

Training Meeting # 4, February 6, 2025
Location: West Valley HS, Room 1101

Agenda

1. Announcements

There is a WA State House Bill (HB 1085), sponsored by local District 4 House Rep Suzanne Schmidt, and companion WA State Senate Bill (SB 5272) that addresses school safety with expanded crimes and penalties to those found responsible for interference by force, violence, intimidation, threats to not only school employees but also to officials of extracurricular athletic activities, both elementary and secondary schools.

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billssummary?BillNumber=1085&Year=2025&Initiative=False>

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billssummary/?BillNumber=5272&Chamber=Senate&Year=2025>

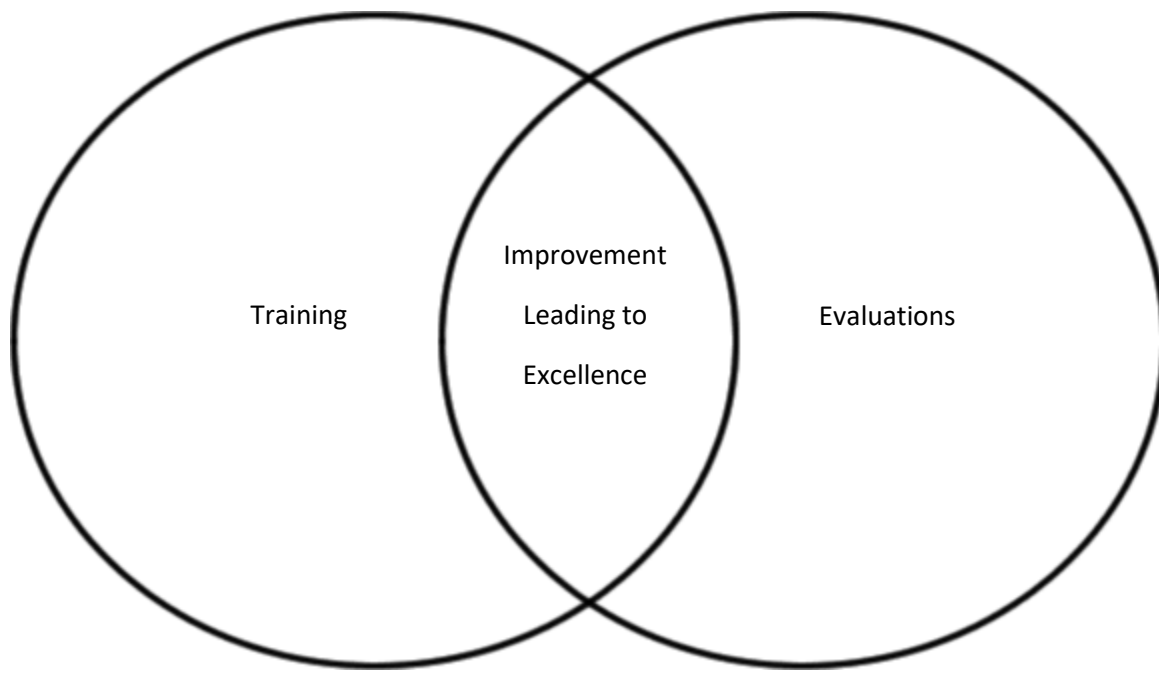
2. Working the Plate

- a. **Positioning/Attacking the slot**-Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9LVjH5_zoE (4:00)
- b. Umpiring 101 Video: **Calling Balls & Strikes** (8:04)
- c. **Plays at the Plate**-Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0S_pTprOqo (3:19)
- d. **Plate Meetings**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQv38uBxm64> (8:00)
- e. **I. C. L. E. G. S:**
 - i. **I**ntroductions
 - ii. “Is there a **C**oncussion trained health professional on site?” (yes/no)
 - iii. Confirm **L**ineups (straight 9, DH, Player/DH, or EH), numbers, names, positions, etc.
 - iv. “Coach, is your team legally and properly **E**quipped?” (Requires verbal assent)
 - v. “**G**round Rules: “Coach, please take us around.”
 - vi. **S**portsmanship & **S**ite Administration “Is there a site administrator on site?”

