

CONDUCTING A GOOD PRE-GAME / POST-GAME MEETING

PRE-GAME

- Your pre-game really begins when you get the assignment.
- Double check and confirm your commitments and assignments BEFORE the actual day of a game. Leave cell # or contact # in case of a possible cancellation due to weather.
- Determine how long it will take you to travel from work or home to the game site.
- Meet with your partner/s. Share information that you may have about playing conditions, players/teams, coach tendencies, history between the opponents.
- Discuss any new rules or Points of Emphasis for the season so everyone is on the “same page”.
- Do not allow friends or fellow officials to be part of the locker-room conference.
- Stick to the subject at hand. War stories, last night’s game or where you’re going to stop afterwards should not be part of the pre-game.

Establish a Pre-Game Routine

- Put on your equipment in the same order before every game using a mental check list - plate shoes, shin guards, chest protector, indicator, and mask. Dress in a specific order.
- Silly? Establishing and practicing a pre-game routine will help you take the field the right frame of mind, free of mental distractions. Tough day @ work? Put it behind you.
- Review how you will handle tag ups, appeal plays, the tag between home and first, three-foot interference, check swings, obstructions and interferences.
- Discuss situational mechanics that may differ from standard.
- Discuss how you, as a crew, will handle confrontations and ejections.
- Discuss trick plays that the teams may use that you should be aware of. Be prepared for the unexpected! Be proactive - ask the coach if there is something they do that could catch you off guard.
- Discuss where you will be entering and leaving the field of play. Enter and leave the field together as a crew.
- If checking equipment - helmets, bats & catcher's equipment - do it as a crew. Dugouts are foreign territory for umpires and should not be entered alone. Working as a team you will be less likely to be drawn into idle chitchat and will have each other as a witness to any accusation of inappropriateness.
- Know when you are to meet with coaches or other game personnel for about five minutes prior to scheduled game time. Meet with a member of each coaching staff at home plate.
- Check the lineup for first and last names and numbers for all players and that no numbers are duplicated. It should list all nine defensive positions.
- Problems during the contest – get together quickly and discuss appropriately. If a call has to be changed – the original official makes the call.
- Do not meet after an inning immediately after a close call.

POST-GAME

- Return the game balls to the bench / home team dugout as quickly and unobtrusively as possible.
- Be alert for any possible appeals or protests that could still be legally made.
- Briskly walk off the field with your partner/s by the pre-determined exit route.
- Do not engage in crew congratulations until you are off the field and away from public observation.
- If you have reason to believe that leaving through the most convenient or pre-determined exit will lead to an altercation or confrontation, use a different route.
- Avoid mingling or moving through players.
- Once you are in the locker room or out of earshot of the public, discuss the things that went well. Discuss anything unusual, vague or confusing that happened.
- If there are questions concerning rules that came up during the game, look them up and verify them now.
- Discuss areas where there could have been improvement or things could have been done differently.
- Finally – when you are by yourself – review the game. Acknowledge to yourself what you did well as reinforcement. Acknowledge where you could improve. Digest the post-game discussion. If you had specific goals set for yourself, did you meet them?
- Take from each game or contest the things that will strengthen your officiating.