

The right call

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2
APRIL 15, 2001

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ABUA Membership Hits Extra Bases With Recent Swing!!!

Membership update

Optimism in ABUA has not been higher as our association swelled to 842 members in early April. We also have 16 local associations that are ABUA members. Thanks to all of you who believe in what we are doing and what we are offering amateur umpires. Please

continue to talk us up with your fellow umpires.

In the next two years, we plan to develop working alliances with state high school associations and college conferences to provide intensive, hands-on, educational instruction. Stay tuned!!

ABUA vs. NASO Insurance...Make The Right Call

We have received a number of inquiries regarding insurance benefits for ABUA's individual members. The concern is whether the local association insurance program (LOAN), which ABUA local associations have the option to purchase through NASO, is comprehensive enough to cover individual umpires. The answer is **NO**. **The ABUA insurance plan is more beneficial to umpires because it includes accident medical, game-fee replacement and general liability coverage AS PART OF your membership fee.** The LOAN insurance program that ABUA local associations have the option to purchase DOES NOT cover umpires with these benefits. The LOAN insurance program is a general liability policy that covers the local association and its board of directors. The plan also affords each individual member of the LOAN association with accidental death and dismemberment coverage but does not include accident, medical or game-fee replacement. Both programs provide specific benefits that cover specific situations.

John Stransky from Special Markets has provided the following examples of how each coverage works. Example 1: You are a member of an association and not a member of ABUA. Your association assigns you to work a game and one of the participants is injured. After the game you write up an incident report describing what happened. Two years later you are named in a lawsuit. Your local association is not named in the lawsuit. Coverage through the LOAN Program covers your association and board of directors. Because the suit has been filed against you personally, no benefits from the LOAN program insurance will kick in. LOAN program insurance will provide legal defense for the association, not just you. Any judgments against you and the association would be paid up to the policy limits. Example 2: Using the example from above let's look at the ABUA Insurance Program and the differences between the two. With the ABUA General Liability coverage for you will be covered individually. The policy will supply defense and pay settlement/judgment amounts up to the policy limit. Again, if both you and your association are named

in the lawsuit, one attorney will be assigned to protect you and the association. Example 3: Again, using the same example as above, let's look at what happens when the individual is a member of ABUA and the association is not a member of the ABUA local association plan. The individual ABUA member that is named in the lawsuit will have coverage under the ABUA Insurance Program. The association that the member belongs to will not have any coverage if named in this lawsuit. The directors and officers of the association or the association it self, including the members, may be required to cover the cost of the judgments and attorney fees for the defense in the suit. It is essential that you as an individual and the association you

(See ABUA Insurance p. 5)

ABUA Lineup

C.J.'s The Golden Rule

C.J. Mitchell is like genuine 14 carat gold...with special emphasis on the genuine part. Chuck "Bo Bo" Brayton, the former Washington State head baseball coach, echoed that when he watched Mitchell working an A-Legion tournament. Needless to say, the Cougars mentor was impressed with his discovery. Mitchell, work as a replacement was in the right spot at "replacement" of this which led to a place on staff, "Everything that." Proof of is easy to find in the border of Oregon and is the assignor for Eastern Washington Lewis and Clark Col-all the assignments for ball. If anything big the Northwest, it's phone hasn't stopped year as an umpire, worked his first full



C.J. Mitchell
ABUA Hall of Fame

Mitchell's meteoric rise up the umpiring ladder was due to a strong adherence to the spirit of the Golden Rule. "I don't put players and coaches down...telling them to sit down and shut up," Mitchell said. Not surprisingly, Mitchell's attitude, honed by his years in the human resources field, gave him the calm demeanor of a veteran who has been there. "Let it happen, and listen. Everybody's not out to get you." Admittedly, he likes it better when things are tense and the game is on the line. "I work better when the pressure is on."

And for Mitchell, there is always something going on. Mitchell worked his first NCAA Division I Regional in 1976 and enjoyed six return visits to the postseason, including four trips to Omaha. He worked the plate in 1984 for the USA Olympic Team that featured a bevy of soon-to-be major league stars, including Mark McGwire. He was called on again four years later and handled the 1988 squad's exhibition in Spokane, Washington. He also appeared in one NAIA World Series. His 1977 appearance at the CWS marked the first time umpires were selected from around the U.S. "We paved the way for what has become a tremendous program."

