



THE UMPIRE WEEKLY

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HIT-A-THON

Don't forget to save the date!

The 1st Annual Battle Ground Little League Hit-a-Thon is Saturday, May 19th right here at our fields.

It's going to be a fun family day at the ball park with games, food and fun!

Remember, this isn't something that you have to fund yourselves... Grandma Jean in Florida or Grandpa Joe in Arizona can sponsor your player online.

So, this week we had some rather interesting situations come up. I didn't get to witness most of them because I was with the Majors Softball team at the Spring Swing Tournament. They did a great job, by the way; finished 3rd only losing two games and both games were very close and could have gone either way. We're very proud of them. Now, on to our topics.

CALLING TIME FOR SUBSTITUTIONS

The first situation that was rather strange was when a child player apparently called time, walked out to the mound and made a pitching change. I've never heard of such a thing. This is just not allowed. Maybe the manager was trying to teach the young man some leadership or team management; I'm not sure. If that's the case, great. I would encourage coaches and managers to teach and instill in their players those traits and skills; however, that should be done at practice and off the field. Not during live games.

Rule 5.10 gives us the rules for when an umpire shall call time. There are essentially eight reasons given for calling time and rendering the ball dead. Rule 5.10(d) says, "The ball becomes dead when an umpire calls "Time." The Umpire-in-Chief shall call "Time" - when a manager requests "Time" for a substitution, or for a conference with one of the players;"

The interpretation is that only the manager may call time and make a substitution. As an umpire, we should not allow a child to make this transaction on the field. Also, managers must request, and be granted, "time" before they leave the dugout.

JUDGEMENT CALLS

Everyone who watches Major League Baseball has seen a player or manager arguing an umpire's call. Whether it be a play at a base or the plate; or whether a pitch was a ball or strike. We expect that in baseball. Even at the Little League level, a little grumbling or groaning at an umpire's calls is to be expected. It IS baseball after all. But taken too far it is not acceptable. In fact, arguing judgement calls at all is an ejectable offense.

Rule 9.01(d) says, "Each umpire has authority to disqualify any player, coach, manager, or substitute for objecting to decisions or for unsportsmanlike conduct or language, and to eject such disqualified person from the playing field." Rule 9.02(a) says, "Any umpire's decision which involves judgment, such as, but not limited to, whether a batted ball is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or a ball, or whether a runner is safe or out, is final. No player,



manager, coach, or substitute shall object to any such judgment decisions.” The interpretation is that if a player, coach or manager argues any decision that involves an umpire’s judgment they are subject to ejection from the game. In fact, the Little League umpire training manual, which is called the Rules Instruction Manual states in the Instructor’s Comments section for Rule 9.02(a), “Arguing on BALLS AND STRIKES should not and will not be condoned. Teams should be warned that if they start for the plate to protest the calls they could face an ejection.” The Instructor’s Comments also state, “There is probably no other rule more important to an umpire. Judgment calls are final.” Any call involving an umpire’s judgment cannot be argued and if they are argued then Rule 9.01(d) reminds us that each umpire can eject a player, coach or manager for “objecting to decisions.”

Just a couple of quick examples to look at.

One: whether a player is safe or out is a judgment call and cannot be argued or protested. If a manager insists on protesting the game, let him. Mark the book and play on. He will quickly find out that the Protest Committee will rule in favor of the umpire because judgment calls cannot be argued.

Two: The Infield Fly. Refer to number one. An infield fly is a judgment call. Do not assume that an umpire “missed” the call. The umpire must adjudge whether the play required “ordinary effort.” If he or she adjudged that it took or would take more than ordinary effort to make the play, he or she does not call the infield fly. Judgment.

INTER-LEAGUE RULES

One final comment. If you are a coach, manager or umpire... even if you’re not and you are solely a spectator, it is highly recommended that you read and become familiar with the Inter-League Rules. These are rules that are not necessarily covered by the Little League Rulebook or where the rulebook allows for local leagues to choose whether or not to adopt a particular rule. The Inter-League Rules are voted on and adopted by the President of each local league in the District.

They cover some general game rules, some rules specific to each level of play and time limits. Every local league in the District is bound by these playing rules for every game whether they are playing a team from a different league or from within their own league. The Inter-League Rules are not optional. They are available on our website and you can access them by [clicking here](#), or you can find them posted in each of our dugouts.

I mention this because several times this season there have been situations that arose that are covered by the Inter-League rules but, too often one of the teams is not aware of those rules. Typically, we find that teams visiting are often not aware of or not abiding by the Inter-League Rules. I would like to make sure that our coaches, managers, umpires and spectators are aware of these rules so that we don’t embarrassing ourselves by arguing about them.

As always, thank you for reading and...

Contact Us

Dan Boyett

Umpire-in-Chief

Battle Ground Little League

www.bgll.org

PLAY BALL!