

Welcome to North Star Umpires,

I would like to welcome you to our umpire family. I look forward to getting to know you and want you to know how important you are to the future success of North Star Umpires. Our continued success is dependent on having top quality umpires, which we are committed to helping you become. I am confident you will enjoy your time with North Star Umpires.

This handbook is intended to answer many of the questions you may have along with giving you an outline of what is expected of you as a representative of North Star Umpires. Veterans, please review the mission of North Star Umpires along with the code of conduct and procedures implemented by the Board of Directors at North Star Umpires.

Please read this manual and contact me with any questions you may have.

Gary LaChance, CEO
gary.lachance@northstarumpires.com

Remember, you are an Independent Contractor. Under no circumstance should you consider yourself an employee. All taxes due are your responsibility. Each time you umpire a game for North Star Umpires, you are the face of our Association. For that reason, we have a set of standards that we expect all umpires to abide by. North Star Umpires reserves the right to limit or remove games from independent contractors who do not follow the standards set in this handbook.

Table of Contents

North Star Umpires Mission	2
North Star Umpires Beliefs	2
Code of Conduct.....	3
Personal Appearance.....	4
Schedules	5
Game Procedures	6

North Star Umpires Mission

North Star Umpires will create the finest and most respected umpire association in the country. We will do this by the training of our umpires in proper mechanics, rules interpretation, and field management. We will further accomplish this in all of our business and on field contact with our clients by treating them with integrity and respect in every encounter.

North Star Umpires Beliefs

We believe in providing legendary service. Our goal is to give all of our clients top quality service on and off the field.

We believe that “good” is not good enough. We expect our umpires to continually strive to be better. We need to raise the bar *every time* we see our clients.

We believe in honesty and trust. We will work to build trust with our clients every time we work with them. We will give them our ultimate effort, with honor and integrity in every call we make.

We believe in the ongoing training and development of our umpires. The continued growth of North Star Umpires is dependent on making our umpires better. Our desire is to improve the performance of every umpire in every game. We expect our umpires to be qualified and registered with the MSHSL and with other baseball organizations, such as the NCAA when necessary.

We believe in doing business in a professional and orderly manner. Our reputation and therefor our pride is built on the use of standardized mechanics, consistent application of the rules and doing business in a manner recognizable to our associates and clients as professional and efficient.

Code of Conduct

Be Professional

How we conduct ourselves before, during, and after each game is documented by many people, and is reflective upon both you and North Star Umpires. Profanity is not acceptable anywhere around the field. We must be more professional than all participants and spectators present, without being condescending. The ability to keep calm and cool goes a long way to defusing most conflicts.

Excessive fraternization with teams is unacceptable. To have a friendly discussion is one thing, but to joke around and act goofy is not professional.

Be Consistent

Consistency is vital to our success as an organization. Coaches want our best efforts, and we will give them our best. For example, a consistent strike zone is extremely important. Coaches have repeatedly said they would rather have a large zone instead of a tight zone. However, that doesn't mean ankles to neck, or a foot off each side of the plate. We will train our umpires in the proper interpretation of the strike zone, and we expect that our umpires will strive to enforce that zone.

Integrity

Umpires will find themselves involved in games that are ugly, games where one team is dominating another team. Integrity means we still give a consistent and honest ruling on all calls. It is not our job to intentionally miss calls, or 'make up' for mistakes by coaches, players or another umpire. In addition, umpires must remain focused and work as hard as they can to stay in proper position.

Willing To Learn

Please be willing to learn. We can all learn more rules, interpretation, and enforcement along with proper technique. Umpire advancement is tied to learning and performing at a high level. To be eligible for higher level games, umpires must demonstrate the required knowledge of rules, mechanics and field management.

North Star Umpires will sponsor opportunities to grow, and as an independent contractor with North Star Umpires it is your responsibility to learn, you must make the effort to get better.

Must Be Teachable

Willing to learn and being teachable are completely different. Evaluation by senior umpires are for your benefit, please be receptive to their observations. Your mentor and/or senior umpire is there to help you become the best umpire you can be. Please receive his assessment in an accepting manner. Defending mistakes is not being teachable. Listen, learn and get better.

Email Addresses

All e-mail addresses issued by North Star Umpires are to be used for North Star business. Please refrain from using the NSU address for any and all personal business.

Social Media

You need to consider social media as a public forum at all times. Please be mindful of what you put out there. As an Independent Contractor you represent North Star Umpires and your partners, Act accordingly. Do not use this forum to discuss specifics about your assignments, other officials, conferences, coaches, players or any related personnel. Follow specific conference, school and/or governing body social media policies.

