The best way to gain respect as an umpire is to know the rules. In order to know the rules, you must thoroughly understand their interpretations. I have listed below a few of the most frequently asked about interpretations by our umpires, league presidents, managers and coaches.

**CATCH:** If the infielder has made the catch and drops the ball while in the act of making a throw following the catch, the ball shall be adjudged to have been caught. Most important – in establishing the validity of the catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove he has complete control of the ball and that his release of the ball is voluntary and intentional.

**INFIELD FLY:** On the Infield Fly Rule, the umpire is to rule whether the ball could ordinarily have been handled by an infielder – not by some arbitrary limitation such as the grass or the base lines. The umpire must rule also that a ball is an infield fly, even if handled by an outfielder, if in the umpire’s judgment; the ball could have been as easily handled by an infielder. The infield fly is in no sense to be considered an appeal play. The umpire’s judgment must govern, and the decision should be made immediately.

**FOLLOWING A HOME RUN:** After a home run is hit out of the playing grounds, the umpire shall not deliver a new ball to the pitcher or catcher until the batter hitting the home run has crossed the plate.

**CHANGE OF POSITIONS:** A pitcher may change to another position other than a pitcher only once during the same inning; e.g., the pitcher will not be allowed to assume a position other than a pitcher more than once in the same inning.

**WARM-UPS OTHER THAN PITCHER:** Any player, other than a pitcher, substituted for an injured player shall be allowed five warm-up throws.

**SPECTATOR INTERFERENCE:** If spectator interference clearly prevents a fielder from catching a fly ball; the umpire shall declare the batter out. However, no interference shall be allowed when a fielder reaches over a fence, railing, rope, or into a stand to catch a ball. He does so at his own risk.

**COACHES STAYING IN THE COACH’S BOX:** It has been common practice for many years for some coaches to put one foot outside the coach’s box or stand astride or otherwise be slightly outside the coach’s box lines. The coach shall not be considered out of the box unless the opposing manager complains. Then the umpire shall strictly enforce the rule and require all coaches on both teams to remain in the coach’s box at all times. It is also common practice for a coach who has a play at his base to leave the coach’s box to signal the player to slide, advance or return to a base. This may be allowed if the coach does not interfere with the play in any manner.

**BATTER TOUCHED BY PITCHED BALL:** When the batter is touched by a pitched ball which does not entitle him to first base, the ball is dead and no runners may advance.

**CATCHER INTERFERES:** If a catcher interferes with the batter before the pitcher delivers the ball, it shall not be considered interference on the batter under Rules 6.09(c). In such cases, the umpire shall call time and the pitcher and batter start over from “scratch”.

**OBSTRUCTION:** Under Official baseball Rule 7.06(b), when the ball is not dead on obstruction and an obstructed runner advances beyond the base which, in the umpire’s judgment he would have been awarded because of being obstructed, he does so at his own peril and may be tagged out. This is a judgment call.

**OVERRUNNING FIRST BASE:** A batter-runner cannot be tagged out after overrunning or over sliding first base if he returns immediately to the base.

**RUNNER TOUCHES UNOCCUPIED BASE:** If a runner touches an unoccupied base and then thinks the ball was caught or is decoyed into returning to the base he last touched, he may be put out running back to that base. But if he reaches the previously occupied base safely, he cannot be put out while in contact with that base.

**RUNNER CONTINUES TO ADVANCE:** If the batter or a runner continues to advance after he has been put out, he shall not be considered as confusing, hindering or impeding the fielders.

**A CLOSING TIP FOR YOUR UPCOMING TOURNAMENTS:** Whenever you are sure you got the play correct, do not be coerced by player’s or coaches’ appeals to “ask the other umpire”. If you are not sure, do not hesitate to ask one of your partners. However, do not carry this to extremes. Be alert and get your own plays. But remember, the first requisite is to get decision correct. Umpire dignity is important but never as important as being right. Last, but not least, remember the pitch or play is nothing until you make the call – do not call the play too quickly or turn away too fast when a fielder is throwing to complete the double play and keep watch for dropped balls after you have called a man out. To command respect, you must hustle, know the rules and dress professionally.