

Section 3

Signals

- A — Standard Umpire Signals
- B — Umpire-to-Umpire Signals

A — Standard Umpire Signals

Umpires are communicators, and signals are how umpires communicate. You must have good signals to be a good umpire. The universal language of umpiring is body language, and the words of this language are signals. Signals are a form of sign language. In sign language, only the hands are used. In signal language, the whole body is used. Signal language is designed to be understood immediately by anyone at any ball park.

Every signal initiates from a set or ready set position. The feet are planted in a solid, wide base at least shoulder width apart. In order for a signal to convey its message, it must be seen. The first move before giving any signal is to, without moving your feet, come to a full standing position. Nearly all signals are given up or away from the body for the express purpose of being seen.

Once a signal is seen, everyone who sees it must understand what it means. Signals must always be informative, precise, dignified, structured and calculated. Signals are designed to convey strength, confidence and authority. Any movement while giving a signal is always forward at the play. The signal is held long enough to convey conviction, then the arms and hands are brought back into the body, thus completing the signal, before moving to the next position.

Signals are precious and should not be used unnecessarily. The less a signal is seen the more effective it is when used. Do not draw attention to yourself by overusing or needlessly using any signal. The play does not dictate the structure of a signal. The play only dictates the emphasis of the signal or the verbal accompaniment.

Do not echo a partner's call. If there is no play, a call or signal is not needed. Some examples of when a signal is not needed are (but not limited to):

- The ball clearly goes over the fielder's head or bounces in front of her
- A pitch is fouled directly back to the backstop or fouled over the backstop or over the sides of the backstop

- The ball is overthrown or completely missed by the intended receiver
- A runner obtains a base or home before the ball arrives
- While the batter is getting set, pitcher is showing no indication of quick pitching

OUT

From a standing position with feet shoulder width apart, pull the left hand/arm into the midsection of the body. Extend the right arm straight up with the palm of the hand facing the ear. Bring the right forearm slightly forward while clenching it into a fist (this is the Hammer). The right upper arm and forearm should be at a 90 degree angle or greater. Verbally call "Out." Bring the right arm back into the body before moving the feet or moving to the next position.

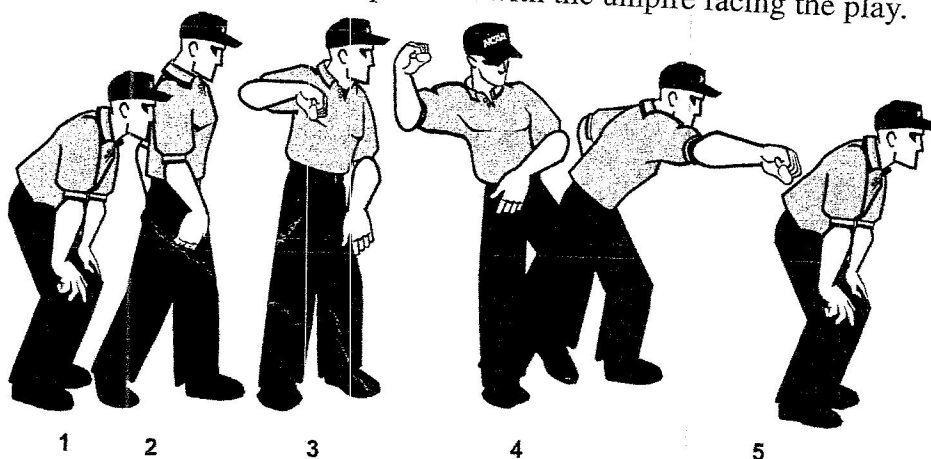
Note: Left handed umpires may reverse this and use the left hand to signal outs.



