

**RBL Umpire Clinic #1**  
**Pre-Game Preparations and Game Responsibilities and Positioning**

**Pre-Game Responsibilities of Both Home Plate and Base Umpires**

1. Decide who will umpire at home plate/who will umpire on the bases
2. Make sure there is both a new game ball and a good back-up ball in the bucket
3. **CHECK ALL BATS for RBL Approved Bat Stickers.** Give any bats without stickers to the manager and remind him of the penalties:
  - Hitting a pitch with a bat without a sticker: **Ejection** of the batter and an out every time he comes to bat
  - Hitting a pitch with a double-wall and/or composite bat: **Game forfeit**
4. Make sure the pitcher will be wearing a mask
5. Check with managers and identify players who will need a runner (They should be identified in the team's lineup, and they should tell the home plate umpire when they come to bat that they will need a runner)
6. Review these specific responsibilities of each umpire:
  - **Home plate umpire:** Announce batters who will need a runner, call balls and strikes, call fair and foul balls, call catches, watch tags after caught fly balls, make calls at third base and home plate, and call time after every play
  - **Base umpire:** Make calls at first and second base, calls on trailing runners, and calls on runners leaving early
7. Decide who will call "infield flies" (plate umpire, base umpire, either) and review the signal for a potential call
8. Remind each other that the "mercy rule" in RBL is 12 runs after 5 innings (4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead)
9. Decide how to handle a manager's "request for help" on a call (Comply, consult, and make the final call)
10. Consider meeting with the two managers at home plate before the game to review expectations regarding bats, pitcher masks, courtesy runners, avoiding Interference and Obstruction, "asking for help," appeal calls, etc.

**Home Plate Umpire's Game Responsibilities and Positioning** (It's a good idea to have a small pad and pencil)

1. Announce batters who will get a runner
2. Two alternative places to stand when calling balls and strikes
3. Call illegal pitches: Less than 6-foot arc or more than 12-foot arc (**Most important:** Be consistent)
4. Call a batter out if either foot is entirely outside the outside line of the batter's box (**not** the batting platform) when he hits a pitch fair **or** foul
5. When you need to call a batted ball fair or foul, **move** to a position on the foul line: Call **fair balls** non-verbally only. Call **foul balls** both verbally and non-verbally.
6. On a play at first base, **move** in front of the plate and watch to make sure the fielder and runner use the right bases
7. On a play at third base, **move** inside the foul line toward third base, so you're in position to make the call
8. Call catches (making sure that the fielder has control of the ball, which requires "voluntary release" of the ball) and also make sure runners tagging up don't leave a base early (remember this is an appeal play, not your call to initiate)
9. Announce runs scored (they are not "official" until you announce them)
10. Regularly announce both the count on the batter and the number of outs
11. Announce where the 5<sup>th</sup> (or 6<sup>th</sup>) run is if it's on the bases
12. Remember that with two outs a pitcher who wears more than a mask for protection **MUST** get a runner
13. Though they are usually base umpire calls, watch for **Runner Interference** and **Fielder Obstruction** in case you are "asked for help" with a call
14. Try to make sure no courtesy runner runs more than once an inning (This is an appeal call)

**Base Umpire's Game Responsibilities and Positioning**

1. Your major responsibility is to make calls at first base, second base, and on trailing runners
2. Use both eyes and ears to make calls at bases. Don't make a call before a play is over, the runner has reached the correct base, and the fielder has control of the ball. Then take a second or two to vision what you think you saw before you make your call both verbally and non-verbally with clarity
3. As a play develops, anticipate the possible need to make an **Interference** call (runner impedes fielder) or an **Obstruction** call (fielder impedes runner), and make these calls when the situation requires them
4. Anticipate the need to make calls on "run-bys" (a force or tag play) and on "losing contact" (a tag play only)
5. Make sure a runner doesn't leave a base early (Call him out if he does. This is your call, not an appeal call)
6. Make sure a runner tags each base (If he doesn't and a fielder, coach, or manager appeals, call the runner out)