

Staying Power

By Danny Mascorro

How many times have you seen an umpire work really hard to attain a goal only to reach that goal and their performance falls off the following year(s)? Unfortunately I think we have all witnessed this too many times. Every umpire at every level has set a goal; at the NCAA level the goals are usually:

1. Umpiring non-conference college baseball games
2. Umpiring in a NCAA college baseball conference
3. Umpiring in a NCAA conference tournament
4. Umpiring in a NCAA Regional and Super Regional
5. Umpiring at the College World Series

Every one of these steps takes planning and hard work to attain. Not one of these steps is easy. So why does an umpire work so hard to reach any or all of these steps and their performance falls off?

Complacency:

Many experienced umpires I have talked to over the years agree that complacency is the biggest reason. When we think we have “made it”, a sense of entitlement follows. What some umpires don’t realize is that with every step forward in your umpire progression you “Raise the Bar” pertaining to your own performance. You are viewed by coaches, players, coordinators and your partners at a higher level and expectations of you are greater. It takes a lot of hard work every game and every year to continue to umpire NCAA Baseball at a high level. Never assume that once you reach one of the goals listed above you will automatically be back next year; it doesn’t work that way.

Leadership:

Every one of us needs to continue to develop our leadership skills. You cannot be a part time leader or pick and choose when you want to be a leader. You do not have to be a Crew Chief to be a leader, everyone at this level is viewed as a leader. Leadership skills in baseball are both on the field and off. There have been a number of skilled umpires who are no longer in college baseball because of off the field issues and this is due to a lack of leadership. Approachability and remaining calm in stressful situations is a solid trait of leadership.

Attitudes:

This is the area that most feel contributes to complacency. Everyone can and will have a bad day. This is totally different than having a bad attitude. A bad attitude is a choice we make and it affects everyone around you; coaches, players and your partners. It is tough to be in a locker

room for a weekend with partners who have a bad attitude. Nothing is better than working weekends with partners who have positive attitudes; it makes for a great weekend.

Remember: Some people light up the room when they enter and some people light up the room when they leave. We have a choice on which one we want to be.