

## DIAMOND REPORT

Hello Umpires,

Well it is that time of the year again. I know it doesn't seem like baseball weather but the calendar says opening day spring high school baseball is a month away. Time to be registered and hopefully a member of the NHSOA and if not please consider joining we are baseball's voice in the NSAA officials pool. It is very important for each of you to take care of the responsibilities off the field: register, watch the pre-season baseball video, take the open book exam, and closed book exam if needed.

It is time to check our equipment to make sure everything is in grade A shape. Safety is important for our athletes it is also important to the umpires. Shoes shined, gear clean and safe, and uniforms clean and not faded and wrinkled. Our first appearance can go a long way on how we are treated on the field. First impression makes a difference!

This is also the time to get in the rule book. We don't have many rule changes for the 2018 season, and a few editorial changes...but if you get into the rule book we can find something you may not have known or help you better understand a rule. There is no excuse for not knowing the rules. We have to enforce them. We also need to get in the officials' manual, we umpires all need to be on the same page, study the manual and if you have questions feel free to call Troy Test or I. Get in front of a mirror and check out your signals. Your strike call, your punch out strike 3, the safe and out calls. Go through your umpire signals so you and your partners are on the same page when communicating.

With that said make a checklist to go over with your partner in pregame. Pregame is the umpire's time to develop their game plan and a way to get prepared mentally. There are 3 teams on the field, Home, Visitors and Umpire team. Put it this way, there are not too many fans cheering for us unless the call is in their favor. We need to know what each other is doing and how we are going to communicate our actions. The officials manual gives us a blueprint to follow. So let's take the time to get our minds and bodies mentally and physically in shape. Good Luck this season.

Hope to see you all at the NHSOA Baseball Clinic on Sunday March 4, 2018 at Fremont High School starting at 1 PM. Dan Masters and NSAA Evaluators will be in attendance. Remember first appearance does make a difference.

Respectfully,  
Gary Eikmeier