

Oregon School Activities Association

Baseball SRI Bulletin – #3

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Getting the Call Right

The current thinking at all levels of play is that getting the call correct must prevail over umpire pride. That means previously rendered decisions may be reversed, but that doesn't mean that any and all calls can be changed. This bulletin will explore the guidelines for changing calls.

- In most cases the calling umpire is the one who must seek help on the plays in question.
- Umpires are prohibited from criticizing or interfering with another umpire's decision unless asked by the one making it.
- An umpire should seek help when his view is blocked or his position is such that his view of critical elements may have been blocked.
- Just because a coach asks for help, an umpire is not required to seek it. Don't use "asking for help" as a means to pacify a coach.
- Umpires are not advised to seek help on plays which they are 100 percent confident in their judgment and view of the play.
- Umpires should not, however, come off as arrogant by refusing a reasonable request for assistance.
- Coaches are not entitled to a second opinion when the calling umpire is certain his decision is correct.

Judgment calls cannot be reversed except in very limited circumstances. The situations listed below are examples of calls that could be changed.

- Deciding if a home run is fair or foul.
- Deciding whether a batted ball left the playing field for a home run or ground rule double.
- Cases in which a foul fly ball is caught or not.
- Cases in which a fair fly ball is caught or not if there are no runners on base.
- Cases in which a foul tip is dropped or trapped by the catcher.
- Cases in which a fielder may have pulled a foot.
- Cases when an umpire clearly errs in judgment because he did not see a ball dropped or juggled after a tag or force.

When an umpire seeks help, he should do so shortly after making the call. He should not have a lengthy discussion with the coach and then ask for help. That conversation must take place away from players and coaches. Such meetings should be infrequent and not a substitute for umpires seeking proper angles, exercising sound judgment, and having the conviction to stay with a call the umpire believes was properly made.

TAD'S TIP

Never bark at a player or coach. You don't like to be shouted at, so apply the same courtesy. Be firm when necessary, but use a normal relaxed voice. There are times when you need to raise your voice, but shouting often indicates loss of control.

See you at the yard.

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