How to Become a Baseball Umpire

YOUTH LEAGUES TO THE MAJORS

Umpire School HQ
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We at Umpire School Headquarters want to wish you the best of luck before your begin umpiring!

We’re confident that if you follow the tips in this guide you will give yourself the best chance of becoming an umpire.

If you go through the process and don’t get get a job on the umpire path you want, don’t worry! There are plenty of baseball leagues that are always looking for umpires - you just have to get out there and try!

You can always use the our website to find umpire associations who can connect you with leagues looking to hire umpires near you. Click the link below to see find umpire schools in your area:

http://www.umpireschoolhq.com/how-to-become-an-umpire/

Best of luck!

The USHQ Team

http://www.umpireschoolhq.com
How to Become a Little League Umpire

Becoming a Little League baseball umpire is an excellent way for people who are passionate about the sport of baseball to give back to their local community and to stay involved in the game they love. Little League baseball is almost as much of an American pastime as the sport itself and helping kids learn the game can be extremely fulfilling.

What you’ll need:

- Umpire equipment
  - Often provided by the league, so check with your local Little League before you buy anything

- Umpire uniform (shirt, shoes, hat)

- Little League rule book

- Volunteer information and/or form

Start off by attending a local class or training program for umpires. Often local recreation departments provide this or can at least point you in the right direction. Getting a basic education on the rules, signals, and positioning makes
all the difference. The Little League organization often hosts a national Little League umpire school that you can attend if you’re able to travel or live nearby.

Get in contact with local Little League regional office. Again, your local recreation department can help with this by giving you the names and contact information of the people you need to reach out to. Another great way to get plugged into your local Little League program is to attend local games and talk directly with current umpires.

You’ll have to complete a volunteer form which you usually can find online. If your local Little League has a website you may find it there along with additional information but your local recreation department should also have it. Prior experience will help impress the powers that be so be sure to include all prior umpiring or baseball and softball playing experience. They like people who are passionate about the sport so show them you are.

When you apply they will ask to complete a background check, like any job. Keep in mind that you are working with children so this topic is especially sensitive. Typically they look for child abuse reports and any domestic violence reports.

Like any other similar or hourly job you may need to lobby for work time at first so making friends with league official and the head of the umpiring schedule will help. Also, knowing other umpires can help. They may be offered a day or time that they can no longer fill and may contact you to help them out. Make sure you have all your equipment ready to go for your first game. Some leagues have enough funding to provide you with the equipment while others will ask you to buy them yourself. Most large sporting goods stores will have what you need if you do need or want to buy your own.

Next, get out there and enjoy the sport of baseball, stay current on Little League’s rule changes and have fun!
How to Become a Babe Ruth Umpire

Babe Ruth Leagues are baseball and softball leagues for kids ages 13-18. There are over 9,000 leagues and 56,000 team in 6 countries and in all 50 US states. Babe Ruth leagues are great baseball leagues to umpire because, for this age group, the games are a little more intense than other youth leagues and the rules start to resemble that of high school and college – leading off is allowed and the bases are further apart.

If you’re not an experienced umpire, and even if you are, we suggest you visit your local youth league ball fields to go see what Babe Ruth baseball looks like. If you’re not familiar, it’s a more advanced youth league with older players. If you accustomed to local youth recreational leagues, you need to be sure you’re ready for the Babe Ruth level of play. In addition, you can introduce yourself to the umpires at the field and get to know them.

Join the National Umpires Association (or NUA), it is one of the largest umpire associations nationwide and was inaugurated by Babe Ruth League, Inc. The association exists to assist local league officials who are affiliated with the program by providing education and training. They teach league rules as well as umpire mechanics with the stated goal of improving the quality of umpiring in their league games.
After applying, you will be sent a baseball rule book and exam (they also offer a softball version) that must be completed prior to umpiring. In order to pass you need to score 80% or better. There is a small fee associated with the exam.

Once you’re a National Umpires Association member, they can help you by suggesting umpire clinics that you may wish to attend. Getting hands on training is highly recommended.

