

TO ALL UMPIRES:

Attached is an MLB press release issued today regarding 2008 playing rule changes.

As discussed at the Scottsdale meeting, virtually all rule changes this season are insignificant umpire-wise (***at the MLB level***). [Changes were made to the "batter's box rule" for the MINOR LEAGUES ONLY, and experimental rules were adopted for two short-season A leagues.]

The two changes that Major League umpires should be aware of are as follows (underlined portion is new):

1:

"Rule 4.05 Comment: It has been common practice for many years for some coaches to put one foot outside the coach's box or stand astride or otherwise be slightly outside the coaching box lines. Until a batted ball passes a coach, a coach is not permitted to position himself closer to home plate than the coach's box nor closer to fair territory than the coach's box. Otherwise, a coach shall not be considered out of the box unless the opposing manager complains, in which case the umpire shall strictly enforce the rule and require all coaches (on both teams) to remain in the coach's box at all times."

2:

In practice, a pitcher does not need to be standing *on* the pitcher's plate when taking signs, so Rule 8.01 is clarified as follows:

"Pitchers shall take signs from the catcher while in contact with the pitcher's plate."

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In addition, MLB umpires are to be aware of the new MLB regulation that REQUIRES both base coaches to wear helmets (liners or "skullies" are not permissible). As sent to all umpires in an e-mail 2/26/08, enforcement of the new MLB regulation is as follows:

### **ENFORCEMENT of this regulation beginning with Spring Training games:**

Coaches must wear a helmet to be on the field. A hard helmet is required; "skullies" or cap inserts are not permitted.

If a coach comes out to his coaching position without a helmet (as if to begin an inning), the umpire should direct the coach put on a helmet immediately.

If the coach does not immediately move to comply with the umpire's direction, the individual is to be ejected from the game.

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