

HeyBlue! Online

SUPERCLINIC SUCCESS!

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Superclinic 2019 is in the books and what a Super Clinic it was!

43 participants from all areas of the province converged upon Abbotsford for the bi-annual affair.

The BCBUA was proud to welcome Major League Baseball Umpire and BCBUA friend Tripp Gibson to town to share some stories, give some advice, and encourage all of our umpires—young and old—to strive to be the best they can be!

Gibson, a 5 year MLB vet, made the trip north from the Seattle area where he currently resides. The native of Kentucky was making his 2nd trip to the Lower Mainland after being a guest instructor in 2016 at the High Level Clinic for National umpires.

Students spent time in the cage with Gibson learning the finer points of set-up, stance, timing, and appearance. There were other sessions on



base mechanics in the 2 man system, rules lessons in the class, yoga and stretching exercises, and game management. The next Superclinic in Vancouver will be in 2021.

Special points of interest:

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- Leave your Legacy on the Game! ... page 10
- Canadian Umpire and Hall of Famer Jim McKean passes away at age 73. Page 22
- Baseball Canada Umpires committee implementing changes. Page 22

Caravan rolls through BC

The most grueling training program that Baseball Canada offers was offered this February in BC. The BCBUA hosted Caravan, the National Umpire Course Conductor Program and BC has 11 new instructors as a result of their efforts!. Baseball Canada Master Course Conductor Ron

Shewchuk of Manitoba was on hand to lead the event for the fledgling instructors. The event is a 4 day marathon of instruction, practical and theoretical work and teaching that focuses on teaching basic instructional skills. The total hours spent by students over

the weekend is equivalent to a course credit if taken in post secondary.

Congratulations to our new level 1-2 clinicians in BC. The BCBUA now boasts 37 trained instructors in the province.

Level 1-2 Clinics Underway!

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It's spring and that means that BCBUA clinics are well underway. All umpires are reminded that they must register in advance to attend clinics using the online website, www.bcbua.ca and pay your membership dues at the same time.

Umpires who have passed their level 1 exam are permitted to move up to level 2. This year's level 2 clinic is the Offence. Umpires must attend a level 2 Offence clinic, and then pass the level 2 Offence exam online. Once completing both Level 2 Offence and Level 2 Defence, and passing both exams, then an umpire will be eligible to attempt level 3.

If you are not moving on to level 3, which is fine, then you must annually submit a passing level 2 exam and pay your membership dues.

If your area has not scheduled a clinic yet for your association, get in touch with your area rep to set this up!

New Provincials Chair

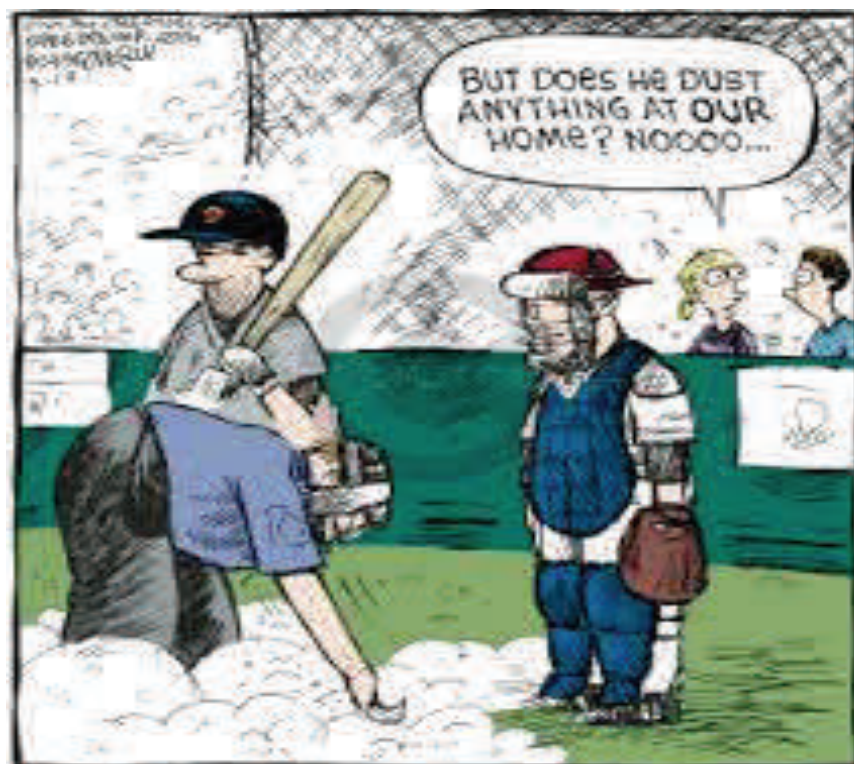
BCBUA umpire Joe Mallinson has been named the new Provincials Chairman. Rick Antoniak had been serving in this capacity for the past 3 years and is stepping down for personal reasons.

