

What Do I Need To Do To Get Promoted To The Next Level?

Promotions Are Based On The Interest You Show In and Potential You Show For Your Next Level

To determine that, we look at on-line and field training participation, number of games worked, and in-game observations by umpire observers and coaches. We also consider the competitiveness and intensity of the next level, which increases throughout the season. It is unfair to umpires and teams to assign an umpire to a level we don't think they're ready for.

We start by looking at which umpires have worked the most at each level in the current season and at past observations and discussions with interested umpires. Umpires build their case for promotion with each game and interaction.

One way of getting our attention is emailing us to explain what you are working on and why you think you are ready for a promotion or where you need some help.

The best way to prepare yourself is to have a 2-season plan. For example, you might say to yourself, "OK, it's the start of the season and I'm now doing AAA bases and want to move up to AAA plate by fall (or end of spring). So, my plan is to try to get x number of AA plate assignments and y number of AAA base assignments, have a plan to work on one or two things for each game, tell my partner or parent or observer what I'm working on, and then after the game, discuss that with them."

What Are We Looking For When Considering Where Is The Best Level For You?

First, we have to see you more than once. So every game is an opportunity to get better and show your stuff.

At Majors, we expect you know the AAA things below and:

- Keeping your head still and watching the pitch from the pitcher's hand to the glove, then not rushing your call
- Rarely have bad pitch-calling misses (an obvious ball called a strike and vice versa)
- Move crisply in the field and signal loudly and confidently
- Not calling foul when a ball is hit well out of play or bangs off the fence
- Signal outs and when in effect, the infield fly
- Immediately recognize and call the infield fly rule
- Immediately recognize and enforce interference and obstruction rules
- Confidently place runners on runner awards, like overthrows out of bounds
- Be able to explain rules to managers calmly and precisely
- Understand how to end a conversation with a manager, involving the adult game coordinator when needed
- Ensuring that there is no more than 2 minutes between innings

At AAA, we expect you know the AA things below and:

- Consistently in the slot with good head height about the top of the strike zone
- Staying down when calling balls, standing up when calling strikes and doing so loudly
- Giving the count loudly and effectively to the players so the bench can hear
- Correctly signaling foul tip vs. foul ball
- Getting out from behind the plate and confidently signaling outs, fouls, etc.
- Making calls loudly and with a pause to ensure the ball has not been dropped
- Finding the wedge and getting within 6 feet on tag plays
- Knowing your duties between innings to ensure no time is wasted

At AA, we are looking for this:

- **Rules.** In addition to the basics, you know these:
 - **Hit while swinging.** The ball is dead, the pitch is called a strike, the batter does not get first base

- **Foul tip** – The ball is live, runners can steal, but the ball must not hit the dirt or fence, must hit the catcher first, and must be caught by the catcher
 - **Foul ball** - the 3 ways the ball becomes foul (and do not call foul when a ball is in the IF until it has stopped moving in foul territory or is touched by a fielder in foul territory (or it touches the batter))
 - **Bunt**. That holding the bat over the plate is not a strike - the batter must move the bat toward the ball
 - **Catch**. The fielder must hold the ball in hand or glove until the fielder takes it out or moves the glove so s/he can take it out
 - **Interference**. If a runner interferes with a fielder fielding the ball, the ball is dead, the runner is out, the batter gets 1B unless you think there would have been a double play, then both runner and batter are out.
 - **Pitch bouncing**. Can be anything: a hit batter, a hit, a swinging strike, a foul ball if hit - but can never be a called strike.
 - **Awards on overthrow**. One base by the pitcher touching the pitching rubber. All others are 2 bases. The question is from when
 - . **By an outfielder**, 2 bases from *the time of the throw*. So all runners at or beyond 2B will score
 - . **By an infielder**, two bases from where the batter and runner were at *the time of the pitch* - **unless** all runners had already gained their next base at the time of the throw and then 2 bases from the time of the throw. Most common play is the batter running to 1B and the IF throws it out of play. The batter gets 2B (two bases from where the batter was at the time of the pitch), every other runner gets 2 bases from where they started.
 - **Leaving early**. When runner leaves before pitch reaches the batter:
 - . the ball is never dead, play continues
 - . if the batter gets a hit, the hit counts but the runners may only go as far as is necessary to allow the batter to stay on the base earned by the hit
 - . if a runner is thrown out, the out stands
 - . all runners not put out, even those not leaving early, go back where they started.
- **Mechanics – plate**
 - Enlarging the strike zone but rarely calling strikes above the arm pits or below the knees
 - Calling balls while down, calling strikes only after standing up
 - Giving the count every few pitches (balls on left hand, strikes on right hand)
 - Calling balls and strikes loud enough for the dugout to hear
 - On strikes, saying nothing if batter swings, just signal strike
 - Calling fouls loudly
 - On fair, just pointing to the IF, say nothing
 - For all catch, no catch or fair/foul calls, coming out from behind home plate to make the call, making all foul calls with the foul line running between your legs.
 - **Mechanics - bases**
 - Good ready position, adjusting position to be near the next call so you can beat the ball and runner there and being set before making the call.
 - Crisp mechanics: loud and proud. Safe call at full extension parallel to the ground.

So How Do I Get Promoted?

- Get the LL rule app and pick one rule out before the game to review. Remember, many of them have video illustrations.
- Rehearse your signals in the mirror.
- Think of a play in your head or one you've seen and pretend you're making the call and have to explain it to a coach.
- Get as many games as you can handle to see more situations.
- **Remember**: you never know who is watching (or videoing). Coaches, fans and observers report back to us and tell us about how well you do and what you might want to work on. So every time on the field is an opportunity to show your stuff!