

SRI BULLETIN #2 – March 6, 2012

WORKING AS A CREW

Working as a crew is critical to having a well umpired game. When watching a game, it is easy to see if there is a crew or individuals working the game within the first couple of innings.

The crew's responsibilities begin long before the umpires arrive at the field. Umpires should contact one another at least 48 hours prior to game day. Remind one another of the upcoming game assignment, game time and location. Discuss which parking lot you'll be at and what color jacket or shirt you will be wearing that day. There is no worse feeling than to be at the field waiting and hoping that your fellow umpire remembered the game. The crew is not off to a good start if proper communication protocol is not followed for each and every assignment.

The pre-game conference for umpires is critical. It's just as important if it's the first time you've worked with an umpire or the tenth time. It's important the crew discuss when U1 will cover third base, touch and tag responsibilities, fly ball and line drive coverage, fair foul coverage, and signals that will be used to communicate. (pg. 56 -59, Signal Chart, Oregon Baseball Umpires Manual) Don't assume that your fellow umpire knows what you're going to do.

Having called your partner and now completed a good pre-game conference, you are ready to step onto the field and start the game. Now communication is crucial. The use of hand signals is a must to insure proper crew coverage. I often see umpires doing a great job of giving all the proper signals at the proper time, but the signals have no meaning because they don't do what they said they were going to do. Where we see this most often is on the time play. Plate umpire after plate umpire will signal time play then go first baseline extended rather than lining up the play and the touch of home. Another thing that is troublesome is seeing one umpire fire off signal after signal all game long, and his partner standing there doing nothing. Working a game with a partner that is communicating with every batter and every change in situation makes the game much more fun. The most important thing to remember is that signals have meaning and all members of the crew must do what they say they are going to do.

Tad's Tricky Trivia: Hall of Fame

Name the five inaugural inductees into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

(see answer at end of bulletin)

WORKING AS A CREW (continued)

A crew needs to work together when a mistake happens. If the plate umpire misses his rotation to third or the base umpire over commits to a single play with multiple runners, the crew does their best to cover the play. Standing there and saying “that is your call, not mine” is unacceptable.

The final and most important mechanic working as a crew is **TRUST** and being **TRUSTWORTHY**. Umpires may do everything else well, but if they do not trust their partner to properly cover plays and make the correct calls, then it becomes impossible to work as a crew. That being said, we must also be trustworthy. If I say I’m going to cover third, I need to be there. If I agree in our pre-game conference that I am going to have touches and tags at a base, I need to make sure I watch all of them. In the two man system, an extraordinary amount of trust is required.

When you begin to work your games more as a crew and less as a single umpire, games become much more fun to work, and others will have much more fun working with you. Remember at the end of the game, the comments you should hear are for the crew. *‘Those umpires were.....’*

Tad Cockerill

OSAA Baseball State Rules Interpreter

cockerill51@gmail.com

Tad’s Tricky Trivia Answer: *Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth, Honus Wagner, Christy Mathewson, and Walter Johnson.*