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MESSAGE FROM: Greg Schmidt, CCSUA Chairman, SUP Regional Advisor

Hello Everyone, the season is fast approaching. Now is the time to take the test if you have not. Remember you must take and pass the SUP test to be eligible for post season play for all divisions. Test closes midnight eastern standard time on Friday, February 15.

Did you receive your Rule Book and Manual after your registration? If not contact Arbiter Support:

Having problems? Let our support team assist you.

Phone

801-702-8022

Email

sup@arbitersports.com

Support Hours

Monday--Thursday – 5:00 am to 7:00 pm MT

Friday – 5:00 am to 5:00 pm MT

Saturday – 8:00 am to 2:00 pm MT

Please go to the NCAA Softball Central Hub Home Plate. There are two new postings for **Procedural Changes, a Uniform update and Manual Mechanics update. A revised 2-umpire mechanics portion of the Manual will be available at the end of next week, plus more to come! So check back often.**

There is a difference in the In-Field fly signal diagrams noted in the Rule book vs. the Manual. We will use the diagram in the “Manual” in all cases on the field.

Anyone who needs help or has a question please contact me for assistance. Looking forward to a great season!

Greg Schmidt

CCSUA Chairman

SUP Regional Advisor

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FOCUS AND PREPARTION

SEASON IS HERE!

Now that the season has begun Focus and Preparation is a must for every game throughout the season. In January's newsletter we listed several key points that should be addressed each and every game:

1. Accept your games and write them down in your calendar book. Give yourself additional time to be able to arrive at your games at least one-hour prior to start time.
2. Be physically **FIT!!** Exercise, eat right and get rest! Do not over extend yourself with accepting more games than you can handle due to work and personal obligations.
3. Professionalism!
 - Dress appropriately to all games. Preferred acceptable attire is Polo Shirt and slacks, or track Suit bottoms or wind pants. No baseball hats, casual gym or heavy sweat suits attire, and no College Logo affiliation on any attire.
 - If you are the Plate or Crew Chief Umpire, contact your partner(s) and coaching/event staff by email several days prior to your game.
 - Conduct yourself appropriately before, during and after your games.
 - Have a good **PRE-GAME AND POST-GAME** with your partner(s).

Print out the above-three main topics on a separate sheet and keep it in a notebook binder along with a pre-game and post-game list to assist you with being prepared for every game. Also, include a copy of your schedule, which will have your partner(s) contact number listed. This will allow you to contact them immediately if you need to communicate with them on any changes that may have occurred while you were driving or upon your arrival at the game-site location.

IMPORTANT ASSIGNORS INFORMATION REMINDER!!

From Joanne, Jim and Rich:

1. RAINOUTS- If a coach offers you the make-up game and you can work it, say yes and then notify the Assignor so they can add the make-up date in the Arbiter. If you cannot work the date, let the Assignor know that they offered you the make-up date, but you are unavailable on that date.

- **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTACT THE COLLEGE**

Print the Rainout Policy that is listed in the Arbiter under LISTS/FORMS

Southern California is widespread. It may be raining where you are, but dry 5-miles from you. If there are weather issues in southern California on game day, contact your partner that morning.

Contact your partner a minimum of 3-days ahead of all games, not just weather related. Discuss uniform, arrival time and parking.

Responsibility to contact the college:

- Division-I Crew Chief
- Division-II Crew Chief
- Division-III/SCIAC Plate Umpire on game-1
- NAIA/GSAC Plate Umpire on game-1
- Community Colleges Plate Umpire on game-1

As a reminder for College games:

Mist....Drizzle....Rain....Wind

- You can play in MIST
- When it turns to DRIZZLE start to watch for wet bases, ball slipping from hands, unsure footing.
- We can't play in RAIN, or we lose the field. Pull the players in the dugout and suspend the game to see if the rain cell will pass by.
- Wind gusts make it uncomfortable to play, but when it affects the student athlete's focus it may become dangerous. Rarely do we suspend/call a game due to wind. Don't let the coaches make the call. Of course one will want to quit when their team has a lead.

• **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTACT THE COLLEGE**

Use the SAMPLE EMAIL in the Arbiter in LISTS/FORMS and communicate with the college at least 2- days prior to your game. However, even though you started the communication it's usually up to you to keep it going. The home school staff usually remembers to let the visiting coach know, but they tend to forget the officials. With an email in front of them they will have your telephone number easily accessible.

If you are going to be busy on the morning of a game, then contact the college, and let them know how to reach you, in case there are any changes. Contact them on game day around 9 a.m. Most coaches use text now, so that would be a good way to start the communication. If you don't hear from them within a few minutes, call them. If you don't reach them, call the person(s) listed in the Arbiter for that college.

There is a “point of contact” at colleges. Here is the order of contact protocol:

- Division 1 Event Manager.....Sports Info Director/Associate AD
- Division 2 Sports Info Director/Associate AD.....then the coach if you fail to reach them
- Division 3 Head Coach.....Athletic Secretary....Athletics Office
- NAIA Head Coach.....Athletics’ Office
- Community Head Coach....Athletic Secretary....Athletic Office

2. GAME REPORTS - If you are the plate umpire, you must complete a Game Report on the Arbiter. A game report should include a quick summary of: rain issues; removal of bats; sportsmanship issues; illegal pitches; ejections; protest; field/grounds keeping situations, etc.

- If additional Incident reports need to be completed for illegal bats, ejections or protest, please do so within 72 hours, preferably 24 hours.
- The current BAT list is dated January 14, 2013. Please make sure that all coaches have this list with **their bats highlighted** and **the count noted next to the bats** their team is using. You can remind them of this protocol in your pre-contact email and again at your check-in meeting with them upon your arrival to the field. This will help to eliminate delays when checking the bats prior to the game.
- Besides the bats must be noted on the list, you must also check the bats for cracks, dents, rattles, etc. When you have to remove a bat for any issue, you must complete an Incident Report.

