

What describes your umpiring career: hobby or profession?

Umpiring has taken me places and enabled me to experience many awesome venues that I would've never seen otherwise. I was blessed to enjoy several of these experiences this past season. In addition, I have been able to work with some high quality individuals on the field. These individuals get most of their plays right but that is not all. Many of these individuals are experts in handling situations. Still, that is not all. Many of these same individuals have another trait in common. These individuals are true professionals, on and off the field.

What does it mean to be a professional? Merriam-Webster defines a profession as "a type of job that requires special education, training, or skill." Searching the internet yielded the following via vocabulary.com: "When you talk about the methods, characteristics, and attitudes of a person holding a job that requires higher education or advanced training, you're talking about their professionalism." How do you approach your umpire career? Is it a hobby? Or do you spend significant time honing your craft both in-season and during the off-season?

I grew up in a blue collar family. My dad has been a truck driver in the oil fields of West Texas for more than three decades. Growing up, I watched my dad wake at 3:30 a.m. regularly and work a sixteen-hour day only to come home, eat, sleep a few hours and do it all over again. He has done his job without an accident for over thirty-five years. This is not an example of good fortune. Rather, I believe that my dad has committed significant time, resources, and energy to become the skilled professional he is today.

The upcoming season is a few months away. We are all busy with our careers, families, and life in general. However, there will be some time to reflect on where you are and where you want to be. Many times the difference is a fine line. Professionalism alone will not get you 'there'. However, a lack of it will keep you from advancing. The following quotes were crafted by some very successful individuals and share some common threads. Happy Thanksgiving.

"Winning is not a sometime thing, it's an all time thing. You don't win once in a while, you don't do things right once in a while, you do them right all the time. Winning is a habit." -Vince Lombardi

To achieve success, whatever the job we have, we must pay a price.”

“Success is like anything worthwhile. It has a price. You have to pay the price to win and you have to pay the price to get to the point where success is possible.

Most important, you must pay the price to stay there. –Vince Lombardi

“It takes twenty years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you’ll do things differently.” -Warren Buffett