OVERHAND OUT

With feet at least shoulder width apart, step at the play with the left foot. Bring the right foot over and behind the left foot while raising the right arm high in the air. Plant the right foot and step forward again with the left foot while bringing the right arm over the top of the head in a throwing motion with a closed fist. Just as the throwing motion is completed, bring the right foot forward, in line with the left foot and end in a set position. A verbal call of "Out" (usually drawn out- ooouutt) accompanies the signal usually starting when the arm is directly overhead and finishing with the thrown fist. (reverse if left handed)

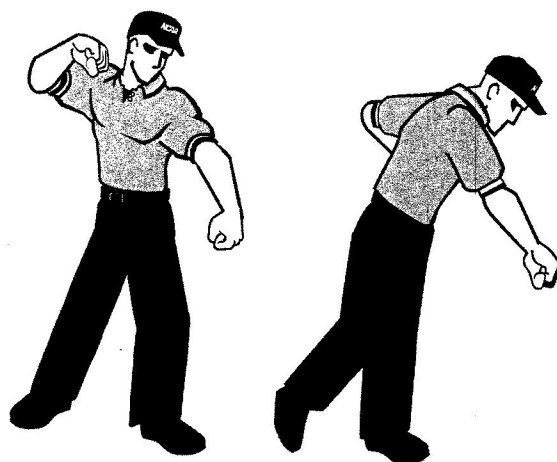
It is important to have complete control of the body during and at the end of the signal. The signal should end in a balanced position with the umpire facing the play.



PUNCH OUT

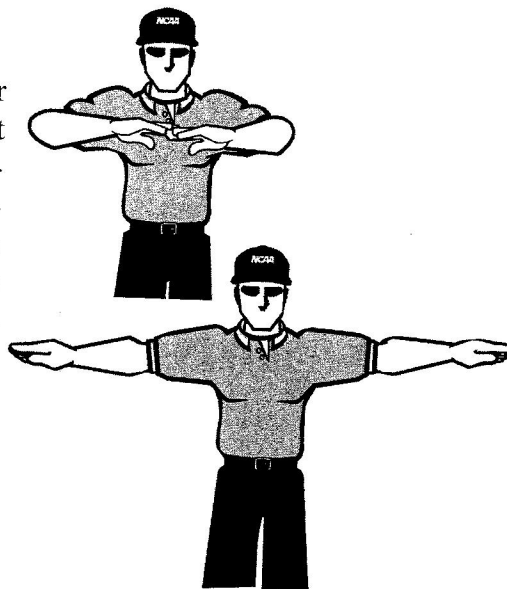
Use this signal as a sell out when you are too close to the play to do a full overhand out. It can also be used if a play warrants more than a routine out but less than a full overhand out.

From a standing position with feet shoulder width apart, step back with the right foot and punch forward with the right arm at about shoulder height. The hand is in a fist. This technique brings you no closer to the play than when you started. The initial stepping back is overshadowed and compensated for by the strength and forward thrust of the punch. (reverse if left handed)



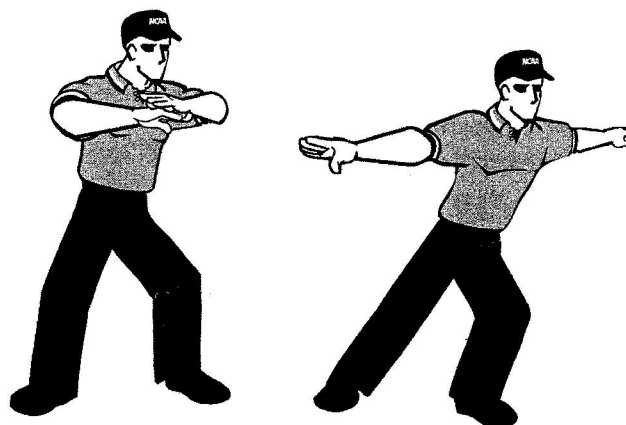
SAFE - NO CATCH - NO TAG - NO INFRACTION

From a standing position with feet shoulder width apart, bring both arms into the chest at shoulder level with the palms of the hands facing down. Extend both arms straight out horizontally with the palms down. Do not have your hands in fists. Verbally call "Safe," "No Catch," "No Tag." Bring both arms back into the body (similar to a Ready Set position) before moving the feet or moving to the next position.



