

Iowa Amateur Softball Association



Umpire-In-Chief Manual

Revised 2-18-2008

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Commissioners Message

This Manual has been created to assist you in performing your duties as a member of the Iowa ASA Umpire-in-Chief Staff. As you know, we take extraordinary pride in the development and training of our umpires, making our commitment and dedication to the ASA Umpire Program a mainstay of admiration of many sports organizations throughout the nation. To maintain that level of excellence, it is important to put in writing our basic organizational policy, along with our duties and responsibilities so that we, as a staff, are better able to impart our knowledge and the ASA standards to all Iowa ASA umpires with the same unity of thought. It is imperative, therefore, that all UIC Staff members have a thorough understanding of this Manual. Your recommendations to change, update, delete or modify the contents of this Manual are solicited and strongly encouraged.

Thank you for being a part of the Iowa ASA Umpire Program. The time, energy and professionalism that you bring to our program are impressive, and certainly praiseworthy. We are extremely proud of our very successful Iowa ASA Umpire Program, and each of you is an integral part of the program's success.

IOWA AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

The Iowa Amateur Softball Association (Iowa ASA) is an affiliate of the ASA/USA Softball, the national governing body of amateur softball in the United States. The responsibilities of Iowa ASA include the regulation of competition and the assurance of fairness and equal opportunity to all who participate in ASA/USA Softball within the State of Iowa.

Iowa ASA is a non-government, non-partisan and non-profit organization that is staffed by volunteers who are dedicated to the advancement of softball at all levels of play. Iowa ASA accepts any person that qualifies as an amateur, regardless of sex, color, creed or national origin. Through the dedicated efforts of the Commissioner and the Commissioner's Staff, Iowa ASA is ranked as one of the top softball programs in the United States.

HOW THE IOWA ASA OPERATES

The Iowa ASA program is coordinated and administered by the Commissioner who is appointed by ASA/USA Softball. The Commissioner is responsible for appointing an Umpire-in-Chief (UIC), a Junior Olympic (JO) Commissioner, State Player Representatives, and any other appointment deemed necessary to administer the program. With the approval of the Commissioner, the JO Commissioner is responsible for appointing District Commissioners and Assistant District Commissioners and the Commissioner is responsible for appointing a District Adult Commissioners and any other appointment that is necessary. The UIC, with approval of the Commissioner, is responsible for appointing District UICs, Assistant District UICs, and any other appointment deemed necessary to administer the umpire program. All appointments are for a period of one year, normally Jan. 1 to December 31 of the following year. Reappointment to UIC Staff positions is at the leisure of the UIC and the Commissioner. The UIC and/or the Commissioner may terminate any UIC Staff appointment without cause.

Teams wishing to join and participate in Iowa ASA events and activities register through the Commissioner or the Commissioner's staff.

Umpires join the Iowa ASA through membership in the ASA/USA Softball Umpire Program that provides a myriad of benefits. Individuals who wish to become ASA/USA Softball umpires register through the Iowa ASA State Office or through a UIC Staff Member.

UMPIRE PROGRAM

Iowa ASA umpires are proud because of the training received, the uniform they wear, the assignments received at the local, association, region and national level, and the recognition received during their career. Each of these factors is important to the umpire program. As each game is conducted, the umpire is responsible to administer the game in accordance with the ASA/USA Softball guidelines. The goal of the Iowa ASA Umpire Program is to provide each umpire with the opportunity to succeed at completing this responsibility and to help the umpire achieve his or her personal goals within this avocation of umpiring.

The Iowa ASA Umpire Program is coordinated and administered by the Iowa ASA UIC, with assistance of the UIC Staff. The Iowa ASA UIC staff includes (see Appendix):

Iowa ASA UIC

The Iowa ASA UIC serves at the pleasure of the Iowa ASA Commissioner. The UIC is responsible to the Commissioner for the overall management and supervision of the Iowa ASA Umpire Program. In addition to the primary staff, the Iowa ASA UIC may appoint Assistant UICs as deemed necessary.

Junior Olympic (JO) Program UIC

The JO Program UIC is responsible to the Iowa ASA UIC for the identification, assignment, management and supervision of the umpires assigned to the JO Program Championship Tournaments. Other duties include:

- In coordination with the State UIC and Adult Program UIC, organize and assign the UIC assignments in support of the Iowa ASA JO Championship Tournaments.
- Ensure all Tournament UIC's assign and reassign umpires to all Iowa ASA JO Program Championship Tournaments, including Regional Tournaments, and maintain contact with the respective Tournament UICs and Tournament Directors to ensure that the appropriate level of umpire support is provided to each tournament.
- In coordination with the Iowa ASA State Office, maintain current rosters of tournament certified umpires who are qualified for assignment to the JO Program Championship tournaments.
- Communicate frequently with the Iowa ASA JO Commissioner and be responsive to JO Program umpire needs.
- Utilize the UIC staff to ensure that the JO Program is responsive to the needs of the Iowa ASA Umpire Program.
- During the Annual UIC Staff Meeting, provide the UIC Staff an overview of the JO Program, with emphasis on the previous Tournament season, and other issues relevant to the JO Program.
- Assist as required during the Annual Rules and Mechanics Clinics.
- Supervise, or assist in the supervision of umpires at Iowa ASA championship tournaments, when requested.

