



USA SOFTBALL UMPIRE COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS:

The local USA Softball Umpire Coordinator is one of the most important individuals at the National Championship. In many cases, this is a first-time experience for the volunteer that has stepped up to the challenge of being the umpire coordinator.

The coordinator responsibilities begin prior to, continue throughout and after the National Championship is completed. The pre-National Championship duties are critical to a smooth and successful Championship; including but not limited to be the contact for the out of town umpires and their housing requirements. The duties of the Coordinator begin once the National Championship roster of umpires is identified.

Let's discuss the duties, responsibilities and expectations of the Local Umpire Coordinator:

Once the coordinator is identified; this information should be provided to the National Championship UIC to allow them to begin communications. The National Championship Umpire-in-Chief (UIC) is assigned by Kevin Ryan, USA Softball National Director of Umpires usually in March. Early communication between the UIC and Umpire Coordinator identifying all requirements will insure a smooth National Championship for all concerned. This can be accomplished by e-mail, letter or phone call; it is never too early to introduce yourself to the UIC. In many cases, the UIC is from out of town and may not be familiar with the National Championship site and local facilities. It is important to have the UIC's travel information (arrival & departure), housing requirements and what is expected of you as his Umpire Coordinator. Provide contact information for the Championship Director. Provide the bracket/playing times to the UIC for their planning purposes as soon as possible.

Prior to the National Championship, the Umpire Coordinator should prepare a letter of introduction to all the assigned umpires including their contact info and the best time to reach them. The Umpire Coordinator letter should follow the UIC's letter to the umpires and outline the information required by umpires, especially the out of town umpires including motel information, maps, directions and clinic information. The letter or e-mail to the umpires should be specific on the lodging; cost to the umpire if they require a single room or bringing their family (1/2 of the cost of the room).

The Umpire Coordinator should secure the location for the pre-championship umpire clinic and provide this information to the UIC as well as the umpires assigned to the National Championship. The UIC should provide their requirements for the clinic: (i.e. projector, computer, white board; etc) to insure all is available to make the clinic a success.

The umpires may be invited to the pre-championship draw or manager's meeting; this information can be obtained from the National Championship Director and be provided to the UIC and umpires. Arrange to have the umpires sit together and be introduced at the luncheon; this is usually accomplished by the UIC. The UIC usually sits at the head table and is required to speak to the coaches concerning the Championship and playing rules, answer questions and set the proper tone for the National Championship.

Transportation is an important task for the Umpire Coordinator as some of the umpires may be flying into the National Championship site; make sure you have their travel itinerary; have someone meet them at the airport and get them to the hotel; in many cases, this may be you. Insure they have transportation back to the airport for their return home.

As previously stated, the UIC may be unfamiliar with the local facilities and should visit the National Championship site and playing facilities. Provide the location of the scorekeepers, umpire's dressing area, a secure area for confiscated equipment, championship headquarters, etc. Remember, the umpire staff may contain male and female umpires and separate dressing facilities, or accommodations may be required. A copy of the ground rules may be helpful to the umpires if the facilities have different configurations. Some details to discuss include the time and place of the coin flip, line up cards, game balls, game reimbursement.

The housing arrangements are very important and should not be taken without careful planning and coordination. The umpire coordinator should receive copies of the USA Softball Umpire Agreement and a roster of the National Championship Umpire Staff. In their letter to the umpires, the coordinator should remind the umpires the lodging is based on two umpires per room. If the umpire requests their own room, they are required to pay for 1/2 of the room cost. In the assignment of lodging, the coordinator should attempt to room umpires according to age, smoker/non-smoker, etc., (i.e. do not room a 24 year old with a 56 year old, if possible, room an umpire with a car with an umpire without transportation as this usually works out for all concerned; roommates become friends and will make sure they have a ride to and from the hotel. To reduce cost to the host city, be aware of the travel plans of the umpires and if possible, reduce the requirements for unnecessary rooms due to the umpire's arrival/departure itinerary.

At the pre-championship clinic, adequate time should be provided for you to discuss the logistics of the Championship to the umpire staff parking area, passes if required, maps with information on laundry, restaurants, etc. The umpire picture is usually taken prior to or just after opening ceremonies, arrange to have a photographer available and the time and place for the photo. Additional information for the umpires to include: the time and place of opening ceremonies, uniform and time of the photo, umpire party, first games and any other planned events that they are expected to attend; phone numbers of Championship Headquarters. A good idea is to identify the out-of-town umpires that do not have transportation and that will need a ride to and from the ballpark.

The UIC will outline the pregame checking of equipment, a secure process including tagging and identification of the equipment (bats, helmets) and storage to ensure the equipment can be returned after their elimination or at the end of the Championship. Note: it is the responsibility of the team or player to pick up their confiscated equipment; they should know the location and who to contact.

The Umpire party is usually held the afternoon or evening prior to the final day of the National Championship. The Umpire Coordinator should select a site for the party; it can be at the hotel, local restaurant or at the Championship site. Don't forget to include the umpire's wives in the party! The UIC will present the umpires with their Championship Certificate, commemorative USA Softball flipping coin, pins and National Championship umpire picture.

Have the payment to the umpires for their games confirmed with the UIC. The coordinator should arrange with the Tournament Director or local city staff for payment of the officials. A form is required prior to payment, have these available to the umpires at the clinic. Identify the time and place for their payment; if hotel or other expenses are to be deducted, ensure this information is provided to the umpire. A signed form for payment must be provided to the UIC for his National Championship report.

Communication is the key to success! Good communication with the UIC and Umpires prior to the Championship makes everything go smooth.

Thank you for volunteering for this important assignment! Your dedication to the USA Softball Umpire Program and this USA Softball National Championship is greatly appreciated.