

**SOFTBALL  
NEW ZEALAND  
UMPIRE**

**LEVEL ONE WORKBOOK**

*Ehara tāku toa I te toa takitahi, tāku toa, he toa takitini  
My strength is not that of one person, but the strength of many*



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## Our Vision

The softball community experiences quality umpiring and the enjoyment it creates.

## Our Mission

To lead and deliver quality and professional umpiring providing enjoyment and support to all those involved.

## Our Values

**Passion** – encompassing excellence, enthusiasm, persistence and dedication.

**Honesty** – implicit to gain trust and portray fairness.

**Courage** – having presence, calmness in how we behave and leadership in game management.

**Quality** – achieved through consistency, teamwork and continuous improvement.

**Enjoyment** – for the umpires, players, team management and spectators.

**Respect** – for each other, players and the rules.

## Foreword

Umpiring plays an important role in supporting our elite athletes to excel on the world stage and encouraging our local communities to participate, compete and enjoy Softball.

Thank you for giving back to the Softball community by choosing to umpire. Whether you umpire locally or at an international level you are an important part of the game. The best view of the game is from where we stand and trust me the view is outstanding!

The Softball New Zealand Umpire Pathways Framework was developed in 2017 to align with the Softball New Zealand Umpires Strategic Plan 2016-2021. The Framework puts in place systems to deliver more, better supported umpires and provide a clear direction and focus for our efforts to achieve a transparent, consistent and effective umpiring grading system throughout the country.

This Level One Workbook is a part of that grading system. It is not intended to replace the Softball New Zealand (SNZ) official rulebook or World Baseball Softball Congress (WBSC) mechanics manuals but to complement those, introduce and reinforce the minimum level of skills a SNZ Level One umpire should demonstrate. The workbook will help encourage new umpires to develop their skills and to achieve Level One accreditation.

Becoming a SNZ accredited umpire recognises a level of competence and effort enabling you to wear the SNZ logo with pride, knowing you have earned it.

We are all students of the game and as you progress through the SNZ Umpire Pathway your learning will be built upon in the Level Two and Three workbooks, practical training and mentoring by other umpires. It is hoped that you will be inspired to continue to improve your umpiring and progress through the Pathways Framework. Provided that you umpire both plates and bases for a season, be assessed on four of those games, pass a basic umpire theory exam and complete this workbook you will achieve your Level One accreditation.

The Pathways Framework and Strategic Plan can be viewed on the Softball New Zealand website: <http://www.softball.org.nz/GET+INVOLVED/SNZ+Umpires/Resources.html>

SNZ would like to acknowledge Softball Australia Limited, Softball Canada and WBSC for some of the content in this manual.

Wiremu Tamaki

***Softball New Zealand (SNZ) Umpire-in-Chief  
Kai-Whakawaa Matua - Poiuka Aotearoa***



## Level One – Rookie Umpire *(From the SNZ Umpires Pathway Framework)*

<b>Season Games</b>	Eight minimum
<b>Workbook</b>	Level One exercises completed
<b>Annual Rules Test Entry Level</b>	50% minimum, resit available
<b>Feedback</b>	Regular feedback from local umpire in chief (UIC) or mentor
<b>Regional Evaluation</b>	50% minimum over four games: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two plate</li> <li>• Two base</li> </ul>
<b>Local UIC and Delegate</b>	One plate and one base per evaluator Evaluation games are not required to be on the same day <i>See page 26 for the Level One practical evaluation form</i>
<b>Skills Required</b>	Starting positions Signals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balls and strikes</li> <li>• Fair and foul</li> <li>• Foul tip</li> <li>• Count</li> <li>• Dead ball and time</li> <li>• Safe and out</li> </ul> Audible calls Check swing Safety base Obstruction ruling and signal General rules knowledge and application
<b>Opportunities</b>	Regional age grade and school tournaments SNZ Secondary School – Junior and Division Two SNZ Under 15



### Workbook Information

This workbook will take around two hours to read and complete the four exercises contained in it. You do not have to complete the workbook all at once.

Additional time will be needed to review your exercise answers with your local chief umpire.

## Starting Positions – WBSC Two Umpire System

Complete the following exercise using the 2018 WBSC **Two** Umpire System Fast Pitch Mechanics. This manual is available via the WBSC website: <http://www.wbsc.org/softball-umpire-area/>

Alternatively you can use the July 2018 link to WBSC Rules and Mechanics from our SNZ Umpires Resource webpage: <http://www.softball.org.nz/GET+INVOLVED/SNZ+Umpires/Resources.html>

When you are finished this exercise make a time to review your answers with your local chief umpire. They will explain any questions you don't get right and record (on page 27) you have completed the exercise for SNZ records. Your mark will not be recorded.

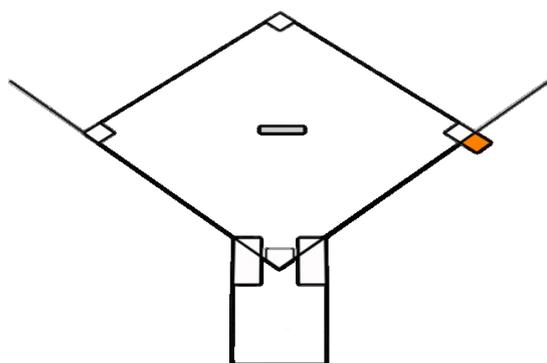
Throughout this exercise we will introduce you to some terminology that will be used in the annual rules test.

For runners R1 is the lead runner, followed by R2 and R3.

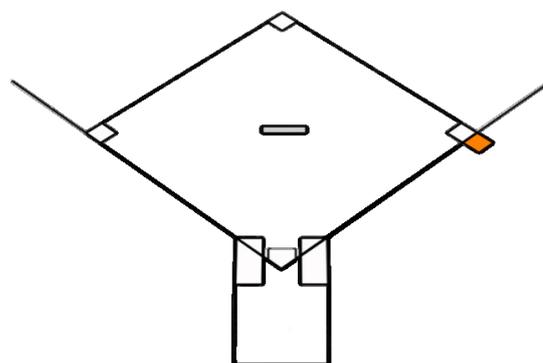
For bases 1B = 1<sup>st</sup> base, 2B = 2<sup>nd</sup> base, 3B = 3<sup>rd</sup> base and HP = home plate

### Starting Positions Exercise - On the diagrams below:

1. Mark with a **P** where the plate umpire and mark with a **B** where the base umpire should stand for the plate meeting.
2. Mark with a **P** where the plate umpire and mark with a **B** where the base umpire should stand between innings.



1. Plate meeting



2. Between innings

The **four essential elements** in umpiring are:

1. The ball
2. The defensive player (fielder)
3. The offensive player (batter or runner)
4. The base (or area where the other three elements meet)



Four essential element theory is the principal theory used in all WBSC mechanics whether it is a two, three or four umpire system. Umpires use this theory to move to a position on a play so they can **see** all four essential elements in **front** of them.

