

WHAT CAN THEY TEACH ME?

Recreation personnel, league directors and game assigners say that some of their umpires are reluctant to enroll in annual umpire training since they are veteran umpires and do not believe that there is anything to be learned by attending these sessions. Umpires with this attitude are presumptuous, arrogant, ignorant and even larcenous. They presume that they are umpiring in the most effective and professional way. They deny the possibility that there is any room for them to improve in their avocation. They have lost touch with the reality that the rules, the mechanics and the game itself has changed since their first season. Most importantly they are cheating the players by taking their game fees under a false pretense. Doing the same thing incorrectly over a period of years does not make it perfect it just makes it permanent.

It would be ludicrous to imagine a professional who earned their degree and practiced for years without updating the skills and knowledge of their chosen field. Any tradesman who worked at their craft for decades using the same techniques learned when they were an apprentice would soon be unemployed. Businesses who relied on outdated technology to market their goods and services could not survive in the competitive market of the twenty first century. Annual in-service training, continuing education and professional development is a key component of success in any occupation or avocation. Individuals participate in this training because of an interest in learning, a sense of obligation, a chance to maintain and improve professional competence, an opportunity to enhance career progression, to keep abreast of new technology and practices, or to comply with requirements or regulations.

Successful umpires use a set of skills to perform their duties including good positioning, established movement patterns, communication techniques and efficient mechanics. They perform their duties in a professional manner, in a proper uniform, with a full understanding of the rules of the game. Updating those skills and knowledge on a regular basis is a prerequisite for success on the field. Those who dismiss the necessity for this training have lost respect for themselves, their fellow umpires, the players, the uniform, the game.

There is an old axiom that states, "Umpires are expected to be perfect in the first game of their career and continue to improve thereafter". Participation in annual umpire training under the guidance of experienced clinicians will facilitate that improvement.

