

Setting the Tone for the Game

Too often these days we see umpires going out onto the field with an “**Us vs Them**” attitude towards the players and coaches.

This attitude shows in many areas, in their game stories after matches as they recount how tough they were at sending players off or what they said to players, and in their body language on the field of play during the game.

Why is it that some umpires feel the need to believe that they are in a constant battle with players? How can we change this?

Above all, an umpire must remember that the game is for the players, not for them.

An umpire must ensure a safe and pleasant playing environment and protect the players at all times.

Umpires can do this before the match even begins. How an umpire sets the tone for the game will make a huge difference to how the game proceeds.

Here are a few simple things to consider:

- **Never make threats** – most players know the rules of the game and did not turn up to receive a lecture!
- **Do not spell out what you expect from players.** How would you feel if the tables were turned and a player told you what they expected from you?
- **Do not create conflict by having an over-officious attitude**
- **Get to know names** – You are not the enemy of the player.
- **Smile and enjoy the game** – After all, you have nominated to umpire. If you don't enjoy it, why are you there?

