

## Little League Baseball and Softball Glossary (Version 5 – 2017 Season)

This glossary contains -

- a partial list of definitions from the official Little League Rule Book (“Rule 2.0 – Definition of Terms”).
- and
- terms or slang used on the [www.LittleLeagueUmpiring101.com](http://www.LittleLeagueUmpiring101.com) web site (marked with \*).

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- An **Appeal** – is an act of a fielder in claiming a violation of the rules by the offensive team.
- An **At-Bat** – for the purposes of meeting the requirements of Mandatory Play (if applicable), is when a batter assumes the position of a batter with no count and is put out, called out by an umpire or reaches base.
- **Award a Base** – When a runner is allowed to proceed to a specific base due to an umpire ruling. For example, runners are typically awarded the base that they were attempting to reach just prior to an obstruction call.
- A **Bag** – slang for a base other than home plate.
- **Balk** – is not called in Little League – see illegal pitch.
- A **Ball** – is a pitch which does not enter the strike zone in flight and is not struck at by the batter. If the pitch touches the ground it is a ball. If it hits the ground and hits the batter, the batter is awarded first base.
- **Bang-Bang Play** - A play in which the base runner hits the bag a split-second before the ball arrives or vice versa.
- A **Base** - is one of four points which must be touched by a runner in order to score a run; more usually applied to the canvas bags and the rubber plate which mark the base points.
- A **Base Coach** – is a team member in uniform or an adult manager and/or coach who is stationed in the base coach’s box at first and/or third base to direct the batter and the runner.
- A **Base on Balls** – is an award of first base granted to batters who, during their time at bat receive four pitches outside the strike zone.

- The **Base Path** - is the natural path (about 3 feet in width) between any two bases of a runner who is attempting to reach a base safely.
- A **Batter** – is an offensive player who takes a position in the batter's box.
- **Batter–Runner** is a term that identifies the offensive player who has just finished a time at bat until that player is put out or until the play on which that player becomes a runner ends.
- The **Batter’s Box** - is the area within which the batter must stand during a time at bat.
- The **Battery** – refers to the pitcher and the catcher. When the pitcher has his foot on the pitching rubber, and the catcher is behind home plate ready to receive the ball, the battery is said to be established. At this moment, all base runners must be on their respective bases. If not, the runners could be called out for leaving early on the subsequent play.
- **Block the Plate** – occurs when a fielder physically obstructs access to a base for a runner. It is only legal when the fielder has possession of the ball AND is ready to make the play on the runner. Otherwise, the fielder is in violation of the obstruction rule.
- A **Blown Call** –refers to an erroneous call by an umpire.
- **“Blue”** – is the nickname or title that people will call an umpire during a game, regardless of what color shirt he / she is wearing (usually a blue shirt).
- A **Bunt** – is a batted ball not swung at, but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly. The mere holding of the bat in the strike zone is not an attempted bunt.
- A **Catch** – is the act of a fielder in getting secure possession in the hand or glove of a ball in flight and firmly holding it before it touches the ground - providing such fielder does not use cap, protector, pocket or any other part of the uniform in getting possession (if so it is not a catch).
  - NO it is NOT a catch, if simultaneously or immediately following contact with the ball, the fielder collides with a player, or with a wall, or if that fielder falls down, and as a result of such collision or falling, drops the ball.
  - NO it is NOT a catch, if a fielder touches a fly ball, which then hits a member of the offensive team or an umpire, and then is caught by another defensive player.
  - YES, it IS a catch, if the fielder has made the catch and drops the ball while making the throw following the catch. The player must hold the ball long enough to demonstrate complete control and that the release is voluntary and intentional.
  - YES, it IS a catch, if the ball is finally held by any fielder, even if juggled, or held by another fielder before it touches the ground. Note: Runners can leave their bases the instant the first fielder touches the ball.