## Starting Positions – Base Umpire

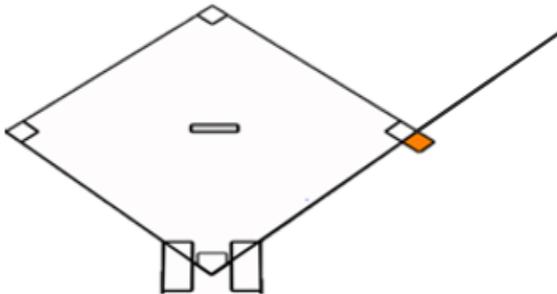
Starting positions of base umpires are important, so the umpire has, or can easily move to, the best place to see the play being made, keeping the four essential elements in **front** of them.

### Starting Positions Exercise Continued

Referring to the 2018 WBSC Two Umpire Mechanics, on **each** of the following diagrams: Mark an **X** where the **base** umpire should be positioned **before the pitch**.

**Write or circle your answer**

3.



No runners on

Before the pitch with no runners on, how far back from 1<sup>st</sup> base should you stand?

\_\_\_\_\_metres

Which side of the **base line** should you be standing on before the pitch?

Fair                  Foul

**This is known as “A” position**

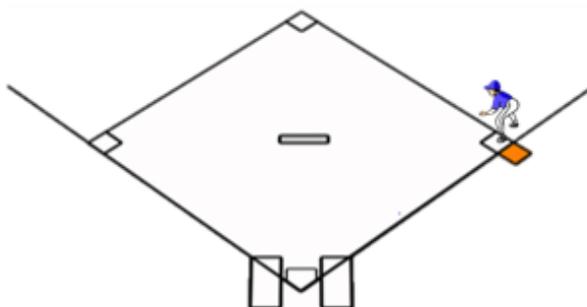
4. Before the pitch, **no runners on base**, how far off the **base line** should you stand?

*Hint: refer to page 6 of the 2018 WBSC Mechanics.*

\_\_\_\_\_mm

**Note:** This distance is a guide only. Depending on where the fielders are standing you may have to stand further back from the base line. You should not go any closer.

5.



Runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base  
(R1 on 1B)

Before the pitch with a runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base, where should you be standing?

- a) 5-6 metres behind 2<sup>nd</sup> base
- b) Behind and off the 2<sup>nd</sup> base fielder shading toward the runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base
- c) No closer than halfway but no more than two-thirds between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> base, behind and off the 2<sup>nd</sup> base fielder

**Note:** Ensure you have a view of the pitcher, runner and home plate area.

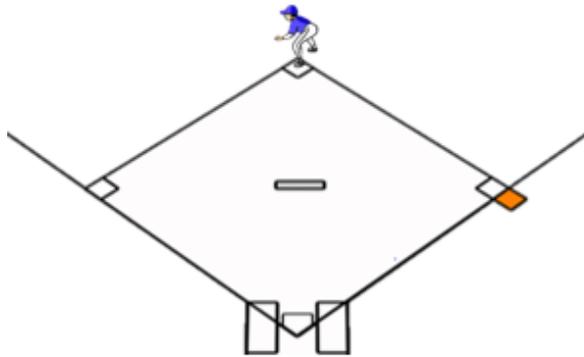
**This is known as “B” position**

“Behind and off” and “shading toward” are terms used in the WBSC mechanics manual. If you are unsure of their meaning, ask your local chief umpire to demonstrate where you should stand.

Mark an **X** where the **base** umpire should be positioned **before the pitch**.

Circle your answer

6.



Runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> base (R1 on 2B)

Before the pitch with a runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> base, what **fielder** should you be standing behind and off?

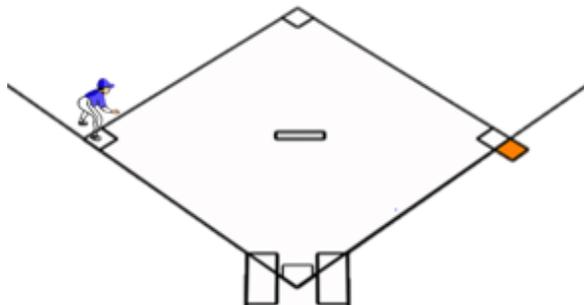
2<sup>nd</sup> base      3<sup>rd</sup> base      Shortstop

Which **side** of that fielder should you be shading towards?

1<sup>st</sup> base      2<sup>nd</sup> base      3<sup>rd</sup> base

This is known as "C" position

7.



Runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base (R1 on 3B)

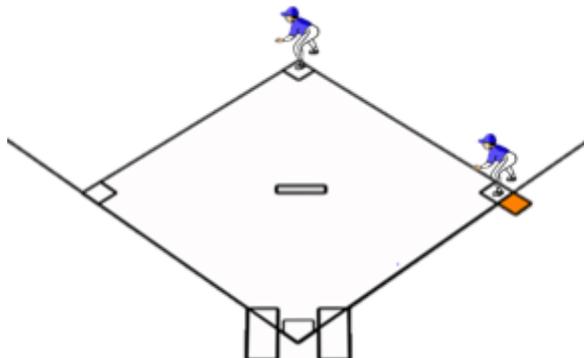
Before the pitch with a runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base, what **fielder** should you be standing behind and off?

2<sup>nd</sup> base      3<sup>rd</sup> base      Shortstop

Which **side** of that fielder should you be shading towards?

1<sup>st</sup> base      2<sup>nd</sup> base      3<sup>rd</sup> base

8.



Runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> base  
(R1 on 2B and R2 on 1B)

Before the pitch with runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> bases, what **fielder** should you be standing behind and off?

2<sup>nd</sup> base      3<sup>rd</sup> base      Shortstop

Which **side** of that fielder should you be shading towards?

1<sup>st</sup> base      2<sup>nd</sup> base      3<sup>rd</sup> base

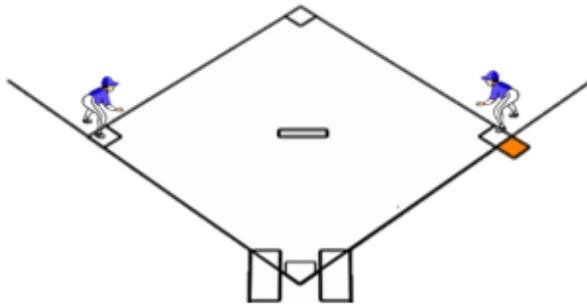
**Note:** In all of the above situations ensure you have a view of:

- The pitcher
- The runner and
- Home plate area

Mark an **X** where the **base** umpire should be positioned **before the pitch**.

Circle your answer

9.



Runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base  
(R1 on 3B and R2 on 1B)

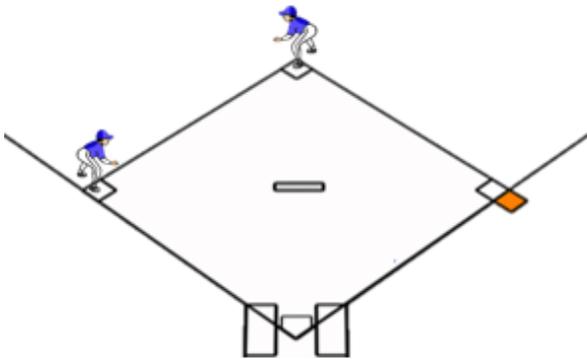
Before the pitch with runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases, what **fielder** should you be standing behind and off?

2<sup>nd</sup> base      3<sup>rd</sup> base      Shortstop

Which **side** of that fielder should you be shading towards?

1<sup>st</sup> base      2<sup>nd</sup> base      3<sup>rd</sup> base

10.



Runners on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base  
(R1 on 3B and R2 on 2B)

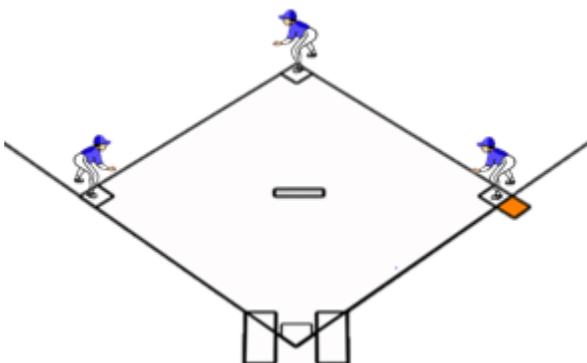
Before the pitch with runners on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases, what **fielder** should you be standing behind and off?

2<sup>nd</sup> base      3<sup>rd</sup> base      Shortstop

Which **side** of that fielder should you be shading towards?

1<sup>st</sup> base      2<sup>nd</sup> base      3<sup>rd</sup> base

11.



Loaded bases  
(R1 on 3B, R2 on 2B and R3 on 1B)

Before the pitch with loaded bases, what **fielder** should you be standing behind and off?

2<sup>nd</sup> base      3<sup>rd</sup> base      Shortstop

Which **side** of that fielder should you be shading towards?

1<sup>st</sup> base      2<sup>nd</sup> base      3<sup>rd</sup> base

**Note:** In all of the above situations ensure you have a view of:

- The pitcher
- The runner and
- Home plate area

Some other things for a base umpire to remember:

- Stay out of the way of the batted ball
- Stay out of the way of the runner
- Stay out of the way of the fielder
- Stay out of the **line** of the thrown ball



Moving from starting positions for infield and outfield hits to keep the four elements in front of you will be covered in the SNZ Umpire Level Two workbook. These movements are detailed in the WBSC Two Umpire System Mechanics if you want to learn more before progressing to Level Two.

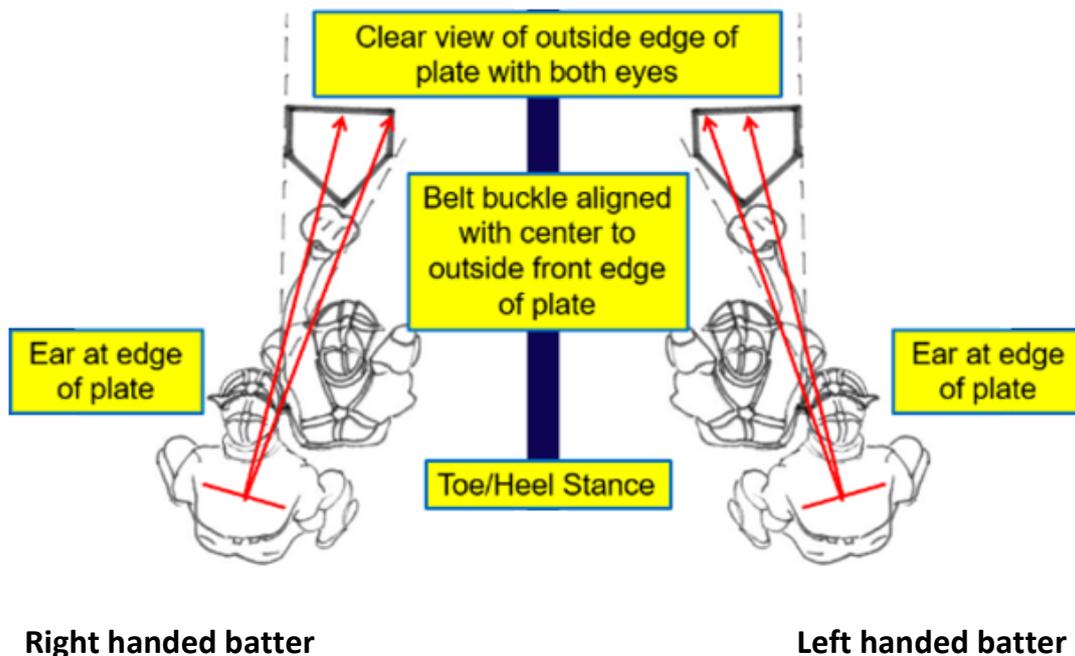
## Starting Position – Plate Umpire

The starting position of the plate umpire is important, so the umpire is in the best position to have a clear view of the **pitch** and the **batter**, keeping the four essential elements in **front** of you.

The plate umpire should line up with:

- Eyes just above the **top of the zone**
- Ear on the **inside edge of the plate**
- Positioned **between** home plate and the batter

Plate umpires should judge balls and strikes over the catcher's shoulder nearest to the batter.

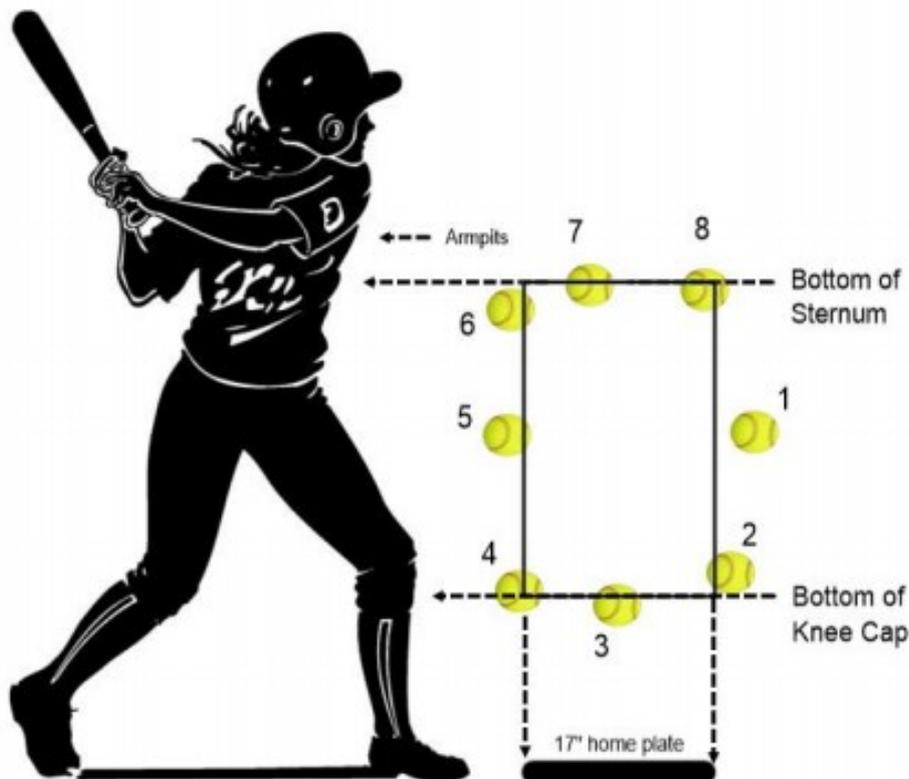


## Strike Zone

**Fast Pitch:** The strike zone is the space **over any part of home plate** between the bottom of the batter's sternum (chest plate) and the bottom of their knee cap when they assume their natural batting stance.

