

**Examining the Current State of
Baseball Officiating in Europe**
Recruitment, Retention and Efficacy Domains
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<p>Recruiting and retaining officials for the game of baseball is challenging. Attrition is always issue in sports due to retirement, injury, or personal reasons and therefore there is a never-ending need for new officials. This is exacerbated in Europe by the fact that baseball is not a major national sport in any of the countries. Sports officiating is an important job with physical, mental and technical demands. Officials' skills go hand in hand with increasing demands of the game: player skills and external pressure from stakeholders. Most available research is overgeneralized and not focused on the sport of baseball and little has been known about the European umpires carrying out officiating duties on the field.</p> <p>This thesis examines recruitment factors such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. It also considers retention issues including perceived organizational support, self-determination theory, psychological and physical attributes, and sense of community. A survey was used for active umpires in Europe, to which 245 responded. It examines issues such as why they started, their frustrations, reasons for continuing as officials, and efficacy.</p> <p>The survey results indicated that umpires in Europe start later as officials, are working many games due to a shortage of officials, and experience much verbal abuse. They are also resilient, confident, and are looking for improvements to the amount of support they receive and the environment they work in.</p> <p>This thesis also introduces two possible development pathways that can be the foundation for improved training and understanding of where an umpire career can lead. Understanding these factors and closer cooperation between officials and their national federations can provide officials with an environment that is enticing, rewarding and fulfilling which will have an impact on the quality of games played in Europe. This thesis provides a solid base for future research of baseball officials in Europe.</p>	
Keywords Baseball, umpire, recruitment, retention, efficacy, training, pathway	

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1 Introduction

Sport referees have a challenging job, due to the many aspects of a game/match that they must take into account, the speed and complexity of the decisions they must make, the repercussions their actions have, the number of people involved in a match, and often the hostile nature of spectators at the sports event (Guillén & Feltz 2011, 1). At times it can feel that there is no difference between umpiring a baseball game between teams of children with overeager parents or a top professional series with players making millions of dollars. The main job of a baseball umpire is to oversee a game of baseball played by two teams according to the rules of that league. One of the most important things an umpire can do is maintain the integrity of the game. Integrity is the quality of being honest and fair, and doing the right thing. This means catching and correcting any cheating that may occur. (USA Baseball Amateur Resource Center 2016.) Former MLB umpire Ron Luciano said the following regarding integrity in a 1979 New York Times article, "Integrity exists in all professional sports, but to preserve it, someone must be involved who doesn't win or lose." In describing the role of the baseball umpire, the Professional Baseball Umpire Corporation (PBUC) says the following:

The integrity of baseball is embodied in the Umpire upon whom the trust is placed to insure the game is played by the rules guaranteeing fairness for those involved. During the course of performing these prescribed duties, the Umpire must at times interpret and clarify rules as they are written. Words can never be written to cover all situations in our great game and therefore incidents may occur which call for the sound and fair judgment of the Umpire. (PBUC Manual - Pat O'Conner, President, Minor League Baseball, 2012.)

Baseball has a long history with its beginning being traced back to New York City in 1845. Baseball is very conservative and traditional, and is subject, if not hostage, to its legends and stories, making baseball and umpiring not adept at quick change. Bruce Weber (2009, 83) author of the definitive, behind the scenes, book on baseball umpires "As They See 'Em" mentions the last major revision of the rulebook as being in 1949. Major League Baseball (MLB) has since done a major revision of the rulebook in 2015. The revision included the reorganization of the chapters to make the rule book more logical. Weber (2009, 83) describes the professional baseball rulebook as "a highly unruly document that is written in faux legalese." This can certainly make it difficult for the beginning or inexperienced umpire to understand the nuances of the game.

Umpiring is often a thankless job and Weber's 2009 book also gives us some examples of how umpires are often treated like equipment, even at the professional level; just another box to check off in preparation for a game by the event staff or the club management. Then general manager of the New York Mets Steve Phillips said of umpires, "Management never cared for the umpires." (Weber 2009, 10). Fay Vincent, commissioner of Major League Baseball (MLB) from 1989-1992, told Weber, "The owners basically see them like bases." (Weber 2009, 10). Even veteran former MLB umpire Larry Young, current MLB umpire supervisor, admitted to Weber, saying, "We're a necessary evil." (Weber 2009, 10).

It is a well-known expression among umpires that you must start out perfect and get better from there. All this can make it unenticing to those considering umpiring or asked to join the forces of the officiating crew. It is common for 20-30% of first or second year umpire to quit. This creates a constant need for new recruits. Sport officials are held to a higher standard - fairly or unfairly, they are seen as influencing the game, often to a greater extent than the players (Lirgg, Feltz, & Merrie 2016, 40). Several researchers have noted the importance of retaining umpires and attempted to understand how various coping skills and personality types assist individuals to persevere in the activity despite the negative experiences (Kellett & Warner 2011, 472).

Baseball umpires get short shrift when it comes to materials written for them. Most publications dealing with baseball umpires are focused either on anecdotal stories by individual umpires or mechanics manuals that deal with the on-the-field placements and movements used by umpires to carry out their duties. Countless volumes of baseball books are available to the public to learn more about their favorite athlete or more importantly, learn more about how to play the sport. There is also an endless supply of material on both the physical and the mental training needed to develop and become a top baseball player. To learn more about how to become an umpire or develop your umpiring skills, however, a person would need to sign up for a course or clinic, most of which can last as little as a few hours to professional training programs that are 4 to 5 weeks in length.

There is currently a push by all levels of government and many National Sport Organizations to further increase levels of participation in organized sport (Cuskelly, Smith, & Rynne 2009, 1). Increased participation will increase the need for officials. The issue addressed by this thesis is three factors all interconnected. By reducing attrition and increasing retention, you lower the number of prospects you need (Sabaini 2001, 19). Effective systems for training, motivating, and supporting athletes are better predictors of success than are any measures intended to identify them (Green 2005, 235). An increase in the

capacity of the officiating aspect of the sport system can only be achieved through three possible alternatives: recruiting more officials, increasing the workload of current officials, or increasing the career length of current officials (Cuskelly & al. 2009, 1). By identifying sport officials' motivations to begin and continue refereeing, perhaps more sport officials can be recruited and retained to help ease the burden of a declining sport officials' talent pool (Hancock, Dawson, & Auger 2015, 33).

The author is an active umpire with nearly 20 years of experience in Europe and the United States and is a certified European umpire trainer. The author has officiated extensively in Finland, Sweden, and Norway, and to a lesser degree in Hungary and considers himself more of a knowledgeable practitioner of sports officiating rather than a researcher. The aim here is to identify factors leading to the recruitment of and playing a part in the retention or attrition of baseball umpires in Europe. This thesis attempts to find solutions to the issues on a practical, manageable level that is suitable for the amateur European baseball landscape.

Hancock, & al. (2015, 33) divided sports officials into three categories: interactors, monitors, and reactors. Interactors attend to several cues during an athletic performance and have a high level of interaction with athletes as they are typically in the field of play. Baseball umpires belong to the interactors category due to their location on the field in relation to the players and the many tasks necessary to follow a game and make calls. Baseball umpires, as interactors as described by Hancock & al. (2015, 33), allows for some comparison to team sports such as basketball, American football, and Association football (soccer). Each umpire crew works as a team, monitoring two teams of players on a field or court through movement over a shared area of responsibility. Along with the rules and physical demands to carry out the duty of an umpire, coaches and players often verbally challenge, harass or berate umpires for the calls they make. It is not uncommon for a coach to come onto the field and argue with an umpire over a call. Some arguments can be dramatic and in some cases even aggressive.

This thesis will look at how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and their influence on becoming an umpire and consider their influence on continuation. We will look at organizational and fraternal support, self-determination, career pathways, and what types of training need can be done to give umpires the tools they need to feel confident in carrying out their important duty of officiating a game of baseball.

2 Background

2.1 Recruitment

Effective strategies for recruiting volunteers who are prepared to make a long-term commitment to formal positions are essential for the survival of voluntary sport clubs (Schlesinger, Klenk, & Nagel 2015, 195). Programs require a minimum number of participants if they are to function adequately. Consequently, each participant or beneficiary encourages others to join, at least until the program is adequately manned (Green 2005, 238). It is becoming more and more difficult to find new, willing sports officials for many sports. There are reports of annual attrition rates in officiating as small as 20% and as much as 60% for various sports around the world (Cuskelly & Hoye 2013, 456; Cuskelly & Hoye 2004, 18; Forbes & Livingston, 2013, 4; Hancock & al. 2015, 31) Much of this evidence, however, is anecdotal due to poor records kept on incoming and outgoing officials.

A May 16, 2017 USA Today article claims that abuse and pay are the main reason that keep people away from starting up or continuing as sports officials in the United States. They also point out the tendency of a negative portrait by media focusing on errors made by high profile officials rather than highlighting the essential role played by officials at all levels of sport. Baseball is not immune to this phenomenon. Cuskelly and Hoye (2004, 18) discuss the difficulty of “selling a positive image” of sports officiating. The media and lay literature would lead us to believe that the real or perceived threat of verbal and physical abuse is the leading cause of attrition, yet investigators have begun to challenge that notion, citing that officials once past the initial stages of entry into officiating, are psychologically resilient and generally accept that abuse is to be expected (Forbes & Livingston 2013, 5). This is affected today by social media and the ease to comment about any topic and reach an audience. Thirty three percent of European umpires reported being criticized in social media regarding their performance as an official.

Any organization that sponsors competition has some responsibility to assure that the competition is safe, sane, and sportsmanlike, and officials are going to be a large part of assuring that (Sabaini 2001, 10). Sabaini (2001, 19) sums up the problem best by saying, “Once we get them, we have to keep them.” The sport literature suggests that sport organisations are relatively immature in the development of human resource management strategy but are becoming more 'professional' in the way they approach people management issues (Chelladurai in Taylor and Ho 2004, 4).

2.1.1 Intrinsic Motivation – Love of the Game

Why would someone take on the position of an umpire? Who would volunteer to put up with so much abuse?

For many people, the reason why they pursue officiating is as simple as the love they have for sport. Often they are current or former athletes and have a desire to continue to challenge themselves in the sport from a different perspective and stay connected to their sport. Many officials choose this avenue as a way to give back to sport, to help mold future participants or to help build the sport. For some of the younger newer officials it is a way to earn some money or to be recognized by people who are important to them. For those few who became an official in a sport they did not participate in as an athlete, many times they pursued officiating because their children were participants (Sport Information Resource Centre 2016)

At least four concepts are required to analyze the process by which people become involved in sport: recruitment, motivation, socialization and commitment (Green 2005, 236). A comparison between athletes and officials is far from a stretch and these concepts are discussed through the paper. Word of mouth is most widely used and perceived as the most effective method of recruiting new officials (Cuskelly & Hoye 2004, 10). Having explicit prior connection to a sport appears to weigh heavily on the decision to enter into an officiating role in that sport (Livingston and Forbes 2017, 96). Both imply a prior positive connection via an agent for the sport. Officiating sports is a skill and not everyone is intrinsically motivated to referee. It is important to note that recruitment and attraction into the role of an umpire is only the first step along a participation continuum which may be followed by sustained involvement and advancement to higher levels of involvement (Livingston and Forbes 2017, 96).

One of the main reasons that people become umpires is devotion and a sense of giving back to the game (Dosseville, Rioult, & Laborde 2013, 3). Devotion is defined by Merriam Webster as a love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person or activity. Becoming an umpire shows a level of competence and effort that not many are prepared to do. Entry into officiating appeared to be largely the product of an intrinsically motivated love of sport, which for some was reinforced by the addition of extrinsic rewards (money, praise from others) particularly at a young age (Livingston & Forbes 2016, 352). It is another way to extend or expand a career in baseball. Many umpires come as a result of retirement as a player, ending of a playing career due to injury. The European Baseball Umpire Survey (EBUS) created by Jones (2018) shows an overwhelming majority of European umpires (75%) claimed that they were baseball players before becoming umpires. This might mean giving

back to something they care about, molding future participants, or gaining personal satisfaction from helping others (Titlebaum & al. 2009, 104). The EBUS also shows that many European umpires choose to umpire on their own (55%) and an overwhelming majority (89%) of umpires stated the main reason to umpire was to “give back to the game”.

Despite the fact that humans are liberally endowed with intrinsic motivational tendencies, the evidence is now clear that the maintenance and enhancement of this inherent propensity requires supportive conditions, as it can be fairly readily disrupted by various non-supportive conditions (Ryan & Deci 2000, 70). Devotion alone is not enough to keep an umpire involved if the umpire feels they are not in control to some degree or they are not receiving the support they need to enjoy what they do, to advance to the next level, or to simply become better at officiating.

At many of the lowest levels of baseball, especially for children, volunteers, often parents, physical education teachers, or other coaches and players, are the backbone of organizing the officiating for games. This is due to the connection to the teams or players involved in the game(s) or the location of the games. Most often they are family members or part of a close-knit community. This is often sufficient because the youth games are often less demanding, shorter, sometimes even time limited, the main goal of the games is participation and not the outcome of competition. This is not to imply that the task is not challenging, rather the skill demands needed and player demands at lower levels are less.

