

Oregon School Activities Association

Softball SRI Bulletin / May 25, 2015

BEFORE THE GAME

Be prepared for your game – Do some preparatory work a day or so before the game, making sure you are familiar with the game site and the correct starting time. ***Make sure your uniforms are clean and your equipment in good condition*** (a good time to clean your shoes for the next game is right after the previous game), check your shoelaces and pack an extra set in case one breaks during the game or while you are dressing.

Arrive well ahead of game time – It's important to start the game at the scheduled time. That involves you and your partner/s entering the field ***15-20*** minutes ahead of game time (***giving enough time for equipment check and walking the field***). If a team's arrival is delayed due to unavoidable circumstances (***late bus, traffic tie-up, etc.***) work with both coaches to begin the game after a reasonable warmup.

Have a thorough pregame – ***A pregame meeting is essential for good performance on the field.*** Go over ***rotations*** and situations that may arise.

Enter the field professionally – Be businesslike and stride confidently with your partner/s to the field. ***Leave any food or beverages behind.*** Don't stop to talk to spectators or players. If you are acknowledged, give a polite "***hello***" and keep walking to your destination. Enter the field about ***15-20*** minutes before game time giving enough time for bat/helmet check and walking the field to observe any unusual things that may arise.

Keep pregame (plate talk) conference brief – Conduct the pregame meeting between head coaches and captains five minutes before the game. ***Keep the conference professional but brief and to the point.*** Exchange lineup cards, coaches verify that their players are legally and properly equipped. Have the home coach go over the ground rules (***it's their field***) saving time.

Know what to do after the pregame meeting – If the ***national anthem*** is going to be played, the base umpire/s should remain with the plate umpire standing at ***attention without conversation.*** The base umpire/s should then ***hustle*** to their in between inning positions (***about 10-15 feet off the foul line in fair territory facing the infield.***) The plate umpire should set up ***10'*** beyond the first or third base foul line extended facing the team that is coming to bat. They should observe the pitcher and may observe the ***2nd, 3rd*** or ***4th*** warmup pitch while in their plate stance behind the catcher.

Essentials of Pregame Conference

Conducting a quality pregame conference sets the tone for the game. If umpires focus only on addressing the issues they are supposed to, they can avoid making mistakes in conducting the conference. In ***NFHS the head coaches are required to be at the pregame conference.*** The plate umpire should introduce himself or herself before introducing the base umpire/s. ***The***

main purpose of the pregame conference is to confirm the safety of players and equipment, remind the participants of sportsmanship behavior and cover items that are required.

- There shall be no balls hit or thrown in live-ball territory.
- The home team and then the visiting team shall deliver their lineup cards to the plate umpire checking (first initial and last name, jersey number, position and batting order of each starting player and shall include each eligible substitute), then permit the coaches/captains to check it over one last time. Once the coach confirms the lineup card, it becomes official.
- ***Confirm the DP/Flex.***
- Ground rules
- Coaches verify that their players are legally and properly equipped.
- Remind coaches and captains that sporting behavior will be followed.

The plate umpire must also establish who the head coach is for each team. Establish where the official scorekeeper will be located. ***The pregame conference is not a clinic!!!***

QUICK TIP

Walk the perimeter of the field before the game checking for any openings in the fences. Check for any wires or tree branches that might be hanging or near the field and for any safety hazards in dead-ball territory. Make sure the field is clear of any debris and that the field is properly lined, especially the batter's box area.