



Calling the Ditch

SBUA
Sask Baseball Umpire Assoc

INSIDE: Sask has 2 pro umpires working in the US; Umpire of the Week for Sask and Canada; Sask Summer Games Umpires; Sask Umpire Kidsport involvement; & Rocky's Final Question

SUPERVISOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the second installment of our newsletter. As stated in our March edition we want to provide a method of regular communication to our umpires. Our goal is to send this newsletter out four times a year. I want to thank Shaun Bzdel for taking on the role of publisher.

Our clinic season has closed and now we are busy umpiring our league games. From the comments I have heard our new format for the level I clinic program developed by Scott mills and the education committee has been well received. Down the road with the on-line modules being developed by Baseball Canada our level I training programs will become friendlier and more practical. Hopefully by the Baseball Canada annual meetings this fall most of this will be in place and we can start implementing next spring. This fall, our committee will look at the level II and III clinics along with the superclinic and make the necessary changes there as well.

Provincials are just around the corner. Some championships sites haven't been decided yet but the most have. Take a look at the SaskBaseball website to see the locations. If you are interested in umpiring any of these championships contact the zone director.

Our mentorship program planning is completed and ready for implementation. Dave Bisskey has been working hard in developing the program however it probably won't be in place in the entire province this year. But that could be a good thing as we will be able to work out the bugs so that next year we can go at it with full speed. This will be a great developmental tool especially for our rural umpires. For more information contact Dave or your zone director.

Looking down the road to the fall, some very important events will occur. Baseball Canada and SaskBaseball through the direction of Sport Canada have developed a five year strategic plan. The umpires division will do the same. A

preliminary session was held in March to kick around ideas but a formal draft will be developed this September. You will be able to see when and where on the SaskBaseball website. Keep checking as the endeavor is extremely important for our future.

Secondly, I have had discussions with Trevor Drury about restarting the Gilligan Open (golf tournament) for the weekend of September 15 and 16. He is working on it presently and more information will be forthcoming. One thought was to have the strategic planning meeting in conjunction with the open. We will keep you posted.

Thirdly, SaskBaseball and Manitoba Baseball have agreed to host a caravan this this fall. This is a clinic for umpires which is held for the instructing of umpires to instruct umpire clinics. The caravan is a great rule and mechanic learning weekend but it focus on teaching aspects. It will be held in Moose Jaw on the Thanksgiving weekend. We will probably have seven spots so if you or you know someone who might be interested contact myself or your zone directors. There usually is lots of interest so it won't necessarily be first come first serve but rather where and who best serves our requirements at this time.

Finally, in the fall is when we hold our AGM. Umpire attendance has been down in the last few years. These are very important meetings and it is YOUR program. As mentioned the draft of the strategic planning will be presented for approval. The elections will be

held. This year, the entire board is up for election so the future of the program is in your hands. Finally Elemer Jerkovits and his committee will present a new set of bylaws for approval. Again this is very important that you attend and have your say.

In closing, thank you for umpiring our great game. Without you it won't happen. If you have any comments or concerns contact me or your zone director.

2012 UMPIRE BOARD

Provincial Supervisor	Rocky Nickel
Asst. Supervisor	Dave Bisskey
Past Supervisor	Trevor Drury
Zone 1	Bob Burns and Kevin Culy
Zone 2	Elemer Jerkovits
Zone 3	Bruce Walker
Zone 4	Murray Bucsis
Zone 5	Gary Dodds
Zone 6	Scott Mills
Zone 7	VACANT (Trevor Drury-assisting)
Zone 8	Terry Schneider

2012 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Executive	Rocky Nickel
Education	Scott Mills
Communications	Shaun Bzdel
Kidsport	Kevin Culy
Awards	Murray Bucsis
Mentorship	Dave Bisskey
Constitution	Elemer Jerkovits

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Did You know that in the 2011 baseball season, there were only two Canadians were umpiring in the minor leagues for PBUC (Professional Baseball Umpires Committee) and they were both from the province of Saskatchewan? Stu Scheurwater and Aaron Roberts worked in the Texas League (AA) and Carolina League (high A) respectively. Two more Canadians were hired this year and are currently working the rookie league. This year, Aaron has gone back to umpire in the Carolina League while Stu has been promoted to the Pacific Coast league (AAA).

