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BRITISH COLUMBIA BASEBALL UMPIRE'S ASSOCIATION

Hey Blue! Online

Superclinic Success!

"It was the best Super-clinic, by far"

were the statements echoed by many who attended Super-clinic 2009 in Surrey. BCBUA welcomed 52 students to Surrey Christian School for 2 days of instruction from some of the world's finest instructors.

International Baseball Federation Supervisor of Umpires Dick Runchey was on hand to provide his usual top notch instruction. Baseball Canada

National Supervisor Corrie Davis and Former Major Leaguer Ian Lamplugh were also present to take the troops through their paces in gym and classroom sessions.

The instructor corps was rounded out by BC's finest clinicians which made for an unforgettable weekend for those in attendance.

Social activities on Friday and Saturday provided for an excellent opportunity to meet and greet our guests and meet other

umpires from around the province.

The first ever Friday Night Poker Challenge was won by young card shark Sean Weatherhill. Each participant received a door prize and a gift (Satchel) plus a clinic shirt.

Superclinic will move away from Vancouver next year because of the Olympics and it is hoped that Vancouver Island and the Interior will both host a similar event next spring.



Provincials Just Around the Corner

BCBUA has appointed long time veteran Don Hass as the new Provincial's Chairman for the 2009 championship season. Hass is currently on a sabbatical of sorts as he recovers from some medical issues that have prevented him from umpiring over the past 18 months. And while Hass is sorely missed on

the field, he continues to contribute off the field in many different ventures our association is pursuing. Don assures us that there is a huge need for umpires at the various Provincials this summer.

The deadline to apply is May 31. Level 3 umpires will get first dibs but we expect to take a large number of level 2 umpires due to

the logistics of staffing several tournaments on the same weekends. Don was also instrumental in spearheading the new travel fund that BCBUA has set up. The fund will assist officials in rural areas who have to travel to larger centers to get experience working in high profile tournaments.

World Baseball Classic Concludes...

By now we all know that Japan won the World Baseball Classic in a fantastic conclusion to a great tournament in March. It was Japan's 2nd successive victory in this event. Better news is that there were 2 Canadian um-

pires on the field for the tournament for the first time ever. Stephane Dupont from Montreal and Corrie Davis from Edmonton were part of the crew of MLB/IBAF umpires who worked the tournament.



(Continued on page 3)

Calendar of Events:

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| July 16-26 | World Baseball Challenge - Prince George, BC |
| August 6-9 | Junior National Championships - Trois Rivières, PQ |
| August 6-9 | Baseball Canada Cup - Kindersely, SK |
| August 13-16 | Midget National Championships - Fredericton, NB |
| August 20-23 | Peewee National Championships - TBA |
| August 20-23 | Bantam National Championships - TBA |
| August 20-23 | Bantam Girls National Championships - TBA |
| August 20-23 | Sr. Men's National Championships - Dartmouth, NS |
| August 22-30 | Canada Summer Games - PEI |
| October 15-18 | Baseball Canada Caravan - Edmonton, AB |
| November 22 | BCBUA Annual General Meeting (Tentative) - Victoria, BC |

Baseball Canada Umpire Clinic

At long last BCBUA hosted a high-level umpire clinic for National/International level umpires and those wishing to join the Baseball Canada umpire program. Richard Christie, our Provincial Supervisor, gets full marks for his hours of effort in putting this successful venture together. This clinic was a long standing goal of the BCBUA Education committee which originally submitted a desire to host this event in 2006.

The 23 current Baseball Canada members and 13 prospective members attended the weekend event in Langley which featured special guest instruction from Ian Lamplugh and Corrie Davis.

Interesting discussion took place during the classroom sessions on Friday and Sunday with live Premier League game action for participants to umpire on Saturday. Umpires were evaluated and taught how to evaluate by BC's finest.

Saturday night featured a banquet and good will. Last season's umpire accomplishments were recognized and announcements were made with respect to this year's Baseball Canada assignments.

Christie indicated that there would be another similar clinic next season as BCBUA attempts to improve its high level umpire program.



National Championship Assignments for 2009:

Congratulations to the following people who were selected to represent this province at this summer's Canadian National Championships. We know that all of you will represent this province proudly.

Pewee boys	Bill MacMillan – Trail & Ed Berkenstock – Courtenay
Bantam girls	Kelly Hunter – Kelowna
Bantam boys	Chris Connelly – Kamloops
Midgets	Jerry Tregaskis – N. Delta
Junior	Fabian Poulin – Nanaimo & Fred O'Rourke – Vancouver
Seniors	Will Hunter – Courtenay & Steve Boutang – Cranbrook
Canada Cup	Chris Addison – Vancouver & Nick Moore – Courtenay & Richard Christie (Supervisor) – White Rock
Canada Summer Games	Chet Masse – Victoria



Stump the Ump Answer from Issue 2

So here is the question from Issue 2 back in January.

