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Hey Blue! Online

Baseball Canada Convention a success...

Richmond was the site of the Annual Baseball Canada Convention this past November. Representatives and delegates from all 10 baseball Provinces were on hand to take in the weekend activities hosted by David Laing, John Berry and Baseball BC.

The convention featured the Annual Umpires Committee Meetings, hosted by BC Co-Supervisors Troy

Carmont and Steve Boutang.

A number of initiatives were discussed among the many workshops that took place over the 4 day event, which culminated with the Baseball Canada Awards Banquet.

Many new initiatives and motions were passed at the Umpire Committee Level. Here are some highlights:

- Dress Code at the National level has been updated
- * long sleeve black jerseys are now acceptable for the Plate Umpire.
- * 8 Seam Caps are now available through the new supplier Home Run Sports in Winnipeg.
- * Also, the rumoured

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BOUTANG AND SMITH Re-Elected!

BCBUA Vice President Steve Boutang was acclaimed to his 5th term as Vice President. Boutang, who has been the Vice President for all but 1 year since 2001, ran unopposed at election time despite questions regarding his Interim role as Co-Supervisor of the Province. Boutang remains as Education Chair, a posting he has held since 2005.

Smith was acclaimed to his 2nd term as Secretary and will continue to act as Provincials Chair, and Chair of the committee charged with the appointment/election of the New Provincial Supervisor.

HASS, BERKENSTOCK, HARTLEY, MacMILLAN, and RYSZ also elected....

There were no other elections at the AGM for the first time in recent mem-

ory. The remaining 5 Area Director postings were all returned to their incumbents.... Ed Berkenstock (Area 2), Don Hass (Area 4), Kris Hartley (Area 6), Darcy Rysz (Area 7), and Bill MacMillan (Area 8) were all acclaimed.



Calendar of Events

March 31-April 3	National Umpires Clinic	Kamloops
May 13-May 15	Canadian College Nationals	Kamloops
May 26-May 29	John Main Peewee	Location TBA
July 8-19	World Baseball Challenge	Prince George
July 28-August 1	Midget AA Provincials	Mission
July 28-August 1	Sr. Mens Provincials	Kelowna
July 29 – Aug. 1	Midget AAA	Kamloops
August 4-August 8	Bantam AA Provincials	Victoria
August 5-August 9	West. Canada Summer Games	Kamloops, BC
August 18-August 22	Peewee AAA Provincials	Location TBA
August 25-August 29	Midget AAA Westerns	Location TBA
August 26-August 28	Sr Mens Westerns	Trail, BC

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change to Charcoal Grey pants has not happened and probably won't. Heather Gray remains the standard for pants.

- Corrie Davis, of Edmonton Alberta, was elected unopposed to the position of National Supervisor of Umpires for a 2 year term.
- The term Long Term Officials Development will become a household idea in the coming years. The thought is that there will be a Nationally developed and implemented program that will teach, and develop umpires to be the best that they can be in their careers. This will likely impact our training and delivery methods in BC, as will be the case in all provinces. There is no timeline estab-

lished for implementation at this point. It is being patterned after the Long Term Athlete Development program.

- Minor changes were approved to the 3 man rotation manual which will be updated on the Baseball Canada webpage.
- Minor rule changes were also adopted. Most notably, in the case of pitch count situations in minor baseball
 - * **the manager may come out for a 2nd trip to the mound with the same batter only for the purposes of removing his pitcher prior to exceeding pitch count.**
 - * **Additionally, all Professional (MLB) rules from 2010 that were not in effect last season are now approved at the Base-**

ball Canada level. Most notably is that the pitcher is now permitted to bring his hand to his mouth while on the dirt portion of the mound without penalty – so long as he wipes his hand on his uniform.

- BC was commended for being one of the few provinces which has an active Female Umpire program.
- KIDSPORT was re-affirmed as the Baseball Canada Umpires Charity program for 2011. It is hoped that all umpires in every province will donate 1 game fee each season to this worthwhile cause. Contact BCBUA's Rhonda Pauls for more info on this.
- Prince George will be the site of the 2012 Sr Men's National Championships.

National Clinic returns to Kamloops

The National umpires clinic will return to Kamloops for a 2nd year. In co-operation with the Best of the West Invitational, the event features both Bantam and PBL league games, and TRU BC College League Games over the March 31-April 3 weekend. All level 4-5, and prospective level 4 umpires will be there to showcase their talents and learn

Quote: "The game, the crew, and then you. Those 3 things, in that order, should always be your focus as an umpire."

