

BLUES NEWS ON LINE

Contributions to mtoft@ozemail.com.au

June/July Edition Vol 6/7 of 2004

Thanks for your input

with Andrew Rindfleish

One of the most interesting happenings of the last two months has been the enthusiasm with which the initiative to introduce a new national on-diamond shirt has been embraced. A working group has been set up to look into a new shirt and consists of Phil Waller (Vic), Sue Itzstein (NSW), Darren Sibraa (Qld), Yvonne Newman (NT) and Peter Richardson (WA). I had the opportunity to visit Brisbane during the South Brisbane Classic in June. All of the working group except Sue and Peter were umpiring at the tournament and took the opportunity, along with all the senior umpires at the tournament, to "test drive" a number of newer style shirts. We have settled on the need for the shirt to be made from a moisture management fabric, however, the details on the design and manufacturer are still to be finalised. We are on track to have a new shirt for the January nationals.



I would like to thank those in the working group and those umpires at the South Brisbane Classic for their contribution to the development of a new shirt. The round table discussions were very useful

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The New on-diamond shirt research continues

As most of you know the National Umpiring Committee have been looking into new On-Diamond (polo) shirts to replace the cotton shirts most of us wear at the moment.

The National committee have set up a task force to research material, costs, and availability of these new shirts. Members of the Task Force include Darren Sibraa (Queensland), Phil Waller (Victoria), Sue Itzstein (New South Wales), Peter Richardson (Western Australia) and Yvonne Newman (Northern Territory).



Recently at the South Brisbane Men's Classic umpires were given the opportunity to wear some of the shirts which various States have in place as well as one which was made up on spec for the tournament.

Which is the best? Chairing a meeting at the South Brisbane Classic, Andrew Rindfleish gets some feedback from umpires who trialed some of the styles and designs of shirts to be considered.

Northern Territory, New South Wales and the spec one made in Victoria were on trial with a great deal of feed back from all umpires who attended the tournament.

It was also fortunate that we had our National Director, Andrew Rindfleish and Deputy Director, Tricia Sibraa on hand to listen to the feedback as well as Darren, Phil and Yvonne who officiated at the tournament.

It is envisaged that the new shirts would come into being for the 2005 National Championships, but there is a lot of work to be done and a lot of discussion still to be heard before a final outcome.



The players and coaches seemed to want to have their say and most gave it a thumbs up. The general consensus was that we were 'looking more professional' and even though the players and coaches are not in the final decision making process it is good to hear their comments.

Further developments will be forwarded through the Web site and the next edition of BNOL. Stay tuned.

Making Rules easier with Alan McAuliffe

Question: A runner misses a base and the ball is returned to the pitcher or goes dead ... the defensive team players have not noticed the missed base. Is it legal for the defensive coach to bring this fact to the attention of his players on the field?

Answer: Yes! Any member of the defensive team, including bench personnel, may bring the fact a runner has missed a base to the attention of the fielders at any time, regardless of whether play has stopped, or the ball is dead or alive. It is then up to the fielders to appeal in the correct manner, using either a Dead Ball Appeal, or a normal appeal while the ball is alive.

Question: I have read the rules concerning interference and obstruction. At times I have trouble in determining when a play is, or is not, an obstruction. Is there a simple formula that umpires are using to determine such instances?

Answer: There is no specific formula that umpires use to determine when obstruction occurs at a base where a play is being made ~ it is purely umpire's judgment; however, the rule of thumb I use may assist you in identifying possible obstructions.

- If there is contact between fielder and runner **before the fielder takes possession of the ball** - then it IS obstruction.
- If the fielder receives the ball **before the contact between fielder & runner** - then it is NOT obstruction.
- If the contact is made **as the fielder is taking possession of the ball**, i.e. the contact occurs simultaneously with the fielder taking possession - then it is NOT obstruction but simply incidental contact and play on.

In stating the above, it must be remembered that a fielder has the right of way when attempting to field a fair-batted ball, even if the ball has first been deflected from another fielder.

Big night for our new ISF umpires



Well Done! Diane Waller, Leigh Evans and Debbie Keogh were presented with their ISF Accreditation at the Annual Victorian Awards dinner recently. All three completed their ISF accreditation in January at a Clinic in Brisbane followed by officiating at the National Open Women's Championships at Downey Park. The successful NSW candidates will be honoured at their States presentation evening.

