

The right call

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ABUA Passes 1000-Member Mark

On June 26, 2001, the ABUA reached an historic milestone as individual memberships passed the 1,000 member mark for the first time in the organization's history. Ted Breidenthal, executive director, called the membership attainment "a significant day for the ABUA." Breidenthal continued, "Passing the 1,000-member mark presents the ABUA

with significant opportunities in the coming year. We plan to help develop more amateur umpires than ever before." The ABUA would like to thank all its members for the continued support you have shown us through this period. We look forward to a long and continuing relationship with amateur umpires throughout the world.

Hall Of Fame Nomination Form Now Being Accepted

The ABUA currently is accepting Hall of Fame nominations from members. The inductees to the ABUA Hall of Fame have been recognized for their contributions and success in amateur baseball. To date, the ABUA has recognized 16

former umpires/administrators for their on- and off-the-field accomplishments. To nominate someone to the ABUA Hall of Fame, please complete the form inserted inside this newsletter. Deadline for nominations is September 15, 2001.

Send forms to Ted Breidenthal, ABUA, 9227 England, Overland Park, KS 66212. Please help the ABUA recognize our expert umpires/administrators.

ABUA Sets Future Camp Schedule

The ABUA is excited to announce five umpire camps for the remainder of 2001. Camp locations include: St. Louis, MO; West Palm Beach, FL; Phoenix, AZ; Houston, TX and Murray, KY. These

camps are an excellent opportunity for amateur umpires and ABUA members to hone their skills. These camps will offer umpires instructional presentations, cagework, videos and live-game feed-

back. The ABUA curriculum is designed to improve and professionalize umpire's talents. The classroom instruction and on-field evaluations are designed to provide the best camp scenario to develop your skills. ABUA camp instructors will include top NCAA and high school umpires as well as several current and former professional umpires. Please note the camp dates, locations, costs and contacts included in the box at the left. Call and sign up now for your next ABUA camp today!!!

ABUA 2001 Umpire Camps

ABUA St. Louis Camp

Date: September 21-23, 2001
Site: St. Louis, MO
Cost: \$200 ABUA Members/\$250 Non-members

ABUA South Florida Camp

Date: September 28-30, 2001
Site: West Palm Beach, FL
Cost: \$200 ABUA Members/\$250 Non-members

ABUA Houston Camp

Date: October 12-14, 2001
Site: Houston, TX
Cost: \$200 ABUA Members/\$250 Non-members

ABUA Southeast Camp

Date: October 12-14, 2001
Site: Morehead State University
Cost: \$175 ABUA Members/\$200 Non-members.
Contact Chuck Barnett at 502-291-5758.

ABUA Phoenix Camp

Date: November 2-4, 2001
Site: Phoenix, AZ Peoria Sports Complex
Cost: \$200 ABUA Members/\$250 Non-members

To register for any ABUA Camp, go to our website: www.umpire.org, call Bill Davis at 314-960-4761 or Dan Weikle at 303-469-4868.

ABUA Hall of Fame

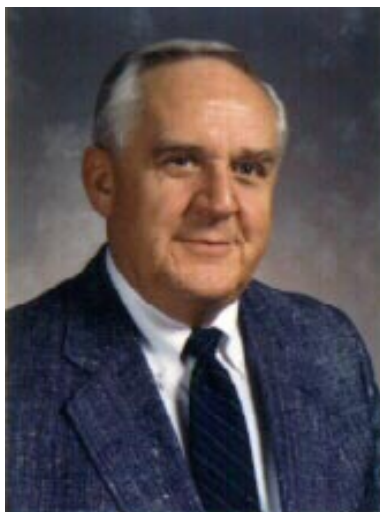
Cossey "Caught" It All

Doug Cossey was a first-year umpire in 1956, but he had been working behind the plate for at least half a lifetime. Doug Cossey was a catcher, and a good one. In 1955, he was invited to spring training with the Dodgers after a seven-year stint in the White Sox organization. So, as a blue-suited neophyte, you couldn't really call him a rookie, because as Cossey puts it, "I umpired every game I caught."