- A **Catch / No-Catch** – refers to the determination and call by an umpire as to whether a fly (or line drive) ball was legally caught by a fielder, thus constituting an out.
- A **Checked Swing** – is a motion by the batter, where he starts to swing his bat at the ball, but stops the swing in order to allow the ball to pass without hitting it. Deciding whether a ball or strike after a checked swing is a judgement call and not straight forward because there's no definitive rule for how far the swing has to travel. Traditionally, it is thought to be the halfway point of a swing. If the batter demonstrated the intent to swing and the barrel of the bat passed over the back of home plate, you likely have a strike.
- **Chirping** – when somebody on the field of play or in the stands continues to complain about an umpire's call or other play outcome. Umpires can give some leeway for complaining but if prolonged and heard by others, they should take action to stop it. Unrestricted, prolonged chirping undermines an umpire's authority, is disrespectful to the game, and usually gets worse if allowed to continue.
- A **Collision** – is a play in which two or more players (usually a runner and fielder) make physical contact. But in addition to its literal definition, a "collision" implies that neither player was at fault and thus neither obstruction nor interference is called. Considered the third alternative to an obstruction or interference violation, no call is made in the case of a collision, and the play stands. A "train wreck" is a typical expression also used to describe a collision.
- A **Come-Back Play** is the act of a play being made on a runner who is returning (coming back) to a previously touched base. Also known as "a come-backer".
- the **Count** – is the number of balls and strikes on the current batter.
- **Contest a Call** – is the request by a manager or coach for an umpire to reconsider (and potentially reverse) his / her call. Under most circumstances, an umpire should not reverse a call.
- **Dead Ball** – is a ball out of play because of a legally created suspension of play.
- The **Defense** – is the team, or any player of the team, in the field.
- **Defensive Huddle** – the act of the team currently on defense (playing the field positions) getting together during a time out to plot strategy.
- The **Diamond** – is the area of a baseball field that is enclosed by three bases and home plate.
- The **"Dish"** – is umpire slang for home plate.

- The **Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike Rule** - is in effect when the catcher does not cleanly catch the ball “in flight” on a third strike and ...

1) less than two outs and no runner on first base

or

2) two outs (first base may or may not be occupied).

“In flight” means that the ball is caught before it touches any other object including the ground. Typical plays that invoke the dropped third strike rule: catcher drops the pitched ball after it crosses the plate for a strike; and on a swinging strike, the ball bounces on the ground before being caught (or dropped) by the catcher.

Under the rule, the batter-runner is not out on the third strike and the ball is live, with play continuing as if a fair ball had been hit into play. The rule pertains only for older player levels – Baseball Majors, Softball Majors and Softball Juniors. At lower levels, the out is always recorded on the third strike, regardless of whether the ball was caught or not by the catcher.

- An **Ejection** – when an umpire or Little League official demands that a coach, player or fan leave the game due to some sort of poor behavior. Typically, the person ejected must leave not just the playing field, but the park as well, and is not allowed to return for the duration of that game. If a person refuses to leave the park, the umpire can temporarily suspend the game or rule the game a forfeit.
- A **Fair Ball** – is a batted ball that settles on fair ground between home and first base, or between home and third base,
  - Or that touches first, second or third base
  - Or that first falls on Fair territory on or beyond first or third base
  - Or that while on or over fair territory touches the person of a player or an umpire
  - Or that while fair territory passes out of the playing field in flight (Home Run)
  - Note: A fair fly ball shall be adjudged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, NOT as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time such fielder touches the ball.
- **Fair Territory** – is that part of the playing field that is within and including the first and third base lines; including:
  - Home plate,
  - First and third bases,
  - All foul lines
- A **Fielder** – is any defensive player.

