fielder holding the ball, the obstruction call will be ignored and the runner will be called out. This does not give the runner a right to be malicious.

e. If a defensive player is fielding a thrown ball and the flight of the ball carries or draws him into the path of the base runner, this would not be a crash.

f. If the ball, runner and the defensive player all arrive at the same time and contact is made, the umpire should not invoke the collision rule (interference) or

obstruction. This is merely incidental contact. If the ball does not enter dead ball territory in either E or F, the ball remains live and in play.

B. Batter interference occurs while the batter is at bat and before the batter hits the ball.

It occurs in fast pitch when the batter intentionally interferes with the catcher's throw on an attempted steal or when he interferes with the catcher on a play at the plate. The batter's box is not a sanctuary for the batter when a play is being made at the plate. It could also occur when a batter releases the bat in such a manner that it hits the catcher and prevents the catcher from making a play. If the batter merely drops his bat and the catcher trips over it, there is no interference.

C. Offensive players in the dugout may be charged with interference if they interfere with a fielders' opportunity to make an out on a fly ball.

D. On-deck batters may be charged with interference if they interfere with a throw and a possible tag on a runner, or a fielder's opportunity to make an out on a fly ball.

E. Coach's interference occurs when:

1. A base coach runs toward home and draws a throw or when he interferes with a fielder attempting to catch or throw a ball.

2. The coach's box is not a sanctuary. A batted ball or thrown ball that unintentionally hits a base coach is not considered interference.

3. A base coach can also be called for interference when physically assisting a runner in advancing or retreating during a play.

F. Spectator interference occurs when a spectator:

1. Enters the field and interferes with a play. EFFECT: the batter and runner(s) shall be placed where in the umpire's judgement they would have made, had the interference not occurred. The field belongs to the fielder and the stands belong to the spectator. Or

2. Reaches onto the field from the stands and prevents a fielder from catching a fly ball in the field of play. EFFECT: A dead ball is ruled and the batter is called out. All runners shall be placed where in the umpire's judgement they would have made, had the interference not occurred. It is not interference if the fielder reaches into the stands.

G. Umpire interference occurs:

1. (Fast Pitch & Slow Pitch) when an umpire is hit by a fair, untouched batted ball before it passes an infielder (excluding the pitcher). The batter-runner is awarded first base (exception to the statement that someone must be called out on interference).

2. (Fast Pitch Only) when an umpire interferes with a catcher's attempt to put out a runner stealing, or an attempted pick-off from the catcher to any base. It is interference only if the runner is not put out, in which case he is returned to his base. In no other case is umpire interference ruled.

When batter, batter-runner, runner, on-deck batter or coach interference occurs, the ball is dead, someone must be called out, and each other runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.

H. Offensive team interference could occur on a thrown ball striking loose equipment left on the playing field should there actually be a play.

I. Batter-Runner interference occurs when he steps back while running to first base to avoid a tag by a defensive player, or when running to first, runs outside the three-foot lane over fair or foul territory and interferes with a thrown ball to First Base.

https://cdn4.sportngin.com/attachments/document/0127/7121/53f347_ea70c33641394343b5d86398e17dc8bd.pdf

Section 2: Deviations from MLB/Little League Rules

This section contains information on NLICC League rules which deviate from or contradict rules in the MLB/Little League rulebook. Due to the nature of the League and the players involved in the League, there are certain limitations to what can be enforced or performed and certain caveats which must be made based on players' abilities.

2.01: No base-stealing. Stealing bases is not allowed in NLICC Baseball in Majors or Minors. All baserunners must remain on their respective bases until the ball is put in play, i.e., no leading off of a base. Stealing First Base, the situation where the catcher drops the ball on the third strike and the batter advances to First, is also not allowed.

- * We do not do balks or steals; therefore, no lead-offs are allowed. If a runner does this, but then fails to tag-up before proceeding to the next base, the runner will be considered out as soon as they touch the next bag. This will be a delayed-dead ball situation. Allow the play to end before making the call.
- By extension of this rule, pickoffs by the pitcher or catcher are not allowed (and are also pointless).
- Note: This rule may evolve in the future depending on catcher competence to throw to Second Base.

