

## Coaches – How to approach an umpire

- If you want to discuss a call with the umpire, ask for “Time”, and approach the umpire to discuss the call. Ask for his interpretation of the call and calmly present your case as well. Ask the ump to confer with his partner if a rule clarification, interpretation or a call may have been missed (not on a judgment call). Let them confer and accept the resulting decision. Nothing you do from there will advance your case.
- Remember that you DON'T want to argue with an umpire. You DO want him to consider your point of view. Control your anger. Don't show up the umpire or grandstand. You're there to make your point, not put on a performance for the crowd. Most umpires are willing to discuss a call - none should listen to you yell at them.
- Know the difference between a judgment call and a rule interpretation and which ones you should be discussing with the umpire. Never argue balls/strikes, fair/foul balls or any other calls that are strictly judgment calls such as force plays, or whether a tag was made in time.
- Go to the right umpire to discuss a call. Not just to the oldest one or the plate umpire. Go to the one who made the call. No other umpire should overrule another.
- Don't make it personal. Talk about the call, not the individual who made it. "I think that call is wrong" is your opinion. "You got the call wrong" is personal.
- Know the rules to a reasonable level – both the rulebook and any special league rules. NEVER bring the rulebook onto the field to discuss a call. That's a quick trip home. Keep it with you on the bench for reference or on your nightstand for those nights you are tossing and turning over a call that didn't go your way.
- Set a positive role model for your players. Don't complain about the umpire in front of your players. Educate them on what a judgment call is and encourage them to learn and understand the rules. Coaches and umpires are both authority figures and every time they discuss calls on the field it is an opportunity to teach the kids how to disagree with mutual respect in any situation.
- Don't allow your players to walk away from the game blaming the umps.
- When it's over, it's over. Discussions end, and not everybody will be happy. Be sportsmanlike and shake hands with the umpires after the game, even if a questionable call may have cost you the game. This is not a coaching tactic or a ritual of the game. It's simply an extension of how a decent human being should act.