

NBSA Umpire Uniform and Equipment Guide

Hi everyone, as we look forward to getting started this season, I wanted to make list of uniform requirements and optional accessories. I am hoping that this will help everyone find comfortable gear that is within your budget that will keep you looking sharp and professional.

NBSA unlike any other umpire program that I am familiar with provides you with hundreds of dollars worth of gear. Most of, if not all of the surrounding communities require their umpires to purchase all of this gear. As mentioned before, all of you are required to purchase is the pants, belt, and shoes. Below is a list of the required uniform items and some suggestions to aid in purchasing items that we are not providing. Like Mark said the other day, looking sharp and acting professional is over half of the battle. The other half is knowing how the game is played and keeping up with the rules.

Where to Buy:

PlayItAgain Sports-Novi: These guys have almost everything you need and offer us a 20% discount.

www.umpire-attire.com: This is one of my favorite websites. They offer almost every accessory that I have ever seen. You can always go here to look at what is available and then price it out elsewhere.

Amazon: Amazon usually has some some great deals on things. You can research at Umpire-Attire and price it out on Amazon.

Required Items:

Shirt: (Provided)

Navy Blue Undershirt: (Not Provided) You will want an undershirt especially when wearing your chest protector. Navy blue is the preferred color however black is ok too. The athletic style undershirts are the best.

Navy Blue Hat: (Provided)

Optional: Navy Blue Hat with a 4 Stitch Bill. The 4 stitch hat has a shorter bill that your mask can fit over. It is known as a combo hat because it has a short enough bill for the mask to fit over, but is long enough not to look weird when you are wearing it on the bases. A lot of umpires will choose to have a short bill hat for the plate. They come as short as a 2 stitch, and then they have a normal 6 or 8 stitch hat for the bases. As for now, I believe you are provided with an 8 stitch hat which you can turn backwards when umpiring at the plate.



Pants: (Not Provided) There are a lot of options out there for pants. This year we have decided to go with the Champro brand pant. They only make one kind of pant that is considered a combo pant. Meaning they have a big enough pant leg to get the pads underneath them, but are not too baggy for the bases. If we all get the same pant, the color will also match. If you go to Play it Again Sports in Novi, they have these pants. Try them on, or use the sizing guide at www.champrosports.com, if you are ordering online. If sized correctly, you should have no problem getting the pads underneath the pants.

If you already have pants from either Smitty or Adams, they will suffice for this year as long as you can get the pads underneath them .

Black Shoes: (Not Provided) When it comes to shoes, there are a lot of options out there. Some are more budget friendly than others. The minimum requirement is to have a black athletic shoe. This could be just a plain black tennis shoe, however, if you are wearing just a tennis shoe, there is a good chance that you can slip on the loose gravel. My recommendation is a low cleat turf shoe at a minimum. Popular brands are New Balance (Major League Umpires), Smitty, 3N2, and Mizuno. There are other brands that make similar shoes, just make sure not to buy a high cleat (Baseball) shoe. You want a short cleat shoe.



Optional and highly Recommended: Plate Shoes!!! The shin guards do have a pad that covers the foot, but unless the shoe that you are wearing has a steel toe, getting hit on the toe could be painful. Purchasing plate shoes will become a necessity when you start calling higher level ball, as the velocity of the ball becomes higher.



Black Belt: (Not Provided) Getting a nice thick belt will look good, and will secure the ball bag better than a thinner belt.



Chest Protector: (Provided)

Optional: *The provided chest protector is a soft shell protector. As you advance in your career, you might consider purchasing a hard shell chest protector such as a Wilson West Vest. Wilson has long made high quality umpire equipment. Their equipment is what most professional umpires use. It does come with a hefty price tag, however, I still have my West Vest from 20 years ago and it is still in good shape.*



Shin Guards: (Provided)

Optional: *The provided Champro Shin guards are good shin guards, however they are rather large. As you advance in your career, you might desire a slimmer shin guard that fits under the pants better. Wilson along with other brands make slimmer shin guards.*

Ball Bag: (Provided)

Note 1: These fall apart over time. There are a number of options out there. Most professional umpires use the navy cloth ball bag made by Smitty.

Note 2: *These are to be worn when working behind the plate. Wearing them in the field is not recommended as they flop around while you are running.*

Indicator: (Provided) Provided in the ball bag is an indicator (Often incorrectly referred to as the clicker, I am totally guilty of doing this). These are used for keeping track of the balls, strikes, and outs. These do wear out over time, and you can never have enough of them. They are relatively inexpensive and come in a few different styles. I carry at least 3 in my bag because they break when you need them.

Note: *It has been a practice in Northville that the base umpire carries an indicator and keeps track of the count. In my experience, this practice can create conflicts when there is a discrepancy in the count. The Umpire in Chief (Plate Umpire) has the sole responsibility of keeping up with the count and verifying it with the scorekeepers. Having another umpire with a separate count can only add to the headache. Field umpires will often mis-count because they are paying attention to other things.*



Plate Brush: (Provided)

Note: This is the most important item in your whole equipment bag. **USE IT!!!** Keeping the plate clean says a lot about you. Clean it between innings and any time it is dirty.

Cup (Men): (Not Provided)

Optional Items:

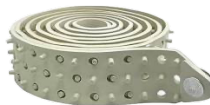
Thermal Wear: It might be cold early in the season. Thermal wear will help cut down the chill. Navy blue or black is the preferred color for the thermal shirt.

Gloves: Navy blue or black gloves are the preferred color, however bring what you need to protect yourself. We don't want you getting frost bite.

Jacket: We do not have a standard jacket, but the rule of thumb is that umpires wear the same jacket. The most popular style for our level of baseball/softball is the Navy Blue Smitty with the Red Strip. If you end up doing high school they will make you get the one with the MHSAA logo on it. For youth baseball/softball you don't want any logos.



Shirt Stay: These help keep your shirt tucked in and you looking professional. There are many different styles out there, but my favorite has been the rubber wrap around style.



Throat Protector: As an umpire, occasionally a ball can bounce off the ground and hit you just below the mask in the throat. A throat protector is relatively inexpensive and can help prevent this.



Equipment Bag: Having a bag to keep your equipment together is a must. Almost any bag will do. For a price, Wilson makes a great bag with separate compartments to keep your cloths separated from your dirty gear.



Sport Shoe Cleaner: There are lots of options here, but it is important to keep your shoes clean. Just like the plate, keeping your shoes clean says a lot about you.