

We have the best view of the game.

Here are a couple thoughts to make it even better? Hopefully this helps:

### THE NEW RUBBER HOME PLATE MATS

An experienced ump suggested: until we get more familiar with how the ball bounces off the rubber (compared to our experience with wood) -- *hesitate* a second before making your call, *absorb what you saw*, then decide and make your call (loudly).

### TIME LIMIT

No. HnP does not have a time limit on games.

But that means:

### GAMES ARE TAKING FOREVER!

The last two games I worked showed a total of **97** runs scored (including 14 in the top of the 9th) !! That takes a while.

But more importantly -- and this *is* within our control -- it's our job to encourage managers to hustle their players out onto the field every half-inning change.

### THOUGHTS

A student of the game, reflecting on Opening Day, encouraged "umpires to take charge and not let the players run the show."

Take it for what it's worth.

(It's worth a lot. Be decisive. Don't engage with players -- refer them to their manager. Answer managers' questions briskly, concisely, firmly. Then call "Play"!)

### HIGH PITCHES

Generally, our pitchers have adapted well to the taller screens, closer to them. But we know that this has raised the minimum arc a ball must fly. Less skilled pitchers may struggle to keep the ball under the 12-foot-from-ground maximum. You can generally control this by making an "illegal" call early in the game.

We work to not overdo this, but it is important to enforce Rules.

### OUTFIELDERS

Rule 8.7: "An outfielder cannot throw out a Batter-Runner ... 1st Base"

-- "Outfielder" is defined as standing on grass at time of pitch.

-- An "Infielder" is still an Infielder if he goes onto the grass to field a ball and may still make a play at 1st.

### IN CLOSING:

a thought from Chief Instructor Michael Blades:

"Out" call should be deliberate -- count one thousand two thousand in your head before

calling the out – make sure the fielder has control of the ball – this will prevent needing to change an “out” call to a “safe” call.

Just because it is a bang-bang out does not mean it needs to be called immediately. The only out called immediately is the front end of a double play – the tail end is almost always a sell safe or a sell out.

#### **AND TO END ON A HIGH NOTE:**

Even having lost a number of experienced umpires this season, we have men stepping up to assist their fellow members in being able to enjoy the game.

With respect and appreciation, Peter

Huff-N-Puffers Umpire-In-Chief

[peter.e.toomey@gmail.com](mailto:peter.e.toomey@gmail.com)

440-669-0750

Video of the 2024 Clinics, Schedules, Rules, Umpire Information, and the Umpire Guide are *always* at [www.huff-n-puffers.com/Rules-and-Regulations.html](http://www.huff-n-puffers.com/Rules-and-Regulations.html)

The USA Softball rulebook can be downloaded as a PDF from [www.usasoftball.com/official-rulebook/](http://www.usasoftball.com/official-rulebook/) and the USA Umpire Manual at [https://cdn1.sportngin.com/attachments/document/0144/3128/2023\\_Umpire\\_Manual.pdf](https://cdn1.sportngin.com/attachments/document/0144/3128/2023_Umpire_Manual.pdf)

Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail -- but if it makes you a better umpire ...