

# IMPROVEMENT IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER - MAYBE!

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Seven weeks have come and gone. Seven weeks left in the regular season. You wait seven months to get back in the uniform and once it starts, it's over. The game that we truly love seems way too short.

That brings to mind the first area of concern. As an umpire you can't squander your opportunity on the diamond when you get the chance. Give every pitch and every play your best effort--that all starts with high focus and thinking ahead of the pitch. Perfecting those two techniques will eliminate mistakes and help you to understand what is going to happen on the diamond, long before it happens.

Weekend Series: I have witnessed several umpires--who appear to be bored, bigger than the game, or not interested. This **attitude** leads to umpires being fooled, missing plays, being out of position, not getting set to make the proper judgment on the play. As you know, working a Division I baseball game is not an easy task. Doing it the proper way takes a lot of mental work which is very fatiguing. To do it the proper way is to show control, be assertive (in a positive way), high energy and focus on all aspects of the game. Act like this is an exciting adventure and take **pride** in your performance--it makes the game a lot more fun and life a lot easier on the diamond.

Umpiring is not that difficult **if you do the little things right**. Don't ever try to do too much or invent the wheel--let the game come to you and use the proper mechanics: **you will be successful**. Here are a few disconcerting observations, (but all are easily correctable) from seven weeks of travel and nearly 150 evaluations.

- Way too much conversing with coaches and players. Takes away from focus.
- Not getting set on plays. Moving through the play.
- Not creating proper angles and distance on plays.
- Call out or safe too quick. Well before the play has been complete.

- Alignments at the wings are very bad. Not adjusting to the defense.
- Pause, Read and React is very poor. Not knowing where your outfielders are on every new batter. Read the fielders and don't stay too long on flight of the ball.
- Not meeting standards of the strike zone. Way too many white line strikes.
- Poor presence! Need to carry yourself in a professional manner, at all times. Look the part and act the part.
- Umpires trying to do too much.
- Taking their eyes off the ball before it is in the pitchers glove.
- Not getting set on fly balls in the outfield. Not creating good angles on fly balls. Be ready for catch or no catch.
- Need to review rotations for 3 and 4 man mechanics. Several mistakes on basic rotations.
- Not reading your partners keys. Partners need to give good keys.
- Coaches out of the box and no umpire will address the coach in a proper manor.
- Enforce the safety "V".
- **RELAX! FOCUS! PROCESS! PRESENCE! ENERGY!**

**I have seen some outstanding umpiring this season—much more good than bad!** As the season heats up, we need to be the best we can be. Ask yourself, *what can I do better the rest of the season, to be the best I can be?* The season goes fast. **DON'T SQUANDER IT!**  
**FINISH STRONG!**