

TRAINING UMPIRES WITH YOUR EVALS

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USING EVALUATIONS AS TRAINING TOOLS

▶ INTRODUCTION

- Creating a tool that will be effective in a painless and meaningful way.
- Learning to translate and interpret what your eyes see.
- Learning to use the written word to enhance the performance of others.



Yogi Berra once said

YOU CAN OBSERVE A LOT BY JUST WATCHING.

WE MADE TOO MANY WRONG MISTAKES.

IT AIN'T THE HEAT, IT'S THE HUMILITY.

Effective Umpire Evaluation

WHEN GIVING AN UMPIRE EVALUATION, MAKE SURE TO AVOID TOO MUCH NEGATIVE COMMENTARY, REITERATE WHAT GOOD THE UMPIRE DOES, AND COVER THE ENTIRE GAME OR TOURNAMENT.

THERE IS NO REASON FOR THE UMPIRE TO DREAD RECEIVING AN EVALUATION AS LONG AS IT GIVES THE UMPIRE HELP IN IMPROVING.

Avoid Consistently negative comment

- ▶ Constructive criticism differs from negative commentary. While all of us are weak in some areas, don't make the umpire feel worse about it by being mean or degrading.

Reiterate the umpire's positive contributions

- ▶ Umpire evaluations are not just for constructive criticism, they also provide time to praise umpires for the good work they have done.
- ▶ If the umpire had a strong game on the plate, give specific information that the umpire used. It will boost confidence and reinforce the behavior or mechanic.



Offer tips for improvement

- ▶ The entire point of an evaluation is so the umpire can learn what they are doing right and wrong, reinforce the correct mechanic or behavior, and improve upon their weak points.
- ▶ Highlight how the umpire can be better at their game.

Useful performance review phrases

- ▶ Excels at
 - Excels at paralleling the baseline when moving to call the out at first on a double play.
- ▶ Improved (specific area) by (specific way)
 - Improved sell out signal by moving feet parallel when throwing the arm.
- ▶ Effectively communicates by (specific instances)
 - Effectively communicates as evidenced by saying loudly, "I have third, and visually verifying U1 is moving to the plate in the 3 umpire system."
- ▶ Shares ideas and techniques
 - Effectively shared angles on pickoff plays at third base in post game conference with umpire team.

More effective phrases and sentences

- ▶ Displays an ability to learn and rapidly adapt to quickly changing situations (be specific)
- Displays an ability to learn and rapidly adapt to quickly changing situations as plays at the plate develop.
- ▶ Makes effective use of time
- Effectively keeps the game moving as evidenced by making sure the warm up time between half innings is limited to one minute or five pitches.

The research shows

- ▶ Learning is more effectively reinforced and personalized when the learner knows the why, how and becomes responsible for learning.
- ▶ Check out the manual and email me with what you found.
- ▶ What does the rule book say?
- ▶ Can you say that by stating the rule?
- ▶ In the angle distance video take a look at what the research says about the angle and range of vision the eye can see and get back to me with what you saw.

Exercise Directions

- ▶ You need to work with the umpires to your right and left in this exercise.
- ▶ There is a paper on the back of the chair in front of you.
- ▶ Working in groups of 3 or 4, flip the paper up and read the sentence. It comes from actual umpire evaluations from 2018 national tournament umpires.
- ▶ In the next minute your group is to rewrite that sentence using some of the guidelines given earlier.
- ▶ Select a spokesperson.
- ▶ You can present your rewrite if it is not a repeat from one of the previous groups.

A better way to say it

- ▶ Needs to work on a stronger aggressive strike call and use emphasis on close ball calls.
- ▶ With experience and confidence at this level will come a body language of being relaxed on the field.
- ▶ Worked hard to comm w/ partners when moving.
- ▶ He had a good stance and a good strike zone.
- ▶ Good USA Softball signals and nice utilization of sell calls when appropriate.
- ▶ Worked well with all partners, and staff.

