

SJUA

The Relief Pitcher

Behind The Plate by Gerard Malamisura, SJUA President

I hope this message finds you well and energized for the season ahead.

As we continue to grow and evolve as an organization, I want to take a moment to recognize the dedication, professionalism, and integrity each of you brings to the field. Umpiring is more than just enforcing the rules—it’s about upholding the spirit of the game, ensuring fairness, and serving as leaders in our baseball community.

This past year, we’ve made meaningful

strides in training, recruitment, and mentorship. From our veteran officials who continue to set the standard, to our newer members who bring fresh energy and commitment, I am proud of the culture we are building together.

Looking ahead, our priorities remain clear:

- Strengthening our training and development programs
- Expanding opportunities for advancement

- Supporting one another both on and off the field

I encourage each of you to stay engaged—attend meetings, participate in clinics, and continue striving for excellence in every game you work. Your growth strengthens not only your own skills, but the reputation of our entire organization.

Thank you for your continued commitment and passion. I look forward to seeing you out on the field this season. ⚾



Important Dates

SJUA Meeting	4/1
SJUA Meeting	4/15
SJUA Meeting	5/6
SJUA Meeting	5/20
GVAA Tournament	5/21-5/25
Medford Tournament	5/28-5/31
SJUA Meeting	6/3
SJUA Meeting	6/17





**"Umpiring is best described as the profession of standing between two seven-year-olds with one ice cream cone."
Ron Luciano
MLB Umpire
from 1969 to 1979**

The A Position by George Sanders, Vice President

A baseball umpire's role extends far beyond calling balls and strikes. They are the visible authority on the field, responsible for enforcing rules, maintaining order, and ensuring the game is played fairly. Because of this, acting and appearing professional is essential to the integrity of the sport.

Professionalism begins with appearance. A clean, well-fitted uniform, proper gear, and confident posture immediately signal credibility to players, coaches, and spectators. First impressions matter, and an umpire who looks sharp is more

likely to be respected before a single call is made.

Equally important is conduct. Umpires must remain calm under pressure, especially when faced with disagreements or emotional reactions from players and coaches. Responding with composure rather than frustration helps de-escalate tense situations and reinforces the umpire's authority. Consistency in decision-making also plays a major role; when players know what to expect, they are more likely to accept calls, even if they disagree.

Communication is another key element of professionalism. Clear,

confident signals and concise explanations when necessary help prevent confusion and keep the game moving smoothly. At the same time, knowing when not to engage is just as important—arguing or becoming overly defensive can undermine an umpire's position.

Ultimately, a professional umpire contributes to a better game experience for everyone involved. By demonstrating respect, confidence, and control, they uphold the standards of baseball and ensure the focus remains where it belongs: on the game itself. ⚾

Rules Lawyer by Joe Rosenberg, Rules Interpreter

The Strike Zone: Accuracy vs. Consistency

Definitions:

NFHS: The strike zone is over home plate, top halfway between the batter's shoulders and waist, bottom at the knees, measured in the batter's normal stance.

MLB: The zone is over home plate from the midpoint between the shoulders and top of the uniform pants to just below the kneecap, measured in the batter's stance. The zone is 17

inches wide (home plate) and extends in depth across the plate; any part of the ball crossing any part of the zone is a strike.

Accurate: The rule-book strike zone is what umpires should call—precisely as defined. Given a 17" plate and a 2.91" ball, a pitch can register as a strike when any part of the ball touches the zone, effectively creating about a 23" target width where contact counts. Striving for this "accurate" zone means internalizing these dimensions and applying them every pitch.

Consistent: In practice, without electronic aids, most umpires emphasize consistency over perfect accuracy. Players and coaches will adapt to a reliably called zone—even if it's shifted slightly in or out, high or low—so long as it is applied uniformly. Ideally umpires aim for both: an accurate, by-the-book zone delivered consistently across all levels of play, but consistency is often the pragmatic priority. ⚾

Baseball Talk by Matt Scalise, Supervisor of Officials

Now that the season is officially underway, I want to remind everyone that we should be arriving at the field at least 30 minutes before game time. If for some reason you cannot make it there by the 30-minute mark, please make sure your partner is aware ahead of time. If an issue comes up that affects your arrival to the point you'll be late, be sure to notify both your partner as well as Doc and myself as soon as possible.