According to Rocky Nickel, Sask Baseball's umpire supervisor,

"Stu has told me on numerous occasions that the training he received through Sask Baseball and Baseball Canada made it much easier to be hired by professional baseball. When he arrived at professional umpire school he was much further advanced than the other American umpires. Our training of mechanics and systems made the transition to what was expected a natural progression. It was a huge advantage for both Stu and Aaron."

A short bio from each is included and congratulations to two of our alumni and the best luck in the further endeavors.

STU SCHEURWATER

Stu took his first umpiring clinic and started working amateur baseball at the age of 11 in Regina, Saskatchewan. Throughout his amateur career he continued to attend clinics and advance his provincial levels. Stu worked numerous city and provincial tournaments included the Saskatchewan Summer games. Stu then wanted to expand his amateur career got involved in the Baseball Canada's national program. Stu worked his first nation tournament in Medicine Hat, Alberta (2005 Canada Cup). In January of 2006 Stu attended Harry Wendelstedt Umpire School in Daytona Beach Florida. From there he got hired into professional baseball. While waiting for Home Land Security visa paper work to be accepted Stu had to sit out the 2006



season. That summer Stu attended his second national tournament in Guelph, Ontario (2006 Juniors). Stu started his professional career in the Arizona League (2007) and continued to work in North West League (2008), South Atlantic League (2008), Carolina League (2009), Texas League (2010-2011), and Pacific Coast League (present). Stu also spends his Januarys instructing

at the Harry Wendelstedt School of Umpires in Daytona Beach Florida.

AARON ROBERTS

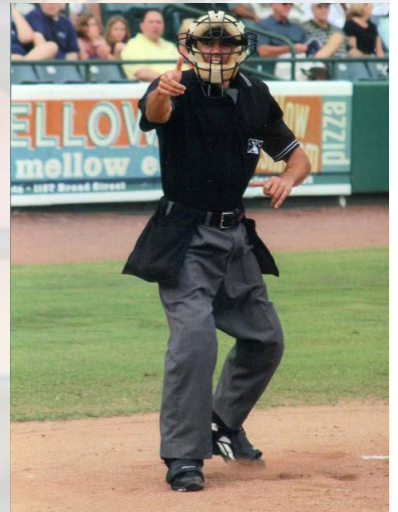
Aaron attended his first level 1 clinic in Saskatoon at the age of 15. Within the same year Aaron worked the Mosquito AAA provincials and Peewee AAA provincials. He continued by taking his level 2 clinic the following year in Saskatoon; and became a level 4 umpire in 2007.

After getting his level 4; He enrolled in umpire school in 2007. He chose to attend Harry Wendelstedt umpire school. After his first year they encouraged him to go home, work on some of his skills and to return the following year.

In 2008 Aaron returned to Harry Wendelstedt Umpire School and was one of the top 25 students. He also received the Top Returning Student award. From there Aaron was sent to a two week evaluation course in Cocoa Beach, FL by Professional Baseball Umpiring Corporation (PBUC). Aaron was lucky enough to receive a job as an umpire with Minor League Baseball in the Gulf Coast League (2008). Within that same year Aaron got promoted to the Northwest League.

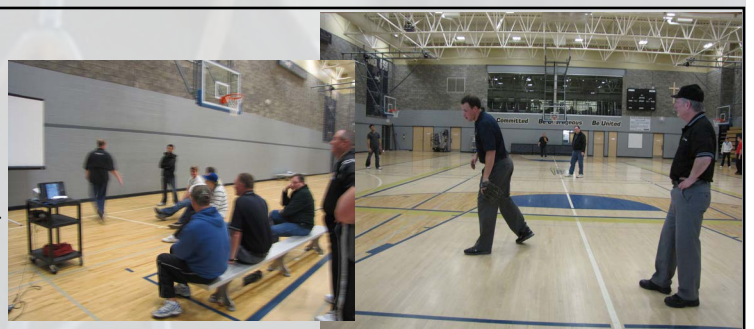
He returned in 2009 to the Northwest League (short season, A ball). In 2010 Aaron worked in the South Atlantic League (long season, A ball). 2011 brought a promotion to the Carolina League (high A ball).