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

Don't Be Bigger Than The Game

Contributed by Jacquie Davies

Are you bigger than the game?
Who is the Game For You or the Player?

Now we all want to get out there, umpire the game and get home. Right. I don't think so.

We'll think about it this way you're the player you pay all this money to join the club and buy your glove cleats etc. You want game time, well don't you. The same as the umpire we all want game time to improve our game.

Then some umpire comes on to the game has strike zone so small its out of this world and all you here him calling is balls. Not on.

We all want to go out there and have a game. Player's, Umpire; s the best game we have ever had in our life, from little league to the top. Just remember if you are in a hurry to get the game over with, why did you take the assignment anyway. Leave it to someone that wants to be there.

The game is for the players not for some show boat of an umpire. A good game is where you don't even think about the ump or hear anything about the ump. They just go and do the job of calling balls and strike safes and out, an the odd bit in between. Ok . This what we are looking for obstruction interference, fly ball you name it. So we have got the gist of why we are there.

To many times I have seen an umpire make a spectacle of a player, like calling the obvious out. If you don't have to sell it don't. Everyone can see he's out. Just signal the out. Same with a safe call. Why would anyone really want to bring attention to themselves? We really only need to be there when the time needs us to be.

So lets get on to the Umpire from hell. Who calls every play as if his life depends on it? Who does he think he is kidding? (Himself) The players don't want this. They just want us to be there, on a call for the close plays. They really they don't even want us there even on those. Players think that they can control the game themselves. I don't think so. They do need us.

When you go out there an call the game be relaxed think about what you are doing read the play think about where the ball is follow the ball follow the player watch the tag up. Don't be nit picking on the small things that don't really matter. Just don't even see them. We are having so many

things to think about, oh I will just call that guy out that way I can take the game away from me. Not. The game has just become focused on you because you are becoming bigger than the game you are now thinking that you are just going to get away with it. NOT. Players are now focused on you, you are becoming bigger than the game you are calling stupid things you are trying to get the game away from you but it is coming at you at a great rate of knots.

STOP

You have now become greater then the game you are calling crap should I say it sorry you have lost it.?????????

RELAX

If you read it from some of the great's Pause Read React. And everything will come together an you won't be greater then the game. SO don't think I will be ok. You won't be, you will kick yourself for weeks. Don't even go there you are a good umpire you just need to learn to relax into the game call what you see and don't try to be bigger than the game as the game will eat you up. Hay no one told me this when I started out. They just told me to go out an umpire no direction no advice nothing. So you people coming forward now have all this experience and advise so you don't have to be bigger than the game. Why would we give you this advice to put you wrong? Don't think so we are here not to help.

We're all a bit like training a dog. Give a good command, it will try to do it's best. Give it a bad command an it will try to call your bluff, if you stand up to it they will learn. Now this applies to both the umpire and the player. An umpire really needs to have a low profile until its needed and then bring it to the fore. A player needs to know how much to push. We are a necessary evil. We need to be there but we don't. Think about it.

You can have a game with out scorers but you can't have a game with out an umpire. And we can't have a game with out players. Whither it is a player umpire or a professional. But all I can say is don't be bigger than the game. Think about what level you are umpiring and apply the rules accordingly. Don't go over doing it in the kids games an then forget to do it in the Seniors. We just need to be consistent in whatever level we call. An to follow plays.

A great game is when you don't know the umpires have even been on a game.

Bet Your Life Calls with Bob Henning

(For Use When In Doubt)

There are so many gray areas when it comes to making critical decisions on the diamond that umpires need to base their decisions on more concrete evidence. Have you ever had to guess one of your calls and make a decision based on conjecture? Yes, conjecture, otherwise known as a guess based on skimpy evidence. It is not a pleasant situation to find yourself in when deciding important calls that require your immediate response.

I like to think of these types of calls as 'Bet Your Life' calls. Are you 100% positive that what you think happened actually took place? Often times umpires are not 'positive' of just what took place yet are obliged by the rules to render a decision.

One important way to stay out of trouble is to utilize a series of responses when you are in doubt of exactly what happened or what you think happened. Nothing upsets the participants, spectators and our own partners more than when umpires miss these types of calls.

