

## **6/16/08-CATCHERS- PLAYS AT THE PLATE**

Teach the correct technique for plays at the plate and your catcher will make more successful plays and eliminate umpire obstruction calls.

The catcher should face the throw with his left heel just off the corner of the plate and his left toe pointed down the foul line. This positioning gives the runner the plate.

As he takes the throw, he should plant his left foot in the base line and make sure his left knee is facing the approaching runner. His shin guard protects it. (If he lets the side of his leg face the runner, he is taking a risk of a serious knee injury.)

This is applicable for throws from left and center fields. On throws from right field the catcher should plant his left heel on the right field side of the plate, deeper on the plate. As the runner approaches he will have to take a slightly larger step to align his body to make the tag.

All tags should be made with the hand on the ball and in the glove. However, on throws from right field and the runner going into his slide the catcher may have to execute a "slap" tag. This is a one-handed tag made turning and slapping the runner with his glove as he goes by.

Leave the facemask on. At higher levels of baseball, the impact can be enormous so leave it on. "But coach, I can't see the incoming ball with my mask on." The answer to that is, "You can catch an entire game with your mask on. Leave it on."

As the runner slides, the catcher should move to block the plate entirely. He gets his butt very low (Important) and forces the runner away from the plate. (He hooks him away from home plate. Coach Grant calls it riding him out.)

He should set up and have momentum WITH the runner as he makes the tag. He should do this with the ball in his bare hand and that hand in the glove with the back of the glove facing the runner.

After he has made the tag he should immediately spin away, setting his feet and closing off his front side as he looks to throw out other runners trying to advance.

Umpires will wait to see if the catcher still has the ball after a collision at the plate. They will not call the play safe or out until they see that ball. Make sure the catcher shows the ball to the umpire immediately after the tag.