



October 2019
Volume 10, Issue 2

HEY BLUE! Online

BCBUA ANNOUNCES AGM DATE

The BCBUA has announced the date and location for the 2019 Annual General Meeting. The event will take place on Saturday October 26 at 1pm at the Sandman Signature Hotel - 10251 Edwards Drive, Richmond, BC.

There are several items up for voting this year. Most notably, the resolution which would increase membership dues for the first time in a decade. The full resolution is available on the website and was emailed to all members in September.

In short, the resolution would increase dues for all umpires effective January 1, 2020. Umpires who are 13 and under would pay \$35 annually (up from \$25) and all other members would pay \$65 (up from \$50).

BCBUA President Sean Sullivan indicates the main reason for the proposal is because the association requires additional funding to continue to offer mentorship programs, instructor training, and to offset funding shortfalls from lack of Gaming Grants and similar revenue streams.

"Baseball BC contributes \$5,000 annually to BCBUA, and sometimes more, but any excess funding is never a guarantee. Increasing membership dues will assure members of having these programs continue without interruption. If we are able to gain increased Gaming funds, we can devote that to other areas we would like to improve on", says Sullivan.

As an example, in 2019 there was no additional funding provided by Baseball BC, but in 2018 there was additional monies allocated to BCBUA.

Dues have not increased in years and there is a long track record of positive feedback from the programs currently offered by BCBUA.

SULLIVAN TO STEP ASIDE

Sean Sullivan, President of the BCBUA, will not seek a 3rd term. After 4 years at the helm, Sullivan, a native of Nova Scotia, will instead step aside and assume the role of Past President. Sullivan cited work commitments as the main reason for not running. Sullivan intends to be active in the association, but in a lesser capacity. Rhonda Pauls, former Vice President, was nominated and acclaimed to the role. She will assume the position after the conclusion of the AGM October 26. Pauls served as Vice President for the past 8 years. Jared Roberts of Victoria will take over as Treasurer as incumbent Rick Antoniuk declined to run.

BACK TO SCHOOL EDITION

AGM Resolutions.....	2
President's Report.....	4
Positioning Tips.....	6
High Level Assignments.....	8
Troubles on the Bases?.....	10
T12.....	12
From the Chief's Desk.....	16

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Photo's from the Summer
- Gear Heads
- Cartoons
- Interesting articles and tips



CLINIC REPORT

Once again the BCBUA conducted a record number of clinics throughout the province in 2019. Nearly 80 clinics took place which netted a total of nearly 1650 registered members. This number represents a nearly identical total from 2018.

There will be a full accounting of the membership numbers and breakdowns by level made available at the AGM in Richmond.

In addition to level 1-2 clinics, there was Superclinic in Abbotsford, the Umpire Academy in Kamloops, and National clinic also in Kamloops. Despite the multi-

tude of clinics taking place, there are still umpires who choose to register online and do not attend these valuable learning seminars. Clinics aren't the same as they used to be. Levels are split into theory/rules, and practical gym components more evenly than in previous years.

There are also still associations out there that don't hold clinics. This is a huge disservice to the players, and the umpires who are asked to go onto the field and officiate games.

Lets all try to get out to a clinic in 2020!

BCBUA Membership remains near record high in 2019

IN MEMORIAM

It's with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of Mike Davis. Mike was a level three umpire out of Richmond and will be dearly missed by our members.

He was a well liked man both on and off the field and his presence in the association will be missed by all who knew him.

We also are sad to report the passing of former BCBUA umpire Michael Rogers of Nanaimo. Mike was the son of National Umpire Dan Rogers.

Mike had a short but valiant battle against cancer. We offer our thoughts and prayers to Dan and his wife Theresa on their loss.



