



UMPIRE TRAINING RUBRIC / OUTLINE OF SKILLS

What makes a successful umpire?

- Rule knowledge
- Effective communication (verbal and listening) skills
- Effective game management, composure, and self-control

Appearance of a successful umpire

- Clean, well-fitting uniform
- Appropriate, athletic shoes
- Long hair pulled back from face
- Having the appropriate equipment for your assignment (plate umpire needs shin guards, chest protector, face mask, indicator, plate brush, and ball bag, base umpire needs indicator)

Definitions - Key words / phrases that will be heard throughout training

- Angle over Distance: The decision an umpire must make when moving a great distance to the proper position for a play. Based on the type of play, the umpire should obtain the best possible angle even if it includes a longer distance to view.
 - Having the correct angle but being farther from a play is better than having a poor angle but being closer to the play.
- Buttonhook: The movement of the Base Umpire from outside the infield to a position inside the diamond while picking up the ball and glancing at the runner. This is accomplished by planting the right foot and using a pivoting motion toward the runner.
- Check Swing: An intentional attempt by the batter to stop the completion of their swing.
- Forty-Five Degree Angle: The maximum position at first base which an umpire should not go beyond as their final calling position.
- Good Pelvic Alignment (GPA) : The alignment of a Plate Umpire's pelvis with the outside front corner of home plate.
- Heel/Toe Stance : The position of the Plate Umpire's feet when the heel of the foot closest to the batter is in a straight line with the toe of the foot closest to the catcher.
- Inside/Outside Theory : The theory that governs the movement of the Base Umpire, as determined by a batted or thrown ball, inside or outside the infield.
- Shading the Lead Runner: Position in which the Base Umpire assumes off the foul line with runners on base. The Base Umpire should position themselves closer to the lead runner (20-30 feet), but not any closer than 15 feet.

- When in position 3 (behind the shortstop) the Base Umpire should position themselves off the left or right shoulder of the shortstop depending on if the lead runner is on second base or third base.
- **Slot:** The position the Plate Umpire assumes behind the catcher slightly inside the inside corner of the plate with their inside ear lined up with the inside corner and outside the perimeter of the strike zone prior to the set position.
- **Tag Play:** A situation in which a defensive player in possession of the ball touches a runner or batter-runner who is not in contact with a base.
- **Trailing the Batter-Runner:** The movement of the Plate Umpire toward first base near the line in fair territory to observe possible violations by the batter-runner and to assist the Base Umpire with unusual situations.
- **Walking the Line:** The mechanic in which the Base Umpire starts on the foul line and moves toward home plate as the pitch is delivered. Walk the line by taking one or two steps toward home plate, pushing off with your foot furthest from the foul line to move into fair territory when the ball is batted. Umpires should stay upright throughout the entire process to allow for quicker movement, smooth transition and maximize your field of view.

Source: 2024 USA Softball Umpire Manual

<https://www.usasoftball.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/120/2024/02/2024-Umpire-Manual-Rev-1-Final.pdf>

Skill	Meets Requirements (Yes or No)	Comments
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the definitions / key words used throughout training		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the Safe mechanic		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the Sell Safe mechanic		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the Out mechanic		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the Sell Out mechanic		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the Dead Ball / Foul Ball mechanic		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the Fair Ball mechanic		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the mechanic for giving the		

Skill	Meets Requirements (Yes or No)	Comments
count		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the foul tip mechanic		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the Delayed Dead Ball mechanic		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the Strike 3 mechanic		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the mechanic for requesting help on a check swing		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the mechanic to signal Infield Fly is ON/OFF		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the Pre-Game Plate Meeting for all divisions they qualify for		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the		

Skill	Meets Requirements (Yes or No)	Comments
Plate position mechanics (heel/toe, etc.) for both left and right batters		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the timing of calling a pitch		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of working the slot		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of stepping into the Plate position and resetting between each pitch		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of when to lower into the set position on each pitch		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of what GPA is and how to achieve it		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of where the strike zone is and where they should set their eyes to best see the pitch		

Skill	Meets Requirements (Yes or No)	Comments
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the difference when calling strikes and balls		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of when the count should be given during an at bat		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of removing the face mask with the left hand		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of clearing to the left of the catcher		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of where to trail to based on where runners are on the bases		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of where the holding zone is and when to be positioned there		
The umpire demonstrates an		

Skill	Meets Requirements (Yes or No)	Comments
understanding of the Inside / Out theory		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of where to stand when in Position 1		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of walking the line on each pitch		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to get the proper position for calling a play at first base from Position 1 based on where the ball is coming from		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to get the proper position for calling a play at second base from Position 1 based on where the ball is coming from with the use of the buttonhook		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to get the proper position for calling a		

Skill	Meets Requirements (Yes or No)	Comments
play at third base from Position 1 based on where the ball is coming from with the use of the buttonhook		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of when to move into Position 2		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to get the proper position for calling a play at first base from Position 2 based on where the ball is coming from		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to get the proper position for calling a play at second base from Position 2 based on where the ball is coming from		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to get the proper position for calling a play at third base from Position 2 based on where the ball is coming from		

Skill	Meets Requirements (Yes or No)	Comments
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of when to move into Position 3		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to get the proper position for calling a play at first base from Position 3 based on where the ball is coming from		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to get the proper position for calling a play at second base from Position 3 based on where the ball is coming from		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to get the proper position for calling a play at third base from Position 3 based on where the ball is coming from		
The umpire demonstrate an understanding of performing a buttonhook		

Skill	Meets Requirements (Yes or No)	Comments
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to get into proper position to call a stolen base from any Position		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to get into proper position for a “back pick” play at any base from any Position		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to get into proper position to call a double play originating from any position		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of when a play is considered a force or tag play		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to call a tag play		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of what the 4 elements of a play are (Ball, Base, Offense, Defense)		

Skill	Meets Requirements (Yes or No)	Comments
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to request a manager communicates with them		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the importance of body language & tone when communicating with others (managers, partners, coaches... etc.)		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of when Managers Choice should be applied		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to apply Managers Choice		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of the 6 elements of pitching		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of common illegal pitches		
The umpire demonstrates an		

Skill	Meets Requirements (Yes or No)	Comments
understanding of how to call an illegal pitch		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of how to enforce an illegal pitch		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of batting out of order		
The umpire demonstrates an understanding of when an out is enforced for batting out of order		