Experience was the best teacher, and Cossey was proof positive of the maxim, working college games fresh off the farm. He broke in with Notre Dame vs. Michigan as the plate umpire. "I could only work the plate," recalled Cossey drawing from his many years as a player. "I didn't know what the base umpire did." His partner that first day, not short on experience, was retired major leaguer George Soloman.

From a beginning that would have a lesser ump's head under water, Cossey began a career that saw him work baseball in the premier collegiate leagues in the Midwest, namely the Big 10 and Mid-America Conferences. He worked 32 NCAA Regional Tournaments and handled the College World Series seven times. He literally set the standard for others to follow and even mentored the current Big 10, C-USA and MAC supervisor, Rich Fetchiet. Cossey recalled a disagreement with his young protégé, which facilitated an in-between games rule book examination where Fetchiet scoured the book trying to end a disagreement with his partner. Although Cossey couldn't recall the exact rule in question, he did remember one thing. "I was right, although Fetch might not say so."

Reminder: Send all ABUA correspondence to PO Box 99482 Louisville, KY 40269-0482



Doug Cossey
Hall of Fame

Cossey seemed to thrive on these types of challenges as his career progressed. Cossey's biggest games came during the 1984 MLB umpire strike when he was named crew chief to umpire games at Detroit's Tiger Stadium. "It was a challenge of a lifetime," Cossey recalled, but like most umpires his most memorable game was also his quickest. At the 1977 College World Series,

Cossey drew Arizona State against South Carolina. "It was a 1:35 2-1 game." "It would be tough to get one of those today in Omaha." He was also the crew chief for the Bronze Medal game at the 1984 Olympics and later was sent to Australia by USA Baseball following in the footsteps of his partner of twenty years, and dear friend, the late Tom Ravishiere. "Rav could do it all on the field."

Today, at age 71, Cossey is still working in the game of baseball. After serving as an assistant baseball coach at Michigan State from 1991-96, he is still at the university handling game management duties and getting to see umpires. "I see some of the young guys umpiring and feel proud to know I helped pave the way for them."

And pave the way he has...he was inducted into the Eastern Michigan Hall of Fame, where he played collegiately, in 1986. Last year, Cossey was inducted into the ABUA Hall of Fame for his contributions to amateur baseball umpiring. "The opportunity to spend a night gathered with a group of legendary umpires and be in their company is a thrill I will cherish forever!!"

By Dan Weikle

VISIT OUR WEB SITE
www.umpire.org

The right call

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**Professional
Umpires for
Amateur Baseball**

Remembering/Forgetting My First Game

OK, so it's my first year of umpiring baseball. I have two seasons worth of game fees invested in equipment and uniforms. I walk around the house calling roaches "Safe!" or "Out!", and stop my wife when she tries to move a pan off the stove – "BALK!" My family thinks I am certifiably insane. My first game in blue was a JV Baseball game and I called the 2nd game by myself. I am fortunate enough to be living in a small community where no one takes anything or anyone too seriously, especially umpiring. I rose at 5:30 a.m. to travel to my very first preseason tourney (10, 12, and 14-year-olds). I arrived to discover my partner had attended a Major League Baseball Umpire School.

Greg (my partner) is a very good guy. He calls NCAA Division I baseball and high school. But I knew I was in some real trouble when he called me to the side for our pregame meeting and said, "Scott, I don't care if you're calling a little league t-ball game, call it like it's the 7th game of the World Series." I took the bases for game one and that is when my education began. Greg "moved" me around almost every pitch and the more he moved me, the more nervous I got. I had lost every ounce of sense between "Play Ball" and "SCOTT – OTHER SIDE! MOVE OVER!" By the 7th inning, I wanted to crawl into my equipment bag and have my wife plop it in the underbelly of a Greyhound bus going anywhere/out of here. This was definitely an umpire initiation lesson. Then in game two, I felt like throwing up.

