

OSAA Umpires,

The 2018 Baseball season is already upon us.

Are you ready?

While the multi-sport officials will have an advantage, muscles used for each sport require pre-season conditioning, especially when it comes to the plate umpire. If the only walking you did over the winter was to the refrigerator and back, you may have trouble getting into those plate pants. This bulletin will focus on getting properly prepared for the upcoming season. Additionally, the bulletin will hi-light an important point of emphasis from the 2018 OAOA/OSAA pre-season supplement to the state baseball manual.

- Strengthening your core muscles is in an umpire's best interest. Healthy eating, cardiovascular exercises, walking and strength training are all great elements of improving ones fitness.
- To help alleviate soreness early in the season, gradually practice your plate stance. This will stretch and build those muscles, and increase endurance.
- Get into your plate stance and "set" for 5 or 6 seconds, about the same time as each pitch during a game. Try and complete two or three sets of 8-10 repetitions over the next several days prior to the season beginning. In addition, similar to a pitcher "throwing a bullpen" on his off day, complete those same sets on your off days early in the year when you may have three or four days between games.
- It is as important to check your uniform and gear as it is to get in shape. Upgrade and/or replace any gear that has had its last hurrah. Straps on the mask, chest protector and shin guards may need to be replaced. Pants that appear more pink than grey should be put on the permanent DL. Maybe you need a new hat? Ball bags seem to be an area I see umpires overlook. Get them cleaned and pressed. What about good shine on your shoes? Look the part, and be professional. Looking good goes with feeling good. Out dress your partners!
- Last, but also very important, please remember your cold weather gear! Layer up; hand warmers; gloves; multiple undergarments. "Spring" ball in Oregon is really "Winter" ball... Be prepared out there. It is no fun when we get so cold that we are uncomfortable.

Better sportsmanship for a better game

The state baseball committee, in conjunction with the NFHS, is again making a sportsmanship a point of emphasis for the upcoming high school baseball season. I encourage all umpires to read the information included in your packet regarding sportsmanship and the need for umpires to effectively model good behavior, encourage sportsmanship by the student-athlete, and warn and/or penalize participants who fail to exhibit proper sportsmanship. There is simply no place in the game for poor sportsmanship, particularly activities which demean, belittle, or threaten opponents. Taunting must be dealt with swiftly and effectively. Consistency amongst officials in enforcing a "no tolerance" policy in regard to such behavior will make the high school athletic experience better for everyone associated with the game.

I am not asking any of you to walk on to the field with a "chip on your shoulder." Instead, I am asking for the inner fortitude to deal with behavior which is clearly antithetical to the best interests of the game. There is no need to respond in any way which might escalate a situation or put you in a position to have to defend your own behavior. Be professional, be firm, and be expeditious.

First pitch is a few days away, be ready. Have a great season, and I'll see you at the yard!

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