3. Rules

- a. Hit by Pitch: See Handout on following pages
- b. Interference: Special Cases
 - i. **Batter’s Interference**-Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=haKbGATRMsQ> (17.40)
 - ii. **Catcher’s Interference/Obstruction**-Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwACCuUWGDs> (14.29)
 - iii. **Umpire Interference Rule 2-21-2**: It is umpire interference when the umpire inadvertently moves so as to hinder a catcher’s attempt to throw, or when a fair batted ball touches an umpire (immediate dead ball, batter awarded 1st, runner’s advance one base if forced), or when a pitch or thrown ball lodges in umpire’s uniform/equipment (see lodged ball award.)
 1. Batted Ball hits Base Umpire before a fielder-Immediate Dead Ball
 2. Thrown Ball-No interference unless ball is lodged in umpire’s gear
 3. Plate Umpire Interference-Delayed Dead Ball
 - iv. **Spectator/Coach Interference**: Often when a player in the dugout or on-field coach interferes with a defensive player making a play on a fly foul ball. (Batter is out, runners return to last occupied base at the time of pitch.)

4. New Umpires Check-In



“FEEDBACK IS THE BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS”

What are the evaluators looking for when you are working the plate?

Stability of head and body positioning (slot): Does the umpire position themselves in the slot, assume the crouched position at the proper time and at the appropriate head height, and track the incoming pitch with their eyes while maintaining a stable head and body

Strike zone judgement, consistency and accuracy: Is the strike zone appropriate for the level of competition? Is the strike zone accurate and consistent?

Timing and volume of calling balls & strikes: Does the umpire demonstrate “proper use of eyes” in the timing of calls, and with a mechanic and volume that clearly indicates a ball or strike?

Pre-pitch communications with partner: Does the umpire give the count (as appropriate for the situation), number of outs, rotations, infield fly/double tag, or timing play for each new batter or situation?

Putting the ball in play: Does the umpire consistently put the ball back in play after every dead ball/time out (foul, hit by pitch, balks, etc.)?

Proper positioning for plays/rotations: Does the umpire open the gate on passed balls, clear the catcher, move to the line for fouls or plays at first, rotate correctly when situation indicates, and in the correct position for plays at the plate?

Situational communications with partner: Examples: “I’ve got 3rd if he goes.” “I’ve got the line.” (On potential fouls/trouble balls to right field.) “I’m going home.”

Touch, tag-up and fly ball coverage responsibilities: Does the umpire position him/herself properly to see touches, tag-ups? Does the umpire understand fly-ball coverages and when there is a relinquishment of coverage?

Hit by Pitch Rule 8-1-d: A batter becomes a runner with the right to advance to first base when a pitched ball hits the batter or the batter's clothing, provided the batter does not strike at the ball; or

1. If the batter permits the pitched ball to touch oneself, or if the umpire calls the pitched ball a strike, the hitting of the batter is disregarded except that the ball is dead. It is a strike or ball depending on the location of the pitch.
2. If a batter's garment, such as a shirt (i.e., not tucked in), or wristband that is not worn properly (i.e., on the belt) is touched by a pitched ball, the batter is not entitled to first base.
3. *Note: A sliding mitt or batting glove worn in the back pocket of the uniform is considered to be part of the uniform and being worn properly.*

Hit by Pitch Quiz:

When a pitch hits a batter, the ball is declared dead....

- ☐ a. Immediately.
- ☐ b. After all other possible plays (i.e., steals, rundowns, etc.) have been completed.

Preventative umpiring would suggest which of the following?

- ☐ a. Ask all players to have their shirts tucked in.
- ☐ b. Tell a player to take their sliding mitt out of their back pocket.
- ☐ c. Remind players and coaches that wristbands must be worn on the forearm only.

In which of the following situations is, or is not, a batter awarded 1st base? (Y or N)

- ☐ a. The pitch hits the hitter's hand before hitting the bat and the batter did not swing.
- ☐ b. The pitch hits the hitter's hand as the batter is swinging at the pitch.
- ☐ c. The pitch hits the batter's hand while the batter attempts a checked swing.
- ☐ d. The pitch hits the batter's hand during a checked swing.

