

BLUES NEWS ON LINE

Contributions to mtoft@ozemail.com.au

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Andy's Address

At the last Softball Australia Board Meeting, a recommendation to increase the national Umpire Staff by one was adopted.

The two staff members appointed by the Board were Mark Toft and Sue Itzstein.

The Board also endorsed a decision by the National Umpiring Committee to confer Level 7 accreditation on Debbie Grove of Victoria.

Congratulations to all three – I know each will continue their hard work for softball umpiring in Australia.

NEW SHIRTS

The New Shirts Working Committee have been busy and results of testing and design and fabric should be available soon.

What's in this Edition

- **Tofty and Itzy Appointed to National Staff**
- **Debbie Grove receives Level 7 accreditation**
- **Tribute to David Crowe**
- **Lightning - Some tips**
- **Lyle Tyler OA**
- **Family of Umpires**
- **Logan City battles on**

Classic Quote

"The Nine Old Men are smooth-functioning, age-resting, rustproof softball organisms that defy the laws of gravity, have been known to stand up an entire game and manage to hold their own on any softball field when their opponents do not exceed them by two inches in circumference. Though many of them have let their bodies go to their heads, they are all perfect sportsmen. None is swelled-headed about his softball or overly antagonistic toward the umpires." – Newscaster and softball player Lowell Thomas, describing his team, the Nine Old Men, cited in *Referee*, August 2003.

Heads up for headwear

In a recent report to the Softball Australia Board National Umpiring Director, Andrew Rindfleish drew attention to the need to adapt our rules to allow players from backgrounds that have traditional headwear to participate in our game. The following extract from the Softball Australia report to the States on the outcome of the recent Board meeting provides the detail of the Board's response. Well done to Andrew on gaining quick progress with this item.

Statement of Position? Use of traditional headwear

The following statement was endorsed by Softball Australia and will be incorporated in the Competition rules.

Australian democracy guarantees us our civic freedoms with fundamental rights and equality. The institutions of Australian democracy enable diversity in our society to flourish. The Sport of Softball has provided an exciting recreational activity for women in the Australian community for over fifty years and for men since the early 1980s. The strong recreational base of female players has produced an elite team good enough to win Olympic Bronze at the 1996 and 2000 Games and our Men are currently ranked 3rd in the World after an outstanding performance at the 2004 World Championship.

Our community is culturally diverse and for Softball to continue to serve the entire Australian community Softball Australia recognises that Softball must modify its uniform requirements to meet the needs of all cultures within the community. This includes allowing players to participate wearing tradition headdress such as the Turban and Hijab.

Related Rule Change

Rule 3 Section 8 a Exception be modified to allow traditional headdress.

The Power Of Attitude

Our lives are not determined by what happens to us, but how we react to what happens; not by what life brings to us, but by the attitude we bring to life.

A positive attitude causes a chain reaction of positive thoughts, events, and outcomes. It is a catalyst...a spark that can create extraordinary results.

David Crowe says goodbye from umpiring

by Mark Toft



The last time: David Crowe talks to some of the umpires at the Under 16 Boys State Championships where he said goodbye from umpiring.

You are involved with a sport for many years and you recall a number of people in that time. For me David Crowe is one such person. Being a Queenslander and not getting to meet other higher ranked umpires from other States I recall meeting David Crowe who gave me some useful tips and advise about my umpiring. Let's just say Crowie was one person who made a heck of a lot of sense in what he said.

But, unfortunately Crowie has called it a day from umpiring. It seems to be an eternity since Crowie came on the scene and now

he's gone.

I took the opportunity to get Crowie's profile from Darrell Shepherd (which was used in Crowie nomination for Life Membership of New South Wales Umpire's Association) and I have included parts of this in this issue of Blue's News On-Line.

"David has proven himself to be a very worthy recipient of Life Membership of the NSW Softball Umpires Association."

"He has held a position on the Executive for a period of 8 years and has been an UIC, Deputy or Examiner 45 times."

"David has been very much involved in the training programs over many years and has been an outstanding example for junior umpires."