- Obtain rule interpretations and umpire information from the Iowa ASA UIC.
- Submit rule change proposals and casebook plays to the Iowa ASA UIC.
- Attend biennial national clinic for Umpires-in-Chief if whenever possible.
- Perform other duties as directed by the Iowa ASA UIC.

Adult Program UIC

The Adult Program UIC is responsible to the Iowa ASA UIC for the identification, assignment, management and supervision of the umpires assigned to the Adult Program Championship Tournaments. Other duties include:

- In coordination with the State UIC and JO Program UIC, organize and supervise the UIC assignments in support of the Iowa ASA Adult Program Championship Tournaments.
- Ensure all Tournament UIC's assign and reassign umpires to all Iowa ASA Adult Program Championship Tournaments, including Regional Tournaments, and maintain contact with the respective Tournament UICs and Tournament Directors to ensure that the appropriate level of umpire support is provided to each tournament.
- In coordination with the Iowa ASA State Office, maintain current rosters of tournament certified umpires who are qualified for assignment to the Adult Program Championship tournaments.
- Communicate frequently with the State Commissioner and be responsive to the Adult Program umpire needs.
- Utilize the UIC staff to ensure that the Adult Program is responsive to the needs of the Iowa ASA Umpire Program.
- During the Annual UIC Staff Meeting, provide the UIC Staff an overview of the Adult Program, with emphasis on the previous Tournament season, and other issues relevant to the Adult Program.
- Supervise, or assist in the supervision of, umpires at Iowa ASA sanctioned tournaments, when requested.
- Obtain rule interpretations and umpire information from the Iowa ASA UIC.
- Submit rule change proposals and casebook plays to the Iowa ASA UIC.
- Attend biennial national clinic for Umpires-in-Chief whenever possible.
- Assist as required during the Annual Rules and Mechanics Clinics.
- Assist at District, Association, Regional, or National Championship Tournaments, as directed.
- Perform all other functions as directed by the Iowa ASA UIC.

Deputy UICs

The Deputy UIC's are responsible to the Iowa ASA UIC for the management and supervision of the umpires registered within their Area. Other duties include:

- Assist in the formation and organization of umpire associations within their District.
- Assist in the recruitment and registration of umpires, and with the distribution of registration materials to newly registered umpires. Recommend umpires for district, state, regional and national championship assignments.
- Assist the District Commissioner in providing and assigning umpires for any district tournaments within the District.
- Conduct clinics in their District; observe umpires, and aid in their training and development.
- Supervise, or assist in the supervision of, umpires at Iowa ASA sanctioned tournaments, when requested.
- Assist at District, Association, Regional, or National Championship Tournaments, as directed.
- Disseminate rule interpretations and umpire information to umpires and local associations in their District.
- Obtain rule interpretations and umpire information from the Iowa ASA UIC.
- Submit rule change proposals and casebook plays to the Iowa ASA UIC.
- Promote the Amateur Softball Association at all times.
- Perform all other functions as directed by the Iowa ASA UIC.

UMPIRES-IN-CHIEF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The duties and responsibilities of the Umpire-in-Chief and the UIC Staff members are under constant review and revision. However, basic goals and objectives are outlined below:

Consistency in the program is our primary objective. Consistency means that all UICs and their assistants are focused on implementing the standards established by the Iowa ASA UIC and approved by the Commissioner. These standards include, but are not limited to:

- **Consistency in Dress:** UICs must ensure all umpires continually meet the Iowa ASA umpire uniform requirements. Old, soiled, or faded uniforms and equipment should be replaced so our umpires look sharp and professional regardless of the game they are assigned.
- **Consistency in Mechanics:** UICs must ensure that the standard ASA mechanics are taught at every umpire training session. Additionally, UICs must ensure these standards are used at all Iowa ASA tournaments.
- **Consistency in Rule Interpretations:** UICs must ensure that the same accurate rule information is disseminated to, and implemented by, all umpires and umpire groups in a timely fashion.

- Consistency in Visibility: UICs must ensure that leagues, umpires and umpire groups have access to their UIC and all information regarding the ASA.
- Consistency in Advertising: UICs must ensure information about the ASA is available to affiliate members and to independent organizations who might want to join.

The UIC position is extremely time-consuming and oftentimes frustrating. Organization is the best means to lessen both frustration and time expenditure.

CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE IOWA UIC STAFF

- Must be an ASA Registered Umpire.
- Must reside or be employed in the District the UIC represents (Slow Pitch District Boundaries will be used).
- Must interview with the State UIC.
- Probationary appointment to UIC Staff for a minimum of one year.
- All appointments to the UIC Staff are for a period of one year, normally Jan. 1 to December 31 of the following year. Reappointment to the UIC Staff is at the discretion of the Iowa ASA UIC and/or the Commissioner. The SoCal ASA UIC and/or the Commissioner may rescind any UIC Staff appointment without cause.

