

May 10, 2017

We are in the play off season. Independent leagues have started and the public schools will begin within the next two weeks. There are several things that are consistent this time of the year.

- 1) Everyone is a little tired. Players, coaches and umpires.
- 2) Some are playing for more than others but everyone is playing for something.
- 3) Seniors are finishing their careers. Teams are finishing their season. Every game is going to send someone home. Frustration looms everywhere.

What can we do to minimize the possibility of making a mistake and increase our level of efficiency ?

- 1) Engage your brain before you open your mouth.
- 2) Don't make a statement that you cannot back up by rule or that results in a penalty that you do not plan to enforce.
- 3) Lack of rule knowledge is un-acceptable. We all have brain locks but for a crew to miss a rule is a mistake that cannot be defended.
- 4) Choose the words that you use in your response and explanation wisely and apply them correctly.
- 5) Be brief and to the point (backed up by rule).
- 6) Don't put a player or coach in a corner by not allowing them a way out of a situation. By making this mistake we are almost insuring that a confrontation will occur or continue.
(The result of any discussion is to answer a question which should help a coach or player understand our decision. That's why we back up our decisions by referencing a rule. Don't assume they are going to leave happy. Decisions are based on facts, happiness is based on emotions).
- 7) Answer questions, not statements. "You missed that call", or "that's awful", warrants no response.
- 8) Allow a coach to vent, if they are doing so professionally, Many times we get involved in the conversation before they even get to their point. Cutting them off increases their level of frustration and decreases our opportunity to give a correct and accurate response.
- 9) All the rules are important however take time to review the ones that we know are going to occur every game. Rules that "if you can't quote the book are going to cause major problems."
 - * Pitching requirements including the penalty for an illegal pitch,
 - * Substitution situations (understanding the difference between a unreported substitute and an illegal substitution.
 - * The flex/DP rule.
 - * Obstruction and interference penalties.

Control the things that you can control.

- * Look sharp in your uniform.
- * Act and look like you are engaged in the game.
- * Clarity of mind is important.
- * Keep your head on a swivel. Eliminate surprises.
- * Don't lose sight of the ball. Hardly anything happens without it.
- * Anticipate the play not the call.
- * Hustle and move with a purpose.
- * Angle and position = a higher rate of "call efficiency".

** Slow yourself down during the decision making process, control your breathing, review the play in your mind and use the proper mechanic. All are important elements in selling the call".*

** Understand your responsibilities on every play. Discipline yourself to be thinking "every play is going to involve me". Where do I need to be and what do I need to do to cover the situation. We cannot be asleep on a single pitch.*

** Judge not your partner, yet ye be judged.*

We are all going to miss judgement calls, we don't get to call NY.

The result should be do whatever you have to do to "get the play right."

*Jerry Stone
MROS Interpreter*