Mallinson, a level 5 umpire, is a past graduate of Umpire School, and is currently working in the lower mainland as a brewmaster. He is a native of Langley and currently residing in Vancouver.

All umpires are encouraged to apply for Provincials. Most of them take place near the August Long weekend, the weekend before, or the weekend after. In 2018 there were over 100 applicants and 89 umpires were placed into tournaments. As an added incentive, those umpires with level 3 receive an extra \$15 per game fee as incentive to work these events.

The BCBUA is thankful and indebted to Rick for his years of service in this capacity.

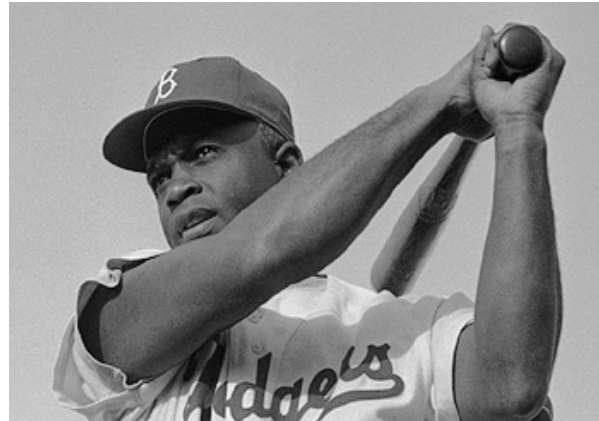
Check the BCBUA Website for more information on Provincials.



Jackie Robinson's 100th Birthday

Major League Baseball, which has traditionally honored Jackie Robinson on April 15 each year – the anniversary of breaking baseball's color barrier – will now celebrate the 100th year anniversary of his birth during the entire 2019 baseball season.

Major League Baseball, which retired Robinson's number and has celebrated Jackie Robinson Day in every ballpark since 2004, have planned ceremonies and youth initiatives connected to his life to support the Jackie Robinson Foundation's scholarship and education programs throughout the year.



Exactly.....



"Whoa! Time out. The loud guy in the white shirt is right — that was a ball. My mistake. Sorry everyone. Thank you, sir."

Umpire Academy Nearing



The 5th annual Umpire Academy takes place April 5-7 in Kamloops. 12 umpires will be in attendance from all over the province. The umpires were hand selected by a group of senior supervisors and evaluators with input from local area UIC's. The Academy is a full 3 day umpire camp for up and coming umpires who have shown talent at a young age and who want to potentially enter the Na-

tional program at a future time.

This year's camp will feature Provincial Supervisor Steve Boutang, Vice President Rhonda Pauls, and Level 3 co-ordinator Bill MacMillan as instructors plus several part time guest instructors.

There will be class, rules, field mechanics, cage work, and game management situational training. And of course plenty of game action and feedback.

All umpires may have an opportunity to earn their level 3.



National Clinic Set for April

- The 11th National Umpire Clinic takes place April 11-14 in Kamloops BC.

Provincial Supervisor Steve Boutang indicates that he expects some 50 participants over the 4 and a half days.

Guest instructors at this year's camp will include mainstays Jon Oko, Andrew Higgins of Alberta,

Ron Shewchuk of Manitoba, and Ed Quinlan of Ontario. Several BCBUA supervisors will be giving instruction as well. This is a special invite only clinic. Registration information will be posted on the website soon. Check your emails for more details. Special Invitations will also be notified.



Tripp Gibson addresses Superclinic class

Pauls Earns Master Course Conductor Status



BCBUA Vice President Rhonda Pauls earned her Master Course Conductor Status by successfully completing the course requirements at this year's Caravan in Abbotsford.

Pauls first earned her Jr.

course conductor status at the 2009 Caravan in Edmonton and later earned her Sr Course Conductor Status in 2018.

She joins Steve Boutang and Rob Allan as the only Master CC's in the Province.



Level System Explained....