The Why's of Evaluating



While Observing What Did You See?

- ▶ Ask yourself, are they?
 - ▶ Too Close
 - ▶ Too Deep
 - ▶ Square or Hooking
 - ▶ Head in Zone
 - ▶ Too High or Too Low
 - ▶ Too Quick or Too Slow

Ask Yourself, How Can I Correct?

- ▶ Should they work on
 - ▶ Heel/Toe
 - ▶ Stance
 - ▶ Set up Quicker or Later
 - ▶ Slot positioning











You can offer insight on the reasons for making a change

- ▶ Give Reasons Why:
 - ▶ See the Outside and Low Part of Zone Better
 - ▶ Being set prior to the release of the pitch to see the ball all the way in
 - ▶ Head in Zone causes Flinching and Blinking
 - ▶ Wider Stance will enable an Umpire to get lower
 - ▶ Hooking causes problems with Catcher
 - ▶ If not the same on both sides, can cause an inconsistent strike zone

The Why's of Evaluating

- ▶ WHAT did I see?
- ▶ HOW am I going to help?
- ▶ YOU are the teacher!

▶ SUCCESS



Bringing the Information Home

- ▶ Review/Translate the Individual Umpire's Evaluation.

- ▶ **National Championship Evaluations**

- ▶ Leadership
- ▶ Plate
- ▶ Bases
- ▶ Overall & Recommendation

- ▶ Let's translate some evaluations

Leadership

- ▶ **Has a positive presence on the field and continues to grow their strength in presence each game. Handled situations on the field effectively and timely. Lead and participated in pre and post-game debrief with partners and UIC's. They are fully vested in growing as an umpire. At times, still sees things as black and white that may not allow them to adjust or make the 'best' decision per a unique play. Remember, not all plays are covered and that is where experience and good instincts allow you to adjust. Continue to be open to what you can learn from others that may have different ideas and experience. Continue to grow as you have been doing.**

Plate Mechanics

- ▶ **Good heel/toe stance, GPA. Good tracking, timing, vocals and signals. Made some adjustment to height during tourney. Set at right height and then as ball is coming in was going lower a bit that had an effect on the low strike zone. Good tracking of the ball but there's times where you go in and you double like click your head and go to that corner or that site again to almost reemphasize itself get your timing and stay with it. Great communicator on the field, loud and specific. Hustled in the holding zone very well, allowing you to get to 3B and or home based on where the play develops. Continue to work on getting off the line more when rotating up to holding zone so when you rotate home, you have the distance needed to see all elements along with any obstruction/interference. Reads the field well.**

Base Mechanics

- ▶ **Good hustle across field. Good chases and parallel movement. On bunts, do not go beyond a 45 degree angle. You were putting yourself in a running lane if play continued beyond 1B. Counter rotated position and play at 1B, remember angles/distance. Took a path into the baseline versus parallel movement, achieving best angle/distance. Need to communicate louder/more, especially in late reads so partners can properly adjust. Good job improving your distance on tag plays, at times a little too close. Great job adjusting your set position by end of tourney, looking more athletic. Has good hustle across the field toward 2B and 1B.**

Overall Performance

- ▶ **Good potential. Made many adjustments immediately and asked great questions. Very impressed with demeanor and attitude. Continue to gain more experience in the 3 umpire system as this will allow you to see more situations and allow yourself the ability to adjust to situations quicker. Working with a more experienced crew allowed you to focus on what you only needed to do. Want to be able to handle your responsibilities along with assisting crew on field if needed.**

Evaluating umpires at a local level.

- ▶ **Who evaluates your local umpires?**
 - ▶ UIC, players, coaches, league director, other umpires and scorekeepers
- ▶ **What are the expected results from those evaluations?**
 - ▶ Improve, status quo, or decline
- ▶ **What follow-ups are done and by whom?**
 - ▶ How does the umpire receive feedback
- ▶ **Breaking down the positives and negatives.**
 - ▶ Translating the feedback
- ▶ **Develop training programs based on those needs.**
 - ▶ Taking baby steps

Establishing Goals and Expectations.