AGM RESOLUTIONS UP FOR VOTING

ORDINARY RESOLUTION 1 Member dues for members who will not have turned 14 by December 31 in that year be increased from \$25 to \$35 per year, and member dues for all other members, except life members, be increased from \$50 to \$65 per year;

SPECIAL RESOLUTION 1 (if approved previously by the board of directors, requires 2/3 majority in favour by all members present in person) The bylaws of the Society be amended by providing that the term of office as a director of the immediate Past President be two years and s. 4.2(a) of the bylaws be amended to read: "(a) immediate Past President, whose term of office shall be 2 years";

SPECIAL RESOLUTION 2 (if approved previously by the board of directors, requires 2/3 majority in favour by all members present in person) The bylaws of the Society be amended by providing that a resolution in writing, consented to in writing by a majority of the directors, is as valid and effective as if regularly passed at a meeting of directors, unless a director requests that the proposed resolution be discussed at a meeting of directors prior to a vote being taken, and to amend the last sentence in s.5.4 of the bylaws to read as follows: "A resolution consented to in writing by all of the directors, or a resolution consented to in writing by a majority of the directors if no director has requested that the proposed resolution be discussed at a meeting of directors prior to a vote being taken, is as valid and effective as if regularly passed at a meeting of directors."

TIPS FOR 1-Man System... if you have to do it.

(This article was taken from Referee Magazine)

It's not news that budgets for athletic programs, especially in recreation and intramural leagues, have had to be tightened. Often the first items trimmed are officiating fees or the number of officials assigned to a game. That is certainly true in softball. The use of the one-umpire system may not be allowed by state or national association edict. In some areas, however, it's a very common practice.

If you have to work sole never take your eyes off the ball, except for a time play or a live-ball appeal being made on the bases. In either of those situations, as soon as you make a call, quickly turn to see if the runner crossed the plate and then immediately turn back to the play to ensure the ball was held and not bobbled or dropped.

Here are some more mechanics tips.

No runners on base....On a ground ball in the infield, hustle out from behind the plate and start up the first-base line inside the diamond about six feet off the line. Be stationary when you make the call and be ready to move toward the center of the diamond if there is an overthrow. If the ball goes through the infield for a base hit, move toward the pitcher's plate. If the possibility of extra bases exists, move with the runner but keep an eye on the ball.

On fly balls, follow the same procedure except you must get an angle if the possibility of a trap exists. On balls hit down the line, move down the line until you make your ruling and then hustle to be in position for a play on the batter-runner. If the play on the batter-runner is going to be made at the plate, make your call from inside the diamond on the first-base side. If the throw is coming from right field, move about six feet directly in front of the plate and let the throw go by, then move into position to make the ruling.

Runner on first base....On a ground ball in the infield, hustle out just to the left of the pitcher's plate, being prepared to move in the direction of the throw and make any ruling necessary. Follow the previously mentioned procedures for base hits, fly balls, balls hit down the line and plays at the plate.

Runners on first and second....On a fly ball or ground ball in the infield, hustle out to the pitcher's circle. Naturally, on a ball hit down either line, you will have to make your fair/foul ruling and then move to get the best angle on any play that follows. On a base hit where there is a strong possibility of a play at the plate, move halfway up the third-base line in foul territory. If the throw goes home, hustle back behind the plate and make your ruling from a position behind the plate based on where the throw is coming from. That will normally be one of the baselines extended. If no play is being made at the plate, move into the diamond and hustle into position to get your best angle for any play on the bases.

Bases loaded....On any hit ball, move up the third-baseline in foul territory. Be careful not to slow down or run into the runner advancing home. Follow the above procedures for fly balls, balls hit down the line and whenever there is a strong possibility for a play at the plate. If no play is being made at the plate, move into the diamond and hustle into position to get your best angle for any play on the bases.

The above positions are basic guidelines I recommend. Each code may vary in some cases. Besides calling balls and strikes, outs and safes, fair and foul, you must also closely watch for runners leaving bases too soon, interference and obstruction and manage the game in a professional manner. To successfully work using the one-umpire system, hustle at all times to get good angles.

FROM THE OVAL OFFICE—President's Report

By Sean Sullivan

As I wind down on the end of my fourth year as the BCBUA President and sixth overall on the board - I did two years as the Treasurer, I have decided not to run for another term. It comes with mixed emotions, as I truly enjoyed my time with the board. I will be fulfilling my role on the board as Past President, so you haven't totally gotten rid of me yet! I had the opportunity to work with many talented people who are truly committed to making baseball a better game through the growing of great umpires. I also forged some tremendous friendships that I cherish and will maintain going forward.

You need to know that your association is in excellent hands with Rhonda Pauls taking over as President and Jared Roberts coming on as our new Treasurer. I would like to thank Rick Antoniak for his work as our Treasurer for the past four years. Rick always brought sound decision making to his role and consistently kept the board informed of our financial situation so we could make timely decisions. I would be remiss if I did not thank the rest of the board, from our Directors to the Area Reps. They had the courage to speak up and voice their concerns/opinions which led to robust discussions and in my mind, the board choosing the best way forward.

