

How you move sideways or down-It happens and it generally is your fault. You may not realize it, but that is part of the problem. You may feel that we have favorites, but really we just have umpires that do what we expect them to do and some that don't. Remember that you are an independent contractor and not an employee-we can choose who we contract with to do the games.

Some good ways to move sideways or down:

- **Don't listen**-you should get feed back during the season from your assigners, trainers, evaluators, and partners. Ask what info they have for you, **listen** to it, and then apply it. We understand that change takes some time. Do not be a "Yah but" guy-making excuses is just another way of showing you aren't willing to take instruction. Try asking a question instead. Own your mistakes and learn from them.
- **Don't know the Rules/Mechanics**-We get calls every season about umpires that don't know the rules or the proper way to enforce them. I'll never understand how someone can take money to do a job without putting any effort in learning how to do it properly. Read rule books and attend clinics every year. I read rule books frequently and learn or remember something every time. I try to attend at least 2 clinics every year and I learn new things every time. The kind of umpiring we do is extremely tough because we have to know multiple sets of rules. High School rules are different than Cal Ripkin or Pony and those are different than Little League. Let's not even talk about the big brained folk that throw fast pitch into the mix. ;) We have plenty of guys you can call when you don't understand something. If you don't know who to call, consider our Trainer Garth Benham (805-235-9995)-that seems to be his JOB! If you are scared of Garth you are always welcome to call me (805-459-6319). Little League related: don't forget our local LL World Series umpire John Valverde (805-757-2863). When someone calls **you** looking for answers to rule questions, you'll know that people are noticing you for the right reasons.

Just like the players, you have a place to be on every play and it isn't always parked in back of the plate. Learn the game and let the ball take you to the play. It is essential to keep all the elements of the play in front of you. Learn the proper way to signal calls and communicate with your partner. Learning proper mechanics is hard, but knowing them makes the game easier. If you aren't sure what the rule is or how to apply it; or maybe you aren't sure where to move on the field in a certain situation, look it up first, then call someone who knows.

Everybody needs a mentor-I have mine and you need to find yours-**And Listen to Them!**

- **Be unprofessional**-we are all professional umpires. We may not call MLB games, but we get paid to officiate and we need to act like this is a real job. Stay calm when interacting with coaches, some ejections can't be avoided, but most can. Let the coach be the aggressor, don't bait them. Fans are a problem but they are not your problem, if needed get the game administrator to deal with them. Don't interact with them-you may be offering to have someone's mouthy obese grandma moved to the parking lot with a fork lift like one of our umpires. Leave

your phone in the car-you don't want to be observed by coaches and fans texting/talking when you are being paid to umpire. For crap's sake don't drink alcohol, pee in the bushes, show up late, strip naked, or do anything else that will result in a call to me (yes all of those things have happened). Everybody's phone has a camera and the League President will call your Assigner. You are still being paid to umpire between innings-move to your between innings position and observe the warm-ups. Stay out of the stands/dugouts and pay attention to what is going on with the game. Look like a professional-dirt, wrinkles, and stains are not professional.

- **Don't show up/be late-** Missing a game will earn you a suspension, period. It could get you booted from the association and guess what-No Refunds! League presidents **always call** if you are running late and it is always one of a very few guys. **Don't be that guy!** Be on time-game time is not on time, 30 minutes early is on time. Be early enough to do everything that is expected. LL expects you to check gear, Cal Ripken/Pony doesn't, so be earlier for a LL game. Working a field you haven't seen before? Be early enough to get lost-you may get lost just walking to the field. Be on the field 10-15 minutes before the start time. Start your plate meeting 5 minutes before game time.
- **Assign your game to someone else-**If we assign you a game and you send someone else, how are we going to know who to pay? If you know someone who is available when you are not, let us know and we may assign them. That way we know who is working and where.
- **Don't communicate** When Arbiter sends you the email that you have games-go accept or decline them. If you wait, the Assigner may just give the game to someone else. If you wait too long Arbiter will take the games away and block you for that day so that you can't get games from us. If you need to decline-give a reason. The reason should not be a work function, birthday, anniversary, kids game, doctors appointment, etc...-You know about them so those things should already be blocked on Arbiter. Set your blocks so that you don't waste the Assigner's time. Canceling 5 minutes before game time is not acceptable and will make our whole Association look unprofessional to our leagues. We expect you to take a HS game over a Rec game-give us some notice so our game gets covered, too. We can work with you if you have special scheduling needs-can't work weekends or Fridays-we can work around that, but LET US KNOW.
- **Refuse to take games/take games then turn them back for "better" games-**As an independent contractor you have the right to refuse any games you are assigned, but say "no" enough times and you may not have the opportunity to say "yes" later. Assigners like "yes" men. Avoid taking games from other Rec leagues until after you have received your schedule from us. If you spend the Rec season working for other assigners don't expect to be at the top of our Assigner's list come tournament season. The assigners all talk/help each other so it will get back to us where else you are working. We need all the bodies on board to cover the leagues our Association is obligated to.