SELL SAFE

From a standing position with feet shoulder width apart, bring both arms into the chest at shoulder level, parallel to the ground, with the palms of the hands facing down. Take a step at the play with the left foot while extending both arms straight out horizontally with the palms down. Loudly call "Safe." Complete the signal by bringing the right foot forward on a line with the left foot. Bring both arms back into the body (similar to a Ready Set position) before moving the feet or moving to the next position.



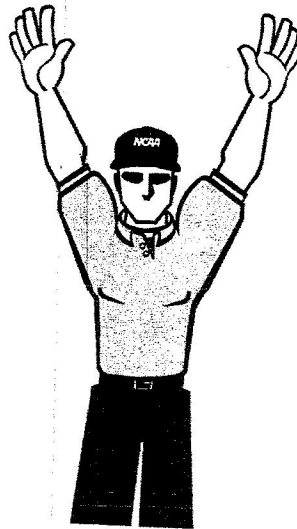
DEAD BALL - FOUL BALL - NO PITCH

From a standing position with feet shoulder width apart, raise both arms straight up with palms forward. Arms should be at about a 35 to 40 degree angle from the body. Verbally call: "Dead Ball," "Foul Ball," or "No Pitch." If the ball is close to the line, the feet should be straddling the line. When the plate umpire signals "No Pitch", the signal may be accompanied by movement to the open side of the plate for better visibility.



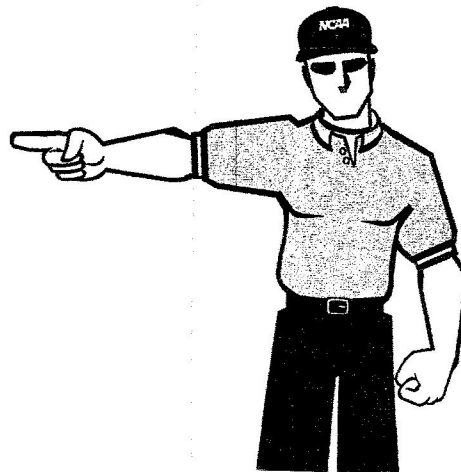
TIME

From a standing position with feet shoulder width apart, raise both arms straight up with palms forward. Arms should be at about a 25 to 30 degree angle from the body. Verbally call: "Time."



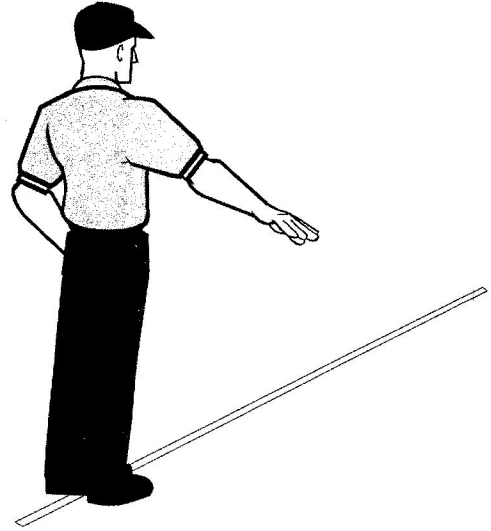
FAIR BALL

From a standing position with feet shoulder width apart, extend the arm closest to the field horizontally at shoulder height and point, with either open hand palm forward or a finger, to fair ground. Do not make a verbal call. If the ball is close to the line, the feet should be straddling the line.