The board was able to grow our grassroots programming, our mentorship program and our National program continues to lead and be the envy of the rest of Canada. We have invested a tremendous amount of time and money into the Caravan program and now have over 40 instructors that are well placed around the Province. We have held regular Advanced and Super Clinics, our Umpire Academy is a great story as it continues to generate our next wave of National level umpires and we have forged a great working relationship with several MLB umpires who give us their time in the off season to assist with our clinics.

The board has fought hard for change when it comes to umpire abuse and the excessive number of ejections we see year over year. I can report that we may have now begun to finally change opinions by participating in two extraordinary committee meetings. First with the PBL which then led to a meeting hosted by Baseball BC and other partner associations to discuss a consistent discipline process for baseball in BC. We continue to profess that these leagues should be adopting a discipline process similar to that of the NCAA and US High School, where coaches and players can see what discipline will be levied prior to any misconduct occurring. That will hopefully deter this unnecessary behaviour and allow umpires to umpire, players to play and coaches to coach. Here's hoping!

I love this sport and will continue to love this sport. I am already hyped for next year's season as we have many things to be proud of! Hope to see you at the AGM this October 26, check the website for more details.

Sean Sullivan
President
BCBUA

Canada Cup Crew below: Supervisors Rob Allan and Steve Boutang, Umpires Sean Weatherhill and Blaise Laveay





Above: BCBUA Umpires John Pentland and Gary Webber at the Pee wee Nationals

Below: Gary Webber correctly sets in fair territory with R3 during the pitch.





BC Umpire John Pentland at the Peeewe National in Quebec

POINT OF THE PLATE— A TUTORIAL



When working the plate, angles on calls are often overlooked. When you see umpires on TV, they are making their calls at all sorts of different angles than what we probably were taught or what we currently do. There's a reason for that, just like there is a reason for everything we do on the field!

Here's a quick lesson on what to do for those sometimes difficult plays.

When the ball is put into play and it appears that a runner will try to score, take 1 or 2 big steps backwards towards the screen so you can read the play.

From there, adjust to first base line extended or third base line extended depending on the type of play you have.

For plays that are not going to be close—ie the runner is caught dead to rights and the ball is going to beat him by 10 feet or more, you can reasonably assume that a slide play will happen. In this instance, take up your position at the point of the plate or on first base line extended.

If it appears like the play will be closer, or if you see the catcher having to reach out in front of him to go and get the ball, you can reasonably assume that a swipe tag may occur.

90 percent of the plays are going to be swipe tags.

Take up your position along third base line extended and watch to see the daylight (catcher's glove either making contact with the runner or missing him). If you do this correctly, you will be in perfect position to see those close swipe tags.

As we see in the picture to the left, National umpire Ethan McNamara is starting from the point of the plate. Since it isn't a swipe tag situation and is a slide play, he stays at the point to watch the play and make his call from there.

Practice this in your basement this winter and be ready to implement that in your first games next spring!



Andre Jean (right) and Ed Levinson (left) enjoying a joke at the plate



Strike 3! Says Andre Jean



John Pentland is Johnny on the Spot to make the call!

Life Member Jerry Tregaskis – beating Cancer yet again! Way to go Jerry!



(L to R) Jacob Daniels, Ethan McNamara, and Tavin Edge

NATIONALS 2019

Mike Green—Peewee West

Lane Yakemchuk—
Peewee West

Craig Burt—Peewee West

Bill Keegan—Peewee West

Gary Webber—Peewee
National

John Pentland—Peewee
National

Jared Roberts—Peewee
Atlantic

Shawn Bird— U15

Jon Hollett—U15

Kevin Burk—Sr Women

Les Maerov—Sr Women

Trevor Sharpe—U18

Bruce Kristinson—U18

Sean Weatherhill—
Canada Cup

Blaise Laveay—Canada Cup

Corey Klein—Jr Men

Darcy Rysz—Sr Men

Sean Sullivan—T12

Scott Eckardt—T12

Steve Boutang—T12

GRAND FORKS INTERNATIONAL

The Following Umpires worked the 37th Grand Forks International Tournament

Steve Boutang—Chief Umpire

Sean Sullivan

Scott Eckardt

Rhonda Pauls

Phil Bourgeois

Blaise Laveay

Jayden Saban

Sean Weatherhill

Matt Hicketts

Joe Mallinson (Selected but injured)



Caption describing picture or graphic

PAULS SELECTED TO PAN-AM WOMEN

Abbotsford umpire Rhonda Pauls was selected to her fourth International tournament in August when she attended the Pan American Women's World Cup of Baseball in Aguascalientes, Mexico.