Kathy Strahm – NCAA Coordinator of officials

BCBUA Hall of Fame Inducts Ian Lamplugh

In 2009, the BCBUA Awards Committee created the BCBUA Hall of Fame to recognize the on-field accomplishments of umpires from our association. 2010 marked the first year in which we opened our doors to recognize our most successful umpires.

It should come as no surprise that our first Hall of Famer is none other than Ian Lamplugh of Victoria. Ian worked 3 years in the Big Leagues from 2001-2003, appearing in more than 200 games. During his upbringing in the Capital City, Lamplugh was a member of the

BCBUA before joining the Professional ranks in the late 80's.

On hand to make the presentation to Ian at the Baseball Canada Awards banquet was his long-time friend, and former Provincial Supervisor Richard Christie.

Level 1-2 combined clinics a thing of the past....

The BCBUA is pleased to announce a revitalization of our level 1 and level 2 clinic structures. The days of the combined Level 1-2 clinic are behind us in the urban areas. It is impossible to teach a new 13 year old umpire the same material as a 10 year veteran level 2 umpire. It has taken years to convince the Board of Directors and the Membership that a new education model had to be accepted, and took many months of hard work to design the

new clinic structure and communicate the changes to the users (minor ball associations) and clinicians. The new model features 2 distinct clinics. The level 1 clinic is for 60 foot diamond baseball with basic rules and mechanics. The clinic is designed for brand new umpires for a maximum of 2 years only, regardless of age. The level 2 clinic is designed for lead off baseball and should be taken by all umpires working at the Peewee level

and above. It features pitching regulations, less basics, and more refinement of rules. Clinic content will change slightly each year. It will provide for a much improved clinic experience for all concerned.

In rural areas, it is expected that in some cases the combined clinic will still take place in order to relieve small associations from the burden of paying for 2 separate clinics.

President's Report *By John Berry*



Hello, members, and welcome to another exciting year in baseball officiating!

Your board has been busy since our November AGM, putting into place some of the things we discussed there, and getting all of our usual activities ready for the year and, increasingly as I write this, underway. We have a committee completing a report on the process for selecting our next provincial supervisor; that has been slightly delayed but is expected shortly. In the meantime, Steve Boutang and Troy Carmont, our interim supervisor team, have been doing some great work in moving forward on many fronts, including the national program.

We had a very successful SuperClinic in Surrey last month, and it was wonderful to see a good number of enthusiastic young umpires attending

an advanced clinic for the first time. They received some great instruction, including the work of the guest instructors. But even better, most of the instruction was done by our own BCBUA instructors. We have a good complement of Baseball Canada caravan-trained instructors in BCBUA, and they certainly showed their prowess at the clinic. And now these instructors, and others, move right into doing the many Level 1 and Level 2 clinics that we are holding throughout the province.

Our board members, our instructors, umpires in chief, volunteers in so many ways in the umpiring world, are all critical to our success. Don't be afraid to acknowledge them!

We've changed our clinic system this year, with improvements to the content of the clinics, including some new material that should refresh and

challenge the members doing clinics every year. We are putting more emphasis on the evening clinics, as they are popular and we think provide a better learning environment. We are also keeping Level 1 and Level 2 clinics separate; again this seems to be more effective than a combined clinic. There is some flexibility for isolated areas. We've also changed the way we are handling evaluations for Level 3; please contact your Area Rep for more information – there is no longer a separate charge. And there are more tournaments – they are great to work, whether provincial or local, so watch for news locally and on the BCBUA site.

We're coming off a year of terrific growth – in our numbers, in our development as officials and in our opportunities. We look forward to an even better 2011.

Dress Code Revisions...

The BCBUA dress code has been revised. The Navy jersey is now an optional jersey, while the Powder jersey is now Mandatory for Provincials use. Black, of course, remains an optional alternative.

There have been a few minor changes to the level 3 program as recommended by the Education Committee.

In today's episode, our award winning local scribe Bill MacMillan offers the sequel to the dramatic thriller entitled the Level 3 Grand Strategy...

BCBUA LEVEL 3 GRAND STRATEGY : THE SEQUEL

When last we heard from our lonely Level 3 Coordinator he was off to the Big Meeting to present his ideas to all the Representatives and Big Thinkers.

The journey was long and fraught with peril. He had to ride his horse through mountain passes, dodge highwaymen (Dept. of) and be ever vigilant for the constables of the Buffalo Taxi Company who are always on the lookout for the unwary traveler. Upon arriving in the village of Richmond and thinking he was finally safe he discovered the God had a sense of humor. The poor Lower Mainland drivers were chastised with a marginal snowfall that brought them to their knees and trapped the weary traveler in the Inn.

