

Livonia Junior Athletic League 2023 Umpire Handbook

Introduction Letter from the LJAL:

Over the past 30 years the Livonia Junior Athletic League (LJAL) has supported the baseball program with its own Baseball Umpire Corp. The goal is for this Umpire Corp to be one of the most well-respected and professional organization in the region. Coaches, Players and Parents from around the area know that Livonia has one of the best Umpire programs around.

It takes a person of solid character, integrity, and guts to put on a blue shirt and call balls and strikes! Being an umpire will help you grow personally and professionally at the same time provide opportunities for the youth of Livonia.

You will develop/strengthen skills like:

- Character
- Self-Confidence
- Conflict Resolution
- Critical Thinking
- Communication Skills
- Concentration and Presence

These skills will help you become a better person, a better umpire and are critical skills employers look for.

Before you step on the field, as a rookie or a seasoned veteran, remember you represent the LJAL, the Umpire profession and yourself. The LJAL expects its Umpire to be knowledgeable, act professional and perform at a high level.

To support you the league is making a significant investment in our umpires.

- Establishing a mandatory Umpire Training program
- Provide equipment/uniform needed for you to take the field on day one.
- Attractive pay scale making it one of the best in the area.

Because of the efforts of our umpires and leaders in the past that this program exists. If you are prepared to accept the challenge and put in the effort required, we would like to welcome you to this truly unique fraternity.

Tim Clinesmith
UIC, LJAL Umpire Corps

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce you to the policies and practices of the Livonia Junior Athletic League Umpires Corps for the 2023 baseball season. These are not suggestions, but expectations. As a condition of employment, you must attend a mandatory training session and follow the enclosed policies, as they have been implemented for your benefit as well as for the benefit of our league.

This handbook will cover...

- A. Uniform / Equipment Policy
- B. Drug & Alcohol Policy
- C. Canceled Game – No Show Team or Weather
- D. No Show Policy
- E. League Rules
- F. Insurance and Liability
- G. Conflict of Interest
- H. Social Media Guidelines
- I. Pay Scale and Pay Checks
- J. Umpire & Field Reviews / Incident Report
- K. All-Star Day and Championship Bids
- L. Outside League Association Employment
- M. Gifts and Graft Policy
- N. Field Locations
- O. *Starting the Game – Pregame Meeting*
- P. *Game Management*
- Q. *Umpire Cheat Sheets and League Rules*
- 2023 - Umpire Application
- 2023 – Umpire Ejection / Incident Report
- 2023 – Umpire Evaluation Form

Nothing in this manual is intended or shall be construed to imply a contract between the LJAL and you as an Umpire. The relationship between the LJAL and you as an umpire is an at will relationship (independent contractor).

The LJAL is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate in employment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or any other characteristics protected by federal, state or local law.

This handbook is a living document and is constantly being updated as time and necessity require.

The most current version of this handbook will be maintained by the Umpire in Chief and posted at www.ljal.com.

A. Uniform / Equipment Policy

Uniforms

In 2023 the LJAL in a commitment to give our umpires a more professional look will provide ball bags and uniform shirts. The proper uniform must be worn by all umpires who are doing games for the LJAL. This includes everything from 8U through 18U, fast pitch softball and those umpires involved in the All-Star / Championship games.

The shirt and ball bag will be the property of the umpire

The LJAL expects their umpires to have:

- Grey Pants – clean
- Black Belt – no dress belts
- Blue/Red/Black Undershirt – NO WHITE
- Black Socks – NO WHITE
- Baseball cleats / Umpire shoes – cleaned, free of mud and dirt
- Proper personal protection
- Black or Blue cap – no logos.



In our effort to be establish a professional appearance for our Umpires the league mandates that uniform shirts are clean and tucked in, pants be clean, wrinkle free and hemmed. Shoes are free of mud and dirt.

Additional umpire uniform apparel (belts, caps, jackets, ect...) can be purchased from Umpire-Attire - Baseball and Softball Umpire Equipment | Ump-Attire.com

Given the level of baseball in our travel programs, the number of games available to umpires in our house league and the umpire pay scale associated with it, the league expects our umpires to make required the investment*.

Umpires are encouraged to have more then one shirt for double headers and tournament days.

Equipment

The LJAL will provide all the necessary equipment an umpire will need to get started. Umpires are responsible to maintain, care for and return all equipment provided by the league. Clean all gear and prepare for the upcoming season. Your equipment should always be kept clean and presentable.

