

The right call

ABUA Inducts Five at Fourth Annual Hall of Fame Banquet

It was a night of celebration January 12, 2002, in Dallas as the ABUA held its 4th Annual Hall of Fame Banquet. This year's inductees were Al Alford, Al Forman, Riccardo Fraccari, Brad Rumble and Dick Runchey. The festive dinner and ceremony with nearly 100 attendees highlighted the talents and dedication of the Hall of

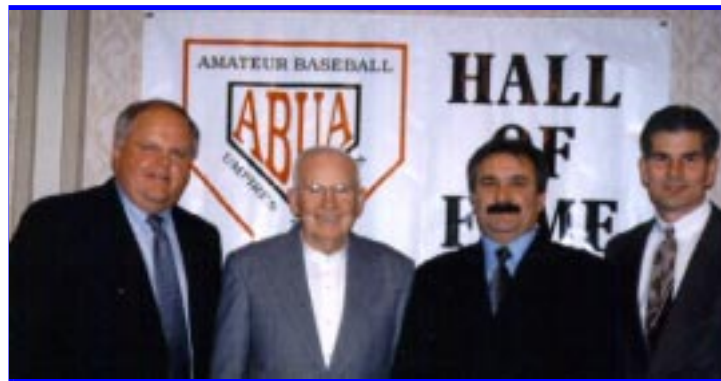
Famers. Emotions filled the air as presenters relived the lives and contributions of the inductees.

Runchey, the first ABUA president, gave thanks to those who made this honor possible.

First Instructors Clinic Webcast Set for February 8th at www.umpire.org

For the first time, the ABUA is offering the most technologically advanced educational materials to its members in 2002. As a new benefit for members, the ABUA will broadcast over the Internet the 2002 Instructors Clinic Webcast live at 8 p.m. Central time Friday, February 8, 2002. Following the live webcast, the material will be archived and can be accessed by members at any time.

Said Runchey, "This is the most gratifying day in my umpiring career. Thank you for allowing me the



Hall of Famers L-R: Runchey, Alford, Fraccari, Rumble

chance to umpire with you guys." All of the inductees paid tribute to families, friends and fellow umpires for their support.

Fraccari didn't allow his day-long flight from Italy or jet lag to dampen

his spirits. He enlightened the crowd with his Italian flare and stories of his experiences at numerous international events.

Al Forman could not attend due to health issues. He will be recognized at next year's event.

Dick Runchey Award

The first ever ABUA Dick Runchey Award, which is awarded to the individual who exemplifies leadership and service to the ABUA, and

in the process improves the overall quality of officiating in amateur baseball, was presented to John and Melany Kleis.

Thanks to all of those who attended this year's gala event.

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ABUA Hall of Fame

ABUA's World Ambassador



Anibal Rosario
ABUA Hall of Famer

Anibal Rosario has called baseball in 16 countries. He has umpired in every Olympic tournament. He has been the chief umpire for five gold medal games. In the world baseball community, the name Anibal Rosario is legendary. But even though he is one of the giants in the umpiring community, he does not consider himself a celebrity. He is a humble man of quiet dignity who is met with global respect wherever he travels.

"Un hombre de barrio," is how his protégé, Willie Rodriguez, describes him. This means Rosario is "a man of the neighborhood." Rodriguez, who first met Rosario in 1975 while he was in high school, speaks admirably of this man who has become a legend in Puerto Rico. First introduced to him by his father, who

was the director of umpiring for Puerto Rico, Rodriguez is one of Rosario's biggest admirers. "He brings a lot of pride and dedication to his job. He is an example to follow. He has earned respect from every team in every tournament. His reputation is impeccable."

Rosario's neighborhood happens to be Arroyo, Puerto Rico, where he is a physical education teacher at the Jose M. Massari Elementary School. But, predictably, Rosario's influence on his students goes far beyond the classroom. Rodriguez explains, "After class at school, he takes care of those kids without fathers. The kids ask him for his blessing, just like he is their father."

This year, at the 34th World Cup Games in Taipei, Taiwan, Rosario was a father figure to the 33 umpires assigned from around the world to umpire the tournament. When the Games Commission Chairman, Osvaldo Gil was informed that the assigned Umpire Director would not be able to attend, he turned to Rosario to pick up the lead. Without missing a beat, Rosario and his youthful protégé Rodriguez conducted two days of intensive mechanics instruction, and Rosario assisted Gil in the daily umpire assignments.

Rosario took his new position in stride despite being placed in a supervisory role; it eliminated him from umpiring the final gold medal game. He approached his work in typical fashion. Fun loving, with an infectious laugh off the field, Rosario approaches his work with the unbridled joy and dedication typical of one who has achieved great success. "I'm serious about the work when I get on the field. I want to do the best I can. Every game, no matter who plays, I want to be remembered as a good umpire."