Greg told me every inning what I was doing wrong. Over and over again, I told myself, just don't throw up on the catcher. Then game three of the day took a new turn. Greg had left and I was paired with a guy who also coaches – I had the dish again, despite my valiant efforts to get out of it. And I did something else even more odd – I RELAXED. Yeah, I missed some calls, but I was on my way. I learned a lot from those first two games in my version of "The Big Show." There is a fine line between learning from a pro and scrambling to please one. We are there for the players and to make it fun. Stay calm, pause between pitches, and remember how cleanly you made that one call at home when the roach tried to slide under the trim molding. *By Scott Watkins*

From The Desk Of The Executive Director

I'd like to kick off this column with a question that has caught my interest over the years: Are umpires, as a group, motivated to get better and improve? I mean, do umpires REALLY want to get better? Or are umpires more inclined to just get by on God-given ability and judgment?

If the answer is "yes," that most umpires do want to get better, how best do you improve your skills? My answer to that question is annual, on-going, educational camps or clinics. That's where the ABUA comes into play.

The ABUA's mission is "to improve the overall quality of officiating throughout amateur baseball,

and to provide a national organization under which local associations and individual umpires can promote professionalism, integrity and a love for the game of baseball." We have an aggressive plan to act upon this mission, and it's right around the corner.

The ABUA will conduct five intensive, three-day camps across the country this fall for high school and college umpires who aspire to become better. The camps will be held September 21-23 in St. Louis; September 28-30 in West Palm Beach, Florida; October 12-14 in two locations: Houston, TX and Morehead State University, KY; and November 9-11 in Phoenix. I highly recommend that you take advantage of this incredible learning op-

portunity and attend one of these camps. As an ABUA member, one of the greatest benefits is the 20 percent discount to all camps and clinics. Not only does this save you money but you get exposed to some of the best instructors in the country. The instructors who will staff ABUA camps truly are "teachers." They take this role seriously and will do whatever it takes to help you become a better umpire.

Please check out www.umpire.org frequently in the next few months, as we will post all the latest information for all five camps. I'm sure you will become a much better umpire by attending one of the ABUA's fall camps.

USA Baseball Updates

ABUA Finalizes 2001 Summer USA Schedule



With USA Baseball now in full swing, the ABUA is now finalizing its umpire schedule for this year. The National USA Team is in the middle of its 30-game summer swing, which includes a series in Japan and Alaska along with other game sites around the US. Terry Mann, ABUA/USA Umpire Assignor has been working with many local assignors in putting together this year's National Team umpire schedule. "The ABUA was able to secure several exclusive game assignments on the east coast with games against Taiwan in the latter part of July. In addition, a number of other National games in the midwest include some of our ABUA umpires from respective local areas where the games are being held."

Additional USA Baseball assignments include: David Rogers from Houston, TX, will travel to Vera Cruz, Mexico, to umpire the USA 15-16 year old Olympic Festival August 1-13, 2001. Also, a number of ABUA umpires were involved in umpiring the USA Junior Olympic Baseball Championships East (15-16 year olds) in Jupiter, Florida. Finally, Tucson, AZ, hosted the USA Junior Olympic Baseball Championships West July 23-30, 2001. Several ABUA umpires were selected to umpire this tournament. The ABUA will work with USA Baseball to increase future umpiring opportunities.



Recent USA National Team action during its USA tour.

CBUA/USSSA Eval Camp Marks Success

A total of 24 prospective college umpires participated in the June evaluation camp held in Chelsea, MI, cosponsored by the United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) and the Collegiate Baseball Umpires Association (CBUA). Each umpire worked plate and base assignments. Umpires received inning-by-inning instruction from camp evaluators Perry Costello, Bob Cox, Rich Fetchiet, Duane Owens, Andy Rieman and Dick Runchey. Crew instructions also took place and each umpire received valuable input from the evaluators throughout their assignments. Written evaluations were mailed to the campers after the tournament and will be forwarded to assignors at the request of the individual umpires. Said Fetchiet, "A couple of the umpires proved they're ready for Division I consideration and others enhanced their chances for more games at the junior- and small-college levels. A few of them confirmed they may best be suited for high school baseball. For a first attempt at a camp like this, we considered it very successful. We hope to offer a similar experience for interested umpires again next summer."



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ABUA Helps 1st Year Association Start-Up

In each edition of The right call, an umpire association will be profiled to learn what associations are doing to promote professional amateur umpires. This edition's profile is the Avon Grove Umpires Association (AGUA), Southeastern, PA.

