

# THE ROLE OF AN UMPIRE

“The trouble with umpires is that, they just don’t care which side wins.”

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## THE ROLE OF THE UMPIRE

- Definition – Webster’s
  - “a person who rules on the plays in a game and who sees that the rules are not broken.”
  - “a person chosen to settle a dispute; arbiter, especially one whose decisions are binding on both or all parties to the dispute.”
- Is this what we do? Is this what it is all about?

## THE OFFICIAL’S ROLE

- After players & coaches, we are 3rd dimension of athletic contests.
- Good officiating facilitates the event, ensuring that outcome is dependent upon skills & tactics of players.
- Poor officiating detracts from the contest and decreases enjoyment for players & fans.

## MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- See that event proceeds within the context of the rules of the game.
- Interfere as little as possible, never seeking to become the focus of attention.
- Set and maintain an atmosphere for the enjoyment of the contest.
- Show concern for the athletes.

## THE PURPOSE OF HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS

- National Federation – “Interscholastic Activities, the other half of education.”
- Our Number One Priority – Sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity
- Life lessons – preparation for life

## BELIEVE IN WHAT YOU DO

- Umpiring gives you a chance to shape the lives of young people.
- Gives you a chance to stay active in a sport.
- Gives you a chance to ensure ethics, sportsmanship and fair play remain important.
- Teaches you responsibility, work ethic and professionalism.

## WE WEAR MANY HATS

- Those who play a role of an official also plays a role of an educator.
- You are the state’s or the league’s representative at the game.
- Maintain order, everyone else has an emotional investment.
- Control the game, not be controlled. Don’t have to be in control to have control.

## AN UMPIRE’S ROLE

- Know the rules; know the spirit of the rule. Coaches & players expect that of you.
- Insure that the game is played as intended; that no advantage is gained that was not intended by the rules.
- Insure that a team wins or loses the game based on their skill, tactics and preparation and a dose of plain luck.

## THE ROLE OF THE UMPIRE

- Make the HARD call.
  - Anyone can call the strike down the middle or the out by 10 feet.
- Be the one that is objective.
- Be the adult, in control and confident.
- Model sportsmanship and proper behavior for the players, fans and coaches.

## IMPORTANT POINTS

- Know why the game is being played – not for you to be able to officiate.
- Behave as if you will be on Sports Center.
- Treat each act as an independent event.
- Forget the fans – they do not know the rules, they have an emotional stake, and they love to boo you.
- Answer reasonable questions – some comments do not require a response.
- Do not nit-pick, make sure it is important to the game.
- Keep a good sense of humor, be able to laugh at yourself.
- Stay humble, you have not missed your last one.
- Delay a confrontation – don’t seek it.
- Do not challenge – do not embarrass them.
- If you must eject – realize it too is a part of the educational process.

## BELIEVE IN OFFICIATING

- Be receptive where appropriate. You are never as bad or as good as they say.
- Be honest with yourself
- Be passionate. Love what you do. Look forward to next game.
- Be courageous. Have strong will and conviction. Rise above it and do the right thing.
- Be a Leader. Don’t fall into the trap of everyone for himself.
- Be persistent – work every game to be better.
- Be self-disciplined. Be responsible.
- Have unshakable faith. Believe in yourself.
- Think before you speak. Choose your words wisely.
- Think before you penalize.

## KEY POINTS

- Respect the players for their time, work and dedication to the game.
- Respect the coaches for all they do, their impact on the players, for what they endure.
- Respect the parents for their time, money and emotional investment
- Your respect is earned. Not because you have on the uniform.

## GAIN PERSPECTIVE

- Remember what it was like to play. Have a bad call go against you.
- Coach a team in the summer, have a great play called wrong.
- Be a parent, have your child called out on a pitch at the ankle.
- Understand.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

- Enlighten – don’t debate
- Explain – don’t argue
- Talk – don’t pontificate
- Speak calmly – don’t shout
- Be positive – not negative
- Be friendly – not pompous
- Be confident – not meek or arrogant/cocky
- Be the umpire the coaches and players want for the right reasons
- Be the umpire other umpires want to work with