

MECHANICS & SIGNALS

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MECHANICS DEFINED

Webster's Dictionary Definition:

- Of or relating to work performed by hand or skill at such work.

USA Softball Definition:

- Umpiring Mechanics deals with the who, what, where (and often the why) of it all.



Mechanics are the backbone of umpiring

- USA Softball National Umpire Staff responsibility
- Two types of Mechanics:
 - a. Plate
 - b. Base
- Umpires should work on improving their mechanics during every game.

HOW DID SIGNALS START?

- Who is William Ellsworth Hoy?
- How about William “Dummy” Ellsworth Hoy?



OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Cy Rigler

1915 World Series



- Initiated arm signals for benefit of the outfield players to know what's happening

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Bill Klem
The father of
baseball umpires
1914



- Claims that HE originated the use of hand signals

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Bill Humphrey
Current Day



- Acknowledged as the father of ASA/USA Softball umpire manual

OUR SIGNALS

- Baseball Manual for the Signals and Mechanics
- Adapted their signals to fit our game
- Manual
 - has evolved to include positioning and signals
 - Stresses that it's essential to the success of any umpire to have proper Mechanics and Techniques
- Good Signals are part of our Mechanics.

MANUALS

Where we came from:

Pocket Size

Separate Books

With Rule Books

With out Rule Books

Electronic Age

WHY SIGNALS???

- Universal – Out; Safe; Strike; Ejection
- International Play, National, State or Local all the Same!
- The Right arm is always an Out or Strike. Unless?
- The Left arm something is going to happen, Obstruction, Illegal Pitch
- Let players know what is going on.
- Let your partner know what you are calling.
- Ball call, only the voice?

Umpire Signal Chart

GAME SIGNALS



Safe: Extend arms, palms down. Make verbal call.



Out: Hold right fist above head. If plate umpire, hold mask in left hand. Make verbal call.



Strike: Raise right hand up and then extend to side indicating the number of strikes with the fingers. Make verbal call.



Fair Ball: Make a pumping motion toward the infield. *No verbal call.* Keep mask in opposite hand.



Foul Ball: Point away from the playing field with both arms. Make verbal call.



Time Out: Extend both arms above the head. Make verbal call.



Play Ball: Motion pitcher to deliver ball. Make verbal call.



Play Ball: Motion to pitcher in 8-foot radius for an appeal play. Make verbal call.



Delayed Dead Ball: Extend left arm horizontally.



Trapped Ball: Extend both arms horizontally, similar to the safe signal.



Foul Tip: Touch fingers of both hands together to indicate that the bat tipped the ball.



Count: Use the left hand for "Balls" and the right hand for "Strikes," using the fingers to indicate the number.



Infield Fly: Extend right hand above the head. Make verbal call. If near foul line, call "Infield Fly" if fair.

Umpire Signal Chart



Double: Raise one arm above the head indicating with two fingers the number of bases awarded. Make verbal call.



Home Run: Raise one arm above the head with a closed fist and make a clockwise circling motion.



No Pitch: Raise one hand with the palm facing the pitcher. *No verbal call necessary unless the pitcher pitches while signal is given.*



Plate Umpire: Request help on a ball or check swing by removing mask and pointing to field umpire.

CREW SIGNALS

Ask

a
f
h

Return

b-c
g
i



Field Umpire: Indicate yes it is a strike by giving a definite strike signal.



Field Umpire: Indicate *no* the batter did not swing by giving a safe signal.



Umpires: Indicate an infield fly situation by crossing right hand over left chest.



Umpires: Indicate an infield fly situation is now off by brushing left arm downward with right hand.



Umpires: Request the number of outs in the inning by clenching right fist and tapping on the right thigh.



Umpires: Indicate the number of outs by giving count on fingers on right thigh.



Umpires: Request the ball and strike count by holding open hands on the chest.



Umpires: Use the left hand for "Balls" and the right hand for "Strikes," using the fingers to indicate the number.

ART WORK BY: Concepts Illustration Team, Campbell, CA

SIGNALS USED AND WHY

PLATE UMPIRE CHECK SWING

- Point with Arm open or nearest the batter
- Don't cross across the body,
- Can be seen better.

HOLDING UP PLAY

- Raise Arm away from batter
- Doesn't blend in with batter
- Keeps umpire in Control !
- Stand Up !

SIGNALS USED AND WHY

COUNT

- Above the Shoulders
- Consecutive Fingers
- Left Hand is for the Ball Count and Right Hand for the Strike Count.

PULLED FOOT/SWIPE TAG

- Give Reason why - then make call
 - If making call first, followed by reason - looks like an excuse.

SIGNALS USED AND WHY

FAIR

- No voice, just a point with arm nearest to the field.
- Don't point across body
- A voice can cause confusion.

FOUL

- Voice or sometimes VOICE
- Both arms above shoulders
- May need to call more than once to emphasize call or to stop play.