2.02: Mercy rule. In NLICC Baseball, a Mercy Rule is put in place to prevent a team from scoring too large a number of runs in a single inning; this is to prevent absolute blowouts and restrict the game to a reasonable time frame. Majors and Minors have different variants of the Mercy Rule (see 3.01 and 4.02).

2.03: No infield fly rule. In MLB, a fly ball is automatically called an out if it can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when runners are on First and Second OR

First, Second, and Third Base and when there are less than two outs. In NLICC Baseball, this rule is disregarded: All fly balls must be caught to be considered an out.

2.04: No balks (Majors only). In MLB, a balk occurs when a pitcher makes any motion associated with his delivery and does not actually deliver the ball. This rule was made to prevent the pitcher from deceiving baserunners during a pickoff, and as such balks are disregarded in NLICC Baseball. (Note: This rule may evolve in the future depending on pitcher competence.)

2.05: No balls or walks (Minors only). In Minors, if a batter does not swing at a pitch, it is not ruled as a ball or a strike, but instead as a “good pitch” or a “bad non-pitch” (see 4.01). If a batter collects four good pitches, he/she is called out instead of receiving First Base.

2.06: Change for 2026: bunting is allowed for Majors. However, coaches should not encourage players to stand at the plate with a level bat (mostly Minors). If a batter does this, it will be considered a swing/strike even if the pitch was a ball.

A bunt is a batting technique meant to advance the runners. "A bunt is a batted ball not swung at, but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly within the infield." For it to be a legal bunt, the batter must "square around," splitting hands with the top hand near the label, and use knees to adjust bat height, not the waist, to guide the ball without pushing it, ensuring the bat stays above the hands for a soft drop.

Even when taking a bunting position, the umpire will determine if the pitch was a ball or strike, not based on whether the batter allowed the pitch to pass or not. Treat it like a checked swing.

If the batter starts to show bunt (square up), he/she must either attempt to bunt the ball or pull the bat back; the batter cannot fake a bunt and then swing away (slash bunt). The batter will be called out.

If the bunted ball hits the ground and bounces back up and hits the bat while the batter is holding the bat, it is a foul ball if the batter is still in the batter's box. However, if the batter has left the batter's box and the ball hits the bat or the batter-runner, then the batter is out.

A foul bunt with two strikes is an automatic strikeout, unlike a regular foul ball.

{I will add this link to the Coach's Guidelines:

<https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/bunting-101-the-bunting-progression/>}

2.07: No wooden bats. Bats made of wood are not allowed in NLICC Baseball; only metal bats made of aluminum or composite materials may be used. The type of metal bats allowed varies from Majors to Minors (see 3.04 and 4.06).

2.08: Missed bases. If a runner fails to touch a base in the process of running the bases, he/she is out once he/she reaches the next base.

- At that point, the umpire should signal an out, but not stop play. Allow the play to play-out before explaining the call, so as to not cause unnecessary commotion.
- If a player fails to touch Home Plate, he/she shall immediately be called out upon entering the dugout.
- If a coach or another player touches the runner before they touch Home Plate, they will also be called out.

2.09: Base ties. MLB rules make clarity difficult. MLB generally holds that the fielder gets precedence. New Life Baseball holds that the runner gets the tie. Every effort is made to determine what happened first, but that is not always possible.

2.10: Practice swings. We do not have an on-deck circle. Batters are allowed a couple practice swings while approaching Homeplate, but should not be slowing the game down with multiple swings between pitches. Batters must step out of the Batter's Box to take any practice swings or it will be considered a strike.

- Batters are not to go into the field or behind the dug-out to do practice swings for safety concerns.
- If the batter does not heed these rules, the Homeplate umpire will warn the batter.
- The second time during the game that it happens, the Homeplate umpire will call the batter out.
- If it happens behind the dug-out, the players will receive a warning since they are not supposed to be outside of the dug-out for this to even be a possibility.
- Teams are to utilize the batting cage prior to their game starting.
- Minors should be learning this rule so as to not slow the game down and for safety, but it will not be enforced unless the batter swings after the pitching umpire's arm goes up.

