

NESTOR CHYLAK

Several years ago, Hall of Fame Umpire Nestor Chylak conducted a weekend umpire clinic for a group of high school umpires. The advice he gave then applies just as well today. Here, in no particular order, are the highlights:

Umpiring in General

1. Appearance is vitally important.
2. Be on time.
3. Work with pride.
4. The only way you can be a good umpire is to work at it.
5. Be steady.
6. Don't get too technical.
7. Don't be stubborn—get the play right.
8. The only thing coaches want is consistency.
9. The name of the game is strikes.
10. If you ever have a losing attitude, you're in trouble.
11. Your only enemy is yourself.
12. Give a coach or player credit for trying to get an edge.
13. If you are umpiring by the clock, get out.
14. Don't get the worst of any situation.
15. In a rain or darkness situation, let both teams know what you are doing.
16. Be your own best friend.
17. There are too many ways to do things the hard way. Keep things simple.
18. Animosity rubs off—if you are mad—players and managers likely will be mad.
19. There is not one set way to umpire.
20. Don't walk on the field with a chip on your shoulder.
21. Keep the home plate meeting friendly.
22. It's a lot easier having fun during a game than arguing all the time.

Thoughts on Mechanics

1. The biggest mistake a plate umpire can make is not moving in front of the plate when the ball is hit.
2. Don't get too close to a play because it will affect your angle.
3. The biggest problem for a plate umpire in calling balls and strikes is staying down too long or getting down too late.
4. You can get in trouble by waiting too long on a decision.
5. The lazy umpire will catch most of the heat.
6. A plate umpire sets the tone for the crew by the way he hustles.

Handling Coaches and Players

1. Whether you like it or not, coaches and players have the right to complain.
2. If you are right, it takes guts to take the heat.
3. If a coach wants to protest a game, don't try to convince him he is wrong.
4. Don't try to get in the last word in an argument.
5. When you are right on a call, maintain an even-handed attitude toward the coach or player.
6. On an argument: 1) Get him walking, 2) Don't get in the last word, and 3) Don't show him up.
7. An umpire will get into trouble by making conflicting comments on the same play.
8. The worst thing an umpire can do is go "nose-to-nose" with a coach.
9. Ejecting someone is easy, it takes more ability to settle a problem and still keep a player or coach in the game.
10. A coach will continue arguing a play as long as you let him.
11. If an umpire has a lengthy argument with a coach—it's the umpire's fault. Don't "write a book" on an argument.
12. Don't ever ask a coach or player, "What did you call me?"
13. Don't allow a coach to get you to check with your partner on a routine play.
14. Attitude can cause coaches to get on an umpire.
15. If an umpire thinks back to some of the big arguments in which he has been involved, chances are he has helped cause it to get out of control by the way he handled himself or the situation.
16. Watch out how you say things. An antagonistic tone of voice can create additional problems.