

Softball officials,

Hello. I hope that all of you are having a good start to your season. With the cold weather fading away (hopefully) and the school systems' spring breaks over, we're all entering the long stretch of the softball season. This year, proper mechanics is a focus for MPSSAA softball officials, so I thought I would bring up a few things that I have encountered on the field that we all need to be consistent about.

Check swing mechanics. Our mechanics are much different than NCAA softball or even MLB for that matter. Catchers cannot simply point to the base umpire to ask for an opinion on a checked swing. The procedure should be...

- The catcher needs to turn to the plate umpire to ask if they can go to their partner for an opinion. If the catcher simply points at the field umpire, the plate umpire needs to lean in and calmly tell them that the plate umpire must be asked first. The field umpire should not respond to the catcher pointing at them.

- If the plate umpire does choose to go to their partner, their motions need to be slow and methodical. Step to the side slowly. Take off your mask slowly. Point to your partner slowly and verbalize "did she swing/go?" This way the field umpire knows the question is coming to them and they will be ready with a clear answer.

Bat dropped on the ground near home plate. When a bat is dropped near home plate, it is not our responsibility to pick it up or move it. Let it be. Do not create a problem by tossing the bat to another location only to have that action create a different problem.

Walking the line. Base umpires, you need to walk the line in foul territory with each pitch. A minimum number of steps (1-2). Not 5 or 6. Not zero. From the start of the game until its' completion. This mechanic shows that we are ready for any play that might develop.

As I said, these are a few situations I have seen in my own games and I believe these scenarios happen throughout the state. As always, your local association can give you more information, and you can always feel free to contact me. Keep focused on the game and enjoy yourself.

Rick Morris

wvmdmorris@gmail.com

443-299-9865