

From: Jay Miner, NYSSO Rules Interpreter
Brad White, NYSSO Vice President

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We hate "Do's and Don'ts," and "Always and Nevers" even more. However, based on actual events here are some important tips.

NOTE: All acts and incidents occurred and have been confirmed during association assigned games. Many are scary. Others are just plain bad mechanics.

Here's hoping we won't be expanding the list this year...

1. Use common sense, good judgment and thoughtful reasoning for every game situation.
2. Secure enough game ready alternate balls so you never run out of balls and hold up your palms as though someone else is at fault for your being out of balls. Having enough balls is part of good game management.
3. It's a good idea to look at four warm-up pitches for each starting pitcher in the first inning but do not verbally call and signal the pitches.
4. Do not place balls on each side of home plate at the pregame meeting to show the coaches the width of the new strike zone.
5. When substitutions are made it is imperative to announce full information including names and numbers and batting positions. Calling out, "14 for 26, 19 for 12, and 23 for 6 is very risky because in NYSSO-ASA softball there are no penalties whatsoever for wrong uniform numbers but there are harsh penalties for wrong players being in incorrect batting positions.
6. If the defense leaves the field before three outs and the teams change sides, bring the team back out on the field to complete the last half inning unless a pitch is made to start the next half inning.
7. If a player is injured use common sense, good judgment and thoughtful reasoning to make sure everything is okay before you attempt to resume the game. That's especially important when the coach and/or players are concerned over the injury.
8. During an on field injury situation it is permissible for players and pitchers to casually toss balls to each other to keep loose providing they are well away from the injured player(s). Under no circumstances shall a coach, player or other person hit batted balls to defensive players in such a situation.
9. Do not permit an assistant coach to come out to argue a judgment call or ask for a rule interpretation, as a former varsity assistant often did.
10. The catcher may wear her shin guards while she is in the on-deck circle.
11. The catcher may not wear her shin guards while she is batting.

12. Ignore cell phones and other electronic equipment despite the literally wording under 4-7C-5 Effect, unless the equipment is being used for coaching or game strategy situations. If electronic devices are used for coaching purposes, employ the above rule to stop such illegal acts.
13. Don't tell a difficult coach, "One more word and you're gone." That's a threat you should not make. What would you do if the coach said, "Okay?" It is better to sternly say, "I heard what you said!"
14. Despite what some manuals say, an appropriate "glare" can be a useful tool to quiet a complaining coach or bench personnel.
15. Do not wag your finger at a coach and call out the number of the defensive charged conference as the coach is leaving the circle. The coach likely may already be annoyed about your judgment calls on balls and strikes. It is better to remind the coach by saying, "That's your second conference," in a normal voice.
16. Do not tell a player she can't wear sun glasses or keep them placed on the top of her cap.
17. Do not interrupt play to dust a few particles of dirt off the plate. It is an ejection and not a warning when a coach purposely covers the plate with dirt.
18. Do brush the plate even if it's not needed after the catcher is struck by a foul ball.
19. Do provide an alternate ball to the pitcher when she requests another ball. Do not say, "You made your choice at the start of the inning. You must pitch that ball until it goes out of play."
20. Do not allow the batter to examine the current game ball for possible defects. Do check the ball yourself for cuts if it strikes a sharp object.
21. Don't chastise a player for getting in your way. After all, the field belongs to the players playing the game.
22. Greatly reduce or eliminate umpire to umpire conferences between innings unless you feel a nervous breakdown coming on.
23. Do not talk on your cell phone during the game.
24. Do not summon 911 assistance for injuries; allow the coach to manage the situation.
25. Do not stand near the circle and hand the ball to the pitcher as she nears the circle at the start of a half inning.
26. Don't bellow, "Balls in!" to terminate warm-ups before a half inning.
27. Don't hold your indicator in front of your eyes at any time.
28. An indicator is an indicator and not a "clicker" or a "counter."
29. Do not wear a beanie behind the plate or on the bases.
30. Do not wear your hat backwards.

