



BETWEEN THE LINES

A SOFTBALL CANADA OFFICIATING PUBLICATION

June 2007 – ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

a message from
Bob Stanton
– National Director
of Umpires

GREAT and Informative
articles from our
umpires across Canada

**New Softball Canada
Level V Umpires**

Umpire of the Year
– **Denis Bélanger**

**2007 Softball Canada
Rule Changes**

BETWEEN the LINES

A Softball Canada publication
dedicated to the development of
umpiring in Canada.

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BLUE CONVENTION 2007 QUÉBEC CITY

**Bonjour, Bienvenue, Merci Beaucoup
Hello, Welcome, Thank You Very Much**
Bob Stanton – National Director of Umpires

The above words were heard over and over again during Blue Convention 2007, held in beautiful and historic Quebec City, Quebec from April 5 - 8, 2007. The only other words that came close to being heard as often were, "Can you believe this weather?"

Yves Beaugard, Denis Belanger and his committee deserve a huge thank you for the great job they did in organizing the transportation, facilities, silent auction and hospitality room among the many items for which they were responsible. The weather threw a number of challenges to all that attended and it was amazing to hear the stories of the trials and tribulations that people went through to get to Quebec City.

Our presenters this year, according to the surveys, were well received. Survey results indicated that participants ranked both material and presentation styles very high. The full sessions at the end of the day on Friday and Saturday, proved very popular and there were many calls to repeat this in the future.

Participants indicated that they would like to see some sessions run for a longer period of time and to be repeated over the weekend so that everybody gets a chance to see them. These comments will be taken into account during the planning of the next Blue Convention.

The silent auction saw \$3,500 raised for the Blue Scholarship fund. The 2007 recipients were Sébastien Giguère, QC and Andrea Alexandra Perez-Leon, BC. Congratulations and best wishes in your continuing education efforts.

A few innovations were tried this year, a coaches' forum, an industry presenter, two all-inclusive workshops, a circle of story tellers in the hospitality room and a tribute to those members of our family who have gone to a better life. In order to be successful, we must continue to try new things to make the convention a rewarding experience for all.

Again THANK YOU to the host committee, the presenters and the participants. If we are missing one side of the triangle, we can not succeed. The all out efforts taken by many to get to the Convention will make it one of the more memorable in history.

Thank you to our special guests, Kevin Quinn, Gisléle Vézina and Barry Mano.

A special thank you to Donna Ozarko, who makes it all happen.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF UMPIRES

As we move forward this year, let's keep in mind the state of our game and role we play in it. It is really the coaches, managers and players who are responsible to play the game within the spirit and intent of the rules. They are, at certain levels, also concerned with winning the game. We, the umpires are entrusted, with maintaining the balance between the spirit and intent of the rules and the desire to win.

There are many tools that we use to assist us in our role; rule knowledge, positioning, game control tactics, conflict resolution skills, good judgment and a sense of fairness. Add to that, a love for the game and out of the mix will come a pretty decent umpire.

Through our certification clinics and manuals, refresher clinic and materials, Blue Conventions, national exams, web sites and newsletters we try to provide as much information as possible around the rules, position and mechanics, game control techniques and conflict resolution skills. While good judgment and a love for the game can be influenced, they really come from within and their depth and level are yours alone to determine.

We have a role to play in keeping the game alive and well. We are passionate about the game and rather than be shy about that passion, we need to share it with all our fellow umpires and future umpires. Everybody wants to be on the wave that is moving forward but in order to get the wave moving someone needs to start the push. As umpires who are passionate about the game, let's take up the challenge and provide the push that will get the wave moving. Let's talk often about the positive aspects of the game that we love. Think back to what got you involved, what you loved about it. Recollect those things and allow them to re-kindle the fire in you and let that fire spread to others. If we re-build the game, we will re-build ourselves.

Through out this issue of "Between the Lines" you will find examples of how people have excelled in their umpiring. You will see that many more are finding opportunities to push their personal comfort levels. As with any learning and growth experience, you have to push yourself a little further than you may be comfortable but you soon learn that you are capable of handling it. Keep pushing and growing.

You are the most dedicated officials in the world of sports, and no, not just in Canada but in the world. You work hard, you continue to learn and you continue to give back. Thank you. I wish you health and success for 2007.

Bob Stanton – National Director of Umpires

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



The 2007 softball season is fast approaching and in all corners of our country officials are shining up their shoes and pressing their uniforms in preparation for another exciting season of softball. All these officials are part of one of the best officiating programs in the world today. Part of the reason

for the success of our officials program is the leadership it has received over the past many years and the outstanding leadership it is receiving today. It was with great pleasure that I was recently notified that our National Director of Officials, Mr. Bob Stanton has been named the ISF Deputy UIC. Bob and his current ODC are an outstanding group of individuals who do an outstanding job of providing leadership for our officials program. For any organization to be successful it requires strong leadership and we are blessed with some of the very best.

Our officials program is blessed with a strong sense of cooperation and teamwork. Our Provincial/Territorial UIC's are working hand in hand with our ODC to insure that we have a consistent program in all provinces/territories. This consistency stands out whether you are watching an official working provincially/territorially, nationally or internationally. All of the Softball Canada officials who worked international events and Canadian Championships in 2006 did an outstanding job. The assignments for international and national events will soon be complete for 2007 and I expect that all those assigned to these events will do us proud once again in 2007. Congratulations to all of our officials who will be involved in supervising and officiating at both our Canadian Championships and at International events. We are truly confident that you will represent us with pride and dignity. The level of expertise of our officials who officiate these events are key to making our Canadian Championships a true success. The respect with which our program is held around the world is evident by the number of International assignments which we receive each year.

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In 2007 the Blue Convention was held in Québec City under the chairmanship of Yves Beauregard. Yves and his committee did an outstanding job and are true examples of that age old motto "Champions aren't made in gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them.....a desire, a dream, a vision!!!!" They have done an outstanding job of hosting our 2007 Blue Convention.

Kevin Quinn

President, Softball Canada

A MESSAGE FROM SOFTBALL CANADA DIRECTOR



The 2007 season has already started and here you are, on the field, making calls, strike, ball, out, safe...

You are confident on the sport field and have put all what you have learned into practice. You always try to improve. Bravo! For sure, there will be some difficult

moments during the season. Don't give up during the difficult times. The next game will be your best one. Bravo! And Bravo again!

That would be a great success story that the ODC would be proud of. With their continued efforts to improve the quality of the manuals, mechanics, and of all those other projects, this is surely what they hope for: Personal achievement of all the umpires. The ODC have their heart set for success for everyone involved in this wonderful area of umpiring.

I wish you all a wonderful season and I encourage you in your personal climb up to new summits.

Gisèle Vézina

ODC Board Liaison

WHAT STRIKE ZONE - AM I USING FOR THIS GAME?

By Dave Moore, Level V, Saskatchewan

Some of you might say, "What a dumb question! We have been taught to use the same strike zone every game and BE consistent."

Well let's look at a few scenarios. You can probably come up with a lot more.

First, I think everyone will agree that you will want to use a larger zone (maybe higher and/or wider) for a lower caliber of ball than for Senior. A. Notice I did not differentiate between men's and women's as I feel there should be no difference between the two.

Some people call a "playing card" zone, others call a "D" zone on the outside corner, i.e. wider at the belt and "plate width" at the armpits or knees, while others call a (4' x 8' sheet of plywood) zone and all manage to succeed. How?

Many senior umpires like to call a "wide" zone and are always "looking for strikes" to speed up the game. Let's look at the downside to that for a minute. If you call too large a zone with "top caliber" pitchers, like we've had in Canada in the past, (Shan MacDonald, Lori Sippel, Brenda Staniforth, Glen Jevne, Gene McWillie, Pete Landers or Rob Guenther to name a few) you could be out there for 20 plus innings with a 0-0 score because no one could get a hit or score a run. That is no fun for the players, the fans or your partners!

So what is the answer? Well, I suggest you consider that with better pitchers you call a tighter zone and then if one team gets away ahead, "open it up" for the team that is ahead. Heck, they don't need any more runs anyway! Fans love to see offense and good defensive plays.

On the other hand, when the pitchers or caliber of ball is not as good, you could consider using a zone that is at least a ball width bigger at either the top, bottom, one or both sides or even all of the above! Nobody wants everyone walking around the bases!

We all have games where we start out early by calling a pitch which is "slightly off our intended zone", a strike. If you choose to stay there for the rest of the game, and use a larger zone than you had intended, so be it. The players will adjust as long as you are consistent. If you choose not to stay with this enlarged zone, then tell the catcher (loud enough for the batter to hear) that you will not be calling that a strike any more and carry on. Now both teams will have the message.

By now, I hope you are starting to realize that the key for your "strike zone" is consistency and as long as the game is close, you are calling it the same for both teams on every pitch. By being consistent you will get very few complaints, and if your zone "fits the game" everyone will be happy.

Hopefully this generates some thinking on your part to adjust your zone accordingly, so that everyone involved in your game looks forward to "repeating the experience".

UMPIRING IS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

By Joel Balberman, Level V, Ontario

Umpires work with people. This is an indisputable fact. As people who work with others, it would be to our advantage to better understand some of the ways we can be more effective in our interpersonal relationships both on and off the diamond.

When we take on the role of umpire, we are drawn into relationships with four distinct groups of people, as well as many other secondary groups. These groups are:

- Coaches
- Players
- Spectators
- Other Umpires

Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with the people we come in contact with is challenging to say the least. Let's examine the dynamics of dealing with these groups as well as some do's and don'ts that should be considered.

In our relationships with all groups, we must show respect, in order to be respected ourselves. Look the coach in the eye when you are talking. Remove your sunglasses if you are wearing them. Ascertain what the coach wants – is it information, or is it to show displeasure about a situation on the diamond? Should you respond the same way in both cases?

Use the coach or the catcher to short-circuit any potential problems before they become apparent to others. Communicate and gain respect.

