

PLATE MECHANICS

HOW TO WORK THE PLATE - AND MINIMIZE THE GRIPING!!

AGENDA

POSTIONING

FEET POSITIONS

GETTING SET & HEAD HEIGHT

EYE MOVEMENT

TIMING

CALLING THE PITCH

MISCELLANOUS TIPS

POSITIONING

- Position the head to get the optimal view of the pitch
- Have same position on every pitch
- Eliminate all movement except the eyes
- Eliminate Tunnel Vision = Good Timing!

FEET POSITION

- Feet shoulder width or wider
- Pivot foot in crack of catcher's back, six inches behind catcher
- Heel of other foot on the line with toe of pivot foot
- Be WIDE, be able to see a dime on outside corner of the plate, almost feel unprotected
- Flair knees out as you come down, visualize sitting on a three legged stool
- Back straight, but not perpendicular to ground

GETTING SET & HEAD HEIGHT

- Move Quickly from Standing to your crouch
- Lock in – Eliminate Drift (Continuing Down)
- Get set – Do not adjust, Adjust next pitch
- Hands loose and relaxed, arms and elbows in
- Go down on top of wind-up, go down too soon and you will cramp, too late and you are still moving
- Your chin should be at the catchers head
- Your head position will be EXACTLY THE SAME whatever stance you use

EYE MOVEMENT

- STAY STILL – DO NOT MOVE HEAD
- Follow the Pitch only with eyes, not the head,
- Avoid Tunnel Vision – Where you decide 5-10 feet out what the pitch is and never look at the ball, just the path of where it came from
- WATCH THE BALL ALL THE WAY
- See the ball hit the mitt, Look at the Mitt again
- See the ball through the zone
- Stay set to call the pitch

TIMING

- The most important Element
- BE SLOW
- Your partner should be able to click it before you call it
- See the pitch; replay it again in your mind and then call it
- Same timing on every pitch – strike, swinging strike, or ball
- See it hit the mitt, look at the mitt again

CALLING THE PITCH

- Strike – A lot of ways, use your style (Use your right hand)
- Keep elbow horizontal to ground and straight
- Call the strike, then signal with your arm (be clear and leave NO doubt)
- ON a ball, stay down, if you come up it looks like a strike that you changed your mind on
- Say ball, don't be quiet, Let them know you KNOW what the pitch was
- Step out and relax
- Strike 3 Call –Leave NO doubt it was a strike 3.
- Better to say "strike 3" then "batter out" just in case the catcher drops the ball.
- Keep your eyes in the plate area – catcher could drop ball or we may have a steal.
- Swinging Strike – point to batter with left hand, Give strike signal with right while saying "yes, he went"
- If batter successfully checked his swing stay down, say "ball, no he didn't go"
- If you decide to check with partner. Step back and out to side to him/her with left hand and ask, "SWING"?
- After calling the pitch, step back and relax
- Get in a rhythm – relax, set feet, and set (head position), call the pitch, step out.

MISCELLANEOUS TIPS

- Create good first impressions
- Be business like
- Work hard
- Develop a rhythm
- Get set early vs. too late
- If catcher blocks you, move head height up (move over as a last resort) never go outside
- Define inside and top of the strike zone
- Don't duck the plate, be known as a plate umpire
- If you miss one – call a ball a strike, not the other way
- Be a strike umpire
- Don't give into pressure – don't thing faster than you want
- Make correct mechanics a habit

- Without good habits, you have to be rather lucky. With good habits, no luck involved. Working the plate will be easy
- Let eyes do the work
- If catcher moves, DO NOT adjust, adjust next pitch
- Always give catcher or coach an answer to question. If catcher asks, agree with why he thought it was a ball. If you kick one admit it if you can. Just don't have to admit to too many.
- If possible get bat away from the plate area to prevent anyone from getting hurt. Play is your 1st priority. Move bat only if have time
- Keep your eyes on the ball, bend down and slide bat along ground away from the plate with your right hand.
- Do not throw bat as it may hit on-deck hitter, a runner, or the bat boy
- On a passed ball/wild pitch. – Pivot to opposite side the ball goes & let catcher go after the ball.
- Play at plate makes sure you are on opposite side of plate from the ball.
- Pop-ups behind plate, pivot and let catcher go after ball, stay 12-16 feet away, watch catcher and not the ball. If ball near fence, be between catcher and fence. If pop up come back to fair territory, be on foul line or foul line extended to make the call

GOALS OF WORKING THE PLATE

- Not to call perfect game, can't and won't happen. You will miss some each game.
- Don't get rabbit ears, take care of only what you have to
- Avoid temptations of change zone (lop-sided game or getting even with a player. If you do, don't tell him)
- **BE CONSISTENT – WHAT IS A STRIKE AND A BALL IN THE FIRST IS A STRIKE AND A BALL IN THE SEVENTH**