

## **Minutes from Hot Topic Umpire Discussion**

*2008 NFCA National Convention*

*December 11, 2008*

### **Biggest Problems**

- The group stated that one major problem was consistent rules interpretations across the country.
- It also was the feeling of the group that softball was losing good umpires to baseball, since baseball generally pays more. Some coaches felt that college softball umpire fees were already too high, so some did not want to see an increase.
- It was the general consensus that good umpires were being lost, sometimes due to age, with younger, not so seasoned umpires, getting those spots.

### **Umpire Evaluation**

- Most coaches were unclear about the umpire evaluation process and how it worked.
- Some felt that assigners didn't pay attention to the evaluations, and would hire the same officials regardless of how negative their evaluations were.
- Others felt that maybe the assigners got their evaluations, but the information stopped with them; in other words, the national umpire team never received the input, and thus, may select the umpires for NCAA regional, super regional or national championship work.

### **Being Held Accountable**

- It was the feeling of the group that umpires needed to be held accountable, and coaches didn't see how that was part of the current process.
- Umpires should be required to watch video to help them improve, especially where the strike zone is concerned. Video is readily available from teams.

### **Miscellaneous & NCAA National Umpire Coordinator**

- Before Kathy Strahm, NCAA national umpire coordinator, got to the meeting, coaches talked about the umpire clinic schedule and felt that coaches should be invited to attend. Later, it was announced that coaches were welcome at the clinics, scheduled for San Jose, Tampa, Houston, Philadelphia and Indianapolis in January. The fee to attend is \$30.
- Concerning umpire fees, one suggestion was a different pay scale based on experience.
- Once Ms. Strahm arrived, the conversation changed to championship umpire selection. Some coaches were concerned that championship umpires were selected too early, before the evaluations of the season were submitted and reviewed. Ms. Strahm assured the group that beginning this year, regional umpires will be selected one month prior to regionals, with super regional and WCWS umpires selected after that.

- She noted that the first online testing for umpires occurred in 2007-08, and it was successful and well received by the umpires. Online rules and mechanics testing will continue in 2008-09 and the future.