

Umpiring at Broad Ripple Haverford Little League (BRHLL)

Introduction

The AAA and Major divisions of softball and baseball will have league umpires scheduled for each game. The league will attempt to have a “Mighty Umpire” (i.e. youth umpire-in-training) for base umpiring but there will be times when there is only a plate umpire who will cover the bases as well.

Umpires are volunteers. Most volunteer umpires are parents and grandparents of kids who play in the BRHLL program or have played in the past. The experience level of the umpires varies just as the experience level of the coaches varies. Our goal is to recruit, train and develop more umpires to ensure the league can be properly staffed with quality umpires. One key of umpiring is to control the game and set an appropriate attitude and tempo for the game. We are very fortunate at BRHLL to have a very positive and friendly approach to the game while still being very competitive without taking the wrong approach and setting a bad example for the kids.

The Rookies and Minors divisions will not have league umpires scheduled for their games. In these divisions, umpiring is a “shared responsibility” of coaches for both teams and will likely vary across the two divisions. The coaches will meet before the game begins to agree on a common approach. It is customary for the coaches of the team at-bat who serve as base coaches (first and third base) to umpire from those positions. The coach pitching can serve as “plate umpire”. It is also customary for the coach of the team in the field to be positioned behind second base. This coach can have umpiring responsibilities as well.

Role of the Umpire in Chief (UIC)

1. Oversee that Little League International and Local BRHLL rules are being maintained during play.
2. Umpiring games.
3. Recruit, train and development umpires and Mighty Umpires.
4. Work with our scheduling volunteer to make sure games are staffed.
5. When there are universal questions about rules, getting an answer to the Vice Presidents (softball and baseball) to distribute to coaches.
6. When there is a protest, these must be announced before the plate umpire leaves the field. Protests must then be made in writing to the League President within 24 hours. The protest will be reviewed by the Protest Committee that is chaired by the Player Agent. Additional information can be found in the Little League rule book.
7. Staff umpires for Sunday Showcase games.

Points to Remember for All Coaches

1. **Umpires are volunteers.** Don't expect them to be perfect. Umpires are out there for the same reason as coaches – because we want to give the kids the best experience possible.
2. **Control your tempers.** There's no reason to get ejected from a game. Umpires don't want to do it. Nobody wants to have it happen to them.
3. **We're on the field.** You're in the dugout. Sometimes we see things you don't.
4. **Coaches need to be role models to the kids.** Not just in coaching, but in how they deal with adversity or disagreements. Kids follow by example.
5. **We make mistakes.** We're happy to talk to you, but remember... it's a game.
6. **Under no circumstances do we want coaches arguing or trying to influence Mighty Umpires.** We need them. Bring disagreements to the adult umpire's attention.
7. **You cannot argue "ball," "strike," "fair," "foul," "safe," or "out."** These are umpires judgment calls and CANNOT be argued. On occasion, you can call "Time" and clarify a call with the head umpire, but don't make it a regular habit.
8. **Remember, an umpire has to grant you "time out" before you can leave the dugout and enter the field of play.** If you are not granted "time out," you could be called for interference.
9. **On average, there are 300 plays in a six inning game.** If the umpires make mistakes on a couple of calls, remember that there are many other instances where kids made mistakes or coaches make a bad decision that also impacts the outcome of the game. Losses are often not the umpires' fault.
10. **AAA and Majors umpires don't get paid.** Don't forget to go to them after the game and thank them. That goes a long way to get them to come back next year.
11. **The rule book is the final arbiter.** If there is a question or disagreement about a call, the rule book will be the final determinant.
12. **Please don't try to cut corners on the rules, especially when it comes to kids' playing time.** The way coaches have handled themselves in the past is what has made BRHLL a great experience year after year.
13. **Feel free to give the UIC feedback (confidentially) on umpires (good and not so good).** That's how the UIC learns which umpires might need a little more instruction. But keep it tactful and courteous.