

CTAA Umpire Manual

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Introduction

Intended Audience

This manual is intended for CTAA umpires, managers and coaches playing in the Mustang and Bronco age groups. Umpire and game processes for other age groups are not covered by this document. Refer to the league coordinator for the other leagues.

Document Status

This is a draft document that will be enhanced and clarified as the season goes on.

Umpire and Manager Lists

The umpire coordinator will provide to all managers and umpires a spreadsheet that contains contact information for umpires and managers. This information is to be used to communicate changes to game schedules, cancellations, postponements, etc.

Manager and Umpire Communications

Communication with umpires is a touchy subject. We all benefit when umpires, managers and coaches can interact freely during a game. It benefits all parties involved including the players. That said, we have a long history of events in CTAA that indicate that many coaches and managers are not capable of handling this freedom. We lose a number of umpires each year due to managers and coaches yelling at the umpire for a bad call, missed play, etc. They decide that the \$15 or \$20 isn't worth the abuse.

Because of this, the following policies have been implemented and you should be aware of them.

1. Only the manager may address an umpire during the game.
2. Coaches that want to communicate with an umpire need to go through the manager to get their concern addressed. The manager will then ask the umpire the question.
3. However, a coach or manager may ask the umpire for the count as long as they are nice about it.
4. The umpires are told to have a zero-tolerance policy toward managers and coaches confronting them. I told the umpires to apply MLB rule:

4.06

(a) No manager, player, substitute, coach, trainer or batboy shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box or on the playing field, or elsewhere—

(2) Use language which will in any manner refer to or reflect upon opposing players, an umpire, or any spectator;

(4) Make intentional contact with the umpire in any manner.

PENALTY: The offender shall be removed from the game and shall leave the playing field, and, if a balk is made, it shall be nullified.

CTAA ADDITIONAL PENALTY: If intentional contact is made with an umpire they will be immediately ejected from the game, leave the playing field and suspended indefinitely pending a review and ruling on any additional punishment from the CTAA executive board.

5. Umpires are told to have “thick skin” and the “thickness” varies by umpire but we all know when a statement is made for instructional purposes “Hey this umpire has a low strike zone, you need to be ready to swing” vs. trying to get to the umpire “his strike zone has been in the dirt all day.” Umpires are told that if the comments they hear make the umpire uncomfortable in any way then they should eject coaches and managers that violate this rule. Umpires should also stop the game and have the manager address any fans watching the game if they become distracting and in violation of the rule.
6. f-bombs and other severe profanity will result in an immediate ejection of manager, coach or player. There will be no warning provided.

IMPORTANT: At the end of the day, this is in-house instructional baseball. Players AND umpires are learning the game. The first year umpires are really no different than T-ball players. They are learning the position of umpire just like Johnny is learning how to field a ground ball. They need our help and coaching as much as the players do.

We promise you that if you don’t yell at the umpires when we make a bad call or make a mistake, we won’t yell at your shortstop when he lets a ground ball go between his legs.

Umpire Scheduling and Assignment

Umpire Game Assignment

Umpires are assigned to games based on their experience. They will be base umpires before plate umpires and Mustang umpires before Bronco umpires. The hierarchy is as follows:

1. Mustang base umpires
2. Bronco base umpires
3. Mustang plate umpires
4. Bronco plate umpires

Promotion from one level to the next is generally done at the start of the next spring season. So, all first year umpires will be Mustang base umpires. In their second season they are typically Bronco base umpires. In year three they will umpire Mustang plate and then in years 4 through whenever they can do Bronco plate openings.

NOTE: If an umpire does a number of games in Fall Ball they may be accelerated to the next levels in the Spring season.

NOTE: Any umpire can do a game at a lower level (Bronco plate umpires can do anything, Bronco base umpires can do Mustang or Bronco bases.)

NOTE: Moving umpires up is at the discretion of the umpire coordinator and is based on the umpire’s ability and the needs of the league. The coordinator likes to get feedback on the umpires to know who is doing well and who needs more work in certain areas.

Fall Ball: Fall ball is instructional for players moving up to the next level as well as the umpires. It is a regular practice among the umpires to be moved to the next level to get practice when the games really,

really, don't matter. This means there most likely will be first time umpires at a given position / age group.

WARNING: Umpires that substitute for another umpire and move up to a level they aren't approved for could possibly be suspended or have their games reduced for a period of time. While we appreciate your willingness to help, we need to ensure proper quality of umpires on the field. In emergency situations where the managers request "anybody available" this may not apply.

Umpire Pay Procedure

Pay is pretty straight forward. Umpires are paid before the start of the game. Here are some things to be aware of:

- Plate umpires get \$20, base umpires get \$15, if one umpire has to do both plate and bases by themselves they get \$35.
- Payment is made prior to the first pitch and umpires do not start the game until payment is made.
- After the first pitch is thrown the umpires keep full pay regardless of how long the game goes.
- If umpires report to the field and the game is called before the first pitch, the umpires are entitled to half pay.
- Any continuations of postponed games will be treated as separate games, scheduled with umpires and those umpires will get paid as if it were a full game.