And how will Rosario be remembered? A man of the neighborhood, perhaps; but more like a citizen of the world. Besides his considerable Olympic experience, Rosario also has worked the Caribbean World Series five times, traveling from Cuba to Central America, and places in between such as Mexico and Venezuela. All told, he has worked 27 international competitions. Of his umpiring career, Rosario says, "It's been like a dream. You know, you have to have a dream."

Anibal Rosario, a man of the neighborhood and citizen of the world, lives in Arroyo, Puerto Rico, with his wife Juanita, and his two sons, Aburg and Anibal Jr. Rosario will retire after next year's international competition in Cuba. He has established The School for Latin American Umpiring in Puerto Rico and plans to devote himself to the training of new umpires. "It's like a relay race," he explains. "I'm handing off the baton." *By Dan Weikle*

The right call

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From the ABUA Web Site: www.umpire.org

The ABUA web site, www.umpire.org offers members the opportunity to discuss various umpire topics. Below are some excerpts from the site. Take time to go to our site and share your experiences with other umpires.

Ejections

"I favor the little gesture rather than the big sweeping move because the latter is completely in your face. In football, when we flag a coach or bench a player for unsportsmanlike conduct, we don't jump up and down and ram the flag in their face, and basketball officials no longer break their fingers calling a "T." We just flip the flag in football and call an unobtrusive, quiet "T" in basketball. Why should baseball be any different? Just because of tradition? It's just like the big, in-your-face (and totally unnecessary) gyrations on a strike three. Watch the big leaguers and you'll see very little of that. I don't waste any effort on ejections." *Jon Bible*

Missing a Call

"One thing is for certain, we are all human and no matter how many clinics or rules interpretation meetings we attend or message boards we visit, ultimately we will blow a call. We just hope it isn't in a big spot that can either hurt our advancement or, perhaps the more important issue cause a team

a game. Sometimes I envy umpires who simply show up and umpire for the money only. I do not envy them because I look up to them or aspire to be like them, but I envy them because nothing bothers them." *Pete Booth*

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www.umpire.org

"I'm not going to site any particular call, but have I ever taken a call home with me? Absolutely. I've gone to bed with them, had nightmares about them and gotten up the next morning with that call first and foremost on my mind. I then continue to assess if I was in the right position; did I really look at the call before I made it or did I anticipate and react based on what I thought was going to happen. After several years it has gotten better and a lot of that I attribute to this discussion board, reading and listening to those who have gone before me. With time also has come the confidence I feel we gain through that experience. But I would be lying to say a call I perceive as possibly being missed does not bother me. I tend to be my own worst critic and hope I continue to learn as long as I can still roll the indicator." *Anonymous*

Yelling at a Coach

Players or coaches need not yell comments across a field regarding your partner. That holds true if I am base umpire and they yell something at my partner that I happen to hear. Put a halt to that type of behavior immediately. As others point out, your choice of words are important in not further escalating the situation. Your goal is to diffuse the situation and/or coach. A strong, authoritative statement suffices in letting them know it's not going to continue. If someone away from me yells it, then I will let my partner handle it. I try not to "yell" across the field. Doing that lowers me their level." *B. Fair*

"I think saying "shut your mouth" or "shut up" or "one more word and you're gone" and things of that nature are unduly provocative. Now, I'm not going to suggest that I'm some sort of angel who has never used those expressions. But generally speaking I don't. What is someone's gut reaction when they are told something like that? To fire back, bristle up, etc. Those are fighting words. I think the same thing can be accomplished in other ways. For example, my favorite term is "knock it off." And instead of one more word, I might say "I've heard enough. No more." This gets the point across but not in such a way as to provoke even more." *Jon Bible*

Instructor Clinic. . . Continued From Page 1

You must use Windows Media to watch our webcast on your computer, and it is best viewed using Internet Explorer 6.0. You can download Windows Media for free by going to www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/players.asp. Please allow yourself plenty of time before the live webcast to download the software. Topics covered in the webcast are: High School Rules (McNeely); Working the Plate:



Teaching of Cage Drills and Mechanics (Runchey); Teaching Techniques (Terry Barmann); Three-Man Mechanics (Joe Burlson); Qualities of a Good Umpire (Jon Bible); Working the Bases in a Two-Man System (Bill Davis); and Handling Situations (Randy Christal and Jon Bible).

The webcast is a members-only benefit for ABUA members. After the initial live webcast, you can access the materials at any time. I hope you enjoy the ABUA Instructors Clinic Webcast.

Website To Offer Exclusive Members Only Section

Starting February 1, 2002, the ABUA website, www.umpire.org, will offer an exclusive "Members Only" section. This section will feature past and present newsletters, college and high school rules tests and other exclusive members-only information.

