

AMATEURISH BEHAVIOR

Umpires sometimes do things that give away their lack of experience. Following these guidelines will eliminate many of the amateurish habits of umpires. To be accepted as an experienced umpire, you must either avoid or follow, as appropriate, the below items.

1. DON'T make unnecessary calls. A foul ball right straight to the backstop requires no vocal or physical call from any umpire; the same philosophy applies to a routine fly ball.
2. DO use your indicator properly. Notch the wheels at "0" and you'll rarely have to look at it. You can also "steal" a look by adjusting your mask with your left hand while checking the count. **DO NOT PUT INDICATOR IN FRONT OF YOUR FACE AFTER MAKING A CALL OR AT END OF INNING.** Umpires who constantly look at their indicators are looked upon by players, coaches and fans as either inexperienced or poorly trained.
3. DON'T let people throw you the ball. Have them toss it to the catcher who will then HAND you the ball.
4. DO watch what you say. Even casual conversation or profanity can be misconstrued. The best advice is do not initiate conversation with coaches and players unless it's directly game related. Umpires have been put on probation and even suspended for what they were alleged to have said. **THE LESS YOU SAY TO COACHES, PLAYERS AND FANS, the better.**
5. DO be careful of your attitude. Coaches and players pick up on an arrogant attitude fast. Be reasonable and approachable.
6. DO work every game as hard as you can. Don't give the impression you are doing the teams a favor by being there. Watch your body language. Standing around with your arms folded, having a bored expression, and not hustling gives the impression you don't want to be there.
7. DO have a pre game meeting with your partner. It will keep you out of more trouble than you'll ever realize. Also, DO have a post-game to discuss any unusual situations.
8. DON'T meet with your partner between innings. This should be done very rarely and usually only to clarify coverage problems. Don't meet after a controversial play unless absolutely necessary. If possible, wait an inning or two.
9. DON'T undermine your approach to the contest with negative pre game comments such as, "Well, this is going to be a blowout.", "Such and such a team has lousy pitching," or, "These guys are in last place, have lost 10 straight, etc. etc." Have a positive attitude toward the game.
10. DO give the count, both verbally and visually. "Two balls and two strikes," is preferred over "2-and-2" or "twenty-two." People who may not see you give the count, will hear it.
11. DO shine your shoes and have a clean uniform. As simple as this sounds, it is very important in making a positive first impression. Shoes that are not shined and shirts and pants that are dirty or wrinkled give the impression that an umpire is not serious about his job.
12. DO use an acceptable plate stance. If you want to earn the label of "Amateur" use a plate stance with one or both hands behind your back. Do this and you will show that you have had little or no training. If you are concerned about your hands getting hit, do like many major league umpires are now doing and place them behind your thighs as you take your stance.
13. AND FINALLY—to quote highly respected former Major League Umpire Ed Montague, "It doesn't take any talent to hustle." Move with enthusiasm. Hustle to the outfield between innings; hustle back to the plate from the infield or pitcher's mound; hustle to the infield from the A position.