Touching All Bases

Let’s Play Ball!!
Well… the 2015 softball season is in full swing! Kudos to Carl and Frank on a very informative General Session meeting. Before live ball gets started in about a month, we all have a full slate of training opportunities ahead of us. I hope everyone enjoyed the first of two required (and two optional) Regional Study groups. I can personally attest to good comradery, lengthy and informative question/answer debates, and personal experiences shared from some of our most revered seasoned veterans.

On Deck

Regional Study Session Groups – During February at various locations starting at 6:30pm.

Online Webinars – During February online.

ASA National Umpire School – February 13th-15th in Manteca.

Basic Skills Boot Camp – February 15th at Jackson Sports Academy starting at 8:30am. Mandatory for new umps and those in 1-51%ile of ratings.

On-Field Clinics – February 21st at Antelope HS, Vanden HS and Freedom Park starting at 8:30am. Feb 28th at Freedom Park. Mandatory for new umps and those in 0-71%ile of ratings.

NFHS Classification Exam – Online and must be completed by February 28th.

Training Locations

Jackson Sports Academy
5209-A Luce Avenue
McClellan, CA 95652

Freedom Park
5839 Dudley Blvd
McClellan Park, CA 95652

West Sac Civic Center
1110 West Capitol Ave.
West Sac, CA 95961

Vanden High School
2951 Markeley Lane
Fairfield, CA 94533

Oak Ridge High School
1120 Harvard Way
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

Note: Refer to the Training Schedule for time and dates for all training opportunities.
**Group Leadership Corner**

Thanks for the many questions and positive comments. We have some collective responses for you:

**Training Hours** – Some of you have emailed us to say that you can’t do this or can’t do that. **YOU** are responsible for sending us an email as to what you will do if you are not able to complete one of the training sessions. There are many options for you to choose so let us know what you plan to do to get your 18 hours in. We have not turned down anyone’s proposal yet.

**Certification Test** – This is required. **There have been some glitches on the test site.** We are sorry for that but not under our control. **To make sure you don’t lose any part of the test you have completed, save often. If it freezes on you, save and exit and start again but you should have most of it saved.**

**Study Guide Test** – This is **optional**. You have been given a special login and password to get to this test. It is 100 questions like the Certification Test. **It does not replace the Certification Test.**

**Event Invitations** – Frank is sending out event invitations if you are in the group required for that event. Log in to Arbiter and accept the event or decline it. If you decline it, you need to figure out what you are going to replaced it with and send us an email with that plan (See Training Hours above).

**On-Field Clinics** – Self Assign for the On-Field Clinics. They should be ready next week. Again if you can’t make one or both, see Training Hours above.

**Boot Camp** – If you have been invited to Boot Camp, bring your gear. We will have extensive work on plate mechanics and strike zone. It will be indoors so it will not be cancelled due to weather. If you can’t make it, see Training Hours above.

**National Umpire School** - Several of you are going to NUS in Manteca. To get credit for those training hours submit a copy of your certificate to Neil Hillel at ncoaump16@gmail.com.

**Accountability** - Although, we have worked hard to give you options to get the required training hours for you to become eligible to umpire high school softball, we are not responsible to get your hours completed. **BE ACCOUNTABLE.**

It is getting hectic as we write this article since we have had our first and only General Meeting on 1/27/15. We are very appreciative of the efforts put forth by the Leadership Team members who are working to make your NCOA Softball experience the very best that it can be.

One of the new features we have this year is small Study Groups. These were designed to give you flexibility to attend and a casual atmosphere in which to work with your current and new friends to get into the rule book. There are two groups meeting each day Monday through Thursday each week of February.

Study materials have been prepared for each week so you will be able to get the same material at any of the groups you select. You don’t have to attend the same group each week. It is flexible to fit your busy schedule. You just can’t attend two sessions in the same week and get credit for 2 sessions of Training Hours.

Each of the groups is being held in a local Round Table Pizza meeting room to allow for a casual setting where you can have food and beverage if desired. All food and beverage is on your own. Hopefully, we will build on our camaraderie and mentoring as all levels of umpires will be attending together to learn and help one another.

We look forward to your feedback as we continually try to make your experience a good
one while we prepare to provide a great product on the field.

Frank and Carl, Co-Group Leaders

**For Your Toolbox**

**Video Training**
*By Pete Dutour*

For the past few years, NCOA Softball has been utilizing video as part of its training program. Last year we began using the Drop Box “cloud” storage for easy access and sharing. Once again this year we will be using cameras at some of our scrimmages to provide you with visual feedback so you can see how you look on the field. You will be emailed a link to your folder.

