

NBUA BOD:

On May 18, 2009 a letter was sent out to each First Year Umpire (Mentee) and to their Mentor as well in an effort to determine how the Mentor Program for 2009 is working. A copy of each of those letters is attached. Several questions were asked regarding communications between the Mentor and the Mentee as well as the following question asking for suggestions as to how we can improve the Mentor Program:

“Do you have any suggestions for us about the Mentor / Mentee program that would make it more effective?”

We received responses from 20 Mentors and 15 Mentees and what follows are the responses Here is a summary of the most meaningful and applicable responses received:

Mentor Responses:

- This is the best it's [The Mentor program] ever gone for me, mainly because I've had the chance to actually work a bunch of games with my umpire buddy...makes all the difference in the world...can't be an effective mentor via e-mail, need to work together throughout the season.
- Unfortunately, my mentee has not been assigned with me as frequently as I would have liked and has initiated NO contact with me. We have worked only two games total. I am not going to be a pain in the neck towards him if he has no desire to use me as a sounding board.
- I know I have said this before, but I will say it again, we need to have Leslie assign mentors and mentees together frequently (at least once a week) for the first month of the season and at least once a month after that so we can maintain contact. I know that schedules and availability get in the way but if we are going to be serious about our mentoring program we, NBUA, need to ensure that mentors and mentees work together on field to help them grow in this vocation. The last two times I was able to see a mentee frequently enough to be able to teach them they both ended up Rookie of the Year. I am not just patting myself on the back but that has to be a testament all by itself to the success a person can achieve with the proper effort.
- I have to note here that the mentor program this year far exceeds what was in place when I joined, or it might just be the mentors themselves going above and beyond what was done in the past. I have made every

effort to be better than my mentor was for me and I hope that the spirit in this program continues on.

- THIS EMAIL IS A GREAT IDEA!
- Have Leslie assign 1-2 games a month with each other
- I have worked with a dozen different rookies this season. They have all demonstrated incredible skills and most were new to this sport or at least to umpiring (with no prior experience in umpiring). The whole crops of rookies are well trained, athletic, well mannered, and well spoken. Their above average ability speaks well to the training program and everyone associated with it should be proud of what these guys are doing.
- This is the best it's ever gone for me, mainly because I've had the chance to actually work a bunch of games with my umpire buddy...makes all the difference in the world...can't be an effective mentor via e-mail, need to work together throughout the season.
- No - The program is pretty simple and dependent of the effectiveness of the individuals involved. The fact that it's opt-in prescreens our mentors to only those who will take the responsibility seriously (in general ...). If anything, this e-mail could come sooner in the season, especially for guys like me who's mentee hasn't been able to open up any availability yet.
- No, thanks for doing it [The Mentor Program]. Its just too tough to match up A's and Rookies for games early in the season. Maybe match up rookies with guys who will be doing their games with them and try not to match up rookies w varsity/college officials.
- Good job guys! I think the program works well.
- Find a better name other than "mentee"
- My Mentee was very eager to talk with me while we were working the games together but he doesn't respond to anything else. I have sent him several e-mails and left him several phone messages and he simply doesn't respond. I don't think there's a problem between the two of us, he just never responds to messages. I have talked with other umpires that have worked with him since I last saw him and he appears to be coming along well. I will continue trying to keep in touch.

- I think the mentor program works very well. It did for me. It's just that some people use it differently than others. Perhaps the only change I would make is instead of a single mentor for each new trainee, an e-mail group could be formed so that mentee could ask questions of their own peers instead of just their mentor.
- Not really. I got lots to do and one Mentee is plenty, so maybe limit willing mentors to one mentee...

Mentee Responses:

- My Mentor is a great guy and very responsive; again, this mentor program is much appreciated. I would be fumbling and stumbling my way thru if it were not for the experienced help and mentoring. Thanks for setting it up. I can tell you I am not over confident, but I am comfortable going out and working games with guys I have never met or worked with before and feel like I somewhat know what I am doing and more importantly, what is expected of me. I like the system - it works - keep up the good work. We newbies need this.
- In the post game review I often hear that I need about 100 - 120 games under my belt in order to really be good. I agree that that is perhaps the case, but I know I am not going to work that many games in my rookie year. Could we keep our mentor until we have reached a number considered to place us in the "experienced" ranks of the NBUA? I know that next year mentors will need to take on the 1Y guys coming in - it would be nice if something official were set up where guys could continue to work together.
- Can we see more of the helpful hints emails more often? That was good stuff. Also umpiring instructional tips would be great. Not whole situations requiring an at length discussion; but rather, one line tips learned from on the job. Like keeping track of substitutions and keeping that %#@& hat on when you pull off your mask... I guess it's a bucket for me.
- I have been able to work several games with my mentor; that has been a very big help to me. The downside this year has been the fact that some of the other umpires who I have worked with have given me contradictory input. I have worked two games with one umpire who went out of his way to give negative input and graded me way below what I know that I deserved; while if I were to evaluate him, it would have been as a "C" or below umpire (he is a "B" umpire). The contradictory information and negative criticism are very demoralizing

and could account for some umpires not wanting to continue in the program. My mentor has done a very good job of countering these issues and I have been able to make the proper adjustments to my mechanics.

- My mentor and I talk at least 4 to 5 times a week on the phone. We have worked 4 games together he always has time for all of my questions with great answers and NBUA solutions for problems that occur during a game.
- I have had the great opportunity to work four games with my mentor. We've been in contact before and since. His perspective and example have been very helpful.
- Seems to be working very well.
- So far I've communicated minimally via e-mail with my mentee. I've worked 4 games with him, and have another next week. I've had a few good conversations with him before/after our games, and made myself available via phone/e-mail although I haven't been asked any questions.
- I know it's tough for Leslie, but maybe making it more of a priority to get a few games in together, or try to get tentative schedules early from the 1st years too match up better for the veterans.
- It would be very helpful if, in the future, Leslie could schedule a mentee's first few games with his/her mentor. This way any mechanics issues could be addressed in a constructive manner right away.
- Actually I think the mentor program is a great idea and seems to be working well. I'm very happy with the program and with my mentor. Thanks!
- I have not communicated with my mentor since two days after training ended. I admit this is probably my fault for not initiating the contact. I have not been scheduled with my Mentor even once. I find that if any questions come up, it is during the course of a game, and since I have worked with lots of A and B umps, I ask all my questions during the de-brief after the game. This is easier for me than trying to remember what happened during the long drive home after the game, then emailing my Mentor and trying to explain what happened, to the point he would get the picture and explain.

- If possible try to schedule games with mentors and mentees early on (maybe even the first mentee game) as I think would give the mentee a little bit more of a comfortable feeling especially with the "nerves" of the first game.
- My has been very receptive and helpful and I don't have any input on redoing or improving the member program. I believe it is working well.

Please note that the names associated with these responses have been removed to ensure unbiased and objective interpretations of the responses – free of personalities and political influences.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian Gooch, Mentor Program Chair
Charlie Atterbury, Mentor Program Co-Chair

Attachments:

Mentee / First Year Umpire Update Letter
Mentor Update Letter