Pauls previous stops have included Cuba, Japan, and Toronto.

The event featured 8 clubs from the Americas who all were attempting to qualify for the Women's World Cup in 2020.

Pauls worked first base in the Championship game, but her highlight was working home plate for the Cuba vs USA game, the tournament's feature matchup in round robin play.





West Coast League Umpire Jared Roberts of Victoria shaking hands with Former Montreal Expo and now Victoria Harbourcat Manager Todd Haney. Victoria were defeated in the League Championship Final 2 games to 1.

West Coast League Staff 2019 Season

Steve Boutang – Umpire Administrator

Sean Sullivan	Shawn Bird
Scott Eckardt	Gord McFarlane
Jared Roberts	Shawn Schaefer
Nick Moore	Sean Weatherhill
Jon Hollett	Tyler Pentland
Jayden Saban	Blaise Laveay
Troy Carmont	Bruce Kristinson
Rhonda Pauls	Darcy Rysz
Corey Klein	Kevin Burk
Phil Bourgeois	Matt Hicketts
Mark Bodwell	Brendan Lim

The following umpires received WCL Playoff Assignments in 2019

Steve Boutang – Umpire Administrator

Scott Eckardt – Division Series and Final Series

Nick Moore – Division Series and Final Series

Jon Hollett – Division Series

Jayden Saban – Division Series

Blaise Laveay – Final Series

Sean Weatherhill – Final Series



Peeewe West Nationals – BC Umpires in Front row include Mike Green, Craig Burt, Lane Yakemchuk and Bill Keegan. Back Row – Supervisor Steve Boutang

STRUGGLING ON THE BASES?

By Jon Bible (for Referee Magazine)

What do you do when you're struggling on the bases? We're all going to have bang-bang plays where we do everything right but freeze-frame video shows we made the wrong call; that's a function of being human. But what about the ones that we miss obviously, maybe even badly? What happened? And what can we do to recover?

Timing....

Good timing is as essential on the bases as it is on the plate. I have no idea why, but I always tended to be quicker in [calling plays at first base](#) and force-outs than I was on tag plays. I had to constantly engage in self-talk to make myself slow up in those situations. So if you know you kicked a call, assess your timing; chances are that you called it too quickly. No matter how experienced we are or how sound our basic judgment is, our mind has to have a chance to process what our eyes have seen. Let the play go through to completion and then add a second or two before deciding. Fight the impulse to rush your call, especially if it's a dramatic play like a runner trying to score the winning run with a perfect throw coming in. In these instances it's easy to get caught up in the drama and think safe or out too quickly.

Positioning...

It's more important to get a good angle on a play than it is to get on top of it. In the old days, for example, plate umpires from the big leagues on down called plays at the plate from up the third-base line (think p15). This resulted in them looking at the runner's backside as he slid past into the catcher, and this horrible angle increased the chances of getting the play wrong. In an NCAA regional tournament game, a veteran umpire ruled a player safe at the plate to give a team a victory and send it to the College World Series, although video showed the catcher tagged the runner a foot before he touched the plate. The umpire let himself get blocked out by being up the line, causing all heck to break loose.

In the early '70s, when I was in the minors, NL umpire Frank Pulli created a stir when he began calling tag plays at the plate from his ball-strike position. This caught on as umpires realized they had a better view with the ball and runner coming into them. Now things have evolved so that umpires start on the third-base line extended and adjust depending on how the throw comes in and how the runner slides.

Maybe you kicked the play because you weren't stationary. You can't see all the fine detail of a play if you're on the run and your eyes are jiggling. Sometimes it's hard to force yourself to stop when you're far away from a play, as in a two-umpire crew where you have [back-to-back plays](#) at different bases, but you're better off to do this and focus on getting the best angle.

Anticipation...