A perfect example is calling a leadoff. This is a critical call because the result is the runner is being out. If you are 60%, 70% or 80% certain the runner led off, then they didn't. Are you 90% sure? Not good enough! If you are not positive you have a violation, then the runner did not leadoff.

You guessed it, you had better be 100% certain or willing to 'Bet Your Life' you are correct. Now you should make the call, "TIME – TIME, no pitch. The runner is OUT for leadoff".

Some other situations would be batters leaving the batter's box and contacting the ball, double-batted balls, and batters hit by the pitch or a ball off a batter's bat and hitting their foot. It might be the runners touching bases or being tagged, runners tagging and leaving early or runners causing interference. It could be an infielder pulling their foot early to attempt to get another out somewhere on the diamond.

There are other calls where the same mindset should prevail. All pitches are strikes until you decide they are balls. All balls are fair until you decide they are foul.

Nothing upsets the players, coaches, spectators and your partners more than calling something that didn't happen. If you are not 100% sure a pitch is illegal, then it must be legal. If you are not sure, ignore calling it. Never guess a batter or runner out. Make sure you are 100% correct before rendering them

out.

Below are some pointers I have read somewhere that can assist your decision-making process. Using these guidelines will assist you in making critical calls and help maintain your reputation as an intelligent and fair official.

- ◆ When in doubt, the pitch is a strike.
- ◆ When in doubt, it was not a leadoff.
- ◆ When in doubt, the runner touched the base.
- ◆ When in doubt, the runner did not leave the base too soon.
- ◆ When in doubt, the ball was not caught.
- ◆ When in doubt, the fielder did not pull his foot.
- ◆ When in doubt, it was not an illegal pitch.
- ◆ When in doubt, it is a fair ball.
- ◆ When in doubt, the runner was not tagged.
- ◆ When in doubt, the batter was not out of the batter's box.
- ◆ When in doubt, the pitch did not hit the batter.
- ◆ When in doubt, ask for help!

.....From Page One

Thanks for your input

Margo Koskelainen won the Ausport Award for development of officials at a luncheon held on July 8. Congratulations, Margo. This is, again, public recognition of the status with which our program, managed by Margo for so many years, is held in the greater sporting arena.

The costs of conducting National championships are escalating year by year. As managers of the umpires' program the National Umpire Committee has been asked to look into ways of helping contain, or even reduce costs, of providing umpires at nationals. This has been a discussion item for a couple of years now and I have had discussions with Softball Australia officials recently. Without knowing where we will end up, for those of us who attend nationals, there are likely to be some noticeable changes next year.

The Australian theory exam has come and gone for another year. I'd like to thank Alan McAuliffe, and his committee, for the work in setting and marking the paper, once again. There was a drop off in numbers sitting the paper this year, at some levels. This is of concern, particularly when our sport is in desperate need for more and not less officials through all levels. The way we deliver the paper has been discussed for a number of years now at NUC and the State Directors' meeting. I'd be interested to hear the views of any individuals on the format, timing and delivery of the exam.

Please feel free to email me with any comments you might have.

rindfleish@ozemail.com.au

Mackay jUmp Clinic

Queensland are having a great deal of success with their jUmp program for junior umpires. Recently Ron Trow travelled to Mackay to present the program with a number of young umpires attending. The following is an extract from Ron's report to the Queensland Umpiring Committee.

Those attending the clinic were Matt Rollings, Alison Sternes, Shannon Wylie, Sarah Martin, Cameron Baxter, Steven Baxter, Erin Muller, Dane Smith, Emily Goodwin, Kristil Zappone, Josh Jansen, Courtney Waters, Jacinta John, Dylan Martin, Katie Huddleston, Jason Muller, Jason Cousen.



Steven Baxter on the plate

THEORY

The jUmp presentation was given and used to steer the discussions. As is usual the discussions moved to areas of confusion and experiences. General discussion and questions were encouraged with participation being major criteria.

