



SOMBA

SOUTH OKANAGAN MINOR BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

Providing a Positive Baseball Experience for the Youth of the South Okanagan

Umpire Information for SOMBA Coaches & Team Managers

Updated: April 14, 2024

Most people recognize being an umpire, official, or referee is a difficult (and often thankless) job. Yet ironically, some youth sport parents, coaches, and athletes insist on making this job even harder by shouting ridicule and criticism the officials' way. While fans, coaches and players empathize with an athlete who makes a mistake, officials (who are sometimes not much older than the athletes) are more likely to be condemned, demeaned, and chastized. Teaching respect for officials doesn't necessarily mean encouraging blind obedience, but rather, how to self advocate, take responsibility for your own actions, and overcome adversity.

For parents and coaches, it's important to think about what yelling at umps teaches young athletes. Youth sport advocacy organizations have outlined several different ways yelling at officials hurts kids by communicating to them that:

1. Mistakes are not acceptable.
2. There's no need to take accountability for your own performance when you can blame others.
3. It's acceptable to disrespect an authority figure whenever you disagree with their decision.
4. Even though it's rude, disruptive, and distracting to others, yelling is acceptable behavior.

Remember it's just a game. No missed call during a youth sports game is going to make or break an athlete's career. Youth sports are an environment for learning about and falling in love with sports, not heaping pressure on athletes, coaches, and officials. And in the off-chance a player, coach, or parent makes a mistake and is disrespectful to an official during the game, make an effort to resolve the conflict after the game with a face-to-face conversation with the umpire. This helps illustrate to young athletes that after a conflict with another person it is important to take responsibility for your actions and make amends with the other person.

Below are some important things to know about the umpires for your games this season:

1. All umpires will be scheduled for your games by the SOMBA Umpire Allocator.
2. All games must be scheduled by your respective Division Director.
3. If you wish to set up exhibition games, they must be set up through your Division Director who will confirm field and umpire availability.



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4. If a game has to be cancelled or rescheduled it needs to be done through your Division Director who will contact the Umpire Allocator and Fields Director. Cancellations need adequate time to notify the umpires and, whenever possible, should be done a minimum of 24 hours before the scheduled game time.
5. Umpires are expected to be at the park 20-30 minutes before game time.
6. Decisions on rainouts or poor field conditions made prior to the plate meeting will be made at the Division Director level (or his/her designate) in consultation with the City and Fields Director.
7. Once the lineups have been handed in at the plate meeting, decisions to halt, delay or postpone a game because of safety concerns rest in the hands of the umpires. As some of our umpires are youth umpires they may consult with the coaches prior to making their final decision and need your support in whatever decision is made. Player safety will be paramount in making these decisions.
8. BC Minor Baseball, several years ago, adopted Rule 13.11 which was/is intended to insure we do not lose young officials because of abuse or intimidation by adults. This rule essentially prohibits any coach, player or fan from disputing (in words or actions) any judgement call (balls or strikes, safes or outs, fair or foul calls, etc.) made by an umpire. On calls that involve interpretation of rules, a coach may appropriately request an explanation from the umpire whose decision will be final. Coaches are required to fully abide by the spirit of this rule and behave accordingly without trying to influence an umpire's decision. Should a player or fan be the source of negative comments/actions, coaches for the team involved are responsible to deal with that behaviour. Please remember, when youth umpires are officiating, you, as coaches, are expected to be their biggest allies!
9. Should you have concerns with an umpire, they can be sent in writing to the Umpire in Chief, Lorne Raymond @ mlr1@telus.net and the SOMBA Umpire Allocator, Paul Foreman @ paulforeman4@gmail.com