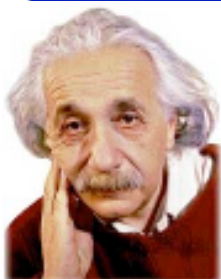


## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Yes . . .  
I've Taught  
Him Everything !

February 2006  
"Chinese Year Of The Dog"



BOB PAPICH  
SODA PRESIDENT

Next Sunday is **Super Bowl Sunday**, my Colts and Cubs failed to make the Championship game or series this year. I have sent e-mails to both organizations explaining that I am getting older, and am classified as a senior citizen. I would like to see them win it all before I leave this world on a permanent vacation. To this point I have not heard back from either team.

I look forward to exchanging thoughts, ideas, solutions to problems at the SODA meeting, at The **Tuscany Suites Hotel, in Las Vegas, Feb 13-15th**. In the North I know the softball season is only six weeks away as I attended two umpire training session on Sunday.

It was good to see many friends again, just to see how we have aged. Most of us have gained a pound or two. But one thing for sure we are all older. In a group of 70 only two people were under 30 years of age. Most were in their 50's and many were in their 60's and some in their 70's. Are you getting my point?

We are not doing enough to get young men and women into the ranks of officials in all sports. According to the data we have received all sports continue to lose officials at an alarming rate. In amateur sports, and lower level sports programs recruiting of officials has not kept up with the growth of the sports programs.

What are we doing wrong? The money is good, you choose the time and place you want to work, how much you want to work and for how long. You are able to deduct the cost of equipment, clothes, and mileage from your tax return. That's not a bad deal, getting paid for something you like to do or be a part of.

Then why aren't we getting more people to join the ranks of officials? Is it because the players are loud and object to our calls not being correct? Is it because of the fans heaping abuse upon the officials? Has society's norms changed to the extent that the profession has a black eye and only jerks are officials?

As **Sportsplex Operators and Managers** we have to put a good product out on the field or floor. What are you doing to increase the growth of your officials program? How are you attracting new people to the program? How are you training them? Or are you training them? Are you giving them a rule book and selling them their gear and setting them loose on your program?

A large portion of the officials continue to try to improve themselves by attending clinics at their own cost to improve their performance on the field or court.

During the playoffs this year in the NFL, we had wide receivers drop passes, running backs fumble the football, with little or no note from the announcers. But when the officials make an error, everyone takes note and makes comments on how poor the officiating is. Who set the officials up as being infallible? Officials are right in their judgement in OVER 95 % of the time. The last time I was in school over 95 % was an "A".

I am finding that many of our members have posted signs and produced a list of rules for spectators conduct. No one feels worse than the official after blowing a call or not being in position to make the call.

Fans have made the mistake take on a life of its own by continually referring to the questionable call four innings, two quarters later, or a half later. The verbal abuse at lower level sporting events has grown to obscene proportions. **Thus causing many officials to walk away from the game.**

Keep working with your officials, let them know what you expect from them and what you will do for them in making their job a little easier. Support your officials, and your programs will be better, with more people wanting to play at your facility. Keep putting training programs in front of them, those who do not want to attend these types of programs you don't want anyway.

It has been 60 years since the **CUBS** played in a World Series, Is this OUR YEAR ?

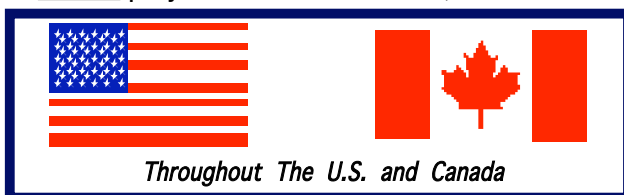
Sincerely,

*Bob Papich*

Bob Papich  
SODA President

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**"It's More Than Just Games, It's The Service Adventure"**

