

Umpiring – Focus **and** Concentration

Darrell Arnold

Regardless of the many *elements* of umpiring which comprise seasons and games, there is one common element we umpires must strive to master: **Focus and Concentration.**

Focus and Concentration can make or break us as umpires. Most of us in the collegiate game do not umpire as our primary career, so immediately we have a challenge in being able to channel our time and energy into college baseball for four months a year. This means, that in short bursts, usually 2 to 4 hours at a time, we have to be able to completely compartmentalize our **Focus** on a job that requires an immense amount of **Concentration**. One of the things that make umpires, who truly succeed in our game-is their ability to turn off everything else in their world **and channel all of their mental and physical energy to the game that they are working on that day.** For many of us this means that you have to shut down the challenges of your primary career for a short time and block out the things going on at home when it is game time. This time has to be *compartmentalized* for the baseball game you are working in order to be able to officiate at your best.

Once we cross the foul line, there are an unending number of **things** we have to do as umpires to manage the games we work. At this point, you have to be able to *compartmentalize* your **focus** even further, we have to block out the crowd, promotions that go on in the stadium and other outside stimulus that can take our mind off the task at hand--**as we know the smoothest game can turn into a big mess in one pitch, thus, being ‘locked in mentally’ is the way to preserve that smoothness.**

I have worked in college baseball for over 20 years and the one thing that has been consistent for me was a pregame routine that gets my mind channeled towards the game at hand. Developing these routines can be a key to your performance and success. Develop a **focused routine** before each game that helps your mind to *sort-of-shed* all of the other complexities in your world and get to the place where all your mental energy is directed towards baseball-- make sure you plan on doing that before each game to maximize your performance on the field.