

It is **amazing** to look back over the past 10 years and to see where College Baseball (Division I) was, and where it is, presently. Not many would argue that our game is at all-time high: with hundreds of games on Television, K-zone via ESPN, and now with the accelerated implementation of Instant Replay--we, as umpires, have equaled, if not exceeded the quality of play on the field. Over these past 10 years, Dave Yeast and Gene McArtor, not only raised the level of umpiring on the field, but they stressed to us the importance of professionalism. Now, with George M. Drouches taking over, he has asking us all to 'buy-in' and take ownership of what we have and what we can control. There is not anything in the professional world that equals to what, we as umpires go through on the field for each and every game. I would even guess-to-say that no one takes to heart *:how we as umpires go about evaluating ourselves and our partners on the field.* The evaluation process, alone, can make an umpire walk out of a locker-room on a 'High' or, in some circumstances, ruin a friendship or even a crew. Here are 5 points that I feel are very important in the evaluation of umpire.

1. Valued Opinion: What kind of Crew Chief are you? **Are you a leader or are you all about yourself?** The way that I begin a post game evaluation is to talk about the *things* I did on the field well and the rotations/plays I did not do so well. I NEVER ask guys, especially younger umpires-what they thought of a pitch or a play that I had. I KNOW I missed it, and I do not want to put themselves in a position to 'agree' with the Chief. I feel talking about these things will open up a good line of communication between all the crew members. This can be difficult for guys just becoming Crew Chiefs when the number 2 umpire might think he's as good as you or better!

2. Fair Reporting: Fair reporting is what the Crew Chief has talked about to his partner(s) on what was observed in the game or games. These positive comments and/or suggestions are what must be sent to the Supervisor in the Evaluation. The suggestions MUST be talked about in the locker-room, or in private, accordingly, with the umpire(s). Get their feelings to see if they agree with you; even better yet- you and the crew might learn something from their comments. Finally, there cannot be any surprises in the Evaluation--if this happens, this is the fastest way to lose your respect as a Crew Chief.

3. Positive Comments: Positive comments about your partners' plate or base work will go a long way! On the Division I level, we should know when we missed a rotation or pitch/play. Being positive, even when a series starts, gains mutual respect throughout the crew. Respect as a Crew Chief leads to being a mentor. We all have mentors we know and trust-especially- when we are having a problem seeing a pitch or a play. *If you can effectively communicate with your partners-- they will trust your judgment.*

4. Constructive Criticism: Usually equals hurt feelings! You cannot talk down to your partners and your comments must be short and to the point. Relating a story of how you made the same mistake, or what you would have done in the same situation--is a good start. If the 'what-ifs' or I disagree come out of your partner(s)--let it go. You, as Crew Chief, have done your job. Nothing else good will come out of your suggestions.

5. Post Season/Regional/Super Regional: This is the toughest as Crew Chief. The first thing I say to the crew in the locker-room is, *your Coordinator and the NCAA believe you deserve to be here!* Relax, have fun, I am not here to write poor reports on anyone! If there is a 4 man mechanic that needs work on, I'll pull that umpire aside and talk about it-and offer suggestions. I don't offer much else unless someone asks. Finally, if there is something that is troublesome or uncomfortable, and needs to be reported to the NCAA, I will inform the umpire that I have to add this to the report. All my evaluations-which are set to the NCAA-are forwarded to the individual umpire.