

# UMPIRE SPOTLIGHT

## Daryl Scholz



**Q. Tell us a little bit about you? Where you grew up, where you live, kids, wife, hobbies, etc.**

A. I grew up in Stillwater, MN, and earned my degree in Psychology from St. Cloud State University. I've been married to my wife, Mindi, for 24 years, and we live in Sartell. We have two beautiful daughters, Abbi (21) and Graci (18), who both played fastpitch softball and many other sports. I coached their youth teams in fastpitch for 10 years and basketball for 6 years.

I love my job as an IT project manager at St. Cloud State. I'm a lifelong learner with many hobbies, including biking, cross-country skiing, reading, cornhole, playing and watching sports, and staying active. After playing slow-pitch softball for many years, I discovered men's fastpitch four years ago and have been pitching for the last three years. The game of fastpitch is fun to coach and ump- but even better to play! I love the competition, time with my teammates, and honing my pitching skills. Both of my daughters were able to play with me this summer, a dream come true.

Recently, I earned the Elite level certification through PaulyGirl Fastpitch to coach pitching. In the past year, I've helped over 40 girls in the St. Cloud area with their pitching.

**Q. How long have you been umping?**

A. I've umped the past two years for a total of 190 games. I've had a lot of fun!

**Q. What made you want to be an umpire; how did you get started?**

A. I love the game of fastpitch softball and wanted to remain in it after my daughters were done playing. Sartell was looking for umpires for 9<sup>th</sup> grade games and decided to give it a try. I'm really happy that I did. Really neat way to stay in the game.

**Q. Do you remember your first umping jig? Tell me about it?** Oh boy, I wasn't very good at all.

A. First game I umped was a 9<sup>th</sup> grade school ball game of Sartell vs Sauk Rapids. I was watching the game like I was still coaching third base. Ball was hit in the right-center field gap and I was looking at how the second baseman and shortstop were lining up for the cut- meanwhile, I missed the obstruction at first base with the runner. I also really goofed up an interference call on a runner. Wasn't very good, but I learned a lot that day.

**Q. What do you enjoy most about umping?**

A. That's easy, the girls. I love the goofy interactions that the girls have when they are unguarded and talk with each other. I really enjoy watching the girls compete and learn the game.

**Q. How has the game changed since you first started?**

A. I'll take this from when I first started coaching. It seems like fastpitch softball (like most sports) have turned into year-round sports. I'm not sure that's good for the sport and the athletes playing it. I think we will see more and more burn out and overuse injuries. I'm hoping it is the girls that are driving the decisions and not the parents.

**Q. What advice would you give to young boys & girls who are curious about umping fastpitch?**

A. Do it! If you have a chance, give it a try. Please understand you will make mistakes, and it will be ok. I've been in ball for over 30 years and consider myself a student of the game and it took me about 30 games before I felt comfortable with everything going on when umping. There are plenty of ways to get better, but you do need to get your reps. USA softball has lots of great resources and ask other umpires for advice. Plus- the girls love it when they see someone that looks like them umping games – not old guys like me.

**Q. Do you have any goals or dreams, you would like to accomplish for umping?**

A. I hope that some of the girls I've coached, mentored in umpiring, or watched play will decide to become umpires themselves. It would be wonderful to foster a culture where players feel comfortable umpiring as they grow older, without the fear of being yelled at by coaches and parents.

**Q. Do you have a favorite memory or game you would like to share?**

A. I really love my interactions with the players, so I have lots of them. One that I will highlight would be from last year I umpired a lower tier 10U state tournament and was doing the championship game. Time had run out and the team batting couldn't come back due to a 5 run limit per inning. So I called time, started brushing off the plate, and told the catcher to go tell her pitcher they won their state tournament. The look of pure joy on her face as she started running out and celebrating with her teammates was really cool.

**Q. Any other Misc info?**

A. Fastpitch is a beautiful game that offers many valuable life lessons for our daughters. It teaches them to try their hardest, face failure, get back up, and try again. They learn to accept coaching and master new skills. Most importantly, they understand the importance of being a good teammate, regardless of their role, and how to play effectively with others.