Here are some more benefits of joining the National Umpires Association member:

- Get help with rule interpretations on professional and/or Babe Ruth rules by emailing, phone, or submitting a support ticket.
- Become eligible to be selected as a member of the World Series umpiring staff. Nine World Series are held annually.
- Umpire’s manual built with the help of American League former Supervisor of Umpires, Marty Springstead. It shows positioning for both regulation and “Cal Ripken Baseball” fields, rule compendium, tips on working plate and bases.
- ID Card
- Membership Certificate
- Babe Ruth Baseball National Umpires Association patch.
- Online BULLPEN magazine access.
- Batter Up e-newsletter
- Regional, State or District Umpire Clinics.
How to Become a High School Umpire

Becoming a high school umpire is a very common goal for aspiring umpires because the games are fast paced and fun because the players in high school baseball are pretty talented athletes. Another big plus is that there is always a need for quality umpires in high school ball because there are a lot of high school baseball programs and teams across the US. Your chances of becoming a successful high school umpire are pretty high.

To get started, you should join your local umpire association. The majority of high school districts will have a specific umpire association you’ll need to join and attend meetings for. You’ll also need to learn the rules established by their governing board. Next, you’ll want to sign up for umpire clinics and training events to help you learn umpire mechanics and best practices. While your local association will host their own training events, and attending their events is recommended, don’t limit yourself to only their events. The more you educate yourself the better you’ll be.

Once you’re a member of your local umpire association, you’ll need to follow any additional steps they have in place to prepare you to umpire live high school
games. Because these requirements vary from district to district and state to state, we recommend that you find a seasoned high school umpire who is a member at your association and ask them to be your mentor. Having a mentor who has done this before is the best way to reach your goal. Networking will also help you land umpiring gigs once you are prepared to umpire.

Many leagues will require you to take an umpire test to become certified and pay a registration fee before you get your first umpire job. Your association can provide you with the information you need to study and pass any exam and registration fees are typically in the $50 range.

Lastly, you need to buy the necessary umpire gear.
How to Become an American Legion Umpire

More than half of current Major League Baseball players at one point participated in American Legion Baseball. It is one of the more traditional and history-rich amateur baseball leagues in America.

The American Legion baseball program is always growing, and participation is easy. The program is always looking for hardworking umpires, coaches, and volunteers. About 5,000 teams compete every season, so there is a lot of opportunity to became an umpire and help in almost every state.

In most cases, local umpire associations provide American Legion departments with umpires for games and tournaments. Umpires can also be nominated by department chairmen and other umpires to officiate the national tournament.

Just like every amateur baseball league, if you want to become an umpire for that league, it is recommended that you attend a local umpire clinic. American Legion posts will often host their own umpire camps and clinics, so contact your local American Legion post for information.

Another component to becoming an American Legion umpire is a certification exam. The test covers the rules of American Legion baseball and is administered by the Legion umpiring committee.
Most American Legion leagues have some type of evaluation process that continues after umpires begin umpiring games to maintain high umpiring standards. It usually covers things like timing of calls, how the umpire handles coaches and players, and their strike zone accuracy.

The cost of becoming an American Legion umpire is very low but it varies by post so contact your local post for more information. The best place to get starting as an American Legion umpire is to visit their great site and read their published umpire manual.

http://www.legion.org/baseball/participate
How to Become a College Baseball Umpire

Umpiring college level baseball can be a very achievable goal for many umpires looking to advance their careers. The pay is decent and the advanced, fast paced game play is exciting and rewarding. It also gives you the opportunity to see up-and-coming players who may one day make an impact at the major league level.

College baseball umpires must perform at a very high level. Requirements do differ depending on the conference but there is a general high standard everyone must meet. For some conferences there is a test you have to pass so you’ll need some experience, usually several years of High School baseball, and a keen understanding of league rules. The Collegiate Baseball Umpires Association requires members to have at least five years of high school experience and to be an active member of an accredited board of high school umpires. However, some local collegiate associations will accept minor league experience or even just graduation from a professional umpire school. Just like any goal, becoming a college umpire requires a lot of dedication and perseverance.

Starting in youth baseball is an obvious path that many current college umpires have taken. The bar to entry is much lower and the best part is you get on
the job training. Once you’ve had a few years experience umpiring games the next step is taking on high school baseball games. While learning the rules and experiencing real life game play is valuable there are other experiences to consider that working high school baseball games can help you with. For example, coaches and fans at the high school level get much more intense. Handling an angry coach is an art that can only be mastered with practice.

