

Mile High Little League Umpire Policy

It is the goal of Mile High Little League to develop the highest quality volunteer umpire program. To that end the Board of Directors has adopted the following policy to reflect that everyone has a role to play to improve this critical aspect of the Little League experience.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- I. Establish the position of Chief Umpire as a permanent position on the Board of Directors and his/her duties
- II. Establish the requirements to serve as a volunteer umpire and explain the policy for scheduling umpires
- III. Clarify rules of conduct by participants and spectators towards umpires and define the umpire's role in enforcing the League's Code of Conduct.
- IV. Provide guidance for growing and developing the volunteer umpire cadre at MHLL

I. The Chief Umpire

The Board of Directors shall vote annually in October or November, to select the Chief Umpire for the following league year. The Chief Umpire, if possible, should be an elected voting member of the board. If the board determines that a member of the league, not on the board, is best suited to serve as Chief Umpire, the volunteer that is selected shall become a non-voting ex-officio member of the board and shall be invited to all meetings of the board.

The Chief Umpire shall be selected by the board with due consideration of the following:

- 1) Volunteer umpire experience;
- 2) Knowledge of little league rules;
- 3) Dedication to self-improvement of umpire knowledge and umpire skill; and
- 4) Ability and desire to teach and mentor volunteer umpires.

Responsibilities of the Chief Umpire

- Review and update, as necessary, the league's umpire training and development program. Such program shall include training curriculum, recognition program, junior umpire program, as well as procedures for mentoring and evaluating volunteer umpires.
- Provide formal training (umpire clinic) to all umpires, at least annually, and informal training whenever practicable.
- Evaluate the performance of volunteer umpires and provide constructive feedback to aid in umpire development.
- Keep abreast of changes to Little League rules and educate the league's coaches and umpires on such changes.
- Stay knowledgeable about what training and development opportunities and materials are available for volunteer Little League umpires, and share that information with volunteers.
- Inspect and inventory umpire equipment to ensure all required equipment is available and serviceable; request Board approval of purchases to replace umpire equipment, as needed.
- Attend formal umpire training opportunities, whenever possible, to develop his or her own umpire knowledge and skills
- Work with the District Chief Umpire(s) to assist league umpires in achieving umpire goals. (For example, if an umpire wants to work a district, state, or regional tournament).

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Responsibilities of the Board:

- Support the chief umpire whenever possible, in accordance with procedures of the Board, by providing resources for training and recognition of volunteer umpires
- Ensure all umpires have access to proper safety equipment.

II. Requirements to serve as umpire and procedure for scheduling

Volunteer umpires: Although some leagues have resorted to paying umpires, MHLL elects to follow the guidance from Little League International and utilize only volunteer umpires. No umpire shall be paid to call games in this league. It is simply a myth that the quality of umpires will necessarily be better in leagues that use paid umpires. We have been fortunate to have many knowledgeable and skilled volunteer umpires over the years, and the Board is committed to continuing to recruit and retain more of these dedicated volunteers.

Umpire Approval Requirements: All umpires must be a minimum of 12 years old, but should be older than the players of the division they are umpiring. All youth umpires must complete the umpire clinic annually, and they must be approved by the Chief Umpire or League President prior to umpiring ANY games at Mile High Little League. All umpires must be approved by the Safety Officer and Chief Umpire, and have successfully completed a background check. All umpires must read and sign a code of conduct form.

Teams using umpires who have not been approved by the Safety Officer are subject to disciplinary action.

Umpire Assignments: For regular season games, all team managers are responsible for providing umpires. The home team is responsible for providing the plate umpire and the visitor team is responsible for providing the field umpire. For end of season tournament games, the division Vice President, in conjunction with the Chief Umpire, will be responsible for umpire assignments. Managers and coaches may be required to umpire end of season tournaments at the discretion of the division VP and/or Chief Umpire.

Substitute Umpires:

The Chief Umpire shall maintain a list of available substitute umpires. Teams requesting a substitute umpire should contact the Chief Umpire at least 48 hours in advance of the game, to request a substitute. If a substitute umpire is not available for game coverage, the team is still responsible for providing their required umpire.

Adult Game Coordinators: In accordance with rule 9.03 (d); if all umpires are minors (under 18 years old), then an adult coordinator must be used or the game cannot be played. See Little League playing rules for more information. Field monitors may not serve in this role. Team managers from both teams must provide a game coordinator, as necessary, for duties as outlined in the Little League playing rules.

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III. Rules for participant interaction with umpires and Code of Conduct

The board of directors has approved a code of conduct that applies equally to anyone who participates in or attends league activities. Consistent enforcement is critical to the successful implementation of the code of conduct. The instructions that follow are intended to supplement the code of conduct, not replace it.