Green (2005, 238) suggests that athlete recruitment should be viewed as a process of socialization where individuals will feel encouraged to start and continue in an activity if they sense that they have both on-and off-court support. Official recruitment could be dealt with in a similar fashion. Green (2005, 234) also presents the Pyramid Model of Sport Development (see Figure 1) with the description that, “high-performance peaks are supported by a broad base of participants”. To fill this broad base, action by the federation, clubs, official association (if one exists) and the individual umpires themselves is required constantly to maintain sufficient numbers in the umpire ranks. To draw in a large number of people takes planning, coordination and preparation to train new recruits. Sabaini (2001, 20-23) offers a wide variety of methods for the US audience, for whom their conference was intended. It is difficult to say whether these solutions would work in a European setting. Items such as fairs, free or discounted training, free officials’ clothing, or recreational tournaments were suggested. The status of baseball in each of the European member countries varies greatly and there is not one single “cookie-cutter” solution to dealing with the issue. Therefore, it is difficult to determine if any particular suggestion would work in one or more European countries.

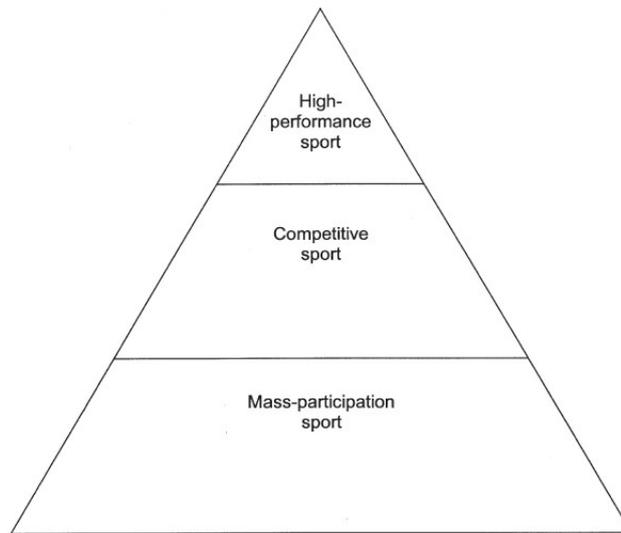


Figure 1: Pyramid Model of Sport Development (Green 2005)

To combat the trend of declining numbers of officials Hancock, & al. (2015, 38) studied the motivations to become and remain officials. In their conclusion, they offer four recommendations that are valid for interactor types of officials, two of which are mentioned here. The first two recommendation deal directly with recruitment focus on stressing intrinsic values, sport, and social reasons. These include articulating to candidates the physical benefits, passion, and challenges that are associated with becoming an official (Hancock, & al. 2015, 37). Baseball's intrinsic value comes from its long history in many countries around the world. This long history has led to the creation of many memories and legends of the game. Baseball in Europe does not have the long tradition as it has had in the United States. Only a handful of countries have leagues or federations that are older than fifty years with most European countries starting their baseball activities in the period between 1980 and 2000. Sport reasons focus on the physical aspects of carrying out duties, which are often not focused on. Physical aspects of umpiring are discussed later in the retention section.

2.1.2 Extrinsic Motivation – Financial Reward

There is not a single umpire in Europe making a living by umpiring. The season is too short and there are not enough games each season to financially support an individual, much less a family. Financial reward, or remuneration is one form of extrinsic motivation, and may be a good way to attract school kids or university students or those between jobs who may need some additional income. The truth of the matter, however, is that there is not enough of a financial reward to draw people to umpiring in Europe. Sport officiating is usually a second job pursued by sports advocates, many of whom are former athletes who want to stay involved with sport while giving something back to the athletic world

(Bernal, Nix, & Boatwright 2012, 36). Financial remuneration may attract some, especially younger officials, to enter officiating, but it does not influence retention (Hancock & al., 2015, 34; Livingston & Forbes 2016, 351). According to EBUS, 31% of European officials are simply fulfilling a club responsibility to supply officials and are seemingly less interested further in developing as an umpire.

A holistic approach aimed at understanding the challenges of recruiting, developing, and retaining amateur sport officials is clearly needed, as is a mechanism via which the resulting knowledge can be translated into action within existing sport systems (Engebretsen & al. 2014, 1273). Each sport has their own challenges and should be looked at on a sport by sport basis. A fundamental question based off this thesis and further study could also be whether there is a difference in recruitment for baseball versus its closely related softball. A better understanding of volunteer culture in each European country would also provide much needed information on possible obstacles.

2.2 Retention

There is more than ample evidence that officiating dropout is a persistent, pervasive, and global problem (Livingston & al. 2017, 1). When officials walk away from lower levels of officiating, the professional levels feel the effects (Sabaini 2001, 28). Europe currently does not have a professional league but a similar comparison can be made to the top European club or national tournaments. There are several factors to when considering whether an umpire will stay on or quit. Most research deals with the negative influences, burnout or abuse, that affect the decision (Rainey 1995, 319; Cuskelly & Hoye 2004, 8). Evidence from other investigations suggests that factors such as the pressure or absence of organizational support, stage of career, of being able to find a sense of community will weigh on an individual's decision to continue or discontinue their participation as a sports official (Forbes & Livingston 2013, 5). Cuskelly and Hoye (2004, 7) have found that schedulers have an equally difficult time supplying adequate and qualified officials for the number of games and competitions over a season, particularly at the grass roots level. A shortage of officials can negatively affect the quantity and quality of games being played (Ridinger, Kim, Warner, & Tingle 2017, 3). Cuskelly and Hoye (2004, 8) continued by explaining that the work load for current officials is often very high. This can be seen too with European umpires. The EBUS indicates that 22% of umpires are working more than 50 games per season and 34% are working more than 40. This section will look at some of the common factors that influence umpire attrition and retention.

Sabaini (2001, 29) quotes then NASO President Barry Mano as saying, "I think excellence in officiating is poorly defined, and hence poorly rewarded." Mano continues, "We need to

find what things go into the mix that we call excellence in officiating, and then we need to turn around and reward when somebody exhibits that excellence.” It is human nature to wish to be recognized or at least thanked for the work the one does, especially if it is done well. Sabaini (2001, 30) also quotes Joyce Sisson, an official assignor, “If you don’t let the people in your organization know that they are important, no matter what level they have achieved in officiating, you’re going to lose them.”

2.2.1 Financial Reward and Investment

Despite most umpires being compensated monetarily for officiating, slightly under 50% of EBUS respondents claimed that the payment was insufficient for the job they performed. However, only 5% claimed that compensation was a source of frustration while only 15% of EBUS respondents mentioned financial reward as a reason to be an umpire. Commitment of time, length of games (41%) and travel (29%) were two of the largest sources of frustration for respondents. The time away from family or work to get to games and to complete them can diminish the impact of received compensation or travel expense reimbursement. Research has also highlighted and identified as problematic the significantly greater time and cost demands incurred by rural and regional officials in comparison to their urban counterparts (Cuskelly & Hoye 2004, 14).

Umpires general purchase their own protective equipment and clothing, which can be a large initial investment if everything is purchased at one time. An Internet search of two major umpire equipment retailers, one in the United States and one in Europe investigated the costs for a basic set of protective equipment and clothing. If purchased within Europe, a set can cost around €1,000, whereas the same equipment can cost €800 if bought in the United States. Despite the cost, 82% of EBUS respondents claimed they have their own protective equipment and clothing. This shows a high level of commitment by umpires to be prepared, protected and look the part of an official in the games they are involved in. In a survey of national federations, a majority claimed they provided clothing, in most cases uniform pique shirts with the national federation, league or umpire association logo (Jones 2018).

2.2.2 Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Perceived organizational support (POS) is an important contributor to one’s intention to remain on as an official. POS is the degree to which employees believe that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being and fulfills socioemotional needs (Eisenberger 1986, 502). It is an important contributor to the development of self-efficacy and job satisfaction in an officiating role (Kerwin, Jordan, & Turner 2015, 385). Results in a study by Livingston and Forbes (2016, 352) indicated that they [sports

officials] were highly resilient and motivated to participate because of their love for the sport and desire to stay connected to the sports' social communities. This indicates that improvements can be made and that associations and federation should be more vigilant in showing their support for their officials. Ideas suggested were recruiting visits with top officials, discounted registration fees, officiating materials, clothing or gear as ways to show support and not require new officials to invest heavily at the beginning.

According to the EBUS, nearly 75% of respondents felt supported by their national federations with 57% giving a 4 or 5 on a 6-point Likert scale. For the European Confederation of Baseball (CEB) the feeling was not the same, with 63% of respondents not feeling supported. Only 17% gave a 4 or 5 using the same scale. This could be because not all national federation umpires will receive a CEB tournament assignment or attend a CEB run clinic to be considered for an assignment. While there are European-wide training clinics annually, the European confederation could potentially do a better job to promote these clinics and spread the word to a wider umpire audience to show their involvement in umpire training. More investigation could be done to see how well national federations are forwarding CEB messages pertaining to umpiring to their national umpires or umpire associations and are making them aware of materials available on the CEB website.

2.2.3 Self-Determination Theory

When individuals succeed, they feel a sense of mastery through effective interaction with his or her environment. When individuals are respected by and connect well with others, there is a certain level of relatedness achieved. Psychological and physical well-being is satisfied when these psychological needs are enhanced. (Bernal & al. 2012, 32.) The most basic distinction is between intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome (Ryan & Deci 2000, 55). It is critical to remember that people will be intrinsically motivated only for activities that hold intrinsic interest for them, activities that have appeal of novelty, challenge, or aesthetic value (Ryan & Deci 2000, 71). For a person to experience satisfaction according to the self-determination theory (SDT), he or she must fulfill three needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Bernal & al. 2012, 32). Autonomy in lay terms is about fitting the sport into umpire's schedule and allowing them a say in umpire matters. Competence refers to the feeling of self-improvement by the umpire and the proof of development via available training methods. Relatedness connects the umpire to the team of umpires or to the sport itself and fosters social networks that support and develop the sense of identity. Across the life span, SDT hypothesizes that intrinsic motivation will be more likely to flourish in

contexts characterized by a sense of secure relatedness (Deci & Ryan 2000, 235). Perceived relatedness and commitment to the sport were the strongest indicators of continuance intentions (Bernal & al. 2012, 32).

2.2.4 Psychological Attributes – Mindfulness and Flow

Umpiring a baseball game can be considered an athletic performance. The body must move in the proper manner and the mind must follow the action and determine the correct call to make. Concentration and focus are required play after play and each play is being scrutinized by both teams carefully. This can create a great deal of pressure for an umpire. The negative consequences of stress may be minimized by mindfulness (Mumford 2015, 15). Mindfulness has been associated with autonomous motivation and with a variety of positive psychological and behavioral outcomes (Deci & Ryan 2008, 183). A key concept in mindfulness is to keep your mind on the moment at hand, the now, and not allow the past affect your decisions about now nor worry about the future. It is about controlling that which we can control in the moment. By being mindful, an umpire can control the amount of anxiety leading up to and during a game. Not enough anxiety and the umpire may be unprepared for the game or individual play. Too much anxiety and the umpire may fear making a mistake or not move appropriately to handle a given situation.

Like athletes, umpires are performing learned tasks and movements on the field of play. Umpires are also striving for that perfect game where everything goes right and the experience is enjoyable. Flow is the mental state of operation first described by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi in his 1975 seminal publication *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety* that has had much connection with athletes. Umpires can be treated in much the same manner. In flow, a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity. Enjoyment appears at the boundary between boredom and anxiety, when the challenges are just balanced with the person's capacity to act (Csíkszentmihályi 1990, 52). Each umpire must find the right amount of anxiety to become connected with the task at hand. Flow also happens when a person's skills are fully involved in overcoming a challenge that is just about manageable, so it acts as a magnet for learning new skills and increasing challenges (Csíkszentmihályi 1997, 2). Flow, or optimal experience (Csíkszentmihályi 1990, 54), is commonly known by athletes as "the zone". It can take years of training and experience for a flow state to become possible. It is not something that you strive for, but rather something that occurs when the conditions align themselves. It is also a state that leaves room for learning. To create the possibility for flow and focus on the factors related to the game, the focus must be the right amount, not hyperfocus as described by Csíkszentmihályi, where tunnel vision occurs and external game-related stimuli are ignored or not perceived. In periods of flow,

the umpire may feel totally immersed in the game with a sense of confidence and success and time will seem to pass by like a flowing river, hence the name given by Csíkszentmihályi. Perhaps the clearest sign of flow is the merging of action and awareness (Csíkszentmihályi 1975, 36).

2.2.5 Sense of Community (SOC) and Mentorship

Staying involved with anything requires that an individual feels a sense of welcome and belonging to a community (SIRC 2016). It has also been demonstrated that a positive relationship exists between SOC and seasonal-employment retention, which is of particular importance in the sport industry due to the non-traditional work hours, training hours, and event schedules that vary by season (Kellett & Warner 2011, 473). Alternately evidence from other investigations suggests that factors such as the presence or absence of organizational support, stage of career, or being able to find a sense of community will weigh on an individual's decision to continue or discontinue their participation as a sports official (Forbes & Livingston 2013, 5). Livingston and Forbes (2017, 97) pointed out that "talking through stressful situations with their umpire partners are thought to play a critical role in retaining individuals in the officiating corps." Story telling can be a good way to teach umpires if done in a productive manner. Using the mistakes of more experienced umpire can help new umpires avoid making those same mistakes and saving them from a little embarrassment or a difficult situation. Officiating is a community of like-minded individuals dedicated to the sport of baseball. The social experience, rather than exclusively on-court/field issues, surrounding officiating are highly important for referees' continuing involvement (Kellett & Warner 2011, 474).

