

HeyBlue! Online

HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER

2019

Volume 10 Edition 3

December 2019

BCBUA AGM Concludes 2019

There was an excellent turnout at the BCBUA AGM in Richmond on October 26 where a number of significant changes took place in our association. We have a new President in Rhonda Pauls, a new Treasurer in Jared Roberts, a new Vice President in Scott Eckardt, and new area reps in Jon Hollett (V.I. South), and Kyle Anderson (Northern BC).

The main topics of discussion focussed around the finances of the association. The report can be read entirely later in this issue. In short, a number of motions were presented by Secretary Les Maerov to streamline voting procedures for the board, as well as a new rule which will limit the Past President's term to 2 years.

Still with finances, outgoing Treasurer Rick Antoniak presented a full report showing that the association spent more than it took in for the year. In combination with lower than needed financial support from external sources, the board recommended that the association consider increasing membership dues. After discussion, the membership voted unanimously to increase dues effective January 1, 2020. There is no way to maintain the same level of programming without increasing revenues. More on that later in this edition.

Awards were presented and much thanks were given to outgoing Treasurer Antoniak and President Sean Sullivan for their years of hard work on our board.



New BCBUA Board for 2020

Officers:

President—Rhonda Pauls

Past President—Sean Sullivan

Vice President—Scott Eckardt

Treasurer—Jared Roberts

Secretary—Les Maerov

Directors:

Area 1 Rep—Jon Hollett

Area 2 Rep—Brad Jones

Area 3 Rep—Gary Webber

Area 4 Rep—Sean Weatherill

Area 5 Rep—John Pentland

Area 6 Rep—Vacant

Area 7 Rep—Kevin Burke

Area 8 Rep—Bill MacMillan

Area 9 Rep—Kyle Anderson

Supervisor of Umpires:

Steve Boutang

Assistants:

Sean Sullivan

Scott Eckardt



FROM THE OVAL OFFICE – President's Report

By Rhonda Pauls

It is with thankfulness and anticipation for the future that I pen my first "From the Oval Office" as your new president. We have so much to celebrate as an organization with all the success of our members over the last few years. I am very proud and humbled to lead the BCBUA into the next decade. I have to say, the organization we have now is not the one that existed when I first became a member in the early 2000's. We have become progressive, adaptive and member focused. We have become an organization with a Mission... and goals...and strategies to get us where we aspire to be. And ...we are winning.

In November, Steve Boutang and I attended the Baseball Canada National Convention in Quebec City, where we were asked to give presentations to the national umpire committee. The BCBUA has become a province that is leading Canada in best practice when it comes to officials development.

I was asked share our strategy and progress on how we are building competency and resiliency in our young officials through our province-wide mentorship initiative, and Steve spoke on how we have built community with umpires through our national program and taken what was formerly one of Canada's weakest national programs to the one that other provinces want to model after. Neither of those accomplishments happened over night or without the commitment and buy in of our leaders at both the provincial and local levels. I want you all to know that you belong to an organization that cares about its members and is working very hard to move us forward in "Growing great umpires!"

We just received our Report Card from Baseball Canada, which is a yearly evaluation of all the provincial programming across the country. It evaluates each province on its registration, programs, governance, coaching, umpires, championships and teams. As a province, we ranked 6th overall in Canada...but as Umpires our individual program score was tied for #1 in the country. I believe that speaks for itself.

For the last couple of years your executive has been building focus committees to support the work that needs to be done each year. We now have organized sub groups that are task oriented and report to the board in a number of areas. Some areas we have been developing are; in Education (resources and practice), a UIC consortium, a UIC resource development committee, Mentorship Coordinators, working with technical expertise on our database and website, implementing a mentorship style training for our supervisors and evaluators. Having gone through a visioning process a few years ago, we now tie all of our actions to our budget process to ensure that we are spending our money on the things we have identified as our goal areas. This is best practice, and ensures accountability to our membership and adherence to our mission. We have engaged many more of our members in this work, and are excited about their areas of expertise that are transferrable to the work we do here.

Some of the things you can expect to see in the coming year that have come out of this past year's work are; a new Jr. Umpire Academy in the Kootenays, New Gym Instructor's resource for Level 1 and 2 clinics, the reinstatement of BCBUA membership and level cards, more targeted on-field coaching feedback from senior umpires at the higher levels, a renewed focus on conduct management strategies, weekly rules focus content delivery through our ever-growing social media platforms, and a development clinic for all of our UICs province-wide. You may have already noticed that our website has a new design and easier content delivery – this has been a long time coming and we are excited about its potential.

Something else that's new and promising is that we have struck an Ad-Hoc joint partners committee with Baseball BC, The PBL and BC Minor to work together to solve some of our on-field conduct issues that have been plaguing our umpires for some time now. The BCBUA is adamant that umpire abuse is unacceptable. The scope of this committee is significant, but the work is all targeted at improving on-field relations between umpires, players and coaches, and addressing the parent and fan issues we have been experiencing. This is the first time a group like this has met with a united goal of finding solutions. You will see changes coming down the pike – stay tuned!

We will continue to support and implement the things that have been building our program over the last few years such as our high level clinic, Umpire Academy, Grassroots mentorship, increased in-game feedback opportunities at tournaments, and continual improvement of our instructional resources for our L1, L2 and L3 clinics.

In closing, I want to say that it is my personal goal that every one of our members feels connected, supported and valued as a BCBUA member. I hope that the work we are doing inspires our members to engage more in activities at the local and provincial levels through the numerous opportunities we have. I want every one of our members to know that there is a team behind him or her, and that they belong to a strong community with ethical leadership and dedicated people who want to see them reach their potential.

For the love of baseball and the umpires who serve the game...I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a safe and joyful holiday season...My inbox is always openRhonda.

Below are some statistical highlights from the 2019 season for our association:

Registration

We had a very slight reduction in total members.

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Members	1617	1633	1491	1456	1315
+/- Prev. Year	-16	+141	+35	+141	-8

By level	2019	2018
Level 1 Regular (14+)	503	525
Level 1 Youth (13+under)	590	568
Level 2 Current	258	295
Level 2 Not Current	152	159
Level 2 Youth Current	30	
Level 2 Youth Not Current	3	
Level 3+Current	52	52
Level 3+Not-Current	24	26
Life Members	6	6
Inactive Members	2	1
Total Paid	1611	1632

1,016 of the 1,632 individuals registered in 2018 renewed their membership for 2019 - meaning that 62% of the umpires registered in 2018 returned in 2019, which is exactly the same % as those from 2017. This means that 38% are not returning year on year. Without tracking individual names, my sense is that the Level 1 members dramatically turn over every year, which means that they umpire for the year and then quit, and a similar number of new level 1 members join. A check of the first 25 Level 1 members alphabetically from 2018 indicates that none of them returned as members in 2019 and a check of the first 20 members alphabetically from 2019 indicates that none of them were members in 2018.

