

## **Summary of February 19, 2024 Umpire Advisory Team Meeting**

On February 19, 2024, the Umpire Advisory Team (UAT) held its first meeting of 2024. UAT members in attendance were Bryan Richter, President, Joe Holonich, Secretary, Joann Brickwedde, Bill Chatterton, Jim Morton, Rick Morris, and Scott Snyder. President Richter called the meeting to order.

### **Topics for Annual Meeting**

John Dye asked the UAT to identify any topics for the Softball Umpires of Maryland (SUM) annual meeting on March 2, 2024. The UAT did not identify any additional topics beyond those suggested by Mr. Dye in a draft agenda.

### **Review of Annual Meeting Presentation**

The UAT made a presentation at the annual SUM meeting in 2023 and believes it should make a presentation at the SUM annual meeting on March 2, 2024. A draft presentation had been prepared and was adopted by the UAT. It was agreed that Jim Morton would make the presentation this year. The UAT presentation and Jim's name would be provided by Joe Holonich to John Dye.

### **Open Items**

It was agreed that all open items were closed.

### **Other topics**

An in-depth discussion was held on the recently completed SUM training. Several concerns about the training were raised. One was the need to see how SUM umpires were rated so that future training could include umpires that SUM believed needed growth.

A second concern was that the mentors assigned to the pitching and game stations did not limit their interactions. Some moved from their assigned positions when nobody was at their station. This resulted in some recruits getting guidance from two different people. For a person just being umpiring, and maybe calling a live game for the first time, this was overwhelming. A similar concern was raised by other umpires who were working on the upstairs activities.

At times, more information was given to a recruit than the recruit could effectively digest. This excessive mentoring led to some frustrations with the recruits. One was so frustrated with the continuing and voluminous amount of guidance that there was a feeling that the recruit could do nothing right. Consideration was given to quitting because of the continued identification of things to improve.

There was general agreement that when a mentor was assigned to a station, they should remain at the station. Another suggestion, which was developed during the training, was to identify focus areas for the mentors. This way, the recruits would not be overwhelmed by getting too much information in a single interaction. Each week, the upstairs coordinator would work with the assigned mentors where to focus with recruits.

Some concern was raised with what appeared to be an impromptu session on three-umpire mechanics. The UAT did not understand how this session was established nor how individuals

were selected to participate. Some SUM umpires were questioning why a general announcement on this opportunity was not made.

Plus, there were discussions about how individuals were chosen and who should have been involved in helping with the selections. The UAT felt that given the discussions about three umpire mechanics and the thinking about the use of three umpires, why was this session held?

**Next meeting**

The next UAT meeting was scheduled for Monday, June 10, 2024, at 7:00 pm.