You will be provided the following equipment for use during the season at no cost (estimated cost for replacement):

- Chest Protector (\$35)
- Face Mask (\$40)
- Brush/Indicator (\$10)
- Leg Protectors (\$30)

It will be expected that the equipment be turned back in at the end of the season. Any damaged, missing equipment may be deducted from your last paycheck. Values are in brackets.



B. Drug & Alcohol Policy

Umpires are expected to have clear judgement and vision.

Umpires are not permitted to smoke or chew tobacco while in the sight of the field or while in sight of parents, players, coaches, or directors. If you want to smoke or chew, do it in your car before or after the game! Umpires are also not allowed to consume alcohol before, during or after the game. Umpire found to be in violation of this rule will have their employment terminated.

ALL LIVONIA FIELDS ARE DRUG AND ALCOHOL FREE

C. Canceled Game – No Show Team or Weather

This is one of the most subjective decisions you may have to make. To help you in making this decision the LJAL has established the following process:

No Show Team(s)

- 1- The Umpire in Chief will inform the umpires assigned to a game of any cancelations, postponement or reschedules as they are received.
- 2- If you arrive at the field and there are no teams (or one missing team) and you have not been notified by anyone, please contact first your partner (if two-man game), then the Umpire in Chief (UiC) before leaving the field. You will be given instructions.
- 3- If NO team(s) at game time wait 15 minutes after the start, then call the game.
- 4- If ONE team at the game, wait 15 minutes after the start, then call the game.
 - a. The team present has full use of the field and does not need to leave (absent issues with weather)
- 5- Report the situation to the UiC.

Weather

- 1- The Umpire in Chief will inform the umpires during the day for any weather-related cancelations.
- 2- If you arrive at the field and have not been notified by anyone the decision to play or not is **yours**. Please confer with your partner (or make an informed decision if working by yourself) about being able to start the game.
 - a. If field is playable, please check local forecast for ability to start game.
 - i. Make an informed, educated decision based on reason and judgement.
 - b. If you can play, **play**.
 - i. Feel empowered to start the game early if need be.

- ii. Inform the coaches of the need to do this.
 - c. If the field is NOT playable, please assess the ability to make it playable.
 - d. If the field can be made ready in a reasonable amount of time (less than 20 minutes), play.
 - i. If not call the game.
- 3- Any game that is delayed because of weather.
- a. If the game is in progress – stop play and clear the field.
 - i. If you feel it is necessary, please send all players back to their cars.
 - ii. You are responsible to know where the coaches are.
 - b. Check forecast and find out if you must postpone or just delay the game.
 - c. Once weather has past assess if the if the field is playable.
 - d. If the game can be played, play. If not call the game.
 - i. This decision is yours.
- 4- **Lightning** – In any case where lightning is spotted after the start of a game, *there will be a 15-minute weather delay. Each successive strike of lightning starts the 15 minutes all over again. If in the opinion of the umpire after the delay the field is unplayable or there remains a threat of dangerous weather, the game shall be called.*

Weather can change very frequently, because it is raining at 4:00 does not mean that it will still be raining and the field is unplayable at 6:15! Also, some parts of Livonia may have rain while other parts are clear. That having been said it is your responsibility to show up to the field and work the game. It is the goal of the LJAL to play all games in any case where it is safe. This is an important responsibility we place with our umpires.

The umpire on the field where the lightning was spotted should also inform the other fields and umpires adjacent to them, and those games be delayed also. For example, you are at Rotary 4, and you see lightning. Call your game and make sure you inform the umpires on fields 1,2 & 3.

If you have any doubt about a game being played, AND you have not already been called GO TO THE FIELD!

D. No Show Policy

For LJAL has a goal of **100%** attendance by our umpires.

The league uses Arbiter Sports for our scheduling - [Sports Event Management Tool | School Event Management Tool | ArbiterSports](#)

Umpires are responsible to make sure their scheduled are up to date and reflects current availability.

If you are scheduled to do a game and you do not show and you do not arrange for another umpire to take your place you could find your scheduled reduced.

You must notify the UiC if you have planned for a substitute umpire so schedules can be adjusted. *One missed game where the umpire is AWOL and the UiC is not notified will result in possible loss of*

employment. Emergency situations are excluded. It is your responsibility to inform the UiC of the emergency.

In any case where you feel you may not make a game - your first call should be to the UiC. Let the UiC know you are (or may be) unable to make your assigned game. We are requiring that you give as much notice as possible, don't call 20 minutes before game time. We will work to schedule as much as possible in advance. For this we feel there is no reason for anyone to miss games because of planned events, vacations, or personal schedules.