3. If you are working the California Community Colleges, do **NOT** send the Incident Report to Dee Abrahamson as noted on the report. As mentioned at our meeting, the Incident Report should be sent to either Rich or Joanne. They will send the Incident Report directly to the Conference Commissioner for that specific college.

4. ARBITER. A.) If you are assigned a Double-Header (DH) and the positions are not rotated in the Arbiter, always switch positions for the second game. B.) Keep your Arbiter updated, as there will be make-up games available due to the rain throughout the season. C.) Many assignments are adjusted with changes in positions; you do not get an automatic notice about this. You need to go back into Arbiter on a regular basis and check your schedule; do so the day before every game.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT CORNER

Always know the level you are umpiring, but never umpire down to that level, as each team deserves the utmost respect and integrity an umpire demands of themselves when officiating any game.

REALITY vs. PERCEPTION

You're going to get yelled at.

“Officials don’t care who wins, but everyone else involved in the game cares a lot (some a whole lot) about who wins. As a result of those facts, you’re going to get yelled at. You’re going to get called some names. It doesn’t matter how right-on your calls are, it doesn’t matter how close the score is or what level you’re working, you’re going to get yelled at.

Nobody likes getting called a name or two or three or “four eyes.” But if you love what you do and you know that jeers come with the territory, as long as they don’t cross the line, officials should tune them out or better yet, embrace them. There’s a saying that goes: “If you want to officiate you’ve got to love it when they boo.” In your next ballgame, consider those jeers from clueless fans and coaches, who often don’t know any better.”

The above-mentioned statement is another principle from the Referee Magazine article regarding REALITY vs. PERCEPTION. If you are sensitive and struggle with fans that are behind a fence making comments then maybe you should think twice about remaining an official, as the jeers are here to stay. Note that there are some jeers/comments that are unacceptable from any coach, player, management staff and/or fan at any time.

If a fan has completely crossed the line in using words or verbal threats or actions towards you or your partner(s), immediately contact the On-Site Administrator or Game Management Personnel to handle the situation appropriately.

RULES CORNER

The answer to last month’s rule question regarding what are the conditions for a substitute pitcher to be considered officially in the game can be found on page 84, Section 8.5.2.4.

This month rule’s trivia question is: Do you know the difference in the Effects between a Fair Batted Blocked Ball contacting loose offense equipment vs. contacting loose equipment belonging to the defense?

The answer will be noted in our February Newsletter.

Catcher’s Obstruction:

Rule 9.4.1 states, “The catcher shall not obstruct, hinder or prevent the batter’s attempt to make contact with a pitch ball.

The Effect is a Delayed dead ball..... (read pages 88 and 89 in its entirety to know the options directly related to Catcher’s Obstruction. In the Effect section of this rule the following

statement is not enforced properly and can be protested at any time:

(b) *Exception: If the catcher steps on or in front of home plate or touches the batter or her bat while a pitched ball is on the way to the plate and there is a base runner on third base attempting to score on a squeeze play, each runner advances one base without liability to be put out whether FORCED OR NOT.*

This exception is very unique, as the penalty for this “squeeze play” of obstruction by the catcher advances the base runners no matter what their base status is at the time of the obstruction, which is completely different than a normal Catcher’s Obstruction Effect.

MECHANICS

2-UMPIRE MECHANICS

As noted by Greg Schmidt, a revised 2-Umpire mechanics portion of the Manual will be posted on the SUP Central Hub at the end of next week. As soon as it is posted, we will make sure to post it on our CCSUA Arbiter page and “New” CCSUA Central Hub, as all of us work 2-Umpire mechanics throughout the season.

DIAGRAMS:

In the 2012 Manual the SUP provided us with a multitude of diagrams to assist us for various situations in a “Perfect” or “Normal” game. These diagrams have continued to be included in the 2013 Manual and should be reviewed throughout the season, as they are really helpful in explaining and guiding you to standard positions and movements for game situations.

GAME MANAGEMENT

Responding Skills are the number-one skill

In reviewing other principles from the Referee Magazine article regarding REALITY vs. PERCEPTION, we thought this would be a perfect time to add the following statement as season begins:

“It’s not the call you made that will be remembered; it’s how you reacted to the objections of the coaches and players.

If your first reaction is to eject the coach, you won’t have a long career as a *College* official. You’ll be deemed unapproachable and your assigner won’t have anywhere that he or she can send you.

On the other hand, if you can keep your emotions in check, while bringing their (coaches) levels of anger and frustration down, you will be a successful official at any level. They might still disagree with your call, but they understand what you saw and they will have been afforded the opportunity to be heard. That doesn’t mean you can’t respond with

those severe penalties, but they shouldn't be your first option, unless warranted.

Let the coach have his or her say, respond in an even-keeled tone and only when he or she doesn't get the point, use other options."

When using other options to de-escalate a situation, always keep in mind that a warning may be suitable for the moment at hand, unless a coach or player has totally crossed the line in their verbal communication; body language or antics, such as throwing equipment or sliding on the ground to prove a point while loudly being abusive toward you or your partner (s). If any of these kinds of actions take place an **ejection** is warranted **without a warning**, as noted in the Rule Book under Section 13.

PHOTO CORNER



Thanks to Joanne Venditto, Jim Johnson and Rich Kohlen for contributing to this month's newsletter!

Knowledge is Power and Experience is the best teacher.