Next, you’ll need to start preparing for the written **NCAA rules** exam and on-field mechanics test. Spend an hour a night reading the rulebook and quizzing yourself. Use all your high school and college studying tricks – flash cards, reciting the rules out loud, and it can’t hurt to have a friend help you.

Getting your foot in the door in a college conference, like any industry, is about who you know. So, attend umpire clinics with established college umpires or maybe approach a few after a game. Establish friendly relationships and eventually ask for recommendations and tips.

Lastly, reach out to collegiate umpire associations and let them know you’re out there and interested in becoming a college umpire.
Have you ever caught yourself dreaming about becoming a Major League umpire? MLB umpires are the most elite bunch of umpires on the planet and it’s no wonder because making it to the major league level is quite a feat. MLB umpires have to work their way through the minor leagues, just like players, perform well, then wait for that once in a lifetime opportunity. It typically takes an umpire 10 years to get to the Majors, which is about double what it takes a player.

Alright, so it’s hard to become a MLB umpire. How do I get started?

Start off with some training. There are 3 MLB/PBUC sanctioned, professional umpire training schools; Jim Evans Academy of Professional Umpires, Harry Wendelstedt School for Umpires, and The Umpire School. Each of these schools’ instructors are former MLB umpires or other high ranking baseball officials. Be warned that the schools only enroll approximately 500-600 umpires each year, so getting in can be a challenge. But, a little silver lining is that most students who attend have never worked a game before the go to umpire school. It’s never too late to start your umpire career.
Next, stand out. Knowledge of the game of baseball is only one factor trainers look for. Almost as important is a strong presence on the field, confidence, and positioning. Umpires need to maintain the integrity of the game so soft skills are crucial to the success of an umpire. At the end of the 5 week course the top graduates are selected to attend an evaluation course. Under 20% of attendees are selected for the evaluation course.

Start your career. An evaluation course consists of instructors grading students who then make suggestions Rookie Ball and Class-A Short Season hiring managers. It’s a long road through the minors but when you reach Triple-A MLB starts to take notice and evaluates who will be a potential MLB umpire.

The waiting game. There are 225 Minor League umps and only 68 in the Majors and the turnover rate is very low. So, if you’re fortunate enough to make it to the minors, get comfortable because you may be there for a long time.
One of the first questions people ask when they start thinking about becoming an umpire is, how much do umps make? In general amateur league pay is relatively consistent while professional, major league umpires can make substantially more, which is to be expected and probably not a surprise.

Major League umpires, according to MLB.com, earn around $120,000 a year in salary when just starting out! More senior umpires can make more that double that, up to $300,000 a year. MLB umps also get major league treatment. Their benefits include $340 a day for food and hotel, 4 weeks of vacation during the season, and they always fly first class. And the perks don’t stop there, once the post season hits the top rated umpires have the opportunity to ump the post season where they can earn an additional $20,000. While it may be extremely hard to break into the majors as an umpire, once you’re in you’re typically in for your career.

Youth baseball umpires are usually paid on per game basis and the pay rate, for the most part, is constant from league to league. A typical games pay is
about $25-30 for the home plate umpire and $15-20 for the base umpire. Pay can increase for specialty tournaments and many leagues will increase per game pay with each year of service. Accredited umpires who have attend the proper school(s) are typically paid more per game, as well. Little League is the exception as their rules state that umpires should be volunteer workers and are not to be paid – however, in practice this rule is often overlooked. To get more detailed information on pay you should contact your local leagues and tournament directors. Youth baseball umpire also often get small perks. Most leagues, for example, will allow umpires to eat and drink for free from their concessions stand. Free T-Shirts and other memorabilia is also a common give away.

Umpiring youth baseball leagues can be a source of additional income, however, most people view it as an exciting hobby first and foremost. There is a lot of value in getting off your couch and getting involved in the community.

Here’s a quick break down of general pay expectations, but please keep in mind that different regions will pay different amounts:

- **Youth Leagues** (7-12 year olds) – $15-30 per game
- **Babe Ruth** (13-18 year olds) – $30-50 per game
- **High School** – $40-70 per game
- **NCAA – College** – $150 per game
- **Minor League** – about $30,000 – $40,000 a year
- **Major League** – about $120,000 – $300,000 a year