

Spokane Baseball Umpires General Meeting Minutes
West Valley High School
Monday, January 5, 2026

Meeting called to order by SBU President, Kevin Wellington at 6:00 PM

Introductions

President Wellington explained that there had been some changes to the SBU Board membership due to several resignations. As per the SBU By-laws, the President has the authority to appoint interim board members. The current Board Members and staff and their titles were introduced. Additionally, President Wellington recognized members of the training teams, the evaluation team, and the onboarding team.

Board Members & Staff

President: Kevin Wellington

Past President: Dwaine Schettler (newly appointed)

Vice President: Matt Miethe (newly appointed)

Secretary: Gary Teale

Member-at large: Rob Bartlett (newly elected)

Member-at-large: Tyler Ashcroft (newly appointed)

Assignor: Bob Francis

Treasurer: Rich Hobson

Instructional Lead/Lead Evaluator: Larry Randall

Veteran's Training Team:

Larry Randall (Lead)

Dwaine Schettler

Rob Bartlett

Nick McFarland

Tyler Schmidt

New Umpires Training Team:

Matt Miethe (Lead)

Jamison Edwards

Gary Teale

Evaluators:

Larry Randall (Lead)

Dwaine Schettler

Kevin Wellington

Clark Cosby

Onboarding Team

Gary Teale

Dave Jemes

Uniforms

Vice President Matt Miethe emphasized the following:

- ✓ If veterans have used equipment that they would like to donate, please contact Rich Hobson. We would like to get new umpires on the field for as little expense as possible.
- ✓ Don't be sloppy. When you show up to the field make sure your uniform is clean and matches your partners.
- ✓ We are still in discussion with WOA regarding the requirement that the WOA shirts be worn for all high school games, not just for the playoff, but during the regular season as well.
- ✓ Rich Hobson will be setting up a uniform ordering opportunity at a future meeting, most likely in February

Professionalism

Lead Evaluator Larry Randall noted the following:

- ✓ **Evaluations:** In 2025 33 umpires were evaluated. Evaluations are a great way to get feedback, regardless of how long you have been umpiring. In 2026, evaluations can still be requested, but we are also going to be doing most evaluations incognito, i.e., you won't know when you are being evaluated, so we encourage all to do your best at every game.
- ✓ **Post-Season Playoff Assignments:** We would like to know ASAP who would like to be considered for post-season playoff assignments. To be considered for these assignments umpires will need to meet the following criteria:
 - Umpire a minimum of 10 varsity level games
 - Be registered with WOA for post-season eligibility (confirming availability for playoff dates)
 - Attend required training meetings and batting cage sessions
 - Be formally evaluated
- ✓ **Training Manuals:** Manuals have been prepared for distribution to all umpires requesting them. These manuals will contain articles, tips, checklists, etc. They will be provided free of charge. Contact Larry at umplarry@yahoo.com if you would like a manual.
- ✓ **Professionalism Characteristics:**
 - Good physical condition
 - Rules knowledge
 - Humility/controlling emotions
 - Neutrality/absence of bias
 - Hustle and focus
 - Proper Mechanics (positioning, timing, vocal clear communications)
 - Open to feedback/commitment to improving

NFHS Rules Update

Dwaine Schettler listed the five new rule changes for 2026.

- ✓ Electronic equipment is not allowed, except for one-way device between dugout to the catcher.
- ✓ Clarification of DH wording in the rule book

- ✓ Clarification of Courtesy runners/Illegal Substitution, i.e., slow guy for the catcher then switched defensively.
- ✓ Player meeting restriction; one player to player meeting per $\frac{1}{2}$ inning
- ✓ Double first base mandatory first base in 2027, possibly implemented in WA this year.

Note: The rule changes for 2026 can also be reviewed at www.umpireclassroom.com. It was highly recommended that umpires subscribe to the Umpire Classroom weekly newsletter.

Certification

The WOA portal for registration and certification is now open for the 2026 season. Veteran umpires already in Arbiter will need to renew their background check authorization and begin the process of completing the requirements for certification. That can be accomplished by accessing the Eligibility tab on your dashboard. If you have questions regarding this process, please contact Bob Francis. If you send Bob a text, please identify who you are in the text.

For new umpires, the link to access the WOA portal and begin the certification process is <https://app.arbitersports.com/registration/official?org=3035&role=3>. If you are a new umpire and have questions regarding this process, please contact Gary Teale at teale.sbu.secretary@gmail.com, or by phone at 206-434-9155. If you send Gary a text, please identify who you are in the text.

Training Meetings

The question came up that since we are having training meetings in two separate sessions, one for veterans and one for new(er) umpires, which sessions should umpires who have only one year's experience attend? While all the new umpires should attend the trainings specifically for them, other umpires can choose which session they want to attend based on the topics being presented. Agenda for each of the training sessions will be sent out via Arbiter in the week prior to each session.

Final Thoughts

Kevin Wellington encouraged all (except for the new umpires) to consider pursuing post-season playoff assignments. He emphasized that it is a great opportunity and experience.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Teale
SBU Board Secretary