Which of the following situations erases the batter's entitlement to first base.

- ☐ a. The pitch hits the ground before hitting the batter.
- ☐ b. The pitch deflects off the catcher or umpire before hitting the batter.
- ☐ c. The pitch deflects off the backstop before hitting the batter.

In which of these situations is the ball immediately dead, or remain live (D or L)

- ☐ a. The pitch hits the ground before hitting the batter.
- ☐ b. The pitch deflects off the catcher or umpire before hitting the batter.
- ☐ c. The pitch deflects off the backstop before hitting the batter.
- ☐ d. The pitch hits the batter during a batter's attempted check swing.

Batter's Interference Rule 7-3-5: Batter's interference occurs when the batter interferes with the catcher's fielding or throwing by:

- a. Leaning over home plate,
- b. Stepping out of the batter's box,
- c. Making any other movement, including follow through interference, which hinders actions at home plate or the catcher's attempt to make a play on a runner, or
- d. Failing to make a reasonable effort to vacate a congested area when there is a throw to home plate and there is time for the batter to move away.

PENALTY: When there are two outs, the batter is out. When there are not two outs and the runner is advancing to home plate, if the runner is tagged out, the ball remains live and the interference is ignored. Otherwise, the ball is dead and the runner is called out. When an attempt to put out a runner at any other base is unsuccessful, the batter is out and all runners must return to the bases occupied at the time of pitch. If the pitch is a third strike, and in the umpires' judgement interference prevents a possible double play (additional outs), two may be ruled out.

Note: Batter's interference is generally a "delayed dead ball."

Batter's Interference Quiz

With one out, R2 attempts to steal 3rd. B2 steps across home plate to hinder F2 who is attempting to throw to 3rd. Which of the following is true or false (T or F). (Case Play 7-3-5-A)

- ___ a. R2 is tagged out despite the hindrance and the interference is ignored and the ball remains live.
- ___ b. B2 is called out immediately (before any tag is made at 3rd) for interference and R2 is returned to 2nd base.
- ___ c. R2 is tagged not tagged out, B2 is declared out for interference, time is called and all runners are returned to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

B1 is up to bat (no outs, bases unoccupied) with a 3-2 count. B1 swings and misses at the pitch and contact's the catcher with his follow through. The result of the contact causes F2 to drop the ball. B1 runs to first base, beats the throw, and is safe. What is the correct ruling? (Case Play 7-3-5-C)

- ___ a. B1 is safe because of the uncaught 3rd strike.
- ___ b. B1 is called out for interference.

With no outs and runners on 1st and 3rd, R1 attempts to steal second. While swinging at the pitch B1 steps over the plate, interfering with F2. However, F2's throw is in time to retire R1. On the play, R3 scores. What is the correct ruling? (Case Play 7-3-5-H)

- ___ a. Since B1 interfered, the batter is called out for interference and R3 is returned to 3rd base.
- ___ b. Since F2 was able to retire R1 at 2nd, the interference is ignored, the ball remains live and R3 run counts.

Answers to this week's quizzes are on the final page of this packet.

HIT BY PITCH DETECTION

Determining whether a batter was hit by a pitch can sometimes be a challenge for the plate umpire. Sometimes an umpire will have to rely solely on circumstantial evidence. Here are some of the criteria and types of circumstantial evidence an umpire can use to handle those situations:

- The batter's reaction. If the batter grimaces in pain immediately after the ball passes him, there is a good chance he was hit. Most first reactions are honest.
- Sounds. Sometimes you hear a sound as the ball passes the batter. If you hear a sound other than the ball hitting or nicking the catcher's glove or the bat, the batter was probably hit.
- Location of the ball. If you have a fastball down the middle of the batter's box and you are in doubt as to whether the pitch got a piece of the batter, give the benefit of the doubt to the batter. Why? A pitched ball belongs around the plate, not over the middle of the batter's box.
- A ball in the dirt. A ball in the dirt can be a tough call because the plate umpire will be straight-lined more on that play than any other. Adding to the difficulty of the call will be the sound of the ball hitting the ground directly before it may or may not have hit the batter. If it looked like the batter was hit and he tried to move, he was probably hit.