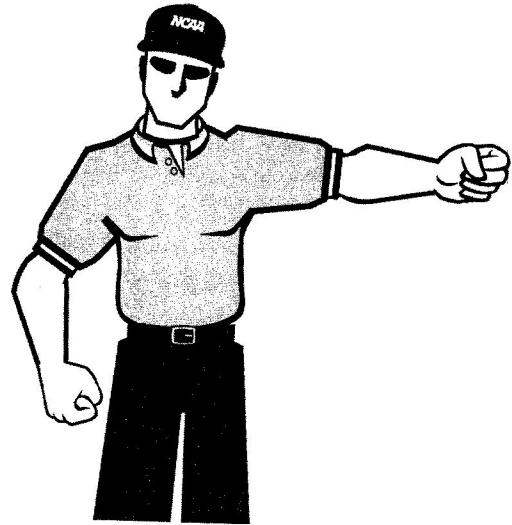
FAIR/FOUL INDICATOR

From a standing position with feet shoulder width apart, straddling the line, extend the right or left arm (depending on the location on the field & status of the ball) at a 45 degree angle away from the body with the hand (palm forward) or finger pointing at the ground. Use only when the ball is close to the line and is not caught on the first touch. Use the indicator only for balls that are bobbled and therefore have their fair/foul status established but are not yet caught or dropped. If the first touch (determining fair/foul) is simultaneous with a catch, the ball has no fair/foul status (because it is caught) and this signal is not necessary, nor do you have time to give it.



DELAYED DEAD BALL

Extend the left arm straight out at shoulder height, parallel to the ground. The hand is in a fist with the fingers of the fist facing forward.



INFIELD FLY

Fully extend the right arm above the head with the hand in a clenched fist. Verbalize: "Infield fly. The batter is out." If the ball is close to a line say: "Infield fly. The batter is out, if fair."

The plate umpire is responsible for making this call. Once the plate umpire makes the call, it should be echoed by the bases umpires using the same signal but verbalizing only: "Infield fly."

If the plate umpire does not make the call (forgets or is not certain of the call) and a base umpire, after eye contact communication with the plate umpire, is certain the ball is an infield fly; the base umpire may make the call.



POINT

The right or left arm extended straight out at the play or player. Only the index finger is extended on the hand. The other arm should be under control in close to the body.



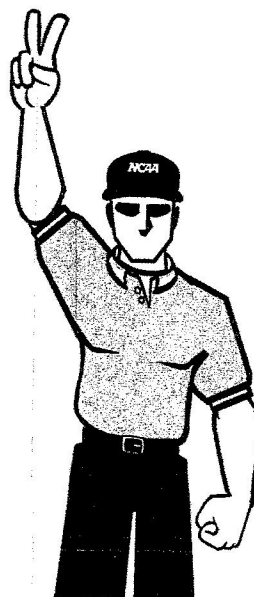
Use the Point to indicate an abnormality in a play (e.g. a tag, a missed tag, a pulled foot) or to reference a player who committed some act. This signal is followed by another signal, usually 'out' or 'safe.' The Point signal must be finished (bring the arm into the body) before another signal is started.

HOME RUN

Fully extend the right or left arm above the head with the index finger pointed skyward and make a clockwise circling motion with the hand and arm.

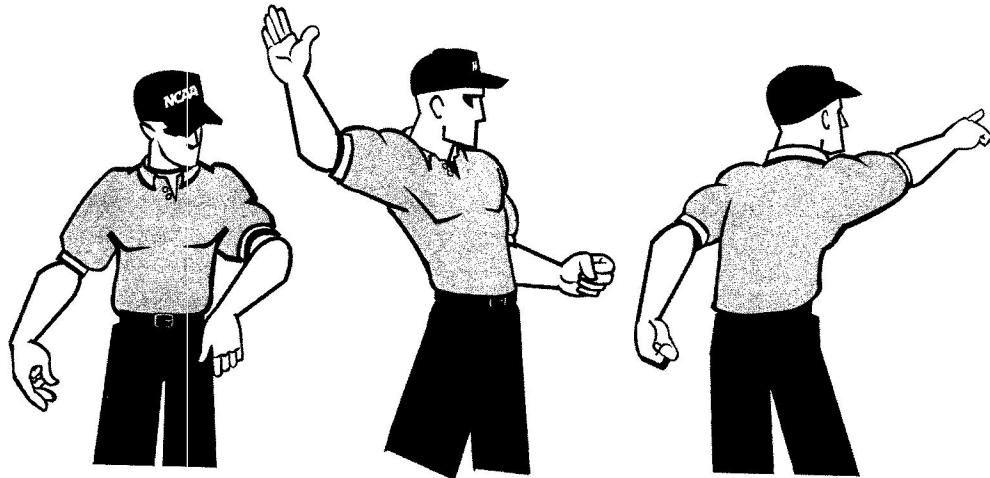
**DOUBLE**

Fully extend the right arm above the head with the index and middle finger showing on the hand. Do not circle the arm.