Section 3: Majors-specific Rules

This section contains rules that apply specifically to the Majors League (hand-pitch) only.

3.01: Mercy rule. A new play may not begin if a team has scored five or more runs in a half-inning. The half-inning shall be declared over once the play in which a team scores a fifth run is called dead, regardless of the number of outs.

You can only score **five runs each half-inning** unless the fifth run was scored during a multi-run at bat, in which case they all count with eight being the maximum possible. There is a **10-run last inning limit**. If a team is down by more than 13 runs (the maximum possible), it is at the two Head Coach's discretion whether the last inning is played.

3.02: Excessive hit-by-pitches. If a pitcher hits two batters in the same inning, they should be replaced, with the option to come back later. If a pitcher hits two batters in the head during the game, he/she will no longer be allowed to pitch in that game, but may stay in the game provided he/she plays a different position.

All of the normal features of the hit-by-pitch rule apply when the pitch bounces first.

If the batter moved to avoid the pitch, this is not considered a head shot. If the batter moves out of the batter's box and is hit by a pitch, it is not considered a hit batter. If a batter swings at the pitch and is also hit by the pitch, the swing takes precedence and it is not a hit-by-pitch, but a strike or hit. The Homeplate Umpire has jurisdiction over determining if the batter intentionally allowed themselves to be hit by a pitch in which case the batter does not get First Base. The batter must make an effort to get out of the way of the pitch. If the Homeplate Umpire determines that the hit was intentional, then the pitcher will be immediately relieved from pitching that game, and possibly ejected based on the circumstances. The Head Coach, the pitcher, and the parents will all be spoken to by the Commissioner to make sure that does not happen again. If it does, then the family will be asked to leave New Life Baseball.

Coaches should not be encouraging their batters to crowd the plate. If this is happening, the batter should get a warning, then if it happens again, it will be a strike.

3.03: Hit-by-pitch when batter is in the strike zone. If a batter is hit by a pitch while the ball is in the strike zone, the batter shall not receive First Base and a strike will be called. If this is their third strike, then that at-bat is done.

3.04: No softball bats. Metal softball bats are not allowed in Majors; only metal baseball bats may be used. (For more information on the distinction between softball and baseball bats, please visit <https://www.acs.psu.edu/drussell/bats/baseball-softball.html>).

- If a batter is found to be using a softball bat or any other illegal bat, the team shall be issued a warning and the illegal bat shall be confiscated. If the same team uses another softball bat during the same game, the team shall receive a team out and the illegal bat shall be confiscated. Team outs will be issued for all subsequent offences beyond two. The League is slowly switching over to approved Little League baseball bats; all players purchasing their own equipment should inquire as to the current standard.

League Approved Bats

Minors & Majors

USA Baseball marking
2 5/8" barrel maximum
*Approved Tee Ball bats may be used in coach pitch/machine pitch divisions only with the use of approved tee balls.

As of January 1, 2018, the new USA Baseball Bat Standard was implemented. USABat Standard bats must be used in the Little League Major Baseball Division and below.

3.05: Intentional walks. These are permitted and the pitcher will be awarded four pitches toward their pitch count. Only one intentional walk without thrown pitches is allowed per game to the same batter.

3.06: Channel Line. This is the additional line drawn to the right 45 feet down the First Base Foul Line in foul territory. The hardest part of this for the player is that First Base is in fair territory and the batter/runner is supposed to run to First Base in the running lane which is not in fair territory. A right-handed batter can easily and will often run out a ground ball and never run in the running lane. The majority of the time this is not an issue as interference will not be called simply because a player is not running in the running lane. If the runner is running in the running lane and runs into the First baseman or interferes with his ability to catch the ball, the runner should be called out even though he is in the running lane. Just as you are not automatically out by running outside the running lane, you are not automatically safe by running in the running lane. The umpire needs to judge where the runner is intentionally interfering or not and then make the call based on that.