We made an effort this year to encourage associations in all areas to use carded umpires, and this has not been entirely successful. There are entire associations where geographically there are only a handful of registered umpires which does not make sense. We need to do a better job in 2020 of tracking this.

By area	2019	2018	2017
Area 1 - Vancouver Island South	218	208	185
Area 2 - Vancouver Island North	128	134	121
Area 3 - Lower Mainland East	246	254	239
Area 4 - Lower Mainland West	272	254	247
Area 5 - Lower Mainland South	373	389	333
Area 6 - Thompson	77	64	78
Area 7 - Okanagan	152	180	173
Area 8 - Kootenays	96	92	83
Area 9 - Northern BC	53	56	69

2019	# of Clinics Offered	# of Participants	Participation rate
Level 1	40	693	
Level 2	36	540	
Level 3	1	43	
Level 4/5	1	56	
Umpire Academy	1	12	
Totals	79	1332/1617	82.37%

Clinics: The Statistics above represent the number of clinics BCBUA ran this year.

In general, it can be said that roughly 82% of BCBUA members took a clinic of some kind in 2019, roughly the same as in 2018.

While some members may have taken multiple clinics, such as taking a Level 2 and a Level 3 clinic, there are not many of those and the numbers should not be skewed too much.

The number of clinics that BCBUA has offered has increased each year since we've been able to track data, which started in 2013. BCBUA offered 79 clinics in various forms in 2019, up from 78 in 2018, and as demand continues to grow, so will clinic offerings .

Exams

Since 2016, all Level 1 and Level 2 exams come with unlimited attempts in order to guide the student to look up their incorrect answers and re-attempt the exam until a successful pass. Level 3 is unchanged, but note the new level 3 rules this year.

	Pass	Fail	Incomplete
Level 1 - 2019	650	1170	325
Level 1 - 2018	561	843	469
Level 1 - 2017	532	768	297
Level 1 - 2016	445	794	229
Level 2 - 2019	375	585	108
Level 2 - 2018	356	841	345
Level 2 - 2017	332	922	264
Level 2 - 2016	298	640	266
Level 2 - 2015	213	154	35
Level 2 - 2014	158	280	46
Level 3 - 2019	73	56	44
Level 3 - 2018	69	38	51
Level 3 - 2017	73	26	64
Level 3 - 2016	61	26	31
Level 3 - 2015	34	23	24
Level 3 - 2014	28	45	29

More people are writing (and passing) the various exams each year. More people are failing the exam, some eventually pass and others don't bother. Lots of people start but don't submit the exam.

Ejections

	Total
2019	299
2018	257
2017	208
2016	185
2015	235
2014	282
2013	146

Despite continuous efforts to civilize coaches and players, ejections are up substantially.

There are still members who refuse/neglect to do their job and file ejection reports. This is troubling because it indicates irresponsibility on the part of those umpires, and ultimately results in more difficulty for the next umpire because the offenders are not being punished fully and continue their offensive behavior. The rules on this have not changed, and are repeated from last year.

Ejection reports need to be submitted promptly. Preferably the same day, or the next day at the **absolute latest**.

If you fill out a paper copy of an ejection report at a Tournament or Provincial, you **must** file the report online as well otherwise BCBUA will not be aware of the ejection. Also, when filling the report out online don't change facts between what is reported on paper and what you're submitting online. It tends to anger the league and makes umpires look like they're misreporting the facts.

Don't editorialize in ejection reports. Only report the facts. Comments such as "The team was clearly not good enough to play in this tournament" or "The quality of the PBL has really gone down in recent years" are subjective comments that anger leagues and administrators. Imagine if they said "Well we must have got the leftover umpires because all the good ones were unavailable" about you and how you would feel if you heard something like that.

Do not post your ejections on social media. You are there to enforce the rules and administer the game, not boast, so keep quiet and just do your job.

Pay attention to what league you are umpiring BC (Minor) Baseball and Baseball BC are different associations. Try to choose the correct one if at all possible! (hint: Baseball BC has no league play)

The ejection statistics by league are as follows:

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
BC (Minor) Baseball	163	121	113	110	145
PBL	93	81	62	42	57
LMBA	20	17	6	15	5
Baseball BC Provs.	6	15	8	6	2
CCBC	6	7	6	0	3
Senior	7	7	3	3	11
Greater Victoria Jr	-	4	7	3	6
Other	4	5	3	6	6

Baseball Canada Umpire Totals
November, 2019

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Totals	Totals 2018
British Columbia	1,095	444	82	27	12	1,660	1,673
Alberta	551	235	68	37	20	911	850
Saskatchewan	563	204	16	18	9	810	754
Manitoba	333	166	69	23	6	597	629
Ontario	3,558	1,597	871	32	34	6,092	5,775
Quebec	928	773	314	34	27	2,076	1,878
New Brunswick	123	23	32	5	5	188	201
Nova Scotia	374	100	49	15	2	540	543
Prince Edward Island	54	29	19	7	1	110	116
Newfoundland	-	-	-	-	-	-	132
	7,579	3,571	1,520	198	117	12,984	12,551
Umpire Totals - 2018	7,637	3,200	1,384	211	119	12,551	

BCBUA LEVEL 3 REPORT 2019

We had a very good year, Mentorship-wise, in 2019. Although our total numbers were down slightly our spread was much better. We had more of our senior umpires that are not in the National Program come out and spend some time with the younger ones. This is how we will build our umpires of the future, through positive feedback that makes them want to come out and learn some more. So, to the senior umpires out there who just want to help, thank you for all you do. You are the glue that holds this association together.

The numbers as of October 22nd are these:

125 Umpire Development Forms submitted
181 Mentorship forms submitted
30 Level 3 evaluations completed

The encouraging aspect of these numbers is that we had 39 different umpires submitting forms and the discouraging aspect is that I know of many more mentorships that took place but there was no paperwork submitted.

This becomes a problem because the young (or older) umpire who receives the feedback does not get a written report to refer to and learn from like they would if the Mentor submitted a report and it skews our numbers when we go looking to other agencies for special funding. So, If you go out to mentor an umpire, the job is not done until the form is submitted!!

Our Association and program is the envy of all the other programs in the country because of members like you who choose to get involved.