If your interaction is as a result of a disputed call or play maintain self-control even if the coach or player is not doing so. Umpires do not have the luxury of losing control of their emotions on the field. Stay calm. Not raising your voice can be very disarming.

In order to be respected ourselves, we must keep within the spirit of the rules, and show firmness in application of the rules. Make that tough call and apply the rules that govern the play. We are not out there to win popularity contests. When appropriate, a sense of humour can go a long way. Show that you are human.

There is no room for any kind of prejudice, bias or discrimination on the ball diamond. Prejudice can poison relationships, and must be set aside.

Never threaten either a player or a coach. Threatening makes people defensive. If we draw a line in the sand, we leave ourselves with few choices, should the player or coach cross the line.

Listen to the message that is being sent. Two people talking at the same time makes for a very poor conversation. The word "listen" contains the same letters as the word "silent". Think before you speak. Show regard for the participant's personal space and stay in the "comfort zone" rather than getting too close. No one likes it if we get in their face.

Realize that we communicate both verbally and through non-verbal means and understand these elements of communication. Research shows that your non-verbal signals are much more important in shaping the perception of those who are watching than what you actually say. Use the skills of body language, voice control and eye contact. Crossing your arms, finger pointing, wild gestures and physical contact of any kind should be avoided.

Spectators are an important part of the game. It would be dull indeed to work in the absence of any fans. Generally, though, umpires should try to disregard the crowd in order to stay focused on the job. Large crowds can cause fear. Turn a negative into a positive and use the crowd to energize and activate you.

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Should a serious problem arise with a spectator, let the home team manager or tournament organizers handle those problems. Do not discuss the game within earshot of any fans. Avoid any response to hecklers. Never discuss plays with fans after a game, or when you are off the diamond watching other umpires work.

Our relationships with other umpires should be governed by the Golden Rule. Treat others as you would be treated. Respect the skills and experience of your peers and partners. Support one another. You are truly the third team on the diamond. Leave your ego at home. Umpiring is not about ego, it is about getting the calls right. Remember: 'At the feast of ego, everyone goes hungry'. Don't cop out – take responsibility on the diamond. Never try to make a scapegoat of other umpires, especially if it is to hide your own inadequacy.

In summary, your level of success, and your ability at this very human activity called umpiring will be enhanced the more you show your humanity to all others that you deal with. Enjoy your relationships, for they sustain you year after year.

GUIDELINES FOR THE SELECTION OF UMPIRES TO CHAMPIONSHIPS

INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

1. Member in good standing with Provincial/Territory Association.
2. ISF certified for at least one (1) year for consideration to ISF events.
3. Capable of officiating at competition being considered.
4. Number and time of previous International events includes ISF, ISC, NAFA, etc.
5. Evaluations from previous Internationals.
6. Completion of all post tournament obligations.
7. Contributes to program, i.e. Blue Convention, Between The Lines, Clinics, Provincial/Territory programs.
8. Stage of career.
9. Actively promotes Softball Canada.

GUIDELINES USED TO SELECT UICs/DUICs for CANADIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

1. Member in good standing with Provincial/Territory Association.
2. ODC members expected to supervise at least one (1) event.
3. Level V umpires. Level IV umpires may be selected for Bantam and Pee Wee.
4. Supervisory experience at a Canadian Championship for UIC position.
5. Supervisory experience at Provincial Championships for DUIC position.
6. Master evaluator rating.
7. Feedback from previous Championships.
8. Contributes to program, Blue Convention, Between The Lines, Clinics, Provincial / Territory programs.
9. Number and timing of events as a Supervisor.
10. Distribute selections; attempt to have at least one (1) from out-of-province.
11. Actively promote Softball Canada.

Principles for selection process:

- Fairness to umpire and needs of the event.
- Distribute involvement.
- Try not to select back to back, especially to the same event.
- Get umpires involved as quickly as possible.

BETWEEN the LINES

CANADIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

2007

EVENT	UIC	DUIC
Pee Wee Girls	Jeff Whipple	Tonya Ribalkin
Bantam Girls	Mitch Zuk	Daryl Way
Midget Girls	Kelly Hunter	Aaron Poulin
Midget Boys	Doug Cundall	Ian Brown
Junior Women	Don Kennedy	Joyce Schroeder
Junior Men	Mark Gough	Ron Cooke
Senior Women FP	Brian Van Os	Lee Pacini
Senior Men FP	Gabe Babineau	Brian Sharples
Senior Men SP	Jack Van Bynen	Murray Harvey and Mike Robinson
Senior Women SP	Jeff Luscombe	Ron Moses

UICs & DUICs

WHERE HAVE ALL THE UMPIRES GONE

By Bonnie Gostola, Level V, Alberta

It is the question most asked of those of us that are still out on the diamond year after year. Where are all of the officials or how come we have only one of you tonight? Often the answer cannot be given in a one sentence answer. There are many different reasons why the number of our umpires is falling every year. First, whether we like it or not, softball is dying. That creates shortage of games, no games, no need for umpires. Second, depending on where you live, umpires have a problem accessing the support and training necessary to survive the average season of softball. Third, umpiring can be a lonely endeavor, especially if you are the sole body in a small rural region. The benefit of comrades especially when fighting a battle of coverage can be taxing and challenging and often lead to the "I can't do this alone" statement. Finally, there is the number one reason why we are losing officials, especially in my mind, when the players, coaches, fans, and media become abusive in their treatment of officials. It always begs the question from the recipient of the abuse "Why am I doing this, it's just not worth it for what I am getting out of the game?" We need to examine each of these statements for reasons and for some suggestions as to how to start fixing and possibly reversing the trend of lower numbers of officials.

The game is dying. We are seeing less and less teams in more areas of the country. Rural regions, which used to be the strongest supporters of the game, are being hit the hardest by the lack of softball. The only practical solution that I can see is to promote the game and try to rebuild the game at the grass-roots levels. Let's make it fun for the kid's again. We are fighting against an environment of full access to everything. There are so many demands upon our kids these days, that asking them to make a decision to play ball becomes a very tough one. I think Softball Canada is working in the right direction with the Learn to Play program. As we increase numbers of ball players, we create a demand for more umpires.

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There also becomes a problem of accessing and continually trying to improve upon the training tools available to all of Softball Canada's umpires. We are continually improving on the techniques used to make us better umpires, unfortunately, if everyone is on the diamond every night, who is available to go out and help our newer officials to improve. Here is the catch; if we give up a night of games to assist our fellow umpires in their training, the umpire program gains, but the teams who do not have an umpire that night, lose. Again, the necessity to recruit new umpires is critical. With enough umpires to cover the games on any given night, that might free up the trainers in our ranks to go out and work with the newer umpires.

Rural community umpires face an even larger problem, they are alone, to cover any and all the ball in their region. These umpires often have little or no time to access the programs available to them. Even if they did, probably would not be able to take time away from the diamond. Where we lose these bodies is in who is going to take over from them when they finally decide to throw in the towel. That is to say, get long in the tooth. We need to get ball rolling in the smaller communities, get the learn-to-play programs to build the athlete base and, guess what, we get new parents who need to learn to umpire their children. We begin to build an umpire base from that. If the kids stay in the game the reality is that so do many of the parents. Umpire associations need to recognize that the ball is out there, in the communities, and need to take the training and support out to the umpires because for many of the above reason, they cannot come to the associations.

The softball communities, like all other sports, are facing another huge problem in retaining officials: Abuse. The problem of continuing abusive situations on the diamond has become a primary reason cited by umpires who have quit. Their needs to be provide a stronger response to any abusive situations. The softball leadership, whether it is at the local, regional, provincial, or national level, has to adopt a zero tolerance policy. We need to protect our Level I, II, and III officials from even having to deal with this problem in the first place. We also need to reinforce the education of our umpires in the techniques in preventive officiating, and recognition skills for when abuse is happening. Senior umpires need to come to the aid of umpires who may be facing a problem on the diamond. Senior umpires also need to lead by example: ball players and coaches need to be dealt with quickly and appropriately when they get out of line. Junior umpires are always watching, if a senior official lets something go by, the wrong message is being sent to all of the participants in the game.

Where is umpiring headed? Well, the average age of the umpires in Canada is rising. We need to get the game back into the communities. We need to continue to employ recruitment measures, which if successful, will lead to more umpires. More umpires, more time for senior umpires to teach and train. More umpires less chance of burnout due to overwork. Zero tolerance of abuse will keep umpires working, who in the past (our present) would quit before putting up with the crap. We need to recognize our workhorses and their contribution to the success of the game of softball in our local communities. Finally, and most important, we need to put the fun back in the game. After all, it still is a game, and games have always been designed to be fun. If you are not enjoying it, is it worth doing. I have never thought so.

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JOURNEY AND DREAM!

By Tenanncy Schroeder, Manitoba

I started umpiring when I was twelve years old. Joyce Schroeder (my mother) umpired for many years and I always watched her. I thought that it might be fun to umpire as well.

When I started, I considered it more a job and did it for extra money. A girl needs money to go shopping and you cannot keep shopping from me. But now I do it for fun. Umpiring different ages and levels is fun and interesting and I plan to do it until I'm too old to stand.

One day I dream of umpiring with other Level V at a Senior Women's Canadian Championship. I also want to try and bring fast pitch back to the Olympics and umpiring there. I hope to help other young umpires get started and continue in umpiring. It will be a challenge but I will try my best.

My favorite part of umpiring right now is the Blue Conventions, mechanic clinics, and the Regional Developmental Tournament. I like the way that they are set up, meeting all of the different umpires, and how fun and interesting it is. I like being able to travel to different places to umpire or for the Blue Conventions. The Blue Conventions are my favorite thing; I loved Calgary and Quebec City!

RECRUITING AND RETENTION: SO WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

By Daryl L. Way, Level V, Ontario

Ask any corporation what is one of its biggest obstacles and you will hear the same response: recruiting and retention. Employees do not plan on staying in current positions very long. Jobs are available and with our aging population, empty voids will need to be filled.