To help clarify what an umpire must do at each level in order to be current the BCBUA has posted a new document online called Roadmap to Excellence. The document outlines each level and the requirements to complete them. It also explains what an official must do before they move up to a new level. In short all umpires (except those transferring in from Little League or another program)

start at level 1, regardless of age. Once an umpire attends the level 1 clinic AND passes the level 1 test online, then they are qualified to move up to a level 2. An umpire may attend their level 2 clinic the same year. Most people don't. Once the umpire is qualified to attend a level 2, there are 2 parts to it. Level 2 offence clinic and exam, and Level 2 defence clinic and exam. An umpire must attend both

clinics in the 2 years and write and pass the exam both years as well. Once they pass then an umpire may choose to move to level 3. Nobody must move up if you don't want to.

But if you move to level 3, you must write and pass the level 3 exam ANNUALLY, and attend an Advanced clinic once every 3 years and get a successful field evaluation once every three years.



Grand Forks Tournament returns in 2019!

The Grand Forks International Tournament will again return in 2019, the 37th edition of the long standing event. Last year's event was cancelled by devastating flooding. This year's event will run June 25-July 1 and will feature 10 teams playing a round robin within 2 pools of 5 teams. Clubs

from Burnaby, Alaska, Seattle, San Diego, San Francisco, Reno, Houston, and a university team from Veradero Cuba will be competing for the 50 thousand dollar prize purse.

It is the richest amateur invitational tournament in North America. Tournament passes start at \$69.

Umpires for the event will include 15 time umpire Steve Boutang, Sean Sullivan, Scott Eckardt, Rhonda Pauls, Phil Bourgeois, Joe Mallinson, Blaise Laveay, and rookie umpires Sean Weatherill, and Matt Hicketts. There are 4 games a day and the final is slated for Monday July 1 at 3:30pm.



In Memoriam... Harold Swanson

Long Time BC Umpire Harold Swanson passed away in New Westminster on January 25 at age 74.

He spent the majority of his life in the Interior and later retired to the Abbotsford area. He umpired high

levels of baseball throughout the province in the 70's and 80's and was considered to be one of the top umpires for many years. He leaves behind to mourn his son Jim Swanson (Victoria Harbourcats GM/Managing

Partner) and numerous other relatives. He was buried next to his father in Burnaby on February 8. The BCBUA offers its condolences to his family and friends.



L3C Trilogy Book 11ish

EAGER BEAVER AT THE SUPER CLINIC 2019

Hello everyone, this is Eager Beaver fresh from the Super Clinic in Rabbits Foot. This may have been the most successful SC ever.....or maybe not. While I was there I had an opportunity to interact with umpires, both young and old, from all corners of this beautiful province.

The instructors were top notch and included a bunch of the BCBUA Big Thinkers and featured Major League Umpire Tripp Gibson who so graciously agreed to come up for this clinic and opened the eyes of many of our members about what it is like in “The Show”.

One of the young umpires I had a chance to talk with was Connor from the Kootenays. Here are some excerpts from our conversation.

EB Connor, this Clinic runs for the whole weekend but you are here bright and early on Saturday. How did you manage that?

C Well Mr. Beaver, we had the day off from school to drive down from “Beyond Hope”. That is always a highlight.

EB Overall, what did you think of your 1st Super Clinic?

C Everyone was really nice and welcoming. The time was organized and the food was great.

EB What was your favourite part?

C I think it was getting to meet a real Major League Umpire and finding out he was just another guy who had made it all the way to the top so why not me too?

EB What did you learn here?

C Oh Wow. So many things. We worked on calling balls and strikes with feedback from Tripp and the other instructors after every pitch. We worked on timing and set up and mechanics. Everything was positive and helpful.

EB What else?

C Working on the bases. We covered so much that you just can't in a regular clinic. Again, we had very positive feedback after every Rep and learned so much more about positioning and moving about the diamond to make calls. The drills were all pretty fun because we learned new stuff and we were always moving.

EB Was everything in the gym?

C Not at all. We had several classroom sessions about rules, exam prep, handling situations, Tripp did a great session about attitude and the love of the game....he told great stories too! Oh yeah....we even did some Yoga on Sunday morning to learn how to stretch and limber up. It was kind of funny watching the “old guys” moan and groan but every one did it, the yoga I mean.

EB How was the overall experience for you?

C It was amazing! I walked out of there with a head full of new stuff to help me and a ton of new friends!!