MLB explanation: In running the last half of the distance from Home Base to First Base, while the ball is being fielded to first base, he runs outside (to the right of) the three-foot line, or inside (to the left of) the foul line, and in the umpire's judgment in so doing interferes with the fielder taking the throw at First Base, in which case the ball is dead; except that he may run outside (to the right of) the three foot line or inside (to the left of) the foul line to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball; Rule 6.05(k) Comment: The lines marking the three-foot lane are a part of that lane and a batter-runner is required to have both feet within the three-foot lane or on the lines marking the lane. The batter-runner is permitted to exit the three-foot lane by means of a step, stride, reach or slide in the immediate vicinity of First Base for the sole purpose of touching First Base.

3.07: Pitch counts. The League follows the Baseball Dudes pitch limits for innings and for games. The Scorekeepers table should make the Crew Chief and the Head Coach aware when a pitcher is approaching their limit.

3.08: Batter's Boxes. If a batter hits a pitched ball with one or both of his/her foot/feet outside of the batter's box, including Homeplate, then the batter is out. **The line is considered part of the batter's box.** Runners do not advance. (Minors will get warnings.) If the batter's box is not fully visible, then the Homeplate Umpire will issue a warning if the batter is obviously out of position.

Section 4: Minors-specific Rules

This section contains rules that apply specifically to the Minors League (machine-pitch) only.

4.01: “Good pitches”. Minors does not count strikes and balls for a batter; instead, strikes and “good pitches” are counted. A strike can only occur if the batter swings at the ball; foul balls are counted as strikes as normal. A “good pitch” is defined as a pitch at which the batter does not swing and is judged to be in the strike zone, i.e. over the plate and between the batter’s shoulders and knees.

- The pitching umpire and either the First or Third Base umpire are responsible for judging the position of pitches not swung at by the batter (see 1.06 - 1.08 for jurisdiction information). If the watched pitch is deemed to be in the strike zone by the appropriate umpires, one good pitch is added to the batter. If the batter accumulates 4 good pitches, he/she shall be called out.
- If the watched pitch is deemed to be out of the strike zone, no good pitch shall be added to the batter. Play will continue as normal.

4.02: Mercy rule. A new play may not begin once a team has batted every batter in its line-up. Once the last batter has batted and the play is called dead, the half-inning shall be declared over, regardless of the number of outs. **The mercy rule does not change for the last inning in Minors.**

Minors can bat around in a half- inning without three outs. In the interest of making fair play fairer, the number of players allowed for batting around will be determined by the team count for the team with the lower number of players. So, if Team A has 10 players that day, and Team B has 12 players, both teams will be able to bat around 10 players.

4.03: Ball hitting the pitching machine. If a live ball put into play strikes the pitching machine, the pitching machine’s power cord, or the ground outlet cover in such a way as to significantly alter the motion of the ball, the play shall immediately be called dead, and the batter will be awarded First Base.

4.04: The wire. Currently, there is a set of telephone wires placed above the Minors field, running from left field to left-center field. These wires are considered part of the field of play. The rules for a ball hitting one of the wires are as follows:

- If a ball hits any of the three upper wires, it shall immediately be called a Home Run.
- If a ball hits the lower wire while traveling upward or at the apex of its flight, it shall immediately be called a Home Run.
- If a bat hits the lower wire while traveling downward, it shall immediately be called a Ground Rule Double.

4.05: Number of outfielders. Instead of the normal three outfielders, Minors teams may position four outfielders in the outfield. The four outfielders may be placed in left field, left-center field, right-center field, and right field.

- If a team is experiencing a shortage of available players, no fewer than two outfielders may be placed in the outfield.

4.06: Approved bats. Change for 2026: Softball bats will no longer be allowed. All players purchasing their own equipment should inquire as to the current standard **found in the Coach Guidelines**. If an illegal bat is used, the team shall be issued a warning and the illegal bat shall be confiscated. If the same team uses another illegal bat during the same game, the team shall receive a team out, and the illegal bat shall be confiscated. Team outs will be issued for all subsequent offences beyond two.

