

## The 3 Ps of Umpiring.

I believe that there are three Ps of umpiring that are very important to an umpire's success: **Professionalism, Positioning, and Patience.**

**Professionalism** starts in the winter where we as umpires need to start our conditioning for the season. Upgrading your equipment is also something you should do prior to the season. Remember your appearance in your uniform is the first impression you make on coaches. Reading the rulebook and understanding the intent of the rule is vitally important in handling situations on the field professionally. Pre-game professionalism is arriving early, dressed appropriately, and conducting a thorough pre-game led by the crew chief without interruptions so all are on the same page. Game professionalism means you should work every game like you are being evaluated, or it is your last game. Handle conflict professionally by letting the coach talk without interruption and making sure you listen attentively. You shouldn't start thinking about a response too quickly as you may miss something that the coach says that will help your case. Post-game professionalism is simple. Don't be the "yeah, but" guy, and if you don't want to know the truth, don't ask the question. Take constructive criticism from the crew chief. He is there to help you become a better umpire.

The second P is **Positioning** and on the field could be the most important part of umpiring. Getting in a proper position and getting set gives the best look at the play. Following the **CCA Manual** and your conference coordinator's request is a great place to start. When working the lines, you should want to get as close to the bag as you can for the best look at the fair/foul call. Choose between the "B" or "C" position when you have a runner on first. The "B" position gives you a great look at the swipe tag, and the "C" position gives you a great look at the impact zone on the tag. The choice between these two positions is a personal one. Home plate umpires need to do everything they can to work in the slot. Get to the 45' line for the possible interference call. Positioning for the play at the plate starts with getting to the point of the plate. Step back and observe the play unfolding, then let the throw and catcher take you to the play. Also, third base extended gives you a great look at the swipe tag at the plate.

The last P is **Patience** which is something we all need to work on. Patience in timing can help you on balls/strikes, and safes/outs. Work on the easy calls by watching the first baseman the entire way until he shows voluntary release. This will help you when there's a close call giving yourself a chance to review the play in your mind. On fly balls use the Pause, Read, and React method. Pause to see the fly ball, then turn and Read the outfield. They will tell you where the ball is, and if it's going to be trouble. After assessing the situation, React, always remembering to side on going out when you are in doubt. The other side of Patience is in advancement in your trade. Make sure you are ready. It is better to wait a year or two than to be put into a situation and fail. Remember, you may not get a second chance.