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## Martinez: State's top umpire Tim Stevens promotes his job while on farewell tour

### Local umpire Mark Allen to replace Stevens as state's umpire-in-chief



By [Tim Martinez](#), Columbian Assistant Sports Editor

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Umpires Tim Stevens (left) and Mark Allen pose a photo after working a high school baseball game at the Ridgefield Outdoor Recreation Complex on Friday, March 20, 2026. Allen will replace the retiring Stevens as the umpire-in-chief of all baseball umpires around the state. (Tim Martinez/The Columbian) [Photo Gallery](#)

On one hand, it was just two umpires working a high school baseball game.

But in another sense, it was like a changing of the guard.

Tim Stevens and Mark Allen worked a couple of games together last weekend in the Clark County Baseballism Classic at the Ridgefield Outdoor Recreation Complex.

Stevens is retiring after spending nearly a half century as a baseball umpire. For more than two decades, he has served as the umpire-in-chief of all baseball umpires statewide under the Washington Officials Association.

When Stevens steps away, Allen, a local umpire for the Evergreen Baseball Umpire Association, will replace him as umpire-in-chief.

“They’re big shoes to fill,” Allen said. “But I’m looking forward to challenge. I just wanted to continue to be involved in the next level and statewide. It’s a lot of responsibility.”

Stevens then chimed in: “He’s not telling you about the fact that he loves the game. He loves all of this. He’s great at working with people, and I think that’s the most important part of this.”

The opportunity for the two men to work a game together came about because Stevens is making the most of his final year as an umpire. He plans to visit and work games in all 22 umpiring associations around the state.

The games last Thursday and Friday at the RORC was stop number three for Stevens, a data technology expert from Lake Stevens.

Stevens said his farewell tour is serving a purpose — to raise awareness about the need for more umpires.

“There are people my age who are walking away from the game, and they’re not being replaced,” Stevens said. “We want to make sure we’re bringing in new people, and we want people know we need umpires. The game needs them, especially younger people. So as I head out, I want to keep my finger on the game by letting people know it’s a worthwhile endeavor.”

Stevens would know. He umpired his first game in 1976, when he was a teenager working Little League games in Eugene, Ore.

After taking a year off, he took a class on umpiring baseball at North Eugene High School.

“One of the requirements was you actually had to work a game on the bases,” he said. “I did that, fell in love with it, and been doing it ever since.”

In addition to high school games, Stevens has worked at the college level, in the minor leagues and even worked games in the 1990 Goodwill Games in Seattle.

Allen also got an early start in umpiring. He attended an umpiring training session when he was 8 years old.

“My father was doing college games, so I went with him to umpire meetings instead of staying home with my sisters,” Allen said. “I got started on the field when I was 14, so that’s 33 years ago.”

While Stevens said many umpires come to the game as former or even current players, anyone with a love for the game can become an umpire.

“Get with people, find a good mentor, and if you have a love of the game, stick with it,” Stevens said of prospective umpires. “Everybody’s going to have that point where they’re going to question themselves in terms of ‘What am I doing here?’

“Push through that. Because once you get past that point and you get to where you have confidence in what your doing, that’s when it becomes so much fun.”

Allen said the Evergreen association usually adds one new umpire every year. But this year he is encouraged by the fact the association added about five new umpires.

As the state’s umpire-in-chief, Stevens says he meets with umpires around the state to make sure new rules are being implemented properly. He comes up with exams that umpires can take for evaluations. And he makes assignments on which umpires will work state tournament games.

While Stevens and Allen have known each other for about 20 years, last weekend was the first time they ever got to work a game together.

“It’s a dream come true,” Allen said.

It was also a treat for Stevens to work with his successor as the state’s umpire-in-chief.

“I’ve been passionate about this for a long time,” Stevens said. “So stepping away, it gives me a good feeling to know that I can turn over my duties to someone who’s equally as competent and passionate about it.”

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