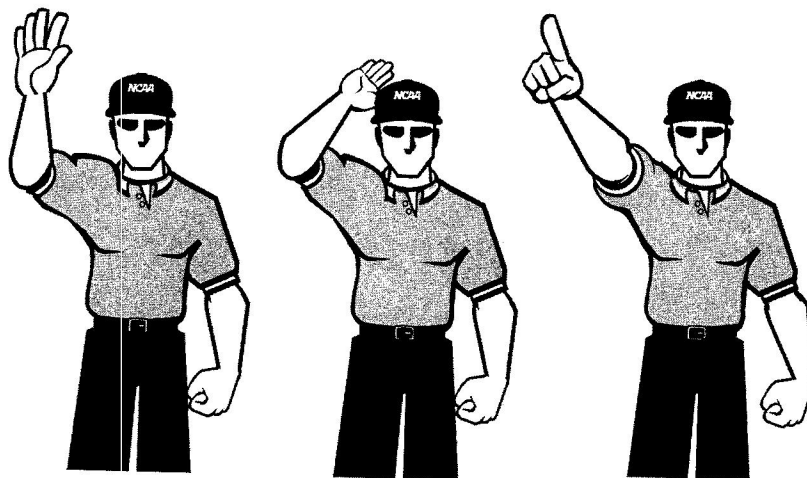


EJECTION

It is imperative when making this signal that no aggressive move or gesture, real or perceived, is made toward the person being ejected. The signal should be moderately animated after increasing the physical distance between the umpire and the ejected person as needed. This signal does not have to be exact, but it must be clearly understood (that someone has been ejected) and should not be overly demonstrative. Two options are offered:



While facing the person to be ejected, step back with the left foot (this opens the body and will allow it to turn/open to your left as you make the arm signal). Bring the right arm with the index finger extended, up, across the body and point skyward to your left. Your arm should be at a 45 degree angle to your body. You will be facing away from the ejected person now and the right side of your body will be facing the him/her. Reverse if left-handed.



Hold up the right arm with the palm open and forward (like calling Time but only half the signal - just one arm and slightly lower). This indicates the discussion is ended. Draw the right hand back to the right ear and redirect it skyward at a 45 degree angle away from the body. The index finger should be extended. Reverse if left-handed.

THE RUN SCORES

Stand at the plate and emphatically point down at the plate while saying, "The run scores!" "Score the run!" Establish eye contact with the score table while signaling and make sure the run goes up on the scoreboard. If necessary, use a deliberate pumping motion with the arm while pointing at the plate and repeat, "The run scores."



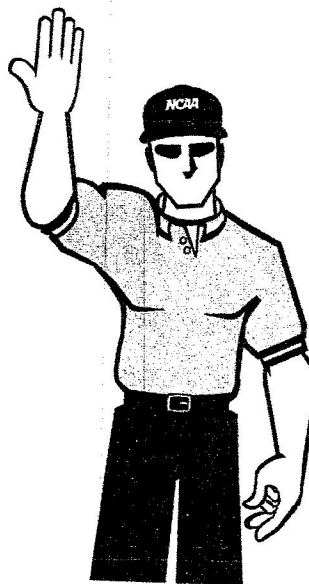
THE RUN DOES NOT SCORE

Stand at the plate. Raise both arms above the head like a Foul Ball signal. Cross the arms back and forth (not too quickly) while saying, "No run!" "The run does not score!" Establish eye contact with the score table while signaling. Watch the scoreboard to make sure a run is not recorded.