Bill MacMillan
Level 3 Coordinator
BCBUA

Social Media

BCBUA has increased its presence on social media over the past two years. We have a team of members who add content to three pages. These pages are Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. We welcome submissions all year round. If you're not already following our pages, please do so as we love your support.

Instagram: bcumpires

Facebook: search bcbua

Twitter:bcumpires

For more information on Social Media posting contact our Chair Sean Weatherill.

BCBUA FINANCIAL REPORT: by Rick Antoniak—Treasurer

CASH:	
Undeposited funds (PayPal):	206.15
General Account:	54,125.23
CURRENT ASSETS:	54,331.38
less O/S EXPENSES:	16,945.13
plus O/S REVENUE:	0.00
TOTAL CASH ON HAND:	37,386.25

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2019 continued.

INCOME	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	Variance 18-19
Administration	0.00	0.00		
AGM	0.00	0.00		
Baseball BC	5,000.00	30,000.00	12,000.00	(25000.00)
BC Minor	1,993.20	0.00	0.00	1993.20
Board of Directors Meetings	0.00	0.00		
Caravan	1,650.00	0.00	(1650.00)	
Clinic - Advanced	900.00	0.00	(900.00)	900.00
Clinic - High Level	0.00	0.00		
Clinic - Level I & II	80.00	500.00	0.00	(420.00)
Clinic - National	17,218.20	15,386.57	13,366.44	1831.63
Membership	65,020.00	67,400.00	62,650.00	(2380.00)
National Travel	2,150.00	2,250.00	2,100.00	(100.00)
Provincials	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Super Clinic	5,125.00	4,500.00	5125.00	(4500.00)
Umpire Academy	4,410.00	1,650.00	5,805.00	2760.00
TOTAL INCOME:	100,996.40	118,086.57	102,071.44	(17,090.17)
EXPENSES:				
Administration	10,495.65	6,801.42	7,666.57	3694.23
AGM	137.03	282.66	333.28	(145.63)
Baseball BC	11,319.00	11,624.00	11,009.00	(305.00)
BC Minor	0.00	0.00		
Board of Director Meetings	8,930.33	5,298.05	8,197.10	3632.28
Caravan	14,640.39	2,581.76	11,195.03	12058.63
Clinic - Advanced	485.17	0.00	(485.17)	485.17
Clinic - High Level	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Clinic Level I & II	28,945.61	25,663.43	30,415.43	3282.18
Clinic - National	19,092.99	15,161.76	13,674.71	3931.23
Membership	4,125.00	3,750.00	4,100.00	375.00
Mentorship	5,139.30	3,881.50	7,329.05	1257.80
National Travel	11,595.30	6,607.21	10,660.28	4988.09
Provincials	1,000.00	2,348.55	3,101.30	(1348.55)
Scholarship	1,491.00	(1491.00)	1491.00	
Super Clinic	4,571.27	5,676.86	4571.27	(5676.86)
Umpire Academy	5,806.87	2,632.73	8,172.80	3174.14
Westerns	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Workshop	0.00	0.00	0.00	
TOTAL EXPENES:	125,798.74	88,609.24	121,531.41	37,189.50
NET INCOME/ LOSS	(24,802.34)	29,477.33	(19,459.97)	(54,279.67)



BCBUA AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Howard Chapman Sr Umpire of the Year – Mike Green – Abbotsford

Female Umpire of the Year – Rhonda Pauls – Abbotsford

Doug Hudlin Distinguished Service Award – Keith Hartup – Ft Langley

Ian Lamplugh Award – Jayden Saban – Powell River

Richard Christie Award for the Unsung Hero – Brad Jones – Nanaimo

Bill Murphy Award for the Most Improved Umpire – Jacob Daniel – Burnaby

Chuck Blaikie Award for Outstanding Contribution to the BCBUA – Phil Bourgeois – Burnaby

George Connelly Builders Award – Shawna Stahl – Cranbrook

Abe Shapiro Mentorship Award – Sean Weatherill – Richmond



Junior Umpire of the Year Awards

Vancouver Island South – Liam Hodson

Vancouver Island North – Karole Diego-Lucero

Lower Mainland East – Owen Clogg

Lower Mainland West – Matthew Knott

Lower Mainland South – Jackson Bakker

Okanagan – Samuel Calderwood

Kootenays – Nathan Dann

Northern BC – James Yandean



Jr Umpire of the Year for LM East – Owen Clogg (Middle) with Aldergrove UIC Rob Ross (Left) and BCBUA President Rhonda Pauls (Right)



LEFT – Brad Jones – Richard Christie Award winner (with President Pauls)

RON BOUTANG MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

At the Annual BCBUA Awards ceremony, the Ron Boutang Memorial Scholarship winners were revealed. Coquitlam's Scott Barden and Chilliwack's Craig Burt were both awarded Scholarships to attend Professional Umpire School in Florida this winter. Both will be attending the Wendelstedt school as they vie for a job in Professional Baseball. We wish them both success as they chase their dreams!



Craig Burt (Left) and Scott Barden (Below) accepting the Ron Boutang Scholarship from Supervisor Steve Boutang



LEFT – Sean Weatherill is congratulated for winning the Abe Shapiro Mentorship Award



Phil Bourgeois was honoured by the BCBUA with the Chuck Blaikie Award for Outstanding Contribution to the association in 2019.



Discipline Chair's Report for the BCBUA AGM 2019

Submitted by: Rhonda Pauls

This year the Discipline Chair received 4 official complaints about umpire conduct.

All 4 of these allegations were deemed worthy of investigation.

One of them was unfounded, but provided a very good education opportunity for me to work with the party who submitted the complaint and bring a greater understanding of what role the umpire has ensuring safety on the field.

One of them, after investigation, was likely founded; but after reconsideration of the accusing party, was dropped.

One of the investigations resulted in the BCBUA issuing a letter of intent to the accused that his membership was no longer in good standing and that all associations would be notified that he was not an individual the BCBUA could endorse working with youth. The individual's response to this was that he would self-revoke his membership and wrote the BCBUA a letter stating that he would not attempt now or in the future to secure game assignments on any field in BC. We have marked his registration as "not in good standing" and have the letter on file and his name flagged in the system should he ever choose to try and register again.

The final allegation was founded, and resulted in disciplinary action. It should be noted that in almost ALL cases where discipline is issued, it is with the intent that learning, self-reflection and change of behavior will come about from said consequences. It is not the position of this board to issue punitive measures that do not serve a greater purpose.