To access the "Members Only" section, go to the "ABUA" icon link located on the left side of the home page. Once there, the user name is ABUA and the password is 2002.

ABUA Umpires Travel to World Cup Games



(Top L-R: Cesar Valdes/Cuba, Nelson Diaz Blanco/Cuba, Joe Bureson/USA. Bottom L-R: Tito Gonzales/Panama, Dan Weikle/USA, Leonel Cajina/Nicaragua). *Dan Weikle, contributing editor to The right call, recently returned from Taipei, Taiwan where he umpired the 34th Annual World Cup Games. Dan chronicles his trip, which included working with ABUA Hall of Famer Anibal Rosario.*

One of the best things about the trip was that I wasn't the only American umpire assigned to the games. Joe Bureson, the Mountain West Supervisor and a recent NCAA College World Series umpire, also was assigned. I was fortunate to be selected by the IBAF. When I arrived at Taiwan's Chiang Kai-Shek International Airport, Bureson and our interpreter, Paul J.J. Huang, were there to pick me up. We were squired out to a waiting van by Paul and several other interpreters (university students majoring in English) and taken to our hotel along a freeway system designed by the

Los Angeles Transit Authority. The first thing you learn about Taiwan, other than you can't read any of the signs, is that the drivers don't pay attention to any of the lane markings. It's every man for himself and you only move over into the proper lane when

you get honked at. There are over 30 million people on the Island, and the majority of them ride two-wheel motor scooters.

The hotel we stayed at, the Asia World, was one of the largest in Taipei. The Taiwanese people have embraced the Western culture; it was like being in New York. There were a lot of taxis and other means of transportation. It seemed the drivers didn't speak English, and didn't know where anything was.

Cesar Valdez, from Cuba, was one of the umpires. He is most remembered for body slamming a spectator on the outfield grass behind second base during the Cuba vs. Baltimore Orioles exhibition game a couple of years ago. Valdez said Castro rewarded him with a new car. Marco Scretti, an Italian from Rome was known as the "Big Dago." He talked like my grandmother but didn't know who Joe DiMaggio was. Most of the umpires were

given nicknames; it helped build good relationships. Hsu Hsieh-Yu (Swee), the local Chinese umpire, was a wheeler-dealer, and knew everyone in town. He took us Karaoke singing one night to a private club over a guy's garage, and knew every back alley shortcut to Tien-Mu Stadium where the Games were played.

Anibal Rosario ran the show, assisted by Willie Rodriguez who worked the plate for the Gold Medal game where the Cubans defeated the USA 5-2. I worked the Bronze medal game won by Chinese Taipei, which defeated Japan. That was an historic game as far as umpire assignments were concerned: two Cubans and two Americans worked the game. During the Games, 16 different countries played an American game, which suggested how important America is to the world community. And in light of the tragedies from 9/11, it was refreshing to see the world competition with such flavor. The players played like Americans; the competition was similar; and the coaches were like American coaches, doing what it takes to win and of course coming out to argue with their interpreters.

The chance to work the World Games is something I will always cherish, as was working with umpires from all over the world. I made some friends and despite cultural differences, we were brothers in America's game for 17 great days. Thanks ABUA for the dream of a lifetime.

NCAA Updates

College World Series. The NCAA baseball championship might be changed to a best-of-three series from the current single-game format. A proposal to revise the series will be considered by NCAA officials in February, said Dennis Poppe, the Association's senior director for baseball and football. If it passes, the national champion would be decided by a best-of-three series that would be played after the conclusion of the double-elimination portion of the event. The proposal, if passed, would put the new format into effect starting with the 2003 season. (Source: www.ncaa.org)

NCAA 2002 Rule Changes 2: A catch has been further defined as: a defensive player's release of the ball must be voluntary and intentional.

2: Obstruction is the act of a fielder, while not in possession of the ball, impeding the progress of any runner.

5-2-f: The use of video cameras is restricted behind home plate, defined as the area from the 1B cutout to the 3B cutout. Monitors for viewing during the game are prohibited from the dugout or bench area, as well as adjacent areas.

5-15: Suspended player(s) due to a fight are restricted to designated spectator areas and are prohibited from any communication or contact with team, coaches or bench personnel until the completion of the contest.

7-11-s: With fewer than two outs and a legal pitch hits a runner from 3B trying to score with two strikes on the batter, the umpire shall call strike three, score the run and all other runners advance one base.

8-2-e-(2): Any runner attempting to advance on a catcher's interference with the

batter's swing shall be awarded the base the runner is attempting to reach.

8-7-b: Collision Rule. If the defensive player blocks the plate/base clearly without possession of the ball, obstruction shall be called, runner is safe and a delayed dead-ball shall be called.

