



Sportsmanship -- Appealing, Protesting, and Clarifying a Call

Sportsmanship is an important part of our organization because we believe we should strive to develop strong character in our children by teaching fair play, discipline, and mannerly behavior. Managers and coaches as the adults in our Youth Leagues should be the ones who are setting the example for strong character in their players. With that in mind:

- It is unacceptable for a coach or manager to charge onto the field, charge at an umpire, or start shouting at an umpire.
- It is unacceptable for a coach or manager to incite fans (parents) or players against the umpires or the other team.

Managers and coaches verbally abusing umpires, inciting players or fans, or showing disrespect to the umpires may be ejected and/or suspended.

We also have the following rules for each of our Youth Leagues that addresses sportsmanship and prescribes penalties in addition to those specified in the Official Baseball Rules and the Little League Playing Rules:

Minor League Rule 11.01.21

Juvenile League Rule 12.01.21

Young Cadet and Cadet League Rule 13.01.21

When an umpire makes a call that you think is incorrect, subject to appeal, or open to protest, there is a correct way to go about it. This does not include charging onto the field, verbally abusing the umpire, or inciting fans and players. Staying cool and acting correctly will go a lot further in persuading an umpire to go the extra mile and consult with his partner, review his rulebook, or weigh the situation, than acting like a ruffian.

Appeal: An appeal is an act of a fielder in claiming violation of the rules by the offensive team (Rule 2.00). On appeal plays, umpires are instructed not to mention the violation unless it is properly appealed. An example is a missed base. An umpire will accept an appeal if he saw the violation and the appeal was made correctly. Judgment calls (e.g., safe/out, fair/foul, or strike/ball) are not subject to appeal. However, a “checked” swing may be appealed, but only by the catcher or the team manager. The most common appeal plays are when a runner misses a base or leaves early on a tag-up situation, or a “checked” swing:

On a missed base or leaving early the correct way to appeal is to tag the correct base with the ball and say, “Appeal” or clearly and unambiguously indicate to the umpire that you are appealing. In some circumstances, the player may be tagged. (NOTE: You get one chance at an appeal. If you incorrectly appeal a play, you cannot appeal it a second time.)

A “checked” swing may be appealed only by the catcher or the team manager. It cannot be appealed by any other defensive player, an assistant coach, the pitcher, a player in the dugout or a parent or fan. Under Rule 9.02 (c) Comment, a “checked” swing may only be appealed if the umpire calls the pitch a ball, but not when the pitch is called a strike. Managers and catchers may not argue the call of a ball or strike on the pretense they are asking for information about a “checked” swing. Under Rule 9.02 (c) Comment, an appeal is made by the catcher pointing to the field umpire and asking the plate umpire to ask the field umpire for his judgment. If the manager wishes to appeal, he will call “time” to approach the plate umpire and request that he ask the field umpire.

Without a field umpire, you will have to be satisfied with whatever is the final call by the plate umpire. There is absolutely no need whatsoever to raise your voice or rush onto the field on the appeal. It is totally regular baseball.

Protest: A protest is made by the team's manager (never a player) to the plate umpire when he contends that the umpire's decision is in violation of the rules. Judgment calls may not be protested. Once again, there is no need to raise your voice or charge onto the field. Ask for "time" and calmly go to the umpire who made the call and ask for clarification (in Rule 9.02, this is referred to as an "appeal"). When an umpire receives an appeal, the umpire may after calling "time" (if "time" is not already out) either take a few minutes to review the written Playing Rules in his possession, if he thinks it useful, or he may confer with his partner, if he has one, to assure himself he has made the correct ruling. If he still believes he has not violated a rule, he will then announce his final ruling. If after receiving the umpire's final ruling, you believe the decision is in violation of the rules, you may announce to the plate umpire that you are officially protesting the game. You must explain what rule you contend has been violated. The umpire will announce to both managers that the game is under protest. That is it. The issue is over.

Example: Fair ball passes the 2nd baseman and then hits the runner behind him. At the time, there was no other infielder who had a play on the ball. The umpire calls interference, the runner out, and awards 1st base to the batter/runner. The offensive manager calls "time" and asks the plate umpire for clarification. He tells the umpire that since the ball passed an infielder and no other infielder had a play on the ball, the call was not correct. The umpire decides not to change the call. The offensive manager tells the umpire that he is protesting the call. If the umpire stands by his call, he will announce the game is under protest and note the exact game situation. In this situation, there is no reason to charge in, yell and scream or use verbal abuse. The protest will be upheld because Rule 7.08 (f) was not correctly applied.

Example: In a Juvenile League game, the 1st baseman tags the safety base (orange) instead of the white base. The umpire calls the out. The offensive manager calls time and requests clarification of the call from the umpire noting that the wrong base was tagged. The umpire confers with his partner and changes the call to safe. There is no longer a need to protest. Now the defensive manager comes in and asks for clarification. The umpire tells him that the wrong base was tagged and accordingly the runner is safe. The defensive manager tells him that he cannot change his call. The umpire says, "Yes I can," and walks away. The situation is now over. If the defensive manager continues to argue, the umpire should warn him that he is now in violation of the rules and in danger of being ejected. The manager turns away and tells the players and fans that the umpire is biased/blind/ignorant/cheating, etc. The umpire ejects the manager. Under IAB Rule 11.01.21, IAB Rule 12.01.21, and IAB Rule 13.01.21 the manager may be suspended.

Arguing a call: This should never happen, especially not on a close play. The closer the play, the less it should be argued. However, if you feel that the play was not close or the umpire missed something (like a dropped ball or a swipe tag) and you would like the umpire to clarify the call or to ask for a second opinion, you can ask politely for him to reconsider his call or to consult with his partner, if he has one. The umpire does not have to reconsider his call or agree to ask his partner for help. He can stand by his call. There is no recourse, but to accept the call and leave the field or go to your position. The umpire has gone out of his way in your favor by listening to your contention or consulting with his partner. There is no need to charge into the field or at the umpire to argue the call. That will leave you subject to ejection and suspension.

In conclusion:

Under no circumstances should a coach or manager charge onto the field or at the umpire to appeal, protest or argue a call. Under no circumstances should a coach or manager incite the players or fans against the umpire or the other team. Under no circumstances should a coach or manager physically or verbally assault an umpire. These are grounds for ejection and suspension and in some cases forfeit.

If there is more than one umpire, a coach or manager is never go to the umpire's partner to request clarification; only to the umpire that made the call. Umpires will never overcall a partner unless the partner asks for help and even then, the umpire who originally made the call will be the one to uphold it or reverse it.