Because of the above-mentioned duties, the UIC position reduces umpiring opportunities. Many of the UICs evenings and weekends that could be used for umpiring must be used to evaluate umpires and attend meetings. However, it is exciting when a Iowa ASA trained umpire excels on the field, or when a new Iowa ASA umpire feels comfortable and does the job that they are capable of doing. The tremendous sense of pride in a job well done is a most rewarding feeling.

UMPIRE TRAINING

Each year Iowa ASA registers nearly 350 umpires with the ASA/USA Softball and about 120 umpires participate in the state umpire clinics. The Iowa ASA UIC is responsible for developing the best umpires possible for the teams that play softball under the Iowa ASA banner. Through the dedicated efforts of the Iowa ASA UIC and the UIC Staff, the ASA umpire-training program is second to none and produces some of the finest softball umpires. Formal training for umpires includes the National Umpire Schools as well as Iowa ASA annual rules clinics and mechanics clinics.

Registered ASA/USA Softball umpires have the opportunity to participate in championship play by meeting the registration criteria annually. An umpire must also complete the below listed requirements:

- Attain the prescribed “passing” grade (70%) on the annual ASA Umpire Rules Exam. The umpire exam may be administered closed book at each mechanics clinic or open book, at the discretion of the Iowa ASA UIC.

A “Certified” Identification card shall be issued yearly to each umpire who completes the prescribed criteria. That umpire is then eligible for assignment to a championship tournament.

CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

Once a year, as directed by the Iowa ASA UIC, the UIC Staff shall meet to assign the required number of Tournament UIC’s for state, regional and national championship tournaments. Tournament umpires that are selected to umpire in the Iowa ASA State and Regional championship tournaments will then be

contacted by the designated Tournament UIC. Tournament UIC's shall keep the respective Program UIC informed of the assignment status of each tournament.

Tournament umpires shall be selected using the following criteria and procedures:

- The Iowa ASA State Office shall provide the UIC staff with a listing of registered and certified umpires.
- Prior to the Annual Council Meeting, the Program UICs shall provide the UIC Staff with a listing of dates, locations and levels of championship tournaments to be assigned.
- The Deputy UICs, or an Assistant Deputy UIC, shall attend the Annual Council Meeting prepared to assign District umpires to the tournaments.
- Deputy UIC's, with the approval of the Iowa ASA UIC, will assign the number of umpires commensurate with the percentage of umpires relative to the previous years tournament.

The Iowa ASA UIC shall determine the qualifications and criteria for the assigning of Iowa ASA umpires to National Championship Tournaments.

RECRUITMENT OF UMPIRES

As softball players increase in numbers, more teams are formed, more games are played and more umpires are needed. Recruitment, therefore, must be a continual process, and each of us has an obligation to actively assist in the recruitment of umpires. Umpires can be recruited in many ways, including the following:

- Former players with an understanding and feel for the game are a good source. They may no longer play but still want to be a part of the game. Veteran umpires are well acquainted with players and are in an excellent position to recruit.
- Volunteer umpires from softball leagues or other youth programs may want to earn money for their services.
- Other sports associations.
- Challenging umpires in your association to recruit one new umpire.
- The use of media through local newspapers, flyers, high school or college papers, and church or neighborhood bulletins.
- Speaking at high school or college physical education classes in order to find interested students.
- Contact the work experience coordinator at local high schools or colleges.
- Encourage high schools or colleges to offer officiating classes and extend the help of the association to instruct.
- Offering community college or adult education programs to assist in recruitment and training.

- Contact officials who work other sports to determine possible interest in adding softball umpiring to their schedule.
- Ask high school and college teachers to promote softball officiating to their students who show athletic ability and/or a strong work ethic.
- Recruit youth and adult coaches interested in umpiring to better understand the rules, or who may want to continue with the game after their coaching career.

UMPIRE UNIFORM

The easiest aspect of umpiring is dressing for the part before taking the field. The umpire may not be sure of what action or reaction will take place during a game, but the umpire does choose the way in which they will dress for the part. When a person puts on the ASA umpire uniform, that person joins nearly 40,000 certified umpires in the U.S who have worked very hard to prove themselves worthy of the responsibility. Wearing the prescribed uniform, which has been laundered and pressed, is the most basic requirement of a good umpire.

The prescribed uniform for Iowa ASA Championship Tournaments is as follows:

- Hat: Navy blue with the American flag (sized for both male and female umpires). The hat must have the ASA letters embroidered on the front crown. Plate umpires must the ASA combo or plate hat under the mask with bill worn forward.
- Shirt: The ASA light blue or navy, micromesh, and 3 buttons placket front pullover with the ASA letters embroidered over the left breast. A T-shirt is optional; however, if worn and visible it must be white with the light blue and navy with a navy pullover.
- Pants: Navy Blue or Heather gray, double knit, with belt loops. **No other shade of gray is authorized. The light blue shirt may be worn with either Navy slacks or Heather Gray slacks and the Navy Blue shirt shall be worn with Heather Gray Slacks.**
- Shoes: All black, no stripes and shoes shall be shined.
- Accessories: Black belt, no gaudy buckles, Navy blue with white ASA letters or gray ball bag, blue or black socks, ASA jacket or V-Neck pullover with the ASA letters on the left chest. These are the only acceptable jackets.

