

HeyBlue! Online

THE CORONAVIRUS EDITION— PART DEUX

FEBRUARY 2022



2022 SEASON ON THE HORIZON

Editorial Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed by our contributors are their own, and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of BCBUA, its directors or officers.

Ya Ya, I know... we said this last year at this time... “We are looking forward to the season ahead”. Of course 2021 was not much better than 2020 was. And as of this writing, things look very murky again for 2022 with the onslaught of the Omicron Variant of Covid-19.

But let’s remain positive. Hospitalizations and deaths have not exponentially increased like the case load has, vaccines and boosters are readily available, and some of the restrictions are keeping people safer than in the early stages of this pandemic. We are all hopeful the end is nearing, although nobody seems to know when.

There is, however, every reason to believe that we will be able to have a relatively normal (pre Covid life) baseball season with a few modifications here and there.

Things could change on a dime—positively or negatively. But what it means for baseball is that we are planning for a regular baseball season, with some limits. Those limits are yet to be determined, and will be fluid as the situation changes. But planning is underway for a clinic season (which may look different depending where you live) and a baseball season on the field, which we are all so eager to get back to.

Steve Boutang—Editor



AGM Report

The virtual AGM took place in December. If you are a BCBUA member in good standing you will have access to the reports through the web portal. We will be having a 2nd Special AGM to adopt the financials sometime in short order. We apologize for the inconvenience to our membership.

Committee and department reports will be available elsewhere in this issue.

Elections took place at the AGM as per the bylaws. The following people were elected to the board.

Rhonda Pauls—President

Jim Van Meer—Treasurer

Jakob Goba—Area 1 Director

John Pentland—Area 5 Director

Blaise Laveay—Area 6 Director (appointed)

Kevin Burk—Area 7 Director

Trevor Stoyko—Area 8 Director

Kyle Anderson—Area 9 Director

The remainder of the executive remained unchanged as they enter their 2nd year of 2 year terms. The full listing is on our website.

BCBUA AWARD WINNERS

DOUG HUDLIN
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE –
Les Maerov

ABE SHAPIRO MENTORSHIP
AWARD – **Joe Mallinson**

GEORGE CONNELLY
BUILDERS AWARD –
Rhonda Pauls

RICHARD CHRISTIE AWARD
– UNSUNG HERO—
Mark Luknowsky

CHUCK BLAIKIE AWARD –
OUTSTANDING
CONTRIBUTION—
John Pentland

HOWARD CHAPMAN SR.
UMPIRE OF THE YEAR—

Scott Eckardt

IAN LAMPLUGH AWARD—
UP AND COMING UMPIRE—
Matthias Smith

FEMALE UMPIRE OF THE
YEAR– **Victoria Ross**

BILL MURPHY AWARD—
MOST IMPROVED UMPIRE
Craig Burt

(Jr UmpireWinners on page 4)

Photos and write-ups on the
individual winners are
available for viewing on the
BCBUA website. Check it out!
Congratulations to all the
recipients!



Secretary's Report—2021

By Les Maerov

Total Membership for 2021 was — 878, a decrease from the total of 1331 in 2020. The vast majority of the drop off came from the level 1 entry level umpires and from adults who chose not to renew.

It is worth noting that Nationally, there was a drop in Umpire Registration to the tune of 33% in all provinces. So we were not alone.

There were a total of 32 clinics completed for level 1 and 2 in one form or another... either in person or online. There was an online Superclinic completed over 7 dates. The National clinic, and Umpire Academy were cancelled.

TREASURER'sREPORT—2021 *Financial Period Ended September 30*

Total overall cash position of BCBUA:

\$112,935.00

The board is pleased to report a healthy cash position at this time. Monies were allocated to various projects for the 2022 season including a rebate in membership dues for returning BCBUA members. Check out information about this later in this edition!



FROM THE OVAL OFFICE

-Madame President's Report

The 2021 season may not have met all our expectations, but we are certainly proud of the members who came out, took their online training, and made the most of whatever opportunities they could - whenever they could!

Although it may look like we struggled through another pandemic year with less-than-we-needed officials, we need to celebrate the fact that just over half of our members DID come out and work hard to stay in the game despite all the challenges and hoops they had to jump through! In a time when we are surrounded by discouraging news and the negative impacts of this pandemic - let us celebrate those who persevered through challenging board work, instruction in a new way, learning in a new way, officiating under protocols and accommodations, and know that thanks to us, the game we love was better because we did.

We know things are different now. We understand everyone had to make hard decisions and do the best they could, and we respect that. Our association did so much more than "ride out this storm", we rose to the challenge and were a leader in Canada in baseball officials' development despite everything that life threw at us. In speaking with other sport organizations, many others did not fare so well. This organization is truly made up of dedicated and innovative people who are willing to do whatever it takes to ensure our organization would come of this pandemic strong and in good shape moving forward.



BCBUA President Rhonda Pauls

You will hear and read reports of things that should lift your spirits and motivate you to do what you can to ensure that we are ready to hit the ground running next spring when the fields open. Things like a strong financial position, a nationally recognized education program, leadership that took on You will hear and read reports of things that should lift your spirits and motivate you to do what you can to ensure that we are ready to hit the ground running next spring when the fields open. Things like a strong financial position, a nationally recognized education program, leadership that took on supporting other provinces who were not able to adapt as quickly and effectively as we did, forward thinking resource creation to ensure our members have the support they need coming out of the

pandemic with new challenges, and most importantly a determination to continue building up our membership with professionalism, a culture of care, and a sense of family in how we treat our members.

Baseball Canada has set a goal in its strategic plan to implement all of the Safe Sport recommendations in the next couple years. Many of these changes have already been happening. A very important aspect of these changes is through new and revised policies that look to better protect our youth, and guide our operational practices to ensure we are all providing equitable, inclusive and safe programming for everyone. Baseball BC took a proactive role in this aspect and has over the last year created (with our involvement and feedback) an extensive framework of policies that the BCBUA will now be able to adapt and adopt as our own. We want to thank Baseball BC and the leadership of David Laing for doing this important work for our members.

Continued next page.....

Our Return to Play committee led by Kyle Anderson was instrumental in ensuring that our members had the most up to date protocols for whatever the PSO set as the standard from the PHO. This committee never imagined in March of 2020 that it would still be doing this ongoing work – but they did, and we owe them our thanks for their effective and comprehensive leadership in this area.

New work evolved this year on a project we are calling the “Talk Team”. It surfaced as a response to the growing concern globally and need within the umpire family for mental health supports.

The work is not yet complete, but I can tell you that the end-goal is to have resources both in person and digitally to ensure that any one of our members who needs to know where to get help when they need it, or just needs someone to talk to in a challenging time, will have access to both through this project .



We are passionate about treating our members as a whole person – not just the technical aspects we address on the field.

As my final thought I want to thank our BCBUA BOD for all the time and energy they have put into this past year. Many of these people have gone above and beyond to ensure our organization remained viable through this ongoing trial of pandemic adjustments. They inspire me to work my hardest and bring my best to what I do. It is a privilege to serve our members with this team.

All of this is respectfully submitted by your most thankful and proud president.... Rhonda

SPECIAL AGM NEEDED!

Due to unforeseen circumstances the BCBUA was unable to complete our Financial Reports in time for the AGM which was held in December. As a result, we are required to hold a Special AGM for the membership to review the financials and have an opportunity to question the board about them. This Special AGM will take place virtually. Watch for the date which will be posted on the BCBUA website! You will need to register ahead of time to attend.



JR UMPIRE WINNERS—2021

Area 1—Vancouver Island South- **Lane Huggins**

Area 2- Vancouver Island North—**Jayden Moore**

Area 3-Lower Mainland East—**Aden Chorer**

Area 5-Lower Mainland South—**Bryce Dobbs-Cox**

Area 6-Thompson—**Austen Johansen**

Area 7- Okanagan—**Tyler Messing**

Area 9-Northern BC—**Ezra Peters**



GEARHEADS—

For Those Who Can't Get Enough By Brad Jones

Out of all the things to gear up on as the heat dome hit the province this summer, this 'Head was drawn to finding the best undershirt for the heat.

