

## APPROACHABILITY—*Gee I've Never Heard That Before*

APPROACHABILITY . . . besides coaches reminding me/us that “this is their livelihood” the word/phrase I hear most from coaches during the season and at off-season meetings is “the umpires need to be approachable.”

Well, as you might have guessed, I have a few thoughts on approachability. Yes, umpires who are approachable and good listeners generally fare better than those who are tough to talk to. When a coach comes out under control and approaches you in an appropriate and respectful way, I do expect you to listen and respond professionally to his question and/or concern. However, let's not confuse being approachable with being inappropriately passive.

If a coach is coming at you in a full sprint, m-fing and c-sucking you, getting profane and/or personal, or putting a show on at your expense, you don't have to be the least bit approachable. If the coach is inappropriate, shut him down quickly with a warning and, if necessary, follow with an ejection.

Similarly, (and please pay attention to this one) if a coach has been unsportsmanlike and you eject him and he now wants to approach you for a discussion, he lost that opportunity when he was ejected and you owe him no further explanation at that time. After an ejection turn and walk away and do not respond to a coach you've already ejected.

Partner(s)—**this is not the time to be a casual observer**—get moving toward the ejected coach in a firm and efficient manner without appearing overly aggressive. Get the ejected coach away from your partner and get him going toward his dugout. Do not stand in place and allow an ejected coach to berate/lecture you. Use phrases such as, “Coach, you've been ejected, you've got to leave the field.” “Coach, let's not make this worse than it already is,” “Coach, keep in mind the prolonged arguing rule, you don't want to get yourself suspended,” “Coach, this is your **official warning**, if you don't start moving toward your dugout, you will receive a two-game suspension for prolonged arguing.”

**Take care of your partner** and do everything possible to get the coach off the field without a suspension but, if the coach ignores all your efforts, than *accommodate* him with a couple of games off.