

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A GREAT UMPIRE?



1. PRACTICE

- a. On-Field
 - i. Volunteer
 - ii. Attend an event or tournament
 - iii. Work on your mobility for specific game situations
 - iv. Apply feedback to fellow umpires
 - v. Perfecting rule application
 - vi. Use of tools
 - vii. How to communicate
- b. Off-Field
 - i. Have video taken of yourself for your review
 - ii. Attend clinics and seminars
 - iii. Self-analyze your game
 - iv. Invest your time and resources to go to other matches

2. STUDY THE GAME

- a. Watch game film (even if it is not a game you officiated)
- b. Read the rules FREQUENTLY
- c. Attend clinics
- d. Secure yourself a mentor
- e. Volunteer to mentor others when appropriate
- f. Read books and magazines about umpiring and coaching
 - i. National Association of Sports Officials Magazine, FHLife Magazine
- g. Be open to discussions with coaches
- h. Invest in yourself by going to clinics or courses to learn

3. FITNESS

- a. Make it an all-year process, not just as field hockey approaches
- b. Set standards and goals for yourself
- c. Test your fitness
- d. Make it a lifestyle
 - i. Cardio
 - ii. Nutrition
 - iii. Sleep patterns
 - iv. Yoga
- e. Simulate game situations in training
- f. Work around environmental factors (i.e. weather)
- g. Find mental exercise (i.e. reaction, memory, lumosity.com)

4. PROFESSIONALISM

- a. Teamwork
 - i. Communication with your partner prior to game day
 - ii. Know where to meet
 - iii. Travel time
 - iv. Compensate for the unknown that may not be good (i.e. late arrival/traffic)
 - v. Relieve/reduce your level of stress before arriving
 - vi. Uniforms
 - vii. Double check you have your coin, cards and cap
 - viii. Prepared for weather
 - ix. Have your bag packed as necessary before arrival
- b. Pre-Game
 - i. Arrive early to prepare
 - ii. Conduct a radio check
 - iii. Be consistent in application and answer questions properly
 - iv. Allow yourself time to warm up. Keep your routine consistent.
 - v. Know the game you may be dealing with.
- c. Know your Surroundings
 - i. Do not criticize others when in the stands or benches
 - ii. Keep comments to yourself

5. KNOWLEDGE OF THE RULES

- a. Resources
 - i. Rule Books
 - ii. FIH Rules of Hockey App
 - iii. Read briefings and documents
 - iv. Review comparison chart
 - v. Watch video to study the application of the rules
 - vi. Ask questions
 - vii. Study applications and concepts of rules
 - 1. Done to make game simple and understandable
 - 2. Don't over analyze
 - 3. Know the basics

6. FOCUS AND CONCENTRATION

- a. Increasing Focus
 - i. Watch games in real time
 - ii. Ask yourself how would you have called it?
 - iii. Mindful internet activities (i.e. reaction, memory, focus)
 - iv. Yoga
 - v. Ask for help when focus is waning
 - vi. There is always something to watch

- b. Maintaining Focus
 - i. Move more to keep blood flowing
 - ii. Notice if your head drops
 - iii. Find a way to refocus
 - iv. Recognize tunnel vision
 - 1. Look around, off ball as appropriate
 - 2. Stay active, mentally and physically
 - v. Ignore what you might hear that takes focus away:
 - 1. Before the match
 - 2. During the match
 - vi. Don't dwell on past decisions, such as:
 - 1. Signaling too long
 - 2. Processing if decisions was right or wrong

7. MANAGEMENT/CONFIDENCE

- a. Umpire matches year-round to work on
 - i. Communication
 - ii. Whistle sound and timing
 - iii. Body language
 - iv. Use of cards
- b. Expose yourself to as much as possible
 - i. You don't know what you don't know
 - ii. Create or obtain opportunities
- c. Learn to manage
 - i. Not everyone is the same
 - 1. Use different tools
 - ii. Know your audience
 - iii. Teams directly
 - iv. This is the hardest part of umpiring
 - v. Learn from non-successful moments
- d. Observe
 - i. Warm-ups and possible tactics
 - ii. Don't just walk around the field pre-game
 - iii. Penalty corners/overheads/movements
 - iv. Look around when able during matches
- e. In sync for progression of penalties
 - i. Set standards and hold to them
 - ii. Players need to know what will happen next
 - iii. Use radios as necessary

