



of Michigan

# USA SOFTBALL OF MICHIGAN

---

## Blues Across Michigan Newsletter

---

### Umpire

### Spotlight:

Tess Layman

Nick Pulaski

USA Softball of Michigan Blues Across Michigan wants to recognize multiple USA Softball Umpires from the USA Softball of Michigan program every month for their accomplishments on the field in the local area, state or national championships as well as how they have given back to the game off the field.

Being recognized does not always relate to the number of national or state championships an umpire has participated in. This honor encompasses an umpire's accomplishments, both on and off the field, in their local area and district in addition to their contributions at the state or national level.

These umpires represent what being a member of the USA Softball of Michigan umpire family is all about and bring attention to the widespread and diverse umpire community in our program across the state.

For this edition of Blues Across Michigan, we are featuring two recently named Elite umpires.





**Tess Layman**

**District 11**

Tess has played softball for 52 years starting with the 4-H program. With that start, she has traveled across the country playing a game she loves.

While playing Senior softball, her teams won six national championships. In 2007, with the encouragement of USA Softball Hall of Fame member, Penny Knupp, Tess took up umpiring at the high school level. In 2010, she registered with ASA (now USA Softball) and attended her first of many national schools. With her knowledge of the game, she moved up the ranks quickly and was able to umpire in her first national championship in 2012. That was the first of a streak of championship events for every year with the exception of 2014, which she chose to take a vacation with her family, and again in 2020. Tess is due to umpire in the JO Cup in 2021.

Tess has umpired many of our state tournaments and Special Olympic tournaments. She says hard work and the love of the game have given her, and many of her brothers and sisters in blue, a chance to umpire all over the United States. She has many great memories that can never be taken away. Tess is currently on the District 11 umpire staff as the fast pitch UIC. Congratulations on this reaching this achievement in your umpire career.

---

Dominic (Nick), is starting his 40th year of umpiring. Nick is regular in umpiring slow pitch and fast pitch games. He received his Elite status after being selected for the 18U Gold as pictured in Oklahoma City this past summer.

Nick began as a slow pitch umpire with goals of working high level softball. While in Muskegon, he was viewed and watched by former USA Softball of Michigan umpire, Dave Ritsema. This was the break that Nick needed; he was given the opportunity to umpire in some of the tournaments that Muskegon hosted. By being around these tournaments he kept hearing comments from other umpires about how the Michigan umpires were regarded across the country and the chances they were getting at the national level. Nick knew he wanted to be at that level and started working on fine-tuning his game and learning the finer points. He also started umpiring fast pitch at the high school level.

After being assigned to the 16U Gold, Nick realized he may have a chance to reach the Elite status as an umpire after being around such a great group of umpires. Nick is one of the few umpires who has umpired at a national championship in both the fast and slow pitch games. While at Liberty University, a professor said "A drop out was anyone who quit something before they reached their potential in the endeavor." Nick loved umpiring so much that he didn't want to quit or drop out before reaching his potential. Nick credits Jim Wolford, Paul Piornack, Gary Evans, Dave Ritsema, and the current USA Softball of Michigan umpire staff for all that they have done to assist him in attaining the level of Elite Umpire. We are glad that Nick did not drop out, and reached his Elite Umpire status. Congratulations on achieving this level of your umpiring career.

**Nick Pulaski**

**District 9**



Congratulations Tess and Nick on being recognized as our February Blues Across Michigan featured umpires. We are proud of both of you for representing our program so well on and off the field.