This year your video clips will be available to the rating committee, but only as a reference...so that when we observe you during the season we can how you have progressed, and what the next steps might be for you.

Remember, the observers and rating committee members are here to help you and to provide constructive comments. We want you to be the best umpire you can be. Video training is being used at all levels of sport, for players and officials alike, because it is an effective tool for those who want to improve.

See you on the field!

**Regional Study Groups** – This year study session groups will be scheduled during February and throughout the greater Sacramento area and will focus on the NCOA study guide and new rules.

**Other Important News**

The CIF Federated Council met and voted upon these issues and what you read below is now very clear. If you have any questions about these issues, please bring them up at your next study session!

**CIF Bylaw 2502**

On January 30, the CIF Federated Council voted to require all base coaches to wear a protective helmet. This rule goes into effect immediately and applies to all levels of high school softball.

This is the wording of 2502: **It is required that adult base coaches wear a protective helmet. Play will not continue until compliance with this rule is met. It is recommended that the helmet meet NOCSAE standards.**

As per NFHS rules, players occupying coaches boxes must wear a NOCSAE approved helmet. (Double ear flaps) Adult coaches are not required to wear a NOCSAE approved helmet, but they must wear a protective helmet. This rule applies to any team playing in the state of California.

**The plate umpire shall not put the ball in play to begin a new half inning until he is sure all base coaches are properly equipped. An adult coach who does not wish to be in compliance should be ejected from the contest.**

**Basic Skills Boot Camp** - This year NCOA will co-sponsor a Basic Skills Boot Camp with GSSA on Sunday, February 15th. If you are a first, second, or third-year official, you can attend this training session to brush up on basic mechanics. All officials are welcome to attend!

**Online Webinars** – This year webinars will replace most of the in-class training sessions offering flexibility and viewing at your own convenience.
Electronic Devices on the Fence

As you remember, there was discussion on the placement of the GoPro on the inside of the fence. **NFHS has ruled that the camera should be placed on the outside of the fence.** There would be too many complications if placed on the inside.

If you have any questions or comments concerning this information or any other softball concern, please contact Neil Hillel at ncoaump16@gmail.com.

**Arbiter** - Remember, being prepared for assignments also includes keeping Arbiter up to date. Arbiter is "WYSIWYG" to the assigner. It tells the assigner, “If it’s not blocked, I’m available for a game”. So, is your calendar up to date in Arbiter? Have you blocked out the days you are not available? Let's try to minimize the number of turn backs this year.

There is much more to Arbiter than just your schedule. Now is the time to log onto the JSS Baseball/Softball site (where you get your assignments), use the “Switch Views” tab to toggle between these web sites, explore the different tabs, update your personal information, etc.

**Certification Exam** - The 100 point certification test will close on February 28th. You must receive at least an 80% to pass and 90% to be considered eligible for playoffs. This year you are only given TWO (2) attempts, or when you have scored at least 90 percent, whichever comes first. Please note the NCOA group has no control over the certification exam and a maximum of TWO (2) attempts is a requirement set by the NFHS.

Member in “Good Standing” and qualifying for playoff games - Criteria for being a member in good standing for basic assignments and for playoff selection is available on the NCOA Softball Hub. Qualifying for post season assignments will be enforced again this year.

**Stump the Ump**

**Fitness Focus** - Fitness is a topic of interest again this year. Remember, first impressions go a long way towards credibility, ability, and character.

**Uniform and Equipment**

The official uniform for NCOA Softball umpires:

- Powder Blue or Navy Shirt (Short or Long Sleeve)
- Heather Gray Slacks
- Plain Navy Jacket (No stripes or piping around shoulders)
- NCOA Navy Blue Hat
- Gray or Navy Ball Bag

For uniform and equipment needs you can contact Bernard Walker at (916) 548-2821 or email him at bmwump@yahoo.com.
Official's Profile
Throughout the year the newsletter will profile officials within the Association so you can get to know them a little better.

Who knows, you may be next!

Name: Ed Hom, Rating Committee, Instructional Staff

Age: 67

Children/Grandchildren: 2

What do you (or did you) do for a living? How long?
Associate Accounting Analyst for 36.5 yrs. Currently, happily retired for the last 8 yrs.

Years of softball officiating experience
26 yrs.

Do you officiate other sports? What are they? Years of experience

Hobbies
Shooting sports. pistol & long range rifle competition.

