

Umpire and Referee Committee

June 3, 2021, 6:30PM | Via Google Meet

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT	Russell Groh, Tom McTighe, Chris Preston, Joan Vormbaum, Chris Wilson (Chair), John Wong
COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT	
STAFF LIAISON PRESENT	Michelle Wilson
GUESTS	
CALL TO ORDER	6:36pm

Approval of December 2, 2019 Committee Meeting Minutes

DISCUSSION	Approval of December 2, 2019 Committee Meeting Minutes
MOTION	SECONDED & VOTE COUNT

Chris Preston motioned to approve the minutes December 2, 2019 Committee Meeting Minutes

Joan Vormbaum seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions

2021 Umpire and Referee Charge and Annual Goals

DISCUSSION	Staff shared with the Committee the 2021 Umpire and Referee Charge and Annual Goals that were found on the USTA NorCal Committee page. There was some concern if over 50 court monitors were going to be achievable in 2021.
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Court Monitor Program Plan

DISCUSSION	<p>The Court Monitor Program that staff has been working on was presented to the Committee. Staff explained that a program has been created to approve court monitors to work at tournaments. While discussing the Court Monitor Program, it was also explained to the Committee that there has been an increase in bad sportsmanship at junior tournaments and that the current junior tournament rule regarding officials is 2 officials for every 8 courts, one of which could be a court monitor. Having more trained court monitors will help improve Sportsmanship due to a greater presence of officials. It was also mentioned that some of the reasons for the program is 1) to identify who the court monitors are and to have a database of court monitors, 2) to ensure that all court monitors are Safe Play approved, and 3) to ensure that all NorCal court monitors have training on their duties before going out to court.</p> <p>It was explained to the Committee that the potential court monitor would need to do the following 3 steps to be a USTA NorCal approved Court Monitor.</p>
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Register to be a USTA NorCal Court Monitor by completing a submitting a Jotform2. Become Safe Play approved3. Attend a Court Monitor Webinar hosted by USTA NorCal
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MOTION

Effective Immediately, Joan Vormbaum made a motion to approve the Court Monitor Program Plan

SECONDED & VOTE COUNT

Tom McTighe seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions

RATIONALE

Having a Court Monitor Program is a good way of 1) knowing who the NorCal court monitors are, 2) ensuring that the Court Monitors are Safe Play approved, and 3) ensuring that NorCal court monitors have training on their duties before going out to court. Knowing who the court monitors are will also enable NorCal to be able to reach out to court monitors willing to work more if there are events that need court monitors but cannot find any.

Court Monitor Welcome Package

DISCUSSION

Staff presented a plan to present each court monitor who successfully completes the court monitor program to be a USTA NorCal approved court monitor with a Court Monitor Welcome Package. The welcome package presented in the proposed plan includes 1 USTA NorCal court monitor t-shirt, 1 hat, 1 stopwatch, 1 tape measure, and 1 Friend at Court. The Committee was informed that the budget for the welcome package for 100 court monitors would be \$4,550 with the following breakdown:

- 100 Court Monitor Shirts – \$1200
- 100 Stopwatches - \$600
- 150 Tape Measures (that is the minimum order): \$350
- 100 Friend at Courts: \$1400
- 100 Hats: \$1000

It was mentioned that providing court monitor t-shirts and hats would make all USTA NorCal court monitors uniform in what they wear, making them easy to be identified by the players when needed. By providing the court monitor with the Friend at Court, they can look up rules if needed. Court monitors would need a tape measure to measure the height of the net and to put in singles sticks. Court monitors would also need a stopwatch to time matches.

MOTION

Effective Immediately, John Wong made a motion to approve the Court Monitor Welcome Package plan and that this resolution be sent to the Budget and

SECONDED & VOTE COUNT

Tom McTighe seconded the motion. The motion was approved



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Finance Committee for a request of \$4,550 for this program	5 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions
RATIONALE	

Although court monitors are mainly hired by the tournament, court monitors have been known to be mostly volunteers. Providing court monitors that successfully go through the program would help to ensure that the approved court monitors have the supplies that they need to work the event and also make it more affordable for them to be a court monitor, especially if they are volunteering. Additionally by providing court monitor shirts and hats, we can help the court monitors to have a more uniform look so that players are aware that they are court monitors are able to find them easier.