The natural batting stance is the stance the batter takes after the release of the pitch when deciding to swing or not to swing at the pitch.

A strike is called by the umpire when **any part** of a legally pitched ball enters the strike zone before touching the ground and the batter does **not** swing. Provided the top of the ball is **at or below the sternum** or the bottom of the ball is **at or above the bottom of the knee cap**.



1 = Ball	2 = Strike	3 = Ball	4 = Ball
5 = Strike	6 = Strike	7 = Ball	8 = Ball

If the batter swings at any pitch and misses, it is a **strike** (regardless of where the ball is).

A **ball** is called for any pitch, not swung at, that does not enter the strike zone.

A **ball** is called for any pitch, not swung at, that touches the ground before reaching home plate.

**Four balls** entitles the batter to go to 1<sup>st</sup> base. This is commonly known as a “walk”.

If the ball is swung at, missed and the pitch hits the batter, it is a **strike** (the ball is dead).

If a pitch **outside of the strike zone** hits a batter, they are entitled to 1<sup>st</sup> base (the ball is dead).

## Signals

It is important for umpires to use the correct signal and to demonstrate the signal properly.

Using signals means all umpires know what you have called on a specific play.

Signals also communicate umpire decisions to coaches, players, scorers and spectators.

## Strike

Strikes are called verbally and signalled with the **right** arm.



1. **Wait** until the ball hits the catcher's glove, then call "STRIKE".
2. Stand.
3. Bring left arm across the body.
4. Raise right arm above the body, elbow at shoulder height, clenched fist.

Balls have no signal, but are called verbally "BALL" while in position 1 above, then stand (position 2).

## Foul Ball

Fair and foul ball definitions and examples are covered in detail on pages 16-19.

Any foul ball that is **not caught** is a strike and the ball is **dead**.

If a foul ball is caught, the batter is **out** and the ball is **live**.

## Foul Ball Signal

Stand up.

Both arms up and above your head.

Try and get your mask off (hold in left hand).

Say "FOUL" loudly.



## Foul Tip

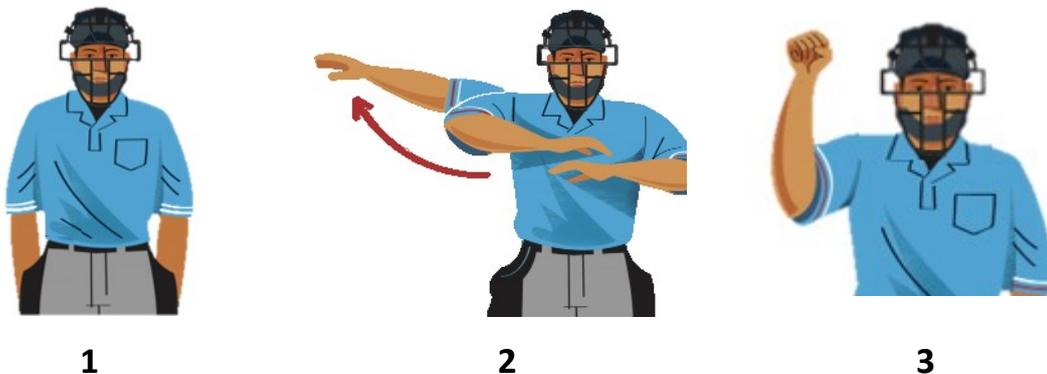
A foul tip is a batted ball which:

- Goes directly from the bat to the catcher's hands or glove
- Goes no higher than the batter's head
- Is legally caught by the catcher

### Notes:

- It is only a foul tip if the ball is caught (if the ball is not caught use the foul ball signal page 10).
- Any foul tip that is caught is a strike. If it is the 3<sup>rd</sup> strike the batter is **out**.
- In fast pitch the ball remains **in play**, runners can steal a base on a foul tip.

## Foul Tip Signal



- Wait** until the ball is caught by the catcher **then** stand.
- Bring the left hand in front of your body, with an upward motion brush the fingers of your left hand with the fingers of your right hand.
- Strike signal – raise right arm above the body, elbow at shoulder height, clenched fist.

## Count

Keep a count of balls and strikes on your clicker. The clicker is held in your **left** hand so your right hand is free to signal strikes and outs.

Indicate balls on your left hand and strikes on your right. Hands at, or above head height.

Include a verbal count. Balls are said first followed by strikes.

Eg: "3 balls, 2 strikes".

It is not necessary to give the count every pitch, but do give the count:

- When requested
- When a batter has 3 balls
- When a batter has 2 strikes
- After a check swing
- After a play back, pick-off attempt or stolen base



## Dead Ball and Time

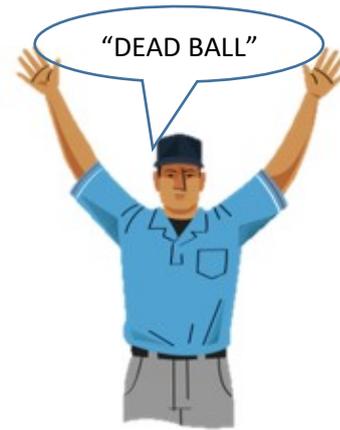
The dead ball and time signals are the same as the foul ball signal.

Both arms up and above your head.

Say “DEAD BALL” loudly or “TIME”.

The **dead ball signal** is used in situations where it is necessary to stop play e.g.

- Ball goes out of play (over the dead ball line)
- Batter is hit by a pitch
- Batter is hit by a batted ball
- Serious injury to a player



The **time signal** is used when other stoppages in play are required e.g. ball from another game is hit into your playing field, a coach requests time to make a substitution or talk to a player.

## Safe

Move to a position to get a good angle on the play keeping the four essential elements in front of you.

Do not make a call until the fielder making the play has **complete control** of the ball.