"His dedication and enthusiasm for the work of the NSWSUA has continued for many years. He has been very much a driving force in getting the NSWSUA to where it is today. Thus, I have no hesitation in nominating David for Life Membership of our association."

Darrell Shepherd

David Crowe is a Mudgee (country NSW) boy. He completed schooling in Mudgee before moving to Sydney to complete Teaching Degree (K-6).

He now lives in Newcastle with his wife Nicole (a Level 5 umpire) and they have a daughter, Nateisha.

David became interested in softball after watching an ABC telecast of the Women's Final (from Adelaide - 1983). He thinks he remembers that Triplett was on the plate, Koskelainen on 1st, Marland on 2nd and Dunn on 3rd.

Personal Note: from Margo Koskelainen

I first met David Crowe in 1990. He was appointed by NSW as the Liaison Officer for a National Championship held in Sydney that year, I was the TCU. His bubbly and charming personality has proved to be an asset to the Umpiring Program. He was always fun to be with at a tournament. Who on the umpire crew could forget Hobart in 1993 - I certainly wont.

I will not forget, either, David Crowe's significant contribution to the Australian Softball Umpiring Program in particular and to our sport in general.

He obtained his Level 1 in 1986. Like most country umpires, he had to travel a great deal to gain experience in any form of umpiring, therefore many Friday afternoon school classes were missed so that he could catch the train to Sydney to then get some sort of connection to some other venue - Sydney, Wollongong, Wagga, etc.

David's umpiring career highlight remains his first National Final Plate, Under 19 Women's Brisbane 1992. Other highlights for David include Level 6 [#102] accreditation in 1993, the 1997 & 2002 International Squads, the 1998 Trans Tasman exchange and appointment as a National examiner.

Along with attending National Championships each year since 1991, and quite often more than one in any given year, David has umpired international games on many occasions. He was appointed to the Micronesia Games in Pohnpe, Federated States of Micronesia, in 1992.

David's greatest softball ambition was to achieve international accreditation and, in January, 2004, this goal was realized. His ISF accreditation number is 1008a. The list of his international credits follows this article.

David's contribution to our sport extends to administration also and he has held positions within New South Wales, the most recent being Vice President. He travels regularly to Sydney for State meetings.

... continues Page 3

When time permits, David's other interests and hobbies include spending time with his family, especially his daughter, working in the yard of the new house, swimming, good wine, dining out, drive in movies and good wine.

His personal goal at present is to continue teaching after spending a few years away from the profession.

In June of 2004 David retired from umpiring after recognizing that his family had sacrificed much in order for him to reach his softball goals. David will now spend more time with his lovely wife Nicole, who also retired from umpiring this year, and of course, Nateisha.

Western Australia

Milestone for Graham Bancroft

At a recent award ceremony at Dale Districts Men's Softball Association, Graham Bancroft (Level 6) was awarded a gift for his 1000th game for the South Eastern Districts Softball Umpires Association.

Graham is a Life Member of SED-SUA, which was started in 1987 to supply umpires for competitions south of Perth, which has had enormous success training young and seasoned umpires alike.

Congratulations Graham on your achievement!



Recent Level Advances in Western Australia

Congratulations to the following people who have recently attained their level 1:

Anne Deveson-Kelly
Jeff Dillon
Peter Valenti
Kerry Walker

Congratulations to you all on the formal start of your umpiring career!

Busy time for WA Softball

The next couple of months will be a very busy time for umpires in WA. There are several men's and women's tournaments coming up that, in the past, have been hard work but very enjoyable. The tournaments are:

Australian University Games: 26th September – 1st October
Super league Tournament: 1st October – 3rd October
Under 19 Men's Selection Tournament: 23rd – 24th October

The University Games will see uni teams from all over the country participate in WA. The Softball component is being held at the Wembley Baseball ground.

The Women's Super League tournament is one of WA's most prestigious tournaments as we see the best players in WA mixing it with some of the best players in Australia. Many umpires who have officiated at this tournament position it as one of the best tournaments in Australia.

If there are any umpire's wishing to attend this event, please contact Warren Duff (State Umpire in Chief) via email at warrenduff@tpg.com.au.

