

## OFFICIAL IMPROVEMENT

**TACT:** Tact implies delicate and considerate perception of what is appropriate. Developing and refining tact takes a constant awareness of the situation. Your perception of others and ability to react tactfully won't become intuitive unless you practice it. Try to avoid causing offense, and remember that the rules stand behind you.

**EMPATHY:** Empathy is "the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and experiencing the feeling of others." In order to understand what it is that coaches or athletes are trying to get from you, you have to be able to put yourself in their place and understand where they are coming from.

**AUTHORITY:** Having the ability to get others to see things your way, backed up by the rules, is commanding authority. Apply the rules fairly, impartially and equally to all situations. **Be consistent from one game to the next.** Reinforcing your position of authority begins with your first contact. (Pregame) Apply the rules fairly to provide a safe playing environment.

**CHARISMA:** Confidence is an element of charisma. Be confident in the decisions that are made. **You are not out there to win a popularity contest; you don't have to be liked by everyone to be charismatic.** Posture has a lot to do with charisma (crossed arms indicate a defensive posture, avoid slouching.) **Strong leaders have good posture.**

**HUSTLE:** Hustle is "to officiate a contest in an alert aggressive manner." **For umpires that means being in the right position at the right time to see what is happening, making sound calls and decisions based on what is seen.** To have hustle you've got to have a high level of energy and fitness. **Keep yourself physically fit.**

**ENTHUSIASM:** Is a "strong excitement of feeling. It's the pure enjoyment of the sport you are officiating. **It's the enjoyment you get from being an umpire.**

**RESPECT:** We aren't born with respect, we earn it. **Gaining respect is wrapped up in appearance, attitude, language, restraint and the way we treat others.** **Respect is a two-way street.** Be a good listener, be an effective communicator, be courteous to others. Never use derogatory remarks. To be respected by others an umpire must have integrity. Avoid making benign remarks predicting the outcome of the game or any of the participants. Watch what you say and do outside the field. Keep your language clean and live to high moral standards. **Respect your fellow officials.** Show up on time for the pregame meeting (if you are going to be late use the phone.)

### TIPS FOR BETTERING YOUR OFFICIATING

- Relax.
- Professionalism. (look the part in proper dress, demeanor and enthusiasm)

- Stay cool. (be prepared to handle the unexpected, control your emotions)
- Work diligently to perfect timing. (see the total play)
- Be teachable and keep egos in check
- Hustle.
- Preventive techniques.
- Avoid showboating, avoid responding to the crowd, anticipate.

Larry Harwood

OSAA Softball State Rules Interpreter