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CLOSE AT HAND

It is hoped umpires — unlike the average coach, fan, commentator and even player — know that the hands are not part of the bat. If a pitch hits a batter's hand before hitting the bat and the batter did not swing, it is a hit batter. If the batter swung at the pitch — including an attempted checked swing — it is simply a swinging strike. If the batter checks his swing, the ruling is no swing and he takes his base.

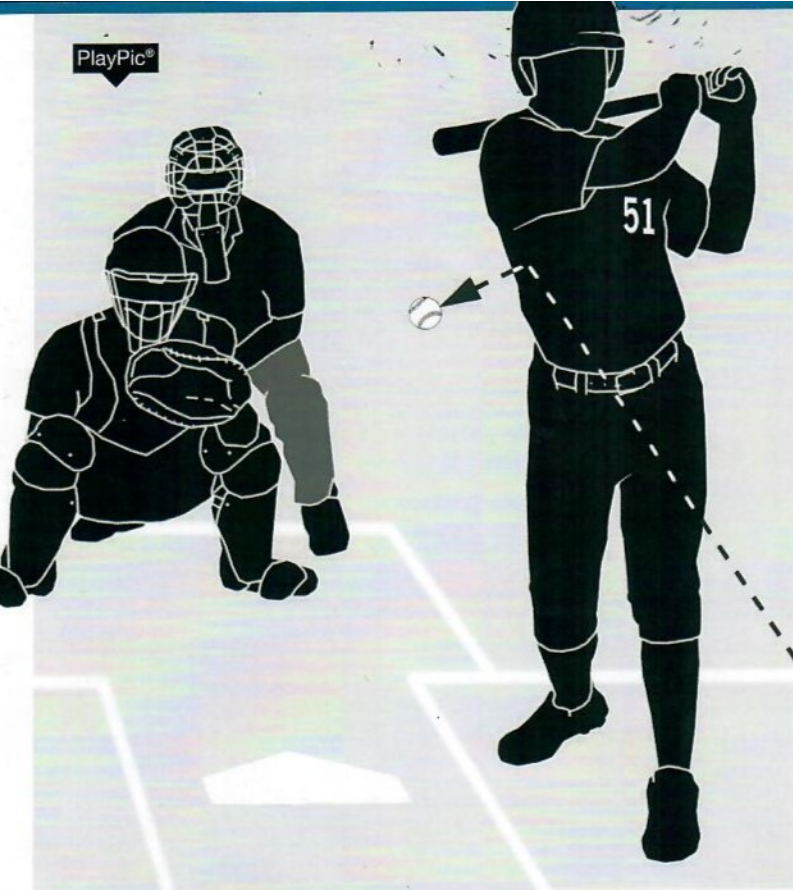
The challenge for umpires is determining if a hand or the bat was hit — and perhaps in what order. Umpires will have to use all available information — sound, batter's reaction, etc. — to render a decision.

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DIRT AND DEFLECTIONS

A pitch that hits in the dirt before touching the batter does not change anything. Coaches have been known to argue that the ball hitting the ground erases the batter's entitlement. What does erase the claim to first, though, is a pitch that deflects off the catcher or umpire before it touches the batter. In such a case, the ball remains live and in play, runners may advance and the batter is not entitled to any base. Interestingly, you won't find that spelled out in any rulebook.



FROZEN IN PLACE

Certainly, no batter is allowed to obtain first by moving into a pitch, such as sticking out an elbow. As a practice, umpires will give leeway to a batter who freezes on a pitch at him. Perhaps the batter anticipated a breaking ball, but there didn't end up being any "break" in the pitch.

If he couldn't reasonably have moved, he didn't really permit the pitch to hit him.

