

TOP 10 TIPS Umpiring

By S. Redisch

#1 NO ONE COMES TO SEE THE UMPIRES

There's a reason we wear grey. Blend in. But look sharp doing it. Shoes polished. Phones left in the car. Everyone is here for the game and the players. Umpires are the facilitators who apply the rules of the game fairly. Make the calls, make them as correctly as possible and move the game along.

#2 UMPIRES ARE THE THIRD TEAM ON THE FIELD

Just as the teams playing the game communicate and back each other up in the field, the same goes for the umpiring team. Every batter, every pitch to a batter can bring a new situation that you have to anticipate. Use hand signals and verbal cues to communicate with your partner on each changing situation.

#3 PLAY YOUR POSITION

Each umpire has a jurisdiction which requires them to make a call. Know the scope of your jurisdiction and do not make a call outside that jurisdiction unless asked. One umpire should not call "out" and the other signal "safe."

#4 HUSTLE & FLOW

No one expects the umpire to match the speed and agility of the players to beat them to a base to make the safe or out call. But they do expect you to be in the best position possible to make a correct call. Your hustle may not be applauded by the fans, but the players and coaches know and appreciate that you take the game as seriously as they do.

#5 DELEGATE RESPONSIBILITY

Coaches are responsible for their players, collectively and individually. If a player is demonstrating unsportsmanlike conduct, discuss the situation with the coach, explain the lines that have been crossed and outline the consequences for the player and the coach if the behavior continues.

#6 MMMMECHANICAL MONOTONY

The goal is to create muscle memory that instantly puts you in the right position to make the right call. Where are your feet planted? Are your knees bent to line up with the strike zone? How far behind the pitcher am I? Does my partner know I will have the play at 3rd base? The monotony of mastering mechanics makes muscle memory.

#7 KNOW THE RULES

From catcher's interference to the infield fly, you will see all kinds of situations that require proper application of the rules. Does the overthrow merit awarding a runner one or two bases? Depends on which position made the throw. Don't just carry a rule book. Know it!

#8 LOUD & PROUD

It's a big field. Fielders adjust their positions pitch by pitch, often depending on the count. Runners on base move or stay depending on the umpire's call. Your partner's next move depends on hearing your call. Say it. Sell it. Own it.

#9 EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

There's something in every baseball game that you have never seen before. Much like the players, a moment of nonchalance can lead to a disastrous result for a team. Don't be the disaster.

#10 BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL ARE FUN

You are outdoors and on a baseball diamond. Kids are playing a child's game and having fun. Although you are getting paid to be there, if you aren't having fun along with the kids, then it becomes a job. Take pride in what you are doing and enjoy watching them play.