

Umpire and Rules Committee Newsletter

Umpire News in 2007

David Vincent

Here is a review of the umpire news in the majors in the last year.

Long-time crew chief Joe Brinkman retired at the end of 2006. Brinkman made his debut on September 6, 1972 with a double header in Cleveland and worked his last game on July 2, 2007 in Anaheim. Although he had been thinking about retirement for a few years, health issues finally made the decision for him. Brinkman worked in the AL from 1972 through 1999 and on the major league combined staff from 2000 through 2006. The Minnesota native was named a crew chief in 1983 and worked three World Series, three All Star Games (including the plate in 1991) and had many LDS and LCS assignments. Brinkman worked behind the plate for two no hitters: Steve Busby's in 1974 and A.J. Burnett's in 2001. One of his most memorable moments was working the George Brett "Pine Tar Game" in 1983 in Brinkman's first season as a crew chief. Brinkman taught at the Bill Kinnamon Umpire School starting in 1973 and bought the school in 1981. He operated the business until 1998, training over 4,000 umpires, 38 of which became big league arbiters.

At the same time that Brinkman's retirement was announced, Bob Davidson was appointed to the staff for the 2007 season, and this culminated his struggle to regain what he had lost in 1999. Davidson had worked in the majors from May 31, 1982 through the ill-fated decision by the umpires to resign during the 1999 season. He was out of umpiring from after his last game on September 1, 1999 until he returned to the minor leagues in 2003. His story is similar to Tom Hallion and Ed Hickox, who also returned to the minors, Hallion the same year as Davidson and Hickox one season earlier. The three umpires were made permanent major league substitutes starting with the 2005 season. In March 2007, Hallion and Hickox were added to the staff through negotiations between the union and MLB. The umpires agreed to wear microphones during national baseball telecasts and also to work the 2009 World Baseball Classic. The staff was expanded by two to add Hallion and Hickox, who filled in where needed on various crews during the season. The three umpires lost 5 seasons each due to the failed union strategy.

During the All Star break, Bruce Froemming announced that he would be stepping down from active duty as an umpire after the season. Froemming had topped the 5,000 game mark in August 2006, becoming only the second arbiter to reach that milestone after Bill Klem. Froemming started his big league career on April 6, 1971 at Shea Stadium in a game that was halted after five innings due to a snow storm. His first plate job five days later was an eleven-inning contest at Shea Stadium. Froemming worked a total of 5,159 regular season games in his career, along with three All Star Games, five World Series and numerous other post-season assignments. On September 14, Froemming became the oldest person to appear in a box score. On that day, Froemming was 67 years 351 days old and thus topped the previous record set by umpire Charlie Berry in the 1970 post-season. Froemming celebrated his 68th birthday two days before the end of the regular season.

Ted Barrett, who worked his first major league game on May 28, 1994, was ordained a minister by the Southern Baptist Convention during the off season. He had completed his master's degree in biblical studies last year and is working on his doctorate in theology; he is thought to be the first ordained minister on the major league umpire staff. There was a nice feature on him in *USA Today Sports Weekly* in August.

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The game between the Yankees and Orioles in Baltimore on June 28 was suspended with two out in the top of the eighth inning and completed on July 27. The umpires at the start of the game were Jim Joyce (HP), Jim Wolf (1B), Rob Drake (2B) and crew chief Tim Tschida (3B). When the teams resumed play a month later, the umpires were crew chief Randy Marsh (HP), Bob Davidson (1B), Sam Holbrook (2B) and Hunter Wendelstedt (3B). This crew worked the last 10 outs and then remained in the same positions for the regularly-scheduled game that night.

One of the most unusual (and most publicized) events of the year involving an umpire occurred on April 28 in Cleveland. Ed Montague's crew worked that series with the Orioles and Indians. In the top of the third inning, Ramon Hernandez flew out and Miguel Tejada was doubled off first. Plate umpire Marvin Hudson ruled that no run scored on the play but by the bottom of the sixth inning, the crew had decided that Hudson had made an error on the ruling since it was a timing play and not a force out. Montague called the official scorer from the dugout to tell him that the run counted. The Indians protested that game but this was not something that could be appealed since it was a correction of a misapplication of the rules.