How does that relate to us? Last time I looked, we too are aging. Where are those young, dedicated umpires wishing to fight their way up the ladder? Let us face reality; we live in an instant society and we want it all now! Not only do we need to come up with a plan for the future, we need to do so as a collective body involving umpires from all levels. New ways are needed to promote this game. Creative marketing skills as well as human resource talent may be able to come up with strategies to promote our game. Target areas should include community centers, community newspapers, and media at all levels, and players themselves.

Once recruited the umpiring community needs to step up and support the rookies. Many of us are too busy on the diamonds leaving new umpires to fend for themselves and that will just lead to disaster in many cases. We cannot afford to let our precious new resources sink on the diamond. Here are a few ideas that may work in your local group.

1. Recruitment – marketing program to schools, community news, recreation centers, leagues
2. Development – new recruits need more than clinic and rule book. On field training. Perhaps incentives for trainer to spend time. Do we need to set up budget for trainer who is losing game fees to work with new umpires? The answer is not to take money from the umpire learning since this is an incentive to umpire.
3. Retention – Assist umpires to achieve goals. Promote rewards as in umpiring at Canadian Championship, increased levels, involving them in program, and perhaps become an instructor.

We need to also examine the cause of our turnover so that we may continually improve our program. Since the provinces are going to have their own recruiter, perhaps we should all get involved to offer help and suggestions to keep growing in being the best program. Since our supplier has a waiting list for the scooter with embroidered decals on the side, now is the time to start looking forward.

DENIS BÉLANGER

SOFTBALL CANADA

UMPIRE OF THE YEAR 2006

Denis Bélanger has been umpiring for the past 20 years. He has been involved in the Softball Québec umpiring program since 2000. Denis is an active member of Softball Québec and held a position on the Board for three years where his main focus was looking after the umpire program.



Denis has dedicated a tremendous amount of time to the softball umpiring program. He took charge of the development of all Québec umpire instructors for the last three years. There is no doubt that Denis has a passion for the game. He manages to work approximately 120 games a year and will go anywhere to work a good ball game to ensure he is keeping his umpiring skills up to date.

He has been fortunate enough to work several Canadian Championships, the last being the Senior Men's in Owen Sound in 2004. Last summer he traveled to Nova Scotia to work the East Canadian Senior Men's Championship and made a significant contribution to the crew.

Denis also dedicates a great deal of time as a translator for Softball Québec as well as Softball Canada; his desire to ensure that information is properly communicated to the members of these organizations is outstanding.

Finally you can say that when Denis Bélanger was vaccinated as a kid they injected him with the "softball serum" which went directly into his blood stream, so it is clear his passion for this game will last a lifetime.

Denis Bélanger has been, and will continue to be an outstanding contributor to the game of softball at both the Provincial and National Levels. We thank him for his efforts and recognize him by selecting him as the recipient of this award.

NEW LEVEL V UMPIRES



BRENT CHADWICK Saskatchewan (FP)

In fifteen years behind the plate, I have had the opportunity to work with countless talented individuals from within the ranks of Softball Canada. As a "Master Instructor," I draw from those priceless experiences in the classroom, and continue to enjoy developing the sport through the grass roots levels. Elite provincial and national competitions like the 2006 Canadian Senior Men's Championships have been imperative in furthering my own love for softball on the field and, with my recent Level V certification, provide the motivation to advocate the game even more as it grows in popularity.

BETWEEN the LINES

With the support of numerous colleagues, softball has evolved from an everyday hobby into one of my lifelong passions. The opportunities that have been afforded me by the softball community can only show how the growth of a program can make a difference in the goals and pursuits of an individual. Fifteen years on the provincial and national scene has afforded me a glimpse at every level of softball competition. With the guidance and confidence of UIC's Bernie Burtney, Sterling Swain, and now Moose Gibson, I have been given numerous chances to succeed by attending a variety of events. My on-field activities have always been aided by Level V's Dave Moore, Jimm Barr, and Gary Skjerven at the many elite events that have been hosted here in Saskatchewan. I can only marvel at the amount of opportunity and assistance that exists if one wants to learn and grow. With the support of my wife, Marni, and two children, Jesse (5yrs) and Brennen (16mths), I can only hope that the tradition of family connections will bless my future in the softball community.



GENEVIEVE GAUDREAU Québec (FP)

The ball was always my favourite summer sport since the age of nine years old. I played about twenty years and I was a coach during six years. I umpired baseball and house leagues in softball from 1988 till 1992. In 1998, I returned to umpire in softball, after seven Canadian championships and four national as a coach of Quebec. The experience of player and trainer helped me a lot to become a better umpire. Furthermore, I had the chance to work with a group of experienced umpires, in Quebec and else where, they supervised me well into my development. Finally, I pursue my learnings with the aim of restoring the sport what he had brought me.



VINCE GRECO British Columbia (FP)

AKA Vinnie, Vince da Prince, and what the players call me!

I can honestly say that my decision to umpire probably saved my life. I started when I was 12, doing a little bit of Little League, then some Babe Ruth. When I turned 15, I met some of the local association softball umpires, and that was when I switched to the dark side. Umpiring fast pitch kept me out of trouble, made me a couple bucks, and enabled me to spend a lot of time with guys who loved the game and were excellent officials.

While there have been plenty of people that helped me along the way, a certain handful really went the extra mile. My initial intro to Umpiring was through Jim Hubbard. A crazy ump out of Victoria who had his own mechanics, didn't necessarily follow the program, but was a great teacher and had a lot of knowledge of the game. I thought he taught me a lot about the slot, diamond presence, respect of the game, and most importantly going to war with your partners.

To this day, I still believe that is the best quality in another official...knowing I can count on him when the stuff hits the fan. After Hubs, I met Tom Bell, and Brian Van Os. I guess you could say they were somewhat more "polished" but had the same morals and beliefs. Vanner was and still is a great inspiration on rules and having fun with your partners. After that came Aaron Poulin, Bob Reid, Gary Schmit, and Keith Hazel. There is no doubt that Schmitty kept me in the game, mostly because of our long talks in the Central Park shack, or change room at RAP. With all the pre mentioned guys, we would stay at the park (till early morning sometimes) at talk about games, situations, what ifs, rules, what we screwed up, and what we would work on. Those were the best times for me. The last five years Schmitty and Keith have helped me develop into an official, preparing for Nationals, fine tuning, supporting the program and teaching me how to lead. There is no doubt I consider all these guys my family, and am also thankful they prevented me from getting into a crazy life that is oh too easy to get into as a kid.

Now being 33, having umpired for 20 years, I truly have realized the lessons that have come along my way. I received my Level V working Senior Mens in Prince George this past year. I'd have to say the best crew I have worked with. We had tons of fun, ate like kings, and had several pops. I am very grateful that Vanner and Chris Lee were there to lead.

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I struggled early in the tournament, trying to be too serious, too officious. After day two, I realized that if I could not continue to have fun on the field (while still respecting the game) that I did not want to Umpire any longer. I then loosened up, had fun and the tournament went much better.

One of my favorite memories of umpiring would have to be at the Junior Men's in Waterloo – 2003. Jim Herbert and Bob Stanton leading a bunch of misfits, watching us call illegal pitches until our arms almost fell off. The end of a game; the Stanton shuffle to protect his umpires and the debriefing by Jim Herbert at about 3 am. I am so thankful to work with that whole crew.....good times.

In closing, I hope to reach someone as I was. I hope to keep promoting our program, and to someday lead as the people before me have done. I truly owe my life to the local association guys, and even though we may butt heads, I have the highest respect for them, and truly wish to make them proud.

Yours in balls and strikes!



TIM LEDERMAN British Columbia (FP)

I live in Port Coquitlam, a suburb of Vancouver in beautiful British Columbia with my wonderful wife Cathy. My wife is an inspiration to me and her patience, understanding and tolerance of my passion for officiating is one of the main reasons I have been able to realize many of my goals. I have four daughters and one son who long ago left to pursue their own dreams. My umpiring journey began in the early 1980s in Coquitlam, British Columbia. I brought my daughter to the local recreation center to sign up for minor Fast Pitch. On the registration form I got to pick from two choices if I wanted to help out, coaching or umpiring. Well I knew I didn't really want to coach so I checked the other box and it changed my life forever!

Over the years during what has turned into a career I have had the privilege of officiating at many, many provincials, well over a dozen Westerns, two Canada Cups and three senior Canadian Championships. I have to say that I have learned something new that helped me in my officiating career at every one of these events.

My first senior Canadian Championship was the Masters Men in St Johns, New Brunswick in 1998. In 2002 I was selected to attend the Senior Men in Winnipeg, Manitoba and in 2006 the Senior Men in Prince George BC.

The astute reader will note that those Canadians were four years apart. That I believe is a fairly typical experience in British Columbia for those who aspire to officiate at higher level events. I was privileged and honoured to have been selected to represent the province when so many other fine officials apply from our province each year. The wait has been four years between Canadian Championships for me but it certainly gives you a great deal of time to consider your goals and how best to achieve them.

So 25 years later with the help and support of many people in the Softball British Columbia program I reached my ultimate goal!! Level V!! But wait, my mentors say I now have to be even better than what got me here. After all as wiser people than me have said, it really is about the journey not the destination.

It would take pages to acknowledge all those who helped me on this journey but there are some significant names I want to mention, some whom I am sure have no idea that they helped me. All of the Levels Vs in British Columbia who I have worked with or for have been instrumental. Thanks to Mike Hornak, Brian Van Os, Hans Troelsen, Bob Henning, Chris Lee and David Burns to name a few. In 1998 as a liaison I got to watch Mary Debruyne work at the Canada Cup in Surrey British Columbia. She was amazing and I decided to emulate her mechanics from then on. Two guys that I work with day in and day out who supported me in my goal to reach Level V are Bill Watson and Bill Yerdon. These friends have always been there to help and encourage me.