4.07: Determining when play ends. Play ends in Minors **when the lead runner has been stopped** or the ball is thrown to the pitcher (who must be in the pitcher's area of play) and the pitcher **has control** of the ball (ie, if the pitcher throws home for a play at the plate, the play is very much alive). However, teams should still be attempting to get base runners out, not just ending every hit by tossing the ball to the pitcher. If they choose to end the play by throwing the ball to the pitcher, all base runners **get the base they are running toward**. (If a base runner is touching a base when the play ends, they do not get the next base **unless forced to move by another runner**.)

Section 5: Miscellaneous

This section contains rules/information about the League which are important but do not belong in any of the previous sections.

5.01: Touching players. Coaches are encouraged not to touch any players while a play is live i.e. at First and Third Bases. A runner may slap hands or high-five other players or a base coach while rounding the bases, but a coach can be called for interference when physically assisting a runner in advancing or retreating during a play. Note too, that on a Home Run the only out that can occur is if one runner passes another runner on the base path, or if a runner fails to touch a base.

5.02: Out-of-play balls. If a ball is thrown out of play during the course of a play, all current baserunners will receive the base ahead of them and the play shall be declared dead. The ball is considered out of play if it enters a dugout or is thrown **or bounces** over or under a fence marking the boundary of the field. **This does not apply to** throws that are bobbled, misplayed, or uncatchable. Those are still play-able, **as long as the ball is still on the field**.

5.03: Team outs. On certain interference calls or various other infractions, a team may receive a team out. A team out is not assigned to any specific player, but instead simply raises the number of outs in a half-inning by one.

- If a team out is the third out of the half-inning and is not part of a play (i.e. the batter does not put the ball in play), the next offensive half-inning for the team that received the team out will begin with the batter who was batting at the end of the previous half-inning, with the count on the batter reset.

5.04: Thrown bats. A thrown bat is defined as when a batter **intentionally or unintentionally** flings or throws a bat after a hit, foul ball, or otherwise.

- If a thrown bat occurs, the team whose player threw the bat shall receive a warning. If anyone on that team throws another bat during the same game, the batter who threw the bat shall be called out. All subsequent thrown bats by that team during the same game will result in the offending batter being called out.
- If a thrown bat hits a player, coach, umpire, etc., the offending player shall be called out, even if it is the first instance of a thrown bat during that game. All subsequent thrown bats by that team during the same game will result in the offending batter being called out.

5.05: Carrying bats to First Base. It is legal for a batter to carry his/her bat to First Base, but it is strongly discouraged. If the carried bat hits a player, coach, or umpire during the course of running, the runner shall immediately be called out. The runner will also be out, if they carry the bat on to Second Base.

5.06: Live ball hitting a runner. If a live ball (i.e. a ball not yet touched by a fielder) hits or is touched by a baserunner in fair territory, the baserunner in question will be called out and the play shall be declared dead.

- If a live ball touches a baserunner other than the batter, the batter shall receive First Base and all other baserunners (minus the one who is out) must return to their last acquired base.
- If a live ball touches the batter in fair territory, he/she is called out and all baserunners must return to their last acquired base.
- **A base does not protect a base runner from being called out for interference when he is touched by a batted fair ball.**

5.07: Catching the ball with a hat. By popular demand! Catching or otherwise intentionally deflecting a ball with any part of a player's uniform is not allowed. The outcomes for such an infraction are as follows:

- If a live ball is caught or intentionally deflected by any part of a fielder's uniform, each runner, including the batter, shall be awarded three bases.
- If a ball thrown by a fielder is caught or intentionally deflected by any part of a fielder's uniform, each runner shall be awarded two bases.

5.08: Players should be in full uniform. This means they are wearing a hat, their team shirt tucked into baseball pants, socks, and close-toed shoes; if in the field, carrying a glove. Play should not start unless all players are thusly presented.

- Players should not wear dangling, **distracting** necklaces or earrings for safety reasons. Pitchers should wear solid colored pitching sleeves which are not distracting.

5.09: Coaching limitations. Since we are a developmental league, we encourage the coaches to position their players at Home Plate. But once the pitching umpire's arm goes up or the pitcher winds up, all comments need to stop for the safety of the batter. If a coach persists in yelling in comments, the Crew Chief should stop play and speak to them.