I also want to address something I've been hearing from a few coaches lately. While these comments have not been directed specifically at our

group, it is still worth mentioning. We must always maintain a professional demeanor on the field. As NFHS reminds us, high school athletics are an extension of the classroom, and they should be treated that way. Please ensure that no crass jokes are made and that foul language is not used during the game. No matter how mature the players may seem, they are still kids, and they deserve to be treated accordingly.

At the same time, remember that this is still a kid's game and it should be fun. When appropriate, try to keep the atmosphere positive. Take a moment between

innings to speak with coaches and build a rapport. Developing those relationships can go a long way in helping manage situations later in the game.

Finally, as we get the season rolling, remember that communication is one of the most important tools an umpire has. This is one of the few places where we are expected to be loud. Everyone on the field should clearly know what the call is, whether they agree with it or not is a different matter all together. Be loud, be confident, and sell your calls.

Most importantly, enjoy yourselves. ⚾



**"Gentlemen,
he was out
because I said
he was out."
Bill Klem
Major League
Baseball
Umpire from
1905 to 1941**

Stay Sharp (answers to the last page)

1. With the bases loaded and two outs in the bottom of the last inning, the score is tied. B6 is hit by the pitch and is awarded first base. R3 legally touches home and scores and B6 legally advances to and touches first. R2 starts toward third but goes to join the celebration near first and never touches third:

A. The game is over if R3

touches the plate and B6 touches first base.

- B. If the defensive team legally appeals R2 not touching third base, the run does not score.
- C. The game is over as soon as R3 touches the plate.

2. B1 hits an infield single. B1 runs through first base, does not attempt for second, and returns back

to the bag. Before touching the white base, he stands on the colored base while taking off his shin guard. He is then tagged by F3.

- A. B1 is out.
B. B1 is safe.

Your Assignment by Gary Schmitt, Assigner

Let me begin by saying thank you to everyone for their flexibility. We started the season with rainouts. The regular season is now in full swing. I ask that you keep your availability update to date, this includes your weekends. Games are added and cancelled all the time.

We have entered into contract with the

following leagues this year

- Oaklyn Little League Baseball/Softball
- West Deptford Storm travel league (home games and tournaments)
- Marlton Softbal (Home Rec League and their tournaments)
- GVAA tournament

- Medford Youth (home league play and tournament)
- Mens Over 70 MSBL League
- Mastery High School Camden
- Howard Phifer Middles School-Softball/Baseball
- Maple Shade BR

Enjoy the season. I am always available if you have any questions. ☎

The Money Man by John Henderson, Treasurer

I will be sending out assessment account statements in the next week or so. When you get it, please verify the information matches

your records and let me know of any discrepancies. There are still a handful of members who owe dues, I will be

reaching out for payment. As always we accept cash, check, and venmo at @SJUA-treasurer. Thank you as always. ☎

Secretary's Desk by Matt Korang, Secretary

The 2026 Baseball season is finally in under way. For our cadets it has been a long journey since they filled out our on-line registration to finally calling balls and strikes. Congrats to all of those that muscled through to become members of SJUA.

Congrats also to those that made a bumper class of cadets to fill our ranks. Matt Scalise, George Sanders, Bruce Lazaruk, and Tom Wajda all took part in prepping a large class of Cadets. (If I missed

anyone, you have my humble apologies.) Training of our cadets has not stopped; it has now fallen on everyone of us. The large number of cadets means that you likely will umpire a game with someone in our class of 2026.

Remember, our cadets are new to umpiring. They look to you for example. They look to you for positive feedback. Keep this in mind at your pregame and postgame with a 2026 cadet.

Thanks to everyone for

completing their eligibility requirements. One final requirement to make sure you stay in good standing is to pay your dues to the SJUA. Your dues are essential for a financially stable association. Without them, the association would falter and cease to exist.

Paying your dues also keeps you in good standing. If you are not in good standing you could lose games and would have no say in the operations of the organization. ☎

South Jersey Umpire Association

www.sjumps.com

Board Members

Gerard Malamisura
President
gerardmalamisura@yahoo.com

George Sander
Vice President
sandersgtkr@verizon.net

Matt Korang
Secretary
mkorang@comcast.net

John Henderson
Treasurer
hendersonj263@gmail.com

Gary Schmitt
Assigner
docschmitt@yahoo.com

Matt Scalise
Supervisor of Officials
scalisematt@msn.com

Stay Sharp Answer

1. B (NFHS 9-1-1 Note 2)
2. B (NFHS 8-2-2)