

Oregon School Activities Association

Baseball SRI Bulletin – #3

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DOING WHAT'S RIGHT

During a break at a recent preseason clinic, I overheard a conversation between two other umpires. One asked the other how he felt about a new mechanics requirement. He replied, "Who cares? In our association we're going to keep doing things the way we always have."

The philosophy umpires should take onto the field is: *get the play right, no matter what your personal feelings may be about the rule or mechanic involved.* Some new mechanics will require a lot of effort to adopt, because they are different from how you have done things for many years or they are different than what you do at other levels you officiate.

In order to properly umpire a high school baseball game in the State of Oregon, umpires must enforce the **NFHS rules** and use the **Oregon Baseball Umpires Manual's** approved mechanics, whether you personally like them or not. This is true whether you are umpiring a JV game in Madras in April or whether you are umpiring the State 6A championship game in Salem in June.

For the games to be fair to all concerned, the umpires must apply the same rules, mechanics and philosophies throughout the state. One rule; One mechanic; One interpretation. For umpires to work effectively together, we must follow the same mechanics, or chaos can ensue. There is no reason why teams from different regions can play against one another without lengthy conversations about the rules for the day, but umpires from different associations seem to invariably have issues coordinating their mechanics for the day. If we are all following the prescribed mechanics, we should be interchangeable parts. If we are applying the rules consistently, teams and coaches should be in for no surprises.

If we disagree with rules or mechanics, there are avenues through which we can try and change them. I encourage each one of you to take this approach if you feel strongly enough about a rule and/or mechanic. Start with your local association trainer. Until there is an approved change, we owe it to the participants and to each other to play from the same deck.

It is especially critical for veterans to commit, for it is those with the most experience who most resist change. It requires checking egos at the door. It may involve processes that seem foreign, such as attending meetings (and paying attention) and obtaining, and actually using, the myriad of educational tools now available. To do less cheats everyone involved. Do not be the outlier who says, "My way or the highway." Do what is right.

Tad's Tip....

Successful umpires watch others, ask for advice, and are willing to share their opinions with other officials. Ask a veteran if you can sit in on their pregame and postgame discussions. When watching a game, note those things umpires do well. Ask questions on why they do the things they do. Pick their brains about philosophy and mechanics. Most veterans are always willing to help others, especially when the request for help is sincere.

See you at the yard.

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