THE MECHANICS

When a pitch hits a batter, the plate umpire will declare the ball dead, then verbally award first base. It is dangerous to point to first base; it could be viewed as a strike signal, or if the batter checked his swing, the base umpire could interpret the pointing signal as a request from the plate umpire to rule on the checked swing.

If the pitch hits the batter but the pitch results in a called or swinging strike, the plate umpire declares the ball dead, then signals a strike. Some umpires point toward the plate and verbalize, "The batter does not get first." Another optional mechanic approved in some areas involves the plate umpire indicating what part of the batter's body the pitch hit. For instance, the umpire can tap his own elbow while verbalizing, "Got 'em on the elbow."

It is important to observe the batter's reaction. Not every batter reacts negatively to being hit by a pitch. But since too many players unschooled in the finer points of baseball become angry even when plunked by an 0-2 changeup, umpires need to work quickly and head off problems before they begin.

As the plate umpire, prepare for the worst — the batter charging the mound — every time a batter gets hit. After calling time and awarding first base, step quickly around the catcher and jog up the baseline with the batter for at least a few strides. Watch the batter and use your voice to ensure the batter remains calm and heads toward first. By positioning yourself between the batter and the pitcher, you can prevent most volatile situations. ■



MIKE BLANCHARD,
SEAL BEACH, CALIF.

Quiz Answers

Hit by Pitch Quiz:

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Preventative umpiring would suggest which of the following?

- ☐ T a. Ask all players to have their shirts tucked in.
- ☐ F b. Tell a player to take their sliding mitt out of their back pocket.
- ☐ T c. Remind players and coaches that wristbands must be worn on the forearm only.

In which of the following situations is, or is not, a batter awarded 1st base? (Y or N)

- ☐ Y a. The pitch hits the hitter's hand before hitting the bat and the batter did not swing.
- ☐ N b. The pitch hits the hitter's hand as the batter is swinging at the pitch.
- ☐ N c. The pitch hits the batter's hand while the batter attempts a checked swing.
- ☐ Y d. The pitch hits the batter's hand during a checked swing.

Which of the following situations erases the batter's entitlement to first base.

- ☐ N a. The pitch hits the ground before hitting the batter.
- ☐ Y b. The pitch deflects off the catcher or umpire before hitting the batter.
- ☐ Y c. The pitch deflects off the backstop before hitting the batter.

In which of these situations is the ball immediately dead, or remain live (D or L)

- ☐ D a. The pitch hits the ground before hitting the batter.
- ☐ L b. The pitch deflects off the catcher or umpire before hitting the batter.
- ☐ L c. The pitch deflects off the backstop before hitting the batter.
- ☐ L d. The pitch hits the batter during a batter's attempted check swing.

Batter's Interference Quiz

With one out, R2 attempts to steal 3rd. B2 steps across home plate to hinder F2 who is attempting to throw to 3rd. Which of the following is true or false (T or F). (Case Play 7-3-5-A)

- ☐ T a. R2 is tagged out despite the hindrance and the interference is ignored and the ball remains live.
- ☐ F b. B2 is called out immediately (before any tag is made at 3rd) for interference and R2 is returned to 2nd base.
- ☐ T c. R2 is not tagged out, B2 is declared out for interference, time is called and all runners are returned to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

B1 is up to bat (no outs, bases unoccupied) with a 3-2 count. B1 swings and misses at the pitch and contact's the catcher with his follow through. The result of the contact causes F2 to drop the ball. B1 runs to first base, beats the throw, and is called safe. What is the correct ruling? (Case Play 7-3-5-C)

- ☐ F a. B1 is safe because of the uncaught 3rd strike.
- ☐ T b. B1 is called out for interference.

With no outs and runners on 1st and 3rd, R1 attempts to steal second. While swinging at the pitch B1 steps over the plate, interfering with F2. However, F2's throw is in time to retire R1. On the play, R3 scores. What is the correct ruling? (Case Play 7-3-5-H)

- ☐ F a. Since B1 interfered, the batter is called out for interference and R3 is returned to 3rd base.
- ☐ T b. Since F2 was able to retire R1 at 2nd, the interference is ignored, the ball remains live and R3 run counts.