



The Ground Rules

The monthly e-newsletter of the
Amateur Baseball Umpires' Association

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Runchey Becomes Majority Owner

Dick Runchey, ABUA's first president and a member of its 2002 class of Hall of Fame inductees, became the majority shareholder in ABUA May 1, 2004, and will assume the position of chairman of the board.

"This is a dream come true," said Runchey, a member of the International Baseball Federation umpire subcommittee. "I knew when we formed ABUA in 1998 that I wanted to become the majority owner at some point. The timing is perfect for me to do this right now and I couldn't be happier."

For over 30 years, Runchey worked his way up through the professional and amateur ranks and built a very impressive resume. It took him only nine years from the time he attended the Al Somers Umpire School in 1973 to work his first College World Series game. As a rookie CWS umpire in 1982, Runch was awarded the first of four championship-game plate assignments (more than any other umpire in the modern era). In addition to the 1982 CWS, he also worked the prestigious event in 1983, 1990, 1994 and 1998. Dick worked 19 NCAA Division I Regionals from 1980-1998, and 12 Big Ten and three Mid-American Conference Tournaments.

Dick's plum international assignment was the 1992 Olympic Summer Games in Barcelona. The Plymouth, MI, native also worked the 1998 World Championships in Italy and the 1997 Pan American Games in Indianapolis.

Off the field, Dick has given of himself to countless ABUA and NCAA initiatives. In addition to his service as ABUA's president for its



Dick Runchey was the first president of the ABUA, and is now the Chairman of the Board.

first three years (1998-2000), he was an NCAA Baseball Regional Umpire Evaluator and committee member for nine years. Considered one of the best clinicians in the country, Dick is one of the ABUA's top teachers at camps and clinics around the country.

Said Runchey, "I look forward to working with our executive director, Ted Breidenthal, and our Executive Committee members to make ABUA the best association of amateur baseball umpires in the world. We owe it to all amateur umpires to provide them with the best available resources so they can become the best at their craft."

SEE PAGE 2 . . .

We've got a great tip on how to get things right when working the plate is going all wrong!

Tell us what you want...

Do you have a suggestion for a tip of the month?

Any exciting news to share?

Questions you want answered by the ABUA Board?

Send Doug an e-mail at nyyank@comcast.net and we'll do our best to give you what you want!



Remember....

One of the benefits of your ABUA membership is the 10 percent discount you get when you order from Honig's!

Now is the time to order all your new equipment and uniforms for summer through Honig's!

Tip of the Month...

Working the plate when everything is going wrong!

It's that time of year, isn't it? We haven't missed a pitch but for some reason during our next time out, it seems we can't get any pitches right. We can only hope that the pitch is hit or is so far off the plate the BULL has to jump out of the way. Well here are a couple of tips that I have used that can get you back into the groove.

1. The best tip I can give you is to Go Back to the Basics. Whatever you learned from an umpire clinic or other umpire that got you started, go back to it. I was taught to call pitches by using the method used at Professional Umpire School. "On the Rubber, Get set, Call it." This method will slow your timing down, get you focused and will get you back on

track.

2. Move back- I see many umpires almost leaning on catchers. By moving back even a couple of inches you will be amazed how much more time you will buy before you make your call.

3. Grab body parts: The grabbing of a wrist, the hand on a knee or on the back of the thigh seems to make us think before we have to move that right arm. Again, we're buying time.

Calling pitches is Timing, Timing, Timing. 99% of the time we miss a pitch is because we are too quick. Hope you never have to use one or more of these tips but just in case I know they will help.

-- Dick Runchey

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