Yes, I tested two types of cooling skull caps (Umplife skull cap and McDavid skull cap) and found that I liked the McDavid's better. I found it kept cool longer and fit my head better. The final conclusion, however, of wearing a skull cap under my black cap is that with the heat was so bad in late June, the cool skull cap did not significantly change the effects of heat exhaustion.

During this time, I came to the conclusion (yes, it took me that long) that synthetic cool-max style shirts get as drenched as cotton and natural fibres. To this, I find with some synthetic shirts, they stick to your body so bad it is hard to take them off after a game.

I started the season with an Adidas Climalite and SAXX Aerator undershirts for the heat. I was leaning to the SAXX as I have moved to using SAXX Kinetic Long Boxer Brief as my compression shorts. Liking the Aerator, I looked for a second one and the local store finally got their new SAXX summer selection in May, only to find SAXX had stopped producing the true black shirt and moved to a two-toned dark charcoal shirt that is classified as black. The new product felt a little more starchy and not silky like the previous model.



Continued below...

Thus, my quest for an alternative began. My search led me to two Canadian online companies that offered some alternatives.

First, United Sports Brands (unitedsportsbrands.ca) is an online company that sells Nathan, McDavid and Shock Doctor products. USB is the place I purchased my McDavid skull caps and I wanted to see if the Nathan shirts would be a step up from the SAXX. The Nathan Rise short-sleeve shirt felt more comfortable than the newer SAXX, but is only true black in the back core of the shirt. The colour of the rest of the shirt is a very dark charcoal that is passing for their classification for black.



The Nathan Rise (left) and the SAXX Aerator (right) short-sleeve t-shirts

GEARHEADS—cont.

The Nathan, like the Adidas and SAXX, absorbed the moisture and kept it on your skin, but did not noticeably reduce the body heat while out on the field.

As the season moved to the fall, I moved back to wondering about natural fibre for next year. This speculation turned my look to a company, Liberty Clothing, I have used to purchase face masks.

Liberty (libertyclothing.com) produces a hemp/cotton Carr t-shirt that is comfortable and airy. Yes, I know, sounds like some hippie-dippie tie-dyed option, but given the synthetic options, a comfortable light natural fabric might be a better option.

Yes, I have stayed away from the UA shirts, just something that does not tweek my interest. However, UA along with New Balance do offer some options for those days of July.

UA's HeatGear Short Sleeve Compression Shirt is a true black synthetic that is the preferred choice for many umpires.

New Balance has a compression short sleeve turtleneck, but what I found with wearing a similar product (Mizuno mock turtle-neck) is that they are great if you are experiencing chaffing from your chest protector. However, a short sleeve turtleneck, even one synthetic, does not really work is lowering your body temperature. A sleek, thin turtleneck is not the best option when dealing with the heat.



NEW WEST VEST!!!!

Yes Folks, they are finally here.

After years and years of standing pat with old technology, Wilson has released two new Gold chest protectors, or the next in line of their Gold West Vest product line.

The two second-generation WV Gold Pro, Air Management and Memory Foam, attempt to deal with the two shortcomings of the existing West Vest models, namely the nostalgic protective padding and the lack of heat dispersion.

Gearheads continued....



The Wilson WV Gold Pro Memory Foam (left) and



WV Air Management (right)

GEARHEADS—cont.

The Memory Foam model finally changes the foam used from traditional furniture foam to the use of memory foam that will give the new CP a lower profile under your shirt or jacket. However, it will be seen if this model challenges the best modification of the West Vest by Team Wendy.

The TW mod Gold are one of the most coveted CPs out there, especially since Team Wendy stopped doing the CP mods to chest protectors 3 years ago. Most umpires holding on to these treasures will wait until the jury is out before moving to something new.

The MF Gold has a sporty charcoal pad that looks to be a drawing point to umpires who want a different look of their CP. While the Air Management model boast a trifecta of being lightweight, better air flow, and protection.

Both Gold 2.0 come in 11", 12" and 13" length models, contain hinged shoulder plates to balance movement and protection, and include reinforced side rib pads for extra protection.

However, what may be the best improvement for this model is the use of Fidlock magnetic buckles that are easier to connect and separate than the old plastic airloc buckles.

While Wilson has attempted to improve their harness with a neoprene 4-point triangle harness, I would still recommend slapping an Ump Life CP harness on it to really maximize the upper chest protection.

These models are not on the market yet, so you will have to wait until the early part of 2022. Some outlets are taking pre-orders for these second-edition CPs.



**BCBUA Umpires (left to right)
Kevin Burk, Tyler Pentland, and
Blaise Laveay**



Prince George Umpire Tom Stephenson

BCBUA PIONEERS PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR UMPIRES

This past year saw the formation and development of the Safe Sport Committee within the BCBUA with an overarching objective of supporting the safety and well-being of our officials and two major factors have led to its creation.

The first is the quickly changing landscape of our society at large, and more specifically, the culture around minor sports particularly as it relates to the health and wellness of its participants; with an ever-increasing focus on mental health. Issues surrounding harassment and bullying, maltreatment, and negligence have all found their way into the court systems and larger organizations are responding to these new precedents with systemic changes. In our neck of the woods, Via Sport and Baseball BC have been leading the charge, and this is now filtering down to us.

The second reason for the creation of this Committee was the growing number of BCBUA members both talking about and reaching out for support, particularly with respect to the mental toll the job can have. This need was magnified during this spring's clinic season where participants of the online Superclinic were asked about their mental challenges as related to officiating and the response was overwhelming. To many of us who have been in leadership roles for some time, these results simply corroborated what we have seen over the years with our officials, often reflected in registration and retention numbers.

To date, the Safe Sport Committee has been involved in reviewing many of Baseball BC's new policies to ensure the BCBUA's perspectives, concerns, and insights would be included in their development. Additionally, the committee is working on putting a wide array of resources together for our members including information on various mental health challenges and ways to manage/support them, community-based supports available by region, and a wide array of suggestions and strategies for handling baseball/umpire related challenges.

Extensive research, culminating in literally nothing tangible, has been the primary driving factor behind the Committee's largest initiative to date, the Talk Team. Once ready as a service for our members, the Talk Team will be a group of umpires from various regions in the province and of varying development levels as umpires who will be available to our members to act in a peer support fashion; to be an option for our members to reach out to, should they be struggling with either baseball or general life challenges.

Although there are currently no identifiable peer support programs for officials of any sport for us to model ours after, extensive research does show the value of these programs within organizations or groups. And given the nature of our role, we are often overlooked by others in the sport which then necessitates us looking inward to support our own already. In this respect, the Talk Team aims to continue and expand on this already ongoing practice.

As there are no models for us to follow, the Safe Sport Committee is working through several tasks related to the formation of the Talk Team including extensive training of and support for the members, the current and potential legal issues involved, and the involvement of specialists to both add validity and due diligence safeguards to the program. Ultimately, it is our objective to bring a functional, valuable, and safe service to all our members to aid in their well-being, and our retention of them in the rewarding role as an umpire. It is our hope to have this service ready for our members for the 2022 season.

We look forward to providing updates and the rollout of these resources and supports soon.

Bruce Kristinson - Chair, BCBUA Safe Sport Committee

Sean Sullivan, Will Chambers, Rhonda Pauls—Committee Members



MEET THE NEW BCBUA SOCIAL MEDIA GURU!

BCBUA would like to welcome our new Social Media Liaison Alex Sagert to the team! Alex is a longstanding member of the BCBUA family and recently stepped up to share his social media experience and enthusiasm for promoting all things umpiring with the rest of the baseball world. Welcome aboard Alex!

With Alex's addition, we bid a hearty thank you to outgoing Media whiz Sean Weatherhill who is pursuing academic priorities. Sean did great work the past few years in engaging and promoting our product to the baseball world and keeping everyone updated with the goings-on at BCBUA. Thanks again Sean for all your hard work!