In Hancock & al.'s (2015, 38) recommendations for retention they also suggest outlining intrinsic values and social reasons for retaining officials. Important factors in socialization into the community were the involvement of a mentor or friend that introduced our participants to officiating and assisted in their integration into the social community that surrounds officiating (Warner, Tingle, & Kellett 2013, 321). Livingston and Forbes (2017, 98) discovered that "a mentorship culture within umpiring is highly supportive of umpires at all levels. The social network among baseball umpires is quite strong worldwide and very fraternal in nature. Friendships are born through this community and a sharing of knowledge is common across all types of borders. Socialization reflects participants' expectations, perceptions of rewards, and the values they attach to those rewards (Green 2005, 241). Hancock & al. continue with their recommendations by identifying sources of stress and train appropriately how to cope with such sources. Coping can also be managed through the sharing of experiences via the fraternal community.

Soon after starting as an umpire it is important to find models which the new umpire can emulate. The trickle-down effect, also referred to as the demonstration effect, assumes that “people are inspired by elite sport, sports people, or sports events to participate themselves”. Previous research indicates that role models have at least three characteristics: outstanding performance, being worthy of imitation, and similarity. (Wicker & Frick 2016, 5.) Role models are individuals who provide an example of the kind of success that one may achieve, and often also provide a template of the behaviors that are needed to achieve success (Lockwood 2006, 36). Gibson (2003, 601) describes that the positive impact of role models wanes over time after knowledge acquisition at the early stage and that the impact of negative role models increases over time for affirmation of their own unique abilities at the late stage. While the presence of role models may inspire people to become referee [umpires] (recruitment), they may also motivate active referees [umpires] to continue their activities (retention) (Wicker & Frick 2016, 6). This requires action by national or continental federations to highlight the accomplishments of their umpires and put stock into their official commodities to allow a return on the trickle-down effect.

In 2017, five European umpires were selected to participate in the third World Baseball Classic (WBC). This was the first time that European umpires had participated in this top-level event with professional baseball players. European umpires have officiated in Olympic baseball games during their inclusion between 1992 and 2008 and while baseball was a demonstration event in 1980. Countries competing in continental and international events are required to send at least one umpire to officiate. More needs to be done to publicize these nominations and the accomplishments of the officials at each tournament for others to emulate. Approximately 20 European umpires have attended one of the two certified 5-week umpire training course that prepare umpires for the Minor League Baseball system. Despite the visible successes, research has stated that there was little academic evidence to support the casual link between role models and sport participation (Wicker & Frick 2016, 6).

To compare with baseball athletes, only four players born in Europe and advancing through the European system have made it all the way to the MLB. Alex Liddi from Italy, Donald Lutz from Germany plus two players currently on an active 25-man roster, Max Kepler from Germany and Dovydas Neverauskas from Lithuania. The main reason for this is due to the amount of time and resources put into the number of baseball academies across Europe in the last 10 years. Currently there are no umpires from Europe officiating in the MLB or Minor League Baseball (MiLB) nor is there a system in place to find such

talent potential. The time constraints of the summer-only season, the low pay and the difficulties to advance through the system will make it extremely unlikely for someone from Europe to consider MiLB or MLB as a potential option.

It is important also for experienced umpires to make themselves available to new recruits and inexperienced umpires to share any obtained knowledge and experience. This is commonly called mentoring. 54% of EBUS respondents mentioned having access to a mentor when they started umpiring while 39% were not given access to a mentor with the remaining respondents unsure of the availability of a mentor. Several researchers have noted the importance of retaining umpires and attempted to understand how various coping skills and personality types assist individuals to persevere in the activity despite the negative experiences (Kellett & Warner 2011, 472).

2.2.6 Physical Attributes

Physical and mental preparation should be performed by each umpire just as players and coaches prepare for each game. Is the umpire physically ready for the game and its demands, including level of play and the conditions in which the game will be played?

Baseball umpires are required to move somewhat, especially at lower levels of the game where there are not four umpires working together (Lirgg & al. 2016, 42). The lower quality of the game and routine, creating plays that are not expected, can also account for some extra awareness and quick reaction to sudden changes in the action. Baseball players are in top physical condition due to access to improved training methods and the need to stand out to be scouted to be a potential draft pick by professional teams or recruited by colleges. It stands to reason that umpires should also be able to keep up with the athletes. The physical demands include standing for the length of the game without taking breaks to sit down between innings. Games in baseball can last as short as 1 hour and 30 minutes at lower levels where only 5 or 7 innings are played. At the most competitive level, the adult amateur and professional level, games last 3 hours on average. Baseball games have no time limit, except for curfews, and it is not uncommon for a game to last between four and five hours. Standing for hours at a time with sudden bursts of action can take a strain on the umpire's body and mind. Focus and concentration are in high demand by an umpire. This focus is at its highest for the plate umpire, who will call, make a decision, on several hundred pitches each game. Over the course of the 2016 MLB season, umpire Larry Vanover called 10,171 pitches in his 34 plate assignments (MLB 2010, 61). The average number of pitches per game in the 2016 MLB season was 290 and is equivalent to the number of times a plate umpire needs to squat each plate assignment.

Currently there are no physical fitness tests that an individual must pass to become a baseball umpire. It would be beneficial to new and existing officials to have a standard of physical fitness to monitor one's ability to cope with the strains of officiating the sport or to monitor their development. The WBSC has a set of guidelines for softball umpires and could be evaluated for appropriateness and applicability in baseball umpires.

To combat all the above issues and increase the ability to retain umpires, Titlebaum, & al. (2009, 107) suggest trying to create a positive and rewarding experience for the officials thus providing incentive to new participants and motivation for existing referees to continue in their positions.

2.3 Referee Self-Efficacy - Refficacy

Baseball umpires, like other sports referees or judges, are the backbone to games, competitions, tournaments and championships. Umpires are taught to have high levels of integrity, competence and ability to put up with pressure. Training early on focuses much on the rule book and the on-field mechanics, or movements, required by umpires. Regardless of the sport, all officials rely on their game knowledge and decision-making skills; they all must communicate with players, coaches, and other sport officials, and they all are under some degree of pressure as well (Lirgg & al. 2016, 42). One issue for European umpires is where to practice the skills learned. Unlike the professional leagues around the world, most European leagues have a short pre-season with only a limited number of practice games or exhibition games where the focus is not on competitions and the results of the contests but rather getting in shape, mentally and physically for the regular season.

Self-efficacy refers to people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action to produce specific outcomes (Bandura 1977, 193). Self-efficacy is not simply one's perceptions of one's amount of personal skills, but is a judgment of one's ability to use the skills one possesses at a specific point in time to produce a certain outcome. Perceived self-efficacy is concerned with judgements of personal capability, whereas self-esteem is concerned with judgements of self-worth (Bandura 2000, 11). Efficacy perceptions are influenced by past experience, verbal persuasion, vicarious and imaginal experiences, and physiological and affective states (Bandura 1986, 7). It is also possible to be confident to not succeed at a task whereas self-efficacy is the foundation with which one is prepared to deal with a task at hand.

Guillén and Feltz (2011, 3) established the first framework specifically aimed at referee self-efficacy, which they renamed refficacy to emphasize its uniqueness for sports officials. The framework is shown in Figure 2.

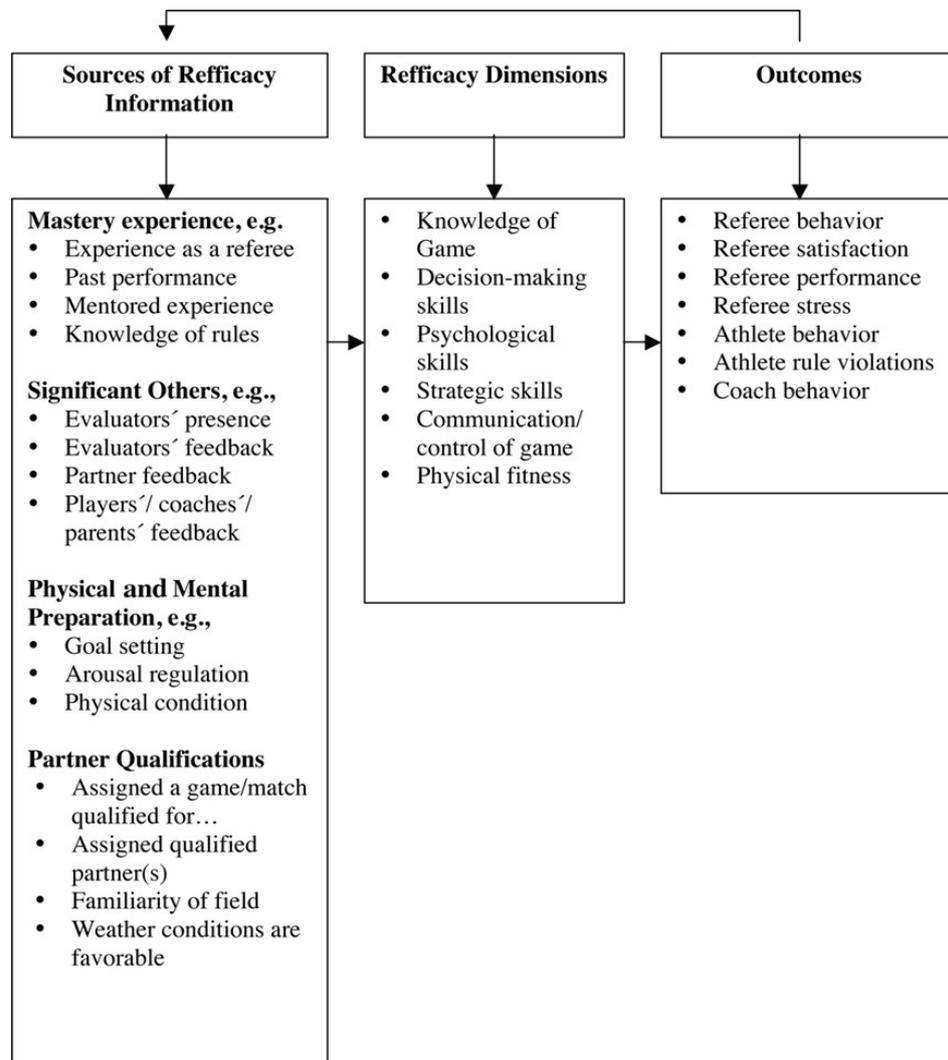


Figure 2: Conceptual model of refficity (Guillén and Feltz) 2011

The framework establishes six key dimensions for successful officiating: game knowledge, decision-making skills, psychological skills, strategic skills, communications, and physical fitness. The sources of these components are mastery experience, significant others, physical and mental preparation, and partner qualifications. Refficity is based on other teacher, managerial, and coaching frameworks and adds the official's need for working with a team of other officials, split-second decision making and the environment of possible verbal, unfriendly audience. According to this conceptual model of referee efficacy, the extent to which referees believe in their capacity to perform successfully is hypothesised to influence, amongst other factors, also referee performance (MacMahon 2015, 141).

The refficity dimensions influence outcomes. The more sources and dimensions you have under control the better you can manage the outcomes, even when they fall out of your control. All outcomes, positive and negative, are brought straight back as sources for further refficity. High efficacy referees are hypothesized to demonstrate faster and more accurate decisions, have greater physical fitness, have athletes and coaches report more

satisfaction with referee performance, have co-referees who report more satisfaction in working with their counterpart referee, report lower referee stress, and have fewer athlete rule violations than low efficacy referees (Guillén & Feltz 2011, 4).

Officials should try out a variety of training methods to improve and develop. Among them are psychological or mental training items such as visualization. Mental imagery (or visualization) is a skill most high-level athletes and coaches will use on a regular basis in training and competition to improve performance (Menard 2010, 17). Menard uses visualization with his clients to learn a new skill or tackle a difficult skill. Nothing however can replace being on the field and experiencing how the game is played and the speed at which it is played. Performance accomplishments have been shown to have the strongest effect on self-efficacy and performance, while vicarious experiences such as modeling have shown positive yet weaker effects. Verbal persuasion and physiological states have also been demonstrated to mediate self-efficacy, although some research has failed to support these links. (Vealey, Hayashi, Garner-Holman, & Giacobbi 1998, 55.)

Research has repeatedly shown that a growth mindset fosters a healthier attitude toward practice and learning, a hunger for feedback, a greater ability to deal with setbacks, and significantly better performance over time (Dweck 2009, 1). A person with a growth mindset focuses on learning and takes authority for such learning. According to Dweck (2007, 11), fixed mindset thinkers refuse to take risks and are afraid of making mistakes. Such individuals have a false sense of superiority and are undermined by a deep sense of self-doubt. One may never become perfect at what they do but with a growth mindset and a strong sense of self-efficacy, learning can take place in all forms and the process can continue to move forward. It is about the process and not the result.