As the next phase of my officiating career begins I look forward to the challenge. Chris Lee says I got to be even better now. Brian Van Os still says "You got to get your nose in there!" Well I am ready guys. Hope to see you all on the field somewhere soon.



STEVE MONTIGNY Québec (SP)

My umpiring career started with a Friday night friendly slo-pitch league. I was 13. At that time, I did not know much about the softball rules! Then, two years later, I registered with Softball Canada. I never imagined that I would be where I am now.

I umpired to make a couple bucks during the summer time, but I was “short” after 1994, so I continued in 1995! Then, the following years, I have participated in several provincial tournaments, Eastern Canadians and my first Canadian Championship came in 1998.

I was fortunate enough to be assigned to another Canadian Championship in 1999. In 2001 I umpired in New Brunswick as well as Ontario which provided me with some great experience which helped me with my game. After another Fast Pitch Canadian Championship in 2002. I then decided to start umpiring slo-pitch and in 2001 - I had an opportunity to develop my skills for the slo-pitch game while umpiring in Dorchester, Ontario. I received my level V in slo-pitch in 2006 in Surrey, BC.

I take this occasion to thank my family, especially my mom, who always pushed and supported me throughout the years of my career. Many thanks to Marcel Beaugard and his son Yves for their support and encouragement, they contributed greatly to me becoming a better umpire and a better person. To Benoit Marquis for believing in me and all the umpires I have worked with. I learned so much from all you and I thank you for it.



RON MOSES Saskatchewan (SP)

I have been umpiring since 1989, both Fast and Slo-Pitch. It has become a passion with me and waiting for the winter season to end so I can get back on the diamond is sometimes very difficult.

Like many, I started out playing ball and normally gave the officials a hard time, within reason. I remember one day when things got out of control and the Plate Umpire called time, and both umps headed towards my dugout, (I told everyone that I am now history, he is going to throw me out of the game), these gentlemen (Donny Roop & Butch Guitard) looked at me and said, “Young man, we advise you to keep it down, we are not going to throw you out, it will be easier to control you on the field than on the other side, one more word and your team forfeits the game, then the team took over.

I was very impressed with the way they handled the situation. A couple of years later – when I decided to stop playing but wanted to remain with the program – I decided to become an umpire and whenever there was a sticky situation, I think back to these two gentlemen and I try to approach it with a level head, and a smile (then I throw them out).

I have had guidance along the way by many individuals and after analyzing bits of each – I hope – made me the official I am today. I would like to thank the following individuals for their guidance and support; Brian McRae, Barry Adams, Terry Dexter, Mark Gough, Jeff Whipple, Mary deBruyn, Rick Lippert, Rick Russell, Moose Gibson and a special thanks to Doug Cundall.

I have had the opportunity to attend National at Fast Pitch from Jr. Women’s, Jr. Men’s and twice at Sr. Women’s and CF Military Fast Pitch Nationals plus three yrs at Sr. Men’s Slo-Pitch and CF Slo-Pitch Nationals. At each tournament I thought it was a highlight to be able to represent my Province, to be able to walk away in the end with a Level V (SP) caps it all and I hope to attend a national someday as a UIC/DUIC to return what was given to me.

Thank you to everyone who was ever associated with me along the way; you have all been a part of my success in achieving this goal.



TERRY RICHTER Alberta (FP)

I have been around the game for about 30 years as a player, coach and official. I started officiating in 1994 in Edmonton. I did my first provincial in 1996 and my first Western Canadians in 1998. My first Canadian Championship was the Midget Boys in 1999 in Kitchener, Ontario. I officiated at the Junior Men's, Junior Women's and the Senior Men's in 2006. In 2003 I officiated at the World Cup in Florida.

I have been involved as a member of the Edmonton and District Umpires Association executive for the past 10 years, holding several positions. It is important for me to say that without the support of my family Marie, Krystle and Mitchell, I would not be the level of umpire that I am today.

I look forward to meeting or working with all of my fellow officials.



DOUG WEBSTER SR. Ontario (FP)

I have been umpiring since 1988. When I finished my playing career I wanted to stay involved with Softball but I didn't have the pallet for coaching, so I turned to officiating. I enjoyed officiating, but had no interest in advancing my level until 1997 when the Junior Men's Nationals were in Oshawa, Ontario and I acted as the Umpire Liaison – that's when I "got the bug". I experienced the excitement of participating in a major tournament by watching those officials excel, and knew I wanted to reach those heights! With a mentor like Don Bracey, I knew my goal was attainable.

My first Canadian Championship was the Midget Boys in 1999, where I received my Level IV. This tournament led to a number of succeeding tournaments including; the first ISC II tournament in 2002, the Junior Men's in 2003, the World Masters tournament in 2005 and finally the Senior Men's in 2006.

I have been an instructor/evaluator since 1997, and have served on the Ontario Fast Pitch Committee for five years. I am also very active at the local level, serving on the executive committee of our association in a number of capacities.

Before receiving my Level V the highlight of my career was watching young umpires that I had helped, go to and be successful at Canadian Championships.

I have to thank my wife Beth for allowing me to chase this dream and also my two harshest critics, my sons Mark and Doug Jr. who think they know everything about umpiring?? The old man is still one up on you!

LES YUEN Alberta (SP)



2006 ISF XI WOMEN'S WORLDS WOW!!!

By D. Jill Tuckey, Level V, Ontario

What an honor, what a trip! From the day that we were told that we had been chosen to officiate at the Women's Worlds, the journey has truly been amazing. It is for certain that Greg and I had made our minds up that we were going to do what we needed to prepare ourselves to be our best when we got to China.

When getting an assignment to umpire in a different country it is important that you learn as much about the country you are traveling to and you should make it part of your preparation plans. There were a number of challenges we faced when we got to China, luckily we did our homework. China is surrounded by historical sites which are fascinating, however the environment is far from that, the smog, smell and lack of infrastructure was hard to accept. The food and health standards were non-existent which made it hard to eat proper meals by our standards. These hurdles did not affect the quality of our officiating, it just made it more difficult to concentrate and focus on the job at hand.

The facilities and games were incredible; we were actually umpiring at the softball venue for the 2008 Olympic Games. The feeling was amazing and difficult to put into words. Emotions at the opening ceremonies were high and your first game assignment was that reality check of why we were in Beijing, China.

Greg and I were honored to be selected to attend this prestigious event. Hard work, commitment and teamwork during the tournament paid off. I was assigned to work the Bronze Medal game at 1st Base - Australia vs. United States as well as working the Gold Medal game - Greg Pipher at 1st Base and Jill Tuckey - 2nd Base - Japan vs. United States. This experience was something that Greg and I will cherish for a long time. We also had the opportunity to tour China after the tournament. This allowed us to take in some of the amazing sites in Chinese history, which most of us read about; The Great Wall, Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, Summer Palace and others.

There were a few life lessons that will stay with us forever - umpiring at this level is the ultimate dream in our careers and we are proud to be a part of the Softball Canada program. Our program provides our officials with opportunities for those who work hard and are willing to make sacrifices. It is evident that Softball Canada Umpires are among the best in the world. The other lesson that we learned during our stay in China; is that we are truly lucky to be living in Canada. The air that we breathe, the food that we eat, the roads that we travel on, the infrastructures that we have are there to protect our people.

Thank you to all and we certainly hope that your dreams come true!

THE LOST ART OF GAME CONTROL

By Jack Van Bynen, Level V, Ontario

Too many times now we see it with the younger inexperienced officials, the profanity of the participants, the aggressive attitudes of players, coaches and fans. Where and when is it going to stop? We all talk about retention and recruitment but until this verbal abuse is dealt with it is not going to help.

In the game of slo-pitch we are far too tolerant or have become immune to the aggressive behaviour and attitude of the participants this we as officials must change. The private complexes have not helped; to the owners it's all about the number of refreshments they sell. After all it is a business, it's not about ball. It's about the beer!!

We as umpires, umpire associations need to get help from our leaders and do what is necessary to change this behaviour and make it all about the game. The leaders you have put in place must tackle this problem, not turn the other cheek. It's not worth the money to lose your integrity as an umpire in these types of conditions, you do not have to officiate perhaps you can do something else until this changes.

We need the two-umpire system in the game for training, for game control, and some back up when there is a problem between the beer cart and the diamond. We need to go back to when we enforced the rules on the diamond and get away from the rules being dictated to us. The old cliché of "well you don't have to work here" is correct. You don't have to work in a disrespectful environment.

It seems to me too many of us have accepted this present behaviour. Do you have to? That is up to you. Most new officials will not return or do not complete the season because of the attitudes, maybe that's why we have an aging umpire population. Soon we will be too old and hard of hearing, it won't matter any more what is said on the diamond.

There are a lot of good umpires in the program, there could be a lot more if we took control of the game. Yes, game control or lack of game control is a lost art. Only you can get it back.

"Food for thought"

HOW TO BE AN EXCELLENT UMPIRE

By Douglas Webster Jr., Ontario

There is a secret to being an excellent umpire that transcends the knowable schematic of rule knowledge, positioning, mechanics, and politicking. This secret has been uncovered, either consciously, or unconsciously by every Level V in the country, and yet, escapes so many of us.

This secret is something that is cosmic and all-powerful, and it has nothing to do with magic, voodoo, or being touched by some omniscient force. The umpires who have acquired this power simply "get it." The question then becomes: "What is it they get, that the rest of us don'ts".

One of the laws of the universe is the law of attraction: Like attracts like. Opposites only attract for magnets, nothing else works that way. To explain what I mean: Try to imagine a bad day you are having. Doesn't it seem when you are having a bad day, everything seems to go wrong, and everything seems to get worse as the day progresses? Why is it that you are chosen to be the cosmic whipping boy/girl on this particular day? And why doesn't that day ever seem to end?

