

Subject: Fwd: Huff-N-Puffers Umpires -- "View From Behind The Plate" Issue 24

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Date: 8/22/2023, 17:06

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Sent to all Umpires.

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject:Huff-N-Puffers Umpires -- "View From Behind The Plate" Issue 24

Date:Tue, 22 Aug 2023 17:05

From:Peter E. Toomey

We have the best view of the game.

Here are a couple thoughts to make it even better? Hopefully this helps -- especially as we move into Playoffs:

PLAYOFF UMPIRE SCHEDULES

For those few guys needed, follow very soon -- be on the watch.

Because I don't know which teams will continue to play, they'll come day-by-day.

POSTING SCHEDULES ON THE SCOREBOARDS

I do that. On every diamond. Before every game.

But now I wonder whether it's worth it.

Do you ever check? Is it helpful? Or overdone?

RUNNER FROM HOME

His job is to get a hit. But then what?

We're struggling with a recent event where the defensive team felt the Batter got in the way of a possible play at the Plate.

Neither Umpire called Interference because they didn't believe his presence was significant. (So that's the call.)

But this is one more thing for the Plate Ump to be aware of.

And for the Base Ump (yes, he's 60-80' away, but) to observe on a throw Home -- in case he's asked.

I'm adding to my Pregame Checklist to suggest to any Manager using a RFH that -- on a potential play at Home -- his safest spot is against the fence on the 1B side of the Plate -- in other words, through the left-handed Batter's Box.

AND IN CLOSING:

a thought from Chief Instructor Michael Blades:

Illegal Pitch: This is one of the more difficult "judgment" calls to be made from the plate. At about 4 seconds from release to the plate, a little less on the flat pitch, the plate umpire has to be "on his toes." In the middle of the arc of this pitch, he has to say "illegal" and get his left arm out with a closed fist for the delayed dead ball signal.

The reason this call has to be made as soon as possible is so that the batter knows this is not a pitch that he has to swing at -- even if it hits the plate -- it is a dead ball unless he swings.

If you wait until the catcher has the ball and then say it was flat or too high you have defeated the whole purpose of the call. You only compound the problem if you explain it to the catcher in a voice that the infield can't hear. Confusion all around and I have seen it many times.

The "illegal" call should be loud enough for the infield to hear.

Yes it is a tough call and it means you must concentrate on every pitch -- but when you took the plate, it is your responsibility.

I believe missing this one call frustrates more players on a regular basis than other calls. There's no real way of knowing where 12 feet is -- before the game, look at the backstop to estimate. You have some help with the 6 foot arc -- if it's over (or as high as) the screen, it cannot be flat.

Because this is entirely judgment -- when you say it is illegal that means for all practical purposes it *was* above 12 feet or below 6 feet period. It is like the strike zone in baseball -- they don't get to argue this one -- but first we must call it.

AND TO END ON A HIGH NOTE:

An ump recently confirmed he was not scheduled, then said "I'll bring my ump shirt and hat in case."

To which you know I replied: "I'd hope you would *always* -- we never know! Thanks."

With respect and appreciation, Peter
Huff-N-Puffers Umpire-In-Chief

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Schedules, Rules, Umpire Information, and the Umpire Guide are *always* at www.huff-n-puffers.com/Rules-and-Regulations.html

The USA Softball rulebook can be downloaded as a PDF from www.usasoftball.com/official-rulebook/ and the USA Umpire Manual at https://cdn1.sportngin.com/attachments/document/0144/3128/2023_Umpire_Manual.pdf

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