

St. Louis ASA – Plate Mechanics – Focus On The Umpire’s “Routine”

- 1) Relaxed Position: Umpire observes all action of the game from behind the catcher (18-24 Inches) – their body square to the pitching plate. Mask on, arms at side, mindful of the game.
- 2) Going into “Stance” - Step in with foot closest to catcher 1st. Toe should be near the midline of the plate. Then, step in with the foot behind the batter 2nd so that you have a “Heel – Toe” Alignment.
 - a) Heal of foot behind batter should be in front of the Toe behind the catcher
 - b) Umpire should try to achieve “Good Pelvic Alignment – GPA” (Belt Buckle Pointed to the OUTSIDE Corner of the plate).
 - c) Distance from the catcher – some variance, but should not touch them when going set.



- 3) “Set Position”
 - a) Start in the SLOT
 - b) Ear nearest catcher on the inside edge of the plate (when set)
 - c) Remain out of the perimeter of the strike zone
 - d) GPA
 - e) Open to the outside pitch
 - f) Allows you to track the pitch to glove/ground



- 4) Going “Set in Stance”
 - a) Bend at knees – not at waist
 - b) Knees over toes
 - c) Slight tilt of umpire’s trunk – forward (work to keep back straight)
 - d) Rotate Head/Eyes to pitcher
 - e) Hand placement - comfortable
(Refrain from “Locking Your Arms On Knees”)



5) The Pitch & Call

- a) Tracking – pitcher’s hand all the way to the catcher’s glove/ground
- b) SLIGHT movement ONLY – guided by nose
- c) TIMING – Seeing, processing, deciding, and then...
- d) Verbal – Make for both BALL & STRIKE (Verbalized in the DOWN/SET Position)



- e) “BALL” – low tone, made on each pitch caught by the catcher that is not a strike.
- f) “STRIKE” – forceful tone, made on each pitch that “contacts” the zone and is not swung at.

6) The Signal (Strike)

- a. Keep feet “set in place” – come to a standing/upright position
- b. Once standing – quickly make a routine strike signal (3rd Strike signal when appropriate)
- c. Drop arms to sides



7) Stepping Back – After making the pitch call (Ball or Strike), and standing upright –

- a) Foot behind the batter – moves first
- b) Foot behind the catcher – moves second
- c) Return to Relaxed Position: (Umpire observes all action of the game from behind the catcher [18-24 Inches] – their body square to the pitching plate. Mask on, arms at side, mindful of the game)

8) Repeat throughout the entire game!!! Work (Practice) to become efficient with movements. The “Robotic” look is NOT desired! Try to develop a smooth transitional movement. Once mastered, this can help plate umpires become much more consistent when calling a game. Routines help umpires remain focused and refrain from getting flustered during tough moments of a game.

Additional Plate Mechanics:

Check Swing:

- a) Remove Mask
- b) Request help from partner (optional – if unsure)
 - a. 2U System – Wherever they are on field
 - b. 3U System – Open umpire
- c) Verbalize – “Swing?” or “Did they go?” (Avoid Gender Verbiage)



Giving The Count: Raise both arms above the head indicating the number of balls with consecutive fingers on the left hand and strike with consecutive fingers on the right hand.

- a) When...
 - a. Asked
 - b. A play is made at a base
 - c. A delay occurs during the game
 - d. The next pitch could result in the batter changing (careful not to overuse).
- b) Verbal...
 - a. Give both the number of balls and strikes verbally each time the count is given.
- c) Rotate your hands, NOT your body, slowly... so everyone can see the count.
- d) Giving the count should aid in the flow of the game, not hinder it.