If you can, try to trace your steps back to the moment you woke up. Did you wake up in a foul mood? If you did, the chances are you have been projecting that foulness out into the world, and in response, bad things surmount. Your focus has become skewed, instead of focusing on the task at hand; you are focusing on how lousy you feel. And because you are so focused on how lousy

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your day is going, you begin to make careless errors that could have otherwise been avoided. While you dwell in this state of discontent, things appear to get worse for you. This is because you are focusing on every minutely bad thing that has happened, instead of doing the easier thing and getting on with your day. In this sense, your “awful day” is a self-fulfilling prophecy you created when you first awoke pissed-off in the first place.

To solve this cycle, one word will suffice: Attitude.

When I say “attitude,” as it relates to umpiring, I am not simply talking about having an ideal “team-player” attitude, or being happy all the time. There are plenty of umpires out there, who are pleasant, or are great team-players, and yet, they couldn’t call a decent game to save their life. When I say “attitude,” I am speaking specifically about the individual who is able to see beyond the self. I am speaking about the individual who is able to see beyond the moment, and turn every moment into a positive learning experience.

Too often, we dwell on the pitch we missed, or a wrong call, or a rule we may have misapplied which led to some form of controversy. Once we begin to dwell on these events we begin to construct a “negative mental perspective.” Remember, the law of attraction: like attracts like! Because we begin to dwell on the pitch we missed, the wrong call, or the wrong rule, things seem to spiral out of control and it begins to happen all over the place. Whole innings, games, even entire tournaments can pass us by and before we know it, we’re questioning our legitimacy as officials.

Then all of a sudden we go out there, and BAM! We’re back on the top of our game, calling the best game of our lives. Your strike zone is perfect. You don’t miss a single call. You apply every rule correctly and you even bail out your partner with excellent positioning! How does this happen? It’s because you have changed your mental perspective. You have become focused on making every call right. Wrong does not enter in to your thoughts, and so it doesn’t occur over the course of the game. This is not a coincidence; this is the law of attraction in action!

I have been fortunate enough to witness Serge Laflamme perform his seminars on positive visualization on a number of occasion. Serge discusses the concept of visualizing his pre-game theatrics of dressing before the game, his visualization of how he will address the home plate conference, and then continue to visualize himself making mechanic after mechanic from the opening pitch, until the final out throughout the entire game. This concept can appear mentally stressing to even begin to visualize! You might say: “7 innings and 200 pitches, is way too much visualizing for me!” It is easy for Serge’s principle to be lost on the average umpire, because the average umpire cannot wrap his or her mind around such a concept. It is natural for us to react and say: “I can’t do all that, it’s simply not realistic.” Of course it isn’t, and the moment you admit this to yourself, you have admitted that you are an inept umpire, and you might as well quit right now because you will never be as good as Serge Laflamme. But wait! This is the negative mental attitude taking over your thoughts! As soon as you do this the law of attraction states you will not succeed, because you have told yourself this is what you want!

Or . . . you can dig a little deeper. You can look beyond the surface context to what Serge is saying in his seminars and get to the route of his philosophy. The reality is: Amidst all his talk about visualization, Serge is outlining a “positive mental impression.” By maintaining a constant state of positive visualization, Serge is able to create a mental space for himself that is reminiscent of that old “Little engine that could” story. We all know that tale about the engine that wasn’t the strongest, or the fastest, or the most skilled, and yet by utilizing a positive mental fortitude through the repetition of the phrase “I think I can . . . I think I can” the little engine that could, persevered where no one else could and saved the day!

Take for example, Don Bracey. Don never called a perfect game in his entire 25 years, but he was excellent all the time! I remember working with Don during his preparation for a major tournament during a local Men’s League game. I noticed Don was turning his head into the play, instead of turning his entire body into the play, as per, the designated “proper mechanics” as laid out in our Manuals. I had never known Don to deviate from Softball Canada mechanics, and after a few innings, decided to ask him why he was trying something different. Don explained, in preparation for his upcoming major tournament, he would be expected to adopt certain mechanics that Softball Canada had yet to implement, and what I was witnessing, was him training himself to break his habits for the upcoming tournament!

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If that isn't the absolute definition of dedication, I don't know what is! Even though Don had been a Level V since the late 80's, here he was, Fifteen years later, still behaving as though he were a student of the game, which is exactly how he perceived himself. For Don, he was preparing himself to perform as best as he possibly could and he was doing this, by going through the motions of what led him to become the excellent umpire we know him to be. Don perceived every single play as an opportunity to improve and he took full advantage of each opportunity.

Some umpires are great officials and are so comfortable with the rules and proper mechanics they believe there is nothing left for them to do, except, get the opportunity to the Senior Canadian and get the Nickel. I guarantee you Don Bracey, Serge Laflamme, or anyone else for that matter did not get his or her Level V on autopilot! Those umpires, fortunate enough to get their Level V, did so, because they were able to move from being great officials to excellent officials by maintaining a constant mental state of moving forward in a positive way and improving, no matter how minute the detail may have been!

The law of attraction applied in this case too: because he was working toward achieving excellence within his performance, he was making himself a better suited umpire for the upcoming tournament. Like attracts like!

For those of you whom are sitting on the edge of oblivion, trying to decide what is holding you back from achieving the next step in your umpiring career; be it, a level increase, a major tournament, a Canadian Championship, or a Level V appointment, consider this: It is not politics, or a lack of skill that is keeping you from reaching the next level, it is your attitude. As long as you continue to think along the same path, and go through the same motions, you can expect the same result. Albert Einstein said: "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result." If you want to be better, you have to do what it takes to get better.

I mentioned earlier the limitations of mechanics, rule knowledge and positioning. The next step is an intangible. You must believe there are parts of this universe mathematics and science cannot fully comprehend. Quantum Physics teaches us the universe is shaped by the perception of the mind and so therefore, the universe is what we make it. A positive attitude creates a positive result; a negative attitude creates a native result. If you want to be an excellent umpire you must eliminate all doubt in your mind and focus purely on the positive, because, the moment a negative thought enters your mind, you will experience the clutches of failure. Many of us are familiar with the adage: "You reap what you sow." This principle is not just a Christian moral, but a reality that unlocks a key to how the universe operates: Positive energy spreads and negative energy works the same way. I don't know any umpire who wants to officiate a lousy game, so the next time this happens, you might want to go back and examine the state of mind you were in when you stepped on the diamond. Try and see if you can pin-point the moment where things began to spiral out of control. If you can do this, you will learn something significant about yourself and how to improve your ability as an official. With hard work, patience, and implementing the ideas I have laid out in this article (no matter how absurd it may sound), I assure you, you will be well on your way to moving to the next echelon of success! That Canadian Championship, or that Nickel could be right around the corner for you!

Remember, there are no perfect umpires, only excellent ones.

THE COMEDY CORNER

STRIKE A POSE!



By Daryl L. Way, Level V, Ontario

To polyester or not; that is the question? Having worked at one of the country's top fashion magazines, I have yet to see polyester as one of the leading fabric trends. Okay, I will wait until you stop laughing that I worked at one of those magazines and I am not talking store catalogue either. Are you back? Good. At any rate, I have yet to witness anyone sporting our latest get up on the runway.

Polyester navy pants that cling in warm weather and freeze in cold are not very flattering. So far, I have yet to detect any hint of a natural fabric in our pants. Is there anything more attractive than a colorful log stitched on our rear ends? Wide legs are always in for the umpire on the move. One can fit almost anything under our pants including awkward leg guards and various kitchen appliances.

While I am looking down there, the black shoes really do work. They are hot and for anyone who still works on white gravel diamonds, these puppies can really burn. Shine them up and let me tell you, we look good.

I do not know about you, but that mesh powder blue disco shirt really brings me back to the seventies. I barely remember the seventies and disco is one of those things I try to forget! I was, however, umpiring in the seventies and this shirt sure beats the days of me attempting to sew on the patches. How many times did I go to get dressed and I could not get my arm in the sleeve because I had sewed it together. I am totally sewing challenged. If I did get the crest on, it was probably askew. The old rapier shirts have come in handy when I needed a little sleeveless number to complement my in-between attire.

And this brings me to the little wool hat that feels like a vice grip when first put on the head. Can someone please explain to me who came up with the concept of a dark navy wool cap for a summer sport? I need not go on about this issue. It is a well known fact that when I retire, the stinky hat will be the starter fluid for the bon fire.

So that concludes the fashion section of BTL. Stay tuned for a special supplement on accessorizing that outfit!

WORKING WITH YOUNG OFFICIALS

By Noreen Atkinson, Level V, Ontario

When we are scheduled with partners that are younger, our duty becomes twofold. We are not only expected to bring our “A” game to every game giving the teams our full effort and attention but now more than ever we are entrusted with passing our abilities on to other officials. This special trust and confidence lies quietly beneath the game but it can have irrevocable impact on not only this game but many games to come. It is up to us to make this impact positive no matter what the outcome of the game.

It is extremely important to talk to your partner before the game not only about mechanics and game control but you need to ask them specifically about their game. Ask the young official what are their strong areas and if they could improve on anything...what area might that be? As their partner you can then focus on the areas they have an interest in changing. You will see opportunities throughout that game that you can refer to when conducting a post game discussion.

I find when working with younger officials they look to us all too often for the instant ruling or correct rule application. I have been on the field and instinctively in a difficult situation they will look for immediate assistance from you, their partner. It is quite easy for us to “jump in and save the day”. Is that not the reason they looked our way? Sure it is but is that any reason to jump? I remember being asked by a coach for assistance on an interference call. The call had potential to change the game and although I had a good look at the play, I did agree to ask my partner what he saw. When I talked to the Plate official, he said, you’re a higher level; I’m not going to change your mind. Wow. I then realized one thing we did not cover in the pre-game discussion was OUR roles. I replied, “I can change my mind based on information; what did you see happen?” I got the standard answer, one I have heard many times before. I did not see that play; I was watching the batter runner. What could be learned from this situation?