The U19 Men's Selection Tournament provides an opportunity for coaching staff to pick their best team for nationals and is always a very competitive competition.

Contributions urgently needed

Contributions are urgently needed for the next edition of Blue's News On-Line. It is important that this medium is filled with news about umpires. Remember BNOL is a National Umpiring Magazine written by umpires for umpires.

Send contributions by email to mtoft@ozemail.com.au

Lyle Tyler OA
(based on an article by Helen Baker)

South Australia

In the Queen's Birthday Honours list for 2003, Lyle Tyler was awarded the Order of Australia medal for his services to softball. Lyle's contribution to softball in South Australia has been as a coach, an umpire and an administrator. In this article we focus mostly on Lyle's contribution to softball umpiring.

The South Australian Softball Association was formed in 1943 with Lyle becoming involved in 1958, his initial involvement being through his sister Esme. Lyle's interest in understanding the intricacies of the rules of softball began with his role as coach and umpire for the Adelaide Technical High School Old Scholars Softball Club in 1958. He maintained his association with the club as it progressed from A.T.H.O.S. to Kesmond in 1965 and becoming South Adelaide District Softball Club in 1969. Lyle coached and umpired for the club for more than 20 years, represented the club at State Association meetings and was awarded Life Membership of South Adelaide in 1977.

Lyle umpired in the SA Softball Association District Competition from 1958 – 1981 when his visual impairment shortened his on-field umpiring career. He then changed his focus to the area of development and administration. Lyle was a member of the Umpires' and Scorers' Club which had begun in 1954. This club was the first attempt to provide an organised association for umpires and its main aim was to improve umpiring standards in the State, especially by working towards uniformity in rules' interpretations.

After an Umpires' Auxiliary replaced the Umpires' and Scorers' Club in 1965 under the leadership of Lorraine Mildren, Lyle joined its 3-person team remaining in this position for 7 years from 1966 through to 1973. By this time, Lyle had gained his State Umpire certification and successfully sat several Australian Umpires Theoretical Examinations.

As a member of the Umpires' Auxiliary, Lyle had first-hand experience of the work being done to establish acceptable standards of interpretations of rules and 'on diamond' procedures at the National level. Achievement was first through an Australian Rules Interpretations Committee, of which Lorraine Mildren, was a long-serving member, and, in 1972, by an Umpire-in Chief and two deputies.

The South Australians felt serious misgivings concerning the direction being taken by the Victorian-based national Umpire-in Chief, but attempts to have these concerns addressed were mainly unsuccessful.

When Lyle became the South Australian Director of Umpiring in 1981 he was undeterred by the formidable style of the National Umpire-in-Chief. He patiently researched and prepared lists of contentious rules and their interpretations, took them to the formal meetings in Melbourne between States' um-

pires' representatives and the Umpire-in-Chief, and persistently, but good-naturedly, argues his case.

Know Your Rules (2 volumes), *How to be a Good Umpire*, and *Softball Rules in Pictures* were four manuals developed for the South Australian organisation. Interstate interest in these manuals grew and Lyle was generous with the copies he always had available at the Heads-of-umpires' meetings.

Although Lyle was not always successful in carrying his arguments, he firmly believed in his right to have them given adequate consideration. His reward for his polite but persistent logic came when many of his points were agreed to. Lyle used the umpiring system put in place for South Australia to assist the changes made to umpiring in Australia in the mid-eighties.

As South Australian Umpiring Director Lyle, in conjunction with Lorraine Mildren, Roy Richmond and Alan McAuliffe, modified the Canadian umpiring system to suit the South Australian Softball Umpires' Association, and with further modifications from the American and International Umpiring methods, *The Competent Umpire* book was released.

Collating a series of articles which had been written by numerous people in South Australia, saw the resulting *Know Your Rules* (1 and 2) reach print. *Rules in Pictures* was one of the most successful productions, which was adapted from the New Zealand publication, with updated information and new pictures. The *Rules in Pictures* booklet was given to Softball Australia and remains a useful teaching aid throughout Australia today. This book is particularly in demand by primary school coaches, parents and teachers because it puts the basic rules of softball into a very simple to understand format.

