

# **TASO – Baseball**

**Pre-Game Outline**

**for**

**4-Umpire Mechanics**

# Umpire's Pre-Game Conference

## General Outline

- I. Notify home institution** that the crew has arrived
  - A. Ensure that coaches are also notified of the crews arrival
- II. Confirm start time for game and determine pre-game ceremonies**, if any
- III. Locate and identify school administrator(s)**
- IV. Discussion topics**
  - A. Uniforms
  - B. Pre-game check of bats and helmets
- V. On-Field Pre-Game Conference procedure**
  - A. Positioning of umpires
  - B. Ground rules by home coach or home institution
  - C. U1 does all the talking unless otherwise directed
  - D. Positions for National Anthem and pre-game ceremonies
  - E. Run to positions
- VI. Check swing responsibilities and mechanics**
- VII. Swipe tag and pulled foot mechanics**
- VIII. Fair/Foul responsibilities**
- IX. Outfield Coverage**
- X. Non-Verbal Communication**
  - A. Infield fly
  - B. Standard rotation
  - C. Reverse rotation
  - D. Umpire going out
  - E. Appeal
  - F. Timing Play
  - G. Trap/Catch by catcher on third strike
  - H. Outs and count
  - I. Eye contact
- XI. Verbal Communication**
  - A. On rotation
  - B. Umpire going out
- XII. Crew conferences during game**
  - A. Unusual plays/situations – make sure everyone knows what happened and what the result is
  - B. Questions concerning rules/interpretations
- XIII. Review play/rotation situations**
  - A. 2, 3 or 4 Umpire mechanics
- XIV. Appeals (know WHO is going to make the call)**
  - A. Missed bases
  - B. Tag-ups
- XV. Arguments (coaches)**
  - A. One on One (Head coach ONLY)
  - B. When to step in and when to leave alone
  - C. Ejections/Restrictions to Bench
    1. Hopefully, there will not be any, but if there are.....
    2. After ejection or benching, umpire should turn and walk away
    3. Who is going to help who once the ejection/restriction is made
      - a) If U1 (may depend on which coach/bench it is), but generally,
        - (1) First base umpire if on first base side of the field
        - (2) Third base umpire if on the third base side
      - b) If at 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base
        - (1) U1 is the most preferable
      - c) If in the infield
        - (1) First or Third base umpire (or U1 if 3-man crew) depending on which coach/bench it is
- XVI. Fights**
  - A. Try to stop players BEFORE fight starts
  - B. If you can't stop them, step back and take numbers of participants for ejections and reports. Let the coaches handle the players!!
- XVII. Weather related issues**
  - A. Lightning/Rain
    1. Know the lighting policy and procedures (30/30 Rule)
  - B. NFHS/UIIL rules for delayed/suspended game
- XVIII. Closing**
  - A. Rules or mechanics questions
  - B. Hustle at all times
  - C. Communicate with each other --- we are a TEAM
  - D. Good eye contact
  - E. Good timing
  - F. Get play RIGHT
  - G. Have fun and enjoy what you are doing