2.4 Training and Development

Umpire development has mainly been left up to the national federations and there is not a European wide umpire development program to date. However, steps have been taken in recent years to evaluate umpires participating in European games and tournaments and document progress or regression in such evaluations. CEB also attempts to hold at least two training clinics each year, but participants are required to pay for their own flights and pay a nominal fee for the training session, which can limit participation numbers. National federations are still responsible for nominating umpires from their nation based on their own criteria. Once at a tournament they are added to the register of active umpires and evaluated. Should CEB need additional umpires for a tournament due to a shortage they select an umpire that is in their register with a high enough evaluation for that tournament

and invited to attend. CEB stays out of the initial selection process. For worldwide tournaments governed by the WBSC, there is a separate evaluation based on nominations from national federations and the WBSC usually holds one European clinic annually. Recently there has been a requirement to attend the clinics run by CEB or the WBSC but there is a grandfather clause for several umpires that have been active over the years and have proven their abilities.

The umpire is supported by the MLB Official Baseball Rules (OBR). Most training is focused on the rulebook and the mechanics, placement and movement, by officials to carry out their duties. More emphasis could be placed on how to handle the game to make the pace of the game quicker to shorten games, which was a major complaint (41%) by officials responding to the EBUS. More time could also be spent with videos of unique, difficult situations, as well as how to handle people and how to diffuse stressful or emotional situations. Any officials training should involve not only the rules of the game, but the physical and mental aspects which the umpire will encounter. Blair III, Titlebaum and Daprano (2013) recommend that local officiating organizations offer programs on how to handle hostile situations. This could include role-playing in fictitious scenarios and allow experienced officials to give examples of situations they have experienced and how they resolved them or how they could have better handled them. As mentioned earlier, 46% of European umpires claimed they did not have access to a mentor or were unaware if one was available. According to EBUS respondents, approximately 17% of umpires in Europe do not have a current rule book, which was revised, reorganized and clarified in 2015. Having up-to-date materials provides umpires with the opportunity to officiate games equally as their peers in other countries.

Two ideas for official development have been suggested in recent years. The first is MacMahon, & al. (2015, 14) Foundations, Talent, Elite, Mastery (FTEM) framework based on the 2013 integrated framework by Gulbin & al for the optimization of sport and athlete development and can be viewed below in Figure 3. A key feature of the FTEM framework is that it takes into account the three different sport pathways alongside the officiating excellence pathway (MacMahon & al. 2015, 17). Three of the four main stages have sub-stages within them leading to the final Mastery stage. In the European case, the author suggests that the Foundations stage would consist of officiating local youth leagues, lower divisional or recreational leagues. The beginning stage would be volunteer assistance at games with limited interest or knowledge. This would lead to indirect training via discussions with peers or mentors leading to classroom or material training and evaluation. At the Talent stage the umpire would then start umpiring more games each season, receive additional training and possibly start to officiate higher level games occasionally. At the

Elite stage, the umpire would work regularly at higher levels of baseball, working championship games and begin to officiate European games and tournaments. At the Mastery stage, the umpire would be highly trained and officiate international games and tournaments, such as World Cups, World Championships, Olympics, NCAA college baseball in the US, or make a living in one of the top amateur or professional leagues around the world.

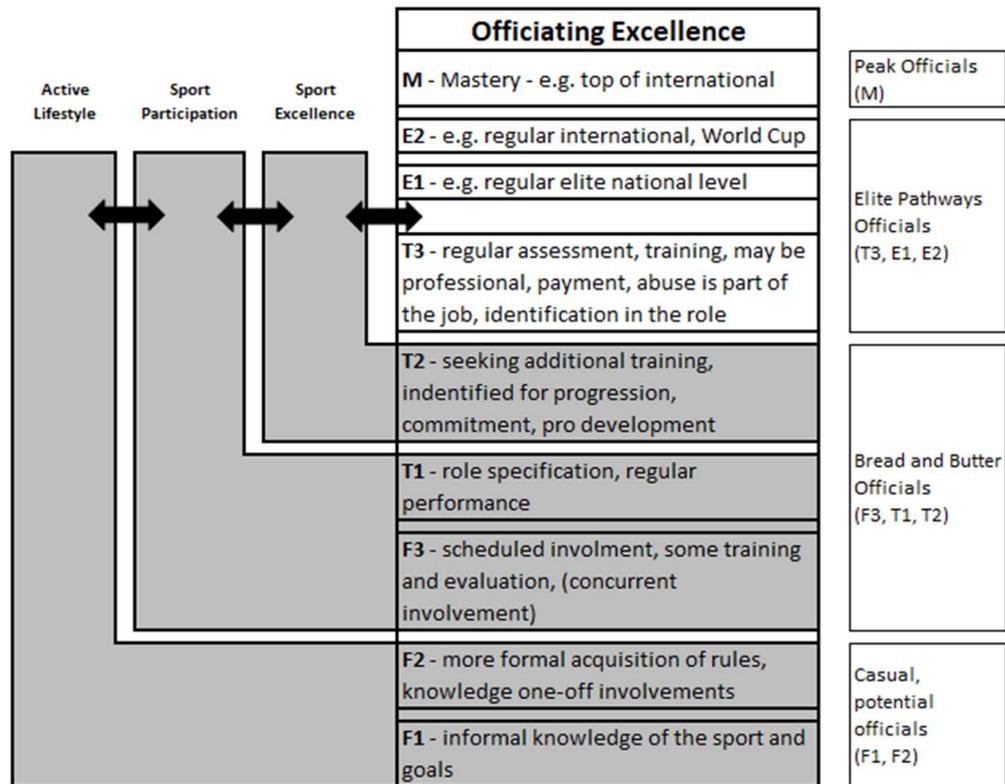


Figure 3: Framework of development for officials. Adapted from Gulbin & al.

As European national federations are still reliant on player-umpires the FTEM pathway considers entry into officiating via an active lifestyle, participant, or sport excellence. These sports pathways allow individuals the opportunity to become officials at an appropriate level and the possibility to improve and develop from their individual point of entry accordingly.

A second framework, Long Term Officials Development (LTOD) (see Figure 4 below), has arisen from another athlete based framework, Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) developed by Sport for Life in Canada. LTOD is being used in Canadian soccer federations in several provinces, is spreading to other sports in the country, and its main goal is to develop officials based on each individual's personal goals. LTOD has three themes: Discover, Develop and Excel. This is cut from the six themes in LTAD, as umpires are expected to perform at a high level from the first time they take the field, no matter what level

game they officiate. LTOD's seven main areas for success are: mentorship/coaching, technical leadership, education, recruitment and retention, talent identification, fitness and training, competition. LTOD gives umpires one of two pathway options, a Talented Pathway which can lead to major national and international competition and perhaps even a professional career or a 4 Life Pathway which provides the skills needed for grassroots, district, and regional competition. LTOD provides a link between the two pathways for those who wish to advance to the Talented Pathway and for those who wish to mentor or downshift to the 4 Life Pathway.

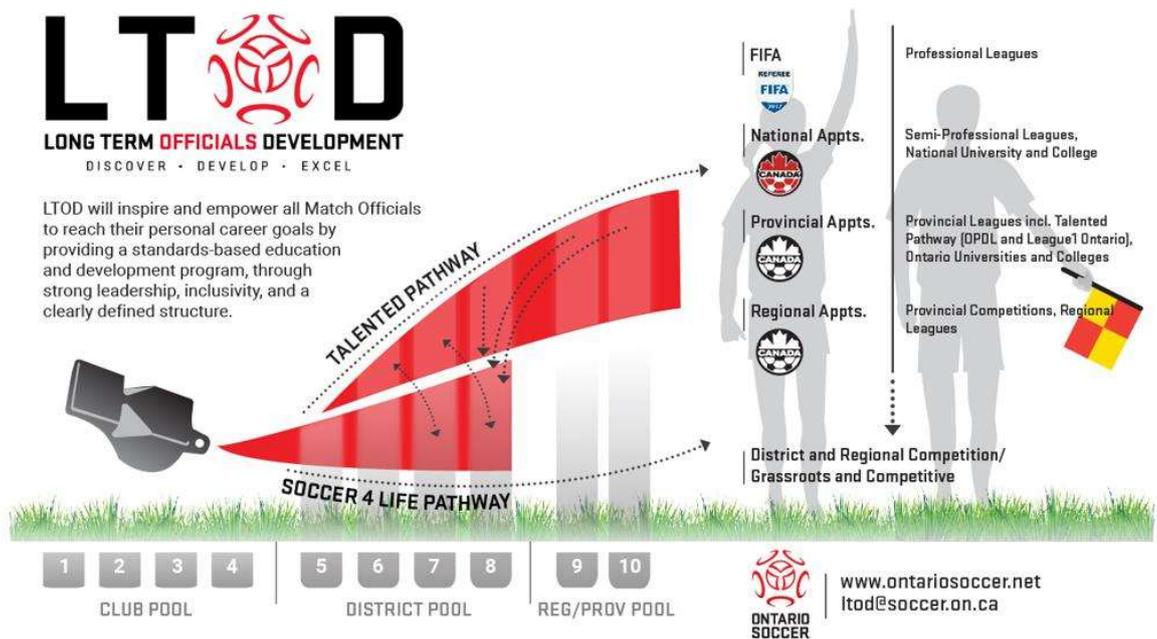


Figure 4: Long Term Officials Development (LTOD) Livingston and Forbes

Both frameworks provide opportunities for autonomy of choice which allows individual levels of challenge and enjoyment. Both frameworks consider a variety of entry points and acknowledge prior sport experience. CEB would be wise to establish either one of these frameworks with the baseball umpire in mind and can adapt it to the conditions of the baseball environment in Europe. A clear pathway assists umpires make autonomous decisions about their own development and sets standards for local, national, continental, and international levels of officiating.

3 Objectives and Limitations

The amount of research on sports officials is increasing but most available research deals with sports officials from sports other than baseball. Incomplete data makes it difficult to document the exact nature and extent of the retention problem (Cuskelly & Hoye 2004, 17). Umpires are essential for sport competition, yet understanding what experiences will ensure their participation in umpiring has to date received little scholarly attention (Kellett & Warner 2011, 471). Without sports officials, there would be no games, competitions, tournaments, or championships. Sports officials are there to protect the integrity of the games, their rules and traditions.

The objective of this thesis is to benchmark the current situation for baseball officials in Europe. An additional objective was to investigate recruiting, retention-attrition and efficacy issues common to sports officials. Via this research it is hoped to create a publication for baseball umpires, to which they may return to at any given moment to know more about what it takes to become or maintain being an umpire. The goal is that the manual will provide umpires with ways to cope with the physical and mental strains of officiating baseball games. Providing the right kinds of materials could help entice those considering to umpire or are required to umpire, assist those continuing to umpire, and limit the number of dropouts, due to burnout or other reasons. The manual would look at the whole person in relationship to the game the umpire will work and find ways to increase the enjoyment of working the game through mindful preparation, focus in times of stress in game situations, how to give and take feedback, and physically recover after a game.

Umpires have been typically managed as merely service-providers in sport, rather than being understood as participants in the activity (Kellett & Warner 2011, 472). In some way, umpires might be considered spectators of the sport that they officiate, but they are simultaneously participants with the sport (Kellett & Wagner 2011, 483). The time investment made by umpires to train and the financial investment in apparel and protective gear is significant. Also, the development path to receiving higher-level, elite games can be long and unclear.

One of the main constraints is that each of the 39 European baseball federations has a different baseball history and culture, a different level of expectation to compete at an international level, and maybe most importantly different levels of financial support. Another constraint is the lack of research readily available to date and the lack of funding for research of sports officials, especially on baseball and, in particular, baseball in Europe. The lack of funding for officiating research often stems from the priority placed by National

Sports Organizations on other activities (MacMahon & al. 2015, 6). Kellett and Wagner site G. Cavallero 1988 article “Psychological Characteristics of the Ideal Baseball Umpire: Study of a sample of Italian Umpires” as one of the only studies to focus specifically on the European, in this case Italian, baseball umpire. Unfortunately, this study was unavailable for review.

The relative dearth of information on the sport officiating experience is problematic, but so too is the limited scope of the investigations to date (Livingston & al. 2017, 1). Many of the studies read for this paper dealt with sports officials as a generic group and studies that had a focus were mainly aimed at officiating the sports of basketball, Association football (soccer), and rugby. This posed the problem of wading through material available that was not specifically meant for baseball umpires and their unique set of tasks. While many similarities can be found between the officiating the variety of sports on offer, material specific to baseball officiating was limited.

Historically, sports officials have been understudied in comparison to their coaching counterparts, with a small but critical mass of research on the psychological aspects of sports officiating first emerging in the mid-to-late 1980s and early 1990s (Livingston & Forbes 2016, 343) In recent years however, more focus has been placed on the sports official and how they prepare, perform and deal with their profession. Hancock & al. (2015, 32) researched sports officials’ motivations to begin, continue and quit their relative sports. Much is known about why officials leave officiating but more can be done to investigate the reasons why they start, stay or how they cope.

Follow up research could be done by doing interviews with umpires, players and coaches to examine their views of umpires and their positive or negative impact on the game. Visiting games in each of the countries could also provide a perspective on how umpires are treated, their level of preparation, professionalism and knowledge of the game. As baseball is a male dominated sport, future research could also examine similarities in softball and if there are any differences between the male and female officials in each country.

