

## Being a Good Mentor

Some of you may remember the days before there were umpire camps and clinics, the **CCA Manual**, conference coordinators and mass communication. What methods did umpires use in an effort to get better? I can only speak for myself, but one of the ways I relied on was to have a good mentor. Without mentioning any names, I was fortunate enough early in my career to work with some of the best amateur umpires in the college and high school game. These individuals were not only good umpires, but great people - who didn't hesitate to help young umpires like myself by answering questions, offering constructive criticism, and leading by example **on and off the field**.

It is very different today... we have all these resources available for self-help and guidance, which is in stark contrast to the mentor method...like we had in the past. Some umpires still offer the knowledge and experience required to be a good mentor, but many others don't take the time or seem to have the interest in making others better. *Is it because they feel threatened? Or, maybe they just don't feel the necessity to help others.*

I would suggest that becoming a good mentor has as many or more rewards than achieving any on-field accolades. Take the time to have good **communication** before a game (prior to the game date as well as a good pre-game), during the game, and, probably most importantly, *taking the time* to have a good post game and discuss situations that happened during the course of the game that might have been good for rules and/or mechanics discussion. I would further suggest that you encourage younger or less experienced umpires to ask questions that would help them develop their trade. **We all know that there is no substitute for experience, but experience without learning is fruitless for development.** Finally, become involved with the local umpire association.

As a young or less experienced umpire, **have the courage** to ask the tough question of the more experienced, but most of all, **have the courage** to accept the criticisms that take place in an effort to learn. Don't take these comments and criticisms personally, but take them as a way to develop into the umpire that you want to be. We all have strong personalities or we would not do what we do, **but we must also drop our walls and receive what can make us better.**

As we enter into the 2019 season, I would request that you all look in the mirror and reflect if you are doing the things that will make you a better umpire, and more importantly, helping other umpires *-around you grow* - into the umpire that you would want them to be?

**Are you a good mentor?**

Best of luck during the 2019 season.