

**CONDUCTING A
GOOD PRE-
GAME / POST-
GAME MEETING**

ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

LET'S GATHER THE STRIPES CONFERENCE

July 22nd and July 23rd, 2005

presented by
Tom Starr and Mary Sylvester

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 a cell # or contact # for outdoor sports 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.

- Arrive at the game site the same amount of time before each game. Preferably a minimum of 45 minutes prior to game time.
- Once you arrive, ask for the Athletic Director and/or advise school personnel you have arrived. This gives them one less thing to worry about.

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, mask – or whistle & lanyard, etc. Dress in a specific order.
- Silly? Establishing and practicing a pre-game routine will help you take the field or floor in the right frame of mind, free of mental distractions. Tough day @ work? Put it behind you.

- 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 or half-time discussions.
- 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 or half-time discussion.

- Review how you will handle tag ups, appeal plays, the tag between home and first, three-foot interference, check swings, obstructions and interferences or how you will handle the clock in the last few seconds of a game.
- 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 or court and will you have a key to the dressing room. (ask game management @ the time of arrival).
- Enter and leave the court/field together as a crew.
- Know where the school authorities will be standing in case a problem arises during the contest.

- 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 your particular sport. Baseball and softball – 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. If DP/Flex is used, verify with the coach that the player listed as DP is the one who is going to hit and the player listed as FLEX is the defensive player.

- Know where the scorekeeper is located.
Know who is home book.
- 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 or timeout 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 or court with your partner/s by the pre-determined exit route.
- 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. Do not engage in crew congratulations until you are off the field and away from public observation.

- 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 a 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.

And most importantly

HAVE FUN