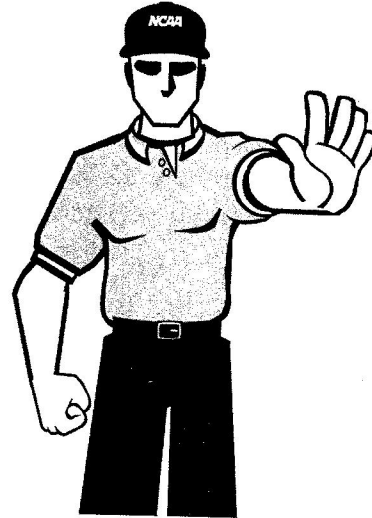
PLAY BALL

Any of a variety of hand motions used by the plate umpire to indicate the ball is in play. With arm extended toward the pitcher, the umpire may use a beckoning motion with an open hand, a pointing motion with an open hand or a pointing motion with one or two fingers extended. The signal may be accompanied with the verbal call: "Play ball." The verbal call may be used without any signal.



DO NOT PITCH

Either arm of the plate umpire extended straight out directly at the pitcher with the hand open and the palm of the hand facing the pitcher. Using the hand opposite the batter gives this signal better visibility.



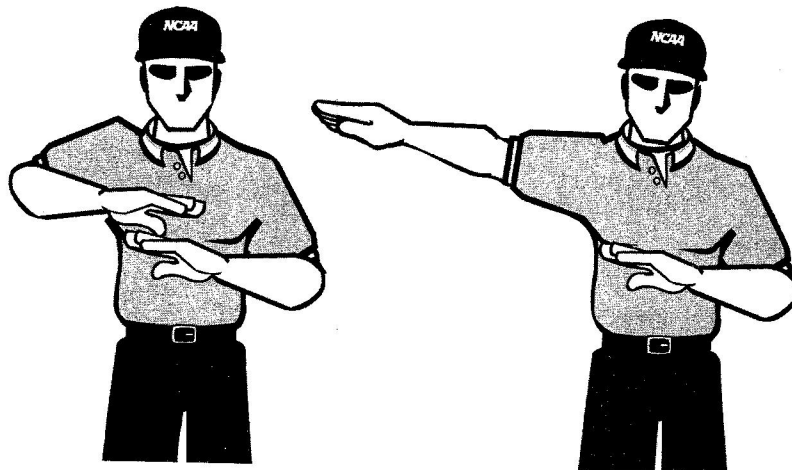
STRIKE

The verbal call of "Strike" is made in the down/set position. The signal is made in the "up" or "going to the up" position. The feet do not move during the signal. The left hand/arm is pulled into the midsection of the body. The right arm is 1) extended straight up with the palm of the hand facing the ear then followed by bringing the right forearm slightly forward while clenching it into a fist (this is the Hammer), 2) extended up and forward as the hand closes in a fist. In either style, the right upper arm and forearm should be at a 90 degree angle or greater. The signal is held long enough to convey the decision with conviction. The signal is finished by bringing the right arm back into the body before stepping back or moving the feet.



FOUL TIP

This is an optional signal. It may be used every time the ball is a foul tip or used only at times when the ball being a tip is not completely obvious. Bring the left hand in front of your body, mid-chest or higher, with the palm or back of the hand facing you. With an upward motion, brush the fingers of the left hand with the fingers of the right hand. This signal is always followed by a strike signal.



COUNT

Raise both arms up and in front of the body. Each arm/hand should be seen peripherally when the umpire is looking at the pitcher. Balls are shown with the fingers of the left hand. Strikes are shown with the fingers of the right hand. Consecutive fingers should be used in displaying the count. A verbal call may accompany the signal and, if used, should be as follows: "2 balls. 2 strikes." Do not say: "2 and 2." or "22." The count is given to the pitcher and held long enough for any other player to see it. The hands may be turned to increase visibility.

**B — Umpire-to-Umpire Signals**

Whereas most signals are used to convey information to everyone in the ball park, umpire-to-umpire signals are meant to convey information between umpires. These are not secret signals. It does not matter if anyone other than an umpire sees them. It is just that no one else needs to see them other than other umpires.

Because of this difference, unlike most signals that are given up and away from the body, umpire to umpire signals are given lower and closer into the body.

Like all signals, these signals are vital to good communication within the crew. These signals should be precise, dignified and used consistently. To enhance visibility and recognition the signals should always be given against a contrasting background such as the shirt or pant leg.

