

UMPIRE GAME CONTROL

To be a successful umpire, you must be proficient in appearance, rules knowledge, mechanics and GAME CONTROL.

Your ability to control the game and to handle the situations as they arise is something that can only be gained by experience. One attribute of highly respected umpires is their ability to present a calming influence in volatile situations.

There are no hard rules that will make your umpiring problem-free or that will work in every situation. However, listed below are some guidelines that have assisted many umpires in controlling their games while at the same time developing stature as a respected umpire.

RESPECT must be earned. It is earned over a period of time through hard work and dedication. Respect comes when players and coaches believe in your ability to show consistent good judgment, and be approachable and fair regardless of the circumstances.

1) Learn when to respond and when to ignore comments. Answer reasonable questions. Ignore most comments. If a coach or player wants you to hear something, they will generally say it to your face. Thus, you don't want to be asking a player or coach what he said or called you. This can be considered baiting. If you didn't hear it the first time, ignore it until you do hear something that merits enforcement.

2) If you can't control yourself, you can't control the situation. It starts with you. You have to be in control to create control. If you lose control, you have lost everything.

3) You can't be a calming influence if you are shouting.

4) Do not stay on top of a close play after making your call. Watch the play until it is completed then clear out. Umpires who hang around after a close call are inviting an argument.

5) Find a place to smile. You can't have a grin on your face all the time because then, people won't take you seriously. However, a well-placed smile now and then will tell players, coaches and fans that you are happy to be there.

6) Never put your hand on or arm around a coach or player or other team personnel. Don't let them do this to you as well. Putting your hand on or arm around a coach or player will seriously compromise your impartiality.

7) Sometimes a player will do something that while not meriting an ejection, will possibly compromise game control. Be sure to talk to that player. You might say something like, "I am OK with what happened, but it didn't look good and I have to come over here and say something to you." This gives the appearance you are addressing a possible problem. By the same token, thank a player for showing poise in a tough situation.

Think of the people you consider top umpires, whether professional or amateur. One of the attributes that make them top umpires is their ability to keep the game and themselves, under control.

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