31. Do not wear your chest protector over your shirt.
32. Do not wear your shin guards over your pants.
33. Do not wear an umpire shirt over your jacket.
34. Don't allow anyone to call you "Blue," unless you are part dog.
35. Herman Munster says, "Do not wear plate shoes on the bases."
36. Do not place a baby or small child in the care of dugout personnel during the game and worse, move the child from dugout to dugout each half inning.
37. Do not bring a dog to the game and tie the dog to a fence.
38. Do not fill out game vouchers between innings.
39. Do not store your cooler in a team's dugout.
40. Do not refuse to start a game because the bus was late and the game would end too late on a school night.
41. Many base umpires (some experienced officials) have allowed a plate umpire to make an insane ruling because the plate umpire was the umpire in chief.
42. Do not appoint a player as a playing manager because a no mind solo coach abandoned her team during a game to accompany an injured player in an ambulance on the way to the hospital
43. Do not call a game after one pitch because of unfit field conditions after grounds' personnel labored long and hard to prepare the field. (The plate and base umpire accepted the fee.)
44. Do not cancel the first game of an uncompleted game of a double header to start the second game. (Could two game fees have been a factor in the umpire's decision?)
45. Do not permit a short-handed team to borrow a substitute player from the opposing team in an interscholastic league game to fill an open spot because both coaches agreed.
46. Do not declare a forfeit on the first game of a double header because of a late arriving team and then play the second game. (Could two game fees have been a factor in the umpire's decision?)
47. Don't hold lengthy conversations with coaches before the game and/or between innings.
48. Don't place your ball bag in front of your groin to serve as a cup.
49. Use a ball bag (not a ball pouch) when umpiring the plate.
50. Do not place alternate balls behind the backstop and run to get a ball after a foul ball.

51. Do not eat an apple, a doughnut or other food or smoke a cigarette at the pregame conference.
52. Don't remove your pants at home plate because you forgot to put your cup on.
53. Do not wear a ball bag on the bases.
54. Do not ask the base umpire to manage your lineup cards.
55. Try not to put on glasses when managing lineup cards.
56. For double headers do not wear glasses for one game but not for the other game.
57. Do not embarrassingly bellow, "Mercy Rule," when a run rule situation occurs. Simply announce, "The game is over due to the official run rule."
58. Do not warm up the pitcher while working the plate and waiting for the catcher.
59. Do not leave a game in progress because you have another game to go to.
60. Do not umpire balls and strikes from behind the pitcher especially when you have a base umpire.
61. The game time is when the game starts and not when you leave for the game.
62. Don't ask an athletics director to call back to confirm he or she received your game confirmation communiqué.
63. Do not insist on handing a possibly emotional coach the game balls after the game. Simply place the balls near their team area and leave.
64. Do not suggest to your partner that you should run to the parking lot immediately after the game.
65. Leave the field with your partner and don't stop to answer questions about the game from anyone.
66. Don't expect free food and drinks from concession stands or ask to run a tab.
67. Don't park your car where it might be struck by a foul ball.
68. Do park your car in the umpire's area or well away from spectator areas.
69. Don't wear your uniform while watching another game or openly root for a specific team. Do not try to influence the game umpires to call specific violations including possible illegal pitching infractions.
70. Beware when a coach says, "Sir," as nothing good will follow.
71. Don't drink alcohol in the parking lot or offer beer to players.
72. Do not tell the on-deck batter that she can't direct runners coming into home plate.