Finally, the Big Meeting. The lonely Level 3 Coordinator waited for his chance to address such an August Body. Pacing back and forth between the coffee pot and the lavatory the Level 3 Coordinator was exhausted by the time he was allowed into the Presence. Our hero was well prepared, however, and came away with approval for all his ideas including the elimination of the \$50 evaluation fee.

Now all in the land may rejoice for it is much easier for all Yeoman to achieve Level 3. Just follow these simple rules and prosper.



BCBUA LEVEL 3 : PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

In order for an umpire to achieve a Level 3 rating in British Columbia they must:

1. **be a member in good standing of the BCBUA**
2. **be at least 16 years of age**
3. **have been a member for at least 2 years**
4. **write the Level 3 exam and achieve a mark of 80% or better**
5. **attend an Advanced Clinic**
6. **be field evaluated and meet the Standards for Level 3**

In order for an umpire to maintain a Level 3 rating once it has been achieved they must:

1. **pass the written exam with a mark of 80% or better each year**
2. **attend an Advanced Clinic at least every 3 years**
3. **be field evaluated and meet the Standards for Level 3 at least every 3 years**

The written exam is a combined True/False and short answer exam that can be downloaded off the BCBUA website or is available at any Advanced Clinic and is a take home exam with a

strict deadline for submission.

Advanced Clinics are presented each year and sometimes more than one in a given year. We try to make sure there is an Advanced Clinic in reasonable geographic proximity to all our members sometime in the 3 year requirement. The cost of the Advanced Clinics vary depending on the costs of presenting one but usually in the neighbourhood of the membership

fee plus about \$125. They consist of approximately 12 to 15 hours of instruction over a 2 day period including both fieldwork and classroom sessions. The social aspect is an important component of the Advanced Clinics; it's neat to meet the umpires from around the province.

Evaluations for either Level 3 (maintenance or promotion) or for educational purposes are now available in two different ways. You may either contact your Area Rep and they will endeavour to set something up with an evaluator or you can apply to work one of the tournaments that will be selected throughout the season and supplied with an evaluator. In order to be assigned to one of these tournaments you must complete an expression of interest and get it to the Provincials Committee (George Smith). The list of tournaments will be posted on the website and will be updated as more information becomes available. All of the National umpires will be asked to contribute two evaluations (of either type) this year so if you know a National umpire perhaps you might call them and set something up yourself. It is time to be proactive in this regard.

The fee for evaluations is no longer applicable.

Go forth now and spread the joy throughout the land and have a wonderful 2011.

BCBUA Awards Presented

The following people were honoured as BCBUA Award winners for 2010.

Doug Hudlin Distinguished Service

John Berry

Howard Chapman Sr Umpire of the Year

Don Violette

Ian Lamplugh Award

Chris Connelly

George Connelly Builder's Award

Bobby Olsowiecz

Bill Murphy Award – Most Improved Umpire

Greg Teasdale

Chuck Blaikie Award – For Outstanding Contributions

Rhonda Pauls

Richard Christie Unsung Hero Award

Thomas Ovanin

New Awards for 2010 Created...

Female Umpire of the Year – Kelly Hunter

Abe Shapiro Mentorship Award – Brian Cagnelli

Special Recognition – Kelly Hunter – IBAF Women's World Cup

-Howard Maisey – 15/16 yr old LL World Series

-Jim Train – 16-18 LL World Series

-Richard Christie – Provincial Supervisor 2008-2010



Pro Image Jr Winners Announced....

In addition to the normal prize donated by Pro Image, the Board of Directors approved that all the winners would be entitled to attend Superclinic or an Advanced Level 3 clinic in 2011 at no clinic charge.

Area 1 – Aaron Davis – Victoria

Area 2 – Reiss Williams – Campbell River

Area 3 – Jeremy Pauls – Abbotsford

Area 4 – Mike Yamaguchi – Richmond

Area 5 – Jenna Antoniak – North Delta

Area 6 – Riley Jepson – Salmon Arm

Area 7 – Tyler Gelowitz – Kelowna

Area 8 – Hanno Southam – Nelson

Area 9 – Justin Luy – Quesnel



FUN FACTS!

Did you know that the 2 umpire system was the norm in the Big Leagues through the 1920's. By 1933 the 3 umpire system was routinely assigned to regular season games. The 4 umpire system started in 1952.

Tip of the Month – Educate yourself

Are you bored silly with winter? Stuck in the house waiting for the snow to melt? Tired of watching television and baseball re-runs on ESPN Classic? Why not sign out some videos from the BCBUA Library and try to learn something new about umpiring.

