

Bob Minshall - HoF - 2000

2000 ISC Hall of Fame Inductee: Bob Minshall---Top notch Umpire and Facilitator - 03/12/02
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Have you ever been put on the spot? Have you ever gone to a sporting event and yelled at the officials? Do you have what it takes to shake off the criticism and focus on the game at hand?

Most of us can say we've been put on the spot. Most of us will admit that we want no part of being subjected to the scrutiny of biased spectators. Consider Bob Minshall. He's definitely been there. He was definitely put on the spot when he made his umpiring debut. Bob was there watching his daughter Marilyn play and yes, he offered some 'helpful' advice to the umpire in obvious need!

Well, it turns out that the umpire fired back at Bob. We've all heard it before. The 'if you think you can do it better, come on out here and do it yourself' line! Did Bob then cower or become belligerent...NO! He marched right out on the field, took over for the bewildered umpire and the game went on.

A funny thing happened to Bob shortly thereafter. What started out as being a gesture of wills blossomed into a love of the sport and an incredible desire for it to continue to thrive. He soon found out that he loved being an official. He studied all of the rules and techniques required to be a topnotch umpire. He emulated Major League baseball umpires by getting down on a knee and getting an outstanding view of the strike zone. His tall and lanky frame facilitated outstanding positioning and he made very few, if any, errors.

In addition to umpiring, Bob is also accomplished hockey and football official. Complete preparation of rules study and technique were areas that Bob excelled in. This was true in all of the sports the players, coaches and fans were fortunate enough to have Bob as their game official.

Career Capsule (over 35 years of service to the game)

1967-68: Bob umpired in the Keelestadle Fastball League in Toronto. This was considered an intermediate caliber league.

1969-72: "Moved up" to umpire in the Beaches Major Fastball League, also in Toronto.

1973-86: Bob again "moved up" as he was selected to umpire in the Ontario Fastball League. This league was the best of the best in Ontario and was an official ISC Travel League. This league featured such great teams as the Newmarket Rays, Oshawa Tony's, Richmond Hill Dynes; Grimsby Peach Kings and Owen Sound King Farms to name a few. During this time up through 1989, Bob umpired in numerous Provincial Championship Tournaments as well as one National C.A.S.A Championship.

1984: Selected by Frank Porth to umpire the ISC World Tournament in Allentown, PA.

1984: Appointed the ISC Eastern Canada Travel League Commissioner.

1985-89: Was on the permanent ISC World Tournament Umpiring Staff.

1986-89: Converted the Intercity Fastball League into an ISC Travel league where he served as U.I.C. and Commissioner. He was also elected as the ISC Canadian Vice President in addition to his Travel League Commissioner duties.

1989: Retired from Umpiring.

1990: Continued his duties as ISC Travel League Commissioner and as ISC Canadian Vice President.

1991: Served as Travel League Commissioner

1992: Appointed Deputy Umpire-in-Chief of the ISC World Tournament as well as ISC Canadian Vice President and Travel League Commissioner.

1993: Appointed as Umpire-in-Chief of the ISC World Tournament and was again elected. Canadian Vice President

1996-2001: Held the positions of Umpire in Chief of the World Tournament as well as Travel League Commissioner.

2000: Inducted into the ISC Hall of Fame.

2001: Announced his retirement as U.I.C. from the ISC following the 2002 World Tourney.

Friends and Associates

Bob Minshall is truly an ambassador of the game. I polled some of his long-time colleagues and here's what they had to say to substantiate that claim.

From Umpire in Chief Designate, Ron Brinkman:

"I never really worked with Bob on the field but as ISC UIC he was my boss for several years. From what I can say about Bob as an umpire is that Bob was a very Black and White guy. What I mean by this is he was either out or he was safe. There was not a lot

of gray in Bob as an umpire. All players, coaches and teams were treated exactly the same. The best team in the world could have been playing the worst team in the world and Bob would have treated neither any differently. That changed a little as an UIC. Bob tried to understand the umpires even more than before when he took over the UIC job. Bob listened to the umpires and always asked their opinion whenever possible. Bob never lost sight of the fact that Softball is still a game. He enjoyed it as a game when umpiring and also as the UIC. Whenever he would be with the World Tournament Umpires he always enjoyed himself. I think Bob's greatest quality was that he never lost track of the fact he was an umpire. As an umpire who has worked with Bob, had him as a boss and now using him as a valuable resource as the new ISC UIC, I will always remember that quality. I'd like to offer once again, congratulations, Bob, on your election to the ISC Hall of Fame. On behalf of all umpires past and present thanks for the memories."

From the Michigan Area ISC Commissioner, Tom Stasik:

"Bob Minshall and I have met several times at the border. We have had to "smuggle" ISC paraphernalia in and out of the country. Bob has always worked hard at umpiring and making sure the umpires were treated right at the tournaments. He has worked several of the youth tournaments in Frankenmuth. We always have a blast with the Canadian connection of Mike Goodridge, Dan Donahue and Bob Minshall. They pull up in the "Van Hilton," and we have a weekend of fun and laughs!"

From ISC Commissioner at Large and Canadian Development Director, Mike Goodridge:

"For those who have got to know Bob over the years, who can forget his reaction when the ISC officials were decked out in their green uniforms for opening ceremonies one year in Sioux City and Bob's response was 'We look like Cox's army out here!'

Bob has had many enjoyable moments over the years but I know personally he always looked forward to the Officials meeting at the beginning of each tournament so he could renew the many friendships that had been built up.

For the past three years Bob has volunteered to come to Frankenmuth to help run the U19 tournament there and I know he very much took great delight in not only watching the future stars of our game but also interacting with the local officials.

I can still recall watching Bob trying to board an Air Canada flight home from the ISC's at St. Joseph when he had on the Stetson Hat that the umpires presented to him and he tried to fit into his bulkhead seat with his hat so proudly worn."

From ISC Executive Director Emeritus, Milt Stark:

"I appointed Bob Minshall as commissioner of the ISC Travel League of Eastern Canada in 1984 shortly after I became the ISC Executive Director in 1982. He has been an ISC stalwart ever since. I think it is one of the best commissioner appointments I ever made in my 20 years as ED. His induction into the ISC Hall of Fame in 2000 was overdue.

Bob is one of only three umpires in the Hall of Fame. He worked in six ISC World Tournaments. When he worked, he was in charge. His size and demeanor made that quite clear; so when Frank Porth retired as umpire-in-chief in 1992, Bob was the obvious choice to become only the second umpire-in-chief in ISC history because I knew that he would be in charge of all aspects of ISC umpiring. He has always been willing to take the heat when a crew has a problem on the field. I have seen him on numerous occasions race from the stands to "take charge" and defend the decisions of his umpires.

As an umpire, he was the best I have seen in my over 50 years of fastpitch experience. As umpire-in-chief for nearly 20 years, Bob used his outstanding organizational skills to set a standard for ISC officiating that, in my opinion, is unmatched in the sport of softball.

His World Tournament crews have always performed at the highest level in appearance and in actions on and off the field. He is a man of fairness and high integrity. He has selected umpires from all over the U. S. and Canada to work in the tournament. If an umpire meets Bob's standards, he is usually invited back; if he doesn't, he's toast!

Although the ISC founder, the late Carrol Forbes, never knew Bob Minshall, you can bet that he has looked down on numerous occasions and concluded that Bob is the kind of honest, fearless man that has made the International Softball Congress the crown jewel of softball organizations because of his tireless work as both an umpire and an administrator."