Facebook: @BCUmpires



Twitter: @BCUmpires



Instagram: bcumpires

All of the BCBUA information can always be found on our website at www.bcbua.ca

"I look forward to keeping all the members of BCBUA updated throughout the season. Stay tuned for UIC Profile highlights and lots of fun and educational material in between. Have a favorite song that you listen to before a big game? email socialmedia@bcbua.ca to send us your favorite song and we will add it to our "BCBUA Pre Game Playlist". Simply search "BCBUA" on Spotify and add the playlist to your account to listen! I will be getting out to a lot of the fields this year and look forward to seeing you all in action!"

Alex



BCBUA Education Report

Rhonda Pauls-Chair

This was a very successful year for the BCBUA in terms of member engagement under pandemic conditions. The high level of commitment by the education team, the use of innovation and outside the box thinking partnered with umpires eager to hone their craft resulted in roughly 80% of our members attending one or more clinic this year.

Although we had done work to engage our members in 2020 by introducing online learning tools, the member response was very low, and the completion rates of self-directed learning left much to be desired. So, it was with much research and learning that we decided to engage a professional streaming software company to assist us with a more personal, engaging and completion-friendly online clinic structure in 2021.

With the help of HQ Enterprises, we were able to build a module-based learning platform with live instructors who engaged the members at each completion point. The instructors led discussions on the check-point questions that were required to move on and were able to complete the rules section of our clinics in a way that was accessible to everyone. Our completion data was stronger than what our research data led us to believe was a reasonable outcome. We were very pleased with the member effort!

The following on-line clinics/development sessions were conducted throughout the season:

- L1 online interactive (10 date options)
- L1 online self-directed (4 weeks option at end of clinic season)
- L2 online Defence interactive (10 date options)
- L2 online Defence self-directed (4 weeks option at end of clinic season)
- L3/SuperClinic/L4/L5 online streaming conference (7 date options)
- UIC Development Clinics – 2 sessions offered

The online content was developed to be completed in 4-4½ hours for each of the sessions. This year we included the L1 exam as part of the L1 clinic, so every member wrote the exam. L2, L3 and L4/5 exams were still held as an additional component outside the clinic content.

Our online platform was so engaging and innovative, we had 3 other provinces pay us a fee to allow their umpires to take their training along with the BCBUA umpires. This served to help out our neighboring umpire family as many did not have the capacity to generate their own content – while helping us offset the cost of creating and streaming these clinics. It really was a win-win.

The L3 – Superclinic L4/5 content was developed between the BCBUA and the Baseball Ontario Umpires Association and served as the only member created superclinic/national clinic to have all provinces participate. By all counts this Superclinic 2021 was an historical event and much appreciation came to the team who built the program. BC was a leader in Canada throughout this pandemic for the extraordinary work it did in member education. We have much to be proud of.

In addition to hosting multi-province online learning clinics, we also were able to host several in person clinics in the Okanagan late in the season as restrictions changed regionally around the province. This was a great learning opportunity for our members in Area 7 – and our instructional team in the Okanagan is to be commended for their dedication to their members by going this extra mile.

The following resources/services were created and made available to our members and UIC's:

- The bcbuaeducationportal.net which is now the hub for all our member resources and services.
- New UIC Resource Manual – developed as a hard resource for UIC's to help them navigate their role, responsibilities and build their leadership skills. (8 components)
- UIC PPT recordings of interactive presentations done with our UIC consortium
- UIC Mentorship teaming project– all new(er) UIC's were partnered with a veteran UIC for ongoing mentorship and support
- A complete live digital compilation of individual mechanics with verbal instructions

Education Report continued...

- A comprehensive live digital compilation of 2-umpire mechanics based on common scenarios and rule applications broken down into phases with closed captioning descriptors.
- Up to date Return to Play guidelines for every phase of pandemic protocols

In terms of Mentorships, we had 73 umpire development forms submitted online for “official” mentorships that were done, which included the work done at the John Main Tournament this year. In addition to these mentorships, many more were conducted by our committed UIC’s as they worked in person with our newest members at the association level on a daily basis. This grassroots work is critical to the success of our program, and I commend each and every member who took the time to work with a new or lesser experienced umpire to help them be better. This is truly the culture that prevails now – one where we give our time and take pride in seeing others succeed.

On top of everything else our team completed, the BCBUA Safe Sport committee (under the direction of Education) is also working on new content for our members around mental health, and additional resources and learning opportunities to support challenging game management situations at all levels.

The last comment I wish to make is that the BCBUA Education Team is truly a remarkable group of individuals who have done some very heavy lifting in member resources and services this past year – for each member of the team I am truly thankful, and I feel very privileged to have the best team in the country – and a Board who trusts and empowers us to do this work for our members.

REGISTRATION Plans for 2022

Ok, so what does Registration look like for 2022? One never knows what kind of twists and turns will take place with Covid 19 these days.

What we can tell you is that Registration was delayed at the start of January for several reasons.

First off, the BCBUA ran a significant surplus the past 2 years. Most notably the board of directors isn’t meeting face to face. That means no travel, hotels, etc. It also means a way larger time commitment from board members to give up many more nights to meet via Zoom instead. But that saved BCBUA a lot of money. Second, because of so many restrictions, we ran clinics virtually instead of in person. Virtual costs less money than in person. Third, we had very little baseball played. There were no championships, no National travel to pay for, and hardly any mentorship to speak of when comparing to a normal season.

The end result was that there was more money taken in than what it cost to run the association. Times 2 seasons of this nonsense.

That leaves a large surplus in the account.

Now, what will the board be doing for the benefit of members with the members money? First of all, the Board decided that an instant rebate could be applied to returning members for 2022. In short, **if you were a member in 2021** (and paid into our surplus) you get to receive a bonus this year. If you are a youth member (13U) your annual member dues of \$35 dollars will be rebated \$10 when you register for 2022. In English that means **returning** Youth members will pay \$25 in 2022. If you are 14 years or older and a member from 2021 and you register again in 2022, you get a \$20 instant rebate when you register. That means in essence you will pay \$45 for 2022. Make sense?

Good... now if you were a youth last year (13 years old) and in 2022 you are 14 when you register, then you will qualify for a \$20 rebate and you will pay \$45 total for 2022.

What was the holdup on the registration online? Simple. The registration website doesn’t accept such payment arrangements and we had to contract our software developer to write in the codes that would allow it. That’s the reason in a nutshell. If you can’t register yet, hold on and it will be ready to go within days.

These Instant Rebates are for **RETURNING MEMBERS ONLY**. The surplus belongs to the membership who built it. Nobody else. And as such, if you are brand new to the BCBUA program, you will be asked for \$35 if you are 12 or 13 years old, and \$65 if you are 14 and older. There are no discounts for senior citizen umpires. (Sorry Les.) But come to think of it, the Board would be interested in hearing from you if you are 65 or older and wanted to make a business case for such a program.

In conclusion. The BCBUA is happy to return a few bucks to existing members. And there will be more things announced in the coming months for our members as well. We thank you all for continuing to be BCBUA Members and supporting our umpire association!

Ejection & Discipline Report - 2021

Fellow baseball officials,

I'm sure I speak for many of us when I say that the 2021 season was the most difficult for officials in recent memory. The surprising thing about this was that it was not COVID which made it difficult, but the alarming amount of negative attitude shown towards officials during a season which was supposed to be about results not mattering and just getting people back on the field. All of this was coupled with a demand for officials for which there is clearly not enough supply to fulfill, particularly with so many of our adult umpires unable to participate for health reasons.

Below is a summary of reported ejections & incidents for this past season by level:

BC Minor – 60 (14 of which came at the U13 level or below)

PBL – 32 (15 Bantam PBL, 10 JrPBL, 7 SrPBL)

Sr, Jr, and College levels – 17

Total – 109

Note...Remember that the PBL specifically said that this was a non-competition year, so to have 32 ejections in this environment is truly amazing and disturbing.

Of the 109 reports, roughly 10-12 were “incident reports” making the ejection count approximately at 100 total.

17 of the ejections occurred when an umpire was working solo as a result of no other umpires being available. Apparently there wasn't much reason to cut the umpire some slack for being alone, and 17 people managed to misbehave enough to be ejected.