5.10: Crowd control. We encourage teams and spectators to cheer their players and franchises, but we do not want to see any heckling or booing of the opposing team. If the "noise" surrounding a game becomes distracting and/or unacceptable, the Crew Chief can temporarily stop the game and either address the dug-outs and/or the crowd. We want a respectful, fun atmosphere which is God-honoring to prevail.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Ephesians 4:29

5.11: Technology. No video or camera documentation will be taken into account regarding calls on the field.

5.12: Infield Shift. Coaches are allowed to reposition players on the field to maximize fielding potential for an opposing batter, but coaches are not allowed to utilize an infield shift. There must be two infielders to the left and two infielders to the right of Second Base.

5.13: Out of the Base Path. There is a difference between the base path and the baseline.

The baseline is the white painted lines between bases that exist as guidelines for the runners, and guidance for determining fair/foul balls.

The first and most important thing to know about the base path is that there is no such thing as a base path (none exists) until a play is made on a runner. The base path is established when a fielder with the ball attempts to tag a runner. Then, and only then, is there a base path. And the base path is a straight line from the runner's position to the base to which he is advancing or retreating. At the moment the base path is established (when the tag is attempted), the runner cannot veer more than three feet to the left or right of the base path for the purpose of avoiding a tag. When a runner is caught between bases and fielders have the runner in a pickle (a rundown), each time the fielders exchange the ball and the runner reverses direction, the runner has created a new base path. And the fielder involved in the pickle who does not currently have possession of the ball, has to make every effort to stay out of the runner's way so as to not be called for obstruction.

<http://www.umpirebible.com/index.php/rules-base-running/basepath-running-lane>

5.14: Fly Ball Striking Top of Outfield Wall/Fence

A fair fly ball striking the top of the outfield fence and bounding back onto the playing field shall be treated the same as a fair fly ball that strikes the outfield fence and rebounds back onto the playing field (in play but may not be caught for the purposes of an out). A fair fly ball striking the top of the outfield wall and bounding over the fence shall be ruled a home run. A fair fly ball striking the top of the outfield fence and remaining on the top of the fence shall be deemed a ground-rule double.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the Word of Truth. **2 Timothy 2:15 NIV**
New Life Baseball Focus Verse:

For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:8 (ESV)

Mission Statement:

The New Life Baseball Ministry strives to glorify God through the development of baseball skills while focusing on character development and the fostering of relationships among the participating families through exposing the players to the Gospel message in word and deed.

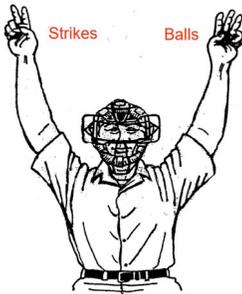
It isn't enough for an umpire to merely know what he's doing. He has to look as though he knows what he's doing, too. - Larry Goetz, professional umpire

I must admit, I was born to officiate; I was made to officiate. I miss it. I knew why I was doing it. God made me to umpire. - Doug Harvey, professional umpire

The best thing about umpiring is seeing the best in baseball every day. The cardinal rule of umpiring is to follow the ball wherever it goes. Well, if you watch the ball, you can't help seeing somebody make a great catch...That's what makes umpiring so much fun. - Jocko Conlan, professional umpire

Hand Signals

Giving the Pitch Count: The pitch count is signaled by holding up fingers on the left hand to indicate balls while the right hand is used to indicate strikes. We lower the left hand.



Home Run: This signal indicates the four-base award for the home run.



Strike

Always signaled with the right hand.

Ball

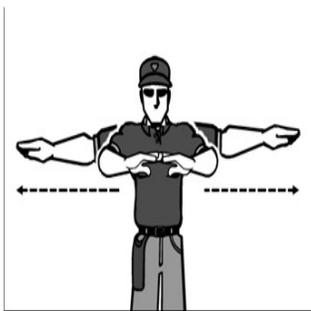
Calling a ball requires no physical signal. It's sort of the default call. If you don't do anything, people will assume you called a ball. To make it simple, just stand up out of your crouch and say "Ball" aloud.

