



# News for Blues

## Western States College Softball Umpires

August 2013

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**We hope that everyone is enjoying their summer!**

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## MESSAGE FROM: Greg Schmidt, CCSUA Chairman, SUP Regional Advisor

Hello Everyone,

Exciting news for CCSUA.

We have launched the new Central Hub the "WESTERN STATES COLLEGE SOFTBALL UMPIRES". You should have received a notice via mass email.

We have combined three groups CCSUA, CCU-North and Arizona. This will make our local training available to everyone in these groups. Each group will still operate independently. This does not take the place of the SUP Central Hub. The SUP Hub will continue to be the final word on mechanics, rules, testing, post season and general information for the umpire community on a national scale.

I look forward to seeing those of you who have been invited to our Fall Clinic. We will have several new people attending this year due to our extremely successful ASA/CCSUA observations at Irvine in July. ASA and CCSUA have formed an alliance to give ASA members an opportunity to be observed for potential assignments to work college softball. We feel this will give our assignors more flexibility during the assigning process.

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## MESSAGE FROM: SUP National Coordinator Staff

It has been a busy summer preparing for next season.

There are new mechanics changes and updates. The qualification test is being updated. Some exciting approaches to the distance and angles concepts.

Looking forward to seeing some of you at camps down the road.

Sincerely,

**Greg Schmidt**  
CCSUA Chairman  
NCAA Softball Regional Advisor

West/Pacific Region  
818-400-9453  
[rrbluegreg@verizon.net](mailto:rrbluegreg@verizon.net)

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## IMPORTANT ASSIGNORS and TRAINING STAFF INFORMATION!

### From our Assignors

The merger of three (3) large umpire associations is taking place now. Although the "Assignors" component won't be ready to be used for another month, the **WESTERN STATES COLLEGE SOFTBALL UMPIRES** Central Hub is now ready for training and information with this August issue.

The umpires from northern California, southern California & Arizona are now joined together to form this Western United States training group.

Please log into the Central Hub for detail information regarding this merger, as well as, comments presented to us during our conference meetings with coaches.

We look forward to talking with all the umpires who will be attending the fall camps, clinics, and observation games. We will be out watching games throughout the entirety of the Fall ball season.

### **YOUR ASSIGNORS ARE.....**

#### Southern California

Joanne Venditto  
Jim Johnson  
Richard Kollen

#### Northern California

Terry Ching

#### Arizona

Dale Wilson

### From our Training Staff

In our June's Newsletter we discussed six key items that need work from most of our umpires. Do you remember what they were? Have you been working on them? We might ask that question at the upcoming Fall Clinic, which brings us to the topic of our fall-winter training cycle to prepare our CCSUA umpires for the 2014 season.

We have more than 30 potential new umpires who will be attending the Fall Clinic on September 7, 2013 at Glendale College (The Hall of Fame room). We have 15 second-year umpires who will also attend. We hope that all veterans and second-year officials have taken the opportunity to work hard during these summer months to improve their skills.

The rest of this year's training cycle includes:

- Selected veterans will be attending the Fall Clinic. You have been notified; make sure you send John Bennett an email to confirm your attendance.
- Fall Ball observation games
- 2014 Pre-season Camp on Jan 31 and Feb 1, 2014.

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT CORNER

Professionalism on and off the field. Where does it begin and when does it end?

**NEVER!!!!**

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## FOCUS AND PREPARATION

By Tanya Garig

### How do I get from here to there? Part 1

What separates a really good umpire from a truly great umpire? What does she have; what can he do that I do not have or cannot do? That is the question that most really good umpires are asking themselves. It is a good question, a tough question to answer. Observers and coaches find it hard to articulate. It is something – the **IT** factor. A few have IT but most do not. I know IT when I see IT. I know when IT is missing – but what is **IT!**???

I believe IT is the ability to maintain the appropriate level of **focus** at all times on the field. Wait - that can't be IT! That's too simple, too obvious. All good umpires can do that! Right? IT has to be something more than that. IT is rare and elusive. Focus is commonplace, basic and understood. Everyone knows that focus is important. If **IT** were that simple, we would all be truly great umpires because we all know how to focus. Don't we!?

Focus can be defined in the context of umpiring as a close or narrow attention; intense concentration on a particular point or action. We must focus on seeing the right elements of every pitch and every play in order to make correct judgments, strike or ball, safe or out. Our mechanics/stances are designed to help us get to the right place at the right time to be able to see all of those elements. A good umpire has all these qualifications, including interacting successfully with players, coaches and other umpires, being physically fit, keeping the uniform looking good and being professional on and off the field.

All good umpires do these things over and over again, pitch after pitch, play after play, game after game. Being focused for a moment, when you expect something to happen is commonplace – that's what we do and it makes us good. We have a lot of really good umpires and then we have umpires that are better than good - they are truly great. If I think I am a really good umpire and want to be a truly great umpire, how do I get from here to there?

Tune in next month to receive information on how to elevate your umpiring skills from good to great.....