On August 20, Rick Reed's crew was returning from a week's vacation to work the Royals series with the White Sox in Chicago. Alfonso Marquez, flying from Los Angeles, was very late due to airline problems. Derryl Cousins, who had worked first base for the Cubs game in the afternoon at Wrigley Field, went to the South Side of town to fill in until Marquez arrived. Cousins worked at third base from the middle of the first inning through the middle of the fifth when Marquez arrived. Cousins then worked at Shea Stadium the next day with his own crew.

Mike DiMuro, son of former umpire Lou and twin brother of former umpire Ray, had not worked since the end of the 2005 season due to health issues but returned to the big leagues on August 17. His father worked from 1963 through his death in June 1982, while Ray worked in the majors from 1996 through 1998. Welcome back, Mike!

Another highly-publicized incident took place on September 23 in San Diego. Milton Bradley of the Padres and umpire Mike Winters had a shouting match at first base during which Bradley was wrestled to the ground by his manager, Buddy Black. Bradley tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee during the wrestling match with his skipper, which will require surgery to repair. A few days later, MLB suspended Winters for the remainder of the season because of profanity aimed at Bradley during the altercation. It was the first umpire suspension in the majors since 2003.

Henry "Shag" Crawford died on July 11 just days before his 91st birthday. Crawford worked 3,117 National League games from 1956 through 1975, three World Series and two NL Championship Series. Crawford umpired three All Star Games and was the plate arbiter in the 1968 contest. His son, Jerry, has been a major league umpire since 1976, while another son, Joey, has been an NBA referee since 1977.

Three other retired umpires died in 2007. Al Salerno, who worked in the American League from 1961 through 1968, died on August 8. Salerno umpired the 1964 All Star Game. He was dismissed from the AL staff for his union organizing efforts. Hank Morgenweck, an American League umpire from 1972 through 1975, died two days after Salerno. Morgenweck, then a minor league umpire, worked the first game of the 1970 National League Championship Series when the major league arbiters refused to work. Joe Driscoll, an amateur umpire, died on April 14. Driscoll worked one game in the big leagues on August 25, 1978, when the staff arbiters struck.

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Three minor league arbiters made their big league debuts as vacation replacements. On May 3, Angel Campos worked with Dana DeMuth's crew in Texas. He was assigned first base for his bow. Todd Tichenor worked at third base with Larry Young's crew at Dodger Stadium on June 8. Damian Beal was called up to help with a White Sox doubleheader on August 24. He worked third base for both games as part of the Gerry Davis crew. Other minor leaguers who worked in the majors in 2007 include: Adam Dowdy, Rob Drake, Chad Fairchild, Chris Guccione, James Hoye, Adrian Johnson, Brian Knight and Mike Muchlinski. Guccione set a record of sorts during the season. He made his debut in 2000 and has worked 1,099 games through the end of the 2007 season without ever being a regular member of the staff. This is the most games ever worked by a non-staff umpire. Rob Drake is not that far behind Guccione, as he has worked 911 major league games as a vacation substitute since his debut in 1999.

As is always the case, many arbiters missed games during the season due to injuries and sickness. Among the 17 crew chiefs, Jerry Crawford, Tim Welke and Larry Young missed significant time, while Charlie Reliford, John Hirschbeck and Ed Montague also missed games in 2007.

At the end of the season, seventeen umpires had worked at least 4,000 regular season games. Four of them were active in 2007 (Froemming, Montague, Reilly and Crawford) and two of them reached the milestone during the season (Crawford and Reilly). The following list shows all 17 and their career totals at the end of the 2007 campaign. Ed Montague moved into ninth place all-time in September

