

WHAT MAKES A GOOD UMPIRE

The following is the criteria the Evaluators look for when ranking officials.

#1 Professionalism

Respect for the game and all involved (players, coaches, fans & fellow umpires)

Conduct/attitude/demeanor toward others - on and off the field.

PERCEPTION IS REALITY How are you perceived?

Arriving to games on time; at least 30 minutes before game time, preferably 1 hour.

#2 Appearance

Dress and maintain your appearance in a manner befitting the dignity and importance of the great game of baseball. No faded hats, shirts or pants. Clean shoes.

The poorly dressed umpire suffers loss of respect to the same degree that the unkempt businessman does, which may diminish credibility.

Looking professional is part of being professional.

#3 Attitude

Teachable (the official who can't 'listen' as he is being taught/critiqued is a reflection of how he would perform in a game...with coaches, players) **Don't be a 'yea, but' official.**

Be firm but not overbearing Confident

but never "cocky" Friendly but not

companionable Calm but alert

Courteous but not ingratiating (to gain favor by deliberate effort) **A**

dignified attitude will often preclude and prevent an argument.

#4 Physically fit

An umpire who is not physically fit is a detriment to the game of baseball.

Athletes are well conditioned and officials must keep pace.

Must be able to move quickly to get into best position to cover a play. Hustle is crucial.

#5 Timing

Decisions must be made positively and with good timing. Timidity or over hesitation indicates a lack of confidence.

Most novice umpires must guard against rendering decisions prematurely.

#6 Judgment

Acquired through experience.

Decisions must be made on the basis of fact.

Every umpire will sometime err in his judgment. NEVER ATTEMPT TO 'EVEN IT UP'. **Consistency is key; consistently good, that is.**

#7 Rules knowledge

Good umpiring is dependent, to a large extent, upon a complete knowledge and understanding of the rules and applying them properly.

To know the rules thoroughly requires constant and analytical study.

Must study not just 'read' so that mental pictures of plays and situations result.

Frequent errors in rule interpretation or in judgment quickly cause the players, coaches and spectators to lose confidence.

#8 Proper mechanics

Essential in attaining the best coverage to make good judgment calls.

Important to take the best position possible for any given play without being in the way of any player or thrown or batted ball.

Many umpires who know the rules well fail to be accepted because their mechanics are poor.



The efficient umpire will not 'showboat'. Competent umpires effectively execute their duties without flair. Being overly dramatic all too often does not accomplish the purpose for which it is intended and such actions frequently cause the players to lose confidence in the decisions made by an 'actor'. **Quiet dignity is much more effective.**

#9 Game Control – Proper handling/defusing of unsportsmanlike situations. Professional handling of ejections. Keep game moving.

Dealing with irate coach or player – Don't look to battle.

Dealing with unsportsmanlike behavior; on the bench or on the field- Know when to 'nip' it in a professional manner before it gets out of hand.

If an ejection occurs be sure you and your partner know your responsibilities.

One minute between ½ innings; line-up card changes done efficiently and quickly; conference held to reasonable length of time; etc.

*It is universally acknowledged umpires have made notable contributions to the development of baseball traditions. It is the duty of every umpire to contribute all that he or she can to maintain the great traditions in baseball by giving this chosen profession or avocation the best service possible. To maintain and continue high standards, it is necessary that each and every umpire carry out each assignment to the best of his or her ability. Throughout the country umpires have been and are admired for their **Integrity**. NFHS Umpires Manual*

Key points from document by Jon Bible (6 time College World Series umpire, 23 consecutive NCAA D1 Regionals)

1. Makes no difference how great your judgment, mechanics or rules knowledge if you do things that cause people to perceive you negatively. Umpires who are weak in some or even all of those categories will be in demand if they have mastered the intangibles well enough that they have a positive image. Umpires who gripe about the caliber of their games or chalk up to politics the fact that someone else gets better assignments would do well to keep that fact of officiating life in mind.
2. Are you overweight? Is your uniform dirty? Are your pants so tight that they get caught on your shin guards when you rise out of your crouch? Does your shirt stick out after two innings? Is your cap from the WWII era?
3. Do you visit with players and coaches?
4. Do you have mannerisms that unwittingly convey fear or a lack of confidence? Some coaches who sense such things in an umpire, especially a new one, are like wolves presented with fresh meat.
5. You don't see major leaguers throwing fits and yelling at the top of their lungs...on the contrary, everything they do is controlled, which projects a relaxed confident "This isn't my first rodeo" image.
6. Do you visit your partner every half-inning? Talk incessantly with catchers? Umpires carrying on running chats with catchers or with partners between innings ranked second on the coaches' "pet peeve" list.
7. Do you yank your mask and mount the dugout when you start getting flak on pitches? Use the old "one more word" line? If a batter mutters something under his breath while walking away, do you follow him and demand to know what he said? In an argument, must you have the first, middle and last word? In all cases you look like the aggressor.
8. To know the rules and mechanics and have good judgment is essential. All that is for naught, however, if for whatever reason you are perceived as dictatorial, humorless, clueless and the like. To be a complete umpire, concentrate as much on the intangibles of good officiating as you do on the other things.
9. Be nice. Don't look for trouble. Strive for excellence, not perfection.