8. COMMUNICATON

- a. Assigners
 - i. Contact as necessary
 - 1. If problems arise
 - 2. Changes occur
 - 3. There are game issues
- b. Players
 - i. When players look for advice
 - ii. Work with them as necessary
 - iii. Use:
 - 1. Whistle
 - 2. Cards
 - 3. Voice as appropriate
 - a. Do not over talk
 - iv. Do not coach players
 - v. Manage consistently
 - vi. Whistle tone communication and severity
 - 1. All 22 players on the field can hear the whistle
 - 2. No excuse for not hearing
- c. Coaches
 - i. Setting the tone and atmosphere
 - 1. Do not over talk and keep it simple
 - 2. Play to the whistle
 - ii. Body language and reaction
 - iii. Umpires held to higher standard of communication
 - 1. Keep calm
 - 2. No emotions
 - 3. Nothing negative
- d. Partners
 - i. Radios Usage
 - 1. Expectations
 - 2. Timing of radio talk
 - 3. As necessary
 - a. Do not make calls for partner
 - b. Do not over chat
 - c. Keep it relevant

9. EMPATHY

- a. For all stakeholders:
 - i. Players
 - ii. Coaches
 - 1. Understanding vs. interruptions
 - iii. Spectators
 - iv. Ball chasers
 - v. Sponsors

- vi. Grounds crew
- vii. Administrators
- b. Will vary based on levels
 - i. Safety concerns first
 - ii. Understanding of the game
 - iii. Skill levels
 - iv. Scrimmage vs. real game
- c. Understand surroundings
 - i. Travel distances
 - ii. Weather
 - iii. Pitch layout

10. CONSISTENCY

- a. Know the applications of the rules
 - i. One voice, one message concept
 - ii. Discard personal opinions
- b. Accuracy
- c. Fairness
- d. Review past performances
- e. Know that some things will not be seen as consistent
 - i. “the criteria used to decide must be consistent to be consistent”
 - ii. Understand conditions may change
 - iii. Perspective is a factor

11. WILLINGNESS TO LEARN

- a. There are always things to learn and learn from
- b. Year-round learning
- c. Don't let finances/dollars affect your learning
 - i. Volunteer
 - ii. Decide the what, the how and time are you willing to learn
 - iii. Learn more by doing
 - iv. Willing to be on your own to learn
 - v. Critique yourself
- d. Get out of your comfort zone to learn
 - i. Challenge yourself
 - ii. Embrace learning
- e. Secure a Mentor
 - i. With a group
 - ii. With a trusted colleague
 - iii. With a hockey friend

12. OPEN MINDEDNESS

- a. Willing to listen
- b. Listen to everyone
 - i. Players
 - ii. Coaches
 - iii. Peers
 - iv. Spectators
 - v. National Governing Body
- c. Take what you can
 - i. Sometimes you're ready for the information, sometimes you're not
- d. Digest what you can
- e. Discard what is not needed
- f. File for future reference
- g. Self-analyzation
 - i. Why did I not see that?
 - ii. Was I concentrated for the whole match?
 - iii. What can I improve on next time?
 - iv. What went right?
 - v. What went wrong?
 - vi. What do I need to work on?
- h. Be open to reviewing decisions
 - i. After reaction from players
 - ii. A proper question being asked
 - iii. Information from partner as requested/necessary

14. UNDERSTANDING OF THE GAME

- a. Know Level of experience and skill
- b. Know your partner
- c. What might you deal with?
- d. Know the applications of the rules
- e. Decision making without blowing the whistle

Other than USA Field Hockey providing umpires with events and training opportunities, it is up to you to decide what you are willing to put into your learning to become the best umpire you possibly can.

Thanks to everyone in this session for their input, honesty and experience to help umpiring in the United States.