Umpire Mentoring/Check-in Program

DISCUSSION	<p>The Umpire and Referee Committee reviewed the Umpiring Mentoring Program/Check-in Program that was presented to them as follows:</p> <p>Objective: To get all umpires an opportunity to be mentored to be the best umpires they could be and to ensure that all umpires know that they have support if wanted and to help train the umpires as needed. This program will hopefully build a sense of community with the umpires and improve the overall umpiring in the section.</p> <p>Plan: All of the NorCal umpires will be broken up by areas and assigned a mentor. The mentor will reach out to each umpire every month to see if they have any umpire related questions. The year would be broken out into quarters (Jan-Mar, Apr – Jun, Jul – Sept, Oct – Dec). Within each quarter, the mentors would reach out to the umpires in different ways once a month with there being one group meeting every quarter. For example, Jan – Mar; Jan – Phone Check-in, Feb – Email Check-in, Mar – Group webinar/get together. The mentors would also help mentor umpires in certain areas requested by staff or the Umpire and Referee Committee.</p> <p>Mentor Check-in once a quarter - Mentors will check in by webinar once a quarter to give updates.</p>
	MOTION
	SECONDED & VOTE COUNT

Effective immediately, Joan Vormbaum made a motion to approve the Umpire Mentoring/Check-in Program	Chris Preston seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions
RATIONALE	

Having an Umpire Mentoring/Check-in Program will hopefully benefit the officials by 1) building a sense of community amongst the officials in the areas they reside; hopefully encouraging networking between officials in their area and discussions on rules, scenarios and situations. By assigning a more experienced mentor, the mentor can help answer questions and provide mentoring on specific situations when needed.

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Monthly Webinars and Kahoot Trivia Challenge Games

DISCUSSION	<p>Staff informed the Committee that USTA NorCal is trying to offer monthly webinars to help provide continuous training on various officiating topics for the NorCal officials. Staff explained that these webinars have been good refreshers and have been well received.</p> <p>The Committee was also informed that before each webinar, there has been a Kahoot Trivia Challenge that has been offered to the officials in which the officials with the top 3 scores receive prizes. The Kahoot Trivia Challenge includes rules and scenario questions. Staff explained that the Kahoot game is beneficial because it reminds umpires of the rules in a fun way and also invites the umpires to have dialog about any of the questions if there is something that they don't understand or something that they want to talk about when the questions and answers are reviewed during the webinar.</p> <p>Staff reported to the Committee that the prizes currently being given to the winners of the Kahoot game were prizes that we already had in the office from a previous year. It was noted that a gift card has been the prize for 1st place, an insulated tumbler/cup for 2nd place, and another prize for 3rd place. Staff mentioned to the Committee that there are few gift cards left and informed the Committee that 4 more gift cards are needed to finish out the year.</p>

MOTION	SECONDED & VOTE COUNT
Effective Immediately, Joan Vormbaum made a motion to approve the request for 4 gift cards for 1st place prizes for the Kahoot Trivia Challenge and that this resolution be sent to the Budget and Finance Committee for a request of \$120 for this program	Chris Preston seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions

RATIONALE

Having the Kahoot Trivia Challenge game is a good way to remind umpires of the rules and how to handle situations in a fun environment as opposed to lecturing about these rules in a webinar. Adding prizes for the top 3 finishers of the game hopefully adds more of an incentive for the umpires to participate in the Kahoot Trivia Challenge. It is important for the umpires to know and retain the rules and know how to apply it, and the Kahoot Trivia Game has been a great way to do this so far.

Promotion for Recruiting Officials

DISCUSSION	<p>Staff presented the following USTA NorCal Umpire Recruiting Incentive Program for Umpires to the Committee.</p>



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BENEFITS

Recruiter will receive a \$25 gift card for each new umpire recruited from April, 15, 2021 until December 31, 2021. In order to be eligible for the gift card, the prospective umpire will need to successfully complete all required steps to be certified as a Foundation 2 umpire by December 31, 2021.

REQUIREMENTS

1. On initial contact with USTA NorCal, the new umpire will need to indicate who he/she was referred by when asked.
2. Prospective official must complete required steps (including creating an account in Officials First, online courses, Safe Play requirements, USTA Membership, Vision Certificate, 2 on-court training/shadowing days, and knowledge check with Sectional Chairperson) to qualify for Foundation 2 Roving umpire.

NEW UMPIRES

Upon completion of Foundation 2 Roving Umpire certification, the new official will receive a welcome gift in the mail from the USTA National Officiating Department that includes on-court supplies, such as a tape measure, Friend at Court, flipping coin, pen, pocket notebook, as well as a uniform polo and hat to get them started on their officiating path.