Managers Umpiring Games

Managers are given umpire money at the beginning of the season. They are shorted \$40 and given the opportunity to "make that money back" by umpiring two games during the season. The purpose behind this is to give the managers a chance to be behind the plate to experience the difficulties of being a plate umpire.

If a manager wants to umpire a game they should respond to the weekly availability request that goes out on Sunday evening with the time slots they can cover. Managers can umpire any slot that isn't in their age group. When they do the game they should be paid \$20 by the home manager of the game just like the regular umpires receive.

NOTE: If you don't want to umpire your two games then you don't need to do anything. You will only be scheduled if you request to be scheduled.

Cancellations

Umpires will check the CTAA website prior to leaving for the game. If the fields are marked as closed they will not report to the field.

If the fields are open and the weather is questionable, the umpires should call the managers to make sure they are playing prior to leaving home.

As soon as it is determined that a game is cancelled, the managers will call the umpires to let them know that the game is cancelled. Again, if there is any question on the weather, the umpires can also call the managers.

Game Times and Time Limits

For the regular season, each game will be played in a two-hour time slot. The plate umpire is the official timekeeper. Even though cell phones are prohibited on the playing field by managers, coaches, players and umpires, we do make an exception for the plate umpire to use theirs as a watch as cell time is indisputable. Conclusion of an in-progress game will be based on the plate umpires time.

All game slots are scheduled for 2 hours. For example, 6p to 8p or noon to 2p. **Your game is NOT 2 hours.** If your first pitch is at 6:05pm or 6:10pm, the game still ends at 8pm. You don't get to run over. There are no exceptions for game situations or score or any other reason except weather (see below.)

If you have an 8pm game, the game will still end at 10pm. You cannot run over and the umpires are instructed to leave at the scheduled end of the time slot. This also applies to any game where there is not a game following yours. You get two hours and to be fair to all involved that is when the game ends.

Plate umpires will call last batter with the batter coming to the plate 1 hour and 58 minutes into the time slot. For example, if the game slot is 2pm to 4pm the umpire will call last batter at 3:58pm. After that batter completes his at bat the game will end. Again, regardless of situation.

It isn't a rule but as a courtesy to the next game, if you have an inning or half inning that ends with 5 minutes or less to go, consider stopping there and getting your teams off the field so the next game can start as close to on-time as possible.

EXCEPTION – There is only one exception to all of the above rules. If there are weather issues and a game is delayed because of getting the field ready to play, the amount of the delay should be divided with the next game. For example, the 6pm game didn't have first pitch until 6:30pm because of field maintenance. You should play your game from 6:30pm to 8:15pm (1:45.) The 8PM game would run from 8:15pm to 10pm (1:45 in length.) This spreads the pain between both games because both games benefit from the work done on the field.

NOTE: The managers will agree on the amount of time to be split between time slots and alert the umpires who will enforce the timing for the end of the game and start of the next game.

Umpire Positioning

Proper positioning on the field is important for an umpire to make a good call. Attached is a document that shows where the base umpire should be positioned depending on how many runners are on base and where they are. Note that it is different for Bronco and Mustang if there are runners on base. You need to read and understand this. Email me if you have questions.

Managers, we can't be at every game to instruct the new umpires on where to stand on the field. Every year we ask the managers to help me out and know where umpires should be and if they aren't in position, tell them where they need to be. In exchange, our umpires help your catchers, first basemen etc. get into the proper positions when they are some place they shouldn't be and could get hurt during a play.

It is all about teaching the game to umpires and players.

Umpire Scheduling Process

Request for availability goes out on Sunday night (or Monday morning) with a due date of 7PM sharp on Wednesday. (We have a couple come in after 7PM and they didn't get on the schedule because we were already done with their part prior to getting their email.)

We take all the responses we get, put them into a spreadsheet that shows who is available to do each game.

For Mustang bases where we always have more umpires than games preference is given to people that submitted availability the previous week but did not get scheduled for a game that week.

The rest of the games are filled based on who is available to cover each slot.

For Bronco bases we usually have more games than umpires. If availability is equal, we try to balance who gets extra games from one week to next but overall availability vs. the schedule is what drives most choices.

Plate umpires - We dig and scrape to get enough umpires to cover all the games. There is good money in umpiring for the kids that stick with it long enough to have all their friends drop out for other reasons.

Once the schedule is done and sent out on Wednesday night that is the end of the spreadsheet. As games open up, get moved, etc. filling them is first come, first served based on experience. We will always try to put a mustang base umpire into a mustang bases position, etc. Getting closer to game time we take the best option (which sometimes is not a very good option.)

Net of it all, people that submit availability get games. At Mustang bases it may be every other week but after that it is usually at least one game per week. The longer you stick with umpiring the more games you will get per week.