

Three Part Preparation, Pre-Game Conference, and On-field Things to Remember for Recreational Leagues

Part 1 Preparation prior to game day.

- A. Ensure all equipment and uniforms are ready for the game the day before the game. Uniform requirements are given in Rule 10 of the National Federation of High Schools rule book. Heather gray slacks are part of your uniform, but not slate gray twill or khaki slacks (possibly Dockers). Dockers or their equivalent are unacceptable. On game day, your pants should be cleaned and pressed with a crease in the legs.

Shoes are cleaned and shined.

Shirts will have the CASO logo, are to be clean, and worn completely tucked in your pants just like the players. Check it regularly while on the field to make sure it has not come out resulting in a sloppy look. When on the field, do not drop your pants to tuck in the shirt, finish dressing, or possibly correct a “wardrobe malfunction.” Please, discreetly handle these in the parking lot.

Hats worn on the field will have the CASO logo. The cap is worn with the bill facing forward. Do not wear your cap backward.

On the plate, you should wear a single ball bag on the hip, preferably the right hip. Ball bags should not be worn so that they bounce off your buttocks or your groin. Although not prohibited, wearing two ball bags is not encouraged.

Make a professional appearance when you arrive on the field and during the entire game.

- B. For your edification, review the league rules. The rules for all recreational leagues CASO umpires are posted on the [Information and Links page](#) of the [CASO website](#).
- C. Remember to bring all necessary equipment including the ball bag, brush, indicator, mask, timer, chest protector, shine guards, and hat.

You should have the game timer in plain sight, such as hanging it on the backstop, so it is visible to the coaches. Do not rely on your watch or your cell phone. This could lead to concerns from coaches about what time the game started and how much time is left based on two different watches. Having a timer hung on the backstop visible to everybody removes the potential for disagreements on game time.

The best situation is a timer with two clocks so you can cover the 90 minute no new inning and the 105-minute drop dead. [Amazon has a lot of different styles at different prices.](#)

- D. Make sure you have good directions to the field. Your Arbiter assignment for every game has a link to a Googlemaps of the address. You can use the satellite option to see the layout and field location.
- E. Arrive no later than 30 minutes before the game and be on the field 15 minutes before the game.

Part 2 Pregame Conference

- A. The pre-game conference should start five minutes before game time or earlier if both coaches are ready. It should take only a few minutes to complete.

Make sure no warmups are conducted anywhere on the field during the pregame conference. This is a safety concern. Everybody has their back to the field and there is a worry a stray throw could hit and injury somebody. Warmups are permitted outside the out of play boundary of the field.

If you are working a cash game collect the fees. This just ensures coaches do not make an honest mistake and forget to pay you at the end of the while folks are in a hurry to leave.

- B. Stand at the tip of the plate facing the field to conduct the pregame conference. Coaches may continue warming up and not come to the pregame conference unless called. You may have to announce “coaches and captains” when you are ready to conduct the pregame conference.
- C. Have the coaches and captains, if present, introduce themselves. Introduce yourself with your first name only.
- D. Establish the ground rules for out of play area and any unique field situations that could result in a dead ball.
- E. Have the coaches state any rules particular to that league such as ending an inning on four or five runs, batter hit by a ball that bounces, infield fly and dropped third strike, etc. You should have read the league rules in advance, but this will help ensure you and the coaches are aligned on the rules.
- F. If the weather looks threatening or thunder showers are predicted, cover the thunder/lighting rule. If thunder is heard or a lightning strike is seen, players must leave the field for 30 minutes. The 30 minutes starts anew with each subsequent thunder or lightning strike. The clock continues to run.
- G. Start the clock when the pre-game conference is complete. If the teams are not ready at game time, politely tell them that the clock starts at game time and continues to run. In this situation, the pre-game conference is conducted with the clock running.
- H. Have both coaches confirm all players and equipment meet NFHS requirements.

Part 3 Things to remember during the game.

- A. We do not check equipment but if you see an illegal bat remove it from the game.
- B. Jewelry is now permitted unless you determine it is a distraction or is a risk to players. This is new for 2023. The guidance from Al Palmer, as the Maryland State Rule Interpreter for the National Federation of High Schools, is to be extremely liberal in what you find a distraction or a risk to players. “Let them play.”
- C. Each batter, base runner, and student base coach must wear a NOCSAE-approved helmet with a classic, caged face protector, whenever they are on the playing field and the ball is live. If a player is wearing religious headwear the helmet must fit properly on her head, e.g., the ear flaps must cover the ears and the face protector covers the face. Otherwise, she cannot bat and the team will have to take an out in the lineup position.

The catcher must wear head protection and a protective mask with throat protector. The catcher's helmet and mask combination shall be NOCSAE certified and the catcher's helmet shall have ear flaps.

If a young person is on the field without a helmet, politely ask them if they are 18 or older. If they are, no helmet is necessary. For individuals under 18, politely tell them they must wear a helmet.

- D. Know the minimum number of players needed to start a game. This is found in the league rules posted on the [Information and Links page](#) of the [CASO website](#). The rule may also state if players can be borrowed to meet the minimum number needed to start a game.
- E. Game time for all games officiated by CASO is 90 minutes no new inning and drop dead at 105 minutes. For multiple games on a weekend, there is an additional 15 minutes between games to vacate and occupy the team benches. These times combined are a two-hour interval for each game that day. For a succeeding game, politely tell the coaches that the timers start at game time if teams are not ready.
- F. If a player has a uniform violation, e.g. a helmet not fitting properly, do not tell them what they need to do. Merely tell them they cannot play until they are legal. Let the coaches tell them what to do. You just say she cannot play until the situation is fixed and made legal.
- G. Always have a cell phone with you. If you perceive a threat to your personal safety, stop the game, call 911, and inform the coaches the game will not resume until you are completely satisfied that the situation has been resolved.
- H. Avoid physical contact with players. If a handshake is appropriate such as during introductions, that is okay. You should not physically contact the catcher at any time.
- I. If you eject anybody, let Joe Holonich know that night. Provide as much information as you can. This includes what happened, who was ejected, and why. Our contract has several penalties for ejections and inappropriate behavior by coaches, players, and parents.