

## **GOING FOR HELP**

One of the goals for the NCAA Softball Umpire Improvement Program is to implement umpire mechanics and positioning standards in the two and three umpire systems so that umpires throughout the country can work the game with the same basic concepts. While this is an important and necessary aspect of any national training program, even more can be done to implement a strong and consistent philosophy regarding game administration.

One area of game administration that, in my view, needs improvement throughout the country is the almost universal notion that an umpire must, and much worse, WILL go for help any time a coach questions a call or requests an umpire to get a second opinion on a play where that umpire is responsible for the call. This situation happens far too often and simply needs to stop. Let's say you are the primary umpire responsible for a force call at first base. The runner and ball arrive at the same time making the play very close. You make an emphatic call and walk to your next starting position only to have the coach (who didn't get the call) request time and walks out to talk to you. It is obvious the coach wants you to change the call- not because you are wrong, but because the call went against her/his team. Are you one to cave in to the coach's demands? Are you one to abandon your only responsibility on that play? Are you willing to appease a coach just so you don't look bad? Are you one to let your partner take the bullet? Are you one who does not have enough pride or confidence in your professional ability and training to believe you got it right? Too often, the answer is yes to one or many of these questions in this situation. If you are the umpire involved in this play and you have all the information you need to make the call, the proper response for the coach's demand is to hold your ground, take the heat, confidently explain your decision and play ball. You will be a more respected and effective umpire for it.

Have a great season!  
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Softball Umpire Improvement Program