I would also like to add that in the final case, there was also misconduct on the part of the accusing party. This does NOT negate our obligations as officials to uphold a higher standard, but it does give the Chair the opportunity to engage the other party (and often league leadership) in a discourse about provocation and what their standards of expectation are for their members.

Please review the BCBUA Code of Conduct which is available on our website.

FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK – by Provincial Supervisor Steve Boutang

The 2019 season was very good in British Columbia. Our membership remained steady at just over 1600 members for the 2nd year in a row.

On the field, we filled 17 National Umpire Assignments and 4 supervisory assignments. This was the most ever for the BCBUA. This included 2 umpire and 1 supervisory assignment to T12. Sean Sullivan received his first supervisory assignment at U18 and received a positive evaluation on his work. 2 of our umpires were selected to umpire Home Plate for the Gold Medal games. Congratulations to Jared Roberts and Mike Green on that honour.

Rhonda Pauls attended the Pan Am Women's World Cup in Mexico in August and worked in the Gold Medal game.

Provincials were again a struggle to staff with too many tournaments on the same weekends and difficulties in communications with hosts, and partner organizations who simply didn't do enough to keep the tournament supervisors in the loop. We need to do better in 2020 and will look to decrease the number of tournaments we staff to allow for a better umpire product on and off the field. Perhaps by reducing what we take on, Provincials will be a meaningful assignment once again, instead of us trying to fill holes with anyone who has a pulse in some cases and putting people in positions to fail, rather than in positions to succeed.

Our 2019 season kicked off by hosting Caravan in Abbotsford. 11 umpires attended and were trained. Unfortunately 1 did not complete the assignments and received a No Standing. Rhonda Pauls earned her Master Course Conductor status. BC now boasts 41 Caravan certified instructors. Still this is not enough to staff the 80 clinics we put on annually around the province. It is expected that a Caravan in the west will take place again in 2021 in a location TBA. BC will certainly have a number of new candidates to attend. BC has 2 candidates in the Sr. Course Conductor Advancement pathway at this time.

From the Chief's Desk... continued

Unfortunately we lost one of our most experienced umpires, clinicians, and supervisors when Rob Allan moved to Alberta this spring. He was honoured with Life Membership in the BCBUA upon his departure. The BCBUA and all our umpires will miss his leadership, his umpiring, and all of the work he performed off the field. Good luck in Alberta.

Our National clinic took place as per usual in Kamloops in Spring. 52 attendees took part over the 4 days. Ed Quinlan, Andrew Higgins, Ron Shewchuk, and Jon Oko were guest instructors. Several new National umpires emerged with level 4T status.

Our 5th Umpire Academy also took place in Kamloops where 12 students successfully completed the weekend. This feeder system to the National program has become a vital step in development for our young up and coming umpires in BC. We hope to expand the program in 2020 to include a 2nd Academy in the lower mainland in May or June for a different target audience of umpires.

Several mentorship weekends took place around the province this year. We completed nearly 400 mentorships overall. This is a typical amount in BC. Much of this work is done by National members who work peewee and mosquito level baseball with young and inexperienced umpires on the field. Many local associations are running their own mentorship programs as well and their numbers are NOT reflected in this total. This program has really developed over the years and I believe it is one of the reasons for umpires continuing beyond their first or second years in the program.

Financially, BCBUA did not receive a great deal of financial assistance this year from the PSO unfortunately and as such we have no choice but to realize a raise in our membership dues for umpires as of January 1 2020. New dues will be \$35 for umpires 13 and under, and \$65 for umpires 14 and above. I can tell you that all the great programs we run in this province; mentorships, clinician instruction, level 1-2 clinics, advanced clinics, and a tremendous National program... do not happen for free. It takes money. And when we don't get Grants, and Baseball BC doesn't give us what we think we need, then we have no choice but to raise our operating funds through membership. We can have status quo or better, but we have to pay a little more for that.

Additionally, from an on-field perspective there was again a great deal of disgraceful incidents involving parental abuse of umpires, as well as coach and player misconduct that fell far below the standards of unacceptable. Parents harassing 13 and 14 year old umpires, coaches yelling at umpires in degrading fashions, players making threatening comments to umpires, and a general lack of respect for umpires who are just attempting to do a reasonable job on the field. What's worse is that leagues and organizations are doing little to stop it. They are not doing enough to educate their coaches and players or parents that this is no longer acceptable in our sport. Finally, after years of inaction, Baseball BC has finally put together a committee aimed at improving the situation by way of education of all involved, and to standardize discipline at all levels of play which will feature meaningful penalties for those who engage, and re-engage, in this type of behaviour. We can only hope for positive things to come of this and I applaud their intervention.

From our Umpire Board perspective, our President Sean Sullivan is not seek re-election this year and Rhonda Pauls has been elected to become our new President. We thank Sully for his 4 years service as our President and wish him well in the role of Past President. I'm personally sorry Sean that you had such a mess to deal with for your 4 years, particularly with the feud between Baseball BC and BC Minor, and the ongoing discipline issues of the PBL. You deserved an easier road to hoe, but your leadership skills have put us in a great position going forward.

Speaking of which, we anticipate hosting a High Level umpire clinic the first weekend in February where MLB umpires will be headed to the Vancouver area to assist us in putting on a unique learning experience. We hope to have as many spots for BC umpires as possible.



DIRECTORS REPORTS – 2019

Area 1 – Vancouver Island South – Scott Eckardt Area Rep

It was another busy year for baseball on South Vancouver Island. There were 218 registered umpires from Sidney to Ladysmith and all points in between this year, an increase of 10 members over 2018. Ninety of these members were in their first year of umpiring!

In Area 1 we were able to run 7 clinics which were hosted by Duncan Minor Baseball (2), Lambrick Park Baseball Academy (1) and the Greater Victoria Baseball Association (4) where we trained more than 150 students at levels 1 and 2. I would like to thank all the instructors that took the time to help with clinics this year, without your willingness to support the association with growing great umpires we would not be able to continue to increase our numbers in Area 1.

In 2019, we were excited to be able to connect with the Lambrick Park Baseball Academy where students from Grades 5 to 12 spend time each day training in both baseball and academics. Each student received 7 hours of umpire training, both practical and theory sessions. The sessions were an overall success and a good start in helping to recruit more umpires, during and after their playing days. It was also a great opportunity to help players understand the rules and the job that umpires have to do on the field. They gained a lot from having a different perspective and it was evident on the field throughout the season.

We are always in need of more umpires, especially at the Bantam level and above so please keep your eyes on the website in February and March of 2020 for clinic dates and times and pass this on to anyone you know that might be interested in being on the baseball field and earning some money over the spring and summer months.