**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

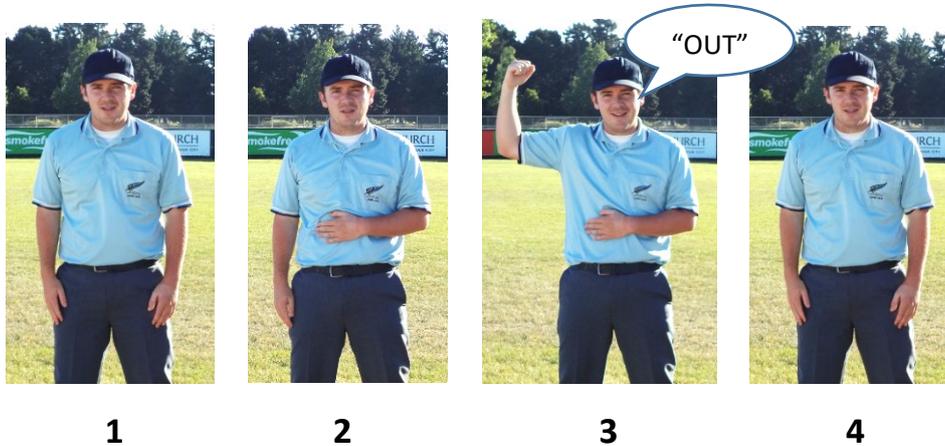
1. Stop, wait and watch the play develop.
2. Bring both hands up to your chest about shoulder height.
3. Give a brisk verbal call of “SAFE”, while fully extending your arms horizontally, parallel to the ground, palms down.
4. Drop your arms to your sides with your hands relaxed and keep your eye on the play until all play is complete.

### Notes:

- Stay with the play until all action has been completed.
- Position 4 is not required if you need to reposition yourself for another call or a potential call.

## Out

Move to a position to get a good angle on the play keeping the four essential elements in front of you.  
Do not make a call until the fielder making the play has **complete control** of the ball.



1. Stop, wait and watch the play develop.
2. Bring your left hand into your body, slightly above your waist.
3. Give a brisk verbal call of "OUT", while punching your right arm to the 90° hammer position clenching your fist.
4. Drop your arms to your sides with your hands relaxed.

### Notes:

- Stay with the play until all action has been completed.
- Position 4 is not required if you need to reposition yourself for another call or a potential call.

## Delayed Dead Ball



**Any** umpire can give the delayed dead ball signal.

It is given by extending the **left arm** straight out from the shoulder and parallel to the ground.

The hand is a fist with the fingers of the fist facing forward.

The delayed dead signal is given in situations where it may be necessary to **eventually** stop play and, depending on the circumstances, apply a penalty or award.

Eg: an illegal pitch or obstruction (covered on pages 24-25).

## Check Swing

The plate umpire may check with their base umpire to help determine whether a batter attempted to hit (swing at) a pitch when:

- You have called a **ball** and the fielding team (usually the catcher) ask OR
- When you are unsure if the batter made an **attempt to hit** the ball.

If you have called a strike, do not ask (you have already judged the pitch as a strike).

### Plate Umpire Request

1. Step out from behind the catcher to the side of the diamond where your base umpire is standing.
2. Take your mask off.
3. Point to your base umpire.
4. Say their name and ask “SWING?”



### Base Umpire Response

1. Say “NO” with a Safe signal OR
2. Say “YES” with an Out signal



**Plate Umpire** – Give the count after your base umpire’s response (see page 11).

## Revision Exercise - Strike Zone and Signals

Complete the following questions by yourself. When you have finished this exercise, make a time to go through your answers with your local chief umpire. They will explain any you don't get right and record (on page 27) that you have completed the exercise for SNZ records. Your mark will not be recorded.

**Circle your answer**

1. The lower end of the strike zone is the bottom of the batter's knee cap. True False
2. The higher end of the strike zone is the batter's armpits. True False
3. After how many balls does a batter get to "walk" to 1<sup>st</sup> base? 3 4
4. Which arm do you use to signal a strike? Left Right
5. A waist high pitch with a quarter of the ball passing over the plate is a ball. True False
6. A pitch (not swung at) bounces up off the ground crossing the front of the plate above the knee.  
RULING: Strike. True False
7. A foul ball is signalled by raising both arms above your head. True False
8. The **delayed** dead ball signal is used to signal obstruction. True False
9. Which hand is used to hold your clicker? Left Right
10. When giving the count, which hand is used to indicate the ball count on the batter?  
Left Right
11. Which arm do you use to signal an out? Left Right
12. The dead ball signal is the same as the delayed dead ball signal. True False
13. The batter is out if they hit a foul ball that is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground (or anything else foreign to the ground). True False
14. The time signal is the same as the foul ball signal. True False
15. The batter is **not out** if they tip a foul ball straight into the catcher's glove on the 3<sup>rd</sup> strike. True False



## Fair and Foul

Umpires have to make several fair or foul calls in every game. The foul ball signal is shown on page 10.

Figure 1



The lines are part of fair territory.

**Any part of the ball** touching a line (even if most of the ball is in foul territory) is a fair ball.

Figure 1: Ball is fair.

## Infield

In the infield, fair and foul are judged on where the ball **stops** OR is **first touched** by a player.

**Don't make your call too early**, the ball can spin back into the diamond, or roll out of it.

Fair or foul is judged on **where the ball is**.

It doesn't matter where the player's feet are.

Figure 2: Ball is foul.

Figure 3: Ball is fair.

1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases are part of the diamond.

A batted ball hitting a base is **fair**, regardless of where the ball goes after that.

**Note:** If a "safety" base is used (secured in 1<sup>st</sup> base foul territory) this is **not** considered part of 1<sup>st</sup> base.

A batted ball hitting **only** the safety base is **foul**, regardless of where the ball goes after that: Rule 5.6 a)i.

Home plate is treated differently.

A batted ball hitting home plate and rolling foul is **foul**.

A batted ball hit fair or foul that comes to rest (stops) on home plate is **fair**.

Figure 2



Figure 3



Get out from behind the catcher and follow the ball.

Try to get your mask off (hold in left hand).

For balls **close** to the line try to get one foot either side of the base line to have the best view when making your call. If foul call “FOUL” loudly! *See figure 4.*

For fair balls close to the line, **do not call** anything, signal the ball is fair by pointing into the diamond with the **arm closest to fair territory**. *See figure 5.*

- Fair ball down 3<sup>rd</sup> base line signal fair with your **right** arm.
- Fair ball down 1<sup>st</sup> base line signal fair with your **left** arm.

Figure 4



Figure 5



## Outfield

In the outfield, fair and foul are judged on where the ball **first touches the ground** OR is **first touched** by a player, regardless of where the ball goes after that.

The lines are part of fair territory. Any part of the ball **first touching a line** (even if most of the ball is in foul territory) is a fair ball, regardless of where the ball goes after that. *See figure 1* on previous page.

If a ball hits the foul ball pole on the full it is **fair**, regardless of where the ball goes after that.

Get out from behind the catcher, try to get your mask off and follow the ball.

