

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What is proper timing? Timing is the proper use of the eyes. Call the pitch as fast as you can...after you see it. Umpires talk about those who call pitches before they have even reached the glove (like the called strike three that goes for a home run!). We watch batters get half way to first before the umpire calls a strike, or watch both catcher and batter turn and look at the umpire waiting for an announcement of his decision. We see the scoreboard being reset after the "ball" becomes a "strike". On the rubber...get set...see it...call it!

The Automatic Call. Why do some umpires automatically call "strike" on a pitch made at a count of three balls and no strikes? Why do some umpires call "ball" on a pitch made at a count of no balls and two strikes? Does the pitcher suddenly get worse or better? Don't do it! Don't do it! Call the pitch exactly where it was placed, exactly as you would in every situation without regard to the count or game situation.

Don't Make It Hard! Every pitch is a strike until it convinces you it's a ball! Baseball and softball are simple games - don't make them hard!

The Game is Yours! When you walk on to the field that game is yours. You are in control. Keep things moving! If you let things drag on, there will be more errors and more arguments for no reason. Keep things fresh and moving and the play of the game will be much sharper.

Don't Look for Praise! Some umpires crave to be recognized as being an excellent official. Once you start looking for praise, you will need it and it will own you. Don't look for praise. You know in your head if you've done a good job or not.

Arrive Early! Get to the park at least 30 minutes prior to the game. This allows you to walk the field, check equipment, have a thorough pre-game conference with your partner, and mentally prepare for the game.

Just Walk Away! Umpires usually never discuss their routine calls. The more an umpire talks, the more he feels he has to justify and explain his call. It takes years of study and practice to make a good umpire. It takes excellent judgment to make a quality official. It can take only one second to make that same official look like he doesn't know what is going on. Make a call and walk away from it! Don't turn that second into minutes, hours and a career.