EB Thanks Connor and good luck in the coming season.

I should note that Connor was there as a result of being selected as Jr. Umpire of the Year in the Kootenays for 2017. One of the perks of this award is free admission to an Advanced Clinic (he still had to pay his own BCBUA membership) anytime in the future. It should also be noted that half of the registrants for this clinic were under the age of 19. This speaks volumes about the future of umpiring in BC.

This is Eager Beaver signing of from the Super Clinic in 2019 and I hope to see you all next time.



Eager Beaver teaches in the classroom at Superclinic 2019

GearHeads – For those who can't get enough

Brad Jones—Author

In this installment of GearHeads, we will be moving down from the mask to the next piece of plate umpire protection, your chest protector (or CP).

All it takes is one-season of umpiring full-season Bantam level or higher to know a CP is so important to umpiring behind the plate. If you started with an old-style soft-shell, the purple and yellow spots (bruises) on your chest that linger for weeks will make you re-think how you are protecting your upper body.

For CPs, don't get thrifty. Do your homework and buy a hard-shell. Even for younger umpires, the extra 20 to 50 dollars (extra assignment or two) will be a more valuable long-term purchase as you progress and develop as an umpire.

As for local associations and umpire-in-chiefs, those bladder, outside CPs should be phased out as quickly as possible and replaced with hard shells. Moving to hard shells, not only helps your younger umpires develop their positioning behind the plate, but when shown how to properly adjust and wear their inside CP, they will be safer too.

When buying a CP, make sure it will form to your body. Hard shells need to be worn so that your heat will mold the plastic to your frame. To keep it up on your chest and covering your clavicle, the best type of harness is a flex-style (triangle) harness that ensures the upper part of the CP is on top of your shoulders and the top of the front plate is giving you full protection.

All-star's Delta-flex harness for its System Seven CP can be used with most CPs with adaptations, but its straps are short and can be problematic. Ray Brownlie (email: rbumpire37@gmail.com) of Ump-life Custom Products makes a flex-style harness that have longer straps and custom printing on the base of the triangle for you to add an image and your name.

Take the time and adjust your CP before your assignment. A CP that is loose and dangling opens you up to shoulder shots that can cause major injury. If you just bought a CP, adjust it just right and wear it around the house. Let your body heat help form the CP to you.

Again, Force 3 Ultimate is leading the way in protection and innovation. F3 is one of the few manufacturers of umpire protection equipment that is producing gear with the state of the art materials like Kevlar and Aramid fiber to build a composite CP built to take a 90-plus fastball. However, it will cost you.

Version 2 of the Ultimate, tweaked to address the minor drawbacks of V1, has improved the shoulder cap protection and implemented the tri-angle, flex style of harness. The change in the harness will hopefully improve the CP contouring to your chest and protect your collar bone.

Wilson's (the supplier of MLB umpires) Gold and Platinum WestVest are the old reliables in hard shells, timeless workhorses that can take a good shot, but need a technical upgrade.

Other quality hard shells include All-star's System Seven CP and Douglas CP with Schutt's XV, Diamond and Champion hard shells being solid options at an affordable price.

Other factors may come into consideration when buying your CP. Make sure it has a good ventilation system as those July double-headers can be scorchers. Also, many CPs will let you add both bi-ceps and tummy extensions to give you additional coverage. This may be an important factor, especially if you are tall or have little extra around the mid-section.

From the Oval Office... President's Report

The 2019 season is right around the corner and MLB Spring Training is open for business. 2019 is already shaping up to be another banner year for the BCBUA. Your executive is hard at work preparing for the 2019 season with clinics already in full swing, grassroots and mentorship committees getting ready to further advance the programming we offer and waiting to see what happens with the recent talks around BC Minor and Baseball BC.

The BCBUA just wrapped up another Caravan where we trained another 11 umpires who successfully attained their certification to help teach BCBUA clinics. We had a diverse representation from the North, Interior, Island, and Lower Mainland. The BCBUA's commitment to Caravan over the past five years is really paying off with a strong group of instructors. A special shout out to Rhonda Pauls who received her Master Course Conductor certification - that is the highest honour at Baseball Canada for umpire training.

We also just wrapped up Super Clinic where we had 43 umpires from all around the Province attend. Our special guest, MLB Umpire Tripp Gibson, spent a day with us imparting his vast knowledge of the game. The cage work with Tripp will go a long way to improving our work on the field. Thanks Tripp!