4 Method

This thesis project was started by considering what kind of manual would be needed by officials to perform their duties. While gathering materials the question arose, what is the purpose of such a manual and what problem is it attempting to solve. It was at this point the manual became a secondary issue and the matter of how to recruit and retain officials moved the forefront as a more intriguing topic. Efficacy of officials seemed to be a major issue for retention and with the availability of the Referee Self-Efficacy Scale, found its place in the material.

The method used to research the background material was literature review. The method used to collect data was quantitative research via a questionnaire. European umpires were sent two questionnaires in English via Google Forms, one a general survey, the European Baseball Umpire Survey (EBUS) (Jones 2018) includes questions pertaining to how they started, length of time as an umpire, greatest sources of frustration and resources available. The second, the Referee Efficacy Scale (REFS) was adapted from the Referee Self-Efficacy Scale (Myers, N., Feltz, D., Guillén, F., Dithurbide, L. 2013) with the term referee replaced with the term umpire. The survey was open between January 1, 2018 and February 9, 2018, allowing for nearly 6 weeks of response time. Names were collected from a variety of courses held in Europe, umpire associations in various countries, and personal contacts. National Federations were also requested to forward the survey to their member umpires, which was helpful in only a small number of countries. In addition invitations were placed on two Facebook groups dedicated to European baseball umpires. One group was the Amateur Baseball Umpire Association – Europe (ABUA-E) and the other was the Jim Evans European Classic (JEEC). Both pages were useful in getting the word out about both surveys and creating more responses.

Fortunately, throughout the past decade, there has been a growing interest in sports officials and therefore some progress made in gaining a broader understanding of their experiences, many of which are used here.

4.1 European Baseball Umpire Survey (EBUS)

To have some facts upon which to investigate the state of baseball umpiring, the author created the European Baseball Umpire Survey (EBUS) to quantify for the first time the views and opinions of European baseball umpires. To see and track any positive or negative developments, a baseline must be set from which further research can be used and compared. A 42-question survey was sent to 450 European umpires from which 245 answers were received for a response rate of 54.4%. The responses were received from 36

of the 39-member federations of the Confederation of European Baseball (CEB), the governing body of baseball in Europe. Both these figures exceeded all expectations and is interpreted as an acute level of interest in the subject.

Little has been known about the situation among the umpire population in Europe. This is a group that has not been studied in the 65-year history of CEB. The scarcity of research regarding the recruitment and retention of referees is surprising since it represents one of the major problems of nonprofit sport clubs across countries (Wicker & Frick 2016, 3).

See Appendix 1 for the entire questionnaire.

4.2 Referee Self-Efficacy Scale (REFS)

Referee self-efficacy was defined as the extent to which referees believe they have the capacity to perform successfully in their job (Myers & al. 2012, 738). Guillén and Feltz (2011, 4) proposed that highly efficacious referees should be more accurate in their decisions, more effective in their performance, more committed to their profession, have more respect from coaches, administrators, and other officials and suffer less stress from officiating than less efficacious referees. Myers & al. created the Referee Self-Efficacy Scale to measure areas of each sport that are to be monitored by officials. This scale is the best way currently to measure knowledge of the game, communication skills, pressure by participants and spectators and decision making by officials. Of the 450 officials that were contacted, 178 took the time to also take the REFS survey.

See Appendix 2 for the entire questionnaire. See Appendix 4 for the original version of the REFS survey.

5 Results

A total of 245 people from 36 of the 39 CEB members nations responded to the EBUS. Both numbers exceeded expectations and is interpreted as an interest in the topic by individuals across Europe. The complete response totals by nation can be seen in Chart 1 below.

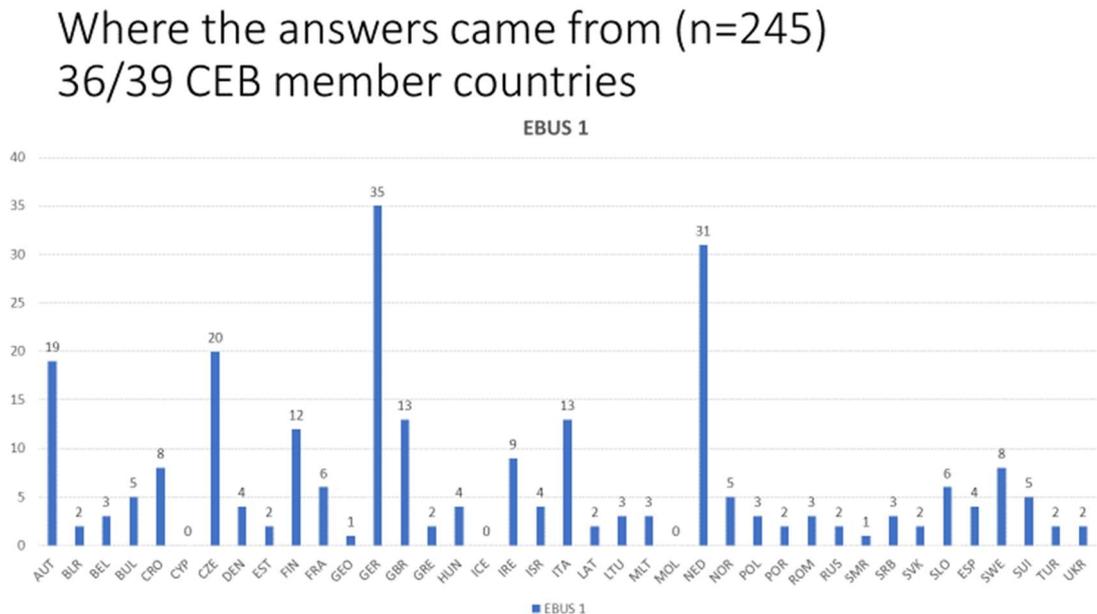


Chart 1: Where the answers came from

There was an expectation to receive more answers from Italy and Spain with their large baseball federations and high level of league play. The reason for the low turnout could be due to language difficulties in responding to an English language survey. This is something to be considered in the future.

In response to how umpires got started, a majority (55%) started out of their own interest while 32% were fulfilling a club responsibility to supply an umpire for a game or games. 75% of respondents were former baseball players, 9% were coaches, 4% were players of another sport and 2% were officials of another sport. Most of the umpires got their first experience officiating between the ages of 10 and 19 (27%) and the next largest group was over the age of 35 (24%) with the 20-25 age group close behind at 23%. As was somewhat expected, 25% of respondents had been umpires for 11-20 years with the next largest group those who had umpired 21-30 years at 22%. There were only 13% of respondents who had umpired 3 years or less. It was interesting to find out that 60% consider themselves umpires only, while 25% considered themselves players who umpired and 15% umpires who played.

Umpires receiving access to a mentor was 54% while 39% did not have access to a mentor and 7% were not sure if one was available to them. It is good to see that 75% of respondents received some form of training before umpiring their first game, but it is troublesome to learn that 25% of respondents did not receive training prior to their first game. Of those receiving training, that training lasted two days (27%) or 1 day (18%). It was good to see that 27% of respondents were trained for 5 or more days. The amount of training by is displayed in Chart 2 below.

How long did the training last?

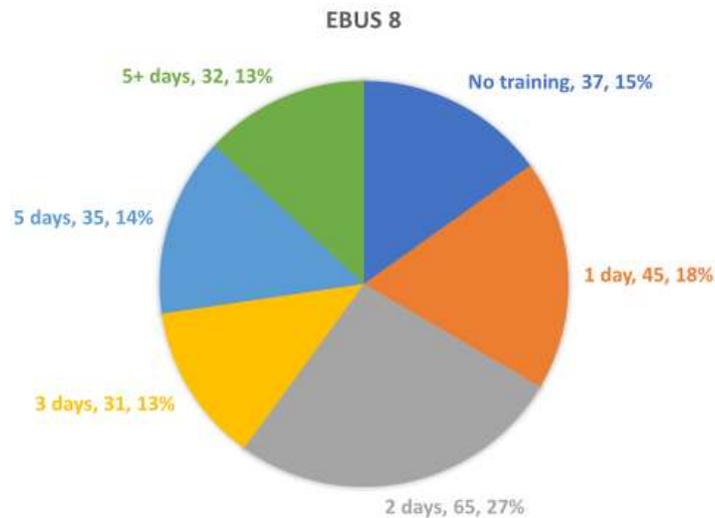


Chart 2: How long did the training last?

Rules, theory and on-field mechanics were clearly the most trained items as seen in Chart 3 below at 87%, 85% and 73% respectively. Cage work (36%) and video review (28%) were less used to train umpires.

What did the training include?

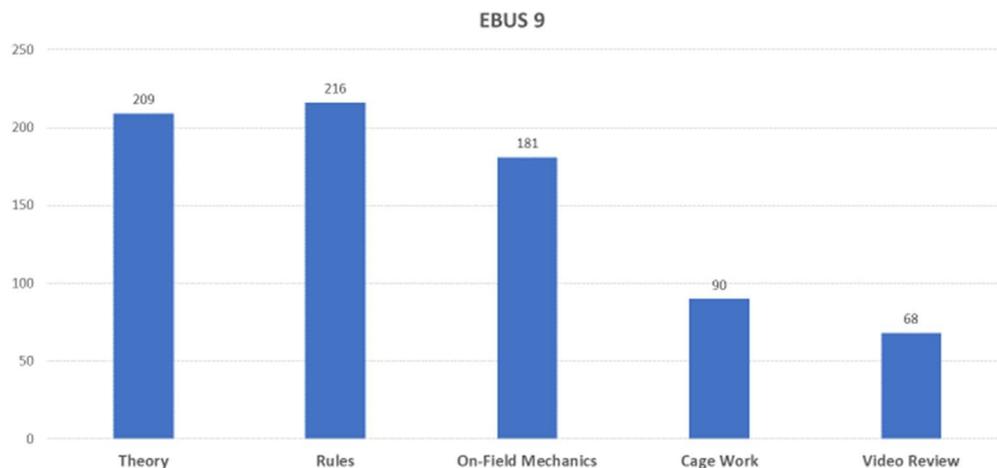


Chart 3: What did the training include?

A positively high number (66%) of umpires had been trained in the last year or 2 but of concern is the fact the 18% of umpires have not participated in a training session in over 4 years. In Chart 4 we can see that 57% of respondents reported annual training sessions in their country, which is a positive finding, while 19% reported sessions are only held when needed or when requested. Further research would be needed to investigate in more detail what is covered and how much times is spent on each subject during shorter training sessions of 1 or 2 days to find out the best ways to effectively and quickly train European umpires and exactly how many hours are spent in the classroom versus practical training on the field.

How often does your NF / UA hold a clinic?

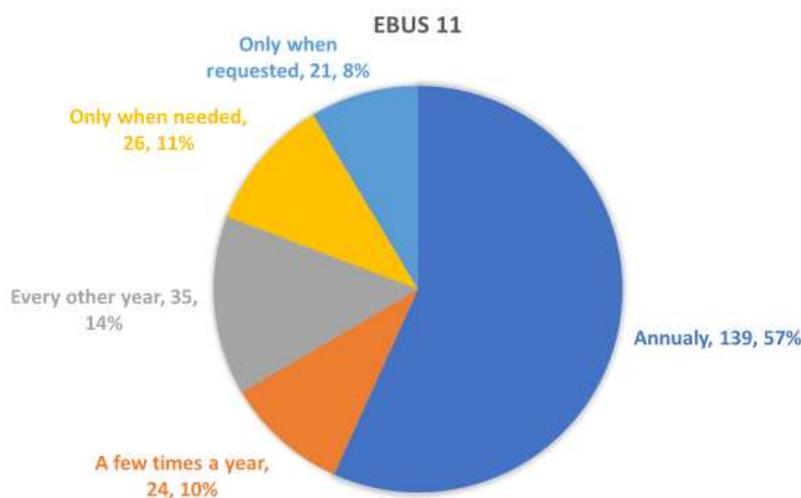


Chart 4: How often does your national federation / umpire association hold a clinic?

58% of respondents noted that there is an umpire or official association in their country while 42% claimed there was not or they were unsure if there was such an association available. 85% mentioned there was an official dress code and 15% either did not know or claimed that there was no dress code. It is very positive to see that 82% of respondents own their own protective gear and another 7% own some but not all protective gear. For those who do not yet own their own gear, 21% reported that their national federation provided gear for games while another 11% mentioned that the home team provides gear to visiting umpires who need gear. 55% claimed their national federation does not supply gear for those who need it for games and another 13% were uncertain.

The 2-man umpire system is the most commonly used system in national leagues. Chart 5 describes the level of familiarity with the most commonly used umpire systems in Europe. According to EBUS, 51% of respondents feel extremely familiar and another 30% very familiar with this system. For the 3-man system, used often at CEB continental club and national tournaments, the results were a little less positive. Only 16% felt extremely familiar and 22% very familiar with the 3-man system. 31% did however feel moderately familiar using the 3-man system. The 4-man system is used at most major international club and national tournaments as well as for all major professional leagues. The results here were a little worrying. Only 9% claimed to feel extremely familiar and 16% very familiar with the 4-man system. Those who felt not at all familiar or only slightly familiar with the 4-man system were 29% for each category. This is an area that clearly needs attention.

