

From the CSLL Chief Umpire



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My name is Mark Smith, and I am the Chief Umpire for Central Springfield Little League. I would like to congratulate you on your selection as a manager in our great league.

The purpose of this letter is to solicit your assistance in making the upcoming season a memorable experience for you, your players, their families, and *our league umpires!* There are a lot of responsibilities that come with being a manager of a Little League team.

First and foremost, I refer you to the Little League Rule Book. **Rule 1.01 states "Little League baseball in all divisions is a game"**. Please treat it as such. You are not out there to display your managerial prowess, and the kids are not out there to impress talent scouts. We all volunteer our time to give the kids a chance to learn baseball fundamentals, sportsmanship, teamwork, and, mostly, to have fun. Please do not put winning a championship as your main priority.

The umpires are all volunteers, just like you. Many of them have limited training other than the five sessions our league offers. We will make bad judgment calls, forget rules, get out of position, and do other things that will undoubtedly drive YOU crazy. It happens in all levels of baseball, even in the Pros, and it will happen in CSLL. My advice: take a deep breath, relax, and forget about it. Remember, **"Little League Baseball in all divisions is a game"**.

Here's how you can help make CSLL baseball a pleasant experience:

1. Safety should be your number one priority. Please follow the rules. Probably the number one issue I have observed over the last several years is coaches hitting infield with a catcher without a helmet. This is a Little League rule and must be observed at all times.
2. Managers, coaches, older siblings, etc. are not allowed to warm up pitchers at anytime before or during a game. Again, this is a Little League rule; the intent is to keep all the players involved to the maximum extent possible.
3. Cell phones, walkie talkies, etc are not allowed to be used on the field. This is a new Little League rule this year. If you absolutely have to take the call, step off the field and put someone else in the coach's box.
4. Set a good example for your players. Remember that they are watching your every move. If you complain loudly about a bad call, it gives your kids the false impression that it's okay to question judgment calls. If something happens, turn it into a positive experience.
5. Control your coaches. These men and women are in front of the kids just like you are, and they set an equally bad impression if you let them complain. Only the manager should be talking to the umpires.
6. Control your parents. The umpires are taught to ignore comments from the stands, but we hear them just the same, and it affects us. If you hear one of your Dads or Moms riding an umpire, please go into the stands and ask him or her to ease up.
7. Never argue judgment calls (i.e. ball/strike, safe/out). If you must talk to an umpire about what you feel is a bad call, show restraint, especially when talking to a Junior umpire. These young ladies and gentlemen are already nervous just going onto the field. When they have an adult come screaming and yelling about a bad call, it will only make things worse. Always have the Adult umpire present when talking to a Junior umpire.
8. Seek me out. If something happened that requires my attention, let me know right away. I want positive, constructive criticism so I can continue to teach the umpires. There's nothing worse than letting the problem go so that the umpire never learns. Don't bad-mouth the umpires to parents, other coaches, and especially the kids. I will be glad to discuss rule interpretations with you but I will never second guess a judgment call on the field by another umpire.

I have a website, <http://www.eteamz.com/csumps>, with some info under the "Handouts" link to help you. Take the time to read it, and put it to practice before, during, and after your game. It will make the game of baseball at Central Springfield that much more enjoyable for all involved. If you have questions, feel free to contact me. Enjoy the season!

"Let's face it. Umpiring is not an easy or happy way to make a living. In the abuse they suffer, and the pay they get for it, you see an imbalance that can only be explained by their need to stay close to a game they can't resist." - Bob Uecker