The Fast Pitch Plate Umpire **MUST** wear a black mask, black or tan padding and black throat protector and plate or combo hat worn with bill forward.

The only jewelry an umpire may wear on the playing field is a wedding ring(s). Watches shall not be worn.

Iowa ASA Slow Pitch State Tournament Uniform Exception

In the event that the temperature is expected to reach 90 degrees or above on Saturday or Sunday of the adult slow pitch state tournaments, umpires **MAY** be allowed to wear navy blue shorts with permission from the Tournament UIC and with the following requirements:

- Shorts must be the navy blue shorts sold by ASA – no other style of shorts are permitted.

- Socks must be crew or ankle length, solid white or white with the ASA lettering. All umpires on a field must have the same style of sock.
- Long pants must be worn for games with a scheduled start time of 7:00pm or later AND for the fourth place, third place and championship games.
- All umpires on the field must be dressed the same, if one umpire desires to wear long pants, then all umpires on that field must wear pants.
- Compression shorts, if worn, cannot be visible under the edge of the umpire shorts.
- If the temperature is questionable, the tournament UIC must confer with the state UIC prior to allowing shorts.
- Umpires must bring both pants and shorts to the tournament site with the intention of wearing pants first.

CLINICS

The teaching profession is just that, a profession. A very small number of people are born teachers. The vast majority, with effort and practice, can become accomplished instructors. It takes training, effort, experience and practice, practice, practice to become an effective instructor. The success of our umpire program depends largely on our instruction. The conduct of our training sessions has a great influence on how the participants respond and learn. UICs have the responsibility to motivate, to instill enthusiasm and to impart knowledge, skill, and proper attitudes to the umpires. This must be accomplished at our scheduled clinics, our championship tournaments, and any other event where we are perceived in a leadership role. Each event should serve as a mini-clinic opportunity.

As instructors, you should expect your audience to critique every aspect of your presentation. Therefore, UICs must thoroughly prepare to present a topic. Punctuality is critical. All sessions must begin on time and end as scheduled. Dress appropriately. In the capacity of a UIC, or an instructor, UICs must look and act the part. A neat appearance communicates confidence and promotes respect. Sufficient experience and a thorough knowledge of the subject matter are indispensable. Lesson plans and an outline are essential in making an effective and worthwhile presentation. Room seating for maximum learner participation and necessary instructional aids, including audio-visual equipment, are critical to successful preparation. Seating should be arranged so that the speaker can see and communicate with all participants. Eye contact is one of the most effective methods of maintaining attention because it keeps people alert and helps to identify whether or not the participants understand.

To be understood, instructors must be heard. When questions are asked repeat the question so that everyone can hear and understand the reply. Speak in as normal a voice as possible, but loud enough for everyone to hear. Use words that are familiar to you and the participants. Pronounce and enunciate words carefully. Use a conversation tone, varying the tones and rate of speaking. To gain rapport, avoid “you” and utilize “we.” This will build in the participants a realization that they and the instructor are working together.

Movement and gestures should be natural. Be relaxed. Avoid extreme movement and pacing. Also, avoid standing rigidly in one spot. Some movement keeps your audience alert.

Nervousness is normal. Even experience does not eliminate all the butterflies. However, a thorough knowledge of the subject and how to present it effectively exudes confidence. Know your material, and memorize your opening remarks. Concentrate on helping the participants relax by telling an appropriate, but in good taste, story relevant to the subject. Avoid such things as rattling change or keys, toying with a pointer, and other mannerisms that detract and distract from the presentation. UICs and instructors must be poised and in control. Although sometimes difficult, try your best not to become irritated or upset. Any question asked may be important and must be dealt with in an efficient manner. Be receptive to constructive criticism.

UICs must display enthusiasm for our umpire program and the instruction being presented in order to inspire and motivate the participants. *Be creative, original and dynamic!*

UIC RESPONSIBILITIES AT CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENTS

As an Umpire-in-Chief, you represent the Iowa ASA and its umpire program. As such, you should be professional in every aspect of the job. Be organized, look and act the part of this very important facet of the championship tournaments. “Looking the part,” means wearing appropriate attire, which includes the Iowa UIC Staff shirt. The UIC is required to be at the tournament site (fields) anywhere from 16 to 20 hours per day. It is essential that the UIC be prepared for any eventuality.