Tell us a little bit about yourself
Will celebrate our 40th anniversary this June. Love to officiate sports but especially umpiring. I go out because I am having fun, if not, I take time off from the game.

Name: Chuck Brabec, GSSA UIC, Instructional Staff

Nickname: Chuck

Age: 52

Children/Grandchildren
3 children: Rick 23, USMC Sgt; Malcolm 12, 7th grade; Miriam, 5, preschool.

What do you (or did you) do for a living? How long?
Analyst for Franklin Templeton. I have been with FTI 29.3 years.

Years of softball officiating experience
30

Do you officiate other sports? What are they? Years of experience
No.

Hobbies
Spending time with the kids, reading books and being computer/mobile phone free.

Tell us a little bit about yourself
I enjoyed Running with the Bulls in Pamplona Spain, Not just once but twice.

Do you have any short officiating story you’d like to share with us?
I had the opportunity to be part of a 3 umpire crew to work an exhibition game at Candlestick Park between a team of 49ers and a team of TV and movie celebrities before a Giants game. Tie game, bottom of the final inning with 2 outs. Base hit, Merton Hanks rounds 3rd, realizes he cannot score, he gets thrown out at 3rd base by a wide margin, and I call him out on a big sell out. The place goes NUTS and Ken Norton Jr., their newly signed superstar is left in the on deck circle. I am surrounded by 49ers, who are bigger and taller me, and members of the other team. They all let me know it would be best if the game does not end in a tie. I quickly devise a solution that all parties approve, I point at my partner at the plate and tell him to nod yes, and I change my call. Hanks is now safe at 3rd base. I look at him, we make eye contact, and he nods and acknowledges I changed the call because the game is for the crowd. Ken Norton Jr. steps to the plate and gets a hit to win the game.
**Name:** Dennis O'Leary, Instructional staff  
**Age:** 55  
**Children/Grandchildren**  
Two, 22 year old & 26 year old.  
**What do you (or did you) do for a living? How long?**  
Current work - FedEx Driver 2 years & U.S. Army Reserves 24 years with three Deployments.  
**Years of softball officiating experience**  
26 years.  
**Do you officiate other sports? What are they? Years of experience**  
Basketball SMOA & NCOA Four years.  
**Hobbies**  
Running, Baseball Fan & Rock & Roll music.  
**Tell us a little bit about yourself**  
Married 31 years, After 25+ years in outside sales & operations in the aftermarket heating & cooling exchange business and three deployments in the Army supporting missions in Iraq & Afghanistan it was a time for a change. Now working a good job with FedEx & umping more games in the great sport of softball. I still have four more years until my retirement from the Army Reserve.  
**Do you have any short officiating story you’d like to share with us?**  
No stories, just enjoy working with the great people in the softball world.

**Name:** Kevin Okino, Instructional staff  
**Nickname:** KO  
**Age:** 56  
**Children/Grandchildren**  
1 son age 29, I daughter age 22.  
**What do you (or did you) do for a living? How long?**  
I have worked as a Bridge Engineer at Caltrans for 33+ years.  
**Years of softball officiating experience**  
9th season with NCOA, 1 yr. GSSA.  
**Do you officiate other sports? What are they? Years of experience**  
Yes. 9th year as a basketball official with NCOA.  
**Hobbies**  
Traveling, golf, caddie (for my daughter) gambling, officiating  
**Do you have any short officiating story you’d like to share with us?**  
For new officials in our association, I am an example of what is possible. Nine years ago I had no softball officiating experience. With primarily only NCOA training and mentoring, I have been fortunate to receive playoff assignments the last several years. Work hard, ask questions, find a mentor and good things will happen!  
**Tell us a little bit about yourself:**  
My most enjoyable moments is caddying for my daughter, who is a scratch golfer, and competes in USGA tournaments all over the states.
Name: Tim Lucke, Instructional staff
Age: 45

Children/Grandchildren
3 children.....Julianna (13), Rebecca (11), Alyssa (8)

What do you (or did you) do for a living? How long?
I am a painting contractor and have been doing it full time for the past 2 years.

Years of softball officiating experience
About 5 years of experience.

Do you officiate other sports? What are they? Years of experience
I do not officiate other sports.

Hobbies
I currently coach a 14U travel softball team which takes away a lot of umpiring time. I also enjoy playing golf any chance I get.