This policy is intended to hold umpires accountable and to create an environment of trust and professionalism.

E. League Rules

The LJAL supports baseball programs for multiple age groups and multiple competition levels. The umpire is responsible to know the rules for the age of baseball and level of baseball they are officiating. League rules will all be posted before the seasons starts in the baseball section of LJAL.com.

F. Insurance and Liability

Umpires who are affiliated with the Livonia Junior Athletic League are covered under our general insurance policy for games played in Livonia, with Livonia teams.

All players and coaches sign an athletic waiver to participate absolving the league and its officials from responsibility in case of injury. Umpires sign the same athletic waiver.

Umpires are open to personal legal action is in a case of "*gross neglect*" on the umpire's part. Many associations and leagues offer additional insurance for an umpire that covers personal injury and liability. It is the individual umpire's responsibility to determine if they want to carry their own insurance for personal injury and liability.

G. Conflict of Interest

As a rule, umpire cannot officiate any game that includes a direct relative. An umpire should disclose to their partner or a league official any relationships to players and/or coaches before the game. The league will then decide and provide direction as to what the umpire should do. This is more critical for travel and competitive summer ball and less critical for house and rec level ball. The goal of this is to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

H. Social Media Guidelines

Social media is part of our lives. All umpires associated with the LJAL must understand the importance of participating in various platforms and do so in a respectful and ethical manner. Postings that disrespect league officials, coaches, parents and/or players will not be tolerated. Remember you are always an ambassador for our league and any postings or communications in your capacity of an official should be done so knowing everything you do is done in public and no electronic communication can

ever be assumed to be private. Also, nothing you post can be done so as a communication on behalf of our league. Only approved directors can speak on behalf of the LJAL.

I. Pay Scale and Pay Checks

This year the league has made a significant adjustment in the pay scale. We have also evaluated our assignment rules for 1 vs 2 umpire and the multiplier for doing games alone.

The proposed 2023 Umpire pay scale is below and will apply to both baseball and fast pitch developmental softball.

Rec/House Level		
8-9-10U (house)	\$40	1 Umpire
11-12U (house)	\$45	2 Umpires (if 1 pay is 1.5X)
13-14U (house)	\$50	2 Umpires (if 1 pay is 2X)
15-16-17-18U (house)	\$55	2 Umpires (if 1 pay is 2X)
Travel		
9-10-11-12U (kvbsa)	\$55	2 Umpire (if 1 pay is 1.5X)
13-14U (kvbsa)	\$60	2 Umpire (if 1 pay is 2X)
Summer HS/COL		
Summer HS Ball	\$60	2 Umpire (if 1 pay is 2X)

Any adjustments, tournament rates or exceptions to this rate are at the discretion of the UiC.

Given the change in multiplier for umpires doing a game alone the expectations have also changed. Umpires working alone must hustle, move around the field and position themselves best as possible to make the call. You can not call the game from behind home plate.

In the case of KVBSA and Colt/Palomin0 games one umpire must be agreed to by the coaches before the game.

Missed payments or pay discrepancies should be brought to the attention of the UiC by the umpire immediately. Only the UiC can authorize additional payments to umpires. Coaches and other directors are not able to promise or authorize additional payments.

The LJAL does not withhold any taxes or make any deductions from the umpires' paychecks. Your status as an independent contractor makes you responsible for all federal, state, and local tax requirements. A completed W-9 form must be turned in prior to working any games.

J. Umpire/Field Reviews & Incident Report

All umpires are subject to umpire reviews throughout the season. Coaches, Directors, UiC, Supervisors and other Umpires will be submitting reviews randomly and anonymously throughout the season. The Umpire/Field Review Sheet will be made available to everyone. You are encouraged to complete this form and submit to the UiC. These are used to provide constructive feedback. Coaches will be

encouraged to fill out as many reviews as possible. This form is self-explanatory and can be done in a couple of minutes.

Incident report will also be made available to everyone. The purpose of this form is to have a record of ejections and game issues. This form should be filled out in ALL cases of ejections (coaches, players, parents) and submitted with-in 48 hours. This form is also available for incidents where an umpire deems it necessary for a director to be aware of a situation. This can also be used by an umpire to get questions answered around rules or uncertain game events. The completed form should be forwarded to the UiC. The form is self-explanatory and can be done in a couple of minutes.

