

LRKA Umpire Mechanics Manual

For use by Umps in the LRKA

www.lrkickball.com



Purpose: The development of the LRKA umpiring duties that every team in the LRKA is responsible for during the season and post-season.

- A – General Mechanics
- B – Pregame Mechanics
- C – Plate Mechanics
- D – Base Mechanics
- E – Closing Duties
- F – Newer / Inexperienced Umpires

A – General Mechanics

Umpires are communicators. Every move we make on the ball field is saying something to someone. Mechanics is a very important part of umpiring. It is basically where you go when something happens. It is what people see. What people see affects what they believe, how they feel and how they will act. As an umpire we want people to believe in our calls and feel confident in our ability. Lead by example. Call every game just like you would want your games called.

Always know what your body is saying. Send the message you want to send. Let the team know that you are taking this as serious as you would want someone to take your game serious. Always move with a purpose. Never saunter or stroll. Make all signals crisp and strong.

This manual depicts standard mechanics of where to stand and where you should be on certain plays. This manual will help you learn the position that an umpire should be in and will help you kind of understand that being in position to make a call will make your job a whole lot easier. Have purpose and direction as you move about the field. If you don't know where you want to be, then it is guaranteed that you will never get there.

Mechanics is being in the best place at the right time. If we are in the right place at the right time we greatly increase good judgment because we can see what happened from the best possible view. Also we cannot be in the right place at the right time if we don't show a little hustle. We have a huge area to cover.

Some General Guidelines for Umpires

- **KNOW THE RULES OF THE OF THE LRKA!** They are similar to the rules of other sports, but there many rules unique to both Kickball and to the LRKA
- **KNOW YOUR UMP SCHEDULE!**
- Always watch the ball
- You always want the base, runner, and fielder in front of you
- You want to be approximately 15 feet from a force play. You need the big picture
- You want to be approximately 7 feet from a tag or close play
- You want to be set for every play
- Adjust your position, change as the play changes
- Arrive at the play before it happens
- **Call in your own area!**
- Support your partners
- Use strong verbal calls
- Don't retreat from a call. That's a negative movement and does not show commitment to your call
- Hold your signal long enough to show conviction to the call
- Not sure on a call, get together and talk about it alone, as a group, away from coaches and players

******RARELY** a play happens where the home umpire should overrule one of his partners.

B – Pre game Mechanics

- Arrive at your game site at least 15 minutes prior to your scheduled game time.
- Prior to arrival make sure you have a pen/pencil, something to write on like a clipboard, umpire score sheet and a watch or phone to make sure you start on time.
- After the previous game is finished, call both captains to home plate for the pre-game conference.
- **Pre-game conference should consist of the following:**
 - Lineup exchange (check and see if anyone has to take outs and/or pickup players)
 - Inform them that the home umpire will rule on tag up plays whether the runner tagged or not.
 - Inform them on how they expect the captains, players and fans associated with their teams to act and that the ZTP is in effect.
 - Explain to them that the home umpire is the final authority and will only overrule a clear missed call. The home umpire will normally accept the call of the field umpire.
 - Check game ball from home team and make sure both teams

agree on it.

- Remind captains that only they are to discuss calls with you and that excessive trash talk will not be permitted.
- **START THE GAME ON TIME.** Make sure you have a clock so you know when the game began and when to call final inning.