We hope to build on the record number of umpires - over 1600 last season. We continue to work with our partner associations in building discipline policies that will hopefully one day eliminate umpire abuse and needless on-field confrontations. We will keep you posted on our work in this area.

More great news was recently bestowed upon the BCBUA. We received 18 national assignments, more than any other Province in the country. It wasn't long ago that BC Umpires did not fare so well at National tournaments. A few years back a heavy emphasis was placed on getting back to basics with mechanics and game management being the priority. This has led to a windfall of assignments and more opportunity than ever for our nationally rated umpires, of which we have 47 currently in the program. We look forward to continuing to lead the country in advancing our program and building outstanding umpires!

More great news this year as Rob Allan, Steve Boutang, Rhonda Pauls and yours truly have been selected to supervise a National Championship. It's not only our on field talent that is being recognized, but building our instructor cadre has resulted in these assignments. We already have other BCBUA members in the instructor program on their way to the same recognition.

Going forward, the BCBUA will be looking at our current membership rates. We currently charge \$25 per umpire aged 13 and under, and \$50 per umpire 14 and over. In order to maintain our education and development priorities your BCBUA board will be recommending a dues increase for the 2020 season. This would be the first dues increase in well over a decade. The proposed rates, recommended unanimously by the board, is to increase rates to \$35 for aged 13 and under, and to \$65 aged 14 and over. This will be discussed further during the season and voted on at the 2019 AGM. Another reason to come out to our AGM this fall! More information will follow in a future "Hey Blue".

Here's wishing you a great 2019 baseball season!

Sean Sullivan
President
BCBUA



Leaving a Legacy

The average Canadian can expect to live about 79 years. That's roughly 28,835 days to leave your mark on the people you know and the places you go. That mark — your legacy — is less about what you do and more about how you go about doing it.

One of my first mentors, who had a respectable career as a high school baseball and basketball official, wrote this to me in an email when I first began officiating: "The only regret I have up to this point is not having been a pro umpire. I would have started out in the minor leagues. The travel would have been an adventure, though not always pleasant. But the games. All the crazy plays and magnificent calls. All the different players, ball diamond characters and the nutso fans. All the different parks and towns on all those nights ... ohhh my! That would have been great. That opportunity is gone for me. Don't let yours go by."

I'm not a baseball umpire, but I understood his sentiment. Every official has the potential to be great no matter what level he or she works or desires to work. What you do with that potential can impact the game in a positive way if you let it. What kind of legacy do you want to leave?

Legacy of trust

Trust is the cornerstone in every good relationship. In officiating it is paramount for success. Assigners need to know they can depend on you to show up when you say you will. Partners need to know you have their back. Coaches need to know you will keep the game under control and do everything in your power to keep their players safe.

How can you be trusted? Don't just pretend to know the rules; really know them. That knowledge can help you through difficult situations and show true professionalism. You can build trust by showing you have confidence in your partners. Don't undermine them to coaches or sell them out to assigners. Be a team player.

Be an honest evaluator of your own performance. That honesty opens the door for others to share honest self-evaluations. Then you can learn from each other's experiences together. Your trustworthiness begins with your everyday life. Are you honest with your family, friends and co-workers? If you are living out trust in your day to day, it becomes a lot easier to carry it over into officiating.

Legacy of influence

Change doesn't always have to come in the form of rule changes, although submitting rule change ideas is one way to go about influence. You can also change the culture of officiating. Is your association stuck in the Stone Age when it comes to technology? Volunteer to put a presentation together with educational video clips for your sport. Do the veterans in your group treat new officials with a "do as I say, not as I do" mentality? Take a new official under your wing by showing him or her the right way to go about becoming a better official.

Being an initiator of change doesn't mean there has to be some grandiose movement. It's the little things that can have the biggest impact. Mother Teresa said, "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." She dedicated her life to changing the way people look at and treat one another. She did that through her own small acts of kindness.

There are many things that are out of your control, but how you act is not one of them. You will be amazed at how contagious a positive attitude can be! Show enthusiasm for the game. The more people that look to you for guidance, the more positive influence you can provide.

Legacy of excellence

Vince Lombardi said, "The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor." Lombardi epitomized excellence and expected the same from his players.

There is a deep satisfaction that comes with pursuing and attaining excellence. It requires sacrifice and hard work. It goes beyond going to a camp during the offseason just to meet a requirement. It's applying what you learn. It's knowing how to take criticism and using it to better yourself. It's taking care of your body. It's having an extensive knowledge, understanding and ability to apply the rules and philosophies of your sport. It's the constant pursuit to be better.