Both forms should be submitted to (tbd)

K. All-Star Day & Championship Game Bids

Opportunities to umpire in league hosted tournament, All-Star days and championship games are assigned by the UiC. Typically, these assignments are given to those that earned the right during the season. Part of this determination is based on reviews received, attendance and availability through the year. The UiC may also select umpires for years of service to the league.

L. Outside League Employment

There is a critical shortage of umpires. A good umpire is very much in demand. As you progress you will naturally become more in demand and will have more opportunities. Therefore, umpires may do games for more than one league and/or association provided it does not cause an issue with LJAL games. In these cases, the LJAL reserves priority for umpires we provide equipment, training, and uniforms to. We reserve the right to charge the umpire for training costs, uniform costs, and/or rental fees for the equipment we provide if there is no availability for the umpire.

M. Gifts and Graft Policy

The LJAL has a strict policy regarding gifts and graft for umpires. Umpires are paid for their service; you are not allowed to accept additional tips or items of value from parents or coaches. This includes, but is not limited to, money, game balls, post-game snacks and beverages offered by teams. This may seem harmless, but the next game you have the same coach they are going to be expecting the close call to go their way because he gave you a coke after the last game. We pride ourselves on our work ethic and hustle. We cannot allow the integrity or judgment of our umpires to be trivialized by a 50-cent can of pop. Umpires are expected to always maintain a professional manner.

It is also the policy of the LJAL to avoid fraternization with parents, players, and coaches. Avoid hanging out in dugouts. Favoring one side of the field over the other, always talking to one coach but not the other. This presents an impression of favoritism and could create an issue later in a game. Bring your own water/snacks and always stay professional.

N. Field Locations

You may be required to work a couple of different fields. We will do our best to minimize travel. Below is a list of fields used by the LJAL and where they are located.

It is recommended you familiarize yourself with these field locations. The letters in () is the abbreviation that we use on the schedules to identify the field. All the parks have multiple fields. All field are marked with numbers.

- Ford Field (**F**)– Located on Farmington Road between Five Mile and Schoolcraft off Lyndon
- Rotary Park (**R**)– Located on Six Mile Road between Farmington and Merriman off Hubbard
- Sheldon Park (**S**) – Located on Farmington Road south of Plymouth. Southeast side behind shopping center
- Bicentennial Field (**BIC**) – Corner of Seven Mile and Wayne Road between Farmington and Newburgh

O. Starting the Game – Pregame Meeting

Things to go through before the game...

- Call both coaches to home plate, and address both coaches at same time.
- Collect a game ball from each.
 - We **STRONGLY** encourage you to also get a spare ball from the last game.
- Review the out of play area.
 - As a rule LJAL will use the backstop poles extended parallel with the foul lines.
 - **DO NOT** put the benches into play.
- Make sure the coaches know to hustle the players on and off, have batters on deck, use courtesy runners with two outs for the catcher.
 - **KEEP THE GAME MOVING!**
- Go over ground rules. Note any specific age or league-based rules.
 - Examples – balks, steals, mercy, ect....
- Make sure the coaches know you will talk only to them. They are responsible for their players, assistants, and parents.
- Identify the scorekeeper for the home team and make it known that the home team book will be used for all scoring and record keeping purposes.
- **Make it clear** – The LJAL will not tolerate poor sportsmanship and has a zero-tolerance policy. This policy applies to coaches, players, and spectators.

P. Game Management

The following is a list of things to keep in mind as you do your games.

- 1- Be polite, be approachable, be professional. Game time is when you call it, not when the coach is ready. Use this to get the game started. You should be at the field, ready 15 minutes before game time. Complete the coaches meeting, tell the home team to take the field – call out game time. This is when the clock starts.
- 2- **Educate yourself as to the rules of the league and know them. Then go over all ground rules with coaches at home plate. Speak clearly and look the coaches in the eye.**
- 3- ***Be Alert, Be Ready, and Hustle!*** This demonstrates that you are involved in the game and a coach are less likely to disagree with a call when you are moving to see the play then when you are standing behind home plate.
- 4- Smile, remember you are the only one getting paid to be there!
- 5- Show and say the count frequently. Don't make people have to guess, this will also show you are in the game and in control.
- 6- **Your appearance is important! Starts when you arrive at the field. Walk to the field ready – uniform clean, shirt tucked in, and shoes wiped. You should be focused and ready for your game.**
- 7- **Avoid cell phones (except for time). Do not text or talk on the field.**
- 8- Should you find yourself in a confrontation with a coach. Remain calm! Try to defuse the situation, explain to the coach you called what you saw. If that does not work inform the coach the play is over, and we are going back to the game and that he needs to return to his bench. Should that not work warn the coach that you will elect him from the game. As a last resort eject the coach. **AT ALL TIME STAY IN CONTROL OF YOUR SELF, DO NOT ENGAGE THE COACH IN AN ARGUMENT!** Should a coach be ejected, he/she must leave the playing field and be out of sight and sound. After the game you need to fill out the incident report and submit it to the UiC. The directors will then handle the situation from there.
- 9- Should a situation arise where a player is injured. Take as much time a necessary to assure their well-being. In most cases parents and coaches will take over from there. Your job should be to control the field by making sure the ball is dead Please keep the spectators and others off the field so the coaches can attend to the injured player (exception for parents in extreme cases).