- ▶ **Who determines the umpire's next path?**
 - ▶ UIC vs. Local Association vs. Umpire
- ▶ **Does one on one discussion take place?**
 - ▶ Buy-in and Commitment
- ▶ **Does reaffirming goals and expectations take place?**
 - ▶ Follow-up and career tracking

Develop/Establish a Focused Umpire Training program

- ▶ **Method to determine general areas of need.**
 - ▶ Prior evaluations and feedback
- ▶ **Where are your umpires strong and not so strong?**
 - ▶ Re-occurring mechanic, rule, and game control issues
- ▶ **Breaking down the positives and negatives.**
 - ▶ Continue the strengths and enhance improvement needs
- ▶ **Develop training programs based on those needs.**
 - ▶ Put pencil to paper

Questions???



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▶ IN CLOSING

- Where do we go from here?
- Have a great day and always travel safe!
- THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!!!

Plate Mechanics - 2

- ▶ Strong voice, sharp signals. Sometimes too square on heel to toe but had remained very consistent on zone, mainly on right hand batters. Kept game moving well and in control. Moved well into the field with good use of holding zone. Watched runners touching bases. Shows good USA/ASA training. Good GPA and timing. Trails BR properly. Good movement to the infield or holding areas from behind the plate. Good USA/ASA training in plate mechanics. Good GPA and slot on both sides. Good trail of BR. Remember to also trail with runner on 1b and don't release too soon to 3b. Good ball/strike timing. Trailed B/R properly toward 1B. Fly ball to LCF trailed B/R when you should have moved down 3B line to obtain angle on catch. You must obtain angles on all balls hit to the outfield if your partner does not go out. Multiple runners on base remember double responsibility at 3B and Home for runners touching bases and possible plays at both. Read the play, watch the ball, move into position for the call. Good plate mechanics, signal and voice.

Overall Performance - 2

- ▶ Had a good tournament. Work on showing more confidence in calls and good strong signals. Had a good tournament, was quiet at times and stepped up during the game when needed. Work on more confidence with the 3 umpire system. Very nice job, both on the field and off. Good demeanor when talking with crew/coaches. Demonstrated correction to mechanics, as the tournament continued, with one exception. Signals/ calls on base's, still a little quick. Overall performance was reflected in their selection as the 1st base umpire on the Championship Game. Very cooperative with UIC and staff. Has positive attitude. Worked very well with the entire umpire crew. Will continue to develop skills with on-going experience. Ben has a bright future with USA Softball!

Leadership - 2

- ▶ Arrived on time and was ready when needed. Was dressed properly. Managed lineup card efficiently and timely. Communicated well with coaches, players, partners, and scorekeepers. Always arrived early. Had a nice clean uniform with shined shoes and a clean hat. Hustled in between plays to get back to his position. Is willing to accept feedback. Arrived timely for assignments. Not prepared for an USA Softball National Championship tournament in mechanics, uniform, or expectations. Was always early and ready to work. Look good on the field. Had good pre-game with crew member and coaches. Had a few rule issues, but work to improve on them. Adjusted and handle problems on the field well. Hustled the complete game.

Base Mechanics - 2

- ▶ Good hustle and movement inside on bases. Good communication with partners. Good "stop/see the play/make the call" Sometimes you watch the ball hit to the outfield which delays your movement inside. If you are not going to the outfield with the ball don't watch it but get inside quickly and then pick-up your runner. Hustles to each position once the pitcher has control of the ball in the pitching circle. Make sure to square up to the base when making out or safe call. Hustles very well to next position on the bases. Be sure to come in closer into the infield to make out or safe calls at 1st base. Good starting position with no one on base. When in the slot needs to square up to the plate. Good use of inside/outside and uses good judgment on distance and angles. Could work on moving on the rails when in the slot position. At times, John is quick on making safe/out calls.