Perhaps a combination of all those things would make for the ultimate legacy. Decide what kind of legacy you want to leave and start acting on it today. You have one shot to make a positive impact and change your game for the better. Don't let yours go by!

This article is taken from Referee Magazine, author Abby Burmeister.



**Superclinic 2019—
gym drills**



Superclinic 2019 Group Photo



Above—MLB Umpire Tripp Gibson addresses class.

Below—Superclinic Instructors left to right—Sean Sullivan, Sean Weatherill, Joe Mallinson, Bill MacMillan, Tripp Gibson, Rhonda Pauls, Gary Webber, Scott Eckardt.



Respect in Officiating... How to earn it!

In a business environment, you know the people you don't like to work with. You know the laggards, the braggers and the ones who shove daggers in your back. You see one of those individuals you don't respect walking down the hallway and you turn around and go the other way.

Similarly, there are sports officials we are unhappy to see arrive at the court or field as our partners. With others we're overjoyed when their names appear on contracts. Partners and supervisors both recognize there are special qualities in the respected officials that make us have that elated reaction. Those special officials are "known" — they bring out a positive feeling from officials and coaches alike when they show up for a game.

One of the challenges is the amount of time it takes to create a body of work. People need to see you work, but you also need the experience, and the two can be in conflict. Experience frames many of the qualities in solid officials. You don't usually, for example, develop a calming influence or become great game managers without learning it somewhere. Officials develop from making mistakes, listening to mentors and supervisors and going to camps. From those experiences, officials become recognized and noticed in a positive way. You're not just the official taking assignments for a paycheck, showing up at game time and throwing your shirt on, then blasting out of the ballpark immediately afterward.

You also don't have to be the official who works all of the top assignments to be a welcomed sight at a game. Here are some qualities that top supervisors and officials claim set the respected apart from the rest.

A Calm Demeanor

Having a calming influence may sound like an odd job description for a sports official. Maybe more for a psychologist or negotiator. But if you query enough knowledgeable individuals in touch with sports officiating, you'll find that quality rising to the top. When it's explained, it makes sense. You need to have an inner calm yourself to project that onto the game. If you remain calm, your partners pick up on that. Your presence also affects the participants. The nature of sports is frequently emotional, and the ability to keep your calm ensures the game is maintained under control. With coaches, given the potential volatility in contests, your ability to remain calm ensures a better relationship with them when you need it to resolve tense situations.

Tom Eades, who has officiated NCAA Division I men's basketball for more than 25 years, always appreciates the partner who handles himself well.

A struggle for newer officials working into the higher levels of their sport is knowing when to stay silent, according to Eades, who said that includes knowing when to avoid confrontations, and how to address a situation in a calming way.



Caravan 2019 - Drill work in the gym

"The really good umpires are virtually unflappable," said George Drouches, NCAA national coordinator of baseball umpiring and former Division III coordinator. "You can tell the guys who want to be there. They have fun, are calm and relaxed and exude a quiet leadership about them. They don't get unraveled."

"If you are exceptional at the fundamentals, that calms everyone down," said Billy Van Raaphorst, who umpired professional baseball and worked his first College World Series last year. "Things might get goofy, but strong fundamentals help you prepare and address those situations. It's how coaches start to trust you."

"It's not that you won't have a problem if you have stone cold fundamentals, but when you do face a tough situation, there's nothing you can't handle."

Approachability

Along with having a calming presence, being approachable was another quality listed for officials who get noticed in a positive way.

Think about those times when you are happy to see your partner. Part of that is because he or she is approachable — you "want" to go up and interact with that person. People notice the importance of that quality and started patterning behavior to emphasize it after a bad coaching experience. Instead, some people choose to mentor others and go out of their way to room with officials they don't know while on the road so they can build better camaraderie. After a tough match, that's the person you seek out.

Drouches phrases this quality a bit differently, using an "attraction vs. promotion" term. Basically, the officials who are known and respected have that extra something. People are attracted to them. Rather than having to "promote" themselves, people want to come to them — they attract others because of who they are, their personalities, how they handle themselves on and off the field.

"It goes back even behind the scenes. Those are the guys who are the mentors — they understand they only get to keep what they give away. Coaches and other officials can see through the self-promoting guys. You want the attraction qualities — calm, selfless, unflappable, quietly in control and everyone just knows it," Drouches said.