During Lyle's term as South Australian Director of Umpiring in 1983 the Umpires' Auxiliary changed to the South Australian Softball Umpires Association which remains the controlling body, under the umbrella of the State Association, for umpires throughout South Australia today.

As South Australian Umpiring Director Lyle forwarded the SASUA Accreditation to the National Umpiring Advisory Committee who modified the system to suit the Australian Softball Federation, and re-released the system in an altered state, to be adopted in the format known today. This system was based on the South Australian Softball Umpires' Association model.

Life Member Lorraine Mildren and Kath Correll have described Lyle as "An enduring individual with an unwavering commitment to softball."

Lyle was appointed to the position of South Australian Director of Umpiring in 1981, a position he held until he retired in 1989. Alan McAuliffe, who replaced Lyle, stayed in the role for 2 years, moving on to the National Umpiring Commit-

tee, and was followed by Toula Connolly who was mentored by Lyle through her initial years in the South Australian Umpiring Director's position. Toula, in turn, stepped down as Umpiring Director in 2001 to make way for Neville Lawrance.

Lyle's steadfast commitment as Director of Umpiring for South Australia built the foundations for what is widely renowned as the most successful umpire program in Australia.

South Australia provides a high percentage of the umpires appointed by the Australian Softball Federation to the Australian Fastpitch Softball Championships each year. So successful is the South Australian umpire program that out of the four Australian softball umpires who have been appointed by the International Softball Federation to officiate at the Summer Olympic Games, since Softball's introduction in Atlanta in 1996, three (John McAuliffe, Alan McAuliffe and Neville Lawrance) have been from South Australia, being one South Australian officiating at each Olympic Games competition.

FAMILY OF UMPIRES

The Lockyer District Softball Association (70 kilometres west of Brisbane) is fortunate to have the umpiring services of the McIntyre family, Ken and his children Amie and Damian.

When the Lockyer Association decided to change to a Winter season for 2003, an SOS was sent out for umpires. The McIntyre family readily offered to help us out. With only one umpire available to us from our own Association, their help was welcomed.

Sunday afternoons saw the arrival of all members of the family, even wife, Janelle, to our diamonds. Luckily, Ken and the kids didn't mind sharing a dressing room when the local soccer umpires took over the umpires' rooms. Very early on, we could see that this was a dedicated family with a sense of fun and enjoyment for the game of softball.

Ken, now a Level 2 and his children, both Level 1, returned to our diamonds for the 2004 Winter season. Amie and Damian, (both students), play for the teams in our current competition as well as umpire.

Ken, just has fun teaching the rules as he umpires (because some of our players need it) and sharing a joke on the diamond. We run a very social competition so his good humour has become part of the recipe for a good game of softball.

Leanne Ramsay
Secretary LDSA

Logan City (Queensland) struggle without co-ordinator

The Secretary of the Logan City Softball Association has sent BNOL a letter to say everything is rosey when it comes to umpiring in a small association.

The bright note is that this association still has trainee umpires working in the grass roots of the program.

Sallyann writes:

We do not have an umpiring Coordinator (Danny resigned) and James Hailstone resigned, so what Blues we have, Amanda Crouch, Belinda Jenkins, Raymond Martin, Shane Million, Manu Cope, Sallyann Lewis and Graeme Skachill only every second week.

Apart from Graeme all of these are also Players/Coaches/Scorers. Mick Gorman when work permits. Vicianne Crane & Jeff Lewis are only able to do bases do to neck and back injuries.

The clubs have had no choice but get in there and do the plates. But the sportsmanship that has come out has been pretty good.

Our trainees are: Cameron Cox, Julie Peters, Dylan Nixon, Shaun Lawrence and Jason Haywood.

The only thing Logan has is the clubs are doing very well with the umpiring.

I am sure that there are a number of associations in the same boat as Logan City. Hopefully umpires who read this article may want to travel to Logan City and give them a hand.

Chin up Sallyann Blue's News On-Line supports your band of umpires as the National Program could not work without the likes of you guys battling on week in, week out.