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## KUDOS CORNER

As your Editor, I would like to give Kudos to those who work diligently all year long to provide the best service for all umpires, coaches and administrators throughout our local associations and nationally. As umpires, we sometimes fail to realize how much work and time is put into assigning, training and providing us with a better understanding and tools to officiate this game so that we ALL succeed, as one. We tend to take certain things for granted or make issues “personal” forgetting that College Umpiring is a professional business, which works hand and hand with the NCAA.

So thank you to the following people, who have and are truly working for the best interest of All of us and the love of “THE GAME:”

Donna Vavrinec, Greg Schmidt, Sally Walker, Joanne Venditto, Jim Johnson, Rich Kollen, Terry Ching, Dale Wilson, Mike Bartling, John Bennett, Tanya Garig and many more, who assist them on a daily basis!

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## RULES CORNER

The answer to last month’s rule question regarding: When is a base-runner considered to have abandoned her base can be found on page 131, under Rule 12.4.6, as well as, page 142, under rule 12.12.5.

This month rule’s trivia question is: What is a considered a legal “Catch.”

The answer will be noted in our September Newsletter.

Ofentimes during our pre-game meetings you will hear the plate umpire explain that for a fly-ball to be caught on the steps of the dugout that have been determined to be out-of-play (dead), “Half the foot must be touching the ground.” This statement is incorrect, as this rule verbiage changed several years ago.

The correct verbiage by rule states that it is Not a Catch if, “The only part of the foot that is in contact with the ground is touching dead-ball territory at the time of the catch.” The A.R. further explains that “A fielder catches a batted fly ball with her toes on an elevated step to a dugout (which has been determined to be out of play in the pre-game meeting) and with her heel hanging over, but NOT touching the ground in live ball territory is considered a “No Catch.”

Therefore, according to the rule verbiage we should explain that when a player is attempting to catch a ball on the dug-out steps that have been determined to be out-of-play (dead) “Some portion of the of the foot must be touching live-ball territory (ground) in order for it to be a “Catch.”

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## MECHANICS

### PROTEST:

When a protest occurs, the flow of the game is broken and can be very difficult to re-establish once the game has resumed. When faced with a confusing situation all umpires should come together and discuss the ruling. **Speak up to discuss the infraction and consult the rulebook if needed to rule correctly. Know the rule and apply the correct rule or effect.**

If a coach insists on protesting even though the rule was interpreted correctly or even though it is purely judgment and the umpire is unable to convince the coach in a timely manner, accept the protest and resume the game. It is far better to file a protest report that will be denied than to forfeit a game. A coach must notify the plate umpire of the intent to protest before the next pitch or one minute after the game ends (legal contest). Once the plate umpire has been notified the following needs to be addressed:

1. The plate umpire must announce to the opposing coach, scorekeepers, official scorer and the public-address announcer that the game will be resumed under protest.
2. The plate umpire and protesting coach must note and record the relevant information, including:
  - a. The opponent, date, time and place of the game.
  - b. The names and phone numbers of addresses of the umpires and official scorers.
  - c. The rule and section of the official rules or a copy of the ground rule under which the protest is made.
  - d. The essential facts, details and conditions pertinent to the protested decision.
3. At the conclusion of the game or as soon as possible the plate umpire will notify the NCAA Secretary Rules Editor of the protest by completing an official protest form, which can be found on the SUP Central Hub. **A rule change for 2014-2015 will reduce the time required for filing any incident report to within 24 HOURS!**

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## GAME MANAGEMENT

### SPEECH THERAPY

The August 2013 Referee Magazine has an informative article regarding “speech therapy.” It contains four statements which should be read and digested with full attention:

- **“The rule is....”** When you’re dealing with coaches and players who do not know the rules as well as you do (and that is most of them), having that phrase ready is a **must**.

It helps to educate participants and can prevent future arguments. Showing your confidence and knowledge will give participants more trust in you.

- **“What did you see?”** There are times that you will need to huddle up with officials after a call, if rules allow. After all, the goal is always to get it right. Collect information from your partners by asking them what they saw on the play. Use the information to stick with or reverse your call. This is also a great question for a coach in a debate about a judgment. It often gets the coach focused on the play in question and can take a bit of the emotion out of the discussion.
- **“Keep your focus.”** Say that to yourself and to your partners when necessary during a game. Maybe it is a blowout during which you can become easily distracted. Maybe it is a tight contest and you need to be focusing on specific things. A reminder can help.
- **“Let’s talk about the game.”** Don’t let your partners slip out after a game without telling them that you want to have a postgame. Talk about the play in which you had a double call or something else unusual. Ask about your judgment in regard to a close play or ruling. Your memory of the game is the sharpest right afterward, so do not let the educational opportunity pass you by. The right phrases at the right time can see you through some critical situations in your career.

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## PHOTO CORNER



Photos by Denny

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**Thanks to Tanya Garig for contributing to the newsletter.**

**Knowledge is Power and Experience is the best teacher.**