"Do the work the right way and don't slack. Ego is the one thing that kills more officials. You don't want to be the type of guy no one wants to hang around. You recognize that type of guy by how he treats other people," he added.

Danny Mascorro, a college baseball umpire whose priority conference is the Pac-12, said an official's natural personality often works into their approachability. "When you're approachable, you listen, respect others and their opinions," Mascorro said. "That brings you respect in return."

"It's hard to lose that reputation once you've built it up, but you only get one opportunity to make a positive first impression."

A Good Appearance

Appearances count. Show up on time. Dress appropriately. "If you have the basics at the bottom, you're better at the top. Officials rise on the roster by knowing the basic elements and mastering them," Drouches said "perception" encompasses a lot of the important positive qualities: "Do you look the part? Do you have command of the game? Do you manage the game well and communicate? Do you run a smooth game? Do the coaches trust you?"

Those who shine, he said, are the officials everyone wants on the game. "It's what separates the good from the really, really good," he said.

A smooth baseball game starts early, Drouches said, beginning with preparation — the business of umpiring. The crew chief sets the tone. How you come on the field and handle the lineup cards with the coaches and how you communicate immediately dictate others' perceptions of you. Little things, like maintaining control of the game, add to positive perceptions, he explained.

Your reactions and how you communicate back to players and coaches are critical to building positive impressions, positive relationships and trust, according to Drouches.

"You need to be able to trust your partner, and not have to clean up a mess afterward."

Non-verbal communication is also part of how you are perceived, according to Drouches. Most officials have cues they use to communicate with their partners mentally, physically and verbally, things like the thumbs up sign, a nod of the head, talking during timeouts. "You see the good crews doing this," he said. "When someone asks why he didn't get the big game, sometimes the response is as simple as 'you shrugged your shoulders when your partner made a call.'"

Confidence

"The partner can wing it when things aren't going right, or your partner can freeze in a tough situation," he said. "I want the officials I work with to see the big picture. The good referees have the experience to take in all those other variables."

That confidence shows up during game situations and when dealing with coaches. "When you work with a guy, you can see how he handles the coaches by his body language," Van Raaphorst said. "Does he have his head, chin and shoulders up? If he's not confident, he's not going to do a good job. We can teach that on a blackboard, but you have to get the experience."

Confidence takes work.

"The better we are, the more fun it gets," Van Raaphorst said. "To get better, you need to work on yourself and your fundamentals. For an umpire, if you are set, have great timing and know the rules cold, the rest is easy. The better you are at the fundamentals, the fewer problems you'll have."

A Solid Background

Jim Quirk, NFLRA executive director and former NFL umpire, said the backgrounds of officials off the field (and court) are indicators of success at a higher level. During his years with the NFL, Quirk worked in a Treasury bond trading room on Wall Street, a contentious environment which required facing off with assertive and aggressive traders. Those years helped shape him as a person, which in turn was reflected on the field. "It carried over into my officiating career," Quirk said.

Your personality and experiences off the field and court help form you during a game, establishing your style. From those qualities come your strengths. In his case, for example, dealing with the intense trading environment prepared him to deal with the intensity of the NFL trenches.

Quirk cited NFL referee Jeff Triplette as another example. Triplette, who served in the military and is a retired colonel for the Army National Guard, is a high level corporate executive (CEO of ArbiterSports), so he is what you would call a "detail guy."

"It also was a strength he brought to the field," Quirk said. "You bring your background from your day-to-day job and transfer it to the field."

"You cannot be a shrinking violet. You have to stand up and make the calls. You have to throw the flag. You can't be intimidated. All that goes back to your personal background."

Game Management

If you handle a big situation correctly, coaches and officials will respect you. Van Raaphorst called the ability to handle situations another important factor that sets apart the special official — the one everyone wants.

In baseball, that means being ready for the second or third play in a sequence, not just the routine ground ball. If, for example, all you are ready for is the basic grounder, then the throw goes wide at first, you may just react to the second incident instead of being "ahead of the play," he explained. "You need to be anticipatory for the unordinary. It's not as big an issue in the pros because the talent level is higher, and the routine plays are normally made. But if you have a 10-and-under game, that's where you learn. The ball gets thrown around a lot more."

Drouches stressed the importance of being in position for the unknown.