It is important to approach these situations with questions rather than explanations. I did not come to the plate umpire and say; I just called interference on the 3rd baseman because they blocked the bag without having the ball forcing the runner to slide wide and then get tagged while off the base. I asked what they saw and yet I still did not get the information I was looking for did I? You see, we both had expectations going into this game and they were different. As the blue team we need to ensure that we understand our roles and goals in both terms. What do the teams expect and what do we expect from our partners.

Ask the younger official some short questions during pre-game discussions. Ask them about their game and specifically what is the best part of their game? Get them talking and relaxed and ask them if there are any areas they find difficult. Perhaps tell them apart of your game you are working to improve and let them know you are seeking to improve your game. This builds teamwork and trust within the Blue Crew and will carry over into the game. Do not do all the talking. This is their chance to work with you not your chance to produce a “mini me”. Let them develop their own style and character.

Whether you work one game or many throughout the season with this young official, your impact will be measurable. Let us make every effort to and “plan the work” and “work the plan” so we give the most support and knowledge possible to our young officials. This can be done simply by listening. Our ability to listen is paramount in producing solid officials. Listen to what they are saying and ask them questions. Get them thinking about solutions and situations. Interest in improving starts from within. The minute we start a sentence with... “I had a call” we will lose their interest. It should be a time when the stage is theirs. Give them your time and attention. You have the experience and the best way to pass that on to others is by listening to them.

“WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE ODC?”

By Murray Harvey, ODC

Several years ago, while enjoying a round of golf with a good friend of mine, I was challenged by him to apply for a position on the Softball Canada Officials' Development Committee (ODC). I had previously been involved with executive positions of my local association and I had officiated at countless Provincial Championships and five Canadian Championships. I was fortunate enough to gain my Level V status in 1998, and was subsequently rewarded with three international assignments and many Canadian Championship supervisory roles. I had also been certified as an instructor/evaluator and had delivered a number of Softball Canada clinics. But, I had never considered applying for a position on the Officials' Development Committee. Perhaps it was because I really didn't know what the functions of the ODC were. Perhaps my ignorance of the ODC's business led to my complacency and hesitancy to get involved.

But, in the summer of 2005, after more prompting and encouragement from my associate, I accepted his challenge and completed the application for a position on the Officials' Development Committee. The application was forwarded through the proper channels and, to my surprise, within several weeks I received a letter from Robert Stanton, the National Director of Umpires, congratulating me upon my selection to the committee. I had been given a two-year term.

I had no idea of what lay ahead. My first assignments were things that I was very confident doing, e.g. proof-reading documents and composing short articles. There was a lot to learn and a lot to do. At first, I was like a fish out of water. I had very little knowledge of all the functions of this committee. I would soon learn that each member of this committee is dedicated to Softball Canada and very efficient and conscientious. Each member brings something different and valuable to the table. The list of ODC jobs is endless: national exams, updating and delivering clinics, umpires' manuals, Canadian Championship supervisions, international assignments, rule book revisions, case book updates, publications, translations, Blue Convention, etc. And now I would be a part of this process.

Of course, there are also meetings to attend: the Annual General Meeting of Softball Canada and our annual winter meeting. There is some travel involved. There are conference calls and hundreds of emails to attend to. Communication is essential to our completion of tasks. The compilation of data and survey information is on-going. Each member of the ODC is given a schedule of assignments that must be completed within established deadlines. The National Director of Umpires chairs our meetings and prepares this schedule of tasks. Each member must report regularly with relation to the completion and progress of each prioritized assignment, large or small.

The general Softball Canada membership is at our disposal. Without our registrants, the ODC members' tasks would be impossible to complete. We reach our hands out to hundreds of umpires for their assistance whenever and wherever it is possible. The co-operation that we receive from our umpires at large is invaluable.

The workload is heavy. Yes it is, but the rewards are great. I now have first hand knowledge of the great work that is done by the ODC on behalf of all Softball Canada registrants. And, at this point, I still have a lot to learn. But I am still in awe of the global nature of this committee and the amazing work that it accomplishes. It is a body that works hand-in-hand with local associations, the provincial and territorial softball bodies, Softball Canada, the International Softball Federation and many other organizations. The work is very gratifying, to say the least. Who would have thought that a small-town kid like me would some day have an opinion or an assignment that might effect change in such a huge sphere of business?

The next time you see an advertisement for applicants to the ODC, give it some thought. It's a big step, but, if you have some time to give, if you have some opinions that might effect change, if you want to make a difference, if you want to give something back to the 'Program', if you want to meet some fantastic people, or if you really care about Softball, complete the application. Do it! You won't be disappointed. You too may receive a congratulatory letter from the National Director of Umpires welcoming you to the Officials' Development Committee.

2007 SOFTBALL CANADA RULE CHANGES

The following Rules changes approved at the AGM apply to Fast pitch, Orthodox, and Slo-pitch:

Rule 1-3 Ball Compression

Ball compression is the “Load Force” in kilograms (pounds) required to compress a softball 6.5 mm (0.25 inches) when measured in accordance with the ASTM (American Society for Testing Measurement) test method for measuring compression displacement of softballs.

Comment: This definition gives better understanding to the term Load force factor.

Rule 1-4 Ball Cor.

The Coefficient of Restitution of a softball when measured with the ASTM (American Society for Testing Measurement) test method for measuring the Coefficient of Restitution of softballs.

Comments: This definition gives a better understanding when the term COR is used in Rule 3-3.

Rule 1-1 e & Note 1-3 Altered Bats

1-1 e Engraved markings for ID purposes on the barrel end of the bat is considered altering a bat.

Note: The following are not considered altering the bat:

1. Replacing the grip with another legal grip.
2. Engraved identification ID markings on the knob end of a metal bat.
3. Laser markings for ID purposes anywhere on the bat.

Comments: Bats are expensive and players are engraving for ID purposes. Engraving causes burrs so engraving the barrel end is altering a bat but engraving the knob end is ok. Laser engraving does not scar the bat so laser marking is ok anywhere on the bat.

Rule 1-14 f Catch

In order to have a valid catch

- 1) When moving toward the out-of-play line, the feet must either:
 - a. Be within the playing area.
 - b. Touching the out of play line.
 - c. Both feet in the air when the catch is made after leaving the playing area.
- 2) A player, who is in dead ball area and returns to the playing area, must have both feet touching the playable area when the catch is made, in order to have a valid catch.

Comments: This new addition to a catch was the interpretation used in previous rulebooks. A majority of games across the country play in parks that do not have fully enclosed fences. These additions to the definition of a catch clarify what happens near an out of play line.

Rule 1-21a Delayed dead ball

Deletes all references to when an obstructed runner is played on and deletes Note

Now will read:

Is a game situation, in which the ball remains alive until the conclusion of a play.

- a. When the entire play is completed, the umpire shall rule a dead ball and enforce the appropriate ruling.

Note: The play is completed when:

1. An obstructed runner is called out or
2. All play has stopped and the umpire has called "Time" or "Dead Ball".

Comments: Defines when the play is completed after a delayed dead ball is called. The ball remains alive until the umpire calls the obstructed runner out or the umpire calls "TIME" or "Dead ball" at the end of all action. This is a change from previous obstruction calls. Previously the umpire killed the play when a play was made on the obstructed runner or when the obstructed runner was called out.

Rule 1-26 Note 3 Fair Ball

Deletes the words umpire or spectator in Note 3-To read as:

The position of the ball at the time of interference determines whether the ball is fair or foul, regardless if the ball rolls untouched to foul or fair territory.

Comments: In all interference, the position of the ball at the time of the interference determines fair or foul. This is particularly important in an infield fly situation. Once Interference is called, the ball is dead. The umpire needs to know if the ball is fair or foul to determine if the batter is out on the infield fly.

Rule 1-28 Fake tag

The new rule deletes the term about to receive the ball in the definition.

Is a form of obstruction on a runner, while advancing or returning to a base, by a fielder who is not in possession of the ball, and that impedes the progress of the runner.

- a. The runner does not have to stop or slide.
- b. Merely slowing down when a fake tag is made would constitute obstruction.

Comments: A fielder cannot fake tag a runner even if he is about to receive the ball. With "about to receive in the previous rule, it created confusion with the obstruction rule which eliminated the term "about to receive a ball". A fielder holding a glove in position to receive a ball thrown his direction is not faking a tag. There must be some type of motion that causes the runner to slow down, hesitate, slide, or change direction.

Rule 1-33 SP Note 2 & 1- 34 FP Note 2 Foul Ball

Deleted words of umpire or spectator. New Note 2 reads

The position of the ball at the time interference determines whether the ball is fair or foul, regardless if the ball rolls untouched to foul or fair territory.

Comments: See Fair ball above.

Rule 1-47 Ineligible Replacement Player

Is a player who may NOT enter the game to replace a player who must leave the game to attend to an injury that has caused bleeding. An ineligible Replacement Player is one who:

- a. Has been removed or ejected from the game by the umpire for a violation of the rules.
- b. Is in the current line-up.
- c. (minor only) An injured/ill player removed from game.

Comments: This new definition clarifies who cannot enter the game to act as a Replacement player under the “Blood rule.”

Rule 3-2b Warm-up bat

Shall comply with the safety grip and safety knob requirements of the official bat. (See Rule 3, Sec. 1h-i.)

Comments: Gives clear guidelines for the safety grip and now includes requirements for a knob on the grip. This eliminates many of the homemade weight devises used.

Rule 3-3i - Load force factor.

Currently the load force factor is 238.14 kg (525 lbs.) Change to be consistent with the ISF to a load force factor of 170.1 kg (375 lbs.)

Comments: This maintains consistent standards with ISF and ASA (the only testing standard used)

Rule 3-8 Uniforms – New exception to rule

All players on a team shall wear uniforms alike in colour, trim and style. Reference to coach’s uniform is found under Rule 4, Section 1b.

