



### Three sports on way out, Tiger show is on

Tiger Woods will be in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing if the International Olympic Committee's programme commission has their way.

IOC sources have confirmed to AFP that golf is one of three new sports provisionally to be slated in for the Beijing Games.

The other two are Wushu, a form of Chinese martial arts, and seven-a-side rugby.

But to include the three means throwing three sports out to make room for them.

The three facing the axe are believed to be triathlon, baseball and softball.

"If we are thrown out of the Olympics it will kill triathlon as we know it," said triathlon president Les McDonald yesterday.

"I simply see no logic in the plan. We are spectator friendly and television friendly. We have a huge fan base throughout the world," added the Canadian.

Don Porter, president of the Softball Federation, confirmed to AFP that he had heard about the plans to oust his sport.

"We will do what we can to protect our sport and keep it in the Olympics," said Porter.

"Throwing us out would send out the wrong message by the IOC. They want more women competing and we have women teams."

All three sports count on the IOC revenue to keep them going.

After the Sydney Games softball and baseball were given US\$4.168 million from the IOC revenues. Triathlon received US\$3.6668 million.

Revenues are expected to increase by several millions after the 2004 Athens Games.

Triathlon, softball and baseball have until November to protect their position in the Olympics.

The decision over what sports are included for Beijing will be taken at the extraordinary IOC Congress in Mexico where the future of the IOC is to be mapped out.

### Don't forget the ones you love by Mark Toft

It's no secret that I love softball umpiring, but the opportunities would not be possible without the dedication of such a great support crew, like my wife and children.

Many years ago I came to Toowoomba and played baseball. Week in, week out I played my game/s and after the game my team mates went up to the canteen and met up with their wives and family who had been watching their husbands and fathers play, and of course we had a few celebratory drinks together.

The one problem I had was that I had no wife and family and I was there drinking with the boys. Well I gave up playing baseball years later and took up umpiring baseball and later again umpiring softball. But there was the same scenario, no one there to watch me perform my duties.

That all changed when I met my wife, Margaret. It gives me great pleasure when Margaret comes to the games, in which I umpire, to watch me officiate.

You see Margaret is one of my best critics, although she does not know much about the rules, she is there to support me in what is a huge part of my life.

Many people have taught me about game management, but Margaret has taught me about managing myself, as an umpire and in life itself. I thank Margaret for her support which has kept me focused in the second most important part of my life.

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**Catch you Later**

### For the Mathematicians

$111,111,111 \times 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321$  (Go on, check it!)

**Larter .....the best  
Medicine**



**There is always  
time to laugh!**

**Just make an  
ASS of yourself**

A City boy, Kenny, moved to the country and bought a donkey from an old farmer for \$100.00. The farmer agreed to deliver the donkey the next day.

The next day the farmer drove up and said, "Sorry son, but I have some bad news, the donkey died." Kenny replied, "Well then, just give me my money back."

The farmer said, "Can't do that. I went and spent it already."

Kenny said, "OK then, just unload the donkey."

The farmer asked, "What ya gonna do with him?"

Kenny, "I'm going to raffle him off."

Farmer, " You can't raffle off a dead donkey!"

Kenny, "Sure I can. Watch me. I just won't tell anybody he is dead."

A month later the farmer met up with Kenny and asked, "What happened with that dead donkey?"

Kenny, "I raffled him off. I sold 500 tickets at two dollars a piece and made a profit of \$898.00."

Farmer, "Didn't anyone complain?"

Kenny, " Just the guy who won. So I gave him his two dollars back."

Kenny grew up...and eventually became the chairman of Enron.

**Life time enemies**

Two boys who disliked each other intensely throughout their schooldays met at Sydney's Central Station many years later when one was an admiral and the other a bishop. Instant recognition was followed by resumed dislike.

The bishop swept up to the admiral and asked him, "Stationmaster, from what platform is the Melbourne train leaving?"

The admiral responded, "Platform 5, madam, but in your condition should you be traveling?"



**Rules Challenge**

**Big Al's Tester**

This month I will deal with two questions ~ one about a pitcher standing on the plate after delivering the pitch, and the other about a runner sliding into home plate.

Question:

Can a pitcher stand on the pitching plate once he has pitched the ball, and if not, what about if he is fielding the ball and is forced to stand on the plate to do so?

