

## **Zero Tolerance Umpire Bullying Policy**

Umpires are an integral part of the Richmond City Baseball Association (RCBA). All guidelines and policies on providing a safe, fair, and fun environment for players also applies to our umpires. RCBA would like to make clear that abuse (as defined in this policy) of any umpire is unacceptable, and members may be subject to sanctions as outlined by both RCBA and BC Minor Baseball Association (BCMBA) discipline policy. **This policy 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 players and coaches will make mistakes during play, umpires will also make mistakes in officiating, particularly in the younger divisions where they are learning how to umpire.** Umpires receive minimal instruction before being sent out to officiate. Also, RCBA does not currently have an Umpire-in-Chief, nor do we have enough senior umpires who can be present to guide youth umpires at every 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.

### **Zero Tolerance Policy Definitions:**

**“Zero Tolerance Policy”** should read: “Ensuring a fair, safe, healthy and fun game environment is our top priority.” RCBA has adopted a zero-tolerance policy for arguing judgment calls, umpire abuse or call-related displays of poor sportsmanship.

**Umpire Abuse** is 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.

**Judgment Calls** - a judgment call is a decision made by an official in a competition using their own opinion of what they have seen. **An umpire's judgment call is final.** Most calls are based on the judgment of the umpire. 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 ball. Judgment calls include balls and strikes, safe/out calls on bases (force and tag), catch/no catch calls, fair/foul, etc.

RCBA is committed to providing an environment where all individuals involved in the game are treated with respect. BCMBA outlines specific policies with regards to non-confrontational or verbal abuse between coaches, players, and umpires in **Rule 13.6 (for 13U and younger) and Rule 13.8 (15U and older)**. **Please refer directly to these sections of the BCMBA Rulebook or full details.**

### **For 13U and younger**

Coaches, Players, and Managers may not at any time;

- Argue judgement calls
- Harass or verbally abuse an official. This includes, but not limited to direct/indirect comments about an official's ability, appearance, age, gender
- Argue over half-swing (you may request the plate umpire their partner for help on a half swing if the pitch is called a ball)
- Offer “education and correction” or attempt to make comments to an umpire about their performance before, during, or after the game.
- Ask umpire about their strike zone; either before, during, or after the game.

When can coaches talk to umpires (13U and younger)?

- Plate meeting
- Requesting "time"
- Raise safety concern
- Request substitution on offense or defense
- Interpretation of a rule (NO PROTESTS allowed 11U and below); an example might be number of bases awarded on an overthrow

Guidelines for disciplinary action range from a written reprimand for verbal abuse, to expulsion from RCBA/BCMBA for flagrant or repeat offenders.

### **Purpose of the Policy**

There have been an increasing number of umpire incidents/ejections in the province, especially in 13U and below. This policy has been implemented to eliminate umpire abuse, both physical and verbal, and to discourage public dissent of umpires at all RCBA ball games. Even though public dissent may not be considered abuse, it is not in keeping with the principles of good sportsmanship. The policy was developed with particular focus, but is not limited to, youth umpires. Youth umpire is defined as any individual under the age of 19 years.

It is never acceptable to verbally abuse an umpire in any situation. **There are appropriate avenues for coaches and spectators to share concerns about the quality of officiating.** The Umpire Allocator/Coordinator/Umpire-in-Chief (UIC) will be used to simplify all these roles. It is welcome to hear any constructive comments on umpires. Any criticism or critique relating to the performance of an umpire should be communicated to them only by the UIC, BCBUA rep, or by an appointed member of the umpire team.

### **Disciplinary Guidelines**

RCBA abides by the Code of Conduct outlined by **BCMBA Rule 13 – Manager, Coach, Player, Parents, and Spectators Conduct.**

The penalties for any confirmed case of umpire abuse by coaches, managers, players, parents, or spectators for both home and away teams on all Richmond ball fields are subject to guidelines provided by both BCMBA and RCBA.

#### **BCMBA Rule 13.2 Behavior Expectations**

Players, managers, or coaches engaging or persisting in conduct or actions unfavorable to the spirit, principles and objectives of good sportsmanship ***may receive one warning from the umpire. If the offense or offenses continue, offender or offenders will be removed from the game.***

All such incidents will be documented **within 24 hours, if possible**, by the umpire(s) involved in the incident via online ejection/incident report on BC Baseball Umpires Association (BCBUA) website. Both the UIC and President will be notified immediately. Copies of the report are automatically sent to the BCBUA area representative, as well as the Disciplinary Chair at BCMBA. **ANY EJECTION RESULTS IN AUTOMATIC ONE GAME SUSPENSION for 15U and above** (effective the next scheduled game). Specific guidelines outlining suspension are in Rule 13.13 to 13.23.

**For 13U and below, ANY EJECTION RESULTS IN AUTOMATIC THREE GAME SUSPENSION.**

For detailed information on subsequent suspensions, please refer to Rule 13. Consequences are severe this year.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Any incident that involves:

- verbal abuse involving uttering threats;
- physical abuse by bodily threatening, shoving, bumping, or harming an official will result in an **immediate indefinite suspension and notification of proper legal authorities.**

This is very serious. At no time will the above be tolerated at any level.

**The Disciplinary Committee** will consist of President, (one of) Vice-President, and Umpire Coordinator/Allocator/UIC.

The president may appoint any other member of the board to comprise the group of three if any of the mentioned members cannot be present.

The UIC or other appointed board members will follow-up to ensure the offender(s) is not in attendance at any of the games during the suspension. The Disciplinary Committee, upon investigating the incident and after hearing from all parties, shall implement any appropriate penalties before the next game (if possible). The offending person(s), board members, and the UIC shall be notified of any disciplinary action.

**Coaches, Managers and Parents**, please keep in mind that you are a role model on and off the field. You are being watched by young players who will emulate your every move, including how you speak to others. These young umpires are placed in a very uncomfortable place of authority that is awkward and anxiety-provoking. *It is also important to stress that coaches are responsible for the behaviour of parents and spectators in the stands.* Have a chat with parents/spectators at the beginning of the season and remind them before every game. Umpires have the right to directly ask unruly parents and spectators (or ask the coaches to communicate this) to leave the game if the behaviour continues (this means they must leave the area surrounding the field).

**If the parent(s) or spectator refuse to leave, the umpire(s) reserve the right to suspend the game without making any judgement as to the final score.**

Put yourselves in their position and show decorum, respect, and empathy. Offer words of encouragement. Thank them for their time. Remember above all else, this is a game. Thank you for your cooperation in the development of youth umpires in our community.