A briefcase or some other type of carrying case is recommended, as you should have at least the following items with you at each tournament:

- Rule Book
- Case Book
- Umpire-in-Chief Manual
- Magnetic or white board
- Small Table
- Laptop (optional) (with power cords)
- Bat Ring(s)
- Notebook with tournament forms, evaluation forms, and note taking paper
- Pencils, pens, and/or markers
- Paper clips and/or stapler
- Tape for marking bats and other illegal equipment confiscated from teams
- List of Approved/Banned bats
- Teaching paraphernalia

Arrive at the tournament site in sufficient time to accomplish the following:

Hotel Accommodations/Travel Umpires - The Host Hotel List is available early in the year and posted online and in the Iowa ASA Guide Book. This list will include the Host Hotel in which 5 (Non-Smoking) hotel rooms have been blocked by the tournament director for the UIC and Tournament Travel Umpires. Please contact the hotel as soon as possible to designate the number of rooms and names of the umpires for each room. Always get confirmation numbers and all reservations must be made at least three weeks from the tournament start date, as rooms will be released by the hotel. If there are any problems with hotel issues, please contact the Tournament Host Contact also listed on the Host Hotel List. Hotel Rooms

should be direct billed to Iowa ASA. **There is also one room compensated to Iowa ASA that is designated to the Tournament Director. If the Tournament Director does not need this hotel room it may be used with their permission by the UIC.** Locate the hotel where the umpire staff will be lodged. Retrieve hotel brochures for distribution to the umpire staff at the pre-tournament meeting. The Tournament host contact per bid requirements was to Hotel Rooms must be coordinated at least three weeks prior to the tournament. **Utilize local umpire to the fullest first!** Local umpires shall be given every opportunity to umpire state tournaments in their local community. Only after contacting every local umpire and umpires that reside within commuting distance (less than 50 miles one-way), should we be looking at bringing in outside umpires and housing them in motel rooms. We owe it to our state tournament hosts to give their umpires the first priority to umpire these games. They are supporting our organization by hosting the tournament and we should be supporting them by utilizing their umpires. **If there is a state tournament within commuting distance for an umpire and that umpire chooses to umpire another state tournament, they will be responsible for their own motel room.**

- **Travel Umpires are those umpires that travel more than 50 miles one-way and need hotel accommodations. These umpires must be highly skilled umpires that provide great leadership and experience to the crew, new umpires that are looking to gain valuable experience and may not have tournaments in their area and are ready to move up or umpires that need additional work readying themselves for regional or national tournaments.** They must work a full schedule of games for the weekend with a variety of different partners that they may be able to help mentor. Travel umpires must room with another umpire whenever possible – including the UIC. The umpire that needs hotel accommodations must work at least two games on the day prior to the night of stay and at least 2 games the day following the night of stay. **No more than a total of 2-3 umpires shall be provided hotel accommodations and for larger tournaments with 12-23 teams and 4-5 umpires for more than 24 teams per site unless situations dictate otherwise and then only with permission of the State UIC.** This should only be allowed if possible and if there is sufficient room within the room block provided for umpires. An umpire rooming with a guest will be deducted ½ of the room fee from their umpire pay. Iowa ASA will be responsible for room and tax only. Umpires are responsible for any incidentals and any other room charges and will be responsible for any damages, fines or penalties. Any umpires abusing room or hotel rules will pay all room and tax charges.

Note: If there is a state tournament with commuting distance for an umpire and that umpire chooses to umpire a different state tournament, that umpire may be responsible for their own housing.

- Review the room arrangements to ensure that all umpires have lodging reservations. Verify the telephone numbers of the Tournament Director, Field Director, and all the assigned umpires, especially those not being lodged at the tournament hotel.
- Visit the tournament site(s) (fields) to get a first hand look at the facilities. Review the ground rules for the facility and be prepared to provide the ground rules to the umpire crew at the pre-tournament meeting. If possible, speak with the maintenance crew (this is a good time to establish a rapport with the ground crew who is a very important part of the success of the tournament), as they will need time to make any necessary adjustments.
- Locate a good umpire area and, if possible, an umpire parking area, away from the teams and fans. ***Do not permit, for any reason, team members and fans to enter the umpire area!!!!***

Additional Duties:

- **Flipping Coins** - The Tournament UIC is responsible for the issuance of the Championship Tournament Flipping Coins. Umpires shall only be issued one coin per tournament season, i.e., if an umpire is assigned to multiple tournaments, that umpire shall only receive a coin for the *first* tournament that they work and not a coin for each subsequent tournament.
- **Tournament Payroll/Evaluation Forms** - The Tournament UIC is responsible to ensure that the State Commissioner receives a final copy of the Tournament Payroll and Evaluation Form via e-mail (see Appendix). This form should be received by the State Commissioner within three days following the tournament.
- **Tournament Evaluation Report** - The Tournament UIC is responsible for completing a Tournament Evaluation Report (Appendix D) upon the conclusion of each assigned Tournament. The Tournament UIC shall forward a copy of this report to the Iowa ASA UIC as soon as practicable upon the completion of the Tournament. This information may be done via e-mail or by phone.

