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Link to Arbiter

http://sup.arbitersports.com/Groups/104484/Library/files/NCA_A_Approved_Softball_Bat_List.pdf

Contact Us

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

In this edition of the newsletter our **FOCUS AND PREPARTION** section will be addressed directly from the CCSUA Chairman. The below statement is noted in the Manual on page 24, and is re-emphasize by our Chairman and SUP Regional Advisor, who has recently attended several camps observing umpires at all levels.

FOCUS

Sometimes the mental part of umpiring is the most difficult of all. An umpire can acquire the mechanical skills, perfect the timing and be able to recite the rules verbatim, but the mental aspects can be most elusive.

Focus, attitude and confidence can be under control and then, inexplicably, they may be lost for a time. Boredom, lost focus, wandering minds, and then the zone is lost or a missed call. Dwelling on an error, reliving it or punishing one for losing focus results in getting behind on the next play.

The most highly trained umpires are able to consistently maintain focus and concentration inning after inning, game after game. They are not distracted by external events or internal thoughts. These umpires work each game pitch-by-pitch, focused and in the present. They are able to focus and concentrate at will.

Focus, concentration and intensity are closely tied and take preparation and discipline to accomplish.

Maintain Focus During the Game

Motivation plays a large role in maintaining focus. An umpire's level of concentration and focus must be by design independent of team intensity. The more intense the competition, the easier it is to self-motivate and concentrate. When the game involves two teams who are at the bottom of the conference standings, concentration and focus is more difficult to maintain. You will need to work to maintain focus throughout the game.

Keys to Maintaining Focus:

- Establish a pre-game routine that includes both physical and mental items. It helps

to bring the game into focus from the beginning and keep it free of mental distractions.

- Establish an in-game routine that includes mental cues to keep alert and in the right frame of mind. An example would be **to get set the same way, at the same time for every pitch**. Use triggers to get into a routine and to keep focused. A “trigger” is a word or action that automatically takes you to your zone of mental focus. For example: **as the pitcher first steps on the pitching plate, say, “Focus” or “Be Alert” or “Ready, set.”** Always use **POSTIVE** self talk.
- Establish timing, whether on the plate or the bases. Work with the same timing every single pitch.
- Establish routines or habits. This leaves mental space/time to focus and concentrate on other aspects of the game. Work the game, whether the plate or bases, **one pitch at a time**. Schedule tiny mental breaks after each pitch and re-focus for the next one.

Regaining Focus

Regaining focus comes down to one simple act: **Get back into the present**. Right here, right now.

Keys to regaining concentration, getting back into the zone:

- Immediately take note of the present.
- Consciously decide to work one pitch at a time.
- Use **POSITIVE** self-talk and visualization to regain focus, concentration and being a solid umpire.
- Before the next pitch, run through all the possible scenarios that could occur on the next pitch. This is called **PRE-PITCH PREPARTION (PPP’S)**.
- Use a “trigger” word to get you back into the zone.

ARBITER AVAILABILITY:

IMPORTANT: BLOCK YOUR ARBITER!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Yes, we all know that it is Fall ball and games are limited, but there is no excuse not to have your calendar updated/blocked with dates that you are unavailable. Some of you are busy with work or travel ball, so you need to block out those dates.

While you are at it, block out all anniversaries, birthdays, work events, family gatherings, Valentines Day thru May, 2013.

When the Assignors send a mass email or post a message on the Arbiter under Announcements that they are beginning to assign dates, go check your Arbiter and add

blocks to dates that you have other commitments/games/family events.

There is nothing worse for an Assigner to send you games whether it is Fall or Spring only to be declined because you had NOT BLOCKED the date!!! I personally call this error on any officials part "The Kiss of DUME." Because if I was an assigner and this happened, you would be the last person to whom I would assign a game in the future. Food for thought!

Professionalism starts here! **BLOCK YOUR ARBITER!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

CAMP (KUDOS)

On 09/28/12 through 09/30/12, several CCSUA Officials attended the NEXT LEVEL UMPIRE CAMP in Phoenix, Arizona.

We would like to take a moment and say **KUDOS** to each of you for being committed to becoming a better umpire by taking the time to attend a camp. The following is a list of attendees, by no special order:

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Greg Germansky | 2. Ronnie Strange | 3. Chris Martinez | 4. Joe Campanella |
| 5. Scott Matthews | 6. Scott Tomlinson | 7. Mark Korras | 8. Jeff Samuels |
| 9. Steve Rodriguez | 10. Dan Marksbury | 11. Anthony Garcia | 12. Ruben Gonzales |
| 13. Katrina Gonzales | 14. Karl Davis | 15. Robert Plancich | 16. Vincent Rojas |
| 17. Jess Black | 18. Marc Shculman | 19. Mark Craver | 20. Katrina Kershaw |
| 21. Jonathan Starks | 22. L. J. Reynolds | 23. Rick Cowan | 24. Kelie Sturgis |

The feedback that each of us received was not only valuable to help us immediately improve, but should also be used to help others with whom we will work in the upcoming fall and spring season, so that ALL of us can become better umpires throughout the duration of our careers.

If anyone is still interested in attending a camp there is one left: COLLEGE UMPIRE FASTPITCH CAMP, Irvine, California hosted by Willie Newman, Smokey Edds and Dani Carson-Newman. The dates are: 11/16/12 to 11/18/12. The Camp flyer and Camp Registration Form can be accessed on the CCSUA Arbiter Sports group under Lists/Forms.

