

2025

Hall of Fame Profile

Robert "Bob" Kuehlwein

Woodbury

Nominated by David Statham

It is with great admiration that I nominate Robert "Bob" Kuehlwein for induction into the MSF Hall of Fame. With an umpiring and playing career spanning 50 years, Bob has exemplified the highest standards of integrity, dedication, and leadership in Minnesota softball.

Bob has always had a deep passion for the game both as an umpire and player. Bob played a lot of competitive tournament and league softball over the years but was limited for a few years to mostly fall ball when adult softball umpiring was in its frenzy. Bob will tell you, he did get a hit off Eddie Feigner

His journey began in St. Paul, Minnesota, where Bob stepped in as a fill-in umpire while playing fast-pitch softball with his brother Rick. What started as a spontaneous solution to missing officials quickly turned into a lifelong calling. From submitting scorecards to St. Paul Parks and Rec and earning his first umpire cap from Hap Holmgren, Bob embraced the role with enthusiasm and professionalism.

In 1971, Bob joined the Maplewood Umpire Association and attended a National Umpire School in Coon Rapids. This was just one of many state and national schools and district umpire certifications Bob attended and led over his career. His early years saw him officiating in Maplewood, North St. Paul, Stillwater (including the JC's in Stillwater Prison), and later expanding to Woodbury, South St. Paul, Inver Grove Heights, Mendota Heights, West St. Paul, Cottage Grove, and 3M leagues. He began working district and state tournaments in 1973 and even officiated softball on ice during the Winter Carnival with the White Bear Lake Umpire Association.

Throughout his career, Bob demonstrated versatility by officiating under both ASA (Blue) and USSSA (Red) organizations. In 1990, he joined the MSF State Staff as Co-UIC for District 3, covering four busy metro counties. He officiated high-level tournaments, including the A-Industrial National Tournament and three-man games in the Metrodome. There was never an umpire situation Bob could not solve. He saved many umpires' careers including mine about 10 times. His experience, leadership and advice were always "spot on".

When Gary Feist retired in the early 1990s, Bob and Greg Langbehn took over the South St. Paul Umpire's program, growing it from three to seven communities. He was also the first UIC to run tournaments at the Treasure Island complex, overseeing over 30 major tournaments, including Super, Major, AA, and A men's events.

In 1997, Bob officiated the ASA A Women's National Tournament in Tifton, Georgia, after working the Women's AA and A State tournaments. He also joined the Suburban Umpires Association, officiating high school girls' fast-pitch for 7-8 years.

Even after a knee replacement in 2012, Bob continued to contribute to the sport, both as an umpire and a player. He returned to play in the over-70 league in Florida until injuries finally led him to retire from umpiring in 2020, marking five decades of service.

Through it all, Bob has been supported by his wife of 54 years, Cathy, who never made him choose between family and softball—a testament to the balance and commitment he maintained throughout his career.

Bob and his wife Cathy reside in Woodbury.