These numbers projected over a full season would have yielded close to our all-time high in ejections on their own. Part of this is because the behaviour and culture is not changing among game participants. However, another part of this is because officials as a whole are improving at learning not to quietly sit through abuse, and to eject participants for misbehavior.

We also have to consider that BCBUA membership was down 40% as a result of the pandemic, and we must wonder how many more ejections would have been reported had those members been umpiring as well. Many games occurred this year without umpires on them, leaving them effectively without any policing of in-game issues. Maybe the participants actually behaved themselves with nobody there to blame.

One particularly concerning trend was the uptick in ejections at the 11U level, where we have traditionally only had 1 or 2 per year, whereas this year we had multiple repeat offenders. The ejections at 13U, 11U and 9U almost exclusively occur as a result of adults abusing minors, and it is clear that BC Minor's Rule 13.11 is not being communicated or enforced in practice in those environments.

From the PBL's side, the concerning level is Bantam PBL where the combination of entry-level coaches, higher-level pay-for-play baseball and the accompanying parental pressure, as well as the use of developing umpires has created an adversarial environment which needs to be addressed by all parties. The BCBUA will be looking at more positive environments for its developing umpires to work in the future.

As we all know, the situation with the number of available officials can now be described as a crisis. In fact, Baseball Canada used that exact wording in their recent workshops. Some leagues have reacted by putting only 1 umpire on the field just to have someone on the game. While this is still not a mainstream occurrence yet, it's very interesting to see that roughly 20% of the reported ejections occurred with only 1 official on the field, which is very disproportionate to the number of games occurring with 1 umpire.

In short: we have some early data to suggest that in games where the teams care about winning, that putting 1 umpire on the field will lead to greater conflict & more unsportsmanlike behaviour, meaning that more ejections will likely occur.

I would suggest to any allocators reading this that you strongly consider not scheduling 1-umpire crews as this does not put officials in a position to succeed or grow their skill sets. It will likely result in more conflict, and does not give the umpire the opportunity to have their partner defuse heated situations where coaches & players are mad at the only person who is there for them to target with their venting. We wouldn't ask teams to play without a shortstop or center fielder; they could but it would be way too difficult in practice. Putting only 1 umpire on a game yields a similar challenge & result for us. But again, the participants don't see it that way for some reason.

Finally, with respect to the discipline aspect of this exercise, as with prior years this was very much “1 step forward, 1 step back” in practice. While I am not at liberty to discuss any specific situations, I can tell you that the different member organizations have vastly different approaches, different thresholds for misbehaviour & different mentalities to BCBUA's role in discipline & sharing results.

One of the most frustrating situations for me is to have a UIC or parent, especially when a minor is involved, ask me if the abuse their son or daughter received while umpiring is being reviewed or taken seriously. I cannot honestly answer “yes” to that question today in many cases, and as a sport we need to do better than that.

Ejection Report continued...

To that end, I'm hoping that our partner leagues and the PSO will update their mentalities this off-season to recognize that BCBUA is a partner organization, not an adversary. They need to truly understand that Umpires are the 3rd team on the field, not just a necessary evil. And that we need some amount of information sharing from them, at a minimum, on those serious incidents in order to reassure our members (and parents in the case of minors) that we are actively promoting a Safe Sport environment for all participants. And to show our members that we are not just hiding behind words & policies which are not being backed up with meaningful action.

Phil Bourgeois BCBUA Ejection Liaison



BCBUA Level 3 Report

By Kyle Anderson—Level 3 Co-ordinator

The BCBUA Level 3 Program has seen some changes during the pandemic, with minimal games, no championships, and limited opportunities for evaluations. The good news for those in the program, is there's no penalty for missing an exam, and no expiration on field evaluations or clinics for the 2020 and 2021 season.

That said, current Level 3's need to have:

- Paid their membership dues in 2020
- Exams written in 2017, 2018, and 2019
- Attended an Advanced Clinic in either 2017, 2018, 2019, or the High Level Clinic in February 2020
- Received a positive field evaluation on both plate and base in 2017, 2018, OR 2019

Current Numbers

There are currently 28 Level 3 Umpires in British Columbia that meet the criteria above. There is also upwards of 100 officials who have some of the requirements complete, which leads to the changes that have been made.

Baseball Canada Level 3 Program (for those who are CURRENTLY level 3's)

BCBUA has moved to the Baseball Canada Level 3 Model which rolled out this year with Virtual Super Clinic across the country.

Attendance at the Super Clinic was the Year 1 Requirement for Baseball Canada, and it is now a 3-year program to reach full Level 3 Status. There are different requirements to complete each year. See the next page for those requirements.

Level 3 Program Continued...

Baseball Canada Level 3 Program

Three national Requirements over Three years (and 1 provincial requirement)

§ Clinic Year

§ Professional Development (Module) Year

§ Exam Year

And.....

§ L3 Field evaluation (this is a BCBUA requirement ONLY and can be arranged through your L3 co-ordinator)

Clinic Year – 2021

§ Attendance is mandatory to maintain Level 3 Certification Nationally.

§ Clinics may still be offered Provincially in any year, perhaps in 2023 if demand warrants it.

Professional Development (Module) Year – 2022

§ Baseball Canada has developed Modules designed for Professional Development.

§ During the module year, umpires are REQUIRED to complete a minimum number of modules.

§ Umpires may take more modules than required.

§ Umpires may take modules during NON-REQUIRED year for Professional Development.

Exam Year – 2023

§ Baseball Canada REQUIRES a Level 3 Exam to be written and passed during a given EXAM YEAR.

§ Exams are only written once every 3 years once you qualify as a level 3.

§ Next Exam Year for current level 3's is 2023.

NOTE: Anyone NEW to the L3 program can access the exam, modules, evaluations, and any provincial super clinic being offered in any given year until they are caught up with the national rotation. Please contact the L3 chair to find out more.

The BCBUA will continue to work on parameters and guidelines for our Level 3 Umpires and Level 3 hopefuls. It is the goal of the Level 3 Coordinator to increase communication efforts and assist any umpires that need clarification or help getting started on the Level 3 path.

Thank you to everyone who attended the Super Clinic this year, and it is the hope of BCBUA that you will all continue with the Level 3 Modules in the Professional Development Year in 2022 to maintain your pathway to Level 3 Certification with Baseball Canada.

Hope to see everyone on a field soon.



A great example of mentorship at work. Level 3 umpire Jim Van Meer (left) of Abbotsford sits with aspiring hopefuls, Sam Wilson and Carson Reid of the Cloverdale Association.

Photo by John Pentland

Area Rep Reports

Area 1—Vancouver Island South

Hi everyone. I'm Jon Hollett, outgoing Area Rep from Chemainus. 2021 was much of the same that we experienced in 2020.

A positive of the year was the availability of online clinics for members to access for training.

Once again, some baseball was played, even with some umpires able to get back to regular mechanics. I hope that 2022 can again be a year of improvement and getting closer to normal.

We are always in need of new umpires to get out and join us. Please pay attention to our website in February and March 2022 for clinic dates, locations and time.

I decided not to run for Area Rep for the next 2 terms. I wish the new area rep Jakob Goba well in taking over the role.

Hi, my name is Jakob Goba and I am the new Area Rep for Vancouver Island South. I have just moved to the Victoria area from Ontario where I was a Nationally certified umpire. I look forward to working with you all in the coming season.

Area 2—Vancouver Island North

Greetings. My name is Brad Jones and I live in Nanaimo. I am the Area Rep for Vancouver Island North. This year began with the hope that things would get back to normal. However, with new waves of outbreaks, the North Island associations started late and struggled to regain the average membership enrollments that were normal before 2020.

With 70 members, this year's membership for the North Island is down about 60 members from our usual total of about 130. Some areas, namely Campbell River and Oceanside, struggled with fielding umpires for local games as their total were down significantly. Nanaimo saw a healthy total of young umpires but would welcome more adults into the fray. The core of the Comox Valley contingent returned for another year of serving as seasoned arbiters.

Further, if the uncertainty of the virus was not enough, the North Island, like many other parts of the province, experienced a sweltering heat wave in the end of June and all through July. The experience brought to the head another concern to address in the future, namely extreme heat during the season.