Mitchell's pride is borne from a love for the game. On being an umpire, he muses, "Some people say the life of an official is all bad. Well, not from my side." Of his career, which is by no means over, Mitchell's words are as good as gold; "All I do is enjoy my work. I'm having a blast." *By Dan Weikle*

who was called in to in the tournament, the right time. Said the unplanned opportunity, the Pac-8 umpiring turned into gold after Mitchell's gilded touch Northwest along the Washington State. He Eastern Oregon and Universities, as well as lege. He also handles high school and legion happens in baseball in C.J.'s call. And his ringing since his third where he not only year of American Le-

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NFHS
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The *Right Call* is published quarterly. All rights are the property of *The Amateur Baseball Umpires Association, Inc.*, 9227 England, Overland Park, KS 66212. To join the ABUA call 502-240-0948 or email cbar10111@aol.com.

**Professional
Umpires for
Amateur Baseball**

A Message From the Executive Director

The ABUA will solicit the assistance of the National Federation of State High School Associations and the 50 state high school activities associations to broaden our reach and scope. This will identify candidates who are worthy of induction into the ABUA Hall of Fame. By involving the state high school activities associations, we will give them ownership in the process and be assured that the nominees they endorse exemplify the highest standards of sportsmanship, moral character and ethical conduct.

In April, I will mail an informational package and nomination form to the executive directors of all 50 state high school activities associations. A hall of fame screening committee, made up of ABUA members, will review the nominations this summer and make its recommendations to the ABUA board of directors in September. The board will announce the Class of 2002 Hall of Fame inductees in the October

ABUA newsletter. All of the high school candidates will be judged on their significant and/or long-term contributions to umpiring at the interscholastic level. The accomplishments of the candidates must be worthy of national recognition for them to be considered. Feel free to contact me at theidenthal@prodigy.net or 913/648-8177 if you would like to submit a nomination for a high school or college umpire who you feel is worthy of induction in the ABUA Hall of Fame.

Fall 2001 Clinic

We are in the early stages of organizing a clinic this fall in Lincoln, NE. We will announce details at www.umpire.org and in the July ABUA newsletter. If you or your association is interested in a one-day clinic this fall, contact Bob Jones at 816/356-5001.

More Legislative Help for Umpires?

A bill in the Kansas House of Representatives could make threatening or striking a sports official a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$2,000, said Rep. Mike O'Neal, chairman of the House judiciary committee.

"This bill could potentially double the fines," O'Neal said in a recent article in the *University Daily Kansan*, the school newspaper at the University of Kansas. "We have a general law in place for battery but it does not specifically say sports officials."

O'Neal said the current law, which carries a maximum fine of \$1,000, also protects other people on the court or playing field.

"A coach who is struck by a parent for pulling his son out of the game is protected by the same law that protects the sports official," O'Neal said. "It covers all those situations." Brian Cooper, a senior at Kansas who works high school baseball and basketball, thinks this bill will provide more protection for officials on the field.

"Parents and coaches get caught up in the moment of the game, so with this bill, if you strike an official, it won't be regular battery. (The offense) will be bumped up a level, which hopefully will make people think before threatening an official."

Umpire Tips On Being An Independent Contractor

As amateur umpires we generally operate as "independent contractors" under the law. Since amateur umpires are not "employees," league assignors and schools are not responsible for withholding taxes, providing workman's compensation or liability insurance, or abiding by state and federal wage and hour laws. Neither are they liable for our acts and omissions if we cause injury to others.

Still, with the changing nature of IRS regulations and other statutes, umpire associations often ask, "What can we do to insure our umpires are independent contractors?" Before exploring three simple tips that should help, let's consider what the law generally provides.

What separates "employees" from "independent contractors" is the degree of supervision provided by the "master."

When the master hires a servant for a desired result and the servant is not subject to control as to the manner in

which he performs the acts necessary to accomplish the result, the servant remains an "independent contractor."