In the 1984 College World Series, I was working second base. A runner at first broke too quickly and my mind registered this as an easy out. The pitcher completed his pick to the first baseman who threw to second, but it was high so that the fielder had to climb the ladder. By the time he applied the tag it was on the runner's upper arm with the rest of the arm over the bag. Because I had my mind made up before the play happened, I didn't assess it objectively. My mistaken "out" call snuffed out a rally and likely cost that team the game.

We set ourselves up to fail if we anticipate how a play will develop, even subconsciously and for a split second. If Sam hits a ground ball in the hole so F6 has to backhand it, we can't afford to let our first reaction be that there's no way F6 can make the play. That plants a seed in our mind that's hard to overcome if we suddenly have a whacker because Sam tripped coming out of the box or is just slow. Same thing if Bob hits a ground-ball bullet to F5 so that our mind instantly registers out but the runner is especially fast and beats the throw by an eyelash.

Making this mistake once caused me to ring up a guy at least a half-step past first when the throw got there. When the coach argued, I told him I got confused and thought the runner was coming from the opposite direction. He actually laughed.

In sum, if you think you missed a call, run through a checklist of these possible reasons. If you identify the problem, you'll be less likely to screw up the next one. And then put it out of your mind, turn the page and move on, or the misses will continue to happen.



Umpire Academy Group Photo from Kamloops – April 2019

TOURNAMENT 12 – Rogers Center



BC Umpires – Sean Sullivan and Scott Eckardt. Supervisor – Steve Boutang



Above: Umpire Sean Sullivan prepares to call a pitch



At Right: Supervisor Ron Shewchuk celebrates his 60th birthday at T-12

My T12 Experience – By Sean Sullivan

I had the chance to represent BC at this years T12 tournament, where they bring in the top 150 high school baseball players to play before major league and university scouts. It is also the opportunity for the Baseball Canada Umpires High Performance committee to evaluate high level Canadian umpires for inclusion on the International list. Twelve (12) umpires in total attended which included BC umpires Scott Eckardt and Steve Boutang. Steve also was one of the supervisors. This is an invite only tournament as you need to be recommended for T12 by your performance at a Senior National Championship.

The event started Wednesday morning with a breakfast hosted by the Toronto Blue Jays, where Mark Shapiro, Toronto Blue Jays Chief Executive Officer and Robbie Alomar, Hall of Famer, addressed the participants. The afternoon was set aside to conduct an in depth four umpire manual review, which far exceeded the content contained in the manual. A lot of discussion entered around ball-base-umpire method and where to get the “best angle” to see the play and make a call.

Thursday the games started and my first assignment was first base. Standing at home plate for the coaches meeting was surreal. Standing there looking around the Rogers Centre was incredible. Banners hanging in centre field, roof was closed, people looking out of the windows in the outfield hotel rooms, Lloyd Moseby, Duane Ward, Jesse Barfield, Sandy Alomar Senior and Robbie Alomar all sitting in the dugouts. Wow, will never forget that.

The game started and just my luck a slow roller to third who charged and fired a pee to first. The runner was faster than fast and I had a whacker to kick off the tournament. If you ask me, I got it right! LOL. He was for sure out! Just ask me! From there I got into my groove and had a few more close plays, but it seemed like between all pitches or plays I was staring around taking in all the sites! It was after this game and all of the others where the real learning happened. The four supervisors came out onto the field and did a game review for each umpire at the four different positions. The manual is one thing, but these discussions were about the different plays that happened and what could you have done better to get that “perfect look”. It left you no choice but to really think what is the perfect position and how can I achieve that on every play. Trust me it is way different than getting to the right spot as per the manual.

We were encouraged to watch the games, ask questions of the supervisors and join the post game debriefs on the field, to which I took full advantage of. I didn't miss one. First game was 10 AM and last game wrapped up around 9:30 PM each evening. By the way the TD green seats behind home plate are an excellent spot to watch a ball game from. Saturday was the final day and they held an All Star game with the best players showcasing their skill in front of scouts, family and friends. We did a split crew with four doing the first 4 1/2 innings and our crew taking the second half of the game. Amazing how fast a 4 1/2 inning game goes when you take an inning and a half at each base.

We changed in the MLB umpires change room and I can safely report they are being looked after okay. Cabinets full of candy, seeds, gum, nutritional bars and a fridge full of power aid, water and juices ensured they did not hit the field without the right addictions. A steaming tray was ready for the post game meal, however they must have forgot to fill that for us!! LOL! The bathroom was well stocked with shaving creams, gel, cologne, etc. however after the second day it was all whisked away until the MLB umps got back for the next series. I guess we were smelling too good coming out of the change room!