As the North Island passes out its kudos for 2021, the area was lucky to have a core of seasoned vets, who worked through all of it. First, we would like to thank Nick Moore and Jonathan Mills in the Comox Valley and Nick Salahub in Nanaimo for stepping up to act as UICs and leads in their local organizations. UIC's David Wood and Jon McDowall continued to support the local umpires in their area. Finally, Will Chambers, in addition to his grassroots work in Oceanside, took on additional commitments to the organization by volunteering for the BCBUA subcommittee for mental health. Other kudos go to Brad and Matty Smith in Comox and Jason Vance in Nanaimo for not taking a rest through the heat of July.

On the development side, informal mentorship was started in Nanaimo under its UIC and Comox with a new head of the area's umpire association. However, in the North Island, only four mentorships were completed in Oceanside, who also got in three umpire practices for their younger umpires.

Area 3—Lower Mainland East

Hello everyone, I'm Gary Webber, Area Rep for Lower Mainland East. I hope you had a good year. Area 3 started late on June 22 and we had an OK year. There was a total of 181 Members, down 62 from 2020.

Everything started well with successful Level 1 and Level 2 Clinics. We had a total of 61 level 1 umpires take clinics and a total of 68 level 2 take clinics. This was down a little from last year but everyone had a great time and learned a lot thanks to our great Education Committee. We had 158 Area 3 umpires take the on-line exam tests and had 118 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 did some mentorship work with young umpires that ended with the John Main Tournament. Thanks to all that helped out. Steve was happy with the way it happened. Again this year I want to thank Rhonda Pauls and Jim Van Meer for all their great work on the Mentorship program. Umpiring in BC is getting better and better because of all the hard work.

AREA REP REPORTS Continued...

AREA 3 Continued...

During the year, Area 3 had 4 Tournaments at the 7 Associations with all Umpires gaining experience from top to bottom.

Area 3 hosted 2 Provisional Championships where 9 Area 2 and 3 umpires provided their skills to make the events all very successful.

All in all it was a Great year and we are looking forward to 2022.

Area 4—Lower Mainland West

Happy New Year everyone! I'm Thomas Brock, your Area 4 director. The short 2021 season is over and although there were few local games, and even fewer umpires, any baseball is better than no season at all. Unfortunately, season-ending events that were hosted in the area ran into significant weather delays or field changes.

This was my first year as Area Rep (what a year to start!) and although BCBUA did an admirable job running online clinics, I look forward to hybrid/in person events, hopefully as early as 2022, and meeting some of the UICs that I only know by name.

Area 5—Lower Mainland South

I'm John Pentland, Area Rep. The Lower Mainland South consists of the following Local Associations and UIC's

- North Langley - Jhim Burwell
- Cloverdale - Gord McFarlane
- Newton - Jerry Tregaskis
- Whalley - Alan McKearney
- South Surrey / White Rock - Sheridan Abells
- North Delta - Brad Woof / Graeme McMurray
- Ladner - John Pentland / Daniel Baxter
- Tsawwassen - UIC position open

The on-going pandemic created a change to our beginning of the year clinics and to our membership numbers in Lower Mainland South. Local Associations in Area 5 were like all other areas in that in person clinics were replace by BCBUA's online clinics for Level 1 and 2 prior to baseball being given permission by VIASport allowing competitive play - thus resulting in the number of members being reduced from previous years.

Membership in Area 5 has dropped from a high of 360 in the pre-pandemic year of 2019 to 321 in 2020 which began with most associations hosting clinics prior to the shutdowns in March, to a low of 189 in 2021 that started with an uncertainty as to whether there was going to be competitive baseball being played with traditional umpiring mechanics.

With Provincial and National Tournaments cancelled for 2021 the opportunity for umpires to be mentored at advanced levels was eliminated. BC Minor Baseball did host the John Main Tournament for 13U in Area 5 over the Labour Day weekend and some young umpires were given the opportunity to work competitive games and get mentoring from National umpires.

Ejections continue to be an issue at all levels in our area, both in the number that have been issued, as well as the number that were likely warranted but not issued - based on information gained through post-game discussions with umpires and spectators.

The goals for the upcoming baseball season for Area 5 will include increasing BCBUA membership numbers that will include reaching out to a more diverse audience; increasing mentorship opportunities through increased mentor training; increased in-person umpire training that augments on-line education; and coach education in regards to rules and umpire interaction.

AREA REP REPORTS Continued...

Area 6—Thompson

Hi, my name is Blaise Laveay. I am serving as your Area Rep for the coming season. I live in Kelowna, but was raised in Kamloops. I played high level baseball for many years before changing allegiances and becoming an umpire. I am a Nationally certified umpire. I look forward to building the umpire program in the Thompson region in the coming season.

Area 7—Okanagan

Baseball was back in 2021 in the Okanagan. It was a late start but a start none the less.

The 2021 baseball season was a product of the time. There were many questions: Are we going to be able to play? Will it be a modified technique or regular ball? Masks on or Masks off? And the answers were few.

The BCBUA, despite these many obstacles and unanswered questions, persisted and came through. Our BCBUA President Rhonda Pauls worked with her team across BC and with Team Ontario to create an amazing online learning program. They produced instructions videos and promoted the online classes. Though the number of participating umpires across the province, and the country, were low, the enthusiasm was high because there was a possibility, however slight, that baseball would be back.

As the provincial Covid restriction began to ease, we too sprung into action, holding several Field Sessions across the region, including Kelowna, Penticton, Salmon Arm and Vernon.

As BCBUA Area Representative of the Okanagan I could not do what I did alone. The people that make things happen are your Umpires in Chief (UIC). Their continued support, willingness to assist with anything along with their overall passion for the game made this year happen. I want to personally thank 1st year Salmon Arm UIC Dan Minski, 1st year Vernon UIC Stu Cleland, COBUA (Kelowna) UIC Bruce Kristinson, and long time SOMBA UIC Lorne Raymond for your continued support of umpiring in BC. I owe each of you my sincere thanks and personal gratitude for all that you have done to make my job easier. Thank you all.

On August 28th, COBUA hosted their Annual Umpire Appreciation Day, normally held at a Kelowna Falcon game but due to another cancelled West Coast League season, decided to have a fun day / slow pitch game. Each of the umpires clearly demonstrated why we are all part of “the 3rd Team on the Field” (Umpires) and not playing regularly. Darcy Rysz was voted the games MVP, not because of his skill sets but just because. A special thanks goes out to Kelly-Ann, the Canteen Saviour of Edith Gay Diamonds, for preparing a meal of Burgers & Dogs for our umpire crew. Thank you Kelly-Ann.

Following the activities UIC Bruce Kristinson handed out a few awards to our up & coming officials, including Rookie of the Year Beckham Pister, Ironman (Most games umpired) and our Annual High School Senior Darcy Rysz Bursary winner Reese Wernicke and our Unsung Hero Matthew McLaughlin. Well Done Gentlemen, Well Done.

A special presentation was also made to Darcy Rysz who was not able to receive his 2019 City of Kelowna - Community Sports Award for his years of dedication to officiating and fund raising for Kid Sport. A job well done Darcy.



COBUA President Bruce Kristinson (left) with Beckham Pister



Kristinson with Reese Wernicke (right)

AREA REP REPORTS Continued...

Area 7 Report Continued....



COBUA President Bruce Kristinson with Matt McLachlan



Kristinson with Darcy Rysz

Though baseball started late, Kelowna was fortunate to host several season ending tournaments, culminating with the Canadian Collegiate Baseball Conference (CCBC) Fall Classic, on October 11th , 2021. The Okanagan College Coyotes defeated the reigning CCBC Champion University of Fraser Valley in 9 innings by a score of 12-5. The series brought in several National Level Umpires from across BC. The Championship fielded our own Tyler Pentland at Home Plate, Blaise Laveay at 1st and Kevin Burk at 3rd .

In 2022 we will be ready to go, so sign up now and call your friends to tell them to stop sitting on the sidelines and get involved. Until Next Season, Be Happy, Be Safe and Enjoy the off season with Family and Friends.