73. Be careful about telling base coaches that they must stay in the coaches' boxes. The definition of Coach's Box reads, "The area in which the base coach is restricted PRIOR TO THE RELEASE OF THE PITCH."
74. Show common courtesy to the student equipment manager when she responds to attend the pre-game meeting at home plate after the plate umpire calls, "Managers!"
75. Do not ask the catcher if they are wearing a cup.
76. Do not tell a pitcher she can't wear a toe plate on her shoe.
77. Do not tell a pitcher she may not wear a batting glove under her fielder's glove. Rule is she may not wear a batting glove on her pitching hand.
78. Do not tell the pitcher she cannot place her rosin bag on the ground behind the rubber.
79. Do not become an "orchestra conductor" by over using the "Hold up," and "Play" signals to the extreme.
80. As the base umpire with no runners on base do not call fly balls hit to the right of the center fielder going toward left field.
81. Do not make a double call with your partner on the same decision. Worse: Do not make an opposite double call.
82. Don't put down your partner by asking the fee for a JV game.
83. Never come in to confer with your partner after a controversial call the previous half inning.
84. Do make a safe signal as the plate umpire after a dropped third strike when the batter is entitled to run.
85. Do point with your left hand to ask the base umpire for help on a checked swing.
86. Don't point the batter to first base after a walk while saying, "Ball four, take your base."
87. Do keep your chin above the catcher's helmet while calling pitches.
88. Don't get too close on force plays including force plays at the plate and plays on the batter-runner at first base.
89. Do get close to tag plays but don't step on any players as your author has occasionally done.
90. Do practice taking off your mask properly so it doesn't pull off your cap.
91. Do understand a foul tip is a live ball.
92. Do understand the ball is dead anytime and every time the batter is struck by a pitch.
93. Do not wear a watch on the field like your author sometimes does.

94. Do not sit cross-legged on the ground to rest between half-innings.
95. Don't cross your arms while umpiring on the bases.
96. Don't cross your arms during an argument with a coach.
97. Do not fret if someone calls you by your first name. That is common practice in the higher levels of play.
98. Tolerate being called "Umpy," when working games for Canadian teams. Umpy is close enough to Ump.
99. Never, never, never shake hands with your partner on the field after a game.
100. Neither seek nor avoid troublesome coaches.
101. Never ask a coach if he or she has any questions.
102. Do see in all areas of the field but call only in your own area.
103. Do watch the ball - glance at the runners and see your partner.
104. Do understand that there is a close correlation between closeness to the play and correctness of the call but realize angle beats distance every time.
105. Do use "pause-read and react," on every play and then follow with "stop-set-focus-hold and call."
106. Don't over dramatize or even call obvious foul balls out of the playing field unless fair/foul is a consideration.
107. Don't place your hand on a catcher even though it's sometimes done in professional baseball.
108. Do watch the catcher's shoulders to determine which way she is turning on wild pitches, passed balls and foul fly balls.
109. Do not have "Rabbit Ears" and respond to comments as your author sometimes does.
110. Do understand it is not showing favoritism to hand the catcher her mask after a play but don't become a valet.
111. Do not brush off a catcher or any other player after a play.
112. Do safely, cautiously and carefully remove a bat (or other equipment) from a potentially hazardous area if there is time to do so.
113. Do not become a "play by play" broadcaster while umpiring the plate.
114. Do not fire a new ball to the pitcher at high speed after a foul ball; it's much safer to hand the ball to the catcher and let her hit the pitcher.
115. Do hold up the count and move your hands laterally from side to side when the scoreboard has the incorrect count.