Evaluations were shared with the umpires as all four supervisors met with us individually. I for one learned a lot and will never forget this experience. I wish we had enough spots to allow every National umpire to benefit from this experience.

BCBUA AGM – Saturday Oct. 26 - 1pm

Sandman Signature Vancouver Hotel

10251 St. Edwards Drive, Richmond, BC V6X 2M9

Nanaimo umpires practicing with UIC Brad Jones



Below: Tavin Edge, Jacob Daniel, and Luke Yam



Above: Ethan McNamara and Braeden Heffren

GearHeads: For those who can't get enough

By Brad Jones

In this installment of Gearheads, we will be looking at one of the biggest innovators in umpire accessories and apparel who happens to be Canadian.

For a true Gearhead, looking outside the box, or outside the Big W or Big N, is fundamental to assessing and finding the best gear.

This means looking at the landscape of umpire equipment, apparel and accessories and looking at who is being the real innovators.

Is it a company like All-Star who has started to mass produce an extremely popular magnesium mask (Mag), or an apparel company like Smitty, who beat Davis in producing the first Poly-spandex umpire pants. Innovation makes the umpire experience a safer and more comfortable endeavor.

What is interesting is that one of the biggest innovators out there is a Canadian, Ray Brownlie in Ontario.

Ray, with his Umplife Custom Products, (not to be confused with the Umplife out of the States) has turned his curiosity for finding a better way of building umpire accessories for protective equipment and plate work into one of most desired and respected gear manufacturers in North America.

Ray's rise in the world of umpire gear began with his proven and well-reviewed umpire lineup card holder and his Rayflex chest protector harness. These have become his bread and butter products along with harnesses for masks and shin guards, locker room mats and chairs, equipment and travel bags, and Umplife training apparel.

With this innovation in umpire gear, Ray has also touched a desirable nerve with many of his products: customization. By offering umpires the ability to put logos and names on their harnesses, lineup card holders, locker room mats, organizational bags or mask bags, Ray has captured a niche in the market and in the demand of his products by making the experience of having his gear a personal expression of each umpire.

With the positive feedback and support of happy umpires, Ray, in the past two years, has expanded into the accessories and apparel landscape of the umpire world with everything from convertible pullover jackets to shoe bags and cap cases.

His catalogue of umpire accessories is full of well-built and desirable products that are in demand by umpires all the way from weekend warriors to professional umpires at the Major and Minor league levels.

With all this success, Ray is not sitting on his laurels, but working for umpires to design and produce products created by umpires for the needs of umpires. Even with his bread and butter products, he is not sitting back, but looking for ways to make it better for umpires.

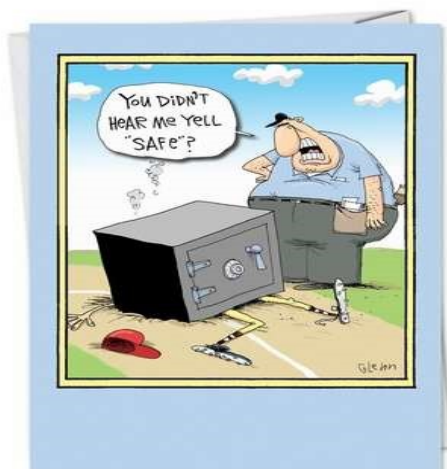
The example of this has been the second coming of his chest protector harness, the Flex line of harnesses and straps, that have been well received up to and including at the major league level.

With the reinforced, neoprene design, Ray has taken the triangle CP harness to the next level with extra strength and comfort.

His hard work to earn the respect of umpires has not been ignored, as Ump-attire (ump-attire.com), one of the biggest supplier of umpire equipment and accessories in North America has signed an exclusive agreement to sell many of his products in North America.

But that does not mean that you cannot still order directly from Ray. He can be reached at rbumpire37@gmail.com or you can keep track of what he is developing from the Umplife Public Group on Facebook, where you can keep track of his new product announcements.

You can also email Ray to get a pdf catalogue of his customized and innovative products. If something catches your eye, just send him your name, shipping address and telephone number with a list of the products you wish to purchase. While it will be in American funds, Ray's shipping costs are palatable in comparison to ordering anything from the States.