	Games	Umpire	Debut	Last Game
1.	5368	Bill Klem	04/14/1905	- 09/13/1941
2.	5159	Bruce Froemming	04/06/1971	- 09/30/2007
3.	4768	Tommy Connolly	04/16/1898	- 07/31/1932
4.	4670	Doug Harvey	04/10/1962	- 10/04/1992
5.	4505	Joe Brinkman	09/06/1972	- 07/02/2006
6.	4497	Harry Wendelstedt	04/13/1966	- 09/27/1998
7.	4424	Bill McGowan	04/14/1925	- 07/27/1954
8.	4290	Larry Barnett	04/08/1969	- 07/24/1999
9.	4244	Ed Montague	10/01/1974	- 10/01/2007
10.	4228	Bob Emslie	04/17/1890	- 09/28/1924
11.	4227	Al Barlick	09/08/1940	- 09/26/1971
12.	4218	Bill Dinneen	09/15/1907	- 10/03/1937
13.	4144	Cy Rigler	09/27/1906	- 09/29/1935
14.	4121	Bill Summers	04/12/1933	- 09/27/1959
15.	4098	Mike Reilly	04/11/1977	- 09/27/2007
16.	4061	Jerry Crawford	05/15/1976	- 08/17/2007
17.	4023	Larry McCoy	09/25/1970	- 08/29/1999

No umpire will reach the 4,000-game milestone until at least 2009. Among the 2007 umpires, the following 12 have worked at least 3,000 regular season contests. John Hirschbeck, currently at 2,923 games, should reach 3,000 games in 2008.

	Games	Umpire	Debut	Last Game
1.	5159	Bruce Froemming	04/06/1971	- 09/30/2007
2.	4244	Ed Montague	10/01/1974	- 10/01/2007
3.	4098	Mike Reilly	04/11/1977	- 09/27/2007
4.	4061	Jerry Crawford	05/15/1976	- 08/17/2007
5.	3849	Derryl Cousins	04/06/1979	- 09/30/2007
6.	3781	Joe West	09/14/1976	- 09/30/2007

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7.	3506	Randy Marsh	05/22/1981 - 09/30/2007
8.	3453	Tim McClelland	09/03/1981 - 10/01/2007
9.	3328	Gerry Davis	06/09/1982 - 09/30/2007
10.	3302	Rick Reed	05/09/1979 - 09/30/2007
11.	3213	Tim Welke	06/14/1983 - 09/30/2007
12.	3053	Dana DeMuth	06/03/1983 - 09/30/2007

In 2007, there were 226 ejections, with 110 players, 103 managers and 13 coaches being told to leave the premises a little early. This number was up from the previous season, in which 182 people were ejected from games. In 2007, Phil Cuzzi led all arbiters with 10 ejections for the season, while Mike Everitt, Chad Fairchild, Tom Hallion, Joe West and Mike Winters had seven each. Everitt's ejections came in just two games, as he was behind the plate for two bean ball wars during the season.

A standard practice that is not new in 2007 is how umpires are assigned to double headers. The umpire contract specifies that the arbiter who works the plate for either game will work only the one contest. Therefore, a minor league substitute is assigned to the crew for the day. Where that umpire is assigned depends on the crew chief but most of the time the minor leaguer works first base in the opening contest, thus subbing for the second game plate umpire, and at third for the second contest, thus subbing for the plate umpire from the first game.

The umpires assigned to work the 78th All Star Game in San Francisco in July were: Bruce Froemming (HP), Charlie Reliford (1B), Mike Winters (2B), Kerwin Danley (3B), Ted Barrett (LF) and Bill Miller (RF). This was the third such assignment for Froemming, the second for Reliford and Winters and the first for the other three arbiters.

A special crew was assembled to work the National League Wild Card playoff game on October 1 in Denver between the Rockies and Padres. This is considered a regular-season game but due to the importance of the contest and the fact that it was the only game that day, a six-man crew was created for the game. The six arbiters were: Tim McClelland (HP), Ed Montague (1B, crew chief), Tim Tschida (2B), Chuck Meriwether (3B), Fieldin Culbreth (LF) and Jim Wolf (RF).

Twenty-four umpires were selected to work the four League Division Series. The following chart shows the lineup at the start of each series, which are identified by the home team of game one. A senior umpire was placed in left field for the first game so that person would be the plate umpire in an eventual fifth and deciding game. Three of the series were three-game sweeps and the last took four games to decide a winner, so no fifth arbiter worked the plate in these series. However, this shows that MLB uses many criteria in selecting umpires for post-season assignments and how they are placed in each crew. The crews worked the entire series, moving with the teams between cities unlike some recent years when the crews rotated between series as the venues changed.