- **Flashing Outs** – hand signals between umpires to communicate the current number of outs. Usually done just prior to each new batter entering the batter’s box.
- A **Fly Ball** -is a batted ball that goes high in the air in flight.
- A **Force Play** – is a play in which a runner legally loses the right to occupy by reason of the batter becoming a runner.
- A **Forfeit** – when a win is awarded to a team due to some issue or circumstance.
- A **Foul Ball** – is a batted ball that settles on foul territory between home and first base or home and third base.
  - Or that bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory
  - Or first falls on foul territory beyond first or third base
  - Or that while on or over foul territory the person of a player or an umpire or any object foreign to the natural ground.
- **Foul Territory** – is the part of the playing field that is outside of the foul lines outside the first and third baselines, extended to the fence and perpendicular upwards.
- A **Foul Tip** – is a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher’s hands and is legally caught.
  - A foul tip must be caught else it is a foul ball (and dead).
  - A foul tip is a strike and the ball is live.
  - A foul tip can be counted as the third strike.
- The **Go-Ahead Run** – any run that puts a team ahead during the game. Example: “He scored the go-ahead run”.
- A **Ground Ball** – is a batted ball that rolls or bounces close to the ground.
- A **Hard Stop** – refers to the time that the umpires and both teams’ managers agreed, often during the pre-game meeting, to end the game. Example: “We agreed to a 7:00 pm hard stop.”
- A **Hit Batter** – when a batter is hit by a pitch. There are different rules that determine enforcement, but in all circumstances, the ball is immediately called dead by an umpire.
- An **Illegal Pitch** – is the following (there are more uncommon situations listed in rule 8.05)
  - Is a pitch delivered to the batter when the pitcher does not have their pivot foot in contact with the pitcher’s rubber.

- Or a Quick Return pitch – which is a pitch made with obvious intent to catch a batter off balance. Umpires will judge a quick pitch as one delivered before the batter is reasonably set in the batter’s box. – 8.05 (e)
  - Or the pitcher while touching the rubber, makes any motion naturally associated with the pitch and fails to make such a delivery – 8.05 (a)
  - Or the pitcher while touching the plate, feigns a throw to first base and fails to make such a delivery – 8.05 (b)
  - Or the pitcher while touching the rubber fails to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base. – 8.05 (c)
  - Penalty – the pitch shall be called a ball and the pitch shall count as one pitch (toward the pitch count) even if the pitch is not actually thrown.
    - If play follows the illegal pitch the manager of the offensive team may advise the plate umpire of the decision to decline the illegal pitch and accept the play.
    - If the batter hits the ball and reaches first and all other runners advance at least one base then the play proceeds without reference to the illegal pitch.
- An **Illegally Batted Ball** – is one hit by the batter with one or both feet on the ground entirely outside of the batter’s box.
  - An **Indicator** – is a device held in the plate umpire’s left hand, to record strikes, balls and outs. Commonly (and erroneously) called a “clicker” or “counter”. Veteran umpires joke - *“if my partner calls it a clicker, I’m in for a long game!”*
  - The **Infield** – can refer to a) The area of the field bounded by home plate and first, second, and third bases; and b) The defensive positions of first base, second base, third base, and shortstop considered as a unit.
  - An **Infielder** – is a fielder who occupies a position in the infield.
  - **Infield Fly** – is a fair fly ball which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when first and second or first, second and third bases are occupied, before two are out.
    - Does NOT include a line drive nor an attempted bunt
    - The pitcher, catcher and any outfielder stationed in the infield on the play shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule.
    - When it seems apparent that the batted ball will be an Infield Fly, the umpire shall immediately declare “infield fly” for the benefits of the runners.
    - If the ball is near the baseline, the umpire shall declare “Infield Fly if Fair”
    - The ball is live and the runners may advance at the risk of that ball being caught or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on any fly ball. If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul ball.