Area 1 hosted two provincial tournaments this year. The Midget AAA Championships were hosted in Victoria at Lambrick Park, August 8-11 and were supervised by Chet Masse, Sean Sullivan and Scott Eckardt. Congratulations to the umpires that were selected to work the tournament, Nick Moore from area 2 and Cory Waters, Kyle Yee, Jared Roberts, Tyler Armstrong, and Amaan Makhani from Area 1, rounding out an all island crew. The Pee Wee AAA championship was hosted by the Victoria Mavericks at Lambrick Park and was supervised by Chet Masse and Eric Rasmussen. Congratulations to those umpires selected to work this tournament, Neil Lundin, Cory Waters, Jeremy Allen, Patrick Fletcher, Mark Jarrett, Connor Beasley, Austin Hack, Joel Mavretic and Jared Mavretic. Both tournaments went very well from an umpiring perspective. Thank you to the supervisors who gave up their time to work with the umpires at these tournaments and provide invaluable feedback to these developing umpires. Provincial tournaments are the time of the year when umpires are able to get the most feedback in order to improve their game and practice in real time. If you are interested in getting to the next level of umpiring please take the time to apply for these tournaments in your area by May 31 of each year in order to be considered.

Finally, I want to thank all Area 1 umpires for all the hard work they put in this year on the field and wish everyone a good winter. Hope to see you all back on the field in 2020.

Addendum: Jon Hollett of Chemainus is the new Area 1 Rep as of this year's AGM.

I'm Jon Hollett and I look forward to being the new Area 1 rep. I have umpired for about 14 seasons both as a young kid and back as an adult after some time off. I'm a level 4 umpire located in Chemainus looking forward to help local UIC's in Area 1 with any support I can offer.

Area 2 – Vancouver Island North – Brad Jones Area Rep

As Fall comes to an end and the Winter Solstice is fast approaching, the 2019 baseball season has been a busy one for umpires on the North Island.

With a hard-core group of senior umpires, this season has been a trying one with many more games which in some cases overlapped each other, but the commitment of umpires, young and not so young, has been yeoman and their dedication and service should be applauded and thankfully noted.

In particular, North Island saw many of our area's finest step up in the last half of July and into the August long weekend to cover Provincial Zones and Play-downs.

As for the August long weekend, three Provincials in Nanaimo, Comox and Parksville stretched our ranks thin, but between grizzled veterans putting in heroic feats of endurance and young guns stepping up and showing what they have learned, the weekend finished with some weary bodies but satisfaction of a job well done.

Special kudos for Craig Bernes and Will Chambers for leading the crews for Provincials in Comox (Pee Wee AA) and Parksville (Mosquito AA) with the usual cohort of senior dudes putting long days of umpiring and mentoring in the August sun. In Parksville, David Wood, Jon McDowall, Lyle Lamont and Paul Hartley weaved their magic; while in Comox, Brad Smith, Mattias Smith, Spike Fraser, Ron Freeman and Brain Plante were energizer bunnies in umpire gear.

I would like to thank all of the umpires who in spite of their leader, made the Provincial in Nanaimo a smooth success. Special kudos to Don Smith, Jesse Ferguson and Nick Turnham for their long days and on-field leadership.

AREA 2 REPORT Continued...

Also, thanks to Finn and Rylan in Comox; Karole, Alex, Markus, Riley and Spencer in Parksville and Cole, Nikos, Shammie, Owen and Adam in Nanaimo for your hard work, being open to learn and keeping those old dogs on their toes.

A special highlight for me this year was a re-acquainting with an old friend after 30 years. When I was in my early 20s, I was lucky enough to do a Little League District tournament (back when Little League umpires didn't think twice about being BCBUA members). Roy Price from Chemainus joined us and I remember his mentoring of me back then. It was great to have Roy with us in Nanaimo this year during the Mosquito AAA Provincial and watching him work his magic again with our younger umpires. Thanks so much Roy.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the senior umpires who have been working on getting our mentorship program going on the North Island. This year proved more than anything that it cannot be done by one person. A successful mentoring program must have a senior team that works together in umpire development.

Special thanks to Jason Vance of Nanaimo, who tried by himself to train young umpires without any support. Hopefully, next year more people will step forward to help us cranky old dogfish.

Area 3—Lower Mainland East—Gary Webber Area Rep

Hello everyone, Hope you had a Good year. Area 3 Lower mainland east had a Great year. There was a total of 246, Down from 254 in 2018 Umpires Registered in Area 3 this year

Everything started well with 8 successful Level 1 and Level 2 Clinics. We had a total of 115 level 1 umpires take clinics and a total of 119 level 2 take clinics. This was down a little from last year but everyone had a great time and learned a lot. We had 304 Area 3 umpires take the on line exam tests and had 208 Pass. We can do a better job at the testing, but glad to see it is getting done.

This year under the, Guidance of the Provisional Supervisor we continued the program that had Level 4 umpires do 5 mentorships each at Local Associations and that went well. Thanks to all that helped out, Steve will glad it happened. Again this year I want to thank Rhonda Pauls and Gord McFarlane for all there great work on the Mentorship program. Umpiring in BC is getting better and better because of all the hard work.

During the year, Area 3 had 21 Tournament at the 7 Associations with all Umpires gaining experience from top to Bottom for all umpires rate ball being played.

Area 3 hosted 9 Provisional Championships where 42 Area 3 umpires provided their skills to make all very successful.

We had 6 umpires Receive National assignments Mike Green, Lane Yakmechuk, Craig Burt, and Gary Webber, Trevor Sharpe, Shawn Bird and 1 Umpires Received National Supervisor assignment, Steve Boutang from Abbotsford T-12.

All in all it was a Great year.

Area 4 - Lower Mainland West—Sean Weatherill Area Rep

Well it was a pleasure serving area 4 for the first year. It was a very busy and successful year for our members. Our members achieved great heights including gold medal games at national championships, prestigious assignments in the west coast league and Grand Forks International.

We hosted several tournaments including PBL and college prep final fours to name a few. There were some challenges but that comes with the job.

I hope to help grow our membership and the local associations. I look forward to another year at the service of area four.

Area 5—Lower Mainland South—John Pentland Area Rep

Not a lot to report from area 5 for this past year. Associations in our area hosted many tournaments throughout the year as well as provincial tournaments.

All associations hosted clinics in 2019 and it appears that the associations are complying with officials being members of the BCBUA, based on lists that were supplied by the association to me in May. Some of our associations will need to address clinic locations for 2020 to ensure they are of adequate size for our clinic needs.

