

Southeastern Association Training and Performance Improvement Plan

On field clinics – preseason, one team JV and Var to run situational baseball and softball with two officials in game situations. Used as a live training aid. Held on a Saturday in early February. Permission from the NCHSAA required. The clinics will run from 10 am – 3 pm and I provide lunches for the officials and participating teams. Funds for lunch come from the Association’s use of scrimmage fees.

Indoor Plate and Base Mechanic Clinics – held preseason to look at and train in proper Plate and Base mechanics. The facility we use has multiple baseball pitching machines and one softball pitching machine. I use the best officials I have as instructors for the umpires. The clinics are held in late January/early February prior to scrimmages starting and after the state clinic. Clinics held on consecutive Sundays from 1-4 pm. Officials get to choose which Sunday to attend. Cost of facility is \$200.00 per clinic and paid for out of scrimmage fees.

Mentor – Mentee Program – I assign one new official (Mentee) to one veteran official (Mentor). The mentor guides the mentee through getting started in the association – how to navigate the Arbiter, answers questions regarding uniforms, locations, mechanics, situations. I make sure the mentor is assigned to some of the same scrimmages as the mentee, and also try to have them work at least one early season game together. I’m trying to make a bond there that gives the mentee someone they can go to for guidance and to make the new official feel comfortable in a strange environment. I use only the best and most trusted officials in the association as mentors. Feedback has been positive from both the mentees and mentors.

Formal Observations - I have two officials with 20 plus years of experience who have chosen to work a lighter schedule but want to stay involved. I use them to do formal observations. Usually the observations are of younger officials who show promise and the desire to become better umpires. The observation form is sent to the official being observed with a copy sent to me. Through our association's use of scrimmage fee money, I am able to pay the formal observer's one-half the standard game fee.

Informal Observations – I will assign a trusted veteran official to work a lower level game with a newer official to give the official immediate feedback in areas where improvement is needed, sometimes even between innings. The veteran official has a de-brief postgame with the newer official and sends me an informal observation via email that night or the next day.

The Southeastern Association has a budget of \$5.00 per official for Baseball and Softball that can be used for training and observations. That gives me over \$1100.00 that can be spent annually in these critical areas. Some of the things I use the fund for is training aids (DVDs, CDs, Game Cards), for live training and observations. Approval from the board is not required, however a receipt or invoice must be presented to the Treasurer for payment. None of these programs have a direct cost to the official. From the \$10.00 membership fee they pay annually, \$5.00 comes directly back to them in sport specific training.