ACT have new Umpire in Chief

Nathan Levy was recently appointed as the ACT Umpire in Chief. A current profile of Nathan will be published in next month's edition of Blue's News On-Line.

If you wish to contact Nathan his email is levynaa@hotmail.com.au

LIGHTNING – ONE STRIKE AND YOUR OUT!

By Rod Dawson (Our own US Correspondent)

Reported in the Sydney Morning Herald 26 January 2004:

Five people were struck by lightning, one fatally, at Nowra on Saturday. In a baffling act of Mother Nature, the lightning, which came from a thunderstorm over Cambewarra Mountain (approximately 9 kms away), struck the Bomaderry Oval and a Worrigeer horse paddock almost simultaneously. Even more mysterious was the lack of storm activity at Worrigeer and Bomaderry. One victim recalled light rain and "thunder rumbling in the background at Worrigeer, but we didn't see any electrical activity before we were hit."

Recent statistics indicate that on average 20 Australians are struck by lightning each year with 2 or more of these strikes being fatal. Research published by the Medical Journal of Australia (MJA) has revealed that whilst there has been a large decrease in lightning casualties in farming or outdoor work environments there has been an increase in sport related casualties. The MJA further determined that there is a deficiency in recommendations for lightning safety at sporting events. The aim of this article is to promote awareness of lightning and the published safety recommendations.

Lightning Physics

Lightning is not a rare event, however it is *the* most underrated storm related weather hazard. Worldwide some 2000 thunderstorms and up to 100 lightning flashes occur every second. Lightning can strike up to 16 kilometres from the parent thunderstorm, well outside the rain area and even beyond the visible thundercloud. The phrase: 'bolt out of the blue' is worth remembering! Lightning can travel long distances. Lightning can also strike from debris clouds up to 30 minutes after the parent thunderstorm has decayed. Thus lightning safety requires a *large standoff distance* from thunderstorms and a *long standoff time* after the storm has apparently passed.

Lightning does not 'decide' where it will strike until the descending bolt is about 30 metres above the ground. So short objects in open areas can be struck even if there are tall structures nearby. Should the lightning strike the ground, the subsequent surface flow can be deadly more than 40 metres in any direction from the strike point.

Thunder is produced when the lightning heats the surrounding air to temperatures greater than 27,800°C, which is about 5 times hotter than the surface of the sun. The superheated air literally explodes, which in turn creates the sound we hear as a clap of thunder. The thunder sound travels 1 km every three seconds. The distance from the lightning can be calculated by counting the number of seconds between the visible 'flash' and the audible 'bang' and dividing by 3. The distance between successive lightning strikes can be

greater than 8 km. So a seemingly distant lightning display can be on top of you literally within moments.

Lightning Patterns in Australia

Data published by the Bureau of Meteorology reveals that no part of Australia is free from thunder activity or from lightning ground strikes. Hobart, Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne areas, on average, will suffer 1 lightning strike, per square kilometre, per year. Sydney 2, Brisbane 3 and Darwin somewhere between 4 and 6. So, given the size of the larger softball parks in each major city, one or more strikes could be expected each year. Will you be out on the diamond when this happens?

Safe Shelter

No place is absolutely safe from a lightning threat. The safest place commonly available is a large, substantially constructed, fully enclosed building. Once inside stay away from electrical appliances and other potential conducting paths. Also stay away from windows and open doorways.

If you cannot reach a substantial building, then an enclosed vehicle, especially a bus, with a solid metal roof and sides is a reasonable second choice. Close the windows and avoid contact with the door, steering wheel, ignition or other conducting surface.

If you are unable to find a safe location, then take action to minimise the threat of being struck. Proceed towards lower elevations, stay away from trees and poles and avoid contact with metal fences, metal bleachers and long metal structures. Unprotected open structures such as dugouts, picnic shelters, bus stops are not suitable shelters.

