



2007 CCA Umpires Manual Available

The 2007 CCA *Baseball Umpires Manual* is the one resource covering standardized mechanics expected from all college

baseball umpires across the country. It is also the one source covering the only approved mechanics used in the NCAA playoffs.

Updated with significant NCAA

points of emphasis for 2007, including calling balks and working the plate, this complete source includes detailed play coverage for crews of two, three, four and six umpires. Mechanics and positioning are clearly represented with the use of *Referee's* exclusive PlayPic and MechaniGram illustrations. In addition, the manual provides guidance on leadership, judgment and handling challenging situations, as well as a brand new interview with NCAA National Coordinator of Baseball Umpires Dave Yeast.

The 2007 CCA *Baseball Umpiring Manual* will be referenced at conference meetings and regional clinic breakout sessions. It is available for \$21.95, including standard domestic shipping. For details, or to purchase the manual, call toll free 800-733-6100 or visit www.referee.com/magads/ccabs. For group discount details, please contact Patrick Miles, national sales manager, at 800-733-6100 or pmiles@naso.org. □



Donald C. Collins

Your Legal Rights and Responsibilities

WHEN SECURITY LEAVES YOU ON YOUR OWN

Q We worked a tough basketball game and the home crowd, coaches and players were very upset with me and my partner, screaming at us and throwing stuff from the stands. We got off the floor as fast as we could after the final horn, but on our way to the locker room, which was a pretty long haul down several corridors, a group of people blocked our way and were verbally threatening to us. Luckily (or so we thought) we had a security escort with us, but when we turned to him to take care of business, he just shrugged his shoulders and said, "You're on your own." We made it through the crowd and eventually got the heck out of there, but do we have any legal recourse available against the school or security guard?

A An official will generally have a legal remedy if he is physically attacked; if an angry fan does more than heckle him and crosses the line into some direct threatening confrontation; and where his association utilizes a contract that spells out a school's obligations and specifies penalties for violations.

Physical attacks maximize an official's chances of getting a legal remedy. Clearly, the official will have a remedy against the person who physically attacked him. Officials should note, though, that they're not going to become millionaires for your average push, shove or punch. Your average battery at a sports contest probably merits a small claims court action. In small claims court, two people face each other with no attorneys. You can't win a lot of money, but you don't need to hire a lawyer. You can take a stand on principle.

Physical attacks don't necessarily mean that the official will have legal recourse against the school hosting the game. Schools are generally only liable for those things they should foresee. However, schools can be liable if they refuse to carry out their basic obligations. A wide array of factors come into play ranging from whether the school had a game administrator, whether they had security, whether the fans were loud and aggressive, whether there were three people in the gym or 5,000 and even the severity of the attack. A school may not be liable where a fan gives a single chest bump to an official to protest a call at the end of a JV game played in front of 20 people. The school may be liable when a fan knocks an official to the floor and stomps on him in a gym of 1,000 people in a rivalry game, in a setting where security is always needed and the school failed to provide sufficient security.

Threats are a bit different. Technically, a threat that most people would find to be legitimate is a legal assault. An official could sue, and the person who made the threat could also face criminal charges. The problem, of course, is that misconduct at sporting events is so commonplace that very few officials are likely to successfully sue over threats at a sporting event. Only the worst threats or threats followed up by a physical attack will likely lead to successful lawsuits or criminal charges being brought.

The sad fact of the matter is that an official probably does not have a legal remedy against a school that allows him to walk through a hostile crowd without a security escort to his locker room after an intense game where fans booed and threw things onto the court. The official may be quite uncomfortable, but mere discomfort isn't generally going to give rise to a successful legal action. However, the official would probably win a suit against the school if one of the hostile spectators attacked him or did something that was way out of the ordinary level of negative discourse and behavior found at a sporting event. The school and the guard probably get off the hook if the fans blocking your path are simply screaming, "You stink!" The school and the guard may lose a lawsuit if a clearly drunk fan is blocking your path, trying to hit you, being held back by three friends and the security guard runs out on you.

An official probably will not find a lot of success suing because things were thrown onto the court. However, if the objects were unusually hard items or the items were clearly aimed at the official and the school site didn't react in a reasonably swift manner to gain control over the crowd, the official could win a lawsuit against the school. The problem is that the official probably wouldn't win a lot of money and would certainly incur some legal expenses.

The best way to deal with those types of problems is to address them through a contract that spells out penalties. Also, officials associations should meet in advance with school administrators to go over security arrangements. Having the non-athletic wing of the school involved can help make security and sportsmanship a priority.

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