

## **Three Part Preparation and Pre-Game Conference for High School Games**

### ***Part 1 Preparation prior to game day.***

- A. Contact your partner prior to game day to confirm where you both will be parked. Several schools, such as Northwood, Poolesville, and Good Counsel have multiple places, parking lots and streets, where you can park. You both need to be parked at the same location so you can arrive at the field as a team. Parking at Good Counsel is in the student lot near the entrance to the athletic fields.
- B. Uniform requirements are given in Rule 10 of the National Federation of High Schools rule book. Ensure all equipment and uniforms are ready the day before the game. Make sure your uniform is clean and your pants have a crease. Shoes should be clean and polished. Make a professional appearance.
- C. Remember to have all the necessary equipment including the ball bag, brush, indicator, mask, chest protector, shin guards, and hat in your car. Have a timer if the game has no new inning time limit.
- D. Make sure you have good directions to the school, and you know where the field is. Your Arbiter assignment for every game has a link to Googlemaps showing the location of the school. You can use the satellite option to see the layout and field location.

### ***Part 2 Prior to taking the field.***

- A. Arrive no later than 30 minutes before the scheduled game or 45 minutes for Good Counsel.
- B. When you arrive at the school, prior to going to the field, discuss with your partner how you are going to work the game.
  - Fair/Foul ball coverage. Will the plate umpire handle all calls?
  - Infield fly. The base umpire can point in the air to help the plate umpire in making the call.
  - Tag-up/touches. Who covers what tagging runners?
  - With the base umpire in the C position, who covers any pickoff attempt at 1<sup>st</sup> base?
  - On a steal to 2<sup>nd</sup> base, the plate umpire moves up the line to 3<sup>rd</sup> base. If an overthrow allows the player to advance to 3<sup>rd</sup> base, the plate umpire communicates 3<sup>rd</sup> base is covered. The base umpire then moves to cover home if there is no play at second due to a returning runner.
  - On a third strike, the base umpire can signal a caught third strike with an extended arm and the fist pointing down or signal a dropped third strike by pointing to the ground with the index finger.
  - For a batted ball that hits the batter while in the box, will the base umpire call a hit batter if the plate umpire is screened or wait for the coach to ask for help?
  - On a check swing will the plate umpire go to the base umpire without being asked?
  - On a ground ball to right field with a play at 1<sup>st</sup> base possible, review that the base umpire remains in foul territory to avoid being hit by the throw and makes the call from there. The plate umpire moves to be close to the home plate side of the circle but still able to watch for a pulled foot. On an overthrow to 1<sup>st</sup> base, the plate umpire moves to 2<sup>nd</sup> base and takes the runner to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base. The base umpire drops to home and has the call at home. The plate umpire can communicate 2<sup>nd</sup> base is covered, so the base umpire knows.

- Discuss how pickles are covered. The plate umpire moves to cover one base and communicates which base to the partner. One umpire should be on the outside of the baseline and the other umpire on the inside of the baseline.

### ***Part 3 Making it happen.***

- A. Both umpires arrive on the field as a team 15 minutes before the scheduled start time. Do not go without your partner. Avoid interfering with warmups when on the field.
- B. At the pre-game conference, the plate umpire stands at the tip of the plate facing the field. The base umpire stands at the front of home plate facing the plate umpire.
- C. The home plate umpire starts the pregame conference no later than five minutes before game time, or earlier if both coaches are ready. It should take only a few minutes.
- D. Have the coaches and team captains introduce themselves. Next, the home plate umpire introduces the base umpire then himself/herself. Only use first names.
- E. Take the lineup cards from the coaches and confirm: 1) the minimum number of players in the lineup needed to start the game; 2) at a minimum, the first initial and last name are listed; 3) there are no duplicate numbers; and 4) substitutes are below the starters. Check if there is a flex player listed in the 10<sup>th</sup> position and, if so, the designated player is listed as one of the 9 batters. If there are any problems or errors perform some presentive umpiring and let the coach correct them. After the lineup card is checked, hand it back to the coach and let the coach review it again. At that point ask the coach if the lineup card is acceptable. Also ask if all players who could participate in the game are included on the lineup card. When the coach accepts the lineup, it is official. Ask if all equipment and players meet NFHS requirements.
- F. Have the home team coach review the ground rules for the field. If the home team coach does not want to cover the ground rules, you may get this at the JV level or some less competitive varsity teams, or you feel you can do it faster, the home plate umpire can establish the ground rules for out of play area and any unique field situations.
- G. For JV games start the clock when the pre-game conference is complete. If there is a delay in starting the game at the scheduled time or the visiting team has not arrived by game time, politely inform the coach that the clock starts at game time and continues to run. In this situation, the pre-game conference is conducted with the clock running.
- H. If the weather looks threatening or thunder showers are predicted, cover the thunder/lightning rule. If thunder is heard or a lightning strike is seen, players must leave the field for 30 minutes. The 30 minutes starts anew with each subsequent thunder or lightning strike. For JV games, the clock continues to run.