GENERAL

Peter Baxter and the Mackay association have worked hard to promote the jUmp program the results were very encouraging. As the attached attendance sheet shows numbers were very good. The presence of Peter Baxter and Neville Baggow in this DA shows in the knowledge of the participants. The participants showed a good understanding of practical positions and mechanics gained from peter by observation and clinics. Thank you to Peter and Neville for their hard work, it shows in the outcomes. All participants were successful in the exam. Peter will now allocate the umpires to games during the season and those who officiate sufficient games and meet the requirements will be presented with their Level 1 on next visit (Semi Finals).

PRACTICAL SESSION:

PLATE

Participants were instructed in:

Role of the Plate Umpire

Set up – timing to stance, adjustments,
Responsibilities

Working with the catcher.
Position and movement

Calling of pitches – soft/hard focus.

The strike zone including

Tracking the ball

Working the slot

Timing

Height adjustment

Use of vocals and mechanics

View of the plate, cues

Stance – heal / toe, relaxed, steady, head

Passed balls skill.

Foul balls

Removal of the mask

Trailing the runner

Movement into diamond

Participants were asked to observe and them given the opportunity to practice the skill and ask questions. Emphasis was placed on why the skill or position was used.



Nine of the participants in the recent jUmp program in Mackay

Those part time Blue's blues

Here it is Grand Final time again and the search to dust off the blues is on again.

Not to bad this morning at some ungodly hour to help out my Association U.I.C's call for help, I discovered to my dismay that I had an identical pair of shoes at home to the ones I had with me, except the ones at home were both right feet.

Of course my UIC had a senior moment and didn't have us on the roster and allocated Lis and I to a game most suited to our skills and abilities, Tee Ball Babes. It has been a long time since we have been on the park together as umpires and we had a ball.

Now I am not belittling our abilities as we all know the biggest job of any umpire is to manage the game and make it enjoyable for the participants. Tee Ball is perhaps the most difficult in the babes as there are no winners or losers. Unfortunately the parents do not know that and of course in the last innings the coaches memory seems to disappear in relation to this principle.

I know we hear the story that all children are competitive. They are, but the one thing they forget to tell you is the way they compete. They are incredibly competitive in areas where they make their own rules, but when other people make the rules they are happy enough to play, not count and just have fun.

So the game was something unusual for these teams. They had umpires there who could actually manage the game. Parents were given time before the game or photo opportunities of their little darlings before they got dirty. This was a good start, keeping the parents on side.

Then the game commenced with good humour. Catchers took great delight in reminding me that it was their job to put the ball on the tee and it was my job to get the tee out of the way.

Smiles all around with the kids, some of whom in the field were happier to play in the dirt when the ball didn't come their way, but hey, what is more fun for a five or six year old than playing in the dirt.

Some great plays, boding well for the future, an unassisted triple play which was appreciated by the umpires, and I am guessing not fully appreciated by the parents.

One catcher reaching up to hold my hand at one stage, I guess to let me

know as I almost fell over him before his hand reached for mine. A little batter in the box in tears not wanting to be there was quickly replaced without penalty, bribed with something as she didn't like M & M's and returned later.

Incredibly at the last change of innings the score was tied.

In the last innings the niggles started from the coaches. One coach who had the bat, wanted to finish the innings rather than finishing at time, which could have resulted in a win.

The opposition coach with 30 seconds to go wanted to ask a question about the runner running off the line. In the end neither coach got their wish and the games settled down for a draw.

It was a good result for the kids as there were only winners for their big day. That is the important thing for this age group, they had a big day and enjoyed themselves, with the minimum of tears. I think I achieved my goals for the day managing the game so the participants enjoyed themselves.

Mike Hannelly

V.U.C. weekend/meeting, Cohuna, where???

Well, it's about a 3-hour drive north of Melbourne, dairy country, and Debbie Grove's place. We set off about 9.00am Saturday, arrival at Kerang about 12.10pm. A quick visit to Deb's bridal and let's say interesting nic knock shop, and it's off to the local hot bread kitchen for lunch.

After lunch we had time to settle, then we found our selves being guided to the local airfield where Captain Steve Grove took us up for a scenic flight over Kerang, Cohuna and surrounding areas, in a 4-seater what's a thingy aeroplane. Great weather and a great day.

Then it was back to the farm by 4.00pm for the milking of several hundred cows, you might be mistaken by thinking it's a milk farm (dairy), but from what we observed it's really a poop patty factory. Hey don't stand in one spot too long while milking is going on, or you a gone'a.