Try to have one foot either side of the base line to have the best view when making your call. *See figures 4 and 5 above.* Move to a better angle if players are blocking your view of an outfield hit.

Once you have called a ball “FOUL” players will stop. You can’t unfoul it (even if you got it wrong)!

Delay your call until the ball is first touched (player or fence) OR comes to a complete stop.

### Remember

- Try to get your mask off
- Follow the ball
- Don’t call too soon
- Signal (if foul)

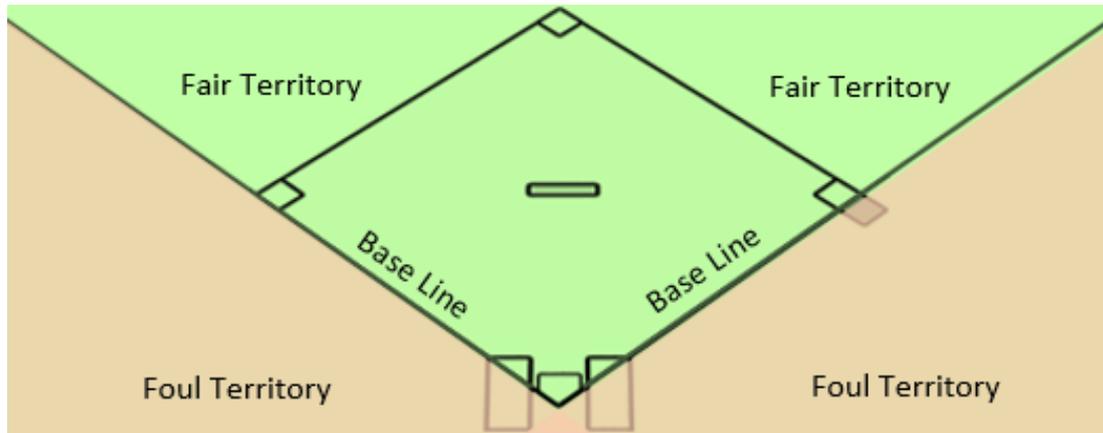
### For Close Calls

- Try to get to the line
- Signal fair or foul
- Be loud on foul calls

## Extracts from the SNZ Official Rules of Softball 2018-2021

### Rule 2.1.6. Fair Territory

That part of the playing field within and **including the first and third base foul lines** from home plate to the bottom of the outfield fence and perpendicularly upwards.



### Rule 5.1.16 Fair Ball

A legally batted live ball that:

- a) Settles or is touched on or over fair territory between home and first base or between home and third base.
- b) Bounds past first or third base on or over fair territory, regardless of where the ball hits after going over the base.
- c) Touches first, second or third base.
- d) Touches the person or clothing of an umpire or player while over fair territory.
- e) First falls on fair territory beyond first and third base.
- f) Passes out of the playing field beyond the outfield fence while over fair territory.
- g) Hits the foul line pole while in flight.

*SNZ note - some fully fenced diamonds have a foul ball pole on the outfield fence*

- h) Is judged a fair fly according to the relative **position of the ball and foul line**, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time of touching the ball. It does not matter whether the ball first touches fair or foul territory, as long as it does not touch anything foreign to the natural ground in foul territory and complies with all other aspects of a fair ball. The position of the ball at the time of interference determines whether the ball is fair or foul, regardless if the ball rolls untouched to foul or fair territory.

## Rule 5.1.20 Foul Ball

A legally batted ball that:

- a) Settles on foul territory between home and first base or between home and third base.
- b) Bounds past first or third on or over foul territory.
- c) **First touches** on foul territory **beyond first or third base**.
- d) Touches the person, attached or detached equipment or clothing of an umpire or player, or any object foreign to the natural ground, while on or over foul territory.

*SNZ note – objects foreign to the natural ground include backstop nets, side-line fences, the safety base beside 1<sup>st</sup> base, loose equipment, overhanging trees and spectators.*

- e) Touches the batter or the bat in the batter’s hand(s) a **second time** while the batter is **within the batter's box**.
- f) Goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batter’s head, to any part of the catcher’s body or equipment and is caught by another fielder.
- g) Hits the pitcher’s plate and rolls untouched to foul territory **before reaching first or third base**.

*SNZ note – the pitchers plate is not to be confused with the pitchers mat. Some diamonds have a pitchers “bar” dug into the ground instead of a mat. If the ball hits this and goes foul (untouched) in the infield it is foul (unlike a ball hitting a base).*

- h) Is judged a foul ball, judged according to the relative **position of the ball and the foul line**, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time of touching the ball. The position of the ball at the time of interference determines whether the ball is fair or foul, regardless if the ball rolls untouched to foul or fair territory.

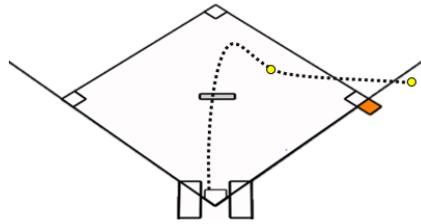
## Revision Exercise – Fair and Foul

Complete the following questions by yourself. When you have finished this exercise, make a time to go through your answers with your local chief umpire. They will explain any you don’t get right and record (on page 27) that you have completed the exercise for SNZ records. Your mark will not be recorded.

**Circle your answer**

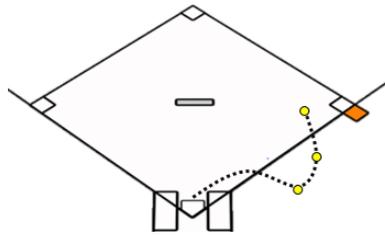
1. A batted ball is first touched **outside** the 1<sup>st</sup> baseline by a fielder with both their feet in fair territory.  
RULING: Fair ball. True      False
2. A batted ball stopping with half of the ball on the foul line and the other half in foul territory, infield or outfield, is fair. True      False
3. Home plate is part of fair territory. True      False
4. The outfield fence upright foul line pole is part of fair territory. True      False
5. A foul ball rebounds off the backstop net and is caught by the catcher before it touches the ground.  
RULING: The batter is out. True      False
6. A batted ball hits home plate, bounces up and hits the bat a second time while the batter is standing in the batter’s box.  
RULING: Foul ball. True      False

Underneath each of the following pictures please write whether it is fair or foul.  
 Try to include a SNZ rulebook reference with your answer. Eg:

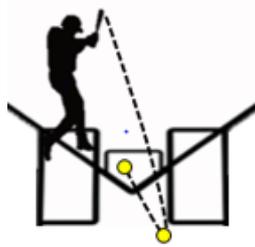


**Fair – Rule 5.1.16 b**

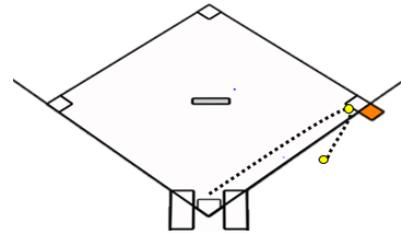
Yellow dots indicate where a batted ball touches the ground/base, the last dot is where the ball stops.