Many of our associations are having difficulties in getting umpires for all games. A big thank you goes out to those that allocate games and work with our members in being the go-between of the demand and supply. Our goal for next year will be to attract and retain umpires. Even though some of the area 5 associations pay a pretty good rate, it is still tough filling all positions.

Area 5 provided a number of umpires to the John Main tournament in Richmond in 2019 and Ladner's Jackson Bakker was recognized and awarded the gold medal plate assignment. A tough decision, with many others proving to be dedicated and willing to advance.

Our area also had keen interest in the Super Clinic as well as having a couple of umpires take the Advanced Clinic in Kamloops.

Cloverdale continues to be a leader in mentorships and I encourage others to advance in this area as well. North Delta is well on their way in this area as well.

Tsawwassen Baseball and Ladner Minor Baseball will have a single Umpire-in-Chief for 2020 and clinics, training and mentorship will be consolidated as best as possible. The South Delta associations have utilized the same allocator for a number of years and umpires work games for both associations seamlessly.

Area 7—Okanagan—Kevin Burk Area Rep

There was a lot of change in the Kelowna area last fall when our long time staple Darcy Rysz decided to step down as President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer, Area Rep, Assignor, Equipment Manager and Valley of Champion Coordinator for the Central Okanagan Baseball Umpire Association (COBUA). With that many had to step up and COBUA found this to be a year of transition. Everyone has been learning their new roles and wondering how Darcy seemed to handle it all and just knew what to do. Darcy, Thank You for continuing to help, mentor and support us throughout this transition.

The biggest hurdle that hit our Area was the large decline in the number of umpires, 26 in total for the Okanagan. Every year there is a shuffle, some umpires leave to take on better paying jobs but then new umpires get into the game evening this out, however this year there was a drop of registered umpires from 180 in 2018 compared to only 154 registered in 2019. I'm left scratching my head as we held 2 additional clinics, one in Penticton and another in Salmon Arm, to address our needs. I will be reaching out to our UIC's to discuss and come up with a game plan to address this shortfall.

We continue to address the mentorship of our younger umpires and this was validated with several emails received from visiting teams congratulating our program after seeing older umpires working with one or two younger umpires in games and tournaments and further commenting on the overall quality of our younger umpires. Thank you to our UIC's and mentors for helping to continue this growth.

Lets continue our growth and identify where we need to improve.

Thank you for everyone's continuing support of the BCBUA.

Area 8—Kootenays—Bill MacMillan Area Rep

2019 was a good year for the umpires in the Kootenays. We saw the majority of the games worked by our younger officials which gave us old guys some time off. We worked our regular house ball, American Legion and Senior Men along with Little League.

For special events we had 4 combined Level 1 and Level 2 clinics and we used a 13U tournament in Cranbrook as a sort of umpire academy. Next year we hope to formalize this a little bit and provide a wider range of instruction....a work in progress. We will keep you updated about progress..

We also hosted the Senior Provincials in Trail in 2019. Everyone had a great tournament and we all survived the few bugs that were around. The baseball was great and the dark horse team from Kamloops won it.

I want to thank all of our young umpires who worked so hard and improved so much for their efforts this year. A special thanks to Kelly Hunter in Cranbrook for all her mentoring and to Shawna Stahl for ongoing efforts on our behalf

I am looking forward to serving Area 9 on the BCBUA board as the new Northern BC Area Rep.

I currently reside in Prince George, and have been umpiring on and off since I was 12 years old, and for the past 5 seasons. I am looking forward to working with the young umpires in the northern areas, focusing on development and fun, but also the family aspect of umpiring. Together we will work hard to enjoy going to the field and looking to improve each game. I can't wait to step on the field with you all.

I would also like to thank the outgoing Area Rep Matt Lowndes for his years of service and I look forward to having him as my assistant going forward.

BCBUA HAS A NEW WEBPAGE

We invite you all to check out the new front page on our BCBUA Website. The site is being enhanced to include a bunch of new features, including more relevant information for instructors. There will also be an upgraded look and feel. Check it out. We're still at www.bcbua.ca



The old “good ump, bad ump” ploy.



ABOVE: Gord McFarlane getting low to see the pitch through the key-hole. BELOW: Mark Penner makes lineup changes.





Perfect Set Positioning.... ABOVE-Michael Yamaguchi, and BELOW – Les Maerov at 1st base





ABOVE – Wes Fung demonstrates the signal for a potential “Time Play”. BELOW – Luke Yam shows great head height .



WHAT'S NEW AT THE ZOO ??



Big changes at the 2019 AGM!! We have a new President and Treasurer, the Level 3 stuff has changed....again, and Baseball Canada has become more prominent in our lives. Lots'a stuff.

Let's look at these one at a time. Dudley-Do-Right, our President, decided not to run for re-election and because there was only one nomination for his replacement....Congratulations to Rona Mona our new President and Leader and an excellent choice to herd us going forward. Dudley will stay on our board as the Past President for 2 years (another big change, term limit for PP) to keep us all on the straight and narrow.

Rick the Stik also declined to return as the money guy so we had to go all the way to the Great Western Land to find a replacement. We came up with Jared from the Island to take over as the Head Bean Counter...welcome Jared.

Level 3 Stuff.....my personal favorite,,, has changed back to what it was before. What was old is new again. The requirements to achieve a Level 3 Certification remain the same. You must be a member in good standing of the BCBUA, you must be a Level 2 umpire, you must attend an Advanced Clinic every 3 years, you must pass a Field Evaluation on both Plate and Bases (2 umpire system) every 3 years and you must write and pass the online Level 3 exam each year. Both the Advanced Clinic and Field Evaluation are good for 3 years so if you do one or the other (or both) before the 3 year maximum they reset for 3 years from that time.

That's the Old so what is the New? The new is that there are no more grandfathered Level 3 umpires in BC. As of January 1, 2020 in order to be a Level 3 you must maintain ALL of the requirements. The most common sticking point is the failure to write and pass the exam **EACH YEAR**. Why did we make this change? Mostly because we have negotiated a Premium Game Fee for Level 3 and above at all the Provincial Tournaments we allocate. It seemed unfair to pay the Premium to umpires that put no effort into maintaining their qualification.

Those former grandfathered umpires who do not choose to continue as Level 3 will revert to Level 2 umpires. No one who reaches Level 2 may be dropped any lower.