PRE-TOURNAMENT MEETING

The Tournament UIC must ensure that the umpires and the Assistant UICs assigned to the tournament have a thorough understanding of the expectations and requirements; this can best be accomplished with a comprehensive Pre-Tournament Meeting. This is especially important for umpires who are assigned to their first Championship Tournament and for those umpires coming from outside of Iowa ASA for they may not be familiar with our requirements and protocols. Umpires truly want to do a good job at a Championship Tournament, and we must ensure that they are given the best opportunity for success. It has been time proved that a well-organized Pre-Tournament Meeting minimizes potential problems and is a prerequisite for a successful Tournament. Before closing the Pre-Tournament meeting, reinforce your requirements and expectations, and afford the umpires an opportunity to ask questions. The better prepared and organized, the better the impression. We want our umpires to be organized, prepared and neat; they expect no less from us.

During the Pre-Tournament Meeting, the Tournament UIC should cover all of the applicable topics listed in the Pre-Tournament Meeting Outline below. The Tournament UIC may provide additional guidance and information as applicable, but it is important that we, as a Staff, be consistent in the information disseminated; this is especially important for umpires that are assigned to multiple Tournaments with different UICs.

Pre-Tournament Meeting Outline

Welcome and Introductions

Umpire-in-Chief

Tournament Staff

Assistant Umpire(s) in Chief

Guests

Umpires (Express congratulations for being selected to umpire in the championship tournament)

Recognize Umpires selected for National Championships

Umpire Housing and Financial Responsibility

Hotel

Check-in Procedure

Incidentals and meals

Check-out Procedures

Saturday Night Rooms

Park/Fields

Dressing

Parking area/Passes

Game Fees and Payment Procedures

Tournament and General Information

Level

Fields

Special rules

Number of teams

Number of games

Umpire Uniform and Conduct

During games

Between games

Use of alcohol, chewing tobacco and smoking

Umpire room/area: Nonsmoking

Umpire jewelry

Player Uniform

Review the Tournament Player uniform policy

Tournament Director Responsibilities, Umpire in Chief responsibilities

Umpire responsibilities

Run Ahead Rule and International Tie-Breaker

What are they?

When are they in effect?

Forfeitures

Game time is forfeit time

Forfeiture procedures

Homerun Rule: (Slow-Pitch only)

Scorekeepers

Location of scorekeepers

Scorekeepers and umpire pre-game responsibilities

Line-up Cards

Where are the unused line-up cards-Tournament Director

Where the game line-up cards should be delivered after the game?

Importance of accuracy in maintaining line-up *cards* (*Substitutions, Courtesy Runners, DP/FLEX, EP, Conferences, etc.*)

Pre-game check with coaches and scorekeepers

Game Balls

Storage and return - UIC will provide proper rotation. 2 new game balls to start (unless good used balls are provided) and one new game ball per game after the first game. *Game balls (new and used) should be returned to the Iowa ASA State Office as soon as possible following the tournament.*

Warm-up Pitches

Bat/Equipment Check

Check all equipment before every game.

NOTE: Any unsafe or illegal equipment removed from a game shall be identified so that the team coach/manager or designated representative can retrieve it after they have played their last game of the tournament. The UIC shall annotate the owner's name, team name, date, and field from which the equipment was removed.

Pre-Game Conference and Introduction

NOTE: Conference should be in sufficient detail, especially when a team is new to the site, and then tailor as necessary in the later rounds.

Introduce your partner(s) and yourself.

Review and approve line-up cards

Coin toss (determine home team)

Ground rules

Substitutions to the Plate Umpire

Jewelry

Questions on umpire decisions or rule interpretations: (*Remember, you are not conducting a clinic*)

Coach, team captain and player involved in play only

Partner(s) keeps others away

Protests

Procedure

Find the Umpire-in-Chief, an Assistant Umpire-in-Chief or Tournament Director(s)

There is **NO PROTEST FEE** during Championship Tournaments

Plate Umpire remain on field, Base umpire locates UIC (If possible, use a two-way radio and have one at each field with the scorekeeper so they can contact you quickly.)

Protests of a playing rule must be settled before the next pitch. Eligibility Protests can be protested at anytime and will be resolved before the game resumes by the tournament director.

Inclement Weather

Responsibility of the Tournament Director and the Umpire-in-Chief before games begin

Responsibility of the Plate Umpire or UIC/Tournament Director during the game

Inform the Umpire-in-Chief if problems exist on your field

Umpire-in-Chief or Tournament Director will notify coaches when play will resume

Umpire Conduct

Promptness

Arrival time for game assignment

Start Game at scheduled time or as close as possible

Be flexible

Availability - Inform the Umpire-in-Chief at your site when you are leaving the area and inform him/her of your return.

UMPIRE MEMBERSHIP MAY BE DECLINED OR REVOKED FOR UNETHICAL, IMMORAL OR UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT. THE UMPIRE WILL BE AFFORDED A HEARING JUST AS IS GIVEN A TEAM OR TEAM

**MEMBER BEFORE DECLINING OR REVOKING MEMBERSHIP. ASA CODE
311 A 5.**

Game Management

Entering the field
Pre-game conference: set the tone
Develop a “flow” to the game
Ejections (Don’t permit interruption of the “flow” of the game)
Players/coaches appeals
Asking partner for help
Work with partner on substitutions
Between inning mechanics
Work with partner on International Tie-Breaker (ensure proper runner goes to second base)
Exit the field

Umpire Evaluations

Review observations and evaluations with each umpire
Sample form is contained in Appendix
Send Evaluations/Payroll to State Commissioner/State UIC within three days following tournament.

