

## CALLING BALLS & STRIKES

- **Balls**
  - In the set position, say “ball” loud enough for the batter and catcher to hear.
    - Avoid motioning with your hands or leaning with your body to indicate where the pitch missed the strike zone.
    - Turning your head *slightly* to indicate that a close pitch was “just” inside or outside is permitted. However, that should not become a habit.
  - On ball four, simply say “ball” or “ball four.”
  - Do not say, “take your base.”
  - Do not point toward 1<sup>st</sup> base.
- **Strikes**
  - There are two aspects to calling strikes: The verbal call and the visual signal.
    - Make the verbal call in the down-set position or as you come up by saying “strike.”
    - Give the visual signal by bringing your left arm across your belt, close to the body, while raising your right arm higher than your head, slightly in front of your body, with your arm in a locked hammer position.
    - If you chose to point with your right index finger when calling a strike, you must keep your hand held straight and focused on the ball.
      - When working the box stance, it is preferred that your feet remain in the set position when making the visual signal. This looks more athletic, is not distracting and looks crisper.
  - Swinging Strikes
    - If the batter swings and misses the pitch, simply give the visual signal.
    - Do not verbalize “strike.”
  - Called Strikes
    - If the pitch is a called strike, verbalize “strike” from the down position or as you come up.
    - Then rise to the upright position and give the visual signal.
  - Called Third Strike
    - A verbal call for the third strike is necessary.
    - The signal for the called third strike *must* differ from the ordinary “hammer.”
    - Umpires may use some creativity in designing their strike three signal.
    - The umpire’s head must remain focused on the home plate area while giving the signal.
    - Umpires must keep in mind that while they must “sell” the call, they must not oversell it and risk embarrassing the players.
  - Swinging Third Strike
    - Use a toned-down third strike signal with no verbal, which will help prevent using a strike/out “hammer” on dropped third strikes.
- **Dropped / Uncaught Third Strike**
  - To avoid the situation in which the coach yells, “Hey, you called the batter out,” it is recommended that you use a signal that doesn’t closely resemble an out or routine strike call. For example, a toned-down bow & arrow strike signal shouldn’t be confused with an out signal.
  - When the Dropped Third Strike Is Not In Effect
    - Signal strike.
    - You may verbalize, “The batter is out” but only if you are certain that the batter is not permitted to run.

- When The Dropped Third Strike Is In Effect
  - Use the appropriate third strike call.
    - If you clearly see that the catcher did not catch the pitch, follow the strike signal by signaling “safe” with no verbalization. The safe signal may be accompanied by a “No Catch” verbal call on closer calls that may need emphasis.
  - If the catcher makes a clean catch, the base umpire shows a closed fist waist high with his right arm slight extended from the hip.
  - If the catcher does not make a clean catch, the base umpire points to the ground with his index finger with his right arm.
    - The arm should be extended from the body so that the plate umpire can clearly see the signal.
    - The base umpire must move into a calling position for a possible play at 1<sup>st</sup> base.

### **GIVING THE COUNT**

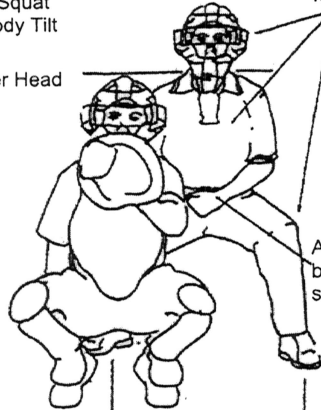
- Balls are shown with the left hand.
- Strikes are shown with the right hand.
- When giving the count, it's preferred the umpire use the “x balls, y strike” method.
  - For example, say, “2 balls, 1 strike.”
- For a full count, say, “3 balls, 2 strikes.”
  - Do not show a fist on both hands and say “full count.”
- When showing the count, your hands should be above your shoulders and at least shoulder width apart.
- Fingers are held up in order (*i.e.*, no long-horns).
- Give the count when asked for it or when there are either 2 strikes or 3 balls.
  - You can also give it when there is an abnormally lengthy delay.
- Wait until the catcher returns the ball to the pitcher and the pitcher faces you before giving the count.
  - Giving it sooner could be distracting and people tend not to hear it.
- Base umpires don't mirror the count.

# THE SLOT

## FRONT VIEW

Proper Head Position is Controlled By:  
 1. Width of Stance  
 2. Amount of Squat  
 3. Forward Body Tilt

Proper Head



Feet at least shoulder-width apart  
 - wider preferred

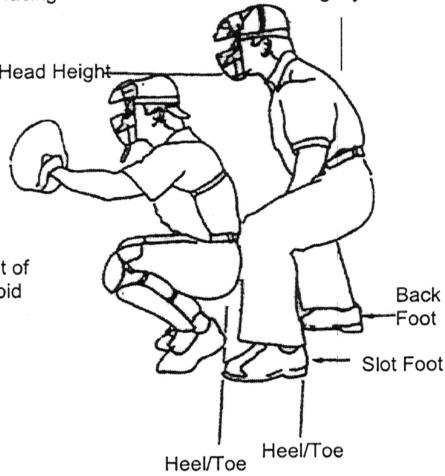
Proper use of equipment facing forward

Proper Head Height

Arm in front of body to avoid slouching

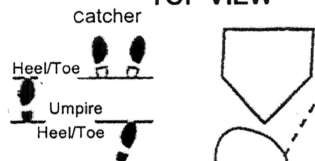
## SIDE

Body tilted slightly forward

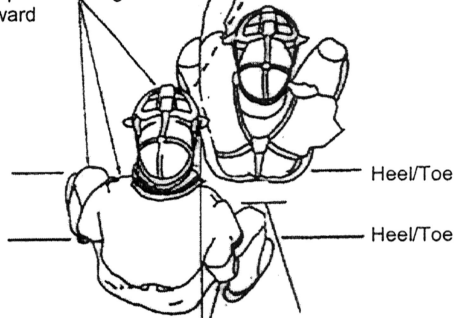


Heel/Toe Heel/Toe

## TOP VIEW



Proper use of equipment facing forward



Umpire's inside ear lined up with the inside corner of home plate

Umpire's knee no farther from catcher's back than 1 foot