2023 LJAL BASBALL/SOFTBALL UMPIRE APPLICATION

The LJAL provides an opportunity for men and women who are 14 years of age (before April 1) and older to apply to be an umpire for the LJAL Umpire Corp. We are looking for individuals who have a passion for baseball and want to protect the integrity of the game. You do not have to have played in the past to be an umpire. Assignments are based on age, experience, attitude, and responsibility. All umpires will be required to attend two training sessions in before the season starts and be available to umpire from middle of April to middle of October (Summer/Fall Leagues).

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIP _____

CELL PHONE _____

*(parents must consent to cell phone number for anyone under the age of 16) **Parent Initial***

EMAIL _____

(email provided will be used for scheduling games in arbiter and for league communications)

*(parents must consent to email for anyone under the age of 16) **Parent Initial***

AGE _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

SS# FOR BACKGROUND CHECK _____

(everyone over the age of 18 must undergo a mandatory background check)

PREVIOUS UMPIRING EXPERIENCE (HIGHEST LEVEL or AGE / YEARS) _____

YEARS OF BASEBALL/SOFTBALL EXPERIENCE (HIGHEST LEVEL / YEARS) _____

- Games are scheduled between 6pm and 10pm on weeknights and can be between 8am and 6pm on the weekends. Does this present an issue for you? YES NO
- We are looking for umpires who can be available a couple times a week. Does this present an issue for you? YES NO

UMPIRE SIGNATURE _____

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN _____

Umpire attests that the information contained in this application is true and correct.

Any falsifying of information may result in termination.

Application is not a guarantee of hire. Mandatory clinics will be required if accepted.

2023 LJAL Umpire Ejection / Incident Report

For 2023 the Livonia Junior Athletic League is mandating an ejection / incident report be filed by the attending umpire(s) for any incident resulting in an ejection of anyone from the game. We are requesting a form for any issue you feel requires league attention or any issues you felt rules are unclear or you need clarification on. This form and process are designed to provide umpires the support they need and the training they request to make our league better for everyone. As the reporting umpire please complete this form in as much detail as possible to allow a thorough review/response to the incident.

<i>Game Date</i>	
<i>Field</i>	
<i>Home Team</i>	
<i>Visiting Team</i>	
<i>League</i>	
<i>Name of Person Submitting</i>	

<i>Description of the Issue</i>	
<i>Was Someone Ejected?</i>	
<i>Who?</i>	

<i>Rules Question?</i>	

For League Use

<i>Response Assigned to</i>	
<i>League Response / Corrective Action</i>	

2023 LJAL Umpire Evaluation

Game Date	
Field	
Home Team	
Visiting Team	
League	
Name of Person Submitting	

<i>Category</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Score (1-5 scale below)</i>
Game Time	Was the umpire onsite 15 minutes before game time and was the game started on time?	
Personal Appearance on the field	Was the umpires uniform clean? Did they present a professional appearance	
Umpire pre-game conference	Were the ground rules gone over, expectations set and coaches informed of league specific rules?	
Mechanics on the field	Did the Umpire hustle and move to get the best view of a play during the game?	
Umpire Signals	Were the calls loud clear enough for the teams to understand?	
Judgement on the field	Decisiveness and Consistency through out the game	
Control of the game	Kept the game moving in a smooth manner, was the Umpire in charge?	
Composure	Handling coaches/players, was the Umpire approachable during the game and present a respect for the game?	

Yes or No

<i>Would you want to work with this umpire?</i>	
<i>Would you want this umpire to work your game again?</i>	

Comments

Plate Umpire	
Base Umpire	

- 1 Exceptional - Some may equal, but none exceed
- 2 Very Good - Much better than required standards
- 3 Average - Meets standards
- 4 Marginal - Does not entirely meet required standards
- 5 Unsatisfactory - Does not meet expected standards