EXCEPTION: Players and coaches, for religious reasons, may be permitted to wear specific head covering and apparel that does not conform to the standard uniform requirements without penalty.

NOTE: For safety reasons, players must wear helmets as and when required under the Rules. The above exception does not preclude a player from having to wear a helmet as required under the rules.

Comments: The new rule is allowing a player to be exempt from headdress rules but does not exempt them from safety requirements like helmets and masks.

Rule 3-8 b 2 a Caps

- 2) Caps, visors and headbands are optional for female players but can be mixed. If more than one type is worn, they must be alike in colour and each of the same type must be of the same colour and style.
 - a) Plastic or hard visors are not allowed.

Comments: Other forms of visors are available on the market. Plastic visors are not made to standards like a helmet and could create a safety problem if they splintered during play due to contact with a ball or a sliding player.

Rule 4-7 a 1) and i & ii Substitutions

New additions to previous rule 4-7a

Any player may be substituted from the game at any time when the ball is dead.

- 1) If an injury to a batter-runner or runner prevents them from proceeding to an awarded base, and the ball is dead, the batter-runner or runner may be substituted.
 - i. The substitute will be allowed to touch any awarded base(s).
 - ii. The substitute must touch any awarded or missed base(s) not previously touched.

Comments: New wording clarifies an existing interpretation that a player change cannot occur during a live ball. The additional wording clarifies the procedure for a player not able to continue to a base due to an injury. Currently injury portion is listed in Rule 9.

Rule 4-7h 1 b3

Effect for an illegal player after completing his/her turn at bat and before the next pitch.

If the illegal player is discovered after completing his turn at bat and prior to the next pitch:

1. The illegal player is called out; and
2. Any advance of runners because of an obstruction, an error, a hit batsman, a walk, or a base hit is nullified.
3. Any additional outs that were recorded on the play will stand.

Comments: New addition #3 brings some consistency to the rules. Batting out of order allows outs to be kept in a similar appeal situation.

Rule 5-4 c 10

A new addition to situations that cause a forfeit.

If an ejected player, coach/manager is discovered participating in the game again.

Comments: Previously the rule covered an ineligible player which is a player removed from the game by the umpire. The additional wording covers ejected players.

Rule 7-2 Effect Sec. 2b-c 2b7 (new addition to 2b 1-6)

If the third out is made on a runner prior to the discovery of the infraction an appeal may still be made in order to reinstate the correct batting order. This appeal, if made does not result in an additional out.

Comments: If a team bats out of order the non-offending team can keep any outs made even after they appeal. Many times the team gets three outs before they actually get an out for the correct batter being declared out. This addition allows the non-offending team to continue with an appeal even after they have three outs. The team appeal reinstates the proper batting order.

Rule 7-6d 1&2 The Batter is out

d. When the third strike is:

- 1) Swung at and missed and the ball touches any part of the batter's person.
- 2) Not swung at and the pitched ball hits the batter while the pitch is in the strike zone.

Comments: 2 is a new addition and clarifies an existing interpretation.

Rule 8-4 TOUCHING BASES IN LEGAL ORDER

Runners must touch bases in legal order (i.e. first, second, third and home plate).

EXCEPTION: If a runner is obstructed at a base preventing him from touching the base.

Rule 8-4h AWARDED BASES MUST BE TOUCHED IN LEGAL ORDER

Awarded bases must be touched in legal order.

EXCEPTION: Unless a runner is obstructed at a base preventing him from touching the base.

Rule 8-6a A RUNNER FORFEITS HIS EXEMPTION FROM LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT

If, at any time, he fails to touch a base he is entitled to before attempting to make the next base.

EXCEPTION: If a runner is obstructed at a base preventing him from touching the base.

Rule 8-9 i SP THE RUNNER IS OUT

Rule 8-9g FP THE RUNNER IS OUT

BETWEEN the LINES

When he fails to touch the intervening base, or bases, in regular or reverse order and the ball is in play and is:

1. Legally held on that base; or
2. The runner is legally touched while off the base he missed.

EXCEPTION: If a runner is obstructed at a base preventing him from touching the base.

Comments: In each of the above rules, the offensive team is not penalized if the defensive team causes obstruction.

Rule 8-5 f RUNNERS ARE ENTITLED TO ADVANCE WITH LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT

When a live ball becomes lodged in a defensive player's equipment or uniform.

Comments: The offensive team is not penalized because a defensive player has the ball caught up in his uniform or equipment. The new rule makes the defensive player continue playing the ball.

Rule 8-7b Effect 7b- 4b Obstruction effect-changes underlined.

1. A Delayed Dead Ball should be signalled, with the ball remaining alive until the end of the play or until the obstructed runner is called out.
2. The obstructed runner, and each other runner affected by the obstruction, will always be awarded the base or bases they would have reached, in the umpire's judgement, had there been no obstruction.
3. In the case of a "fake tag", a warning should be given to both teams.
 - a. The next "fake tag" should result in the ejection of said player.
 - b. If the umpire feels there is justification, a defensive player making a fake tag could be ejected from the game without a warning.
4. If the obstructed runner is put out prior to reaching the base he would have reached had there not been obstruction, a dead ball is called.
 - a. The obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base, or bases, they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment had obstruction not occurred.
 - b. An obstructed runner may never be called out between the two bases where he was obstructed, unless:
 - 1) an act of interference occurs after the obstruction is ruled, or
 - 2) the runner is legally appealed for:
 - (a) Missing a base or;
 - (b) leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched
 - 3) If the obstructed runner safely obtains the base he would have been awarded, in the umpires judgment, and there is a subsequent play on a different runner, the obstructed runner is no longer protected between the bases where he was obstructed, and may be put out. The ball remains alive.
 - c. If the obstructed runner is put out after passing the base he would have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed runner will be called out. The ball remains alive.
 - d. Catcher obstruction on the batter is covered under Rule 8, Sec. 1d.

NOTE: Obstructed runners are still required to touch all bases in proper order, or they could be called out on a proper appeal by the defensive team.

EXCEPTION: If a runner is obstructed at a base preventing him from touching the base.

BETWEEN the LINES

Comments: The Rule defines when the delayed dead ball is called. Section 4b 3) is consistent with ISF and ASA. No longer is a player protected between the base he/she was obstructed if he/she returns to the base safely and a subsequent play is made on a runner.

Case play: R1 is obstructed rounding first base. R3 breaks for home and a play is made on R3 at home plate. R1 returns to first base but then goes to second base after the throw home. R3 is safe at home and then the catcher throws to second base in time to get an out on R1.

Rule: R1 is out because he got back to first base safely before moving to second base. If R1 stood off first base without touching the base and he subsequently tried for second base when the throw went to home plate he cannot be called out. The umpire would return him/her to first base.

Rule 8-9 n Effect l-n SP

Rule 8-9 l Effect j-l FP

If this interference, in the judgement of the umpire,

- 1) Is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the immediate succeeding runner shall also be called out; or
- 2) Takes away the defence's ability to make a force out for the third (3rd) out of an inning, no runs can score on the play.

Comments: It is unfair and not in the spirit of the game to allow the offence to benefit from a violation of the (Interference) rules. The rule applies regardless if the interference is intentional or unintentional.

Case play: 2 out. Runners on 2nd (R2) and 3rd (R3). Slow roller to shortstop (F6). Before F6 fields the ball R3 scores. After R3 scores R2 interferes with F6 preventing her fielding and throwing the ball to 1st for a force-out and removal of the run.

Rule: The run does not count when an offensive player is called out (making 3 outs) for interfering with a fielder's opportunity to make an out at a base to create a force out and nullify a run.

Rule 10-8f Suspension of Play

EFFECT Sec. 8f: In case of injury when "Time" is called, the ball is dead and runner(s) may be awarded a base or bases they would have achieved, in the umpire's judgement had the injury not occurred.

Comments: An offensive team was penalized if a defensive player is injured and play stopped because the umpire feels the player is at risk. Spectator interference introduced the concept of awarding bases the umpire feels the runner could have made had the play not been stopped. It should be noted an injury would have to be severe for an umpire to "kill" the play prior to its conclusion.

Rule 12-2a note: THE BOX SCORE

Each player's name and the position, or positions to be played, shall be listed in the order in which he batted, or would have batted, unless the player is legally substituted, ejected, or removed from the game, or the game ends before his turn at bat.

NOTE (Blood Ruling): Any statistics accrued by the replacement player at bat or in the field while he is in the game are credited to that player, even if he is a listed substitute who does not eventually enter the game as a substitute for another player.

Comments: Previously statistics went to withdrawn player. The player that produced the stats should get credit for them.

SLO-PITCH RULE CHANGES

Rule 1-54 Intentional dropped fly ball

Is a:

Fair fly ball including a line drive:

- 1) with fewer than two out, and
- 2) a runner on first base,

which an infielder with ordinary effort can catch, and the infielder intentionally drops, after it is controlled with a hand or glove.

A trapped ball or a fly ball allowed to bounce shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped.

Comment: Not a rule change but adds the term to the definitions. Note in 2) anytime a runner is at first base the umpire calls an intentional dropped fly ball if all the other criteria in the definition is met. This means a runner at first and second, a runner at first and third base, or bases loaded.

Rule 3-1a

Bats must comply with the current ASA (Amateur Softball Association) bat standards.

Comments: Same rule but name changed to reflect current wording from the ASA bat program. Access the bat criteria and a list of legal and banned bats by going to the ASA web site. www.softball.org- click on Certified Equipment-Click onto bats. The page has an extensive list of approved bats and an extensive list of banned bats.

Rule 4-10 f

(CO-ED ONLY) When the replacement player is used, the player must be of the same sex as the injured and bleeding player.

Comments: Adds a new line which is a clarification of existing policy and interpretation.

Rule 6-5c

The pitcher shall not wear a batting glove on the pitching hand.