Area 7 Director Kevin Burk (left in the polo blue MLB jersey of Stu Scheurwater) poses alongside the COBUA crew at Edith Gay Ballpark in Rutland during the annual Umpire Appreciation Day.

AREA REP REPORTS Continued...

Area 8—Kootenays

Hi everyone. My name is Trevor Stoyko and I am the new Area Rep for the Kootenays. I recently moved to Castlegar from Alberta and previous to that I lived in Saskatchewan. I am a National level umpire. I look forward to working with you in the coming year as your Area Rep.

Area 9—Northern BC

Happy New Year everyone. I'm Kyle Anderson, the Area Rep for Northern BC. 2021 was another interesting season of baseball in the North, with late snow melt, Covid-19 issues, and field problems in Prince George, and there was once again a late start to games.

Membership was down in both Prince George and Quesnel, but short seasons were played and umpires were able to hone their craft they had learned online. On-Field Training was held in Prince George, and in the future, is planned for both Quesnel and Prince George as part of the development program.

There were some high-end games held in Prince George during the season, with an exhibition set between the College Prep Kamloops Riverdogs and the U18 AAA Prince George Knights, in front of 400+ fans in early July. Several local umpires were able to attend and watch local Level 3 officials work the 3- game set.

In 2022, we look for a normal run of games, and hopefully tournaments. Prince George will also host the 2022 BC Summer Games at City Field and Rotary Field at Carrie Jane Gray Park. As your area rep, I will continue to work to improve all umpires in the north, with expanding mentorship opportunities for all umpires once completing their BCBUA training.



This is a great shot of Kyle Anderson watching the play at first base. Kyle's eyes are on the bag, as they are supposed to be at this point. He is watching the first baseman's foot on the bag and the runner's foot coming down on the bag, and listening with his ears for the sound of the ball hitting the first baseman's glove. Great mechanics Kyle!

(Too bad your judgement isn't as good and you called him safe!) :)

BCBUA's RHONDA PAULS NAMED BASEBALL CANADA UMPIRE DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR

BCBUA President Rhonda Pauls was recently awarded the Baseball Canada Umpire Developer of the Year for 2021. Pauls leads the BCBUA Education Committee and has served as BCBUA President for the past 2 years.

Pauls oversaw a number of projects and created others in the pandemic seasons of 2020-2021. This was not limited to work in BC. She served as an integral part of the Instructor Development Committee for Baseball Canada, and was a co-creator of the National online Superclinic in 2021 with 4 others from BC and Ontario.

Recently Pauls was named Portfolio Lead of the new Baseball Canada committee which will focus on Umpire Welfare and Mental Health, Mentorship, and Diversity.

In BC, we all know her great work as the President, but she also co-created our Online level 1 and 2 platform as well as the education content inside of it. Her work with other committees was highlighted by her participation on the Mentorship, Safe Sport, Talk Team, UIC Consortium, and Policy Review committees. She is also a member of Baseball BC's Board of Directors.

In short, BCBUA is fortunate to have such a dedicated volunteer running our organization, and we congratulate Rhonda and her Committees for their outstanding work in the 2021 season.

DEVASTATING TORNADO's IN KENTUCKY HIT CLOSE TO HOME

MLB Umpire and friend of BCBUA, Hal "Tripp" Gibson got an unwelcome phone call on the evening of December 10. A tornado had just hit his hometown of Mayfield Kentucky. The destruction was unbelievable, but fortunately none of his family perished in the tragedy. That was not the case for 74 others who died statewide.

Tripp was on the plane the next day to support family and friends and help out wherever he could. "It's indescribable," he said "You think of the movie 'Twister' and that's nothing compared to what we have here."

"All the people injured, displaced, maybe dead," he said. "There are no words."

Figuring out where things were in Mayfield is nearly impossible, the 40-year-old Gibson said.

"I'm coming down roads that I've driven thousands of times and there's nothing there," he said. "You don't even know where you are."



"Places that you landmarked as a kid, they're gone. There are no road signs. I don't even know where 6th Street and 7th Street and 8th Street are anymore," he said.

At one point, his late grandfather owned almost all of the land around Courthouse Square.

Tripp and fellow MLB Umpire DJ Reyburn hard at work repairing the family house in Mayfield, Kentucky

TORNADO continued...

“I spent one summer painting every building there by myself, up on three levels of scaffolding. I knew every inch of downtown,” he said. “Now, it’s hard to see.”

As a boy, Gibson remembered Bruce Willis coming to town to shoot “In Country,” a 1989 movie . Willis enjoyed spending time with Gibson’s father, Hoot, and some scenes were filmed on family property -- Willis and his then-pregnant wife, Demi Moore, took a picture with young Tripp.

Gibson’s father and stepmother, Marietta, live about two-tenths of a mile from downtown Mayfield. They sheltered at a friend’s house nearby when the tornado hit.

The family owns 100 homes in the Mayfield area, a business his grandfather, a U.S. Navy veteran, started in 1949 to partly help returning service members.

“There are so many stories of survival,” Gibson said.

Gibson went to Graves County High School and graduated from Murray State before becoming a professional umpire in 2006. He worked his first MLB game in 2013, joined the full-time staff in 2015 and was on the crew for this year’s National League Championship Series between Atlanta and the Los Angeles Dodgers.

After Tripp Gibson landed in Nashville, he met up with fellow umpire D.J. Reyburn for the drive to Mayfield, stopping along the way at a Lowe’s to pick up supplies.

“I’m just here to help,” Gibson said. “We’ve got our hands full.”

“I get to go back to Washington, to my wife and two boys, I’m lucky,” he said. “The people here in Mayfield, that’s who I’m thinking about.”

The shock of what he saw will stay with him.



Tripp’s property and childhood home in Kentucky was devastated by the Tornado.

Clinics 2022

Here at the BCBUA we would love nothing more than to publish the in-person clinic schedule for the spring. But reality dictates otherwise. Omicron changed everything in the Covid world, and we truly have no idea from week to week what will happen next.

So that leaves us in a bit of a pickle.. What to do about the impending clinic season.

Your BCBUA Board has determined that we really have no viable options to plan for in-person clinics this year “hoping” we will be able to carry them out. Indoor facilities, unless privately owned by Baseball Associations, are not welcoming user groups into them. That is a major problem for the way we deliver in-person training. And until that changes, we have few options. Things might change later this spring which would allow some parts of the province to have in-person clinics. Until then, we have to improvise again.

The way of the future is on-line. We know that. We developed award-winning education online last year, and we will do so again this year. As such the BCBUA is committed to doing some parts of all level 1-3 clinics online from this point forward. It may be 1-2 hours of pre clinic things like rules and demonstrations, watching some video and learning that way. And some of it might be in person at the end of the clinic. The online part might happen after your in person clinic. Ideally going forward, every clinic will be a hybrid of both forms.

Regardless of all of this, we will be proceeding to schedule similar online clinics as in 2021. If we end up having to do the entire clinic online, then so be it. And that will always be followed up with some kind of in-person session with your UIC at very least.

This isn't ideal. Nothing in Covid world is. But this is the best we can do at this given point in time. We hope you all understand and embrace the opportunity to learn regardless of the way it presents itself.

Look for more information on clinics on the BCBUA website. Talk to your UIC or Area Rep to get up to date information.

JOHN MAIN TOURNAMENT 2021

Former BC Minor President John Main would have been proud of the 2021 edition of his namesake tournament. People overcame and worked together to make the best of a poor situation. Nobody expected the annual John Main Invitational Tournament to happen in 2021, but it did.

From an umpire perspective we had plenty of challenges, including dressing area issues with distancing, the playing protocols, to rain, to scheduling, to manpower.

But John Pentland, as he always does, made it all work with the able-bodied assistance of Joe Mallinson. Several National umpires came out, as they always do, to assist with mentorship and evaluations for those who wanted them. Extra field work was offered on back-fields after games. Debriefs from senior umpires helped our youth and grass roots umpires fix little mistakes. And a good time was had by everyone.



**John Main Photos by
John Pentland**

**BCBUA President
Rhonda Pauls
mentoring 2 youth
umpires at the John
Main Invitational in
Cloverdale**



Top Left—Mentor Troy Carmont (right) having a laugh with umpire Carson Reid (left).