If, for whatever reason, you are still outside and lightning is occurring, there are still measures that can be taken. In some instances a very brief warning will precede a lightning strike. Individuals who feel their hair stand on end or skin tingle or hear crackling noises should assume the 'lightning safe' position (crouch on the ground, weight on the balls of the feet, feet together, head lowered and ears covered). Do not lie flat on the ground.

The cardinal rule:
Do not take shelter under a tree.

At night, a blue glow may show if an object is about to be struck (St Elmo's fire). If in a group, spread out so there are several body lengths between individuals. Once the immediate threat has passed, proceed to the safest place possible.

Develop and Promulgate a Lightning Safety Plan

Hopefully the situation where everyone is crouched on the ground literally kissing his or her rear end goodbye can be avoided. The following general lightning safety plan principles are widely recommended:

One. Designate a chain of command specifying whom monitors threatening weather and who makes the decision to remove teams from the playing field. An emergency plan should include instructions for participants and spectators and in particular, how the activation of the plan will be signalled to umpires and other officials.

Two. Obtain weather reports before and during the planned activity. Also become familiar with the information directly available over the Internet from the Bureau of Meteorology regarding weather warnings. Monitor the weather throughout the day until play has finished and spectators have dispersed.

Three. Define and promulgate all 'safe structures and locations' and form an appreciation of long it will take participants and spectators to reach these locations.

Four. Adopt the '30/30 Rule' as the guide for the suspension and subsequent resumption of activities. The first part of this rule is known as the 'flash to bang' count and is one of the most practical techniques for estimating the distance to lightning activity)*. Most experts agree that the accepted *minimum* safe distance from lightning activity is *no less than 10 km*. So, once the time between seeing the flash of lightning and hearing the subsequent thunder nears 30 seconds, then all play should be suspended and all participants should already be inside or heading toward safe locations. However this rule should only be adopted in good visibility. If you hear thunder but cannot see the lightning be conservative and suspend play immediately. The second part of the 30/30 rule provides the criteria for the resumption of play. The recommendation is that organisers wait 30 minutes after the last sight of lightning or sound of thunder. This figure is based on the typical storm moving at about 40 km/h. Waiting 30 minutes allows the thunderstorm to have moved 20 km, minimising the probability of a nearby strike. It is important to emphasise that blue skies and the absence of rain are not adequate reasons to breach the 30 minute return-to-play rule.

***Note:** Commercial portable lightning detectors are readily available. These devices can detect and track electrical activity up to 64 km away. Prices range between AUD\$280 - \$1200.

Five. If the worst happens, make certain that appropriately qualified First Aid staff are available to administer CPR.

If the preceding recommendations appear somewhat daunting there is an abbreviated version:

- If you can see it (lightning), then flee it (take shelter)
- If you can hear it (thunder), then clear it (suspend activities)

Education is The Key

Umpires should educate themselves regarding the hazards posed by lightning as well the basic safety measures that can be taken. In competitions or activities where there is only rudimentary or no off-field management structures the on-diamond umpires will have to take the initiative. In more well organised associations umpires should seek advice from their respective UICs regarding Lightning Safety Plans to be used during planned competitions/tournaments. UICs and Convenors should, as part of their overall Risk Management Plan preparations, develop a Lightning Safety Plan and promulgate to officials, other participants and spectators. (One of the basic principles of tort law is that an individual has a duty to warn others of dangers that may not be obvious to a guest or subordinate of that person). For larger tournaments that would require longer warning times, the use of lightning detection devices by Convenors should be considered.

References and Further Reading:

- Recommendations for lightning protection in sport, Medical Journal of Australia, Vol 177, 1 July 2002
- Severe Storms – Facts, Warnings and Protection, Bureau of Meteorology, www.bom.gov.au/info/thunder/#protection
- National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement: Lightning Safety for Athletics and Recreation. Journal of Athletic Training Vol 35, Vol 4, December 2000
- NCAA Guideline 1d Lightning Safety July 1997 (Revised June 2003)
- Lightning Safety, National Weather Service, www.nws.noaa.gov
- Updated Recommendations for Lightning Safety – 1998, Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society: Vol 80, No. 10, pp 2035-2041, October 1999
- Images – Oklahoma Lightning, www.oklahomalighting.com

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