# Umpire's Pre-Game Checklist

## 4-Umpire Mechanics

- I. Positioning**
- A. U2 and U4 are ALWAYS on the corners (wings)
  - B. U3's starting position varies according to the bases occupied
    - 1. No Runners or Runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> only
      - a) U3 is in the outfield in E (The Pasture)
    - 2. Runner on 1<sup>st</sup> (anytime)
      - a) U3 is in deep C
    - 3. Runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> or Runners on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>
      - a) U3 is in deep B
- II. Fair/Foul Coverage**
- A. U1 has fair/foul to the front edge of the bases only
  - B. U2 has all coverage from 1<sup>st</sup> base to the outfield fence
  - C. U4 has all coverage from 3<sup>rd</sup> base to the outfield fence
- III. Outfield Coverage**
- A. U1 has NO outfield responsibility
  - B. Someone goes OUT on almost all fly balls
    - 1. Everything except obvious "cans of corn"
  - C. Everything hinges on where U3 is positioned
  - D. If U3 is OUT (in E )
    - 1. U3 is the "KEY" for rotation and responsibility
    - 2. U3 covers anything in the "V" -- hit directly at any outfielder or coming in toward center
    - 3. U2 covers right fielder moving toward the foul line
    - 4. U4 covers left fielder moving toward the foul line
  - E. U3 is IN (in B or C)
    - 1. U4 is the "KEY" for rotation and responsibility
    - 2. Coverage is the same as 3-umpire
      - a) U4 has center fielder moving straight in or out or toward left field and the left fielder
      - b) U2 has right field and center fielder moving toward right field
  - F. If you GO OUT.....You STAY OUT
- IV. Infield Coverage (Fly Ball / Line Drive)**
- A. If U3 is OUT (in E) – U3 takes any play coming toward 2<sup>nd</sup> Base and the second baseman or shortstop moving toward outfield, otherwise, same as 3-umpire
  - B. If U3 is IN (in B or C)) – U3 takes any play coming toward 2<sup>nd</sup> base, otherwise, same as 3-umpire
- V. Check Swing**
- A. Go the "open" umpire for help
    - 1. U2 for RIGHT handed batters
    - 2. U4 for LEFT handed batters
- VI. Rotation**
- A. Remember, someone goes out on almost all fly balls to the outfield
  - B. No Runners (U3 is OUT---in E)
    - 1. U2 goes OUT (revert to 3-umpire mechanics)
      - a) U1 trails batter to 1<sup>st</sup> and returns home when batter advances past 2<sup>nd</sup>
      - b) U3 comes in to cover any play at 2<sup>nd</sup>
      - c) U4 stays at 3<sup>rd</sup>
    - 2. U3 stays OUT (revert to 3-umpire mechanics)
      - a) U2 stays at 1<sup>st</sup> and rotates home when batter advances past 2<sup>nd</sup>
      - b) U3 rotates to 2<sup>nd</sup> and covers any play there
      - c) U1 rotates to 3<sup>rd</sup> for any possible play there
    - 3. U4 goes OUT (revert to 3-umpire mechanics)
      - a) U2 covers any play at 1<sup>st</sup>, and rotates home if batter advances past second
      - b) U3 comes in to cover any play at 2<sup>nd</sup>
      - c) U1 rotates to 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - C. Runner on 1<sup>st</sup> only (U3 in deep C)
    - 1. U2 goes OUT
      - a) U1 trails the batter and has the tag-up at 1<sup>st</sup>
      - b) U1 rotates home for any subsequent play there
      - c) U3 covers the play at 2<sup>nd</sup> and any subsequent play at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>
      - d) U4 covers any play at 3<sup>rd</sup>
    - 2. U4 goes OUT
      - a) U2 covers any play at 1<sup>st</sup> and rotates home if the R1 commits to 3<sup>rd</sup>
      - b) U3 covers any play at 2<sup>nd</sup>
      - c) U1 rotates to 3<sup>rd</sup> for a possible play there
  - D. Runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> only (U3 in deep B)
    - 1. U2 goes OUT
      - a) U1 trails the runners to 1<sup>st</sup> and observes the touch of 1<sup>st</sup>, then rotates home when the runner commits to 3<sup>rd</sup>
      - b) U3 rotates in and has the tag-up at 2<sup>nd</sup> and any subsequent play at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>
      - c) U4 covers any play at 3<sup>rd</sup>

2. U4 goes OUT
    - a) U2 has the tag-up at 1<sup>st</sup> and the touch of 1<sup>st</sup> by the batter.
    - b) U2 rotates home if the batter commits to 2<sup>nd</sup> or R2 commits to 3<sup>rd</sup>
    - c) U3 cover any play at 2<sup>nd</sup>, and any subsequent plays at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> when U2 rotates to home
    - d) U1 rotates to 3<sup>rd</sup> for a play there
- E. Runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> only (U3 in E)
1. U2 goes OUT
    - a) U3 moves in to cover any play at 2<sup>nd</sup> and also has the tag-up at 1<sup>st</sup> and any subsequent play at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>
    - b) U4 has the tag-up at 3<sup>rd</sup> and covers any play at 3<sup>rd</sup>
    - c) U1 stays home
  2. U3 stays OUT (**TROUBLE PLAY**)
    - a) U4 **MUST** move to cover a play at 2<sup>nd</sup>
    - b) U1 has the tag-up at 3<sup>rd</sup> and any play at the plate
    - c) U1 rotates to 3<sup>rd</sup> after R3 scores
    - d) U2 has any play at 1<sup>st</sup>
    - e) U2 rotates to home if U1 goes to 3<sup>rd</sup>
  3. U4 goes OUT
    - a) U2 has the tag-up at 1<sup>st</sup> and play at 1<sup>st</sup>.
    - b) U2 rotates home if the batter advances past 2<sup>nd</sup> and U1 rotates to 3<sup>rd</sup>
    - c) U4 comes in to cover a play at 2<sup>nd</sup>
    - d) U1 has the tag-up at 3<sup>rd</sup> and any play at the plate.
    - e) U1 rotates to 3<sup>rd</sup> after the runner scores, as needed
- F. Runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> (U3 in deep C)
1. U2 goes OUT
    - a) U1 comes up the line and has the tag-up at 1<sup>st</sup>, but stays home with runners in scoring position
    - b) U2 has the tag-up at 2<sup>nd</sup> and any subsequent play at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>
    - c) U4 has any play at 3<sup>rd</sup>

