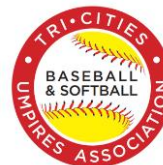




Tri-Cities Baseball and Softball Umpires Association



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Uniform and Equipment Buying Guide for New Umpires

Starting out in umpiring can be a little overwhelming and a pricey endeavor – look at it as an investment. However, there are ways to not break the bank in the beginning. Consult with your assigner or other veteran umpires on the best items to buy. Many veteran umpires may have old uniforms or equipment they are looking to sell or even to give away. Below is some information to help you make decisions in purchasing your uniforms and gear.

	<p>Shirts - TSSAA implemented new standards for uniforms in 2023/24. Many veteran umpires may be looking to get rid of their old shirts. This can be beneficial for new umpires as the old shirts may still be worn at the middle school and junior varsity levels. When buying new though, always buy the current standard. Also look for new umpire starter packages. The official state supplier of uniforms is Officially Dalco. They will be present at the state rules meeting and do offer a starter package. While they are the official state supplier, that just means they are exclusive in printing the TSSAA logos. You do not have to go through them for items without TSSAA logos and equipment.</p> <p>Shirts come in short sleeve and long sleeve. Short sleeve shirts are required. The long sleeve shirt is a good option for the plate umpire to wear behind the plate on cool days when it may not be cold enough for a jacket.</p>
	<p>Pants – there are three different styles of pants: plate, base, and combo. Plate pants are sized larger in the legs and thighs to accommodate your shin guards (always worn under the pants). Base pants are a more traditional fit while combo pants provide more room than base pants. If you are only looking to buy one pair to start, go with the combo pants. If you are investing in two pairs, buy a pair of plate pants and a pair of base pants. Note that larger individuals may find that combo pants may be more comfortable on the bases than regular base pants. Pants come unhemmed though your supplier may offer hemming. It is recommended to get your pants hemmed locally that way if there is an issue you can get them corrected.</p>
	<p>Shoes – like pants, you will find that shoes are offered in a plate and bases variety. Your base shoes should be all black or black with minimal white accents. The base shoes offered by officials suppliers may have some grip or tread on the bottom to help with traction on wet surfaces. They can be purchased from any retailer including Amazon or other sporting goods stores. Cleats are not an acceptable form of base shoes – leave those for the players.</p> <p>Plate shoes have a steel toe and offer extra protection from foul balls, wild pitches, and the catcher’s cleats. They are also more expensive than your base shoes, therefore they are not required to start with. Umpires can get by wearing base shoes behind the plate for middle school. However, as you progress on up to hopefully the high school varsity level, a pair of plate shoes may be a good investment in your second or third season.</p> <p><i>Note: New Balance shoes are shown for reference only. A variety of brands make acceptable styles.</i></p> 
<p>Hats – a TSSAA hat is required. Hats come in 4-stitch, 6-stitch, and 8-stitch. This refers to the length of the bill. When working the plate, the hat must remain forward. Therefore an 8-stitch bill is too long to wear behind the plate. A facemask will fit over the 4-stitch and 6-stitch hats. The 6-stitch bill is acceptable for both the plate and bases.</p> 	<p>Jackets – Again, there are options. Long sleeve jackets come in an “all weather” (fleece lined) and a lightweight version. A lightweight short-sleeved jacket available for milder temps. A recommendation for new umpires is to start with a lightweight long sleeve jacket as you can layer underneath. You can expand your wardrobe later.</p> 
	<p>Belts – the belt should be 1 ½” or 1 ¾” wide. A patent leather (hi-gloss) option is available and is viewed as providing the most professional look.</p>
<p>Undershirts – Navy for baseball. White for softball. They must be solid in color (don’t want them to show through your uniform shirt). Undershirts can range from a \$3 cotton shirt from a discount retailer all the way to a \$30 performance undershirt. There is not a standard for material, just for the color.</p> 	

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Protective Equipment (Plate Gear)

Your plate gear will be your most expensive investment – shop around and find the best deals. This is a good place to look for secondhand items.

There are wide ranges in price and protection value. Keep in mind the level you will be starting out at. You may not need the most expensive gear in the beginning. Do your research with an online retailer that provides customer reviews to help in your selection process whether you are purchasing from that retailer or not. Ump-attire is the industry leader in product reviews on their website. A list of items that you will need to work the plate are:

<p>Chest Protector – Champro is becoming a common economical entry-level chest protector starting around \$80.</p> <p>The Wilson West Vest is a very common chest protector but is also one of the more expensive. There are a couple different versions available ranging from \$180-\$250.</p>		<p>Face Mask – There are two different styles of masks, and this is a personal preference. The traditional style is worn over your hat while the newer hockey style mask/helmet (referred to by umpires as the “bucket”) is often worn without a hat.</p> <p>Masks can range in price from \$80-\$300.</p>	
<p>Shin Guards – Range in price from \$50-\$150. Some offer added foot protection while others don't. This is beneficial if you are wearing base shoes behind the plate. Once you have upgraded to plate shoes the extra flap is no longer needed and should be removed.</p>		<p>Ball Bags – Navy in color. One bag or two bags is a personal preference. If wearing one bag it should always be worn on the right-hand side.</p> <p>Avoid ball bags with narrow belt loops and exterior pockets.</p>	
<p>Lineup Card Holder – Sometimes referred to as a “wallet” you will need this to keep up with the lineup cards.</p> <p>Pro tip: Use a red ink pen. The red ink will provide a contrast when you are recording lineup changes.</p>	<p>Protective Cup – You never want to forget this.</p> 	<p>Indicator – Sometimes referred to as a “counter” or “clicker”. They come in 4 dial and 3 dial, metal or plastic versions. This is a personal preference. The indicator must be kept in the left hand, so find the style that works best for you.</p> 	<p>Plate Brush – they are required but find the cheapest one you can. The plate umpire is responsible for keeping the plate clean by using a plate brush, not their foot.</p> 

RECOMMENDED UMPIRE EQUIPMENT PROVIDERS

Note: Dalco is the only company that can sell TSSAA branded products (shirts, jackets and hats)



ump-attire.com



dalcoofficialsclothing.com



gerrydavis.com



purchaseofficials.com