

The background features a faint, stylized pattern of a cricket ball, with its characteristic curved lines and segments visible in a light, semi-transparent shade against a dark grey background.

United Umpires Training

Getting Dressed for The Plate

- Long Tights on the bottom
- Long socks
- Jockstrap system
- Pants or Shinguards/Shoes first
 - Parking lot = minimal time in tights
- Ball Bags
 - 1 or 2? Under a 34 inch waist, use 1 unless its cold
- Plate Brush/indicator
 - In ball bag pocket – keep pants clean
- Chest protector
 - Over compression shirt
- Uniform Shirt
 - Tucked into tights
 - Use flex belt
- Final Check – Gig Line/Hat

Building a Plate Stance

- **What is the goal of a plate stance?**
 - Put your head in the correct position
 - **What is the correct position?**
 - Able to see the release of the ball through the ball being received
 - AND able to perceive the ball in space over the plate
 - AND in a safe place
- **The Slot**
 - The area between the batter and catcher
 - Put your nose somewhere just off the inside corner of the plate

Building a Plate Stance

- **Heel/Toe or Heel/Instep**
 - Describes the optimal relationship we have to the catcher
 - Trail foot dropped slightly back to give catcher space
 - Slot foot facing forward
 - Trail foot slightly angled to allow knee to bend forward
- **Head height**
 - There are 3 ways we lower our head
 - Widen feet – wider means less mobile
 - Squat – more squat means more strain
 - Lean – not enough lean keeps your head too far back
 - Goal is to have our chin somewhere near the top of the catcher's head

Building a Plate Stance

- **Getting set**
 - The goal is to be set and **STILL** prior to the release of the pitch
 - This means we need to move sharply from A to B
 - Once you are set, your head should remain still
- **Hands – what should we do with them?**
 - Slot hand on or behind knee
 - Trail arm resting on trail leg
 - Hands can be used to **BRACE** yourself and keep your head still

Tracking v. Timing

- **Tracking**

- Track w eyes – not head
- Save your decision until you see ball received
- THIS is proper use of eyes when it comes to plate work

- **The fallacy of 'Timing'**

- Timing can be faked
- Proper use of eyes PRODUCES timing
- Self check – consistency of timing on all pitches

Adjusting with the Catcher

- **Catcher moves outside**
 - Very Simple – we stay still
 - Stay in a safe spot – many balls are fouled straight back
 - Keep your view of corner as consistent as possible
- **Catcher moves forward**
 - This is the biggest fault from plate umpires, we let the catcher move forward after we are set
 - Stop making the bucket training mistake
 - Adjustments forward can be a simple shuffle

Adjusting with the Catcher/Batter

- Catcher moves inside/batter crowds plate
 - When your view of the release/strike zone is compromised, you must be prepared to adjust
 - 2 options
 - Lower under the elbow of the hitter – look for the tunnel – focus on timing
 - Higher over top of the catcher – more dangerous and less view of bottom of zone

Voice/Signal/After

- Signals should be the final part of the process – Respond vs react
- Once we decide the pitch was a strike after proper use of eyes – we go immediately into our strike call
- Whether calling ball or strike – moving our indicator wheel becomes an automatic part of the process
- After the call – step back, keep your head up and focused on the pitcher and then step back in and be ready for the next pitch

At Home – Plate Fundamentals

- **Tape on the floor**
 - Heel Toe
- **Tape on the mirror**
 - Head height and A to B
- **Ball of socks on the bed**
 - Tracking w your eyes
- **Camera for mechanics**

Checked Swings

- **Plate Umpire**
 - **STAY WITH CLOSE PITCHES**
 - **Advanced mechanic – shift focus to bat on pitches that aren't close**
 - **Bat passes plate = swing**
 - **Slot arm signal**
 - **Timing of appeal**
 - **Appealing regardless of base umpire position**

Checked Swings

- **Base Umpire**

- Base umpire can **AND MUST** be appealed to at any time/position
- Focus on hitter early – once ball is released
- Seeing the barrel = hard
- Seeing the batter's actions = less hard
- How batter's swing – different types of swings
- Signal matches situation
 - ICE
 - Intense, Close, Exciting

The Strike Zone

- **Building a strike zone**
 - Calling balls and strikes is hard – go easy on yourself
 - Trust your proper use of eyes
 - Reduce outside influences
 - Make up calls
 - Being afraid of people yelling at you
 - Wanting to exact revenge because someone yelled at you
 - Cut The Rope (Kurt Weidner – TSEUA)

Building a Strike Zone

- **Seek out feedback from reliable sources**
 - Partners
 - Catchers
 - Video
 - A camera set up behind/next to you can be your best friend as a new umpire
 - Be aggressive calling strikes, but don't go looking for them

The Modern Strike Zone

- **Tight and Tall – result of TrackMan and Video**
- **The Wrong Approach**
 - Calling a lot of balls
- **The Right Approach**
 - Being aggressive **ONLY** inside our box

Why do we miss pitches *INSIDE* our defined zone?

- Missed spot
- Pitches within the same AB that challenge opposite parts of the zone
- Distraction from checked swings
- Squeezing the zone for the catcher
- Poor Presentation – when is a strike not a strike?

Why do we miss pitches **OUTSIDE our defined zone?**

- **Bad umpiring advice like – “strikes and outs” or “find a strike to start the inning”**
- **Back-to-back borderline pitches that we **KNOW** aren’t strikes**
- **A pitcher slowly working back towards the plate**
- **Helping a pitcher that is struggling**
- **Pitches breaking towards the plate**

Dealing With Catchers

- **Train your catcher where your zone is**
 - Give them information and consistency
- **Understand the modern trend in catching**

A Disclaimer About Strike Zones

- There are certainly situations where the competitive nature of the game is compromised, and you should “manage the game” - Just don’t start the day thinking about “Finding strikes” or you’ll quickly go outside your zone and erode your credibility

System Mechanics

- Starting Positions
 - No Runner's On – A Position – Use First basemen
 - R1 – B Position
 - R1 and R3 – B Position
 - R1 and R2 – C Position
 - R2 and R3 – C Position
 - R3 Only – C Position
 - Bases Loaded – C Position
- Pause – Read – React with no runners on
 - Base umpire goes out – plate umpire picks up runner
- What is a rotation?
 - The plate umpire moving IMMEDIATELY towards third base to take a play on a runner advancing to third base
 - Recognize when the rotation is OFF

System Mechanics

- **When do we rotate – 3 situations in 2 umpire system**
 - R1 only – base hits to OF
 - R1/R3 – base hits to OF
 - R1/R2 – Caught fly balls
- **Key for successful rotations**
 - Always assume you are going to have to rotate as soon as the ball is hit
 - There is only one ROTATION situation in 2 umpire system when we shouldn't move up third base line immediately – fair foul decision down RF line
 - EVERYTHING ELSE – start to move immediately while reading play

System Mechanics

- **Where to we go for a play at third on a rotation?**
 - 2 options
 - Moving into cutout is the safer option
 - Staying outside is the option that will give you a better look at the play
- **What do we do in (almost) all other situations?**
 - **STAND STILL!**