

December 2013



National UIC's Call

With Tricia Sibraa

Welcome to our final BNOL for 2013, and what a busy year it has been, judging by all the articles that have come across the pages of BNOL.

This month's edition has a wrap-up of Gilley's Round One, which was – for the first time – hosted by Softball New Zealand. Thanks to North Harbour Softball Association (Auckland) for their hospitality to not just our umpires, but also our players. The first BNOL for 2014, which will be published in February, will bring reports from our January Nationals.

Also in this edition is an article about the annual Canberra Skins competition, a highlight of the year for many men's teams. It great to see this expanding into the junior divisions, opening opportunities for many umpires to join in on what always proved to be a very experienced crew.

Thanks also to South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales for their articles this month – SA's piece shows their successes for the year; Victoria's article reports on their recent U17's State Championships, their newly-accredited Level 2 umpires from the Championship and the recipients of the 2013 and 2014 John Larter Umpire Development Scholarships; and NSW's report brings us the 2014 Executive and 2013 Award recipients. Congratulations to all those umpires mentioned in these three articles on your successes – your dedication and willingness gives so much to the umpiring program in this country.

Finally, on behalf of the NUC, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all umpires and their families a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy 2014. For those umpires travelling in early January to National Championships around our country, good calling! We look forward to hearing about your Championships in BNOL next year!

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National News

2013 Gilley's Round One Goes to Auckland, New Zealand
12-15 December 2013



2013/14 Gilley's/Edabone Weber Crew Photo
(Back) Mark Porteous, Andrew McManus, Les Haslam, Brydon Wells, Richard Barrow, John Hickman, Lance Type
(Front) Helen Strauss, Bridget Cameron, Wayne Saunders, Tricia Sibraa, Leigh Evans, Nicola Ogier, Tara Harris.

The 2013-2014 Australian National Championships kicked off with Round One of the Gilley's Shield and the Edebone-Weber Shield at Rosedale Park, North Harbour, Auckland, New Zealand.

A contingent of four Australian umpires along with TCU Tricia Sibraa flew in on Wednesday, and we joined eight New Zealand umpires along with DTCU Wayne Saunders. The crowds were good for all four days of the tournament, and swelled when the New Zealand Whitesox were playing. Rosedale Park hosted the ISF Men's World Championship back in March and is an excellent facility for players and spectators, and the umpires' room is great. Each umpire had a locker, chair and plenty of space to spread out, as well as showers, a generous lounge and a kitchen area.

The first morning included the important bat check task. It always takes time, with two lists to check, and can get logistically tricky. Over a hundred bats were checked, with two removed due to cracks.

Diamond One was wired for video, providing live-streaming to fans back home. The videos are available on-demand after the event, which will be a great review tool for umpires. A mix of 3, 4 and 5-umpire systems were used for the tournament, with healthy pre and post-game crew discussions. The three candidates for upcoming ISF Certification were rostered together on lots of games, which provided an invaluable chance for them to work together.



Bat checks in progress

the surface – Day One felt a little like Perth weather, but it was glorious wandering the park between games.

It was a great experience to be part of this Gilley's, to work with very experienced senior umpires and to work with our neighbours from New Zealand. Thank you to Tricia and Wayne for your management and leadership. A final huge thank-you to North Harbour Softball Association and the local umpires for their hospitality and the provision of food and facilities for us.

Edebone-Weber Shield Final Allocations:
Helen Strauss (P), Mark Porteous (1B), Leigh Evans (3B), Nicola Ogier (LF), Lance Type (RF)

Writer: Bridget Cameron

Wednesday night's dinner was at a local Thai restaurant, while the next three nights saw us enjoying take-away in the umpires room, allowing the crew to stay together longer for socialising and continuing to build relationships. Pizza, Fish n' Chips and Chinese were the meal choices.

Classroom sessions each morning were an ideal opportunity for umpires to raise any issues from the previous day, and for the management crew to reinforce important matters for the crew to implement on-diamond.

The weather was particularly warm on-diamond, with a lot of radiant heat coming off



The main diamond at Rosedale Park.

Canberra Skins 2013

29th November – 1st December 2013

As a relatively new player in the land of the Blues – this year I took my first adventure trip to the ACT Skins to see how these boys go about playing the game (and for money!).....result - I LOVE IT!!!! ☺

So, where to start – greeted at the airport by one of our wonderful local hosts in Alex Turnbull with his usual smiling face and weather conversation – who would have thought you would have needed sunscreen in Canberra?? Then chauffeured to our accommodation and get together at the local watering hole. An introduction to our B Grade Umpire's coordinator for the weekend – Mr. Brett Atkinson, and other new and some familiar faces from around the country. And I mean across the country – Mt Isa, Perth, Kerang, etc. we came from all over.