Aaron is currently working his 2012 season in the California League (high A ball).



2012 SUPERCLINIC

This year's superclinic was held at Bethlehem Catholic High School in Saskatoon, March 10 and 11. Thank you to the Saskatoon and District Baseball Umpires Association for hosting. Check back to the SBA website for next year's clinic dates and location. The superclinic is open to all umpires in Saskatchewan of any level.



SBA UMPIRE OF THE WEEK

Murray Bucsis

As the Chairperson of the Umpires Award Committee, I am very excited in this new program for 2012. The Umpire of the Week is geared to honor a young umpire in each zone. There are many young upcoming umpires who worked hard year after year and did not receive any recognition for the good job they have done. The Umpire of the Week is one way to show appreciation of their contributions to baseball. This program will run for 8 consecutive weeks and giving an opportunity for each zone in the province to recognize a young local umpire.

- Week 1 - Zone 4 May 21 - May 27
- Week 2 - Zone 2 May 28 - June 03
- Week 3 - Zone 5 June 04 - June 10
- Week 4 - Zone 7 June 11 - June 17
- Week 5 - Zone 6 June 18 - June 24
- Week 6 - Zone 3 June 25 - July 01
- Week 7 - Zone 1 July 02 - July 08
- Week 8 - Zone 8 July 09 - July 15

Any Coach, Parent or Umpire may nominate an umpire from their zone. Submit the umpire to your Zone Umpire Director with a short write up and picture of the umpire.

Members of the Awards committee are Chairperson, Murray Bucsis from Melville, and Directors Bob Burns from Estevan and Dave Burke from Kindersley

Baseball Canada Umpire of the Week

Congratulations to Logan Plesniewicz of Regina for Saskatchewan's representative to Baseball Canada's Umpire of Week for May 27 to June 2.

I'm Logan Plesniewicz, I am 14 years old and this is my 4th year in the Regina Baseball Umpire Association and I am a level 2 umpire.

I started umpiring when I was ten because my older brother did it, and when I was a kid I did a lot of things my brother did. I currently stay in the programme for 2 things, the money and the love of the game. I have also worked the mosquito AA and AAA provincials and playoffs for a few years and also help out in most Regina tournaments. Plus I was the 2010 Regina



baseball junior official of the year.

I'm interested in the drums, video games, hockey and I'm part of the Wascana Racing Canoe Club.

SASKATCHEWAN SUMMER GAMES

Every four years the Saskatchewan Summer Games occur. This year, the event will be held in Meadow Lake from July 29 to August 1. The games feature the very best bantam aged baseball players from across the province. It is a method for SaskBaseball to assess talent levels and provides a starting point in the development of the future year's elite program.

Likewise, the SaskBaseball umpire program for these games has moved back to a very successful past strategy. The summer Games are used in a development tool for level III umpires. The umpire division treats the Summer Games like a national tournament selecting umpires from each of the zones. It provides insight into what a national tournament entails while provide a chance for both on-field and off-field development of an umpires abilities.

"I remember back to 93, when I was a new level III umpire and went to PA for the games" states Rocky Nickel. "The Summer Games umpires at that tournament went on to become the heart and soul of our program for years afterwards. I believe that they attended over 40 national and international events."

"Also umpires like Larry Orth, Barry Boreen, Larry Schraeder, David Burke and myself became the nucleus of the umpire board throughout the 90's and into the new century. Now there are a new group of umpires taking that step. Hopefully most will become level IV and V umpires, some will become coarse conductors or sit on the umpire board. Our programs future might be seem in Meadow Lake this year"

We are pleased to announce that the following umpires have been selected for the 2012 Saskatchewan Summer Games. Congratulations and Good luck.