Evening time saw us having a couple of wines over a great meal at the local Golf Club. Later on, we had a couple of wines at the Grove's home, followed by a couple of fine wines. At around 3.00am it was time for bed. After you shut both eyes and open them again, its 6.00am, you guessed it, milking time. The only good part about getting up in 3 hours was rounding up the cows with the 4-wheeler bike. After milking the cows, feeding the calves, and more moving of cows we had brunch, then a meeting, the real reason we went there.

Thanks to Steve and Deb for their hospitality and a great time.

PAN PACIFIC MASTER GAMES

PIZZY PARK, MIAMI, GOLD COAST

6 NOVEMBER – 13 NOVEMBER 2004



ONCE AGAIN THE GOLD COAST SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION IS HOSTING THE SOFTBALL COMPONENT OF THE ABOVE GAMES.

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US IN AN OFFICIAL CAPACITY.

EACH COMPETING TEAM MUST PROVIDE AN UMPIRE SO IF YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE AS A TEAM BLUE (SPORTS FEE, PAN PACS FEE AND ACCOMMODATION WILL BE MET BY THE PARTICIPATING TEAM)

PLEASE CONTACT

TRICIA SIBRAA (UIC)
EMAIL – p.bichel@library.uq.edu.au
Home/Fax – 07 3348 3223



LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE MASTERS ON THE GOLD COAST

CAMERON COX
EVENT CONVENOR



That's Brutal Blue!

Oooouch! At the crack of the bat the runner twisted into foul territory—the third baseman flinched - Canadian umpire Bob Henning didn't move as the line drive struck him square on the leg. The photo was taken the next day. **Bob your reaction time is slowing!!!!**



When you have exercised all your resources try to look outside the square you live in or call Tom Cruise for advice.



Canadian umpire Bob Henning in action behind the plate in Sydney for the Australian International Softball Cup prior to the 2000 Sydney Olympic games.

THE MONOCULAR VISION THEORY By Bob Henning

This topic is the most crucial aspect to an official developing consistency of the strike zone. By utilizing this technique, you will find that your vision of the pitch will improve throughout the zone. Your judgment of the pitch will be more accurate and the overall structure of your decision-making process will increase your ability to be more consistent. I really believe that this topic can and will make a difference in your game. The importance of it in your overall ball and strike consistency will vary between negligible and noticeable levels. After all, plate mechanics were designed to help improve our positioning and consistency. Hopefully, by taking the time to consider this topic, then incorporating it into your game, it will give you a greater sense of confidence, so that you will never have to second guess your strike zone again.

All of us have a dominant eye. That is to say one that is stronger because we use it more and one that is weaker because we use it less. According to Dr. Donna Mockler, who is working for many different professional and amateur sports organizations, people rely more on their dominant eye when they are under stress. When we observe a pitch we must be sure that we are seeing the ball equally with both eyes or are using our weak eye more. If we were to depend solely on our dominant eye to track a pitch from the pitcher's hip to the catcher's glove, we would lose depth perception, as the ball gets closer to our eyes. This is why we must make sure that we can see the ball throughout the entire zone and watch the ball hit the catcher's glove with 'both eyes'.

The beauty of this theory, accepted by many Ophthalmologists involved in sports medicine, is that by making sure we see the ball through the zone using these techniques, we ensure that we have a greater perception of what we see, which translates into better consistency. Often times, you've heard umpires mention that their consistency was not up to par during an at bat, an inning or perhaps even an entire game. I believe that those umpires, without really knowing it, were using their dominant eye more than using both of their eyes during those difficult times. This also explains why some umpires have more trouble with the consistency of calling the outside pitch or outside-low pitch. After you test for your dominant eye, you may be very surprised at just how much movement takes place. By the amount that your thumb moves by being only three feet from your eyes, imagine how much that ball is capable of moving when it is three feet away

There are also some variations that occur with this theory that can give you a different look at the zone, depending on whether the batter is hitting from the right or left side. If you are right-eye dominant, you will have the most trouble with the outside and/or low pitch when a right-hand batter is up. If you are left-eye dominant, you will have difficulty with the outside and/or low pitch when a left-hand batter is up.