Umpire Systems

Two-Umpire System

Set position
Signals (count, time, check-swing, foul ball, pulled foot, etc.)
Fly ball responsibilities- *Discuss coverage*
Tag-up responsibilities
Between innings mechanics

Three-Umpire System

Set position
Signals (count, time, check-swing, foul ball, pulled foot, etc.)
Fly ball responsibilities - *Discuss coverage*
Diagram coverage with and without runners.
Tag-up responsibilities
Between innings mechanics
Difficult Situations (all come together)
Rotation - Use the Inside-the-park play
Schedule- will be utilized for the last FOUR games (including the “**IF**”)

Policy regarding payment of umpires

- Forfeiture of games more than 24 hours prior to the start of the tournament - No Pay
- Forfeiture of game less than 24 hours prior to the start of the tournament - Game Fee Paid
- A game that runs long and umpire misses the next assignment - No Pay
- “IF Game” if not played - Game Paid

Handouts
Assignments

PROTESTS AT CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENTS

The Tournament Director and the UIC shall serve as the Protest Committee in regard to the proper application and interpretation of the playing rules, player eligibility and classification. The umpire crew on the field shall handle all questions dealing with interpretation of playing rules. When a coach refuses to accept the rule application or interpretation and they lodge a proper protest, the following actions will immediately occur:

- The game will immediately be stopped, and the Plate Umpire shall record the time the game was stopped, the count, inning, score, position of runners and any other relevant information necessary to maintain an accurate record of the game at that point. The game will not continue until the protest is resolved by the UIC. The Plate Umpire will remain *on the field*.
- The Base Umpire will immediately notify the UIC.
- The UIC must render a prompt, but proper ruling and order the game to be resumed.

THE ONLY TIME THE UIC MAY GET INVOLVED IN A GAME IS WHEN A PROPER PROTEST IS LODGED INVOLVING THE MISINTEPRETATION OR MISAPPLICATION OF THE PLAYING RULES. PROTESTS THAT ARE BASED SOLELY ON UMPIRE JUDGEMENT WILL NOT BE RECOGNIZED.

An umpire's ruling shall not be changed by a UIC unless a valid protest is lodged and it is determined that there was a misinterpretation or misapplication of a rule. UICs will not involve themselves with the play of a game, unless requested by the field umpires, and then, only to assist with an issue that pertains to the application of a rule or a rule interpretation.

The Tournament Director shall address all issues arising from a protest involving Player Eligibility or Classification.

Protests shall be handled as specified in Rule 9 of the ASA Rules of Softball.

There is NO PROTEST FEE associated with Championship Tournaments.

When a protest is lodged, the UIC must determine if the protest was lodged on the basis of a rule misinterpretation or misapplication. If so, accept the protest and proceed with the process of resolving the validity of the protest. If not, inform the coach and leave the field immediately to ensure that the game resumes quickly.

In resolving the protest, the UIC should isolate and consult with the crew. The UIC should review the play and rule application (and/or judgment) involved. If the protest is upheld, the correction should be made, and the game resumed from the point where the misapplication or misinterpretation occurred. If the protest is disallowed, no correction should be made, and the game should resume from the exact point of the protested play.

TOURNAMENT EVALUATIONS

Umpire Evaluations

Much has been said and written about rating systems for umpires. Everyone understands that it is a very sensitive and controversial aspect of umpiring. In general, evaluation systems attempt to qualify the performance of people and in the process become intertwined with ego, self-image and pride, and in many cases evoke criticism and negative reaction. Despite that, there is a practical need for some form of a rating and evaluation system.

Evaluations are an important part of our championship tournament process. Each umpire should be evaluated for, amongst other things, conduct, and knowledge of the rules, mechanics, positioning, dress, game control, and cooperation with partners and UICs. These evaluations assist in determining an umpire's qualifications, and can support a recommendation for higher competition, including assignment to National Championships.

The foundation of a successful rating and evaluation system rests with the evaluators. To serve a useful purpose, the evaluation must not be overly easy or overly tough. Reasonably demand that the umpire exhibit the professional qualities necessary for acceptance and success. *The first game an umpire works needs to be carefully observed. Spend as much time as possible observing games and provide the umpires with feedback as soon after the game as possible.*

Listed below are "recommended" methods for conducting the Post-Game Evaluation:

- Identify a pre-designated area, away from the immediate "Umpire area" to conduct the Post-Game discussions; utilize a Dry Erase board to diagram scenarios.
- At the conclusion of the game, immediately gather all members of the crew at the pre-designated area.
- Initial remarks should focus on two or three positive aspects of the game.
- Subsequent observations should be limited to no more than two to three recommended areas of improvement.
- Be honest and objective; tell the umpire what will be written in the umpire evaluation; do not tell an umpire one thing and then write something different on the Evaluation Form.
- Avoid profanity or becoming overly emotional.
- Reserve critical comments for a private one-on-one discussion.
- Allow the crew to discuss the circumstances surrounding the "knotty play", judgment or rule interpretation decision before stating your observations. Remember, you may not have seen the entire play.
- Remember, each umpire is giving their best effort and they want to impress you.