INFIELD FLY SITUATION ON

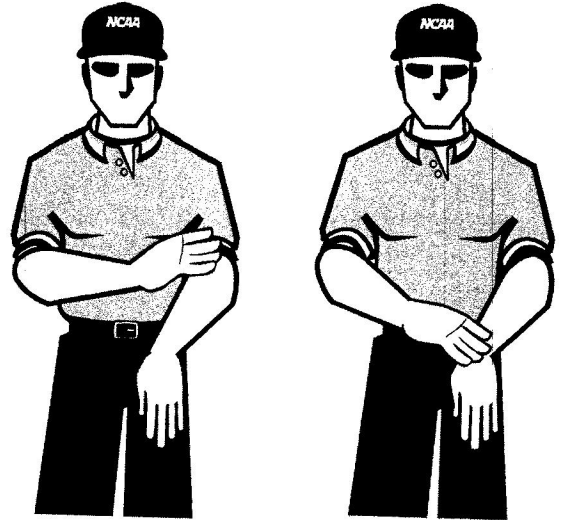
The right hand, palm open, on the left chest indicates the infield fly situation is in effect.

The infield fly signal should be initiated by the plate umpire just prior to the batter stepping in the box. Each base umpire should acknowledge, to the plate umpire, by returning the same signal. The signal should be given before every batter when an infield fly situation is possible.



INFIELD FLY SITUATION OFF

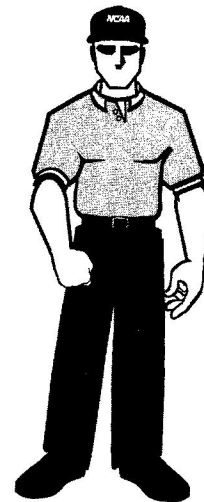
The right hand used in a wiping motion from the left elbow to the left wrist indicates the infield fly situation is no longer in effect.



HOW MANY OUTS?

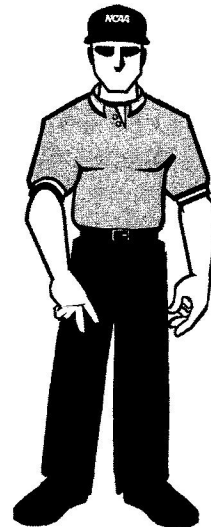
To verify or determine how many outs there are, the umpire looks to a partner and clenches the right fist against the right thigh.

There is nothing wrong with verbalizing the request: "Partner, how many outs do you have?" This, however, draws attention to the umpire and, if it is not necessary, umpires should avoid drawing attention to themselves. If such a request needs to be made more than a once during a game, it gives the impression that the umpire is not concentrating.



HOW MANY OUTS? - RESPONSE

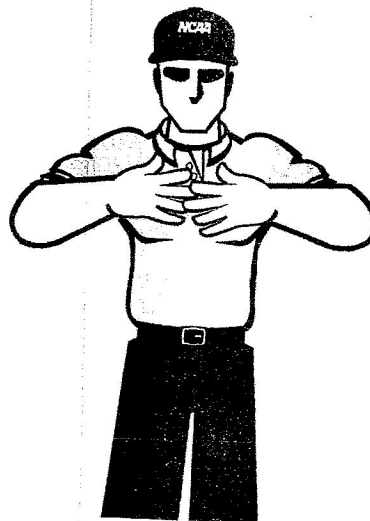
The responding umpire should indicate the number of outs by putting the appropriate number of fingers against the right thigh.



WHAT'S THE COUNT?

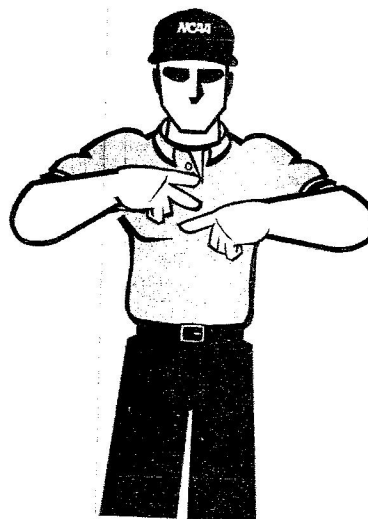
To request the count from a partner, place both opened hands against the chest.