Give this a hard look to see if it can improve your zone. Concentrate using your weak eye more by turning your head slightly so that you force yourself to use the weak eye more. The more you use your weak eye, the stronger it should become.

Eventually you will find that this 'MONOCULAR VISION THEORY' is adaptable. Many umpires have reported that this one topic has made a substantial difference in their consistency and is the one thing that had really improved their game. It could make an awesome difference in your game, and hopefully, make your officiating that much more enjoyable, successful, rewarding and fulfilling.

HOW TO DETERMINE YOUR DOMINANT EYE

(Note: This test is best when verbally administered by a second person.)

- 1) Pick out a spot on a wall that is at least ten feet away.
- 2) Extend your arm away from you and point your thumb straight up.
- 3) Focus on the spot on the wall with both eyes open and while concentrating on that spot, slowly align your thumb with your line of sight to the spot.
- 4) Now, while remembering to concentrate on the distant spot, close your left eye. Is your thumb still on the spot? If the answer is yes, your dominant eye is your right eye. If your thumb has moved away from the spot, then your weak eye is the right eye.
- 5) And of course the reverse of the above is also true. Focus once again, remembering to concentrate on the distant spot and close your right eye. Is your thumb still on the spot? If you answer yes, your dominant eye is your left eye. If your thumb has moved away from the spot then your weak eye is your left eye.
- 6) Now, while still focusing on the spot, slowly blink your eyes one at a time.

This should clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of this test and theory.

Bob Henning

henning@cznt.com

Queensland Blues recognised with new awards

by Mark Toft

Darren Sibraa was named the inaugural winner of the Tricia Bichel Queensland Umpire of the Year Award, which was presented at the State dinner recently. Darren, the current State Director, was honoured to receive this award especially being the first and with the award being named after his wife, Tricia.

Darren's work at the helm of Queensland umpiring over the past 12 months and the excellent communications with all District Associations within the State makes him a worthy winner of this prestigious award.

Darren's officiating on the local, State and National scene as well as special events incorporating the Skins in Canberra, Grand Prix Series and the South Brisbane Classic has been impressive since receiving his Level 5 accreditation.

Probably one of the highlights this year came in Hobart at the Under 16 Boys National championships where he was appointed to the plate on the Championship game.

The Queensland Junior Umpire of the Year Award was presented to Wynnum umpire Adrian Ralph. Adrian has come through the ranks at the Wynnum Association and is currently a Level 3 umpire. Having been awarded the Wynnum Junior Umpire of the Year award in consecutive years, Adrian last season received the Joan Fawke Memorial Award for his service to the District Association. Adrian has a bright future in umpiring and is keen to take the next step to Level 4.

Mount Isa Association was awarded the Queensland District Association Umpiring Contribution for their development of umpires. This award recognises the work and effort by the association in the development and training of um-



Top guns: Pictured L to R, Glen-Marie Carless accepts the District Association Umpiring Contribution Award which was awarded to Mt Isa, Tricia Bichel Queensland Umpire of the Year Award winner, Darren Sibraa (Queensland State Director of Umpiring), Tricia Sibraa (Deputy Director of Australia), and Queensland Junior Umpire of the Year, Adrian Ralph.

pires. Starting the 2003 season with a handful of Level 1 umpires Mt Isa has embraced the State's Junior Umpiring program and recently hosted the Queensland Primary School Championships.

It is a credit to the Western Queensland Association, and their Coordinator Brian Macpherson, to receive this award and acknowledge the achievement despite not having much contact with the major competitions in the State.

Blue's News on behalf of the entire Blue's family congratulate Darren, Adrian and Mount Isa for their awards and the nurturing of umpiring in Australia, especially in Queensland.

Betty McGuire calls it a day after 50 Years

By Mark Toft (with a little help from Stacie and Leigh Evans)

Betty McGuire started playing softball in 1953 with the Rebels Softball team in the Melbourne competition. Games were played at either The Domain or Fawkner Park.

She was fortunate to be coached by Arthur Allsop and Bill Ward, who were both very particular that players learnt the fundamentals of the games and the basic skills of ball handling. Betty recalls that she sat on the bench for most of her first season as there were a few State players in the team, but was advised to use that time by watching and learning from these players. After being married in 1954 Betty did not play in 1955 but big things were yet to come.