116. Do show a clinched fist in front of your body and move your hand laterally to signal that a conference will not be charged after an injury visit to the pitcher.
117. Do not allow game personnel to roll foul balls to home plate or delightfully toss them at your feet like they are hand grenades.
118. Do strongly admonish a coach and issue a warning if you haven't already ejected the coach who yells, "Call them both ways, Blue!"
119. Do not keep the count by holding fingers on your pants leg.
120. Do not point at the location of a ball on the ground in fair/foul situations; rather give a sharp, crisp point with an extended finger of the hand just above the elbow at shoulder height after first extending your arms over your head.
121. Never use the apologetic, weak "Piano Safe" signal with extended hands and your elbows pressed tightly against your body.
122. Do understand it is not blasphemy if an umpire uses clinched fists with arms extended laterally while giving the safe signal.
123. Do understand it is not a grounds rule double when a fair batted ball bounces over the outfield fence. That's a book rule two-base hit listed in the rulebook. A grounds rule double occurs when a ball goes into a special circumstance area unique to that field such as a drainage ditch, sink hole, paved area or high grass.
124. Do not tell coaches at the pre-game meeting to have their fielders raise their hands when a ball goes out of play. That implies that players can call a ball dead. How will you place runners if they stop running based on a fielder's signal on a ball that isn't out of play? Remember, you can always return runners after the fact but advancing them has potential for causing a small riot.
125. Do not call "Intentional Kick" and award bases if fielder kicks ball to another fielder. (Once done in a Major League game by Paul O'Neill while playing for the Reds who kicked a ball directly to a base from right field.) There is no penalty!
126. Do not urinate between the front door and back door of your car in the parking lot.
127. Do not eat a banana you retrieved from your ball bag between innings.
128. Do wear pants that don't get caught in your shin guards.
129. Do wear shin guards that don't catch your pants.
130. Do not allow a team to convince you that illegal, non-approved or dangerous equipment is "good enough."
131. Do wear a black leather belt. Do not wear a braided belt or a canvas belt. Do not allow the belt to dangle awkwardly.
132. Do wear proper shoes. Do not wear construction boots or combat boots.

133. Do not use the batter's bat to redraw the batter's box lines.
134. Do not escalate an argument with a coach by pointing out that the coach has used the wrong term when you know what the coach means (e.g., an offensive coach arguing for "interference" when you know the coach means "obstruction.")
135. Do wear a sufficient amount of deodorant and reapply if necessary when working multiple games.
136. Do not drop your head and run during live ball. Do keep your head up, watch the ball and glance at the runner(s).
137. Do hem your pants. Do not cut your pants with scissors.
138. Do not brush off bases unless they are covered with dirt. Do not constantly brush off bases that are easily visible.
139. Do not run to the backstop to discard your mask when you have a play at the plate.
140. Do not offer medical advise to players.
141. Do report to your chapter representative if a field has improper markings or dangerous conditions.
142. Do allow a player to wear her privately owned proper helmet, even if it doesn't match other helmets.
143. Do not confirm the score with each team every half inning or inning. Do ask for the score from the winning team if a run rule may take effect in the next inning.
144. Do not tell a new pitcher how many runners are on base or how many outs there are.
145. Do pay attention and expect your plate umpire to go to you on checked swings.
146. Do not call a runner out and then immediately look at your indicator.
147. Do not allow illegal equipment, including buckets, on the field even if the offender tells you, "I'll be able to move it if necessary."
148. Do wear a hat when working both the plate and bases.
149. Do not prohibit a player from playing because she is wearing eye black.
150. Do not eject an unreported substitute.
151. Do not permit unsporting cheers from the players.
152. Do not wear two ball bags that do not match.
153. Do not use your hand to signal where a pitch missed the strike zone.

154. Do not angle yourself toward runners at the time of the pitch. Do set up square to home plate regardless of runner situation.
155. Do record offensive and defensive conferences, as well as DP/Flex changes and Courtesy Runners.
156. Do not spray paint an orange nautical life vest black and wear it as a chest protector.
157. Do not lean on your thigh to record changes and stab yourself with a pen.
158. Do not umpire the bases while holding a beach towel in order to dry off softballs.
159. Do not fill up your water jug with an alcoholic beverage to drink between innings.
160. Do wear two ball bags. Do not keep softballs in one and bubble gum in the other to be handed out to the person returning foul balls.
161. Do not "run for mayor" when umpiring or observing games. Strive to be respected, not necessarily liked.
162. Do follow NYSSO's bat removal procedure of safely, carefully and cautiously removing a bat. Do not scream "incoming" and throw the bat into the dugout.
163. Do not hang a digital thermometer on the backstop to be used as a gauge of our misery while working a game.
164. Do not give a history lesson about the origins of your flipping coin.
165. Do not spray paint your mask hours before a game and wonder why you feel like you are getting high by the second inning.