We have a new Librarian – Rob Allan. Rob advises that there are

lots of videos in our library and have re-stocked the items that were stolen last winter.

Educational videos are a great way to learn. You can watch them on your own time, they cost nothing (except postage in some cases) to obtain, and are often done on topics that we don't have time to cover in our basic clinics.

You can watch them several times and rewind them to catch what you missed if you didn't understand a topic properly.

If you want to sign out some of our videos, get in touch with Rob and he'll set you up with what you need for your educational improvement.

Another Super(Clinic) Success!

48 umpires from around the province took part in the semi annual Superclinic January 29-30 in Surrey. The BCBUA welcomed Andrew Higgins to our province to share some of the thoughts and abilities that have made him one of Canada's premier umpires and teachers. Higgins has

represented Canada at the last 2 Baseball World Cups and is one of Canada's foremost instructors and clinicians. Check out more with Andrew in the Extra Innings Segment.

It is worth noting that of the 48 umpires, 24 of them were under

the age of 19. It shows that there is such an appetite for improvement within our Junior ranks which can only speak to the quality of our program in the minor baseball and grass roots levels.

Golden League Victoria Seals Fold

It was a short 2 year stay for professional baseball in Victoria. The Victoria Seals, of the Golden Baseball League, packed up and moved out of Royal Athletic Stadium before Christmas leaving the city without a professional sports franchise. The club cited a poor lease and concession agreement with the City of Victoria as the reason for their departure.

The Golden League merged with 2 other Independent Professional Leagues to form the North American League during this offseason.

Flashback, 20 Years ago this February...

Pam Postema, the first woman professional baseball umpire, was released from the AAA ranks. She began her pro career in 1977 and worked at AAA from 1983 until her release.

BCBUA Mentorship Award in Honour of Abe Shapiro

I am pleased to say that the BCBUA has posthumously recognized a former long time member of our association who gave so much of his time and effort to our association. Abe Shapiro was a former Professional umpire who made his home in Vancouver following his career and who was an even better teacher of the art of umpiring. Our association is proud to honour his contributions by presenting the Abe Shapiro Award each year in his memory.

This year's winner was Brian Cargnelli. Brian was a good friend of Abe's and he shares these thoughts.....

I sit here over my Christmas break thinking about this award that I have just received in the mail. I can honestly say that I have been very humbled over the past few years in the many different awards that the BCBUA has bestowed on me. Some of these awards were for my on-field accomplishments as a Level 5 umpire representing BC at various tournaments over the past 30 years of working National Level baseball here in Canada. Some of the other awards have been for what others think have been a tremendous workload of off-field accomplishments in the realm of service on the Board of the BCBUA as a past Executive member: Vice-President of this association for 4 years; Area Director for 14 years; and Education Chair for almost 10 years. This latest award though was totally unexpected for me as I had no idea that firstly there even was an award for mentorship (I know now that it was a new one this past year) or secondly that it was named in Honour of Abe Shapiro. I have spent the better part of my life as a teacher both professionally and in the umpire world and to be the first recipient of this award moved me more than any other achievement that I have ever received recognition. You see Abe was not only one of my best friends in the umpire world, he was also my mentor and inspiration as a teacher.

Many of you have never heard of Abe Shapiro. He grew up in Ontario, but don't hold that against him. He umpired all the way through his youth, but was also a star athlete in High School playing football. After High School he decided to become a Math teacher and entered College and received his undergraduate degree and finally his teaching degree. He actually never really taught because he also had a passion for Umpiring and attended the Al Somers Umpire school in 1971. He was one of the top graduates of this umpire school and started on his journey to what many believed would be a stop in the Major Leagues. In fact in 1972, 1973 and 1974 Abe worked in Major League Spring Season in Florida and taught at the same Umpire School he was trained at. Abe told me that he redesigned many of the teaching techniques that the school was using from a pedagogical viewpoint and he along with another young official named Jim Evans (yes the same one that now runs one of the two professional umpire schools) were responsible for the education program that was being taught at all of the schools from that time forward. One of the stories he told me once was that he was responsible for the careers of several Major League umpires one of whom was Steve Palermo. I just chalked this up to tall tales but when I met Palermo in 1983 in Seattle he actually told me the same story that Abe had told me. In fact Steve encouraged me to learn as much as I could from Abe as Abe was the reason he made it into pro ball let alone Major League Baseball. Needless to say Abe became a mentor to me on that very day.