In 1956 the Sunshine Softball Association was formed of which Betty was a founding member. Betty played with the East Sunshine Youth Club, while Kerry coached. Clubs that entered teams that first year were East Sunshine Youth Club, McKay's, Sunshine Colts and I.C.I. Lions. Betty's team were thrilled to have their name up as the first Premiers for the Sunshine Softball Association.

Sunshine had the good fortune to have as an umpire Joe McIntyre in the first couple of years, after that they relied on the generosity of the Sunshine Baseball Club who helped out with umpires for games. Because the teams also had to supply umpires, Betty was one of the first to say, 'I'll have a go.'

Sunshine were accepted into the Victorian Championships in 1958 and trav-



eled to Ballarat in March 1959 for their first taste of competing against other Associations. It was very cold, very wet and a very different experience. Each player had raised their own finance to cover trains fares, accommodation etc. but altogether Sunshine were very proud of their Under 17 and Open teams.

In 1960, Sunshine had to supply an umpire with their team entry into Victorian Championships. So no prizes for guessing who got to go. Although scared that she would make some horrendous decision, she was made very welcome by other teams and who should she meet in the first game of the Championships, but her old coach Arthur who was "plating" and another new umpire from Geelong Barry Smith. Barry eventually became the Director of Umpiring for Baseball in Victoria many years later.

From then on Betty was hooked on umpiring, eventually helping to form the Sunshine Umpires Association. With only 3 members that first year they gained more as the years passed. Their intentions were to get their people accredited. This was achieved over the years and they still have a couple of umpires who aspire to higher standards. Unfortunately this is another of those various sub-Associations that has now gone by the board.

'Umpiring can be a very satisfactory area, although it does get very uncomfortable at times when teams believe that every decision is going against them.

'But like players, who need to learn their skills and practice consistently, umpires need to work at learning the Rules and being in the right position to call plays.'

'It just does not happen', Betty said.

Betty's highlight during her years of umpiring was when she was selected to represent Australia as an umpire at the Mini World series held in Brisbane in 1980. Betty also had the opportunity to umpire in many games, which occurred between visiting teams from Canada, San Diego and New Zealand. Some of these games were hosted by Sunshine and she remembers the night at the clubrooms when the visiting consul from Canada didn't want to go home and the others did. Still it was a very good party.

'Another highlight was when Sunshine hosted the visiting team from South



Africa. Many of our players assisted and we hired the Town Hall and Joy Harris from the St Albans Club catered for a dinner for them after which we took them by bus around Melbourne and then on to the Domain where they played against the Victorian State Team', Betty recalls.

During her time at Sunshine, Betty has been a member of the "wet weather committee" later renamed the Pennant committee. She also served on Selection committees, protest committees, umpires association as Vice president, then Secretary since 1959/60. She has represented Women's Sport on the inaugural Sports Advisory Committee to the Sunshine Council and again when it was revived by the Brimbank City Council.

At State level, Betty have been a member of the Victorian Umpires Association, Affiliated Associations Delegate to the Women's Amateur Softball Council of Victoria, and a member of the Tournament Committee for many years and represented Victoria as an umpire at Junior and Senior National Championships from 1974 until 1984.

Betty has been awarded Life Memberships of both Sunshine and Victoria.

Betty believes that she has had the best years of player involvement with many Affiliated Associations of Victoria and enjoyed amicable relationships with players from past State teams at National Championships. She has made many friends from interstate whilst umpiring and enjoys catching up with them whenever possible.

Betty's retirement from softball has left a huge legacy. She has been with the Sunshine Association since its inception in 1956, three years as Vice President and the rest as Secretary.

Since retiring in May, Betty told me she wondered how she ever managed to fit in the administration side as now she is very involved with the Australian Blind Bowlers Association and their Secretary keeps her very busy!!

Betty went on to say she would like to thank all the people who have assisted her during the years.

"I have met some very wonderful people throughout Australia especially in the umpiring area and I have lots of good memories to look back on," Betty said.

"Being retired doesn't mean that I have lost contact with softball, as I would still like to keep up-to-date through BNOL and I will still have some involvement with the Victorian umpires."

Betty, Thanks for the memories. Have fun in Retirement!