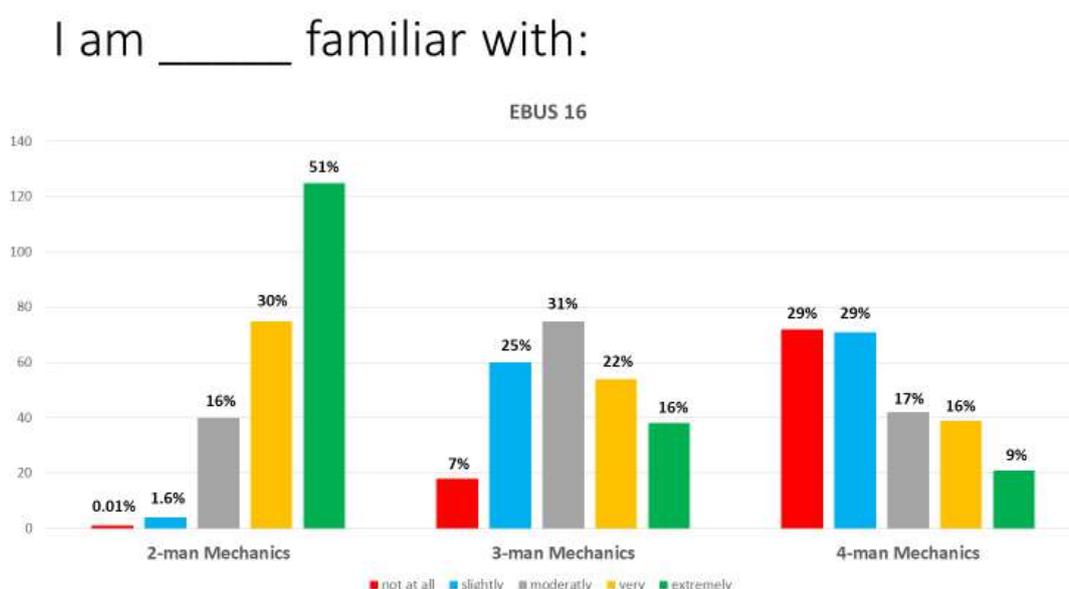


Chart 5: I am _____ familiar with 2-man, 3-man, and 4-man umpire mechanics?

As mentioned earlier, the rules of baseball were one of the most common items trained. Having a current rule book would therefore be beneficial for such training and use in officiating games. Surprisingly 17% of umpires claimed that they have access to a rule book that is older than the last major reorganization of the OBR in 2015. Rule books are available in 14 different European languages other than English based on the information received via the EBUS, however 8% of respondents were not sure if one was available or claimed that one was not available (25%).

Chart 6 gives us an overview of the negative experiences experienced by Europe umpires. On the issue of verbal abuse, 89% of respondents claimed to have experienced to have encountered it but only 6% claimed it was often. Another 27% described encountering verbal abuse rarely while 50% mentioned it happened very rarely. Players, fans, and coaches were named as most to blame for verbal abuse at 40%, 30%, and 22% respectively. Physical harassment was fortunately low with 84% never experiencing it with 14% of umpires claiming it was very rare. Of concern are three phenomena where 46% of umpires mentioning being confronted after a game, 35% experiencing some form of intimidation and 33% experiencing criticism in the media or social media. These are issues that demand immediate attention by national federations to create a less hostile environment for umpires.

Have you experienced any of the following?

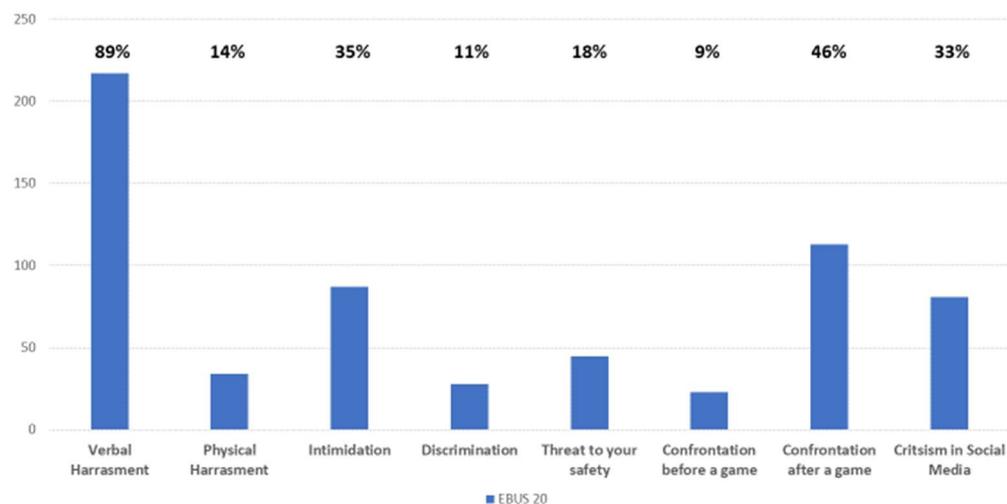


Chart 6: Have you experienced any of the following?

At the national level, respondents clearly felt supported in carrying out their duties giving their national federations either a 4 (32%) or 5 (24%) on a 6-point Likert scale with 5 being very much support. Only 11% rated their national federation a 1 with 4% giving a 0 rating of not at all. At the continental level, CEB did not fare as well. 30% of respondents gave CEB a 0 or not at all supported, with 14% giving a 1. At the top end of the scale, only 7% gave a 5 or very much supported and 11% giving a 4. This could be that some of the umpires have not experienced CEB umpiring first hand or have not been of CEB's involvement in umpire programs in their nation or region. Better communication here could easily assist in improving these figures.

Regarding the positive image or reputation of umpiring, 35% responded that they felt it true that umpires had a positive image and another 40% claimed that this was somewhat

true. Only 9% suggested that this was false while 13% believed it to be only somewhat false. Asked if umpires felt appreciated for their work, 42% agreed that they were appreciated and an additional 33% said that they sometimes felt appreciated. Only 1% felt they were never appreciated and 7% feeling almost never appreciated.

It has been claimed that finding new umpire is difficult and EBUS respondents agreed with this claim. Fully 58% mentioned that it is extremely difficult to find new umpires and another 39% described it as somewhat difficult. As for the reasons why it is difficult to find new umpires, respondents were asked freely to write their own answers. The top responses were: lack of interest, money, travel, everyone plays, and training. Clearly more research is needed to investigate this dimension to more carefully to pinpoint the causes more accurately.

As was discussed earlier, financial remuneration is an extrinsic motivational issue for both recruitment and retention. Often new recruits, and especially youth, are happy to be paid for being allowed to be involved in the game. Those who have been around a while are often satisfied not to lose money in the deal but according to EBUS, 47% are dissatisfied with the compensation involved with umpiring. This issue is also tied to the amount of travel to and from games and the length of the games themselves and is not solely a monetary matter.

One aspect of support for umpires is feedback. A well worded evaluation can assist an umpire in their development. 72% of EBUS respondents reported receiving such feedback. Chart 7 on page 31 indicates that feedback came from a wide variety of sources with the umpire partner being the most recognized at 66%. Coaches came in second at 50% and players third at 36%. It was a little surprising to see that the umpire supervisor or mentor only came in at 30% each and can be explained by the possible unavailability for such a role in some countries. More awareness can be afforded to communicate better what aspects of umpiring should be better paid attention to for evaluation purposes and communicate such information throughout the umpire ranks in those countries that are lacking mentors.

From whom do you receive feedback?

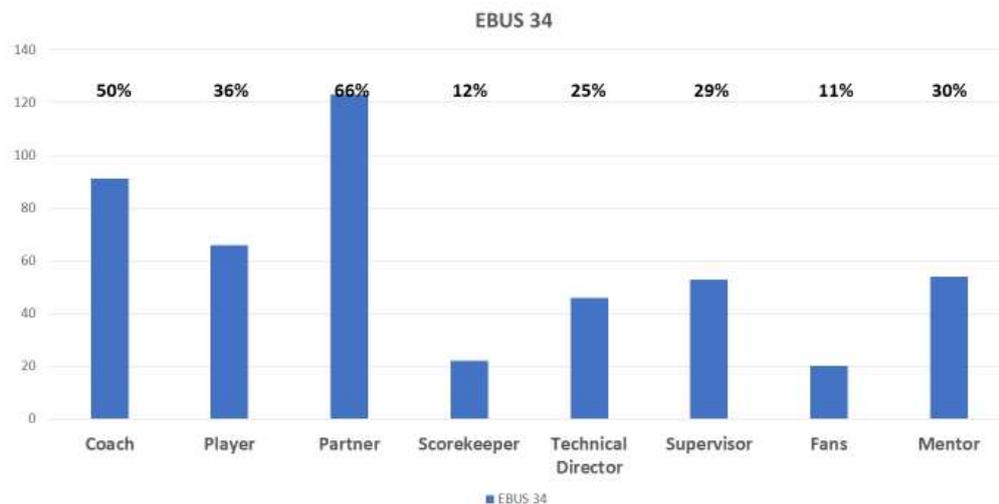


Chart 7: From whom do you receive feedback?

There are many reasons why people take up sports officiating. In the case of European baseball umpires an overwhelming majority of respondents (90%) answered that it was the “Love of the Game”. Some found it simply necessary (37%) to do the job while many accepted umpiring as the next stage in their career (34%). 26% felt they could do a better job, 22% used umpiring as their way to stay fit and only 15% used umpiring for financial reasons. The biggest sources of frustration for umpires were the length of games (41%), field conditions (32%) and travel to games (29%). Officiating games in subpar conditions can be demotivating for some. Often there are not special facilities for the officials to change in or to confer with each other before or after games leaving them feeling not a part of the endeavor. Add to that the need to travel long distances to such conditions at times can cause one to debate why they participate. Other sources of frustration included: players (24%), better games (23%), coaches (21%), compensation (19%), rule knowledge (19%), lack of promotion (14%), and their umpire partner (13%). National federation should take note of some of these frustrations and assist their officials in improving the conditions and environment in which they must work. Despite any frustrations, European umpires seem quite resilient and many claimed that they have not considered quitting officiating (30%). Those who did consider quitting claimed private reasons (22%) or professional reasons (7%) for doing so. Only a handful of respondents mentioned poor pay, abuse, loss of interest or burnout as the cause for their considering quitting.

Without umpires, games and leagues would not be played. Many European umpires are working a high number of games each season, despite the European season being somewhat shorter with less overall games played than in collegiate baseball in the US and clearly less than professional baseball in the US, Japan, Korea, Taiwan or Australia. 22% of respondents are working more than 50 games each season. Chart 8 is a pie chart signifying the average number of games officiated during a season. Nearly 35% of respondents are working over 40 games a season. This most likely includes all levels of baseball in their country plus any continental or international games. An additional 16% are working between 30 and 40 games each season. This is a heavy workload for a seasonal sport and means many weekends away from family or work. Another 25% work 11-30 game each season. In some case, umpires may have to work alone. 7% said that they very often had to work alone and another 9% said they often work alone. 15% claimed they only occasionally had to work alone and 44% said this was the case very rarely. 25% mentioned never having to work alone.

How many games do you umpire on average per season?

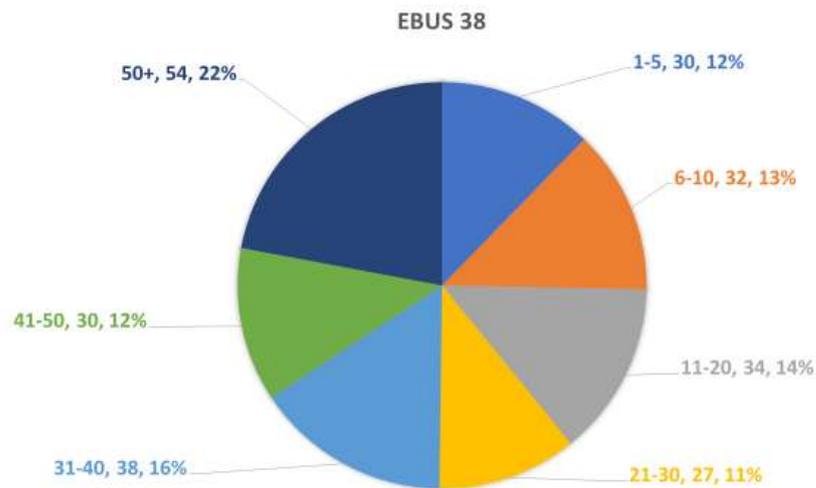


Chart 8: How many games do you umpire on average per season?

Charts 9 through 12 show responses to the REFS survey concerning official self-efficacy. A total of 175 responses were received from 34 of the 39 CEB member countries. This varies somewhat from the 245 responses to the EBUS. Reasons for this could be time factors to answer 2 surveys or not noticing the second survey despite both surveys being clearly marked in the email or message sent to invitees. As with the EBUS survey, Germany and the Netherlands were the top 2 countries from which respondents came and Austria was third. 97% of respondents were male and 46% of respondents were between the ages of 36-50.