SIGNALS USED AND WHY

FOUL TIP

- Touching finger of hands together in a swiping motion
- No voice is required
- Keeps ball alive. Lets partner know what you have
- Change of action.
- It is not a missed swing or a Foul Ball

CLEAR, DISTINCT AND MEANINGFUL

- Take pride in your call
- Be Confident!
- Leave No Doubt
- Work Tall
- Use whatever you have to your advantage
- Be Stopped and Under Control!!!
- Give up Distance to Maintain Angles
- Relax
- **STOP! SEE THE PLAY!
MAKE THE CALL!**

WHAT IS THE SIGNAL?

Clear, Distinct, and
Meaningful?

Shows Confidence?



WHO'S CALL?

- Shows confidence in call.
- Left no Doubt
- Stopped and under control?



WHAT IS THE CALL?

- Strike 3!
- Clear, Distinct, and Meaningful!
- Under control!
- Work Tall!



WHY DO WE HAVE TO?

- **BUTTON HOOKS**
- Gets us into position for our next call.
- Better way to keep all 4 elements in front
- Teaching 1,000's of umpires at all levels.
- **NOBODY ON-3 UMPIRE SYSTEM**
- Ball hit to RF, UI chases, could be a throw to 1st
- Base umpire can keep all 4 elements in view.
- Plate umpire has to clear catcher, etc.
- A situational play

TIMING PLAY

- What is our umpire to umpire signal for possible timing play?
- Could we have a timing play with One out?
- Zero outs?
- Not sure check with partner
- Pre-Pitch Planning

Are you in the game?

DEVIATIONS

1. When can we deviate?

a. Can it be preplanned? - NOT ACCEPTABLE

b. Can it be on the Fly? - THE MOST ACCEPTABLE

2. Will better Pre-Pitch Planning assist us in making the deviation decision?

a. How?



DEVIATIONS

- I. What is an umpires greatest strength?
 - a. Mechanics
 - b. Rules Knowledge
 - c. Anything else to add here
 - d. Game Management

2. What is an umpires greatest weakness?
 - a. Is it a lack of understanding our mechanics (1, 2 or 3 umpire system) or just not using USA Mechanics? Is it something else? If so what? How can we make them a stronger umpire?
 - b. (I feel that you must have a complete understanding of the 2 umpire system in order to better understand and work the 3 umpire system)
 - c. Rules Knowledge
 - d. Game Management

DIFFERENT TERMS THAT HAVE SAME MEANING

1. WEDGE

2. SEE THROUGH THE PLAY

3. UNOBSTRUCTED VIEW OF THE PLAY

4. IS IT POSSIBLE THAT ALL THESE TERMS MEAN THE SAME THING?



CLEAR & UNOBSTRUCTED VIEW

- Working the Slot?
- Seeing the Ball to the Glove?
- Will this cause blinking and/or flinching?



CLEAR & UNOBSTRUCTED VIEW

- Working the Slot?
- Seeing the Ball to the Glove?
- Will this cause blinking and/or flinching?



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF USA MECHANICS

1. The purpose is to provide the best starting position (it is not an “X” marks the spot to make the call). Our mechanics allow us to move to get an “Unobstructed view of the play” – as we’ve noted
2. Why do some individuals move and some do not?
 - a. Is it that they are too lazy?
 - b. Is it that they don’t know they can move?
 - c. Is it an unwillingness to change as the game changes?
 - d. Anything else?
 - e. How can we ensure these things are being taught in our Local Associations?
3. What is our Local Associations teaching at their clinics?

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF USA MECHANICS

4. Mechanics help us to build a repeatable process

5. Does the USA process help build GOOD habit patterns? Do we keep it simple enough (KISS)?

6. Do we Communicate enough with our partners? Can we do more? How?

a. Is communication a part of our MECHANICS? Are SIGNALS part of communication?

b. How can we improve communications while on the field?

7. REMEMBER - When at USA events use USA MECHANICS – PLEASE!!



MECHANICS AND SIGNALS

1. Let's review some video

THESE VIDEOS ARE NOT TO POINT PERSONAL FLAWS OR TO DEMEAN ANYONE, IF YOU ARE IN THESE VIDEOS MAYBE YOU CAN HELP US UNDERSTAND WHY THINGS HAPPENED THE WAY THEY DID AND HOW WE CAN LEARN AND GET BETTER FROM IT

2. We will attempt to

- a. Point out things done correctly
- b. Point out things done incorrectly
- c. Things that could have been done differently / problems that may have been alleviated if using USA mechanics



VIDEO 1

m5: Perfect relay gets Buckner at third

Watc



VIDEO 2



VIDEO 3



VIDEO 4



VIDEO 5



VIDEO 6



YOUR TURN TO ASK QUESTIONS

Why do we work the slot?

Run Scores or Not Signal?

Being stopped for calls?

Theory of the 90 degrees?



THANK YOU
FOR YOUR TIME
AND YOUR ATTENTION

ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR DAY