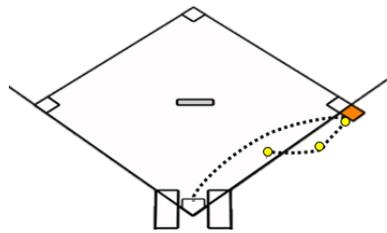
**7.**



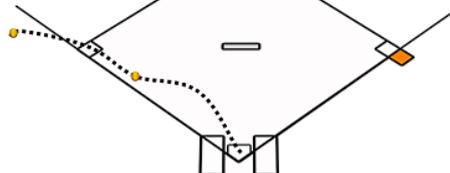
**8.**



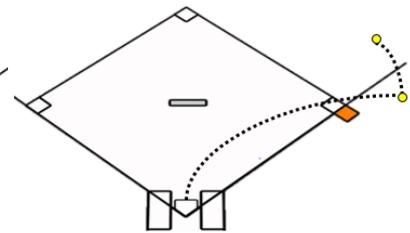
**9.** Ground ball hits fair (white) base



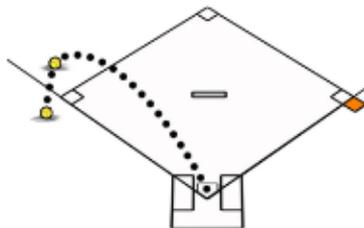
**10.** Ground ball hits foul (coloured) base only



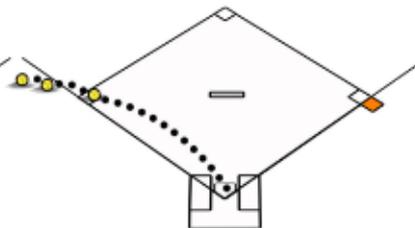
**11.** Ball bounces over base 3



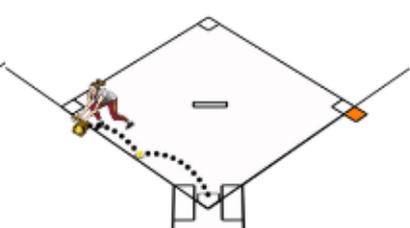
**12.** Fly ball hit into the air



**13.** Fly ball hit into the air



**14.** Ball touches base 3



**15.**

## Safety Base

The safety base is a double base used at 1<sup>st</sup> base. Half the base is secured in fair territory and half the base of a different colour (usually orange) is secured in foul territory.

Only the fair portion is considered as 1<sup>st</sup> base. The foul portion is used for safety purposes only to help prevent collisions at 1<sup>st</sup> base.



The following rule book terms and definitions will be used in this section:

**Batter:** An offensive player who enters the batter's box with the intention of aiding their team to score runs. They continue to be a batter until they are declared out by the Umpire or become a batter-runner.  
*Eg: A batter who is in the batter's box but hasn't hit the ball (into fair territory) yet.*

**Batter-runner:** A player who has finished a turn at bat but has not yet been put out or reached first base.  
*Eg: A batter who has hit the ball into fair territory and started running.*

**Runner:** A player of the team at bat who has finished a turn at bat, reached first base and has not yet been put out. *Eg: Any runner who is on base while another batter is in the batter's box.*

The following rules apply to the safety base:

- A batted ball hitting the fair (white) portion is **fair**, regardless of where the ball goes after that.
- Only **part** of a batted ball has to hit the fair (white) portion for it to be fair.



- A batted ball hitting **only** the foul (coloured) portion is **foul**, regardless of where the ball goes after that.

- The batter-runner may over-run the safety base at 1<sup>st</sup>. After over-running the base, they **must return** to the fair (white) portion. If they **attempt to run to 2<sup>nd</sup>** then return to 1<sup>st</sup> they can be tagged out while off base.
- Only **part of the batter-runner's foot** needs to touch the foul (coloured) portion as they run through 1<sup>st</sup> base.
- On a fair batted ball, if the batter-runner **only** touches the fair (white) portion of 1<sup>st</sup> base and a play is made at 1<sup>st</sup> base, the defence can appeal for a missed base.
  - The appeal must be made **before** the batter-runner returns to the fair portion of the base.
  - Appeals made **after** the batter-runner has returned to the fair base will be denied.
  - This rule also applies to a batter running on a dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike.

**Note:** The fielder must be in the infield when making the appeal.

- On a ball hit to the outfield when there is **no play being made** at 1<sup>st</sup> base, the batter-runner may touch **either portion** of the base. The batter-runner can touch the foul (coloured) portion and continue to 2<sup>nd</sup> base without penalty (this also applies to overthrows at 1<sup>st</sup> base)
- Once a runner returns to the fair (white) portion they must stay on the fair portion. If they lose contact with the fair portion they can be tagged out.
- Only **part of the runner's foot** needs to be on the fair (white) portion.



- When returning to or remaining on base (tagging up) for a fly ball the runner must use the fair (white) portion of 1<sup>st</sup> base.
- On an attempted pick-off play at 1<sup>st</sup> base the runner must return to the fair (white) portion.
- A fielder must use the fair (white) portion of the base EXCEPT on any live ball play made from **1<sup>st</sup> base foul territory**, in this instance **only** the batter-runner and fielder may use **either portion** of the base.

**Eg:** No runners on, the 3<sup>rd</sup> strike is not caught and goes behind the catcher on the 1<sup>st</sup> base side. The fielder can use the foul (coloured portion) to take the throw from the catcher. In this situation **only**, the batter-runner may run inside the diamond and use the fair (white) portion. This reduces the chance of the batter-runner being hit by the catcher's throw.

## Revision Exercise – Safety Base

Complete the following questions by yourself. When you have finished this exercise, make a time to go through your answers with your local chief umpire. They will explain any you don't get right and record (on page 27) that you have completed the exercise for SNZ records. Your mark will not be recorded.

