





## CRL

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CRL youth umpires. Like Haze, two of them have officiated at Collegiate World Series and the third has umpired a Little League World Series.

Winter, and Haze are planning a classroom orientation session on Jan. 9 and two skill clinics on the field on Jan. 17 and 18. As happened last year, Winter will mentor youth umpires throughout the season. Teens and parents interested in the youth umpire program should contact Winter at 916-505-1326 or at [umpire.crl@gmail.com](mailto:umpire.crl@gmail.com).

Winter already has 13 youth umpires who are returning for the 2018 season. But he hopes the lure of an unprecedented level of training will increase the total to between 25 and 30 youth umpires. The youths are paid \$25 a game to be a base umpire and \$37.50 to be a home plate umpire.

The CRL website describes youth umpiring as a fun way to stay involved in baseball: "Umpiring also looks good on a college application because it requires many of the qualities colleges look for: leadership, confidence and the ability to make decisions under pressure."

Winter and Haze said junior umpires also learn invaluable



A youth umpire makes calls at a CRL game last year.

life lessons such as perseverance, punctuality, integrity and resilience, all of which will serve them well in every part of their lives.

As for the CRL youth umpire program overall, the two men see it as a small piece of solving a national epidemic — the precipitous decline in high school referees that is endangering sports programs across the country.

"The reason is there is so much poor sportsmanship displayed in a lot of sports," Haze said.

Young people just getting into high school officiating are immediately turned off, so they aren't replacing older umpires who are aging out of the business.

The two men see Rancho Murieta as a healthy environment for youths to learn umpiring skills. Winter said that stems from CRL culture and values being taught to the team managers and coaches and instilled in the young

players.

Haze also thinks it is Rancho Murieta.

"It is a tight-knit community and people here have a lot more respect for human beings," Haze said. "It allows them to relax and learn on the job without having to be ridiculed by the crowd."

That isn't to say that youth umpires don't get negative feedback when officiating a game.

"The chirping isn't malicious," Winter said. "It is saying something like 'That was a strike.'"

Dealing with adversity and staying focused also is part of the learning process.

When mentoring junior umpires last year, Winter said he made sure team managers and coaches respected their decisions.

"We have taught the managers that a judgement call can't be disputed," Winter said. "They can appeal a ruling but as for balls, strikes, outs and



Dominic Ivezich (left) and Anthony Borg are CRL youth umpires.

safes, they have to live with that."

Last season, Winter staffed 124 home games with umpires. Of those, youth umpires officiated 103 games, and the remaining 21 games were staffed by an outside adult umpire association. Youth umpires also officiated some of the Major team games (with the oldest, most competitive players) last year even though managers typically ask for adults.

Last year, Jordan Remington was one of the few youth umpires tapped for Major games. A senior at Folsom High School, Remington came up through CRL, playing baseball from age 10 to 14. When he was 13, he became interested in umpiring after his father became umpire-in-chief.

"I really love baseball, but I

was never really good at playing it," Remington said. "But I know the game extremely well, fell in love with umpiring and got good at it."

Remington said umpiring a game is very stressful.

"Whenever I make a call, one side is happy, and the other side is always upset," Remington said. "There's noise from the dugout, the players and the stands." Nevertheless, he loves it.

Remington said other young people considering umpiring must care about the sport.

"You can't just go out there and do it for the money," Remington said. "You have to have some passion for it."

Prospective umpires must also be confident.

"When someone approaches you with a rule they just made up, you must quiet them down," Remington said. "You can't be shy, and confidence is key."

Remington said umpiring had been a great way to earn money.

"Except I don't feel like I am working. I feel like I am watching a baseball game, except it is up close and personal."

Remington plans to study communications in college and hopes to become a sports announcer specializing in baseball.

CRL also draws players from Wilton and Sloughhouse and has a robust softball program for girls.

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