With runners at first and second base and two out, the batter hits a line drive straight back at the runner at second who is standing completely on his base when he is struck by the line drive. The pitcher made an attempt at catching the ball, but he missed it completely and no other infielders had a chance to make an attempt.

The key part of this question is whether the base is a form

of sanctuary for the base runner. Many times people think that because the base runner is standing on a bag he is safe regardless of what else is going on. In fact this is not the case. The base runner must avoid being hit with a fair batted ball at all times except in the case of an infield fly. If the base runner is struck by a fair batted ball before an infielder (other than the pitcher) has a chance to play it, then they are out for interference. All other runners return to their *time of pitch* base unless forced to ad-

vance because the batter runner is awarded first in this situation.

In the case of an infield fly, the base runners must remain at their bases and as such the base does become sanctuary and the runner is not out. But this play was not an infield fly as it was a line drive and two were out.

Your job as an umpire is to know these small differences in the rules and apply them almost instantaneously.

(Continued from page 1)

Davis and Dupont are both former BC Superclinic instructors and friends of our program.

I had a chance to sit down and talk with Corrie about the experience at the recent Baseball Canada Umpire Clinic in Langley. Part 1 of this interview appears in this edition. Check out the next edition for the remainder of our conversation.

S.B. -What kind of Prep time was involved in getting ready for the WBC? (When did you find out you were going, what kind of training did you have to attend, etc)

C.D. - I found out about the WBC assignment in mid-September of last year. We were told at that time that we would need to attend the MLB camp in November, MLB Spring Training in February/March, and then be available for the three week long WBC event (a five week commitment in total).

I reported to MLB camp in Long Beach, California on November 1st. MLB holds the camp every year and they use it to expose people to the umpire profession as well as identify candidates for the professional schools held in January. They even offer scholarships to the schools. Most of the attendees were there to work on the two umpire system. I was there along with seven other IBAF umpires to learn the MLB four umpire system. We did a lot of work with the MLB umpire supervisors... Larry Young, Rich Rieker, Steve Rippley, Jim McKean, Marty Springstead, and with Dick Runchey (IBAF Supervisor of Umpires). We started every day in the classroom talking about rules and interpretations and game management. We would then break off from the main group to go over four umpire mechanics. Then we would head over to the MLB Urban Youth Academy to do games. We were constantly receiving feedback from the supervision staff.

We also got a chance to work with Dr. Mark Letendre...he is the Director of MLB Umpire Medical Services. We had to have medical screening done to make sure that we were fit to work, we worked with Dr. Letendre on all kinds of stretching techniques to help target muscle groups that are heavily used throughout the course of a game, we talked about nutrition, and we even did something called impact testing...we took an online test that measured reaction time, short-term memory, color and shape recognition and recollection, etc. If I ever take a blow to the

head in a ball game, I'll be able to go and take the test again and they can measure those results against my baseline results to determine if I have been concussed. There are probably some managers out there who think I've been concussed for my whole career:

S.B. -How much mental ability is involved in umpiring at the International/WBC level?

C.D. -It's a huge component for sure. The balls/strikes/safes/outs part is just like it is in every other level of baseball... it's just that the



stakes are so much higher at an event like this and you have to be able to stay focused and not get caught up in the moment. It takes a lot of focus to be able to block out a huge crowd, the fact that you're in a big stadium, working with players and managers who have impressive resumes, etc. and just do your job.

On the field, you spend a lot of time anticipating situations so that when they happen, you aren't surprised. Every once in a while, those unexpected situations come up and if you've already done your homework and you're not surprised by them... you're able to react quickly and decisively and that really helps to sell the perception that you are on top of things.

Over the course of my career, I have spent a tremendous amount of time visualizing situations and I think that this has really helped me to be successful at the international level. I visualize a situation and how I would handle it, and when a similar situation occurs on the field, it doesn't seem like the first time I've had to deal with it. I've already practiced how I would handle that situation dozens of times in my mind and that's why I'm able to react quickly and decisively.

S.B. -Tell us about the Spring Training experience?

C.D. - Spring Training was a great experience. I arrived in Orlando on March 1st and on March 2nd we had a meeting with most of the MLB umpires who were scheduled to work the World Baseball Classic. It was a huge thrill to walk into the meeting room and meet so many MLB guys. We talked about the tournament rules, a little bit about how international baseball is different from MLB baseball,

and went over the four umpire system. We also received our uniforms and it was almost overwhelming to see that WBC crest on my hats and shirts...it was like it finally clicked that this was really happening.