That leaves Baseball Canada. The 2020 Level 3 exam will be found on the Baseball Canada (BBC) website. All you need to do is go to Baseball Canada.ca and create a profile. This will then gain you access to the BBC Repository of information which includes videos, rules and interpretations, mechanics manuals and much more. It also gives you access to the Level 3 exam. The only difference in this exam as compared to ours (the question bank is the same) is that you only get 1 chance to pass. So.....access your exam, mark any answer you wish for each question, save it and print it off. **DO NOT SUBMIT IT AT THIS TIME!!** Then you get into the books, find the right answers, go back to the online exam and put in the correct answers, then submit the exam. You will be told immediately how you did. All of this is absolutely FREE!! There is no Baseball Canada registration fee until you reach Level 4.

Level 4 and 5.....HMMMMMMMM. Anybody can read the Financial Statement filed at the AGM (page 6 of this edition). If you do you will see a significant amount of money spent on National Umpires. Why? What do they do, anyway? Well, let's see. National Umpires are the cheese that binds the soufflé. They are the umpires that perform the majority of the instruction at Clinics (79 clinics this year), they perform the majority of the mentorships and evaluations (over 400 this year), there are only 2 non National Umpires on the BCBUA Executive and the National Umpires do the majority of the behind the scenes committee work that makes our Association the envy of every other Province in the country.

Eager Beaver continued...

In order to maintain their National Rating they must attend the National Clinic each year (at a cost of approximately \$350 each), write the National Exam, perform at least 4 Mentorships of one kind or another, pay \$50 into the National Travel fund each year and otherwise participate in the business of the BCBUA or local baseball organizations. All of this is done by only 40 National Umpires, while working their regular games and various tournaments across the Province.

So, Yes the Nationals get a few perks but all of them are richly deserved and anybody can be a National Umpire if they have a little talent and are willing to put in the years of work and training that is required.

The 2020 Level 3 and above clinics will be:

National Clinic in Kamloops (invite only)	April 2-5
Umpire Academy in Kamloops (invite only)	April 17-19
High Level Clinic (with MLB instructor) in Abbotsford	Feb 2-3
Level 3 Advanced Clinic in Kelowna	dates TBA

Those are the highlights from the 2019 BCBUA AGM and the cabal of big thinkers. See you around the diamond.

Eager Beaver

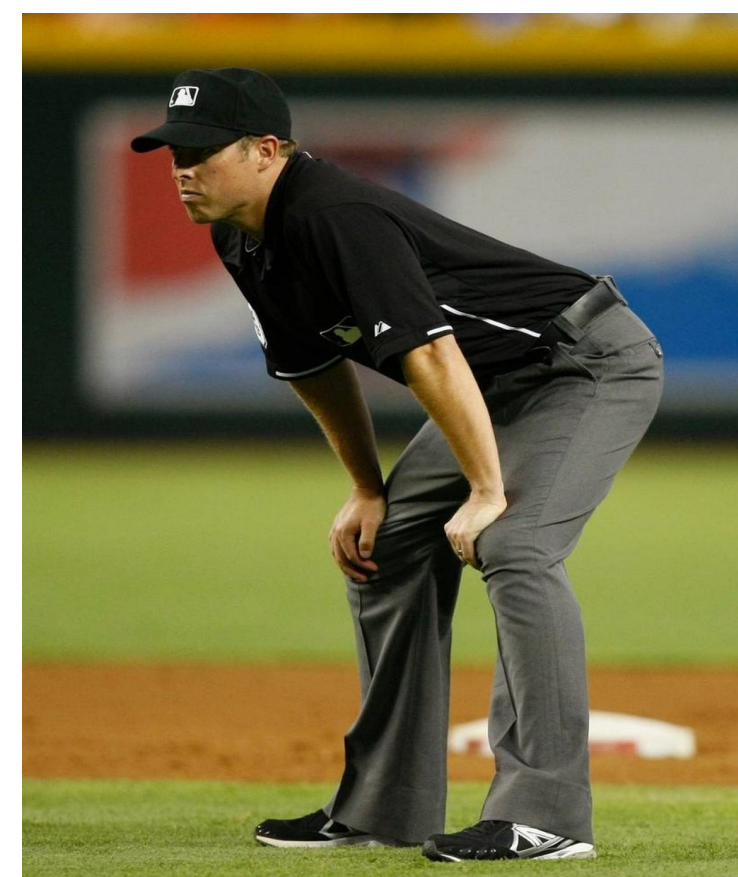
Intrepid reporter for HeyBlue!

CONGRATS GUYS!

The BCBUA is proud of our friends Mike Muchlinski and Tripp Gibson who both were selected to umpire in the recently concluded MLB Playoffs.

Gibson was part of the National League Divisional Series with Washington and the LA Dodgers while Muchlinski served as part of the National League Championship Series between Washington and St. Louis including working Game 1 behind the Plate.

Both of these amazing individuals have been guest instructors at BCBUA clinics in the past. Congrats from all of us!





ABOVE – This is what a plate meeting should look like. Plate Umpire Bruce Kristinson takes lineup cards from each manager, while base umpires Tyler Pentland and Gord McFarlane look on from the other side of the plate.



Base Umpires must be agile and alert for throws that pull the first baseman off the bag. Here Tyler Pentland demonstrates excellent movement in reacting to a poor throw by getting a different angle and then moving with chest towards the ball.

Baseball Canada Convention – 2019

Recently, the Annual Baseball Canada Fall Convention took place in Mont St Ann, Quebec where BCBUA was represented by Steve Boutang and Rhonda Pauls. Both gave presentations on programs in BC that are being copied across the country. BCBUA received accolades all weekend as a top level program in the country.

Several days of meetings gave participants and opportunity to hear from the National Umpire Committee on the project work that has taken place this summer since our last meeting. Education continues to be at the centerpiece of it all. Work is being done at a tremendous pace to get the new Baseball Canada Umpire website portal up and running. The site is already up, and material is being loaded almost daily. There will be educational materials available, video chats about rules (vlogs), fun facts, information on how to reach your goals, and much, much more. There has been a new social media presence launched. This committee, along with various members across the country, have been working diligently to produce a world class umpire learning center which will be available to all umpires eventually. For starters, the level 3-4-5 umpires who register on the site (free) will have first access to that material.

I should also note that Baseball Canada has made a \$150,000 commitment to the Umpire Development Program over the next 3 years to help build all these great tools for umpires!

There were other workshops during the weekend outside the umpire meetings which were attended. The Toronto Blue Jays administration was on hand to talk about T12 and the Honda Supercamps. National Championships logistics were discussed. Hosts were set for the 2020 and 2021 Nationals as well (none in BC).