Umpire Evaluation Worksheet

The Umpire Evaluation Worksheet (Appendix) should be used to record comments on each umpire being evaluated during the tournament. Upon the completion of the Tournament, the information from the Worksheet should be used when completing the Umpire Evaluation/Payroll Report (Appendix). Use the back of the worksheet to illustrate umpire positioning. During the post-game critique, use the illustration to show the umpire where he or she was or should have been. Diagrams may be used also to illustrate the good things performed by an individual umpire and the crew. A concerted effort should be made to observe each umpire at least once at every position. This will provide the information needed when making championship game assignments as well as provide the facts needed to complete the final Umpire Evaluation Form on the umpire. As an Umpire-in-Chief, your primary goal should be to ensure that each team has a fair, equal, and impartial opportunity to win the tournament. It is your responsibility to provide the teams with the best umpires available. Not every umpire will be championship finals caliber. Therefore, your duties include assisting the crew with aspects of officiating that will enhance their personal growth and knowledge as umpires.

Umpire Evaluation/Payroll Form

The Umpire Evaluation Form (Appendix) will be completed on each umpire assigned to a Iowa ASA Championship Tournament. As recommended above, use the Umpire Evaluation Worksheet to record

notes and comments on the umpire's performance during the Tournament and then summarize your observation on the Umpire Evaluation/Payroll Form. **Completed Umpire Evaluation/Payroll Forms shall be forwarded to the State Commissioner and State UIC within three days upon the completion of the tournament. The UIC will not be compensated until all duties have been performed.**

Tournament Evaluation Report

The Tournament Evaluation Report (Appendix) will be used to comment on the Administration and Logistics of each Championship Tournament. The information provided will assist the Commissioner and the Iowa ASA UIC in identifying suitable sites for hosting future Championship Tournaments. Completed Tournament Evaluation Reports shall be e-mailed to the Iowa ASA UIC as soon as practicable upon the completion of the tournament.

Umpire Game Compensation (*Revised 1/18/2007*)

District UIC/Commissioner Fee for directly registering umpires (*Revised 1/18/2007*)

Each District UIC is to assist in recruiting, registration, clinics and assigning tournaments. The District UIC shall be given a \$5 fee for each umpire that they directly register within their district. The UIC will handle all registration materials for the umpire, e-mailing registration spreadsheet of the registered umpires information and paying registration fees to the State Office.

UIC Tournament Fee Compensation (*Revised 1/18/2007*)

The UIC shall be compensated for the tournament (s) assigned based on a proportional fee scale relative to the number of teams in the tournament(s) that the UIC has been assigned (Friday-Sunday). A “working UIC” (*umpires either by choice or necessity*) will be compensated for no more than (3) three games umpired for the tournament. A UIC should refrain from assigning himself/herself from tournament games and shall work only in the case of an emergency or for training purposes. *If for training purposes, the UIC should consider this as part of their UIC duties and not seek game compensation.*

<u>Total Teams</u>	<u>UIC Fee</u>
3-8	\$200
9-16	\$225
17-24	\$250
25-36	\$275
37+	\$300

Umpire Game Fees (*Revised 1/18/2007*)

The Iowa ASA will compensate umpires for game fees in championship play level tournaments and those tournaments directly sponsored by Iowa ASA. Umpire checks will be mailed via U.S. Mail 7 - 10 days following the tournament and umpires should expect to receive payment within two weeks of the tournament. Check may not be picked up in person.

Men's Fast Pitch - \$30/game

Youth Fast Pitch 14, 16 and 18 & Under - \$27 game (*90 minute time limit*)

Youth Fast Pitch 8, 10 and 12 & Under - \$25 (*75 minutes*) (*8 & Under/60 minutes – one umpire*)

Adult 12”, 11” and Co-Ed Slow Pitch - \$22/game

Adult 14”and 16” Slow Pitch - \$25/game

Iowa Select Umpire Program

The Iowa Amateur Softball Association is offering an opportunity for umpires to receive recognition for their contributions and service to the umpire program. Umpires that qualify will receive a certificate and cap to signify their accomplishments. Application fee: \$20.

Select Umpire Requirements:

1. Must be an active ASA registered umpire for at least three (3) years and is currently an active registered umpire.
2. Applicant must complete either (a) or (b) below:
 - a. Must have umpired in at least two (2) ASA state championship tournaments or higher.
 - b. Or be a registered ASA umpire at the local level for ten (10) years.
3. Must have attended either a state umpire clinic or a National Umpire School.
4. Must be in good standing with the Iowa Amateur Softball Association and it's commissioner.