The spring training games went pretty smoothly...I felt well prepared and wasn't as nervous as you might expect. We did three Spring Training games and worked with a few different umpires. I always knew that MLB umpires were the best umpires in the world...but watching their every movement from the field (instead of from the stands or on TV) really helped me to see that even more clearly. They are so well prepared, they read plays so well, and they work so hard...it's easy to see why they are right almost all of the time.

S.B. -How were you treated as a WBC umpire?

C.D. -First class all the way. We were treated like an MLB umpire...even my accreditation said "Corrie Davis – Major League Umpire." We stayed in a beautiful resort right on the beach, we flew first class, we ate in nice restaurants, we had police escorts to and from the ball park and we had security people around us constantly. It made me feel like an important part of the event...something that really doesn't happen very often at the amateur level.

We were also treated very well, very respectfully by the players, managers, and coaching staff. They let us do our jobs. Even though they had never seen me umpire before, I think that they gave me a chance to prove myself. It was like "we know that you're a good umpire until you prove otherwise." In amateur baseball, it's often the opposite..."we think you're bad until you prove otherwise."

It really gave me a whole new understanding of why umpires try to get into professional baseball. Life in the minor leagues is so hard...poor pay, constantly on the road away from your family, eating fast food and staying in cheap hotels, hoping that you don't make mistakes that will cost you your job...and also hoping that the stars align and there might be an opening at the next level for you to move up. All of that... just for a chance to be a major league umpire. I got to live the life of an MLB umpire for a few weeks and it was fantastic...I now see why people try to get there.

(Editors note – the remainder of this interview will appear in the next edition of Hey-Blue! – OnLine.)

Baseball Canada Caravan update...

Provincial Supervisor Richard Christie has confirmed with Alberta Supervisor Jon Oko that Baseball Canada Caravan will take place in Edmonton on October 15-18. The 4 day fast-paced workshop will provide high level clinician training to our top instructors who wish to become part of the Baseball Canada Supervisors ranks and to those who wish to be top level instructors in their own province.

Six candidates will be identified by the selection committee to represent BC at this fall's event. BC is planning to host Caravan in winter/spring 2011.

BCBUA Anniversary Celebrations

BCBUA 35th anniversary celebrations continue as we count down towards our 35th birthday bash in November. The BCBUA Board has planned for an evening social on Saturday November 21 at a Victoria area hotel where we will celebrate our successes for the past 35 years. Plan to attend the social, and then the AGM the following day, November 22.

In order to help commemorate our history, the organizing committee is looking for old items of interest that will help us chronicle our existence. Any old BCBUA items, crests, exams, uniform components and gear (small items only), and especially photos are being sought. Items can be donated or loaned to BCBUA. If you have such items, please contact the following people in your area to arrange for pick up, drop off, or mailing.

Eric Rasmussen – Vancouver Island

Jerry Tregaskis – Lower Mainland Areas

Steve Boutang – Rest of the Province

Help us celebrate our association by making your contribution today!



Tip of the Month

Do you always have 3 hour games when you work the plate? Do your fellow umpires draw straws to avoid working with you? Do you always have to call games because of darkness?

The trick is to work more quickly. This is obvious. But how is the question.

Here are some tips to help you work those 2 hour games that are the envy of all your partners.

- Get on the field at least 5 minutes early to meet the coaches and exchange the lineups so that you can start on time. This seems obvious but only a few umpires do this.
- Count pitches between innings. Once the opening warm-ups are complete the pitchers should only need 5 pitches between innings. Count them! The exception is if a new pitcher enters the game. Give them their 8 pitches as the rule-book indicates.
- When players are sauntering onto the field between innings, provide some verbal encouragement for them to hustle.
- When there is a passed ball and nobody on base, insist that the on-deck hitters shag them. In the meantime, put a new ball into play with the pitcher.
- Similarly with foul balls that go out of play, get a ball into the pitcher's hands as soon as the ball leaves the playing field. It doesn't matter what car the ball hits in the parking lot. You've got a game to worry about!
- Start the inning with several spare balls in your sacks. That way you won't have to call for Time mid-batter to go to the dugout and get more baseballs.
- This is probably the most important tip of all. Call Strikes! Nobody wants to see a batter get a base on balls time and time again because the umpire has a tight zone. Batter's who walk a lot cause more pitches to be thrown, and more pitches encourages pitching changes, which adds time to your games.
- On visits to the mound, get out there quickly to break up conversations, especially when you know the manager is only stalling to allow more time for his pitcher to warm up in the bullpen.
- When a manager changes pitchers and signals to the bullpen to make the change, it is the base umpire's responsibility to run out there and get the pitcher. If this does not occur the pitcher in the pen will usually throw an extra 3 or 4 pitches. Again, all of this takes time.
- You can always get away with calling lots of strikes so long as you start the game with a generous zone. In the first couple of innings you need to make sure you are giving the pitcher at least a ball on each side of the plate.....and keep a consistent zone throughout the game. An advanced tip might be to reward pitchers and catchers who "hit the mitt" by calling those pitches strikes. If a catcher frames a pitch that is close to being in the strikezone, the umpire should call it every time. But make sure the strike zone in the 7th inning is the same as when you started.

