

## HONEST ACCOUNTABILITY

Welcome to the 2018 Baseball Season. As we prepare, most of us start by reading the rules and mechanics books or by checking out the Central Hub for informative articles and new interpretations. We all should be looking to improve as umpires and we can do this in many different ways. One of these ways to improve is learning from the experiences from the year before that have been identified, researched and clarified. **We can add those experiences to our repertoire.**

These experiences can become positive even when we don't get something right - **if we are honest with ourselves.** We must diagnose and clarify the exact reason why we did or did not do something. Then and only then can we add an experience to our repertoire. Don't get me wrong, here, we all know that getting the call right is very important; however, **how did we conduct ourselves before, during and after the play?**

**We must possess** the mental focus to recreate the entire situation and pinpoint exactly **why we did what we did.**

Most of us know when to get back to the **fundamental tenets** that give us better chances of getting pitches correct or outs and safes correct. Many times we do this as an in-game self check. Examples include: timing, angle, distance, were we set? head height - even sound may come into the equation; and, many other tenets.

Now, however, I am not just talking about the calling umpire. Non-calling umpires can be doing things to assist the crew on almost every play: such as pole benders, bases last touched, plays at the plate, approaching unsolicited, and many, many more. This is where some **courage and confidence** may be needed - not if - **but when the opportunity presents itself.** Most times nothing comes from us doing these *little things*: no pat on the back, no recognition - except *that one time* where the crew may need us. **Then our passion for doing the little things could be a big thing.**

There is almost always something we can be doing just in case. Our most defining situations are also the most infrequent situations. **Remember this: experience that has been honestly vetted and filed away is the resource we draw on when these infrequent situations present themselves.**

Don't be content with simply getting the call right. Look for some small way to improve our overall perception, especially when the Head Coach questions one of our decisions on the field. Our gestures, body language, tone of voice, and listening skills are almost as important as getting the call right. Finally, it can be difficult to keep all of these in check when the magnitude of the call is pivotal and emotions are running high. **However, we are, after all - there to manage the game.**

The attached video contains many of the above mentioned components - all in one play - but the indeterminate component in these situations is the Head Coach. *See how it goes.*

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In this particular situation the Head Coach and the umpire engaged in an emotional discussion without vulgarity, any excessive expressions or undue delay. **HAVE A GREAT SEASON!**