**Circle your answer**

1. A batted ball hits the fair (white) portion of 1<sup>st</sup> base, then rolls into **foul** territory and stops.  
RULING: Fair ball. True      False
2. A batted ball hits only the foul (coloured) portion of 1<sup>st</sup> base, then rolls into **foul** territory and stops.  
RULING: Fair ball. True      False
3. A batted ball hits only the foul (coloured) portion of 1<sup>st</sup> base, then rolls into **fair** territory and stops.  
RULING: Fair ball. True      False
4. A batted ball, bounces over the foul (coloured) portion of 1<sup>st</sup> base and lands in outfield **fair** territory.  
RULING: Foul ball. True      False
5. A batter-runner beats the throw to 1<sup>st</sup> base and over-runs this base with half of their foot touching each (fair and foul) portion of 1<sup>st</sup> base. The infield appeal for a missed base **before** the batter-runner returns to 1<sup>st</sup> base.  
RULING: The batter-runner is out. True      False
6. A runner “tags up” for an outfield fly ball with half of their foot on each (fair and foul) portion of 1<sup>st</sup> base. Once the catch is taken, the runner leaves 1<sup>st</sup> base and runs safely to 2<sup>nd</sup> base. The infield appeal for the runner not tagging up.  
RULING: The runner is out. True      False
7. No runners on base. The catcher drops the 3<sup>rd</sup> strike, picks up the ball and throws to 1<sup>st</sup> base fielder standing on the foul (coloured) portion of 1<sup>st</sup> base. The throw beats the runner to 1<sup>st</sup> base. The batting team ask for their runner to be safe because the fielder was standing on the foul portion of the base.  
RULING: The batter-runner is out. True      False
8. On a two base hit to the outfield, the batter-runner only touches the foul (coloured) base when they round 1<sup>st</sup> base continuing safely to 2<sup>nd</sup> base. The fielding team appeal for a missed base because the batter-runner did not touch the fair (white) portion of 1<sup>st</sup> base on their way to 2<sup>nd</sup> base.  
RULING: The batter-runner is safe at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. True      False
9. A batter hits into the infield and over-runs 1<sup>st</sup> base touching only the foul (coloured) base. The throw is wild so the batter-runner continues safely to 2<sup>nd</sup> base. The fielding team appeal for a missed base because the batter-runner did not touch the fair (white) portion of 1<sup>st</sup> base on their way to 2<sup>nd</sup> base.  
RULING: The batter-runner is safe at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. True      False
10. A batter-runner beats the throw to 1<sup>st</sup> and over-runs this base only touching the fair (white) portion. The infield appeal for a missed base **before** the batter-runner returns to the fair portion of 1<sup>st</sup> base.  
RULING: The batter-runner is out. True      False

## Obstruction

What is obstruction? Obstruction is a judgement call and is the act of:

- A defensive player (fielder) or team member who hinders or prevents a batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball.
- A fielder who impedes (slows down or blocks) the progress of a batter-runner or runner who is legally running bases while:
  - Not in possession of the ball
  - Not in the act of fielding a batted ball
  - Making a fake tag without the ball
  - In possession of the ball and pushes a runner off a base
  - In possession of the ball, but **not** in the act of making a play on the batter-runner or runner

### Obstruction on a Batter

The most common form of obstruction on a batter is when their swinging bat hits the catcher or the catcher's glove.

If a batter is obstructed from hitting a pitch by the catcher this is known as "catcher obstruction". A delayed dead ball is signalled (see page 13) and the ball is **live** until the end of the play.

If "catcher obstruction" occurs, the coach of the offensive (batting) team has the option of:

- a) Taking the result of the play (the batter may still reach 1<sup>st</sup> base safely or even hit a home run!)  
OR
- b) Taking the award for "catcher obstruction"

If the coach does not take the result of the play, the award for "catcher obstruction" is:  
Award the batter 1<sup>st</sup> base and advance all other runners **only** if forced.

### Obstruction on Batter-Runner or Runner

The most obvious form of obstruction on a batter-runner or runner is when they collide with a fielder who doesn't have possession of the ball OR is not in the act of fielding a ball.

Another common form of obstruction is a runner changing their running path to avoid a collision with a fielder not in possession of the ball OR in the act of fielding a ball.

If a runner is obstructed, a delayed dead ball is signalled (see page 13) and the ball is **live** until the end of the play. The runners affected by the obstruction are awarded the base (or bases) they would have reached (in the umpire's judgement) had there been no obstruction.

### Points to Note:

- If the obstructed runner is put out before reaching the base they would have reached (had there been no obstruction), a **dead ball** is called. The obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base (or bases) they would have reached (in the umpire's judgement) had the obstruction not occurred.
- An obstructed runner will **never** be called out **between the two bases** where they were obstructed **unless** they are legally appealed for a) missing a base OR b) leaving a base before a caught fly ball was first touched.
- An obstructed runner **may be called out** if they **pass** the base they would have reached (in the umpire's judgement) had there been no obstruction OR commit an act of interference after the obstruction is ruled.



These four pictures = Obstruction.

Fielder has impeded the runner's progress and does **not have the ball**.

Signal a delayed dead ball (see page 13).



These two pictures = NO obstruction. Fielder has the ball in their glove.



Name: ..... Association: .....

**Guide:** For each game, cross out the **Plate** or **Base** section not applicable.

Each evaluator is to observe one plate and one base game.

Tick ✓ each criteria Yes or No. If error occurs two or more times during multiple innings of a game, tick ✓ No.

If criteria is not observed in a game, tick ✓ N/A.

For any signals not observed, evaluator is to ask the umpire to demonstrate signal after their game.

Demonstrates Generally	Game One			Game Two			Game Three			Game Four		
	Date:			Date:			Date:			Date:		
<b>Plate: Signals</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A
• Balls and strikes												
• Fair and foul												
• Foul tip												
• Count												
Starting position												
Check swing request												
<b>Base: Starting position</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A
• No runners on												
• Lead runner on 1 <sup>st</sup>												
• Lead runner on 2 <sup>nd</sup>												
• Lead runner on 3 <sup>rd</sup>												
Check swing response												
Safety base												
<b>Both Plate and Base:</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A
Good presence												
Position between innings												
Calls audible												
<b>Signals</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A
• Safe and out												
• Time												
• Dead ball												
• Obstruction												
Obstruction ruling												
General rules												
<b>Total: Add Each Column</b>												
<b>*Total % = Total Yes ÷ 15 × 100</b>	%			%			%			%		
<b>Evaluator Initials</b>												
<b>Evaluator Feedback Received: Umpire To Initial Each Game</b>												
<i>*If criteria is not observed: Total % = Total Yes ÷ (15 - number of N/A) × 100            Eg: No foul tips in a game = 1 N/A: Total % = Total Yes ÷ 14 × 100</i>							<b>Average %</b>					
							<b>Add Total % ÷ 4</b>					
							<b>50% + Required To Gain Level</b>					

Evaluator One Name: ..... Signature: .....

Evaluator Two Name: ..... Signature: .....

Copy of Level One Umpire Evaluation Received: ..... Umpire Signature: .....

## Level One Workbook Exercise Checklist

Exercise	Completed Umpire Initial	Reviewed with UIC	
		UIC Initial	Date
Starting Positions Pages 5-7			
Strike Zone / Signals Page 15			
Fair and Foul Pages 19-20			
Safety Base Page 23			



## Version History

Version	Date	Resources
1.0	October 2018	For use with: 2018 WBSC Two Umpire System Fast Pitch Mechanics Softball New Zealand Official Rules of Softball 2018-2021

## Umpire Game Record

Use this page to record games you umpire during the season. At the end of the season, give your game numbers to your local chief umpire.

No:	Date	Team 1	Team 2	Grade	Plate Umpire	Base Umpire(s)
E.g.	10/10/20XX	Panthers	Dodgers	U15	Ima Umpire	Bran Newbie
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
<b>Level One Requirement Achieved – Ka Pai</b>						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
<b>15 Games – Tino Pai</b>						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						