- Note (1): If a declared Infield Fly is allowed to fall untouched to the ground and bounces foul and remains foul before passing first or third base, it is a FOUL.
- Note (1) part 2: If a declared Infield Fly falls untouched to the ground, outside the baseline, and bounces fair before passing first or third base, it is an Infield Fly.
- *Editor's Note: Any umpire can call an Infield Fly.*
- **Interference** – there are multiple types of interference
  - (a) Offensive interference is an act by a member of the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play.
    - If the Umpire declares the batter, batter-runner or a runner out for interference, all other runners shall return to the last base that was, in the judgment of the umpire, legally touched at the time of interference, unless otherwise provided by these rules.
  - (b) Defensive interference is an act by a fielder which hinders or prevents a batter from hitting a pitch
  - (c) Umpire's interference occurs (1) when an umpire hinders, impedes or prevents a catcher's throw attempting to prevent a stolen base, or (2) when a fair ball touches an umpire on fair territory before passing a fielder.
  - (d) Spectator interference occurs when a spectator reaches out of the stands or goes on the playing field, and touches a live ball.
  - The ball is DEAD on any interference.
- To **Kick Oneself** – slang used to describe when an umpire misses a call and knows it. For example, "I kicked that call at first base".
- To **Kill the Play** – is when an umpire stops play by calling a time out.
- A **Judgment Call** – a call that is based on how an umpire viewed and interpreted the outcome of a play, as opposed to a call that is based more objectively such as a decision based on rules. There are many judgment calls such as an out/safe and a ball/strike decision. The key point to appreciate is that judgment calls cannot be disputed or changed unless the umpire that made the call asks for another umpire's view of the play. Umpires should rarely change a judgment call once it has been made.
- **Lead Runner** – refers to the runner who has advanced the furthest along the base path among multiple runners on any particular play. Also referred to as "the \$money runner" since he/she is closest to scoring among multiple runners.
- **Let the Play Stand** – typically refers to a decision by an umpire or umpire crew to not change the outcome of a play after reviewing the play and the umpire's original call.

- **Live Ball** – is when the ball is alive (or in play), the game can proceed. The opposite of a “dead ball”.
- **(I’ve Got ...) “Nuthin”** – slang expression umpires used with one another to say they didn’t see enough of a play to make a call one way or another. Typical scenario – a runner obstruction or interference. When an umpire “has nuthin”, no call is made and whatever was the result of the play stands.
- **Obstruction** – is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. A fake tag is considered obstruction.
  - Note: Obstruction shall be called on a defensive player who blocks off a base, base line or home plate from a base runner while not in possession of the ball.
- **Obstruction Type A** – is when the play is being made on the obstructed runner. Play stops immediately (umpire calls time) and a dead ball results.
- **Obstruction Type B** – is when the play is not being made on the obstructed runner. Play continues and the umpire may call time later depending on the outcome.
- The **Offense** – is the team, or any player of the team, at bat.
- **Official Scorer (or Scorekeeper)** – is the person recording the events on the field and who will be the principal authority for questions that may come up during the game and recorded statistics. Typical examples during the game are current batter count (balls and strikes) and number of runs scored. The umpire crew and managers must agree prior to the game start who the official scorer will be, typically a volunteer parent from one of the teams.
- An **Out** – is one of the three required retirements of an offensive team during its time at bat.
- **Outfield** - is that portion of the field in fair territory which is normally covered by outfielders.
- An **Outright Miss** – is an erroneous call that is even worse than a blown call since in this case, most everyone else at the ballpark saw the correct call except the umpire!
- A **Penalty** – is the application of these rules following an illegal act.
- The **Pitcher’s Circle** – is an 8 foot (radius), real (marked with chalk) or imaginary circle centered around the pitching rubber. If a pitcher has the ball within the pitcher’s circle, any runner must immediately advance or retreat or otherwise be called out. The Pitcher’s Circle is used only in softball (not baseball).

- **Plate Ready** – may refer to the safety checklist that the umpire conducts mentally to confirm that the players in the batter’s box area (catcher and batter) are ready for the play/pitch to commence.
- **“Play”** – is the home plate umpire’s order to start the game or to resume action following any dead ball.
- **To Play Up (in the Base Path)** – is when fielders move up from the standard base path or “running lane” of the base runners. By doing so, they are closer to receive a batted ball hit directly to them. There are advantages and disadvantages of playing up in the base path, determined by a particular situation.
- **Pre-game meeting** – a short meeting among all the umpires and the manager of each team, led by the plate umpire, just prior to the game’s official start (first pitch). The objective is to ensure everyone is on the same page regarding various topics that might include any unique local rules, player safety, special circumstances, etc.
- **A Red Flag** –is thrown by a Base Umpire to signal that a base runner left the base early (“before the ball reached the batter”). The “Red Flag” (handkerchief, candy wrapper, whatever) is used only in baseball (not softball).
- **To reverse a call** – the act of an umpire to change his/her previous call. For example, changing an out call to a safe call. Reversals should be rare exceptions and based on new, additional information that prompted the umpire to decide the reversal was warranted.
- **To Rotate Balls** – a process the home plate umpire uses to swap balls with the catchers / pitchers throughout the game. The technique will help speed up the game and also keeps the balls to wear evenly.
- **A Ruling** –is the act and decision by an umpire on how to interpret and enforce a rule or rule violation.
- **A Rundown** – is the act of the defense in an attempt to put out a runner between bases. A “pickle” is a common slang term for a rundown as in “the runner was in a pickle”.
- **A Runner** - is an offensive player who is advancing toward, or touching, or returning to any base.
- **“Safe”** – is a declaration by the umpire that a runner is entitled to the base for which that runner was trying.
- **Sending a Runner** –is typically the act of a base coach to instruct a runner to run to the next base.