There is nothing wrong with verbalizing the request: "Partner, what count do you have?" This, however, draws attention to the umpire and, if it is not necessary, umpires should avoid drawing attention to themselves. Also, if the count is being lost on a regular basis, it gives the impression that the umpire is not concentrating.



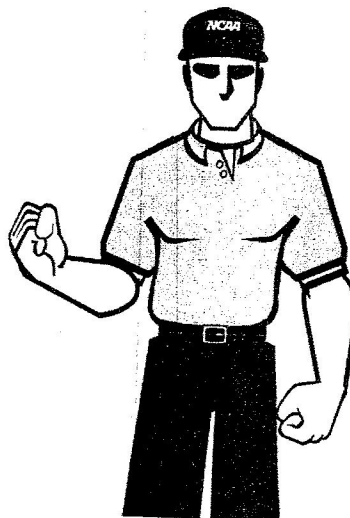
WHAT'S THE COUNT? - RESPONSE

The responding umpire should indicate the correct count by the fingers on the chest.



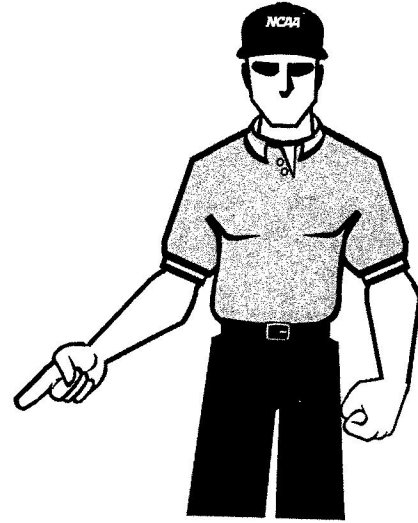
THIRD STRIKE IS CAUGHT

The elbow of the right arm is held at the side of the waist with only the forearm extending out from the body at a 90 degree angle. The hand is clenched in a fist. This signal is used by the base umpire to indicate to the plate umpire that the third strike was caught by the catcher.



THIRD STRIKE IS NOT CAUGHT

The elbow of the right arm is held at the side of the waist, with only the forearm is extending out from the body, at a 45 degree angle to the body. The index finger is pointing at the ground. This signal is used by the base umpire to indicate a third strike is not caught. It alerts all umpires to a possible play on the batter-runner.



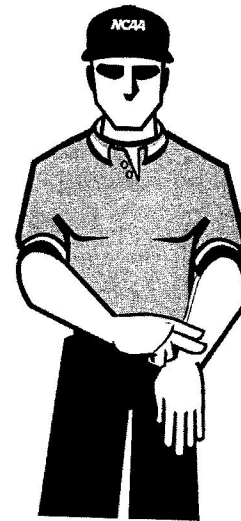
TIME PLAY

Tap the left wrist, where a watch is normally worn, with the fingers of the right hand.

This alerts all umpires to the possibility of a time play. Usually used with two outs and runners on first and/or second.

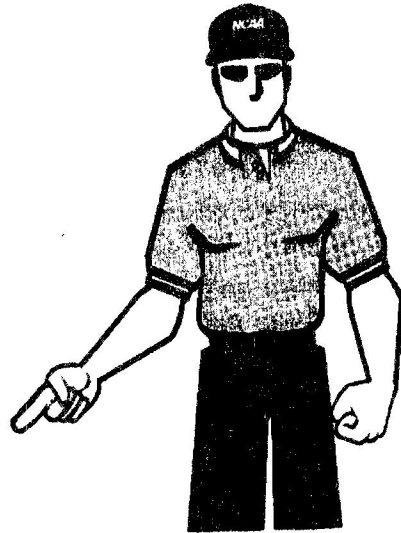
TIME PLAY RESPONSE

Respond with the same signal to acknowledge awareness of the situation.



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