



April 11th, 2025

Umpire Advocate Program

Dear Managers, Coaches and Parents:

In accordance with District 3 Little League and LL.ORG requirements, in all league play games where both umpires are under 18 years of age, an "Umpire Advocate" must be designated by the home team. The game **cannot be played** until this assignment is accepted. Please use your organizational apps (Team Snap, Team Link, Game Changer, etc.) to create a "task" for someone to own for each league game.

The umpire advocate is:

1. A responsible adult, over 18 years of age.
2. Not an active participant in the game (coach, player, etc.)
3. Will be present at the plate meeting and identify themselves to both umpires and coaches as the designated umpire advocate. May choose to wear a fluorescent vest to help identify themselves to participants. Vests will be stored in the green bins.
4. Are there to impartially judge the interactions between players, coaches, umpires and in rare cases, spectators, to ensure that they are cordial, fair and within boundaries.
5. Are there to support the umpires should they need assistance with game management or challenging situations.
6. A bonus if the advocate has a good working knowledge of the rules of baseball and how they are applied in a game.

The umpire advocate should and can:

1. Observe all interactions between players, coaches and umpires when the umpires are involved.
2. Attempt to de-escalate situations that could lead to ejections of players, coaches or spectators.
3. If a situation cannot be de-escalated, the advocate is granted the authority to remove such individuals from the game if the behavior is egregious and is preventing the game from moving forward. We call this an ejection. If this occurs the UIC must be informed immediately, and documentation is to be submitted to D3 as per protocol.

As umpires, we DO NOT enjoy ejecting game participants. Usually, these types of situations occur when a coach or manager wishes to discuss or "challenge" an umpires call on the field. The little league rules forbid these interactions, however, in the opinion of this UIC, that's unrealistic and not the case beyond the boundaries of LL.ORG. We need to prepare our umpires for these interactions in the future. The key is to make them feel safe and not feel intimidated when they do occur.

The right way to do this is for the head coach to approach an umpire and ask for an explanation of the call, or, if they feel strongly that the call is incorrect, they can ask for an appeal. If an appeal is asked for, the coach is to return to the dugout. Both umpires are to move to a section of the infield where they can discuss the call without interruption or pressure. Once the discussion is concluded, if the other umpire felt that the call on the field is incorrect, both umpires can come to this consensus and overturn the call by indicating the proper voice and mechanic for the call. If they decide that they don't have enough information to overturn the call or if they both feel that the initial call was correct, they will indicate that with the appropriate voice and mechanic for the call. That is the end of the appeal process. No further action can be taken and the game resumes. The opposing team coach may ask for an explanation after the conclusion of the appeal, but they cannot appeal the appeal. Live with it.

If either coach or manager persists, we are now in game management mode, and possibly grounds for ejections.

A coach, manager or player using words and/or body language cannot argue or display disgust with a ball or a strike call, a safe or an out call, a fair or a foul call or, a catch no catch call. Arguing balls or strikes directly with the plate umpire or check swing decisions is grounds for an immediate ejection from the game. You may disagree with balls and strikes but keep it to yourself or discuss it quietly with your teammates or coaches in the dugouts.

I would prefer that coaches or players do not ask plate umpires questions like "hey blue, where was that"? If the umpire is confident in their abilities, they can choose to answer. They can also ignore such a statement. Coaches and players should be taught not to ask and not to expect a response in LL ball. Accept the call.

Members, players, coaches and parents and spectators are asked to lead by example, demonstrating good sportsmanship in all facets of the game.

All players, coaches and parents and spectators must respect the position of umpire. It does not matter if the umpire is 12 or 70. The reality is, young umpires are still learning how to umpire, just as players are learning how to play. Mistakes will be made and that is okay. We need to let the mistakes happen. Using fear and intimidation tactics to influence the judgement of our young umpires will not be tolerated. Any questions on any of these areas, I have an open-door policy for my cell phone and e-mail. I am happy to respond to any questions at any time from anyone.

Sincerely,

Steven Mirosh

UIC Cochrane Minor Baseball
NUCP L4T (Can)

Nationally Certified Umpire (Babe Ruth)

Certificate of Professional Baseball Umpiring (Wendelstedt School, USA)

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