

Softball Umpires of Maryland Training Session January 11, 2025

Quick recap

Discussion of SUM's role in supporting girls' softball travel teams and the registration process for umpires. Emphasized the importance of tracking expenses, the umpiring schedule, and the use of a software program called Arbiter for assigning umpires. The meeting also covered various aspects of umpiring, including mechanics, strategies, and communication between partners, with a focus on maintaining professionalism and accuracy on the field.

Next steps

- All attendees to complete registration form if not already done.
- All attendees to complete background check if not already done.
- All attendees to obtain proper uniform and equipment as outlined in the meeting.
- All attendees to review the rule book before next week's session.
- All attendees to practice umpire mechanics and signals at home before next week's session.
- All attendees to bring their umpire mask to next week's session.
- Bob to conduct Arbiter training session on Wednesday at 7pm via Google Meet.
- All attendees to email Joe if they want to attend the Arbiter training session.
- Joe to send spreadsheet for tracking mileage to any attendees who request it.
- Rick and Joe to switch roles for future training sessions.

Summaries

Softball Umpires of Maryland (SUM) Overview

SUM primarily operate on weekends, with tournaments starting on March 21st.

Joe also encouraged the attendees to consider joining high school organizations and mentioned that they have connections with various groups.

He emphasized that they are an organization that pays its members to officiate games, and the camaraderie of the sport is a significant draw. Joe also mentioned the executive board, trainers, and clinicians who volunteer their time, as well as the tournament site UICs who train the umpires. He

clarified that the members are independent contractors, not employees, and have the right to accept or decline games.

Umpiring Schedule and Registration Process

Discussion of the registration process, insurance requirements, and the importance of tracking expenses for tax purposes.

The umpiring schedule typically involves 6-7 games on a field on Saturdays and 2-3 games on Sundays.

Outlined the process of assigning umpires using a software program called Arbiter.

Emphasis on the importance of blocking dates when unavailable and accepting or declining games in Arbiter.

There is a possibility of adjusting the schedule up until Friday before the tournament.

Umpires should arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the game and park together at the site.

CCBC Registration, Uniforms, and Equipment

Registration process includes a background check and a fee for insurance coverage.

Also discussed the uniform requirements, which include a specific jacket, shirt, hat, and pants.

Recommended purchasing these items from an official supply store.

The team also discussed the need for equipment such as a mask, chest protector, and cup for males.

Suggested using a website for used equipment and starter kits.

The team also discussed the payment process, which currently involves checks paid on a weekly basis.

Preparation and Revenue for Officials

Discussed importance of being prepared for long days at work, emphasizing the need to bring enough food and water.

There is a small stipend for UICs to provide snacks and water.

Encouraged the use of thermoses to keep water cold.

Most parks have concessions.

An average of 36 games assigned per umpire.

Emphasized the importance of setting blocks and not declining games to avoid causing havoc.

Softball Mechanics and Teamwork Importance

Discussion of the importance of mechanics in softball, emphasizing the need for consistency and teamwork.

Important to be prepared for games, discussed the roles of different positions in a two-umpire system.

Important to set a good tone and maintain a clean appearance.

Umpiring Mechanics and Strategies Discussed

Importance of pre-game communication with partners, focusing on fair and foul coverage, tag-ups, and handling of uncaught third strikes.

Umpires need to be strong, authoritative, and confident on the field.

Plate Umpires should work the slot, the space between the catcher and the batter, to effectively monitor the strike zone.

Advice against wearing watches or using cell phones as timers during games, suggesting the use of a timer instead.

Follow the right people, don't be lazy, and to find your own comfort in your plate stance.

Umpiring Techniques and Professionalism Discussed

Importance of patience and consistency in umpiring, emphasizing the need to wait for the ball to cross the plate before making a call.

Importance of not touching players and maintaining a professional demeanor.

Need to practice and develop muscle memory for tasks like removing the mask with the left hand.

Discussion of the strike zone, emphasizing the importance of using the forward armpit and top of the knees as the strike zone, and not being influenced by coaches' opinions.

Advised against giving counts unless necessary, and the importance of being aware of the count when a steal occurs.

Umpire Techniques and Signal Etiquette

Use proper techniques and signals.

When to give the count, indicating foul tips versus foul balls, signaling fair balls, using a dead ball signal, giving the play ball signal, and positioning behind home plate.

Emphasis on being patient, letting the play happen before making the call, selling the call with authority when certain, and not bailing out on calls.

Umpiring Techniques and Game Strategies

Importance of positioning of hands during gameplay, patience, replaying plays in one's mind, and the need for accuracy in calling strikes and balls.

Importance of not pointing one's backside to the paying customers and suggested different ways to protect one's hands during gameplay.

Hold calls and replay plays in one's mind to improve accuracy and reduce the chances of coaches arguing.

Being a Good Umpire on the Field

Importance of being a good umpire, understanding the rules, and being approachable.

Stay focused on the game and be involved, especially when unexpected situations arise.

Importance of making strong calls, even in routine situations, and not relying solely on the partner's judgment.

Be comfortable with positioning and practice different scenarios, such as handling a potential overthrow or a ball hit down the line.

Be athletic and efficient on the field. If not as athletic as you used to be, compensate for that.

Need to be ready and prepared for any situation that may arise during a game.

Umpire Strategies and Communication

Be aware of the play and the position of the runners, and moving accordingly.

Need to communicate with your partner, especially in complex situations.

Be invisible to the game, do not interfere with the players' actions.

Be ready for different scenarios, such as a double play or a steal.

Umpiring Communication and Trust Importance

Importance of communication and trust between partners.

Need verbal communication when making unusual calls or adjustments.

Understand each other's mechanics.

The possibility of multiple base - need to adjust accordingly.

Pay attention to partners' actions and communicate effectively to avoid misunderstandings.