Ohio High School Athletic Association

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Softball Bulletin

Director of Officials Development – Softball

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- Important Reminder - Due to some unexpected circumstances we have changed both the date and site for our pre-tournament clinic that will cover the three umpire system, as well as other topics. We apologize for any inconvenience. The new date and location are -

   Saturday, May 11, 2019

   WAGGONER ROAD JUNIOR HIGH

   360 SOUTH WAGGONER RD

   REYNOLDSBURG, OH 43068-9707

   This free clinic is intended for umpires working the three umpire system in postseason play but is open to all OHSAA umpires. No preregistration is needed. Registration will be at noon with the clinic running from 12:30-4PM. We hope to see you there!

- On the topic of tournament play we start our sectional games next week and as such it’s a great time for all of our umpires to “turn it up a notch” and work on our concentration and mechanics between now and June 1. As a reminder for district and regional games our three umpire mechanics are in the NFHS Umpires Manual. For the forty eight umpires working regional and state games with four umpire crews we will email you our four umpire mechanics well before regional play starts. For many umpires we’ll be working with new partners who we don’t know and are unfamiliar with. Remember, our key expectation is to follow the printed mechanics provided, no matter how many umpires are on the field. That is the only way everyone can be on the same page. Thanks for no pre-planned deviations!
• Congratulations to Mike Burwell of Westerville. Mike is a ten year OHSAA umpire who has quickly moved up the ladder and was recently selected to umpire the 2019 Softball Pan Am Games in Lima, Peru. Mike has worked our state tournaments, is an OHSAA certified instructor and an observer/instructor on our Softball Umpire Improvement Team. Keep up the good work Mike – we will be watching this summer along with the rest of the hemisphere!

• Let’s talk about what is not part of an umpire’s pregame responsibilities. In our last full bulletin we discussed Rule 3-6-20 “Bench and Field Conduct”. I like to call this the twenty commandments because it has twenty sections and covers a multitude of softball sins. It’s important for umpires to know the penalties for each of the sections as they do vary based on severity of the offense. Generally speaking, but not quite always, the more serious offenses are near the end of the section. What does this have to do with pregame responsibilities? A good question - we have had some issues with umpires who have decided to issue some or all of the warnings in this section at the pregame conference or some other time before the contest. **This is not to be done!** Many of the violations (some examples - jewelry and equipment, careless bat throwing, unreported substitute) call for some sort of warning on the first offense and a more serious penalty for the second and subsequent offenses. The rule is written in this way because the spirit and intent, as well as the letter of the rule, is to warn and penalize on the second offense. When umpires try to issue pregame warnings and then penalize on the first actual offense the rule is not being followed. Also, please note that each violation category has separate warnings and these are not combined. Therefore, if you have an unreported substitute and a player wearing jewelry you have two warnings, one in each category.

• Now, let’s skip the game and jump to postgame responsibilities. We have had some “postgame ejections” this year and these can at times be appropriate. Keep in mind that the umpires continue to have jurisdiction over the contest until they have left the field. Also, if you are harassed by anyone after leaving the field it’s important to submit a report to our office about the incident. At the same time, we have had times where umpires are staying on the field to observe the “handshake lines” after the games. **This is not a part of your responsibility!** The best advice that I got from one of my early mentors was that officials should follow two rules after the game – “MOUTH SHUT AND FEET MOVING – AND DON’T GET THE TWO CONFUSED”. Certainly, the rules require us to pause in the event of a possible appeal on the final play of the game but that is a rare occurrence. When we hang around without any reason we are only inviting trouble and as you know trouble can have a way of finding us. Bottom line – follow the advice that I have relayed from John Dunnette and you may be able to avoid some problems.