



July 22, 2022

Umpire Abuse

Members of Baseball Nova Scotia are entitled to a fair, safe, healthy, and fun game environment. This includes umpires.

Over the past two weeks, Baseball Nova Scotia has received reports of umpire abuse by adult coaches in a U9 game towards a youth umpire and again at the 11U and 13U and 18 U levels towards youth and experienced adult umpires. In some cases, umpires are no longer being assigned to those leagues.

This behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Youth and adult umpires should only be talked to positively and constructively. Coaches will not challenge judgement calls made by the umpires. **It is acceptable to question the interpretation of a rule, but only in a courteous, non-confrontational manner.**

Umpire Abuse is defined as: - umpire abuse at its simplest, is defined as any deliberate action that makes an umpire feel physically threatened, verbally intimidated or emotionally humiliated. Disrespectfully objecting to calls, yelling at, publicly calling, constantly disagreeing with an umpire by action or verbally can be deemed umpire abuse. Coaches should always show decorum, respect and observe all game rules whenever questioning an umpire about a call.

Judgement Calls: a judgement call is a decision made by an official in a competition using their own opinion of what they have seen. Example: you may see it one way and the umpire may see it differently. Missed calls are going to happen in every game, that's baseball. Judgement calls include; balls & strikes, safe / out calls on bases (force and tag), catch / no catch calls, fair / foul, etc. For reference only – non-judgement calls include; interference, baserunners hit by batted balls, etc.

Youth umpires are an integral part of the Baseball Nova Scotia program. This includes development of all youth umpires. All Baseball Nova Scotia guidelines and policies on providing a Safe, Fair and Fun environment for players also applies to our umpires. Only Positive, Instructive, and Encouraging comments are allowed to be directed at both players and umpires. Verbal abuse of umpires is as unacceptable as verbal abuse of youth players. The purpose of this letter is to make clear that abuse of any umpire is unacceptable.

This letter is not intended to imply that the umpire is always right and the spectator, coach or player is always wrong. We must simply remember that just as youth players will make mistakes during play, adult/youth umpires will also make mistakes in officiating, particularly in the younger divisions where they are learning how to umpire. Please remember, young umpires receive minimal instruction before being sent out to officiate. Also, please keep in mind that they do not attend practices, nor do they have a coach on the field to guide them from game to game. Given that the rules of baseball are numerous and in any given game many difficult scenarios could unfold, it is in all our best interests to judge officials fairly and with reasonable expectations. After all, we cannot play this game without these courageous individuals.



As a reminder of the messaging sent out last month to teams: *Teams, coaches, athletes, or parent groups that are found to be abusive, intimidating, or harassing toward umpires risk having games canceled, being removed from the league, being ineligible for Provincial Championships, and having BNS membership revoked.*

The penalties for any confirmed case of umpire abuse by coaches, players, parents, or spectators for both home and away teams may include the following and will be in addition to any suspension due to an ejection from a game;

- Written reprimand
- Conditional reinstatement requirements (completion of further training, including, but not limited to Respect in Sport, Safe Sport, anger management, or other training deemed necessary by the committee)
- Additional suspension (length and severity to be determined by Disciplinary Committee)
- Removal of BNS Membership

Enforcement of such penalties will be the responsibility of the coach and/or association. Sanctions to the team or association may follow should it be deemed there was not reasonable effort to abide by and enforce the communicated discipline measures.

Ejected coaches, players and spectators are **not** permitted to remain on the surrounding field areas, including grandstands, and must vacate all field areas in a timely manner.

Any incident that involves physical abuse by bodily threatening, shoving, bumping or harming a youth will result in an indefinite suspension and notification of proper authorities. Any offending person wishing to be reinstated must appear before a Disciplinary Committee.

Sincerely,

Andrew M. Downs
President, Baseball Nova Scotia