Hopefully these tips will help you get out of the ball park a lot earlier than you're used to. Try to do these things early in the season and by mid-summer you'll be shaving off half-hour a game.

Extra Innings..... With IBAF Supervisor Dick Runchey

Personal:

Age- 58

Residence: Michigan and Florida

Job Title: Retired from Detroit Diesel where I worked for 30 years.

Currently the Director of Umpires IBAF, Regional Advisor NCAA Baseball Umpire Improvement Program, Executive Director Amateur Baseball Umpires Association

Top of the 1st – How long have you been involved in umpiring?

40 years, 29 of which were on the field as an umpire.

Top of the 2nd – What is your favourite movie of all time?

Animal House (1978 – John Belushi) It reminds me a lot of my Frat. Brothers.

Bottom of 3 – What is your favourite TV Program?

According to Jim (2001-2007 Jim Belushi/Courtenay Thorne-Smith)

Bottom of the 4th – If you had a chance to spend 1 hour with anyone in history, who would it be?

Fidel Castro (Former Cuban President 1959-2008)

Top of 5 – You must have met a tonne of famous people in baseball over the years. Who was the nicest and most

professional person you ever met?

Ernie Harwell – Detroit Tigers broadcaster (1960-2002)

Bottom of 6 – What has been your favourite ball park to visit over the years?

Wrigley Field – Chicago

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

Beer for sure

Top of 8 - What is your favourite ball park food?

Hot dogs

Bottom of the 9th – You've been to a lot of great places in your baseball career. Tell us what your favourite city has been to visit?

It's a tie. Havana, Cuba and Barcelona, Spain

It's a tie game. Lets go Extra Innings with Dick Runchey....

Bottom of 10 – What is the longest game you have ever umpired?

My last game on the field was the 1998 College World Series Championship (a marathon 21-14 game won by University of Southern California over Arizona State). I thought it would never end (kind of like this interview....lol)

Top of the 11th – What has been, in your view, your most memorable accomplishment in baseball?

Having the opportunity to select umpires to work International baseball events as well as the college umpires in the States for the College World Series.

Top of 12 – Do you still set goals for yourself?

Yes, I do, and I have been fortunate to have attained every goal I have set thus far.

Bottom of 13 – When do you see yourself actually retiring from baseball?

I would really love to see baseball get back into the Olympics in 2016 and be able to select the umpires for that event. If that happens, what a great way to go out!



Stump the Ump May 2009

For this issue this is a really simple question, or so it seems. Have FUN and post your answers to the BCBUA forum for a chance to win a prize.

With two out and a 3-2 count on the batter, the pitcher pitches the ball. The batter swings at the pitch but is hit in the hands with the ball. The ball rolls out and stops in front of the plate completely in fair territory.

The batter stands in the batters box holding his injured hand and makes not attempt to run to first.

Seeing the ball lying in front of the plate, the catcher picks up the ball and tags the batter for what appears is the 3rd out of the inning. However the offensive manager comes out and discusses the play with the home plate umpire. Everyone agrees that the pitched ball did

strike the batter in the hands as he was swinging at the pitch, but the ball hit the hands not the bat. The home plate umpire declares that the batter was hit with a pitched ball and sends him to 1st base. Now the defensive manager comes out and says that hands are part of the bat and the batter really should be called out. Who is right? What should this poor umpire do?

REMINDER!

The BCBUA Evaluation structure has changed! Umpires requiring a level 3 evaluation for maintenance of their level, those wishing to obtain an evaluation for promotion to level 3, (or evaluation for upgrade within the level 3 program) and those people wishing to have an evaluation strictly for educational purposes....are all required to submit a \$50 fee and request for evaluation to level 3 chairman Bill MacMillan.

BCBUA can no longer be responsible for tracking down people who need evaluations. It is incumbent upon those requiring evaluation to tell us that they are due.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that 30 year Major League veteran Joe West was recently elected as President of the World Umpires Association. The 56 year old began his career on the field in 1978. He is better known to his counterparts as "Cowboy Joe" because he moonlights as a country music singer who has produced 2 albums. West is also known for inventing the popular umpire chest protector known as the WestVest.



Pictures from the National Level 4-5 Clinic