Spectator interaction with umpires: Spectators must enter every game with the understanding that it is not reasonable to expect the umpires to be perfect. There is to be NO questioning or comments from the spectators regarding umpire calls or performance during a game. If any spectator has concerns about the performance of any umpire, then those concerns are to be addressed to the Chief Umpire or league President for resolution.

There is to be NO questioning of umpires after games or approaching them to criticize their performance. Any visitor who approaches an umpire after the game to criticize or question calls should be reported to the disciplinary committee using the code of conduct violation form.

Manager/coach interaction with umpires: Managers and coaches must recognize that their actions on the field are viewed by players and spectators of both teams, and that all actions must set the best possible example for others. Any and all communications with any umpire shall be done in a respectful and deferential manner.

Team managers are expected to exercise control of their teams and assist in communicating the expectations of the Code of Conduct to spectators. Any concerns about the performance of an umpire shall be addressed with the Chief Umpire or league President.

- Judgment calls shall never be questioned.
- Rule interpretations may be questioned, but only in a quiet and respectful manner as outlined in the Little League official rules.
- Questions must be addressed to the umpire who made the call. Demanding that an umpire “seek help” from another umpire is not acceptable. Umpires have equal authority on the field, and may not over rule each other. Umpires may, at their discretion, seek help from other umpires, but they are not required to do so.
- Yelling across the field to an umpire regarding calls is not acceptable. Request time-out to approach the umpire and discuss the situation in a respectful and conversational manner.
- Absolutely no form of verbal abuse shall be directed at or about an umpire.
- Absolutely no threatening or menacing behavior directed towards or about an umpire.

Absolutely no touching, bumping, or any other form of physical abuse directed towards an umpire. Assault and Battery on a Sports Official are criminal offenses with enhanced penalties in the State of New Mexico and incidents will be referred to law enforcement for prosecution. [See New Mexico Statutes sec. 30-3-9.1]

Coaches, managers, and players who violate the standards of umpire interaction should expect to be ejected by the umpires, and then will be subject to further disciplinary action by the Mile High Little League Board. Umpire ejections reports must be completed within 24 hours and delivered to a field monitor or emailed as instructed on the form.

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CODE OF CONDUCT (SPECTATORS):

Umpires do not have the authority to eject spectators directly. However, they do have the authority to order any player, coach, manager, or league official to take any action necessary that affects the playing of the game and the administration of the rules and to stop game play until league officials deal with unruly spectators. (See rules 9.01(b) and 9.01(f)). Therefore, when an umpire observes violations of the league code of conduct by spectators, they should call “time” and inform the relevant manager of the problem. They should also request a field monitor to come to the field to be ready to remove spectators who do not heed code of conduct warnings by managers. Also, if a flagrant violation occurs that in the umpire’s judgement does not require a warning; all play should stop until the violator is removed from sight and sound of the game site.

Managers and coaches are required to assist the league in identifying the violator, before the person leaves the game site, so that the situation can be addressed by the Disciplinary Committee and the Board.

Managers and umpires (and field monitors if they witnessed the misconduct) are required to submit a report to the Chief Umpire and League President within 24 hours of any violation of the code of conduct that resulted in the removal of a spectator. These reports should be in the format of the approved form and delivered to a field monitor or emailed as instructed on the form.

Field monitors and other volunteers should not attempt to physically force a visitor to leave who is refusing direction from a league official to leave the property. Field monitors, managers, or umpires should call the police for assistance in such a situation, and should call 911 if the visitor engages in violent or threatening behavior.

IV. Recruiting and Development

Managers are encouraged to identify volunteers from among the parents and guests of their players whose temperament and desire to make a positive contribution to the league make them well-suited to serve as an umpire. Managers should connect those volunteers with the Chief Umpire so that he or she may reach out to begin development. Managers should also notify the Chief Umpire of the dates and times of any pre-season “scrimmage” games, so that umpires may take advantage of live-play learning opportunities.

All volunteers are encouraged to contact the Chief Umpire for information about resources for learning Little League rules and building umpire skills. All league umpire clinics shall be open to everyone. The league will attempt to match all interested volunteers with an experienced umpire mentor to facilitate the development of volunteers who are new to umpiring.

There is a wealth of information at Little League University Online <https://www.littleleague.org/university/umpires/> and all volunteer umpires are encouraged to sign up for the Little League Umpire Registry <https://www.littleleagueumpire.org/Account/Login> (FREE) for access to the latest instructional materials and to stay up-to-date on umpire information from Little League International.

Any questions may be directed to the Chief Umpire by email to chief.umpire@MileHighLL.com