Personal Appearance

Game-Site Attire

Nice clean full-length pants with a collared shirt are mandatory. Golf shorts or khaki shorts may be authorized from time to time. That notice will be posted on the web site under North Star News. Gym shorts or cargo shorts are not allowed. Again, you represent North Star Umpires, and how you look reflects on all of us. Coaches see us and will make judgments on what they see and hear, right or wrong.

Uniforms

Umpire clothing must be regularly cleaned and/or pressed. Shoes, belts and other visible equipment should be shined or cleaned. A clean, sharp looking umpire will be received better than a sloppy looking umpire. We represent North Star Umpires; please look professional. Violations of this standard may subject the umpire to a fine by the association.

Equipment

Umpires safety is important. Proper equipment is mandatory. Proper maintenance of the equipment will also keep it in working order, thereby lasting longer.

Hair

Properly groomed hair is mandatory. Hair off the collar is preferred and strongly recommended. Clean shaven umpires are preferred; if facial hair is present it must be trimmed and neat-looking.

Schedules

Schedules are prepared to meet the daily game demands of our clients.

As a general rule, games assignments will be posted a minimum of two (2) weeks in advance, giving umpires time to organize and prepare. Unfortunately, there will be times where changes will happen and a two week notice will not be attainable. North Star Umpires reserves the right to adjust each umpires scheduled games due to many variables (some at the last minute) such as weather, cancellations, or on-field issues. Still, umpires will be responsible for their assigned games.

Schedule changes must be authorized through the Lead Assignor.

All umpires are required to fill out their availability for each month North Star Umpires has games. Umpires will have the ability to adjust their schedules up to two week out; after that deadline, they must contact the Lead Assignor.

Umpires will be assigned games by matching personal ability with our clients' player- talent levels.

Umpires who "no show" for a game are subject to being denied further assignments and may also incur fines. A cell phone is a necessity. Emergency situations and accidents occur rarely but when they do happen, you need to contact the assignor and your partner.

Game Procedures

Day of Game

Umpires need to contact each other within 24 hours before a scheduled game. Umpires will discuss where to park at the field. The senior umpire should contact the home team coach to confirm time and place, and if weather conditions or other challenges exist to the games timely start.

Game Time Arrival

Umpires should arrive no later than 30 minutes before game time. Ideally, 45-60 minutes before the game is best. This allows more time for you to focus on the game along with giving the crew time to discuss situations and rule questions.

Umpire Pre-Game Conference

Rules for the game - Decide what rules shall control the games (high school, college, or pro). Review the slide rule for that game.

Discuss situations and rotation expectations. Senior umpires shall ensure that newer umpires have ample instruction in this area.

Discus who is responsible calls down the lines, infield line drives, and pop-ups.

Enter Field Together

Pre-Game Conference

Ground rules

Slide rule for the game

Expectations for the coaches

Encourage coaches to come out for a discussion, directly to the umpire who has made the call in question, instead of yelling from the bench.

Game Attitude

Hustle, what else needs to be said? Be mindful of how you act on the field. If you are and act engaged in the game coaches will be more likely to respect you. Coaches can sense if you are not interested or don't care. This can create unnecessary animosity on the field.

Game Posture

Be mindful of your attitude and how you act. Do you stand with folded arms, staring into space, looking unapproachable? Coaches will play off that perceived attitude and will become more aggressive. One example of appearing engaged is by standing with your hands behind your back. Remember to stay focused and interested. Avoid a coach getting so close he “beaks” you with his cap, and terminate the conversation in a professional manner when you have learned the coach’s position.

Leave the Field Together

Always leave the field together. Try to exit out of the winning team’s side, if possible.

At The Car

Discuss any unusual plays that happened during the game. Discuss rule interpretations that came up during the game. Go over evaluation of umpire. Senior umpire: submit game evaluation on web site.

No alcohol is allowed at the game site. Again, we are professionals. We can wait until we meet up at a restaurant/bar to enjoy an alcoholic beverage. We will abide by all posted signs, if there is no tobacco allowed on the premises, we will not use any tobacco products.

SIGNATURE PAGE

After reviewing this handbook, please sign and return this signature page. To be assigned games, all umpires must have this on file.

Receipt of handbook _____ (initial) Date _____

I _____ (print) have read this independent contractor handbook. I agree to abide by the procedures set forth in this handbook.

(Signature) Date _____