	Boston	Cleveland	Philadelphia	Arizona
HP	Gary Darling	Bruce Froemming	Dale Scott	Ed Montague
1B	Dan Iassogna	Laz Diaz	Jim Reynolds	Sam Holbrook
2B	Brian Runge	Ron Kulpa	Chuck Meriwether	Greg Gibson
3B	Ted Barrett	Fieldin Culbreth	Jeff Kellogg	Mike Everitt
LF	Tim Tschida	Gerry Davis	Derryl Cousins	Mike Reilly
RF	CB Bucknor	Jim Wolf	Ed Hickox	Mark Carlson

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The umpire assignments for the League Championship Series created two very senior crews with many post-season assignments already under their collective belts.

	National League	American League
HP	Tim McClelland	Randy Marsh
1B	Mark Wegner	Kerwin Danley
2B	Larry Vanover	Brian Gorman
3B	Tom Hallion	Paul Emmel
LF	Angel Hernandez	Gary Cederstrom
RF	Jim Joyce	Dana DeMuth

The crew assigned to work the World Series all came from Division Series crews. Ed Montague, a veteran of 32 years and five previous World Series, was crew chief and plate umpire for game one. Montague's crew included Laz Diaz (ninth year), Ted Barrett (11th year), Chuck Meriwether (16th year), Mike Everitt (ninth year) and Mike Reilly (31st year and regular season crew chief). As with the LCS crews, the second-most senior umpire started in right field in so that he would be behind the plate for a potential game six.

MLB General Managers, at their annual meeting in November, voted 25-5 to recommend using instant replay on disputed home run calls. The replay, if approved by the commissioner, would be used to determine if a ball cleared the fence and also whether it was fair or foul. The GMs have also recommend placing a limit on the number of times a batter can step out of the box between pitches and also on the number of times players can visit the mound during an inning.

It was an eventful year in the Major League umpiring community. With the retirement of Bruce Froemming from the active staff, one crew chief position is coming open for the 2008 season and perhaps there may be more positions open before the start of the 2008 campaign. Since MLB was overstaffed by two umpires during the 2007 season, there is no requirement to hire another umpire to fill the spot being vacated by Froemming. It will be interesting to see if they do add another arbiter to the staff and who might be promoted to crew chief for 2008.

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Committee Business and Notes

Kevin McCann, chairman of the SABR Minor League Committee, is requesting assistance from members of the Umpires and Rules Committee to work with members of his committee to gather rosters and biographical information on minor league umpires. If anyone is interested in helping with this research, or have come upon this type of information in the course of your research projects, please contact the U&R Committee chair, Reid Duffy, at reidduffy@yahoo.com, and Kevin at kdmccann27@comcast.com. Kevin's primary focus of interest is the Kitty League, and he is gathering umpire roster information on that league in the process of his research. McCann is also planning on publishing a memoir by former minor league umpires Denver Howard about his days as an arbiter in the Kitty League in the mid-50's.

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Alain Usereau has embarked on an interesting project that might dovetail nicely into the Doug Pappas Ejection database project. Alain is attempting to chronicle all of the fights, brawls, and assorted mayhem that have taken place on the field at both the major and minor league level. He would appreciate anything you can pass on to contribute to this lively project, and can be contacted at althetiger@hotmail.com.

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Ken McIntosh, in the course of working on a book on the history of baseball at Capilano/Nat Baily Stadium in Vancouver, British Columbia, is looking for a complete roster of umpires working in the Pacific Coast League during these periods: 1956-1962, 1965-1969 and 1978-1999. He has compiled a partial list, but is looking to fill in the gaps. He can be contacted at kandmcintosh@shaw.ca

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Mark Armour is looking for contact information on the following former major league umpires for a project he is working on: Nick Avants, Larry Barnett, Joe Brinkman, Bill Deegan, Don Denkinger, Jim Evans, Art Frantz, Russ Goetz, Bill Haller, Larry McCoy, Jake O'Donnell, Dave Phillips, John Rice, and Marty Springstead. Mark can be reached at markarmour@comcast.net