

## Umpire Advisory Team Minutes

On August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the SUM Umpire Advisory Team met and discussed the following matters. These issues were then discussed with John Dye.

1. **USSSA points vs. coin flip.** Overall this seems to be a non-issue. Coaches seem to either know their point totals or do not seem to think it's a concern. The idea of umpires having access to point totals was discussed, but this seemed like more work for all involved than was called for. If a coin flip is needed, it adds inconsequential time to the pre-game.
2. **Overruling an umpire on a on the field decision.** During one incident this season, a coach disagreed with an umpire's interpretation of a rule and rather than protest, the coach went to find the UIC and ask for a ruling. That particular UIC told the coach that the umpire misinterpreted the rule and then directed another umpire to go to the field and inform him. The UAT agreed that this was handled in the wrong manner. Any rule misinterpretation should be handled as a protest. If a UIC wants to discuss the interpretation with the umpire after the game then they should do so personally. It was also agreed on that this was an isolated incident and not reflective of overall UIC performance.
3. **Working both USSSA Nationals and local tournaments in the same week.** Some UIC's felt that umpires that work the first days of a national (for example Salisbury or Sterling) and then returned to work a local tournament were tired from the first half of the week and that it was reflected in the weekend performance. The UAT believes as independent contractors each umpire should know their own limits & make their own decisions as to if they could work for multiple days.
4. **Payment issues.** Some umpires have expressed concerns that payment for weekend tournaments are a few days later than in previous years. While this may be true, the Umpire Advisory Team felt that this was acceptable especially given the size of many of our tournaments. Also the use of Arbiter Pay was discussed. Some of our members use this system in their local county organizations. There was agreement that while this system does have a certain regularity, it also is not free. Discussion included how would these costs be dealt with (increases in umpire fees, etc.). This subject will continue to be explored.
5. **Arbiter blocks.** The UAT felt that there is still no good reason for SUM members not to set their blocks in a timely manner. It was felt that John Rimmell is only asking each of us to be professional. This is not directed at those who have legitimate family situations that require an umpire to turn back games. Setting blocks on Arbiter slightly more than a week ahead of the games is not unreasonable and should be the norm.

6. **New and back up balls for games.** There have been incidents where sites have run out of either new or used balls before the last game of the day is played. It seems that there are multiple reasons. Some umpires are taking more than one new ball (some times as many as three) to start a game. This is incorrect procedure. Some fields have a tendency to lose more balls because of their proximity to trees, weeds, etc. Upper management (**not** SUM management) felt that it was an umpire's responsibility to supervise teams/fans/siblings in the retrieving of balls during a game. The UAT and John Dye agree that this is **not** our responsibility. Also there is a tradition of upper management selling large amounts of used balls to individual teams. The UAT felt this practice need to be modified so as to have adequate softballs for game play.
7. **UIC visibility.** Some umpires have felt that there is a lack of UIC visibility at times. The UAT felt that the vast majority of UIC's are moving from field to field throughout the day, and that the lack of visibility may happen in isolated incidents. However, all involved need to be sure that they are clearly seen throughout the day.
8. **Field maintenance.** Individual field complexes need to continue to keep fields in good, playable condition. The mats that some fields use in batters boxes are becoming worn and torn. And the continuing inability of Bachman to maintain their fields, even with a minimal amount of rain, makes some of our members feel like being assigned to that complex means you will likely not be working if any rain is in the forecast.
9. **Lightning/thunder policy.** Many umpires have expressed that there needs to be a better understanding of whose responsibility it is to suspend games for lightning or thunder. The UAT understands that by rule, each umpire has jurisdiction over these matters on his/her field. But some feel that we may not be supported by tournament directors or upper management if we adhere strictly to procedure. There are times where a "these games have to be played" mentality have been pushed from upper management (**not** SUM management).
10. **Preseason games at CCBC-Catonsville.** The UAT has heard concerns that very few umpires are being asked, called on, or are volunteering to work the indoor preseason games at CCBC-Catonsville. A very small group of umpires are being asked to work the vast majority of these games. It is understood that these are not paid games but they are beneficial to umpires who want to get a head start for the spring season. It was noted that the assigning of these games needs to be more clear, upfront and timely. It was also discussed that since these are indeed games played under the auspices of the USSSA, using USSSA uniforms, that these games should be included in the year-end total. John Dye agreed.