For those not overly familiar with the Skins format – it is essentially divided into an A and a B Grade competition with a Junior Competition being played concurrently at the same venue. The A Grade competition were playing for money each inning of every game as well as for individual achievements such as home runs etc., whilst the B Grade competition had to fight a little harder to pay their way with the larger of their earnings coming from winning the final game.

In line with the competition gradings, the umpires (with some cross over) were also essentially put into A, B and Junior umpiring pools with both on- and off-diamond feedback and support provided by our many wonderfully experienced blues. Tricia Sibraa led the A team, Brett supported by Martin Turnbull with the Bs and Sarah Houston providing wonderful experience and mentoring to the Junior blue team, and that's without the on-diamond crew members – Mr. Rindfleish, Mr. Evans, Mr. Sibraa, Mrs. Grove just to name a few... Frankly, if you couldn't learn amongst this lot you are in the wrong game!!

As the weekend progressed both the on and off the field rules became evident – for example you will complete the game card with all signatures and return it to the officials room immediately after the game; you are not given match balls – you are given gold of which the same number MUST be returned on completion of the game (this was a little difficult at times – boys tend to beat them up!); you will help yourself to all of the wonderful food which is constantly on hand (free to the blues) throughout the weekend; however, you will NOT touch the BBQ whilst Brett is on hand.

A few key points of interest for this year's competition include that it had the highest number of female umpires in attendance – a point that Alex highlighted at the beginning of the weekend, which is great; if you do not wear steel caps plate umpiring men's games you may get a broken toe; and not realising that you forgot to put on your leg guards until the catcher misses the ball isn't a smart move.

So to answer a few often-asked questions: was it a great tournament? Yes. Did I learn anything? YES & YES. Would I go again? YES, YES & YES!! If you are looking to advance your career in softball umpiring land and enjoy being in an environment where you are challenged by the players, coaches and blue team mates to improve your knowledge of the game, this is a wonderful tournament to put onto your calendar – Hope to see you all in 2014!!

Writer: Jacqui Crafter

South Australia

You don't often hear much from our quiet bunch of Blues in SA (with a couple of known exclusions!!), but we thought given the time of year we would take the chance to share a little of what we have been up to.

The beginning of this season has seen our Green Shirt program (new trainee umpires) grow from strength to strength with over 30 new umpires throughout the state which has kept our Training Coordinator David Datson and our mentors including Big Al (McAuliffe) and Bruce Burford very busy off the diamond. How very privileged we are to have such wonderful experience continuing to support our program, long after their on diamond roles have faded into the history books. A huge thank you to two true gentlemen of the game.

Speaking of Green Shirts – you may recall a previous article written by our very own Green Shirt Sandy Roberts about how her experiences and the support she has found in umpiring has changed her outlook on life as a whole. I am so very pleased to share that Sandy is now a Level 1 Blue, wearing her new shirt ever so proudly! However, this is not the only success this year... Sandy is now a very proud fulltime employee of St John's SA as a First Aid trainer – again another milestone which has been a long time coming for our tenacious lady and one that she credits her umpiring as having provided her the confidence to pursue. Congratulations Sandy – we know that 2014 will be even bigger and better than ever. And whilst on the subject of milestones...

We are also very proud to share that earlier this year, Toula Connolly was awarded her Softball South Australia Life Membership – a fantastic achievement by a wonderful lady who has been a part of our game since 1970 – more details of Toula's achievements will be shared in a future BNOL edition.

Not looking to take up too much of your valuable reading time, we would like to finish by thanking all of the Blues throughout the country who have taken the time to support our travelling crews as they venture around the various events on offer in an effort to expand their knowledge of our wonderful game – it is your welcoming support which makes the decision to continue such an easy one to make – Thank You.

