

Oregon School Activities Association

Softball SRI Bulletin / February 13, 2014

2014 SRI Pre-Season Bulletin #4

OFFICIATE SMARTER

What is the secret to better officiating? Above average to great umpires go above and beyond rules and mechanics by improving their knowledge of responsibilities and expectations from the moment they arrive at a ballpark till the time they depart. Here are some tips and ideas to help in unlocking the mystery.

- **Inventory Your Look** – Before the season starts, take a complete inventory of your equipment and try on your uniforms, ensuring your equipment is clean and in good condition and that your uniforms fit and aren't in need of tailoring or repair.
- **Take All Your Essentials** – Take all of your equipment to every game. You never know when you might be at a different position. Taking a spare plate brush, shoelaces and pencil doesn't hurt either.
- **Pack the Same** – Pack your gear and uniform bags the same way every game (*you are less likely to forget something.*)
- **Clothes Make the Official** – Clothes can make the official. Appearance matters, if your uniform is untucked or your pants are dirty your credibility will likely suffer. ***If your appearance is lacking, participants will know you don't care about it. The next thought is that you don't care about officiating a good game either.***
- **Clean Off Your Gear and Replace Old Accessories** – Clean your gear before re-packing, it will keep dirt out of your bag and speed up the time for getting ready. Replace gear when necessary. By investing in your equipment in the offseason saves the trouble of last minute shopping.
- **Act Like the Athlete You Are** – Officials are athletes too, and an important part of the game. If you want participants to understand that, you need to get and stay in shape. ***You'll be amazed at the credibility you will gain.***
- **Train For the Game** – You must train for what is required of you in your game. You need to do specific training for your sport. Lunges and squats are a must for a softball umpire.
- **Nip Anti-Social Behavior in the Bud** – This can be measured by two simple equations: Bad officiating encourages anti-social behavior. Anti-social behavior equals injuries. ***By permitting these to happen means a loss of control.***
- **Adjust Your Attitude** – What is attitude? For an official it is perspective, disposition, approach, outlook, manner and demeanor. Your attitude affects those around you. ***A positive attitude helps you perform difficult tasks***

MAINTAINING FOCUS

For any official, maintaining your **concentration** during a game and throughout the season is important. Your performance will be diminished if you are not able to maintain your focus. **Concentration** is fundamental because if it is lacking, other aspects of your assignment will suffer. **Losing focus can cause you to be out of position and miss a call or use poor judgment in making a call** (this can cause you to think too much about you lapse and can lead to a loss of concentration for future calls. **The challenge for officials is maintaining focus from the time the contest begins until it ends.**

- Establishing and maintaining concentration begins with a ***good pregame***.
- ***Eye contact*** can be extremely helpful in maintaining focus.
- ***Postgame conferences*** are just important as a good pregame (***be honest with your partner/s and yourself***)

Over the course of a season. There is no ***downtime*** for officials. The middle stretch of the season is when many officials wear down. Mental fatigue sets in. **Focus is an aspect of officiating, just like rule knowledge or mechanics.**

QUICKTIP

One way to enhance presence and possibly help the game move along a little more quickly is to be ***“on the hop”*** going from point “**A**” to point “**B**” and then back to point “**A**”. **Never walk from one position to another.** A simple jog makes all the difference in perception between someone who hustles and is into the game or someone who is lazy and not really into it. **If the umpires are hustling, there’s a good chance that players may even pick up on it and hustle to and from their positions, too.**

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT 2014

As umpires we must know the symptoms and signs of suspected concussions, which are covered in **SRI Bulletin #2** and the rule book (pg 89). Refer to the OSAA document posted on the Central Hub that address specifically what actions an umpire should and should not take. That document can be found **HERE**.

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