Umpiring lends itself to "independent contractor" status. Virtually all umpires are able to control when and where they work by rejecting particular assignments without losing their "job." To follow are some tips to maintain independent contractor status:

1. Sign a Contract. Many associations require their umpires to sign an agreement which acknowledges that they are retained as independent contractors, and thus responsible for paying their own taxes. If you are unable to locate a sample, contact Chuck Barnett with the ABUA.

2. Require Members to Maintain Liability Insurance. One hallmark of an independent contractor is that he maintains insurance coverage. Requiring liability insurance is a good idea for many reasons, not the least of which is preserving "independent contractor" status. Membership in the ABUA

includes liability coverage, and given the reasonable cost of membership, there's no good reason not to require your members to join as a condition of working in the association.

3. Be Diligent With Tax Reporting. Since independent contractors are not considered employees, money paid to them is reported on IRS 1099-MISC forms, rather than IRS W-2s. If your umpires are paid through the association, be diligent in reporting the fees. As you prepare tax returns for your association, be sure you report the payments made to umpires as the appropriate operating expense. It's also a good idea to consult a CPA for help with tax reporting.

As always, you should consult with an attorney in your state to insure that nothing unique to your state's laws changes the suggestions contained here, as they are only intended to reflect the generalities of the law.

By: Jason Reed

USA/NCAA Updates

USA BASEBALL ACCEPTING 2001 UMPIRE RESUMES

Terry Mann of Phoenix has been selected as the USA Baseball Umpire Coordinator for assignments within the U.S. His responsibilities include umpire selection and coordination for all USA Baseball assignments for competitions in the U.S. Rich Fetchiet will continue to recommend umpires for International assignments for USA Baseball. The number of assignments within the U.S. will decrease slightly this year as 2001 is an off-Olympic year.

Assignments usually gear up just prior to and including the year the Summer Olympics are held.



The USA Collegiate Team will be touring the U.S. sometime this summer. As the schedule becomes avail-

able, Mann will be contacting ABUA umpires interested in USA Baseball assignments. Interested umpires should send a baseball resume listing their years and level of umpiring experience, along with the following information: name, address, phone numbers for home, work and fax, email address and social security number. Anyone interested in being considered should contact Terry Mann, USA Baseball Umpire Coordinator by fax (520) 885-2211 or email: usaump@aol.com.

NCAA Names Umpire As Rules Editor

Rich Fetchiet, a key ABUA leader since 1998, has been appointed to succeed Bill Thurston as secretary-rules editor of the NCAA Baseball Rules Committee. Fetchiet has over 20 years of collegiate, national and international umpiring and umpire-related administrative experience.

Rich is currently Supervisor of Baseball Umpires for the Big Ten, Mid-American, Midwestern Collegiate, GLIAC and MIAA Conferences. He is on the NCAA National Umpire Program Advisory Committee and is the ABUA Liaison to both USA Baseball and the International Baseball Association.

Fetchiet retired from active umpiring after the 2000 season. Prior to that he umpired numerous Division I conference tournaments and made three




College World Series appearances, including serving as the plate umpire for the 1999 national championship game. Included among

Rich's international tournaments are the Pan Am Games, World Cup Qualifier, Intercontinental Cup, World Championships and the 2000 Olympic Games. In 1997, the International Baseball Association named him Umpire of the Year. Fetchiet is a higher education administrator at the University of Michigan School of Dentistry. Rich and his wife, Kay, and two children currently reside in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Michigan To Host First Umpire Evaluation Camp

The Collegiate Baseball Umpires Association (CBUA) of Michigan and the United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) are teaming together to conduct their first college umpire evaluation camp. The camp, which sold out immediately, will be held June 22-24, 2001 in Chelsea, Michigan. A total of 24 entry-level college umpires will receive live-game evaluations, pre-game and postgame critiques, and written summaries of their performance.

Duane Owens (USSSA) and Rich Fetchiet (CBUA) are orchestrating this prototype event with renowned umpires Dick Runchey, Perry Costello and Andy Rieman serving as evaluators. Said Fetchiet, "This a tremendous opportunity for up-and-coming college umpires to show their stuff in front of influential college evaluators."