From the Chief's Desk

By Steve Boutang – Provincial Supervisor of Umpires

Some ramblings and rants from the Chiefs Desk as we close out the 2019 season.

Umpire numbers remained steady at over 1600 again for 2019. This is great. It shows that we are retaining more umpires from year to year, but also that there remains a strong interest in umpiring from our youth levels. Hopefully young umpires are benefitting from our mentorship programs, but are also enjoying the experience more because there is less tolerance towards coaches and fans acting improperly at games and yelling at our young umpires.

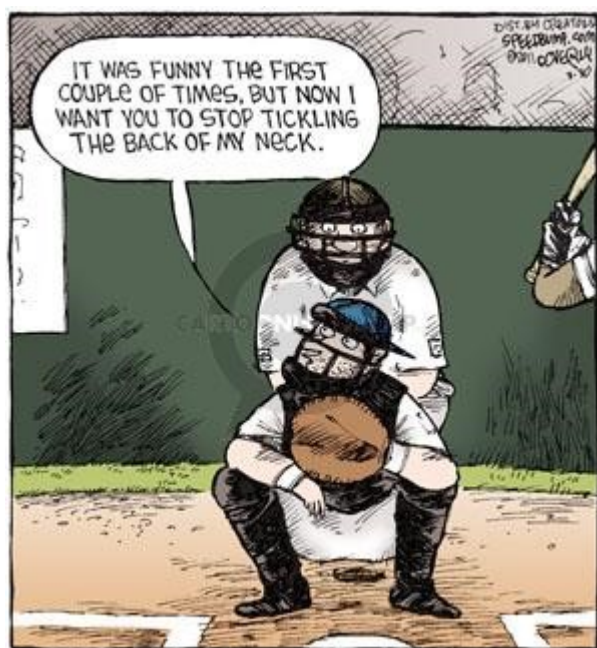
Having said that, ejections were way up this year. Mostly at the higher levels of ball, but there are plenty at the lower levels as well. We continue to see a real downward spiral in the way fans and coaches are treating some of our young umpires out there. It simply isn't acceptable. Finally Baseball BC is stepping in where the troublesome organizations have failed to take a leadership role in their own back yard. Great meetings have already taken place, and more are coming, between the stakeholders to try and change the culture that has permeated baseball from the grass roots right up to senior levels of play. It simply isn't part of the game anymore whereby a coach comes out of the dugout to yell and scream at an umpire under the guise of "firing his team up". That's tv stuff from the 70's and has no place in baseball anymore. Hopefully these productive meetings keep happening and we see some real change come forth from this in time for next season.

I want to acknowledge some people at year's end, as we always do. Not just with awards, but with hopefully meaningful statements. Congratulations to Mike Green and Jared Roberts, both of whom earned the Gold Medal Plate assignments at their respective National Championships. This is a big deal. Hard work and dedication to the craft propelled them to this honour. Our program is proud of you guys for your hard work. Also to John Pentland... John provided a great deal of photos for this edition. Additionally he takes lots of photos of umpires at tournaments for our members. We appreciate your contributions John.

We have 2 dedicated volunteers who are stepping away from the executive at our AGM. Rick Antoniak has been our Treasurer for several years and before that was a long time Area Rep. He has put in hundreds of hours over the years for the betterment of his home association, and the BCBUA as a whole. Rick never shied away from speaking his mind on things, and even if that opinion was not popular he was never afraid to challenge the status quo or stick up for people and groups. Thanks Rick for all your hard work over the last number of years and we all look forward to seeing you on the field a little more often in the future.

Finally I thank our outgoing President Sean Sullivan. Sully leaves his post after 4 years. Previously he was also our Treasurer. Sully never had a single day of peace or calm during his tenure as he inherited an undesirable situation whereby Baseball BC and BC Minor were in the midst of strife. BCBUA was unfortunately caught in the middle and we have had to try our best to stay neutral while continuing to be a service provider to both groups. The politics of that hasn't been easy, but Sean was the right man for the job to help steer us through it. Not only that, our program has thrived under his leadership. Sean, you deserved to have a better situation, but you really showed everyone what you were made of and what our umpire program was made of... and we were the better for having you at the helm. Good luck in your future endeavours.

I sign off this issue by wishing you all well and I hope to see you at the AGM on October 26.



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