Out



The umpire should bring the right hand out similar to the start of shaking another person's hand. Having the palm open and fingers together, bring the right hand up even to the face. Then bring down the hand making a fist in front of the body. The motion is similar to "banging the door" with the bottom of the fist. The umpire's verbal mechanic

should be at the same time the umpire is giving the out signal...” Out!” Most umpires use this technique for all out calls, regardless of how it may seem. For closer calls, most umpires will not modify the motion at all; rather they will simply make the motion swifter, harder and perhaps with an extended follow through.



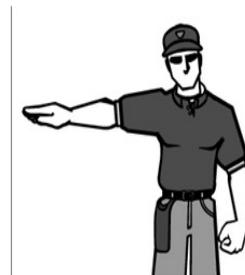
Safe

The umpire's fingers must be together and elbows locked as the arms come up parallel to the ground. The arms are not to go higher than the umpire's shoulders. Keeping the arms parallel to the ground, extend the arms outward. The umpire verbal mechanics should be at the same time the umpire is giving the safe signal... “Safe!” The key to the same mechanic should be: Crisp, Confident, Smooth and Visible.

TimeOut/FoulBall/DeadBall



Simply raise both arms up in the air and shout. It's also a good idea to move out from behind the plate while you make the call so the pitcher (and everyone else) can easily see that the ball is dead.



FairBall

There is never a verbalization for a fair ball. The appropriate umpire simply points into fair territory with either his left or right arm to indicate that the ball is fair.

Strikeout

The umpire is to use the same sign as “Strike”. An umpire should only call “Strike Three.” The plate umpire should follow the strike three call with “Batter is Out!”

BallFour

“Ball Four” is announced clearly.

The Homeplate Umpire then should point to First Base and say "Take your base."

Right arm straight out front with palm outward and fingers up



Signal toward pitcher

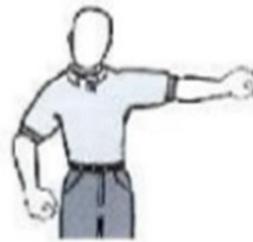
Check-Swing or Appealed Strike



The plate umpire can request help. Step away from the plate, and with your left arm, gesture clearly to the base umpire and ask "Did he swing? Or did he go?" If the answer is yes, the base umpire signals strike while saying "yes, he went!" If the answer is no, a safe sign with "no he did not go!"

Delayed Dead Ball

Left fist extended to the side at shoulder height—signifies infraction for which (1) the penalty may be ignored or (2) bases may be awarded after the play has completed.



Ground Rule Double

If a hit ball bounces over the fence or rolls under it, the closest umpire will signal a ground rule double where he crosses his arms.



Interference/Obstruction

The base umpire will always point at the situation and call, "That's



Interference!" or "That's Obstruction!" as the case may be. On a delayed dead ball situation, it lets everyone know that you saw an incident occur although

Do Not Pitch

penalization may not take place until a later time.

Pausing before making the call

- Umpires sometimes feel pressure to make quick calls (nerves, knowing everyone is watching you, the fast pace of a play)
- In a fast action play, a new umpire will sometimes make a split second decision and make a quick call
- Quick calls are many times wrong
- Examples:

Close play at first. What did you really see? Did runner's foot hit the bag first, or was the ball caught first? Are you absolutely sure of your call? Are you sure first baseman didn't pull his foot?

Runner stealing 2nd with a close tag. After your quick "out" call, you notice the ball on the ground between the runner and the fielder.

- Stay calm at all times before, during and after a play
- Feeling out of control will sometimes cause a knee-jerk fast call
- Watch the play through to completion And think about what you just saw
- Force yourself to delay (maybe by counting to 3) before verbalizing your call
- Think to yourself ... "I'm sure he was safe/out" ... then say it for real, and appear confident as you make the call.
- On tag plays, find where the ball is after the play is over and confirm the out only after verifying that the fielder had the ball in the tag-hand and had never lost control of it during the play (if the fielder is picking it up off the ground, runner was likely safe)
- If you think the tag was good but you aren't sure where the ball is, ask the fielder to show you the ball, then make the call as needed.

After the play, PAUSE!!! Then make your call.