Top Right—Mentor Jim Van Meer (right) discussing how old and short he feels next to umpire Sam Wilson (tall).



Left—Gold Medal umpires Jackson Bakker (left) and Bryce Dobbs-Cox (right).

Bellow—Umpire Carson Reid demonstrates perfect P4 positioning while correctly watching the pitcher's movements.



From the Chief's Desk - Supervisor Report

Here we are again. Covid still has us in it's grasp. And our baseball season is again full of question marks. That's ok. We will get back to a new normal soon enough.

And when we do, we will get back to a normal that includes change to various areas of our operation.

One of those things that will be changing soon is the role of the Provincial Supervisor and the person holding the office.

You will see elsewhere in this edition a job posting for Provincial Supervisor of Umpires.

I won't be applying.

My time is coming to an end here shortly. I've held the role of Provincial Supervisor since 2009 when Troy Carmont and I took over the role in transition from Richard Christie. Once the dust settled, and after a year of learning the position, I became the sole supervisor in 2010.

Lots of things have improved within the BCBUA in the last decade. Certainly our organization has improved, our education model and materials have improved, our engagement with our national umpires is better than ever before, our work with grass roots development is at an all-time high, and our umpires, in general, are of a calibre on the field now that is exceeded by no other province in Canada.

We boast a National clinic that is the envy of everyone, and we are the flagship operation in the country. Our umpires regularly attain Gold Medal Plate assignments at Nationals. That never used to happen in the "old days". And our umpires and our programs are also recognized Nationally with awards and praise at every turn.

Indeed this is a different group than what I inherited., and I'm proud of what we've become.

But unfortunately there is one thing that is the same as its always been, or worse, it seems.

I don't think BCBUA is any further ahead in our relationships with the groups we work with. And that's a real disappointment to me.

In BCBUA's defense, you need to have a willing partner to make positive changes. And we have not.

And from a Provincial Supervisor aspect, its actually been an adversarial relationship, specifically the last few years.

So as a result, I have lost my interest in continuing to bang my head against the wall in frustration. It's a volunteer job, and when volunteering isn't fun anymore, you should do something else with your spare time.

Especially when your so-called partners have outwardly told you that you

are no longer welcome or wanted..

The other provinces heap praise on us, but no such luck with these folks.

That's ok, don't shed any tears for me. I don't need to hang around like a bad smell when I'm not wanted, like some other folks in this province have in the past. You all know who they are. There are other groups in this country that will get my time instead and they are happy for it. And I'm happy for it too.

I was not part of the problem. But I know that I am also not part of the solution going forward either, and so it's time to move on for the good of our association.

I am pleased to turn this program over, in this kind of condition, to someone new who will lead us further into the Promised Land with your help. That was my only goal, and I am proud to have achieved it.

Steve Boutang

Provincial Supervisor



National Clinic 2022

The annual National Umpires Clinic will return to an in-person format again for 2022. Kamloops will again be the site as it has been since 2010.

All National umpires plus those qualified level 3 umpires who are selected will be in the Tournament Capital from May 4-8 this spring.

Guest instructors confirmed for this year's event include the usual compliment of Baseball Canada Master Course Conductors plus newcomer Brian Hodgson.

Registration and cost details will be emailed to everyone in due course.

The Plaza Hotel has again signed on to be our Host Hotel and Sorriso's Italian Deli will serve as our host restaurant for our famous nightly meals.



UMPIRE ACADADEMY RETURNS/EXPANDS

Umpire Academy returns in 2022!

Provincial Supervisor Steve Boutang reports that this year's event will be held twice as a means to expand our training for our junior umpire candidates.

"Not having Academy for 2 years in a row really dealt young umpires a tough hand. We wanted to find ways of working with the hosts in Kamloops to ensure we had an opportunity to expose as many young umpires as possible this year and to catch up on those who missed out through Covid."

In short the Academy is a 3 day all-encompassing experience where umpires get to work games, have class sessions on rules and game management, and do field work and cage work away from the games.

"We resurrected the program

About 8 years ago and have had 5 such events up to Covid. It's a tremendous learning opportunity for young umpires, and a great life experience, particularly for youths who have never worked outside their home association before." says Boutang.

The costs of the event are reasonable and most local associations have helped the young umpires out in the past. BCBUA subsidizes the event.

Umpires who are at least 16 and no older than 25 are eligible and all umpires must have at least started their level 2 program.

If you're interested, speak to your local UIC and Area Rep. Organizers have pegged April 21-24 and April 28-May 1 as this year's dates. You must be available for the entire event in order to be considered.

Hotel and Meals will be part of the registration costs.



JR UMPIRE PROGRAM PANNED

The BCBUA has partnered with BC Minor Baseball to introduce a new Jr Umpire Program for 2022. In short, local associations around BC have been looking for ways to increase the number of umpires available to work Tadpole (U9) levels of baseball. In order to facilitate that, BCBUA will provide an abbreviated training program for 10 and 11 year olds who are interested in getting into umpiring. The details are still being worked out, but if you are a young person who wants to get a head start on the BCBUA program, this will be an excellent way for you to do so with a reduced cost and commitment, while also helping out the local associations who don't currently have the numbers of umpires to staff that level.

BCBUA Provincial Supervisor Job Posting

The BCBUA Board of Directors is seeking applications for the position of BCBUA Provincial Supervisor of Umpires.

The successful candidate will serve a short period of transition with retiring Supervisor Steve Boutang and then will complete a 3 year term of their own.

Responsibilities of the position include the following: Running the National Umpire Program in BC, including the annual National clinic, selecting umpires for National Championships, recommending supervisors for National assignments, planning for Baseball Canada Caravans, Evaluating course conductors and supervisors provincially, and attending all National Umpire meetings and serving on various Baseball Canada sub-committees.

Supervisor Posting Continued....

Provincially, the Supervisor of Umpires will work with the Education Committee closely to ensure that Level 1-3 programs fall within Baseball Canada Standards.

The Supervisor will also work with the Level 3 Co-ordinator to ensure that any umpire in the level 3 program who wishes to pursue the National program is on a proper development path for success.

QUALIFICATIONS:

The Successful Candidate will be a BCBUA Member in good standing and will hold a full Level 4 Umpire Rating at minimum. The Candidate will possess an Effective Course Conductor Rating or higher, and be willing to complete the Sr Course Conductor Program if they don't already possess that qualification.

Apply Directly to Les Maerov, BCBUA Secretary, at secretary@bcba.ca , Deadline is Feb. 15.

MEMBER RECRUITMENT

The BCBUA is reaching out more than ever this year in an effort to try and recruit more umpires into the fold.

Recruiting isn't part of the BCBUA mandate. The BCBUA takes the umpires who register, and we work with them to try and make them a good umpire, provide a positive experience, and hopefully retain them for a period of time while they develop..... Maybe to the next step up the ladder.

Its no secret that there is a shortage of officials in all sports. A shortage of qualified officials in particular. So BCBUA is reaching out to the local areas in an effort to assist in recruiting umpires and help fill game slots at the minor baseball level.

Partnering with Baseball BC and BC Minor, the BCBUA has developed some recruiting tools for associations to utilize this spring.

We have created a promotional video for use on social media, we have handouts and paper materials available for associations, and we have introduced a Jr Umpire program for the 9u divisions of baseball when local associations want to have umpires for that level of play.

The Jr Umpire program is only applicable to the 10 and 11 year olds who want to umpire, but are really too young to join BCBUA. In the Jr Umpire program, a youth gets a cut rate on BCBUA membership, full BCBUA training, and support on the field from an adult.

Contact Rhonda Pauls at the BCBUA for more information!



MLB Umpire Stats 2021

Replay -

48.3 % of calls were overturned.

22.1 % of calls confirmed correct.

29.6 % call stands (insufficient evidence to overturn the call).

409 reviews were completed on force plays at 1st base. That was the vast majority of reviews.

Mike Muchlinski had the best percentage of close calls made correctly among full time staff. He was only overturned 4 times out of 17 challenges.