The snowy weekend culminated in the Baseball Canada/Baseball Quebec Awards ceremonies. The Dick Willis Award for the National Umpire of the Year was presented to Saskatchewan's Trevor Drury for his years of work off the field as well as his numerous International assignments representing Canada. This year Drury supervised at the Sr Women's Invitational as well as worked the Gold Medal Game at the Jr Mens Championships in Gatineau, Qc.

The Lifetime Achievement Award in Umpiring went to fellow Saskatchewan native Rocky Nickel of Moose Jaw Where is Moose Jaw you ask? Get Manitoba's Ron Shewchuk to tell you.....

Anyway, Rocky is a lifelong Baseball Canada leader who umpired many National and International tournaments in his day... but he has been best known for his thousands of hours of contributions behind the scenes... As Provincial Supervisor in Saskatchewan, as the Assistant Supervisor of Umpires for Baseball Canada, Supervising at National Championships, Instructing at Caravans across the country, among many other endeavours.

There are not two more deserving recipients of those awards and BCBUA Congratulates both of you fine men!



BCBUA SUPPORTS UMPS CARE CHARITIES

BCBUA's leadership team of Steve Boutang, Sean Sullivan, Rhonda Pauls, and Scott Eckardt took part in this summer's All Star Charity Golf Classic in Marysville, Washington. The event was put on by MLB umpires in support of their Charity called Umps Care. Money raised went towards providing sick children with gifts, baseball tickets, etc from the MLB Umpire group who reach out through hospital visits each baseball season. The BCBUA is so pleased to be able to contribute to such a worthwhile cause.



"OH STOP, HAROLD! YOU'RE HAVING AN ARGUMENT AT HOME, NOT AT THE BALL PARK!"

**Some of our finest young umpires
hard at work!**



GROWING GREAT UMPIRES!

GEARHEADS – For Those Who Can't Get Enough

By Brad Jones

In this installment of GearHeads, we will be looking at Japanese manufacturers, Mizuno, Belgard and SSK and how they offer a classic, customized and quality line of umpire products.

This year, my first Christmas day was in the middle of June. My Santa was myself, but my present did not come from the North Pole, but Japan. Oh, and I have something to admit – I am a Mizuno junkie and jump at anything else different and innovative from Japan.

It all starts with my protective gear. While my mask is a +Pos mask with a visor, I put in a pair of Belgard, the Rolls Royce of Japanese umpire gear, two-tone PU leather pads on it. I have taken a couple of shots from it in a men's league contest and they definitely passed the test.

Even I cannot afford a Mizuno Pro Titanium mask or chest protector. And don't even talk about the Belgard chest protectors, which are probably close to \$1000 Canadian by the time you got them home. (pictured below)

However, with some saving, My Christmas in June present did include a nice pair of Mizuno Pro shin guards.

The nice thing about these shin guards is that while they are double knee, the top protective pad can be detached by the two snaps connecting it to the main guards. The shin guards are low profile, even with the double knee and have 4 non-rusting plastic buckles to make sure the guards never have rust or stain. With a set of Umplife shin guard harnesses waiting to be attached, these pads have been the highlight of my gearhead season.

Moreover, the shin guards are not the only Mizuno equipment or apparel that came this June-mas; also, I added a Mizuno turtleneck undershirt to test with my plate assignments. I found that it was a little hot in July, but did protect my neck from any chafing caused by my chest protector.

Thus, with my Mizuno purchases for this year, I can add them to my Mizuno belts, socks, plate shoes, base shoes, compression shorts, indicator, back up lineup card holder and second mask.

For those of you who are interested in looking at what Japan has to offer in umpire equipment, apparel and accessories, you can check ebay or better, register online for access to Samurai Gears (www.samuraigears.com). Be aware to access the web site you have to create an account and sign in.

The web store is ran by So Yamauchi, who went to the US and graduated from the MiLB Umpire Academy in 2015 and umpired in Gulf Coast League and New York Penn League for two years. Now, he sells Japanese umpire gear to the United States online. His customer service is fantastic with handwritten notes in English thanking you of your purchase. While he does charge in US dollars, the shipping is not much different from ordering from the States, both in cost and in time.

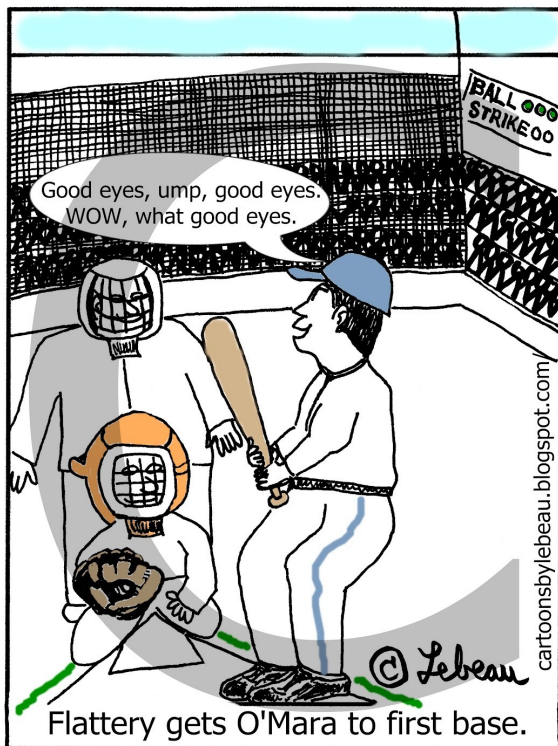
He offers access to Mizuno, Belgard and SSK products which when surfing his online catalogue makes you stop and think: "hey that might work."

Whether it be the SSK five-toed socks to the Mizuno leg warmers, or the SSK ball bags to the Mizuno gold buckle belts, or if you just won the lottery, customize yourself a Belgard "Masterpiece" chest protector. What you have to remember with Belgard is you are paying for the handcrafted work that goes into each piece.

For an affordable option, the SSK gear really takes you out of the box of what gear should look like. The SSK plate shoes look like something out of a Godzilla movie with the horned metatarsal cap. The SSK shin guards are low profile and a little more financially digestible than their Mizuno counterparts. The SSK ball bags are water-proof, and gusseted and while \$42 US, they hold more baseballs and have PU leather on the inside to keep your balls (baseballs) dry.

So is the best place for a one-stop shop of Japanese umpire gear, but ebay also will give you access to Japanese gear, including Mizuno and SSK gear.





CONTACT US

BCBUA Secretary
400-1681 Chestnut Street
Vancouver, BC
V6J 4M6



The BCBUA would like to wish a very Merry Christmas to you and your families. Safe holidays, and a Happy and Prosperous New Year! See you all on the field in 2020!