The survey was focused on baseball umpires, but some of the umpire also had some experience officiating both fastpitch and slowpitch softball for women and co-ed leagues. The respondents came from all levels of baseball, from divisional all the way up to major international tournaments. A number of umpires did not declare their highest level of competition they participated in. Concerning their role as an umpire, 60% responded that they considered themselves as game umpires, while 17% defined themselves as crew chiefs, and another 20% defined themselves as Umpire in Chief.

Charts 9 deals with umpires' understanding the basics of the game, the rules of the game and mechanics used for the game. Respondents clearly feel they understand the basics of the game with 57% feeling a high understanding and no one feeling they were below average or had a low understanding. Regarding understanding the rules of the game, the amount of high understanding dropped to 34% while 41% felt an above average understanding. Only a couple of respondents felt low or below average understanding. For the understanding the mechanics needed by umpire to carry out their duties, the number claiming high understanding dropped to 31% while 38% felt an above average understanding and 29% an average understanding. This indicates that while officials know the game of baseball well enough they do not fully understand the intricacies of the rules and are not fully comfortable with their placements and movements on the field to make calls.

In the context of performing your umpire job, how confident are you in your ability to...

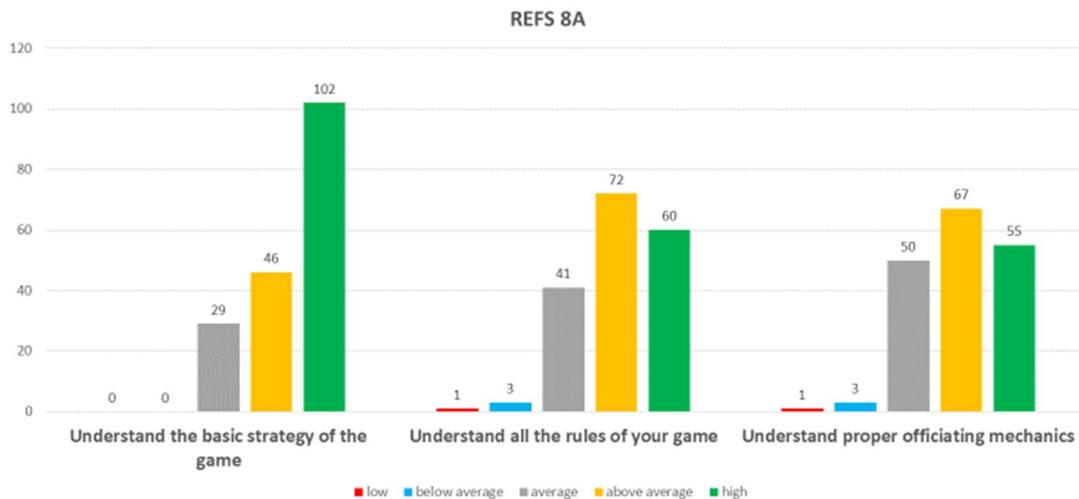


Chart 9: In the context of performing your umpire job, how confident are you in your ability to...?

Chart 10 covers decision making and respondents seem more confident and secure. 31% indicated high confidence in making critical decisions during game while 39% expressed above average confidence. Only 6% showed below average confidence. In response to making quick decisions, 34% said they have high confidence and 37% said they have above average confidence. Again, only 6% indicated below average confidence. To the question of being firm in decisions, 39% claimed a high level of confidence and 37% claimed above average confidences. Here only 3% said they have below average confidence.

In the context of performing your umpire job,
how confident are you in your ability to...

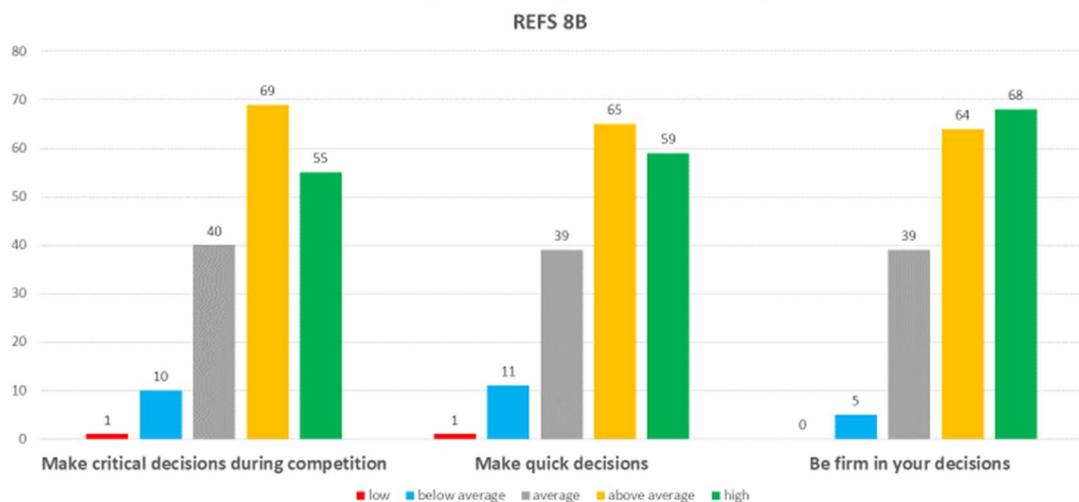


Chart 10: In the context of performing your umpire job, how confident are you in your ability to...?

Regarding influence by players, spectators and coaches European seem to manage reasonably well. Chart 11 shows us that respondents were especially uninfluenced by spectators with 53% indicating a high level and another 26% indicating an above average level. Only 7% claimed they have either a below average or low level of being uninfluenced. Respondents were equally uninfluenced by both players and coaches with 34% and 36% respectively showing a high level and 38% and 37% giving themselves an above average level of being uninfluenced. Only 7% indicated that they had a low or below average level for being uninfluenced.

In the context of performing your umpire job, how confident are you in your ability to...

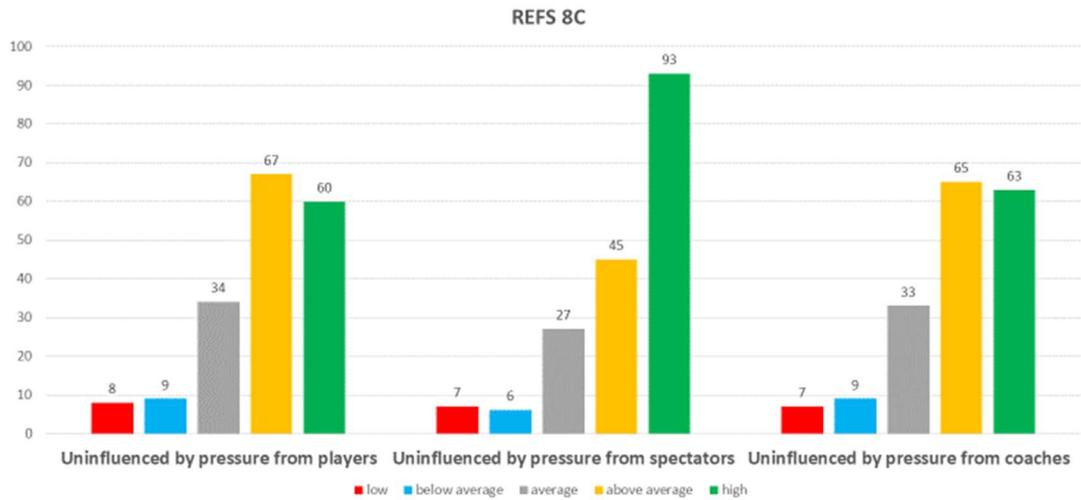


Chart 11: In the context of performing your umpire job, how confident are you in your ability to...?

In evaluating their confidence in communicating with others in Chart 12, we can find areas to improve on. Respondents were more confident when communicating with other umpires with 45% citing high level of confidence and another 37% feeling an above average level. Only one respondent claimed a below average level. In communicating with coaches only 30% felt they had a high level of confidence while 38% had an above average level and 9% felt they had below average confidence. Only 25% of respondents indicated that they felt a high level of confidence in communicating with players. 43% felt an above average level while 5% felt either below average or low average. While these numbers are not all bad, there seems to be room to improve and give officials more confidence in handling communications with both players and coaches.

In the context of performing your umpire job,
how confident are you in your ability to...

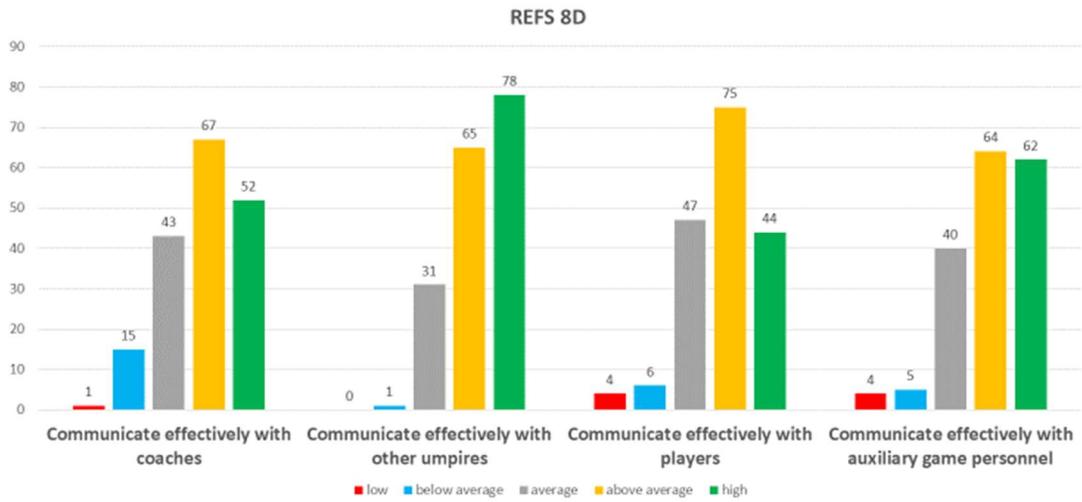


Chart 12: In the context of performing your umpire job, how confident are you in your ability to...?

6 Conclusions

The current reviews underline the importance of the findings within refereeing and officiating research and demonstrate that it is a multidisciplinary area which still has significant research gaps that need addressing (Dosseville & Laborde 2015, 3). We have learned that the issue is not solely a problem of recruitment and retention of umpires in European baseball. What this thesis has attempted to do is put the many concepts together in a package laid out for umpires of the game of baseball and address the sentiment of European umpires. We now know more than we previously did and can further address the issue more knowledgeably. This is a great step forward for umpiring and the game of baseball in Europe.

The good news is that the people umpiring in Europe are a dedicated, confident group and care about the sport in which they officiate. The successes by European players and teams in professional and international competition puts baseball into a spotlight that it has never experienced before. The reinstatement of baseball in the Olympic Games is certainly a marketing advantage that was missing for over 10 years and can assist in incentivizing people to consider taking up playing or officiating baseball. While this thesis can recommend some themes to consider when attempting to handle the issues of recruitment and retention, it is up to each European national federation and their umpires to find the most culturally suitable and financially responsible methods to carry out any of the suggestions they wish to implement in their country.

The bad news is that this is a problem that will never disappear completely and we have only begun to learn about the individuals, national federations and their background, involvement in, and feelings about umpiring. Questions asked and answered have led to new questions and should lead to more research. Without a professional league in Europe, umpiring will always be secondary summer occupation for those involved and limit the number of opportunities to practice and develop the skills needed. Funding is lacking and pressure is put on individuals and clubs to provide officials for developing leagues.

Because of the crucial role they play, sport officials should also be given every opportunity to improve their work (Lirgg & al. 2016, 48). National Federations must also show strong support for their umpires and the rules by which they officiate. Training needs to be organized so that it gives the officials the skills they will need to carry out their duties and deal with the people involved in the game. A tougher stance on verbal and written abuse of officials should be established in support of officials as well as increased recognition of the

work done. A clear pathway needs to be laid out in advance to allow each umpire the ability to decide for themselves to which level of performance they shall strive. If each umpire is given the autonomy to decide for themselves they may find a level of satisfaction that will support them in their career. A physical testing standard reflective of the physical demands required by a baseball umpire should be established to guide umpires to a healthy lifestyle and prepare them for the rigors of all levels of competition.

The office of communities, sport and recreation, in the Australian state of New South Wales has designed a program to address behavior toward officials and allow beginning officials an opportunity to ease into their first year of officiating. Simply having beginner officials wear a coloured vest identifying them as “in-training” will help build greater understanding among players, parents, spectators, and coaches (Umpire Recruitment Kit 2016, 10). This is fine for younger officials in youth games, but for older beginning officials it could be enough to simply wear an armband, which may also be more readily available. This is a step in the right direction to tackle conduct issues by players, coaches and fans. It would also be useful for leagues and federations to write down codes of conduct that they would like to be seen at their games.

Titlebaum & al. (2009, 107) had eight suggestions to help build a successful officials' program and each of them are covered in the following paragraphs. The first step, market the job, can have different looks in each European country and can be one of the more difficult things to accomplish. Titlebaum and his fellow authors suggests creating a positive and rewarding experience for the officials, thus providing incentive to new participants and motivation for existing referees [umpires] to continue in their positions. Many countries in Europe are also simultaneously attempting to promote the game of baseball to get more players. More players could result in more games which also means the need for more umpires. Both tasks could potentially be handled simultaneously if some focus is put on the role of the umpire to the game, its importance in supporting its development, and provide sufficient training to create competent officials.