Abe's professional career came to a sketching halt just before the 1974 season when the United States refused to allow any foreign umpires to work in the United States and Abe, along with Jim Cressman of Ontario, was fired. Shapiro continued to work teaching umpires back home in Canada. One of the young umpires he helped train was Baseball Canada's past supervisor of Officials Don Gilbert who also lists Abe as one of his mentors. In this province he helped everyone who would listen. His energy and enthusiasm for teaching was boundless. When I became a teacher in 1986, I finally realized how much passion he had for teaching. I tried my best to keep up with Abe's passion and drive, but was often left in the dust.

Most of the teaching techniques, drills and systems that the BCBUA have utilized over the past 30 years were designed initially by Abe. Some people claim that I have been an innovator in the education of the officials during my career, I instead offer that it was Abe that started the revolution I just inherited the role and have done my best to keep it going. Abe ran the very first BCBUA all day clinic in 1981. In 1987 Abe and myself wrote the first instructor manual and taught the very first BCBUA instructor clinic. This instructor manual was then used as the basis of the current Level 1-2 student manuals that we still use today. But more importantly Abe was always at the park helping other umpires achieve their dreams. He inspired and mentored numerous young officials including myself, Don Hass, Perry Roussy, Roy Kendal, Troy Carmont, Jerry Tregaskis, Mark Bodwell to name but a few. All of us have gone onto successful careers in amateur officiating and I am sure that none would argue with the influence Abe had on them. It is this mentorship that I fondly remember him most.

Abe once told me that his biggest thrill in umpiring was not when he got the big game, but when one of the people he helped got that game. I truly understand that now as some of the people that I have helped have gone onto bigger and better achievements than myself. I have always offered my time to anyone wanting to improve. I have tried to pay it forward, as Abe did. Sometimes I have been frustrated by the politics of this association, but it was people like Abe that allowed me to grow as an official and I feel duty bound to continue this legacy for the next group. That is why this award means so much to me. To be the first recipient is truly humbling as I stated above as without Abe I am sure that I would not even be teaching today let alone working to help train the next group of officials in BC to go onto bigger and better opportunities in Canada and the world.



Stump the Ump: Winter 2011

Here's a relatively easy one to start off the new issue:

Runners at 1st and 3rd, one out. R3 and R1 are both stealing on the pitch. Batter swings at the pitch and hits the ball directly at the 3rd baseman who fields the ball. The fielder realizes he can't get the runner at home so throws the B-R out at 1st for the 2nd out. R1 now is at 2nd and R3 scored. Problem is that on the swing, the batter's bat nicked the catcher's glove for catcher's interference, but the plate umpire never signalled it because of the possible play at the plate. Nevertheless, seeing the B-R out at 1st the plate Umpire now invokes catcher's interference. He sends R3 back to 3rd and places R1 at 2nd and the B-R at 1st. Neither team is happy with this ruling. The Offensive manager thinks the run should score while the defence says that since no signal was made prior to the play at 1st the out should stand. The umpires get together to discuss the call. What should they do if anything?

Extra Innings – with Andrew Higgins

Personal:

Age- 32

Residence- Regina, SK

Hometown- Saint John, NB

Occupation- General Manager, Sport & Recreation

Top of the 1st

What is your favourite food?

Anything that includes Pasta

Bottom of the 2nd

Plate work or Base work? Why?

Plate work as it keeps you into the game on every pitch

Top of the 3rd

What is your favourite TV Show?

Simpsons

Top of the 4th

Who is your favourite Actor/Actress?

Samuel L. Jackson / Sandra Bullock

Bottom of the 5th

What kind of car do you drive?

Toyota Matrix

Top of the 6th

If you could spend an hour with anyone in history, who would it be?

Bill Clinton

Bottom of the 7th

It's the 7th inning stretch. Will you be reaching for a beer, wine, soda, coffee or something else?

Ice Cold Beer

Top of the 8th

You umpired in several cities in the last World Cup of Baseball. Which was your favourite?

Regensburg, Germany. Fantastic crowd support throughout the 1st Round.

Bottom of the 9th

Who was your hero growing up?

My dad in general, sports officiating wise David McManus

Let's go Extra Innings with International Umpire Extraordinaire, Andrew Higgins.....

Top of the 10th

National League or American League rules?

National League. I like the easy out every 9th hitter and the strategy that comes into play late in the game.

Bottom of the 11th

What is Magnetic Hill? (New Brunswick Landmark)

Took me a long time to figure this out growing up but it's an optical illusion because of the landscape where you put your car in neutral and it appears to be rolling uphill but in reality it is rolling down hill.

