

## It's Only Cheating If You Get Caught...

### **Ready:**

So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.  
James 4:17

### **Set**

Whether it is your first year in sports or you have been involved in athletics for many years, I think it is safe to say we all have heard the saying; "It's only cheating if you get caught." I have never really been a rule breaker in sports. Now, I say "never REALLY" because I am certain I have broken rules on occasion in my days of playing sports. More than likely it was because I probably did not even know of the rule I was breaking.

I feel there are two kinds of rule breakers and each of them are unacceptable in their own right. The first rule breaker is the one, like myself stated above, where the player or coach simply does not know the rule(s). Ignorance of the rules is not an excuse (especially for a coach). I feel it is the coaches duty to know the game or sport they are coaching inside and out so they may teach the athletes. The athletes who do not know or understand the sport they are playing is a reflection on the coach.

The second type of rule breakers have been described many times by many people simply as "cheaters". These are the people who know the rules yet they try to avoid them in order to better the outcome in their favor. I am a coach who is known for sticking up for my players if I feel the call was incorrect by the umpires. I do not give the umpires a hard time, I simply expect them to do their jobs to the best of their potential.

One instance, this past softball season, a player of mine was on the base path. The ball was hit in her direction as she started to advance to the next base. She was unable to get out of the way in time, therefore, the ball hit her on the foot. From where I was standing in the third base coaches box I clearly saw the ball hit her foot. The umpire made the proper call which was the base runner was out for interference. She instantly started arguing with the umpire that the ball never touched her. I quickly ran out on the field and escorted my player off telling her that I saw the ball hit her. I told the umpire 'Good call' as I was walking off. Needless to say, I was disappointed in my players reaction. She felt I should have taken up for her and argue the call. This was an example of poor sportsmanship on my players part for trying to "cheat" in order for her to advance bases.

I feel there is simply no excuse, ever, to try and "cheat" your way to a win in any sport. As a coach, the most exciting part for me is to develop athletes physically as well as mentally on the skills and knowledge of the game so they will have the confidence to not have to try and cheat their way to a victory. If that coaching strategy is successful, I feel as a coach, I am

successful.

## Go

1. As a coach or athlete how often do you feel compelled to "Bend the rules"?
2. How do you respond when your opponent breaks the rules?
3. How do you respond when your athletes break the rules?

## Workout

- James 4:17
- Proverbs 12:22
- Proverbs 19:1

## Bible Reference:

James 4



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