If you're asking yourself why should you attend a camp or you are unsure if a camp is good for you at this time in your officiating career, then let me say here is the time to ask any of the 24 people named above what are the benefits of attending a camp and how it can prepare you to become a better official.

In closing, Camps are expensive, so if your finances are an issue, be pro-active and start saving now to attend a Camp next year that is within your limitations of travel expense. If

you have a goal of becoming a better umpire throughout your career then you should at least attend a Camp every two years.

REALITY vs. PERCEPTION

You're going to be noticed.

“The best officiated games are the ones in which nobody notices you,” Most of you have probably heard that saying in one form or another. Now do us a favor, get out your pen and cross it out. You're going to be NOTICED.

The best officiated games are ACTUALLY the ones in which you're noticed for the RIGHT stuff: making the correct calls, managing the game properly and communicating crisp and clear signals.

Don't try to hide in the background and not get involved when a critical call is needed. You're going to be noticed either way. You are a BETTER official when you're able to step-up and call the ILLEGAL PITCH, OBSTRUCTION and LEAVING EARLY violations. Yes, the game is about the players, but you are a major factor, as well. Embrace your role and don't try to shrink in the background.

In this edition of REALITY vs. PERCEPTION we focus on the above-mentioned statement from Referee Magazine regarding “being noticed.” Good or bad you will be noticed even when you enforce the correct rule violation or make the correct call that a coach disagrees with because of their own lack of understanding or acceptance. Once all the smoke clears and tapes are reviewed the disgruntled coach still may not like your correct call(s), but will respect you for stepping-up and officiating the game fairly.

Anyone can get a failing grade by doing nothing; to obtain a “C” or better takes effort. We should rather be noticed for doing well within the perimeters of officiating than for doing nothing and making a travesty of the game.

RULES CORNER

There are five rules in which the Batter is awarded Second base with no liability to be put out.

- Can you name the five rules?
- What section of the book would you find these rules?

I will have the answer for you in the next edition of our newsletter.

RULE 11.16 Hit Batter (By Pitch)

Rule 11.16.1 states, “A batter is awarded first base when a pitched ball is ENTIRELY within the batter’s box and it strikes the batter or her clothing. No ATTEMPT to AVOID being hit by the pitch is required; **however**, the batter may not obviously try to get hit by the pitch.”

This rule change was implemented at the beginning of our 2012 season and at times has caused some controversy amongst all Coaches, which centers around did the batter try to get hit by the pitch.

Pay attention to the batter’s body movements when the pitch is entering the box before automatically awarding her first base. If she sticks out her knees/legs or arms in an effort to get hit, even though the ball is in the box, you have a Dead Ball; the batter remains at bat and is awarded a ball for that pitch. If it’s ball four, you have a Dead Ball and award the batter first base.

MECHANICS

Below are four correct **Base Mechanics** that are often ignored at the college level:

- It is not your job to stop runners on foul balls or tell them not to slide.

This is the coaches’ responsibility.

- Do not signal/echo fall balls from the bases.
- There is no need to point to the plate umpire when you are ready to resume play after having called time for a player to tie her shoe or dust off. The plate umpire can see when she is ready to play.
- **HUSTLE**. Always run to and from any position, during a play, at the conclusion of a play and between innings.

All of the above Base mechanics and MORE can be found on page 67 and 68 under Random Guidelines of the Manual.

GAME MANAGEMENT

When does Game Management/Pre-Game start? Is it when you meet the coaches at the time you arrive at the field or at the pre-game with the coaches? I say NEITHER! Game Management/Pre-Game actually starts when you accept your game.

As the Plate Umpire or Crew Chief once you have accepted the game you should begin to prepare yourself by:

1. Entering the game information into your calendar: the location, time, partner(s) and teams.

2. If you have never been to the campus or off-site location, Google it for the estimated time it would take you to arrive. Make a note in your calendar what time you need to leave in order to arrive anywhere between an hour to 2 hours ahead of the scheduled game time according to the Conference you are working. This will assure that if you have something else to do personal or work-related you will give yourself enough time to schedule it appropriately or maybe on another day that is less time restrictive.
3. According to the Conference, be prepared to communicate with the Coach or Staff Management person anywhere from three to 10-days prior to your game by email. Some Conferences have a pre-determined contact date.* At the time you communicate with the above personnel you should also contact your partners separately or include them in the email. This will ensure that all crew members are on the same page regarding arrival time, location and parking arrangements.
4. At least one week prior to each game you should have some information regarding the tendencies of each team, their history with each other, if pertinent, some statistical information and their record/standings. This information needs to be discussed during your pre-game with your partner(s).
5. Although it is the responsibility of each team's Coach to have the current bat list available at pre-game inspection, it never hurts to keep a copy of the current Bat List with you, especially if you are working a lower-level college game, as your Bat list may be needed to facilitate the start of the game.

As a Base Umpire all of the above-mentioned steps should be adhered to by you, as well, except number three, which is **solely the responsibility** of the Plate Umpire or Crew Chief. However, if you have not received any communication from your Plate Umpire or Crew Chief three-days prior to your game, **it is your responsibility** to contact him or her by email, text or phone to confirm the meeting time, location, parking and any travel arrangements accommodations.

*Reference cited can be found in the Manual, pg 34 (Pregame Checklist)

Knowledge is Power and Experience is the best teacher.

