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Tips - Tried and True

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- Always arrive on time, no later than 15 minutes before game time. Your partner doesn't need the hassle of not knowing if he's going to have another umpire or not.
- Always be prepared to umpire behind the plate even if you've been assigned the bases.
- Always look sharp. Be sure your uniform is clean, shoes shined and have the proper equipment. If you're perceived as a professional umpire...you'll be treated like a professional umpire. Perception is everything.
- Have a pre-game consultation with your partner to make sure you're both on the same page as far as responsibilities. This is important if you haven't worked with the other umpire before.
- As the Home Plate Umpire, it is your job to put the ball back into play. The batter must be in the box and the pitcher toeing the rubber before play can begin. At this point yell and point at the pitcher "Play Ball" making the ball live.
- Move! Ground ball, get out and down the first base line. 1st and 3rd situation, get down the 3rd baseline, watch the fly ball to the outfield and help your partner out on a run down situation. Always Hustle.
- Always stay focused on the game. As a base umpire with runners on base, never leave the infield to go into the outfield and check a play. Your primary responsibility is the runners on base, so never go farther out than the outfield grass.
- As the base umpire, with no runners on base and a fly ball hit to the outfield, you do not go into the outfield. As You watch the flight of the ball move halfway between first and second base, slightly towards the pitcher mound, and watch the ball while also watching first base for the tag by the runner.
- Be Humble. There's nothing worse than a "Know it All Umpire" who throws his authority around. You're there to serve, not command.
- As a Base umpire watch runners touch every base. Missed bases and leaving base too early are common appeal plays. If a coach sees you are intently watching the play, chances are he won't appeal, but if you're gazing off somewhere else, chances are he will appeal. Don't ever call a runner out unless you're sure he missed the base or left too early.
- As a plate Umpire Do Not say "Strike three- batter out!" The ball may be dropped and the batter will not be out. Don't say "Ball four - take your base." Everyone knows ball four is a walk and to take your base. Simply saying "Ball four" is more than sufficient.
- As a plate umpire being asked to appeal a check swing to the base umpire, always extend your left arm when asking "Did he go?" A right arm extension could be construed as a strike call.
- Never Turn Your Head Away from the field when calling balls and strikes, especially with runners on base. If you have a tendency to turn sideways and extend a strike three call, try not to do it with runners on. You never know what can happen in a split second.
- Don't indicate location on called balls. It's not needed, required or professional. It is alright if a Coach asked location from time to time. However, do not tolerate constant questioning of locations.
- Don't call "Time Out" every time a defensive player asks for it.
- Never call time out for you to get back into position. As a base umpire sometimes the defensive player will flip the ball to you as teams change between innings. Do not hold onto the ball and wait to give it to the pitcher, as it looks unprofessional. Roll it to the mound where the pitcher can pick it up.
- Slow You're Call Making Down. There is absolutely nothing wrong with waiting a second before calling a runner out or a strike. The ball may squirt out of the fielder's glove or you may really see the ball cross the black.
- When calling Balls and Strikes you must keep your head perfectly still. There's no way you can call an accurate strike zone if your head is constantly moving, which moves the strike zone.
- Try to work in the slot between the catcher and the batter, keeping your chin about level with the catcher's head.
- Don't constantly be looking at your ball / strike indicator. It makes it look like your memory doesn't extend past 20 seconds.
- Don't wear a watch. It is important you know the time, as most games have time limits, but wear it inside your pants pocket.

- When tailing or chasing a play, never make a call as you're continuing to run. Chase the play until you reach the proper angle to see the play, stop and make the call from there. Remember, proper angle to see a play is more important than how close you are.
- Sometimes small differences make huge impacts. A Foul Ball is Never a Foul Tip and a Foul Tip is Never a Foul Ball. Why? A Foul ball is a dead ball, play stops, a foul tip is a live ball, play continues.
- Never put your hands in your pockets. It's poor body language that says "I'm bored."
- Don't be talked or bullied into appealing a call if you're sure you definitely saw the play and made the proper call.
- Be professional and courteous, but do not become best buddies with the coaches or players.
- It's always important to maintain a professional image when possible. One way to accomplish this is Never hold your mask by the straps or in your right hand. Hold the mask firmly by the bars and in your left hand, you may need your right hand to make an out call.
- Always be careful of what you say. You never know who's standing behind you listening.
- Always leave the field after the game with your other umpire. You demonstrate that you are a team, plus 2 people together will tend to ward off any disgruntled parent or coach with an ax to grind over a call.



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