GOOD-BYE JOE!

MLB Umpire Hirings and Retirings

January 1 each year brings in a new round of hirings and retirings for Major League Baseball Umpires. Whether that be a long time veteran hanging up his mask, or that magical phone call to a young umpire that will answer his prayers to have received offer of a full time permanent job.

Sometimes umpires, like the players, tell the world that they are leaving before the season is even complete. Such was the case for Joe West and Gerry Davis in 2021. Both were lauded in their final days. West finished with an all time record of 5,460 regular season games and 196 ejections over an amazing 44 year career. It would have been more if he hadn't got caught up in the mass-umpire resignation fiasco at the turn of the century.

Gerry Davis packed it in after working exactly 5000 games including regular season and playoffs. He was a story of consistency. 1237 games on the plate, 1238 games at 1st, 1242 games at 2nd, and 1242 games at 3rd. Add in the 41 line assignments in the playoffs and you get exactly 5,000.

Brian Gorman did the same after a career spanning 30 years. Between he and father Tommy, they worked a total of 7200 games over 56 seasons.

Due to injury, retirements also occurred for several other crew Chiefs, whose names are not public, but who have already signed their retirement papers. It's expected the league will name at least 5 new crew chiefs once the lockout is over.

And now for the Hirings...so far

See below...

#29 Sean Barber—Age 36, Lakeland Florida. 693 games experience as a call up.

#97 Ben May—Age 40, Racine Wisconsin. 658 games experience as a call up.

#40 Roberto Ortiz—Age 37, Caguas Puerto Rico. 412 games experience as a call up.

#67 Ryan Additon—Age 36, Miami Florida. 381 games experience as a call up.

#84 John Libka—Age 34, Saginaw Michigan. 371 games experience as a call up.



Barber



May



Ortiz



Additon



Libka

MLB PLAYOFF UMPIRES

BCBUA Friends and MLB Umpires Stu Scheurwater, Mike Muchlinski, and Tripp Gibson all received Playoff assignments in the 2021 MLB Postseason.

Scheurwater was assigned to the Replay Booth for the NL and AL Wildcard games.

Gibson was assigned to the NL Championship Series between the Dodgers and Braves. Gibson had the plate for Game 1 in Dodger Stadium.

The Kentucky native was on the field in Atlanta later in the series which allowed his extended family to be able to see him work the playoffs in person.

The highlite was for Marysvale Washington native Mike Muchlinski who was not only

assigned to the NLCS but also to his first World Series.

Mike got to work the plate in the deciding Game 6 after spending the previous 5 games on the bases.

Muchlinski, in his 10th season as a pro, has been in BC 3 times to instruct our Superclinics—the first being in 2010 when he was still a “AAA” callup.

We are always proud of these 3 men who give so willingly of their time during the off season to support our programs, and we are all so excited when we see their successes on the Big League diamonds. Please join me in congratulating them.



Where Dey Been? Whut Dey Dooin'?

Book 14 of the L3C Trilogy by Eager Beaver

March 2020 found Mrs. Beaver and Moi strolling down the beach in Ft. Lauderdale in our Speedos and taking in the sights. We were full of anticipation for the new season and then BLAAAP! I said **BLAAAAAAP!** It all fell apart. Not the Speedos (thank God) but the world as we knew it. The Covid!!

Months and months of no gathering, no in-person clinics or Super Clinic or Academy. nuttin'. So, how do we keep the umpires, especially the kids, involved with no ball to work? No problem for our amazin' executive and all the other volunteers who stepped up and created the best online learning package in the country.

There were 3 different Levels of learning including Level 1 and Level 2 but also an amazing creation for the Super Clinic that highlighted the talents and creativity of everyone involved. Late in the Summer we got on the field a little bit but no spectators or Baseball Mom at the park ...it was weird.

2021 and we got to play almost a whole season of baseball and even had some fans for the last ½. Almost back to normal and we hope to get some actual, face to face clinics going in 2022 with some real Provincials and Nationals and everything. Looking forward to it !!!

But wait, 2021 was not a lost year at all. We had some spectacular successes from our members and our friends. Schmedium (Craig Burt of Rosedale) worked his 1st games as a professional umpire in the new Florida Complex League on his way to the majors. Our friends and guest instructors at many of our high level Clinics Tripp Gibson and Mike Muchlinski made a big splash this year also. Both had great years and were rewarded with big playoff assignments. Tripp worked the League Championship Series (with the plate on Game 1) and Mike made his 1st of many trips to the World Series with the Plate on the deciding game # 6. How totally cool is that! Soon we will see Stu doing those games too!

I can't tell you how much I am lookin forward to 2022 and getting totally back to normal (really, I am not allowed to tell you cuz it's a secret). Some would say that being normal would be new for me.. but that's just jealousy talking.

I will see you all in the new year both in the classroom and on the field. Good Luck.



Bill MacMillan—aka Eager Beaver



MiLB Umpire Craig Burt

News from Baseball Canada

Jason Dickson has been hired as the new Baseball Canada Executive Director, replacing the retiring Jim Baba. Dickson will be replaced as President of Baseball Canada by Kamloops BC's Chris Balison.

Balison will remain as Baseball BC President until the end of his term in June 2022.

Some updates from the Baseball Canada Umpire Committee. Chair Don Paulencu has retired after many years of service. Edmonton's Jon Oko, president of Baseball Alberta, has been named as the new Chair of the Committee.

Rhonda Pauls was named as the new Portfolio Chair for the Diversity, Mentorship, and Wellness Portfolio.

Canada Games will be held this summer in Niagara Ontario. Sean Sullivan is BC's Umpire Selection.

High Performance reports that the National Umpires Development Camp scheduled for Kamloops this spring has been postponed to April 2023 due to Covid issues around travel.

Instructor Development Portfolio indicates that Caravan—Clinician Training—will be resuming as soon as possible once restrictions lift. Many provinces and regions have indicated a need to hold Caravans.



Grass Roots Portfolio reports a number of things to be aware of. Level 3 umpires should note that this is an Online Module season. The Online Modules are available at the Baseball Canada umpire website. Umpires need only to register with a user name and password and all of the materials are free for use. This is a requirement for BC Umpires to complete in 2022 to maintain your standing.

Work has begun on developing online level 1-2 modules for use by the provinces for future years.

A reminder that all National umpires must have the NCCP Safesport training completed by May 1, 2022. The training is done online on the coaches website and is free of charge. It takes less than an hour to complete.. And you can't receive a National assignment until you complete it.

Communications reports that the new Umpire website for Baseball Canada is running well and that a repository of educational information is there and available for use by all umpires, nationwide, and is free of charge. You simply need a user name and password to register.

Baseball Canada Umpires group is on Instagram and Facebook. Look out for news and information on those social media sites and keep up with the happenings in our Umpire Community!

IN MEMORIAM

Alberta Umpire Legend Mitch Ball passed away May 1, 2021 from complications of Covid 19, a day before his 48th birthday.

To say Mitch was a great umpire would be an understatement. He umpired in so many high profile events, one could be forgiven for neglecting to remember them all. In most of those events he served as the plate umpire for the Championship game.

He represented Canada at International events, the Little League World Series, and at Baseball Canada National Championships. Most recently he was the plate umpire for the Gold Medal Game at the Sr Mens in 2018. He also umpired several seasons of Independent Professional Baseball including the Golden Baseball League Finals in 2009.

Above all of that Mitch was a world class person off the field. You would never meet a nicer human being who gave of himself freely to the community of Lethbridge, his church, his friends, and to his family.

The BCBUA offers our sincerest condolences to his wife Jana and their 6 kids.



On January 7, 2022 Prince George Native Amanda Asay passed away in a tragic skiing accident in Nelson BC at age 33.

She was a National team player from the age of 17 until present time and was highly decorated as a player on the International stage.

As an all-around athlete she excelled in Baseball (men's and women's disciplines), softball, hockey, and participated in many other sports as well.

She was also highly educated and had a PHD in Forestry and Natural Resource Management.

Above all she was an outstanding person, treated umpires professionally, and was respected by everyone. The BCBUA sends our condolences to her loved ones.

