

ATHLETICS, AQUATICS, GOLF & ICE ARENAS NEWS

OUTSTANDING OFFICIALS

From **Jim Rask**, Athletic Program Specialist (Officials Assigner):

Officiating is a tough and thankless job that is underappreciated and frequently scrutinized. They are undervalued for their work and any praise they do receive is rarely publicized. I am proud to say that was not the case this time around. For the first time, Minneapolis had the opportunity to submit nominations as part of the fourth annual Jimmy Lee Umpire Awards celebration, which took place on August 7 at CHS Field prior to the St. Paul Saints game vs the Iowa Cubs.

The Jimmy Lee Umpire Awards night highlighted Jimmy Lee's impact on officiating across the country and his impact on the community in which he lived. A resident of the Rondo neighborhood in Saint Paul, Jimmy was the first African American ever hired to umpire Big Ten games. He umpired many levels including games featuring Negro League teams when they barnstormed around the state. He also officiated high school basketball in Minnesota regularly calling district, regional, and state tournaments. He was an excellent all-around athlete, a writer and a community leader.

On this night, two well-deserving MPRB umpires received prestigious awards representing the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Veteran Umpire **Charles Hall** (left) received the Most Dedicated Umpire of the Year award, and **Emmett Bergen** (right) received the Young Umpire of the Year award.



Charles Hall (58) is a resident of Minneapolis who is truly invested as an umpire for the MPRB (15+ years of MPRB experience). He loves mentoring and training in new or less experienced umpires. He takes pride in the preparation while making them feel comfortable and confident as they continue to learn and develop. He is a role model for the kids and makes a positive impact on the community. Charles is a wonderful umpire, but what separates him from most is his selflessness and genuine interest and appreciation of others.



Charles Hall, Most Dedicated Umpire of the Year, with his family.

Emmett Bergen (19) is a Minneapolis resident who has made such a positive impact on the RBL youth baseball program (4+ years of MPRB experience). Starting so young has given him an advantage over most people his age. His maturity, communication, and attention to detail are second to none. He is always continuing to learn and improve his skills as an umpire. I had so much confidence in him that I started sending him our highest-level games (18U) as soon as he became eligible at 18. He works all levels and starting this year, I have been using him as a mentor and trainer for new or less experienced umpires. He takes on challenges, remains positive, and knows how to connect with others. Emmett is an invaluable member of our team.



Emmett Bergen, Young Umpire of the Year, with family.

The ceremony took place on the field prior to the game where they were introduced over the loudspeaker and presented with their plaques in front of all their friends and family. They even got to throw out the first pitch along with the other award winners, including long-time MLB umpire and St. Paul native, Tim Tschida.

I want to take the opportunity to thank all the MPRB officials for their hard work and dedication over the years. They are deeply invested in the program and the community because a lot of them grew up in the Minneapolis parks and still reside here to this day. They are tremendous ambassadors and know what it takes to make and maintain a good on-field product. I am proud of our team as we continue to learn, grow, and develop together. We could not run our leagues without them, so please show them your support and appreciation when you see them working out in the field. I know it will mean a lot to them. Not only are they good officials, they are even better people.

Thank you!



Left to right:
Jim Rask,
Charles Hall,
Emmett
Bergen.