Merry Softball to you all and to all a good game ☺



Writer: Jacqui Crafter

Victoria

Victorian Umpire Candidate Success

U17 State Championships – 14-15 December 2013



**Photo: (L-R): Brett Tyler, Jenny Joynson, Darren Spencer, Bernard Vella, Loki Sangali, Mark Williams, Denis Duffy, Michael Round, Connor McMorran, Pete Smauels, Helena Hapta, Ken Evans, Heather Watts, Kian Privitera, Richard Dodds, Stuart Tyler, Stan Tolmie, Tazmin Dodds, Mark Scammell, Mick Thorneycroft, Troy Summers, Rhonda Rowe
Absent: Lorraine Ritchie, Paul Bonner, Dane Sangali, Adan Penfold**

The recent U/17 State Championships held at Waverly Association in Victoria saw the successful achievement of new accreditations for three Victorian umpires.

The Championships were held over the weekend of December 14 and 15 saw Boys and Girls teams from throughout the state vying to become State champions.

The weekend saw candidates showing off their skills working towards their Level 2 Accreditation. Peter Samuels from Casey, Troy Summer from Albury and Heather Watts from Glen Eira were all successful. The standard and commitment to umpiring was evident, not only from the candidates but from all the umpires on diamond. What was particularly pleasing was that the candidates had attended the Candidates Course in September, a positive reinforcement of both the training and accreditation process.

Joining the successful candidates was a 20-strong umpire crew that included a management team lead by Tournament Chief Umpire (TCU) Richard Dodds, who led the umpire crew for the first time, Deputy TCU Stuart Tyler and TAO, Debbie Grove. Across the weekend games were played in great weather conditions.

Congratulations to the following umpires who were appointed to Grand Finals:



Boys Grand Final Crew
Brett Tyler, Mark Scammell, Mick Thorneycroft



Girls Cup Final Crew
Mark Williams, Jenny Joynson



Girls Plate Final Crew
Kian Priviters, Bernard Vella

The successful candidates are pictured below at the presentation with TCU Richard Dodds.



Troy Summers presented with his Level 2
by Richard Dodds



Heather Watts presented with her Level 2
by Richard Dodds



Peter Samuels presented with his Level 2
by Richard Dodds

At the conclusion of the tournament the opportunity was taken to announce the 2013 and 2014 John Larter Umpire Development Scholarship award winners. With a large number of applicants vying for the award, there's no doubt the recipients will go on to better things. The scholarship, presented to Tazmin Dodds from Casey for 2013, and Connor McMorran from Glen Eira for 2014, is presented to a Level One umpire to assist them in the purchase of umpire equipment or attire. The recipient demonstrates a high level of enthusiasm for umpiring, consistently demonstrates an above average level of officiating skill, and demonstrates commitment to work towards obtaining their Level Two.



Connor McMorran presented with his Scholarship



Tazmin Dodds presented with her Scholarship

Thank you to our hosts at Waverley and a big thank you to all the umpires, assessors, senior umpires assisting, and the management crew – another successful State Championship concludes.

Writers: Richard Dodds and Stacey Loveridge

New South Wales

Christmas Message from Director of Umpiring Scott Rindfleish

On behalf of the umpiring family in NSW, I extend my season's greetings and well wishes to all of our friends and colleagues interstate. May this Christmas bring you all peace, happiness and joy. I trust that everyone will enjoy time to relax and recharge ahead of the January National Championships. We look forward to meeting you all on the diamond in the New Year.

SNSWUA AGM

The Softball NSW Umpires Association held its Annual General Meeting on Friday 6 December 2013.

The 2014 Executive consists of:

Director:	Scott Rindfleish
Deputy Director:	Andrew Rindfleish
Secretary:	Vicki Lansley
Treasurer:	Jay Gibson
Executive Member:	Ron Houison
Executive Member:	Amanda Houison
Executive Member:	Leanne Gearside
Executive Member:	Jesse Smith
Executive Member:	Krissi Travers

Annual Award Winners

Following the 2013 Annual General Meeting, the Softball NSW Umpires Association Annual Awards Presentation took place.

Congratulations to the 2013 Award Winners are:

Andrew Rindfleish Umpire of the Year Award:	Scott Rindfleish
Director's Award for Services to Umpiring:	Leanne Gearside
Individual Award for Umpiring Development:	Ron Houison
Affiliate Award for Umpire Development:	Cumberland Nepean Softball Association
Encouragement Award:	Tom Ryan

In other exciting news, SNSWUA Life Member Dawn Young was formally inducted into the Softball NSW Hall of Fame, the first umpire to be inducted, at the SNSW State Teams' Dinner on Wednesday 18 December. Dawn was in attendance at the dinner and we join with the SNSW community in congratulating Dawn on this achievement!