C – Plate Mechanics

- Be set and in position before the ball is pitched. Your position should be **STANDING**, off the fence, 10 to 13 feet to the side and back from the plate in a position to be able to rule on a kick line infraction and able to move to see down each line to rule whether ball is fair or foul.
- The fair/foul lines are home umpire's responsibility.
- Do not allow yourself to be distracted by engaging in conversations with people in the stands, using electronic devices, or wearing headphones.
- After the ball is in play move up to the first base side foul line and watch the play develop. Rule on fly balls whether caught or not caught. Be alert on close plays at first base in case the field umpire needs help on a ruling.
- On calls at third base when there are only 2 umpires, you need to get down that line and rule on those plays.
- On plays at the plate, position yourself in the field of play watching the ball as it comes in. Shade either towards first base or third base side of the field depending on where the ball is coming from.
- Rule on all tag ups on fly balls. Position yourself where you can try and see both the catch and the tag.
- On all calls that your field umpires make, do not make any kind of safe or out movement depending on what you think you have seen. It is tough to explain a call at third when you are 60 feet away and you have a field umpire 7 feet away. As soon as you make your signal, it is almost a guarantee that someone has seen you and they are going to call you on it.
- Close calls at the bases are normally left for the field umpires because they are the ones in position to make that call.

General Guidelines for Plate Umpires

- Plate umpire has all fair/foul decisions
- Plate umpire has infractions on the kick line
- Stand behind the calls your field umpires make unless it was a **CLEAR** missed call
- Control all players, coaches and fans and take action if necessary
- Game management is the key to running a smooth game
- Be approachable

D – Base Mechanics

- With no runner on first base, the first base position is approximately 15 feet beyond first base and 1 yard in foul territory
- The top priority for the 3rd base umpire before and during the pitch is making sure all fielders are behind the pitch line from first base to third base and they stay behind line until the ball is in play. If there is no 3rd base umpire, this responsibility falls on the first base umpire, so position yourself accordingly.
- With a runner on first, position yourself in between first base and second base just forward of the base line and ready to make a call at second or first. Be careful not to block the view of the fielders.
- If there is a play at first, move into the field of play no more than 90 degrees off the line and in a position to see the fielders foot on the bag.
- Remember: on a force out, position yourself no more than 15 feet from the base.
- Always follow the ball to the base. When the ball gets to the base, PAUSE, and then make your call.
- When calling with just 2 umpires, the home plate umpire has the call at third base unless a runner is advancing home. If that is the case you need to get over to third base to rule on any calls over there.
- Never make a call at third base from the right field edge of the grass. There is no way you can see that play from that far away. Watch the play in case there is an appeal and only give input if the home umpire asks for it and tell only in an umpire private discussion.
- Help home umpire with balls that travel down the first base line and help rule whether they are fair or foul. Do not verbalize the call. That is the home umpire's duty.
- Any tag out plays or close throw at the runner plays try and get at least 7 feet from the base in a set position.

General Base Mechanics

- Be set before the pitch
- Recognize the possibilities of the next play and plan what you would do in certain situations
- Do not echo foul/fair balls that the home umpire calls
- Make your call and stick with what you call
- If you need assistance, stop and ask your fellow umpires in a private conference
- Be at the play before the play gets to the base.
- Always have a pause before you shout out your call.

E- Closing

Never put yourself at a disadvantage and appear lazy or unknowledgeable of the rules. Remember whether you are calling with 2 or 3 umpires, stay in your area of responsibility. Have confidence in your fellow umpires. Umpire the game the same way you would want your game umpired. Hustle but don't hurry. Be approachable. Have confidence in your call and stand by it! Have fun!!!!!!

F- Newer / Inexperienced Umpires

Prior to your scheduled game time, communicate with a league rep or someone that is knowledgeable of the rules and ask them could you come to them during the game if you have a rule question or you are not sure how to enforce a rule or something like that. If that person is not a league rep, let them know that they have no say so in the ruling on the field that you just want a clarification if needed.

Remember newer/novice umpires, you have to have the confidence in whatever call you make and cannot let anyone influence you in any way. Learn how to control your teams and come out to the field with the confidence that you can umpire a big game if called upon to do so. Umpiring a game can be just as fun as the two teams that are playing each other. It is your job to have good game management.

If you make a questionable call and you get heckled a little, remember that there is another call to make on the next play or the play after that. Do not get down on yourself because someone said something you may not like. Your one questionable call did not cost either team the game.