9-1-b-(2): The pitcher shall deliver the pitch from the set position only after coming to a complete and discernible stop with his entire body.



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 Mid Atlantic Collegiate (MAC) Association of Virginia.

The Mid Atlantic Collegiate Umpires Association, a charter member of the ABUA, began operation in Virginia in January 1993. At that time there was a need for an organization that would specialize in college umpiring. Before this time, a local high school or recreational umpire association assigned baseball games, including college games.

The current director of the organization, John Porter, started talks with all of the local groups that assigned college baseball from Baltimore to Wilmington, NC, in the spring of 1992. During those talks, Porter identified the areas of concern of each group and worked on a plan to form a consortium of associations for mutual benefit.

The focus was, and still is, umpire development. In January 1993, local associations established an annual baseball umpires clinic specifically oriented toward the needs of an umpire working NCAA baseball. An NCAA regional evaluator conducted an all-day clinic at Georgetown University: About 50 umpires representing four of the largest umpire associations in area, attended the clinic.

Most of these umpires had never attended a clinic specifically designed for

college umpires. The annual meetings of these umpires from different metropolitan areas has proved to be the key to increased standards, and the sharing of ideas, training materi-



als, and techniques. The continued annual support of NCAA supervisors like Dave Yeast, Tony Thompson, Bob Nelson, Scott Graham and Nick Zibelli has been invaluable. The annual meeting became a two-day event in 1994 and umpires now come from seven states to attend the event.

For the last three years, MAC has conducted a state of the art, seven-day umpire school in Florida for its college umpires. This is a very intensive and thorough three-man crew training camp for umpires focusing on NCAA rules and mechanics. All attendees are challenged and receive a comprehensive seven-day menu that includes field drills, cage work, col-

lege games and classroom instruction. This camp is exclusively attended by MAC members.

MAC has an experienced training staff of 50 instructors capable of teaching and supervising every element of umpiring from basic mechanics, to rules, to on-field judgment, to handling situations. Many of the instructors were trained as teachers as well as umpires. Over the last 10 years, MAC has developed an extensive library of training materials, booklets, slide presentations and handouts for all umpires to use. This addition has provided valuable training to new and experienced umpires alike.

Porter is the umpire supervisor of the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA). The CAA has member universities up and down the Eastern seaboard from New York to North Carolina. His duties include assigning over 150 umpires at the college level, including the local summer Valley Baseball League. In addition, MAC recruits, trains, supervises and assigns over 250 additional umpires at 85 high schools and 50 recreational baseball leagues. MAC employs two additional full time administrators. Bob Gustin, an ACC and regional umpire, heads the training and development of umpires, while Rob Porter handles the web site and computerized schedules/assignments. In short, MAC continues to recruit and grow its own umpires, while nurturing them with a comprehensive development and training program that produces quality amateur umpires.

By John Porter

NCAA Kicks-off 2002 Umpire Clinics

The NCAA kicked-off its baseball umpire clinics for the 2002 season in Dallas and Atlanta the weekends of January 12th and 20th.

Highlighted at the Dallas Clinic included Dave Yeast, NCAA National Umpire Coordinator, who covered NCAA umpire guidelines, along with recent updates and changes to the NCAA Umpire Improvement Program. In addition, Richard Fetchiet, NCAA secretary-rules editor, covered 2002 rules changes and points of emphasis. Individual conferences

held meetings to go over respective policies and procedures.

The highlight of the clinic was a presentation by Ralph Nelson, VP of Major League Umpires, who discussed the MLB umpire program and the future direction of major league umpires. Attendees were given tremendous insight into how MLB umpires are trained and evaluated in the areas of the new strike zone and beanball incidents.

The Atlanta Super Clinic in-

cluded a similar Dallas agenda, along with various individual umpire presentations on rules, umpire mechanics and other game situations.

The purpose of these clinics is to further train and develop NCAA umpires in preparation for regular season and postseason competition. The camaraderie at the clinics is an initial step toward improving on-field performance at the NCAA level.



High School . . . On Deck

The High School Appeal

Just like General MacArthur in the Philippines, the “appeal” rule has returned to high school baseball. The new rule is different from the appeal rule used in other baseball rules codes. Can a verbal appeal be made while play continues? No. Can an appeal be made while the ball is dead? Yes. Following a pick-off play, is it still possible for the defense to appeal a missed base? Yes. At some point in

time during the season, you will be tested on the rule, on the field.



Lastly, make sure you know which umpire has touch/tag responsibility

for each base during an appeal situation. You don't want to put yourself in a situation where you and your partner are staring at each other wondering why the other one hasn't ruled on the appeal. On the other hand, we don't want both umpires making the call; the proverbial “safe-out” is not fun. Many have wanted this rule back in high school for some time. Now that it is, let's make it successful.

By Kyle McNeely

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