- Zone 1 Trevor Elliott
- Zone 2 Greg Ast and Chris Shore
- Zone 3 Brad Biermann and Ray Klein
- Zone 4 Daniel Metherall
- Zone 5 Kathy Bornhorst
- Zone 6 Martin Schwerghadt, Chris Fryatt-Miller and Travis Worms
- Zone 7 Bruno Kossmann
- Zone 8 Terry Schneider
- Supervisors Scott Mills and Dave Bisskey



Pictured above are our umpire representitives at Baseball Canada championships this year: L to R Back row: Shaun Bzdel, Terry Marak, Huck Craig, Craig Smith Front Row: Trevor Drury, Kevin Kuly, & Scott Mills

Kidsport

Kevin Culy

Hello Saskatchewan baseball umpires! Kidsport has become a charity that the umpire program in Canada has selected to throw their support behind. This is a very good fit for us as umpires because all of the money raised by baseball umpires in Canada is earmarked specifically for baseball programs. That means that we as umpires have an opportunity to support a great charity that directly benefits the game of baseball that we all love, its win win! Kids get to play baseball and umpires get to umpire baseball. A great way for umpires to generate funds for the Kidsport charity is to donate one game fee from league play or one game fee from tournament play. This can be co-ordinated through person(s) assigning for your league or tournament. Just ask, someone in your organization can point

you in the right direction! Last year at the Baseball Canada Canadian Midget Championship the umpires at that tournament alone raised over \$1000 dollars! To learn more about the Kidsport charity you can go to the Canadian web site www.kidsportcanada.com and read about the program. You can click on the "find a chapter" icon at the top of the page and follow the link to the Saskatchewan chapter at www.kidsportsask.ca if you want to contact the Kidsport program closer to home. If you would prefer to talk to someone in the Saskatchewan umpire program you can also contact me directly at kculy@yahoo.com or open the Sask Baseball handbook you received at your clinic this spring and find the contact information for all eight umpire zone directors. Have fun umpiring this summer! and try to give back to the sport if you can!

FINAL QUESTION

Rocky Nickel

Last Newsletter Question:

With a 3-2 count, bases loaded, tie in the bottom of the last inning of the Midget AAA championship on an inside pitch the batter swings and tries to check it. The pitch hits the batter on the fingers. What is the correct call?

- ball 4, batter walks, game over
- strike 3, going to extra innings
- hit by pitch, batter walks, game over
- foul ball
- call security because no matter what you call someone is going to be upset

Answer:

Let's think this question through. The first thing to remember, on any pitch that hits the batter, the ball becomes DEAD immediately. So the umpire should call TIME first. Now let us rule out a couple of the potential answers. Is it a foul ball? No, the pitch hit the batters fingers not the bat (contrary to myth Hands are not part of the bat). Is the pitch a ball? No, because the pitch hit the batter it has to be either a strike or the batter is hit by a pitch. So those are our two choices. The way the questions reads "the batter swings and tries to check it", one could interpret that he never and therefore it is a strike and you play extra innings. This is a 100% judgement call.

Let's talk about mechanics involved with this play. If the plate umpire is certain he swung, then after calling time, he should point at the batter and say "yes he did" then indicate an out call (it is strike 3, if strike 1 or 2 then indicate a strike). If as plate umpire you aren't sure, ask your partner for help. The mechanic is: point to your base umpire and say "did he go". The base umpire should call it the way he sees it. If it was a strike then say "yes he did" and make an out call (this is for any appeal strike call). If the base umpire believe he checked his swing, he should say "no he didn't" and make a safe sign.

A few more points, the rules clearly state that a catcher or manager may ask for an appeal on a check swing and the umpire must grant such a request. But in a case like this or any time on strike 3 and a passed ball if the plate umpire isn't sure, then he should immediately ask his partner for help without waiting for an appeal request. This way no one is hung out to dry. Finally if as a plate umpire you think he went, call it. Don't let your partner do your job.

As for answer e, call them as you see them. Do your job and don't worry about the consequences. You have methods of handling difficult situations and Sask Baseball has implemented a zero tolerance policy.

New Question:

With 1 out and runners at 1st and 2nd, they attempt a double steal. The batter hits a pop up near the 1st base dugout, the catcher and 1st baseman run to the ball and believe they are going to collide, stop and the ball falls untouched between them, hits a rock and rolls inside the foul line where the pitcher picks it up. The runners remain at 2nd and 3rd and the batter runs towards first and the pitcher races there also just beating the batter. What is the call.

- Foul ball
- Batter is out (infield fly) runner return to 1st and 2nd.
- Batter is out (infield fly) runners remain at 2nd and 3rd.
- Batter is out on force play and runners remain at 2nd and 3rd.
- Batter is out (infield fly) and runner at 1st out for not tagging up.