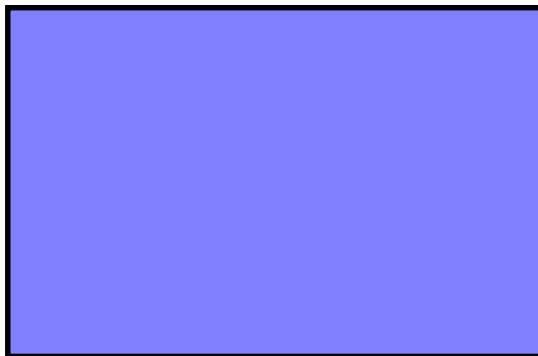
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Association Profile

In each edition of *The right call*, an umpire's association will be profiled to learn what associations are doing to promote professional amateur umpires. This edition's profile is the Kentuckiana Baseball Umpire Association (KBUA), Louisville, KY.

Sometime in the mid 1960s, the Kentucky High School Athletic Association mandated the creation of associations to enhance the skills of high school officials. As a result of this mandate, the Kentuckiana Baseball Umpires Association was formed. At the time of its formation, the KBUA was comprised of nine men who had, up until that time, received game assignments from individual schools in the area. Umpires negotiated game fees

conduct training on field mechanics, and rule changes and interpretations. It conducts an annual mechanics clinic prior to the season, and provides training during the fall of the year. It has formed a partnership with the Southeast Independent Umpires Association



tion (a college umpire association) and the ABUA to conduct a fall clinic at Morehead State University.

The association is funded through membership dues and the sale of advertisement space in the association's directory of officials.

Umpire Position

your partners is to take the position from the start that there are no rookies and that you will carry your share of the load. I know this from experience. Had I not let my surroundings intimidate me when I first got to the NFL and passed on some calls because my veteran partners did not call anything, I would still be in the league.

By not acting like I belonged there from the start, I convinced my colleagues that I didn't. Don't make the same mistake. Stand up and MAKE THE RIGHT CALL!!
By: Jon Bible

This directory provides information about each member of the association. It is distributed to each school, baseball coach, athletic director, and advertiser/sponsor of the directory.

Each year, the membership gathers to honor those who have distinguished themselves during the season. A committee selects members to receive various awards, including Rookie Umpire of the Year, Most Improved Umpire, and various awards named for those who have contributed to the KBUA's success. The KBUA has been responsible for improving the skills of umpires, improving game fees and standardizing the uniform and equipment umpires use.

If you do not have a local association, or would like to ask questions regarding improving your association, we would be glad to help. You may contact Marty McDermott, at mcmuttman@aol.com, or by writing to the KBUA, P.O. Box 99482, Louisville, KY, 40269-0482

ABUA Insurance (from page 1)

belong to have both coverages. If you have questions about either policy, please contact John Stransky at Special Markets Insurance Consultants at (800) 727-7642 or email him at: John@specialmarkets.com.



Professionalism with Integrity

Sometimes it is tougher to stay at a particular level than it is to get there. The best advice I can give in this regard is to "own your position" from day one. By that I mean that you must, besides knowing the rules and mechanics, have the guts to do what is right. Did you see a ninth-inning balk with the tying run on third? Don't "pass" on it just because the crew chief did not call it. Does the home coach need to be ejected? If so, do it. Will you screw up? Sure, and when you do, you will learn from it. In the end, however, the only way to gain the respect of the participants and

VISIT OUR WEB SITE
www.abua.com

High School . . . On Deck

ABUA Needs YOUR Help To Attract High School Umpires

The ABUA needs your help in building THE database of high school baseball umpires in the U.S. We are in the process of procuring 2001 umpire directories of registered high school baseball umpires from all 50 states. To date, the ABUA has received directories from Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, Michigan, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wisconsin. We would like to receive directories from as many of the remaining 43 states as we possibly can.

If you or someone you know has access to a state high school directory that we do not have, please contact Ted Breidenthal, ABUA Executive Director, at 913/648-8677 or tbreidenthal@prodigy.net. "One of our goals for 2002 is to spread the ABUA message to every high school baseball umpire in the country," said Breidenthal. "These lists will allow the ABUA to reach thousands of umpires who could greatly benefit from membership in the ABUA." The ABUA very much appreciates your help with



this important endeavor. Hopefully, with your help we can reach umpires like yourself from throughout the country.

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