Tell us a little bit about yourself:
I am a finance graduate from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and spent many years in the banking and real estate industry. I recently have chosen to be a full time painting contractor mainly because I was tired of sitting behind a desk staring at a computer all the time. Being self-employed has allowed me more opportunity to coach my daughter’s teams and not miss out on all of my daughter’s personal activities.
# NCOA Softball Sacramento
## 2015 Meeting Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Various 6:30pm</td>
<td>Study Session Groups</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Webinars</td>
<td>Online</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 15</td>
<td>Sunday 8:30am</td>
<td>Basic Skills Boot Camp</td>
<td>Jackson Sports Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 21</td>
<td>Saturday 8:30am</td>
<td>On-Field Clinics</td>
<td>Antelope HS, Freedom Park, Vanden HS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 28</td>
<td>Saturday 8:30am</td>
<td>On-Field Clinic</td>
<td>Freedom Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 28</td>
<td>Saturday 8:00am</td>
<td>Video Scrimmages</td>
<td>Oak Ridge HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 28</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Classification Exam due date</td>
<td>Online</td>
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**Other important dates and events:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 13-15</td>
<td>Friday-Sunday</td>
<td>ASA National Umpire School</td>
<td>Manteca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1</td>
<td>Sunday 8:30am</td>
<td>GSSA Clinic</td>
<td>West Sacramento</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**List of Locations:**

- **Jesuit HS**
  1300 Gordon Lane
  Carmichael, CA 95608

- **Vanden HS**
  2951 Markeley Lane
  Fairfield, CA 94533

- **Jackson Sports Academy**
  5209-A Luce Avenue
  McClellan Park, CA 95652

- **West Sac Civic Center**
  1110 West Capitol Ave.
  West Sac, CA 95961

- **Antelope HS**
  7801 Titan Drive
  Sacramento, CA 95843

- **Freedom Park**
  5839 Dudley Blvd
  McClellan, CA 95652

[https://dfsoftball.com/Fields/FP maps.html](https://dfsoftball.com/Fields/FP maps.html)
## 2015 Softball Training Options

*18hrs required by CIF/SJS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandatory for All Umpires</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Hrs.</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Study Groups 2 of 4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 ea</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classification Exam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Webinar Sessions</td>
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### Mandatory for New umps and those in 0-71%ile of Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Hrs.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-Field Clinic</td>
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### Mandatory for New umps and those in 1-51%ile of Ratings

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<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video Scrimmage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic Skills Boot Camp</td>
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<td>6 ea</td>
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### Optional Training Hours

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<tbody>
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<td>Organizational Meeting</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vet. Scrimmages (verified) (2 max)</td>
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<td>2 ea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Scrimmage (not assigned)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Field Clinic</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Boot Camp</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Guide (80% +)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra Study Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>GSSA Clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASA National School</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASA National Fast Pitch School</td>
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**NOTE:**
- Mandatory sessions can be made up with approval of the Group Leaders on a case-by-case basis with an agreed upon training plan.
- It is the responsibility of the umpire to submit an email request for an alternate training plan.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Facilitators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Round Table Pizza</td>
<td>2/2, 2/9, 2/16, 2/23</td>
<td>Phil Perkins, Owen Steen, Gary Butler</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2319 Sunset Blvd Rocklin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Round Table Pizza</td>
<td>2/2, 2/9, 2/16, 2/23</td>
<td>Kevin Okino, Kevin Nicholson</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5110 Laguna Blvd #119 Elk</td>
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<td>Grove</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Round Table Pizza</td>
<td>2/3, 2/10, 2/17, 2/24</td>
<td>Jim Halstead, Rich Reynolds</td>
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<td>2234 Sunrise Blvd Rancho</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cordova</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Round Table Pizza</td>
<td>2/3, 2/10, 2/17, 2/24</td>
<td>Don Postle, Frank Moreno</td>
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<td>4680 Natomas Blvd Sacramento</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Round Table Pizza</td>
<td>2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2/25</td>
<td>Burt Corral, Jack Wendell, George Green</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Grove</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Round Table Pizza</td>
<td>2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2/25</td>
<td>Rick Post, Dennis O'Leary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4949-C Marconi Avenue</td>
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<td>Sacramento</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Round Table Pizza</td>
<td>2/5, 2/12, 2/19, 2/26</td>
<td>Al Weihe, Dusty Marx, Tracey Canady</td>
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<td></td>
<td>888 Alamo Drive Vacaville</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Round Table Pizza</td>
<td>2/5, 2/12, 2/19, 2/26</td>
<td>Rudy Aguillo, Dominic Mercier</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2319 Sunset Blvd Rocklin</td>
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All meeting times are 6:30 to 8:30pm