"Former players who become officials have this ability," he said. "They know what the offense and defense will do and anticipate what could be missed and what might happen next. They are ready to react when the unexpected happens."

Drouches will pay attention to the umpires' ability to anticipate and where they position themselves, along with how they adjust to situations.

"If the officials aren't handling the routine, they probably won't be able to handle the unusual," he added.

Quirk suggested that speaking up when you know a fellow official is wrong is important as well. "Go in, ask questions, start a discussion," he said. "Don't 'tell' your partner something. Ask questions instead and bring them to the surface with your referee. Help bail out your fellow official. When you step in and help save your partner, you're preventing future mistakes."

Becoming the official everyone wants to work an assignment with takes experience — working games, having a mentor and being open-minded.

Sports officials also need to take steps to learn from mistakes and experiences. "Don't gloss things over. Don't tear your partners down. But you need to deconstruct games in a positive way," Van Raaphorst said.

It's a good way you can build toward being that sought-after official.

This Article was taken from Referee Magazine, August 3, 2018



Left—Group of students listens to Tripp Gibson speak at Superclinic. At the Right, Tripp works with students in the cage. The BCBUA is grateful to have such a tremendous supporter in Tripp Gibson.

Superclinic 2019— In Photos



Top—Jackson Bakker in the cage with Instructor Joe Mallinson
Below—Old Dogs learning New Tricks... Unlikely, but a solid maybe....



Superclinic instructors putting the students through cage work and base drills.

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Growing Great Umpires



Baseball Canada Umpire Committee Implementing Change

At a recent Baseball Canada Umpire Committee meeting in Toronto, the committee updated Provincial Supervisors on the myriad of projects that are being completed or nearing completion. Some of these items are ready for implementation.

For starters, Baseball Canada has hired a part time staff person to assist with the technical work required by the umpire committee to attain its goals in a timely fashion. Combined with the sub committee work, these goals are closer to implementation than ever before.

Work is underway on the new dedicated Umpire Website portal which will be accessible by the 2020 season. This portal will allow members to access a variety of new items not previously available. Learning resources, videos, communications, registration capability, umpire tracking, and a host of other tools.

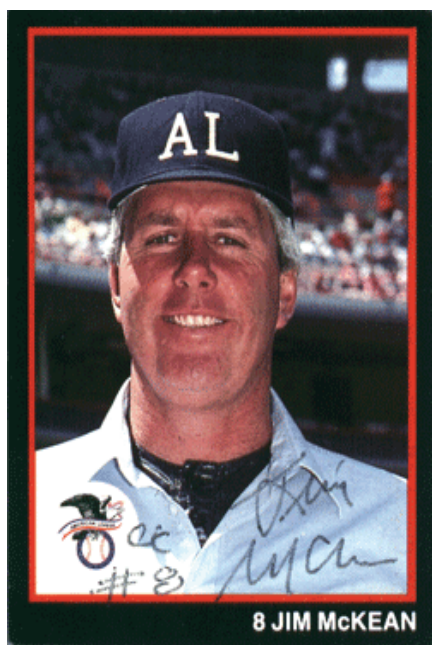
In order to help contribute to this project, and to allow access for all umpires across the country, there will be a small fee required to participate. BC will contribute an amount based on our overall membership which will allow all of our umpires to be part of this great project.

Additionally, the committee is working on branding. Specifically Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are all active with new posts weekly in the winter and daily during the summer months.

Grass Roots learning module development is ongoing and making excellent progress. There will be several components available for use very shortly.

In short, progress is happening at a velocity not previously seen. These are exciting times for the umpire committee and for umpires all across our country.

Canadian Umpire Jim McKean Passes away



Former MLB Umpire Jim McKean passed away on January 24 in Florida, aged 73.

McKean was born in Montreal and was the first and only Canadian Big Leaguer for the duration of his career from 1973-2001

He worked predominately in the American League and wore #8 for the majority of his umpire career. He worked a total

of 3 World Series and 5 American League Championships. After his on field career ended, he worked for MLB as a supervisor and became a television and radio consultant on rules topics.

McKean was not only a world class umpire, but was an outstanding athlete. He played football in the CFL for several seasons with both his hometown Alouettes and the Saskatchewan

Roughriders.

In the off-seasons he worked as a referee in high level college hockey.

His athletic prowess was so great that upon high school graduation he was offered scholarships to 35 different schools.

In 2004 he was inducted into the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame.

The BCBUA offers its condolences to his family during this difficult time.