Comments: Stipulates the batting glove on the pitching hand is illegal. The only material that can be on the pitching hand is tape (bad-aids etc)

Rule 6-6 Exception 3

When a foul ball is fielded close to the foul line and the catcher throws to any base for a possible out.

Comments: This exception was left out of previous Rulebook. The catcher is not penalized if he fields a hit foul ball close to the line and he throws the ball to first base in an attempt to get an out.

Rule 6-8 Effect 1-8 new exception added

Any infraction of Sections 1-8 is an illegal pitch. (EXCEPTION: Rule 6, Sec. 3h, Sec. 4a and Sec. 6-6b)

Comments: This was a contradiction in last rulebook. A defensive player not in fair territory before or during a pitch is not considered an illegal pitch. It is no pitch and the umpire makes the offending player return to fair territory.

Rule 7-2b and Effect

(CO-ED SP ONLY) The batting order shall alternate the sexes.

Effect Sec. 2b:

1. When two batters of the same sex bat back to back, the missing player (female or male) shall be declared automatically out when discovered by the umpire or brought to the umpire's attention.
2. There is no violation until a pitch has been thrown.

BETWEEN the LINES

3. The violation must be discovered while the player is at bat or after completing, his/her turn at bat and before another pitch has been thrown to the next batter.
4. If it is discovered after the turn at bat and after a pitch to the next batter, a proper player (opposite sex) replaces the improper player without penalty. There is no out in this situation.

Comments:

1. Clarifies this is not “Batting out of order” and is not an appeal play.
2. Clarifies what happens when the problem is caught after a batter completes the turn at bat and a pitch has been thrown to another batter. (The opposite sex takes the place of the improper player without penalty)

EFFECT – Sec. 7-6j: The batter is out when:

(CO-ED ONLY) When two batters of the same sex bat back to back.

1. This is not an appeal play.
2. A pitch must have been thrown for a violation to occur.
3. The missing player (male or female) shall be declared automatically out when discovered at bat or after completing his/her turn at bat and before the next pitch to the next batter.
 - a. If he/she is discovered after completing the turn at bat and after a pitch to the next batter no out can occur.
 - b. A proper player (opposite sex) without penalty replaces the improper player.

Comments: Same clarification as Rule 7-2b. Gives the timeline to enforce the out. Clarifies it is not an appeal play and shows there is no violation until a pitch is thrown.

Rule 7-6 | 3 The Batter is out

When he:

- 1) Hinders the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box; or
- 2) Intentionally hinders the catcher while standing within the batter's box; or
- 3) Intentionally interferes with a thrown ball while in or out of the batter's box.

Comments:

1. We deleted the previous #3. In Slo-Pitch there is no circumstance when the batter can interfere with a play at the plate. The ball is dead after each pitch so the runner cannot run to home. After the ball is hit, the batter becomes a batter runner and Rule 8-2h covers the batter runner interfering with the play at the plate.
2. New #3 Clarifies a batter can cause interference while in the batter's box and clarifies interfering with a thrown ball must be intentional. This is not a change from previous interpretations.

Rule 8-2 f

Deletion—entire Effect Sec. 2f—Changes a runner called out for stepping back toward home to avoid a tag from runners returning to the base held at the time of the call, to runners returning to the base held at the time of the pitch.

Comment: Effect Sec 2f-j covers the penalty for 8-2f. A batter runner who steps back to avoid a tag is out and runners return to the base held at the time of the pitch. Previously runners returned to last base touched at the time of the infraction. This takes away umpire judgment on placement of runners.

Rule 8-2m

When any person, other than a team member, enters the playing field and interferes with:

- 1) A fielder about to catch a fly ball; or
- 2) A fly ball that a defensive player, in the judgement of the umpire, is able to catch.

EFFECT - Sec. 2m:

1. The ball is dead and the batter runner is out.
2. Other runners may be awarded bases they may have achieved had there been no interference.

Comments: When a spectator causes interferences both the offensive team and the defensive team may be affected. A rule change (Rule 8-7j Effect 2) was made with Spectator interference in the last Rulebook allowing an umpire to award a runner bases they may have achieved had there been no interference by a non team member. This rule was not changed causing a discrepancy in the rulebook.

FAST PITCH RULE CHANGES

Rule 1-30 (previously 1-18) Flex

Changed the name Defo to Flex.

Comments: The rule remains the same. We only adopted the name Flex, because it better represents the role of the player. Defo indicates defense only, which is not correct. The Flex player can play offense or defense. The term Flex replaces the term Defoe throughout the Rulebook not just in the listed Rule.

Rule 1-54 **Intentional dropped fly ball**

Is a: Fair fly ball including a bunt or line drive:

- 1) with fewer than two out, and
- 2) a runner on first base,

which an infielder with ordinary effort can catch, and the infielder intentionally drops, after it is controlled with a hand or glove.

A trapped ball or a fly ball allowed to bounce shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped.

Comments: Not a rule change but adds the term to the definitions. Note in 2) anytime a runner is at first base the umpire calls an intentional dropped fly ball if all the other criteria in the definition is met. This means a runner at first and second, a runner at first and third base, or bases loaded.

Rule 3-1a **Bats**

Bats must comply with the current ASA (Amateur Softball Association) bat standards.

Comments: This rule was in effect in 2006 and now is in the Rule Book. We deleted reference to BPF rating and the note referring to bats with Titanium being illegal. All bats must conform to the ASA bat standard. Information can be obtained by accessing www.softball.org –click onto Certified equipment–click onto Bats.

Rule 3-4e

Gloves with white, grey, or yellow optic, circles on the outside, giving the appearance of a ball is illegal for all players.

Comments: With the increase use of Yellow optic balls in Fast pitch it now is included in Rule 3-4e. It should be noted this rule applies to all players. The pitcher in Fast pitch cannot use a glove that has any colour tone of the ball on it. (Rule 3-4d).



Rule 3-6 b (1 Facemasks

- 1) Any defensive or offensive player can wear an approved face mask/guard.”

Comments: The reference to plastic is deleted. The facemask could have a guard made of material other than plastic. The approval must be from Softball Canada.

Rule 4-6 e 2 a & b Adds illness to rule

(Minor only) When all legal substitutes have been entered or all starting players re-entered by a team in a game, the re-entry and substitution rules are waived in the event of an injury and/or illness.

- a. The player entering the game will assume the batting position of the injured and/or ill player.
- b. The injured and/or ill player may not return to the game.

Comments: The term ill is included in the rule. This allows a team to continue a game if a player is injured or gets ill and they have no substitutes left. They are allowed to insert a player who already has used his eligibility. To protect from manipulation of the line-up the injured or ill player cannot return to the line-up even as a replacement player (blood rule).

Rule 6-6 Effect 1 & 2

EFFECT Sec. 6 a-b:

1. Foreign substance is an illegal pitch when detected.
2. If any defensive team member continues to place foreign substance on a ball, the umpire can eject the pitcher after warning the manager/coach.

Comments: This gives strength to the rule. It gives the umpire a chance to shift the onus to the coach to get his team to discontinue the practice of putting something on the ball.

Rule 6-8 Effect 1-8 Exceptions

FP-Effect Sec. 1-8: Any infraction of Sections 1-8 is an illegal pitch. (EXCEPTION: Rule 6, Sec.3m, Sec. 7b and Sec. 5a)

Note: Orthodox the Exception applies to: (Rule 6, Sec.3q, Sec. 7b and Sec. 5a)

Comments: This was a contradiction in last rulebook. A defensive player not in fair territory before or during a pitch is not considered an illegal pitch. It is no pitch and the umpire makes the offending player return to fair territory.

Rule 6-3 f Orthodox

- 1) The pitcher must not use a windmill or slingshot type pitch, or the pitching arm may not make a complete revolution in the delivery.
- 2) Turning the body toward first or third base and bending the elbow during the backswing is not permitted.

Comments: The rule has not changed. It is re worded to provide better clarification to what is required.

Rule 7-2 b

- b. The batting order delivered to the umpire must be followed throughout the game unless a player is replaced by:
 - 1) A substitute. When this occurs, the substitute must take the place of the substituted player in the batting order.
 - 2) The Flex player who can bat or run for the starting DP or his substitute in the batting order.

Comments: Clarifies the batting order will change when the Flex player runs or bats for the starting DP or his/her substitute.

Rule 7-6a

Sec. 6 THE BATTER IS OUT

When a batter enters the batter's box with, or is discovered using, an altered bat or a bat on the ASA non- approved bat list.

EFFECT – Sec. 6a: The batter is out and ejected from the game.

Comments: A player is ejected for using an altered bat and a bat on the banned bat list. With the liveliness of bats and balls, safety is a concern to all participants. We are attempting to eliminate participants from using equipment they know is illegal. The severe penalty of ejection for using a bat that is banned shows the serious nature of the infraction.

Rule 7-6 j 4

The Batter is out when he:

- 4) Intentionally interferes with a thrown ball while in or out of the batter's box.

Comments: This is a new addition to the rule. Clarifies an existing rule interpretation.

Rule 8-2 2g

Deletion—entire Effect Sec. 2g—Changes a runner called out for stepping back toward home to avoid a tag from runners returning to the base held at the time of the infraction to runners returning to the base held at the time of the pitch.

Comments: Effect 2g-k covers the penalty and placement of runners for the infraction. Takes away umpire judgment.

Rule 8-2n

When any person, other than a team member, enters the playing field and interferes with:

- 1) A fielder about to catch a fly ball; or
- 2) A fly ball that a defensive player, in the judgement of the umpire, is able to catch.

EFFECT - Sec. 2n:

3. The ball is dead and the batter runner is out.
4. Other runners may be awarded bases they may have achieved had there been no interference.

Comments: When a spectator causes interferences both the offensive team and the defensive team may be affected. A rule change (Rule 8-7j Effect 2) was made with Spectator interference in the last Rulebook allowing an umpire to award a runner bases they may have achieved had there been no interference by a non team member. This rule was not changed causing a discrepancy in the rulebook.



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