The Avon Grove Umpires Association (AGUA) in Southeastern Pennsylvania has, in its first year of existence, assigned umpires for 4 leagues totaling more than 300 games. Although modest by some standards, this workload has proven to be plenty for a first-year association. AGUA has 24 members with varying experience, from seasoned high school varsity officials to first-year rookies. They are primarily focused on youth league baseball (ages 13-18), but the first organization to sign up was a local men's "over-30" league.

Meeting for the first time in January 2001, AGUA's founders were determined to organize a network of

umpires who are committed to continuous improvement and promoting a professional image of umpiring. They established guidelines for dress and appearance,



training and development goals, a code of ethics, and recruiting targets. The ABUA web site and staff were invaluable sources of information and assistance during AGUA's early days.

AGUA has recruited by working with a local Little League or-

ganization to identify interested candidates; it also conducts a rules and mechanics clinic. AGUA now assigns umpires for this organization's Junior and Senior leagues and also volunteers umpires to cover some games in the 10-12 year old league. The purpose of volunteering on the small field is to spread a professional image of umpires and to give back to the league in appreciation for agreeing to hire AGUA in its first year.

Word has spread quickly about AGUA's existence. Each week, it receives requests to cover games from leagues other than its core clients. AGUA will continue recruiting through the winter by advertising in local papers, offering informational meetings and clinics. Using materials from ABUA, NASO, and other sources, the Association hopes to continue with rapid growth and gear up to respond to the volume of game assignments coming its way.

By Steve Sunberg

Why Attend An Umpire Camp?

Everyone -- including me -- seems to be running an umpire camp these days. Camps can be beneficial in terms of learning basic plate and base mechanics, game control, and philosophy but I think too many umpires see them as "quick fixes" -- as a means of getting exposed quickly to the "right people" and "move up the ladder."

The fact is that camps do not afford observers a chance to decide if someone can umpire at a particular level. Primarily, I need to know whether you have a good sense of the college strike zone and can maintain it for nine innings, day after day, week after week; whether you can anticipate and defuse volatile situations; and many similar factors I cannot determine at a camp. So take camps for what they're worth, a

way to learn the basics. If you want to umpire at the amateur level, I would recommend a camp geared for amateurs, not pros. There are too many differences between the pro and amateur game to make pro camps the best bet for aspiring amateurs.

Just today a friend who attended my Lone Star camp and is working his second year of college ball asked if I thought he should attend a pro camp to improve his "skill set." I told him I thought his time and money would be better spent working whatever games and scrimmages he can find with college players, for camps are no substitute for experience, and experience can only be gained with time. In 1969, with three years of

umpiring under my belt, I worked scrimmages at the University of Texas, and the coach later told me there was no way he would have used me at that time because I had no clue what I was doing on the field. No camp would have changed the coaches view; only experience did.

By Jon Bible

Certification Exam Answers Posted

The answers to the 2001 ABUA Certification exam have been inserted in this newsletter. Members are encouraged to use this test as a training tool for further development. Please contact Chuck Barnett at 502-291-5758 or cbar10111@aol.com with any questions regarding this year's exam.

Extra Base Hit!!!**ABUA Offering Riddell Plate Shoe Sale...While Supplies Last**

\$69.99 for members
\$79.99 for non-members



Offer good until 9/1/01 or while supplies last. Get your pair of Riddell plate shoes today. Go to www.umpire.org and order on-line or mail your order to ABUA, P.O. Box 31666, Des Peres, MO 63131.

Umpires have told the ABUA that the Riddell plate shoe is the “perfect” shoe for umpiring at any level of amateur baseball. The Riddell shoe offers comfort, durability and lasting wear for a reasonable price. Amateur umpires spend a lot of money for equipment and training. The Riddell plate shoe is the answer to finding a shoe that lasts for years to come.

All black, full grain leather upper with steel toe cap and steel metatarsal plate. The black rubber outsole is attached to the upper and is designed for multi-surface use. It is flexible for your comfort and very durable. The shoe also has a removable sock liner and arch support for comfort. If you have never had the pleasure of wearing this shoe, you owe it to yourself. If you wore it in the past, we know you are glad to have it back.

Men sizes 6-12, 13 & 14.