The second step is to set standards for officials under consideration to be hired. National federations are not in a position often to be selective as to who is willing to officiate games and therefore need to encourage as many people as possible to come and see if they have what it takes to become an official. However, setting standards, roles and a pathway for the umpire will weed out any less than serious applicant and properly inform those who strive for bigger and better games.

The third suggestion, continually evaluate officials and the program, needs work in Europe. National federations are often so focused on and financially invested in their athletes and teams that little time or effort is given to umpire training and evaluation. CEB has made improvements and does regular evaluations at its tournaments but many of these evaluations are still done by people with little or no experience in umpiring. Also, such evaluations are not linked to the nomination process which is still the responsibility of each national federations. This can lead to favoritism or a “good-old boys’ network” and not be based on skill or knowledge of how to umpire. There is a current situation where there may be good umpires from countries that play a poor level of baseball. Currently there is little possibility for that umpire to be seen or recognized to work higher level tournaments. A proper evaluation system shared by all CEB members could possibly recognize such talent and allow that umpire the possibility to advance along an established pathway.

Suggestion number four, set up a mentoring program, needs to be emphasized more and can be done with local or national umpires or with other interested, well-trained European umpires via a variety of modern communication tools available. The setting up of a European-wide umpire forum or association could also be considered that would provide a platform for training, standards, or communication.

The fifth suggestion, create incentives for staff members, could be difficult if national federations or CEB do not set aside resources to take care of this area. National Federations should make more effort to reach out to their national sports organizations to search for available programs or needed funding.

The sixth suggestion, establish a job structure where students can advance within the program, refers to the establishment of a clear development program in which individuals can see where the program is leading and decide for themselves how far they wish to go within the program and what it will take to achieve such a level. Emphasis can be placed in the structure the needs at each level and remind and recognize the importance of the official at each level.

Suggestion number seven, set policies of how games will be assigned, helps recognize those who wish to umpire more and develop, and areas where umpires are needed and gives fair opportunities to all the available officials. Giving experienced umpires the right kind of challenging games and opportunities for up and coming umpires to work with other experienced umpires can assist development and inspire individuals.

Step eight, hold fans, participants, and officials accountable for their behavior during an event, requires responsibility not only by the people directly involved with the games being played but also by national federations to demand standards of behavior and set reprimands for those who do not abide by such standards. This alone can go a long way in establishing legitimacy for the sport and the national federation to attract people who are dedicated to build and positively develop the entire program.

In summary, I recommend the following actions to improve the state officiating in Europe:

- Promote baseball and the role of the umpire simultaneously
- Encourage participation with regular training and introductory umpire sessions
- Have friendly, exhibition, or non-competition games to allow intro-level games
- Find and use mentors to work with newer officials on and off the field
- Establish a national or regional umpire association to share information and knowledge
- Establish an officials' pathway
- Make officials a tangible part of the national federation
- Reward and recognize diligent and successful umpires
- Write a Code of Conduct for players, coaches, and fans

These suggestions are reasonable and not impossible to achieve but does require time and resources from each national federation. This can only be done properly by allocating appropriate resources to the field of officiating. CEB can assist by promoting good methods and taking current successful examples in use by members and make countries in need aware of what programs could work in their country. 17 countries have some form of umpire or officials' association but there were several people who responded that such an organization did not exist in their country or they were not sure their country had an official's association. This points to the fact that information regarding these supportive organizations is not reaching all the officials and improved communications could provide umpires with information and needed support.

Looking more deeply into sports officiating was a rewarding and educating experience that will allow me to become a better official myself and also provide more support for other officials, their local and national federations, and the European confederation.

There is a reason to believe that the future for baseball and its officials is bright. There will, however, always be a need to find more people to fill in spots vacated by individuals who retire, become injured or have quit due to burnout or frustration. This will require planning and coordination between all shareholders involved with baseball at all levels in each country. The better we can set up systems, organizations, pathways, frameworks and support networks for the officials that protect the game of baseball, the better prepared we will be for the future.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

EUROPEAN BASEBALL UMPIRE SURVEY

Tony Jones
Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences - Vierumäki, Finland (2017)

This survey looks into the reasons why, when and how people start umpiring, stay in umpiring, and quit, or contemplate quitting, umpiring. This survey also attempts to measure the current atmosphere for umpiring in Europe. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Please answer all the following questions as truthfully and accurately as possible. Your identity will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation!

* Required

1. **Email address ***

2. **Country ***

3. **How did you get started in umpiring? ***

Mark only one oval.

- own interest
- fulfilling club responsibility
- recommended by friend
- recommended by other sport
- simply wanted to try
- Other: _____

4. **Before umpiring baseball, I was a _____ ***

Mark only one oval.

- Baseball Player
- Baseball Coach
- Official in another sport
- Teacher
- Player in another sport
- Coach in another sort
- Other: _____

5. **At what age did you start umpiring? ***

Mark only one oval.

- under 10
- 10-19
- 20-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 35+

6. **How long have you been umpiring? ***

Mark only one oval.

- 1 year
- 2-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21-30 years
- 30+ years

7. **Were you given access to an umpire mentor? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- don't know

8. **Were you trained before your first game? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

9. **How long did the training last? ***

Mark only one oval.

- No training
- 1 day
- 2 days
- 3 days
- 5 days
- Longer than 5 days

10. **What did the training include? ***

Check all that apply.

- Theory
- Rules
- On-field mechanics
- Cage work (plate umpire balls & strikes)
- Video review

11. **How long ago was the last clinic in which you participated? ***

Mark only one oval.

- 1-2 years ago
- 3-4 years ago
- 5-6 years ago
- 7-8 years ago
- more than 8 years ago

12. **How often does your national federation / umpire association hold an umpire clinic? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Annually
- A few times each year
- Every other year
- Only when needed
- Only when requested

13. **Does your federation have an umpire or officials association? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

14. **Does your league/federation have an umpire dress code? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

15. **Do you have your own protective gear? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Some but not all

16. **Does your league/federation provide protective gear if you do not have your own? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- not sure
- home team provides

17. **I am _____ familiar with: ***

Mark only one oval per row.

	not at all	slightly	moderately	very	extremely
2-man mechanics	<input type="radio"/>				
3-man mechanics	<input type="radio"/>				
4-man mechanics	<input type="radio"/>				

18. **The most recent rule book you currently have is from what year? ***

Mark only one oval.

- 2015-2017
- 2010-2014
- 2005-2009
- 2000-2004
- earlier than 2000

19. **Does your federation have rule books in your own language(s)? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- not sure

20. **Which best describes you as an umpire? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Player who umpires
- Umpire who plays
- Umpire only - don't play

21. **Have you experienced any of the following? ***

Check all that apply.

- Verbal harassment
- Physical harrassment
- Intimidation
- Discrimination
- Threats to your safety
- Confrontation before a game
- Confrontation after a game
- Criticism in social media, forum or regular media

22. **How often have you been the victim of verbal threats? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Very rarely
- Rarely
- Often
- Very often

23. **How often have you been the victim of a physical attack? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Very rarely
- Rarely
- Often
- Very often

24. **What was your reaction to any such verbal or physical thre**

Mark only one oval.

- Had no affect
- Somewhat affected
- Part of the game
- Deeply affected
- Considered quitting

25. **Who is most guilty of verbal abuse? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Fans
- Players
- Coaches
- Other: _____

26. **As an umpire, do you feel supported by your national federation? ***

Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	Very much					

27. **As an umpire, do you feel supported by CEB? ***

Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	Very much					

28. **Umpires in my country have a positive image/reputation ***

Mark only one oval.

- False
- Somewhat false
- Somewhat true
- True
- Not sure

29. **How difficult is it to find new umpires? ***

Mark only one oval.

- Very difficult
- Somewhat difficult
- Somewhat easy
- Very easy
- Not sure

30. **What do you see as the main problem recruiting new umpires? ***

31. **I feel appreciated for being an umpire ***

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Almost never
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Often

32. **How do you get paid? ***
Mark only one oval.

- Cash
- Bank transfer
- Discount
- Free Food/Drink
- Other: _____

33. **Is the compensation sufficient for the task? ***
Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

34. **Do you receive constructive feedback after a game? ***
Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

35. **If yes, from whom? ***
Check all that apply.

- Coach(es)
- Player(s)
- Partner(s)
- Scorekeeper
- Technical Delegate
- Supervisor
- Fans
- Mentor
- Other: _____

36. **Reasons to be an umpire (select 3): ***
Check all that apply.

- Financial Reward
- Necessity - No one else to do it
- I can do a better job
- Former player - Next stage of career
- Position of Power
- Give back to baseball - Love of the Game
- Fitness
- Other: _____

37. My biggest sources of frustration (select 3): *

Check all that apply.

- Length of games
- Compensation
- Travel to games
- Players
- Coaches
- Umpire partner(s)
- Field conditions
- Field Mechanics
- Rule knowledge
- Lack of chance for promotion
- Better games
- Other: _____

38. I have considered quitting or limiting the number of games I officiate. Check the main reason why: *

Mark only one oval.

- Abuse
- Poor pay
- Travel
- Injury
- Lost interest
- Private reasons
- Professional reason
- Not considered for promotion
- Pressure
- Age
- Unjustified assessment of umpiring performance
- Have not considered quitting
- Other: _____

39. How many games do you umpire on average per season? *

Mark only one oval.

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 50+

40. How often do you have to umpire alone (1-man system)? *

Mark only one oval.

- Never
- Very rarely
- Occasionally
- Often
- Very often

41. Would you like to have an umpire manual to become a better umpire? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

42. Would you use an umpire manual to become a better umpire, if one were made available? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

43. Any other comments? Freely write below

Send me a copy of my responses.

Appendix 2

Referee Self-Efficacy Scale (REFS)

Tony Jones
Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences - Vierumäki, Finland (2017)

This survey looks at European baseball umpire's confidence and is being used in unison with the European Baseball Umpire Survey to evaluate the state of umpiring in Europe. The REFS survey should take no more than 5 minutes to complete.

Please answer all the following questions as truthfully and accurately as possible. Your identity will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation!

The Referee Self-Efficacy Scale was created by Myers, N., Feltz, D., Guillén, F., Dithurbide, L. (2013)

Referee confidence refers to the extent to which referees believe that they have the capacity to perform successfully in their job.

Think about how self-confident you are when you are officiating. Truthfully respond to the questions below based on how confident you feel about officiating. There are no correct answers. Circle the number which corresponds to your feelings of self-confidence.

* Required

1. **Email address ***

2. **Country ***

3. **Gender**

Mark only one oval.

Female

Male

4. **Age ***

5. **Years of experience as an umpire ***

6. **Highest level as an umpire**

7. I have umpired *

Check all that apply.

- Men's Adult Baseball
- Boy's Youth Baseball
- Women's Fastpitch Softball
- Women's Slowpitch Softball
- Girl's Youth Softball
- Other: _____

8. Describe your primary role as an umpire. *

Mark only one oval.

- Game umpire
- Crew Chief
- Umpire in Chief
- Other: _____

9. In the context of performing your umpire job, how confident are you in your ability to... *

Check all that apply.

	Low	Below Average	Average	Above Average	High
Understand the basic strategy of the game	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Understand all the rules of your sport	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Understand proper officiating mechanics	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Make critical decisions during competition	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Make quick decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Be firm in your decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Uninfluenced by pressure from players	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Uninfluenced by pressure from spectators	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Uninfluenced by pressure from coaches	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Communicate effectively with coaches	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Communicate effectively with other umpires	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Communicate effectively with players	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Communicate effectively with auxiliary game personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Appendix 3

REFEREE SELF-EFFICACY SCALE (REFS) Myers, Feltz, Guillén & Dithurbide (2013)

Referee confidence refers to the extent to which referees believe that they have the capacity to perform successfully in their job.

Think about how self-confident you are when you officiating. Truthfully respond to the questions below based on how confident you feel about officiating. There are no correct answers. Circle the number which corresponds to your feelings of self-confidence.

Age: _____ Gender: Female Male Primary Sport Refereed:
 Years experience as referee in primary sport: _____
 Highest level as referee: _____ Referee: Female games Male games Both
 Describe your primary position as referee: _____

In the context of performing your referee job, how confident are you in your ability to	Low	Medium	High		
1. Understand the basic strategy of the game	1	2	3	4	5
2. Understand all the rules of your sport	1	2	3	4	5
3. Understand proper officiating mechanics	1	2	3	4	5
4. Make critical decisions during competition	1	2	3	4	5
5. Make quick decisions	1	2	3	4	5
6. Be firm in your decisions	1	2	3	4	5
7. Uninfluenced by pressure from players	1	2	3	4	5
8. Uninfluenced by pressure from spectators	1	2	3	4	5
9. Uninfluenced by pressure from coaches	1	2	3	4	5
10. Communicate effectively with coaches	1	2	3	4	5
11. Communicate effectively with other referees	1	2	3	4	5
12. Communicate effectively with players	1	2	3	4	5
13. Communicate effectively with auxiliary game personnel	1	2	3	4	5

MYERS, N., FELTZ, D., GUILLÉN, F., & DITHURBIDE, L. (In press). Development of, and initial validity evidence for, the referee self-efficacy scale: a multi-study report. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*