ANTICIPATED COSTS OF THE PROGRAM

\$600 – The determination of the costs of the program will be based on the number of new officials that USTA NorCal gains through this program who are ready to work (education/certification wise) by December 31, 2021. \$600 would mean that 20 new NorCal umpires have been certified during this promotional period, which would be a great accomplishment.

It was explained that this program had been approved by management and has been in effect since the April 2021 Umpire Webinar, where it was announced. Staff has also been recently informed that this program had not been approved by the Budget Committee and needed to be reviewed and approved by the Umpire and Referee Committee and the Budget Committee. Staff also shared their concern that the program has already started to be offered base on previous approval.

MOTION	SECONDED & VOTE COUNT
Chris Preston made a motion to approve the USTA NorCal Umpire Recruiting Incentive Program for Umpires as presented, effective April 15 and that this resolution be sent to the Budget Committee for a request of \$600 for this program	Tom McTighe seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions

RATIONALE
USTA NorCal is in need of more certified umpires. While we get new umpires yearly, we also seem to have a number of umpires retiring or deciding to take a break yearly as well which in turn leaves the number of NorCal officials at around the same number every year. Since all certified umpires know what it is like to be an umpire, they are a good resource to help recruit other umpires and help them through the process. Presenting the umpires with a \$25 gift card for each



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umpire they recruit that become a Foundation 2 official by the end of the year seems somewhat of a nominal incentive for help in recruiting officials.

Process of Contacting Referees (before and after USTA tournaments)

DISCUSSION	Staff apprised the Committee of the new process of contacting the referees before each tournament to check-in to see if they have any questions and also contacting the referee after if they have anything that they need to follow up with the referees about. It was mentioned that a survey is sent out to the players at the end of the tournament regarding their experience at the tournament. With the survey, the players give the tournament a rating number and then provide comments. The Committee was informed that the USTA NorCal Events Department has been following up with the players that give the tournament a low rating and the USTA NorCal Umpire and Sportsmanship Department has been following up with the referees when they receive concerning comments regarding the umpires at the tournament.
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Sportsmanship Rule Proposal Regarding \$50 Grievance Fee

DISCUSSION	It was proposed to make a change to the Sportsmanship Committee Procedures to clarify that effective immediately, the \$50 fee requirement to file a Sportsmanship Grievance is for when the grievance is filed by a player, parent, or spectator. There are some situations that may occur at a tournament that may not be able to be handled using the Point Penalty System such as parent behavior. Specifying that the \$50 fee is for when grievances are filed by a player, parent, or spectator will make the tournament director and/or referee more inclined to file a grievance when they witness unsportsmanlike conduct that can't be dealt with using the point penalty suspension system. It would be made clear to the umpires and tournament directors that filing a grievance is to be used for situations that cannot be dealt with by using the point penalty system. Staff also informed the Committee that the rule proposal has also been reviewed and supported by the Sportsmanship Committee Chair.
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MOTION	SECONDED & VOTE COUNT
Effective immediately, Joan Vormbaum made a motion to approve the rule regarding the \$50 grievance filing fee be amended as follows (new language is underlined) All grievances shall be in writing, signed and addressed to the USTA NorCal Section Sportsmanship Committee, 1920 North Loop Road, Alameda, CA 94502 , or to < sportsmanshipcom@norcal.usta.com >. The fee for filing a grievance shall be \$50 (<u>when filed by a player, parent, or spectator</u>), which fee shall accompany the grievance. The fee shall be refunded if the grievance is upheld by the Committee. The name of the grieving party will not be held as confidential and are provided to ALL	Chris Preston seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions



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parties to ensure administrative due process.

RATIONALE

Making the tournament directors exempt from paying the \$50 fee when filing a grievance will make the more inclined to file a grievance when incidents happen that cannot be dealt with using the point penalty system. There have recently been more sportsmanship issues that involve bad sportsmanship from the parents. The current rules in the Friend at Court just enable the umpires to ask a parent to leave when they display poor sportsmanship. There is currently nothing in the Friend at Court that addresses the parent's behavior before they are asked to leave or to hold them accountable. If the tournament directors and referees file grievances, it could be reviewed and possibly dealt with by the Sportsmanship Committee. This would hopefully gradually improve the Sportsmanship.

New Business

DISCUSSION

New topics were suggested for the monthly umpired webinar including but not limited to protecting your credibility as an official, ability to umpire effectively, and possibly having a session about Safe Play and how to report violations. Staff will look into these topics.

ADJOURNMENT TIME

8:30pm