2. U4 goes OUT
    - a) U1 has the tag-up and 3<sup>rd</sup> and any play at the plate.
    - b) U1 moves to cover a play at 3<sup>rd</sup> on a caught fly ball (tag-up play), but otherwise stays home with runners in scoring position
    - c) U2 and U3 "SLIDE", {as in 3-umpire mechanics) if U1 stays home
    - d) U2 has the tag-up at 1<sup>st</sup>, watches the batter touch first, and rotates home if U1 rotates to 3<sup>rd</sup>
    - e) U3 has the tag-up at 2<sup>nd</sup> and any subsequent play at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> when U2 rotates to home
- G. Runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> (U3 in deep B)
1. U2 goes OUT
    - a) U1 stays home for a play at the plate
    - b) U3 has the tag at 1<sup>st</sup> and any subsequent play at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>
    - c) U4 has any play at 3<sup>rd</sup>
  2. U4 goes OUT
    - a) Ball is caught
      - (1) U1 has the tag-up at 3<sup>rd</sup> and any play at the plate
      - (2) U2 has the tag-up at first and the BR touching first
      - (3) U3 covers the tag at 2<sup>nd</sup> and any subsequent plays at 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>
    - b) Ball is not caught
      - (1) U1 moves up the line toward 3<sup>rd</sup> and watches R3 touch home
      - (2) U1 moves to 3<sup>rd</sup> if R1 commits to 3<sup>rd</sup>
      - (3) U2 rotates home if U1 goes to 3<sup>rd</sup>
      - (4) U3 has any play at 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent plays at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> if U2 rotates to home
- H. Bases Loaded (U3 in deep B)
1. U2 goes OUT
    - a) U1 stays Home for a play at the plate, and also has the tag-up at 1<sup>st</sup>
    - b) U2 has the tag-up at 2<sup>nd</sup> and any subsequent plays at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>
    - c) U4 has the tag-up at 3<sup>rd</sup> and any subsequent plays at 3<sup>rd</sup>

2. U4 goes OUT
  - a) U1 stays Home for a play at the plate, and also has the tag-up at 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - b) U2 and U3 *SLIDE* (as in 3-umpire mechanics)

I. Problem Rotations

1. Runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> ONLY, Trouble ball to mid/short left field near 1 (U4 goes OUT)
  - a) U3 comes in to cover 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - b) U1 stays home and has the tag-up at 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - c) U2 stays at 1<sup>st</sup>
  - d) **PROBLEM:** *Runner tags and starts to home, but the fielder has a great arm and now you have the runner making a dive back to 3<sup>rd</sup> and a "banger" at the bag. Who makes the call? (and how do you get there??)*
    - (1) U3 has to recognize this potential problem and instead of heading directly for 2<sup>nd</sup>, find a "sweet spot" between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> and let the ball take you to the play
2. Runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> ONLY, Fly ball to center field and U3 goes OUT
  - a) U4 has to move to cover 2<sup>nd</sup>. U1 will take the tag-up at 3<sup>rd</sup>

- J. **REGARDLESS OF WHAT HAPPENS-----**  
***Fill The Hole*** (we can talk about dropped coverage/mistakes AFTER the game)

VII. **Routine / Miscellaneous**

- A. Communication is CRITICAL
  1. Flash outs and coverage to your partners
  2. **VERBALLY** communicate is crucial when the ball is hit
    - a) Unless the ball is bouncing, *SOMEONE has to take responsibility for the catch*
  3. If you are going OUT (U2, U3 or U4) announce the fact both verbally and visually ("I'm going out" and raise your right hand pointing to the outfield)
- B. Tag-ups
  1. In general, cover the base where you are at
  2. If an umpire goes OUT, other umpires are responsible for tag-up, depending on the runner and umpire configuration
    - a) Example: If U4 goes OUT or rotates to 2<sup>nd</sup> .....U1 has the tag-up of any runner at 3<sup>rd</sup>
    - b) Example: If U2 goes out with a runners on 1<sup>st</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> & 2nd, U1 has the tag-up at 1<sup>st</sup>

- C. Crew errors will likely occur.....the success of the crew depends on limiting those errors and reacting immediately to any that DO occur to **FILL THE HOLE** and provide coverage.....we can talk about it later

VIII. **Checking with your partner/Conferences/Unusual Plays or Situations**

- A. If you have an unusual play/call, make sure your partners know what happened, particularly if there was a lot going on at the time.....keep the crew informed
  1. Example.....runner called out for passing a preceding runner between 3<sup>rd</sup> and Home. (which runs score, number of outs, etc.)
  2. Don't be afraid to confer with your partners.....Get the play RIGHT
    - a) Don't overdo it.....but check when you need to
    - b) If you are going to check, know who you need to check with (one or all). Except on obvious things (pulled foot, check swing, etc.) it is usually best to get everyone together to discuss the situation---NO COACHES or PLAYERS

IX. **Rules that you may only see at playoffs and seldom seen/trouble rules**

- A. Pitching regulations
  1. Substitution
  2. Re-entry as pitcher (allowed)
  3. Once per inning
  4. Gorilla stance
  5. Multi-colored glove on pitcher
- B. Ball lodged in glove (See Case Plays 5..... for clarification)
- C. Hurdling (arm vs. torso)
- D. Batter interference
  1. at plate
  2. with catcher on steal of 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>
- E. Courtesy Runner
- F. Designated Hitter
- G. Batting out of order
- H. Illegal substitute
  1. On offense (batting/running)
  2. On defense
- I. Appeals of missed base
  1. If a proper appeal is made, the umpire who had responsibility for the touch of that base is the only one who should respond to the appeal
  2. **COMMUNICATE** with your partner
    - a) Make eye contact then signal or verbally announce who has the appeal
    - b) The other umpires **MUST** watch the runners is it a "live ball" appeal as they can advance at their own risk