- To **shake off (another umpire)**: a slang communications term between two umpires most common when one umpire points to another umpire to delegate the decision on a play. The corresponding umpire can make the call for his partner or opt not to (to shake it off).
- **Slot Position** – refers to four specific areas from where a Base Umpire will start a play. Relating to Home Plate Umpiring, the Slot Position generally refers to the position taken by the Home Plate Umpire, behind the catcher and between the edge of home plate and the batter. This Slot position provides the best view of the ball as it crosses the plate.
- A **Strike** – is a legal pitch which meets any of these conditions
  - Is struck at by the batter and missed
  - Is not struck at, if any part of the ball passes through any part of the strike zone
  - Is fouled by the batter when there is less than two strikes
  - Is bunted foul
    - Batter is out and ball is dead if the batter bunts foul on the third strike
  - Touches the batter's person as the batter strikes at it
    - Dead Ball is called and batter is NOT awarded first base
  - Touches the batter in flight in the strike zone
  - Becomes a foul tip
    - Ball is LIVE and in play
- The **Strike Zone** – is the space over home plate which is between the batters armpits and the top of the knees when the batter assumes a natural stance. The umpire shall determine the strike zone according to the batter's usual stance when the batter swings at a pitch.
- A **Tag** – is the action of a fielder in touching a base with the body while holding the ball securely and firmly in the hand or glove; or touching a runner with the ball or with the hand or glove holding the ball, while holding the ball securely and firmly in the hand or the glove.
- A **tag out** – the act of a fielder, with possession of the ball, to touch a base from which a runner did not tag up (below) on a caught, fly ball.
- To **Tag – Up** is to retouch or remain on the runner's time-of-pitch base until (after) the ball either lands in fair territory or is first touched by a fielder.
- A **tail pad** – a (usually) removable section of material at the front of a catcher's chest protector that provides additional protection to the groin area. Required for boys baseball.
- A **throat dangler** – a light, piece of plastic that is attached from the bottom of the catcher and umpire face mask that protects the throat from being hit by the ball/pitch. Required for all baseball and softball catchers.

- **Throwing Lane** – refers to the general path of a thrown ball by one fielder to another fielder. Umpires need to anticipate the throwing lane of each play to make sure they are not hit by the ball.
- **“Tighten the Strike Zone”** – is when the Home Plate Umpire reduces the size (height and width) of a strike. Also referred to as “squeezing” the strike zone.
- **“Time”** – is the announcement by the umpire of a legal interruption of play, during which the ball is dead.
- **Touch** – to touch a player or umpire is to touch any part of the player or the umpire’s body, clothing or equipment.
- A **trapped fly ball** – when the ball makes contact with a foreign object other than or in addition to the fielder’s glove (typically the ground) while attempting a catch on a fly ball. This is not ruled a legal catch and thus no out is called or recorded.
- **Umpire Crew** – the team of umpires assigned to a specific game. Affectionately referred to as “the Blue Crew!”
- **Warm up** – The time allotted to a new or returning pitcher prior to commencing his/her first pitch in the game or to start a new inning. A new pitcher is given one minute or eight pitches for warm-up. A pitcher who enters a new inning after having pitched previously is given up to five pitches to start the new inning.
- **“You (I) (We) Got Nothin”** –the situation wherein an umpire lacks the evidence to call a rule violation.