Answer:

After taking the step simultaneous with the release of the pitch, the pitcher must stay of the plate until he has the ball in his possession again. If he remains on the plate after delivering the pitch, the umpire should advise him to stay off the plate. If he continues to remain on the plate without the ball, an Illegal Pitch should be declared (Rule 6 Sec 1a & Effect for Sections 1-8).

However, the pitcher is permitted to stand on or near the plate while in the act of fielding a batted ball; if he is fielding a batted ball he is no longer considered to be a pitcher, but is simply another fielder.

Question:

A runner sliding into home plate knocks the catcher over, as he is trying to catch the ball. Is this interference?

Answer:

No! A runner is entitled to slide into any base, including home plate, without penalty, provided the runner is able to reach & touch the base with the slide.

The fact the fielder (catcher) is knocked over during the course of the slide is disregarded, as the contact is deemed to be incidental. However, if the runner slides into the fielder from such a position that it would not be possible to reach the base on the slide, or the runner remains on his feet and crashes into the fielder, either with or without the ball, then interference should be ruled (Rule 8 Sec 9q).

## Part of the 2002 Umpire's open Exam Analysis

The NUC marked the papers for Level 4-8 and the Average mark obtained was 81.49%.

The top mark for each State was obtained by: Martin Turnbull (ACT), Scott Rindfleish (NSW), Cathie Allen and Margaret Lee (NT), Ian Goodman (QLD), Toulia Conolly (SA), Leigh Evans (VIC), Graham Bancroft (WA), Tasmania did not have a candidate.

Congratulations are extended to Graham Bancroft, who achieved the highest mark of 99%.

(O.K. I'll ask the question first, I wonder which one he got wrong?) Graham if you would like to let BNOL it would be very much appreciated.

State Directors were responsible for the marking of Level 0-3 papers within their own State, consequently the leading results are not known. An average Australia wide mark of 61.93% was achieved at this level.

At all Levels, an Australia wide average of 63.93% was achieved.

A total number of 782 candidates at all levels sat the exam, which was 2.36% more than last year.

One disturbing feature was noted during the marking process—that being the failure of candidates to answer a question. One paper lost 16 marks as a result of not filling in either circle for a question: three papers lost 2 marks and several lost one mark.

More statistics are on page 10.

### Just a little one for you to ponder

A young man looking for a job traveled to a country town and was immediately offered a position by the owner of the corner store.

"I'm the president of the local football team," the owner said, "and we need a centre half forward with courage and strong hands."

"I'm sorry," said the lad, "but I don't know a thing about football."

"No worries," replied the owner. "we need umpires too."

### Happy 50th Birthday

Two of Australia's more senior umpires celebrated their 50th Birthday this month (August).

Keeping it rather quiet the two New South Welshmen Andrew Rindfleish and Darrell Shepherd enjoyed the celebrations at home and with the members of the National Umpire's Conference in Melbourne just last week.

For your diaries—Andrew's Birthday is August 17 and Darrell's is August 29.

## Questions that caused difficulty—Exam 2002

The Statistics which have been listed below were compiled by the National Rules Interpreter Alan McAuliffe and were presented at the annual National Umpires Conference last month. All inquires should be directed to Alan McAuliffe and not the editor of Blue's News On-Line.

### AT ALL LEVELS the eight questions that caused most difficulty Australia wide.

Question 10B - 83.38% incorrect  
Question 17 - 81.71% incorrect  
Question 29C - 74.17% incorrect  
Question 76 - 72.12% incorrect  
Question 15B - 71.36% incorrect  
Question 5 - 70.84% incorrect  
Question 35C - 70.72% incorrect  
Question 23 - 69.95% incorrect

### 0-3 LEVEL the eight questions that caused most difficulty Australia wide.

Question 10B - 84.90% incorrect  
Question 17 - 82.91% incorrect  
Question 5 - 77.21% incorrect  
Question 29C - 77.07% incorrect  
Question 76 - 74.36% incorrect  
Question 15B - 74.07% incorrect  
Question 23 - 72.22% incorrect  
Question 35C - 72.22% incorrect

### 4-8 LEVEL the nine questions that caused most difficulty Australia wide.

Question 17 - 71.25% incorrect  
Question 10B - 70.00% incorrect  
Question 21 - 66.25% incorrect  
Question 35C - 57.50% incorrect  
Question 77 - 53.75% incorrect  
Question 76 - 52.50% incorrect  
Question 23 - 50.00% incorrect  
Question 25 - 50.00% incorrect  
Question 29C - 48.75% incorrect

### Stop horsing around

If a statue in the park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle.

If the horse has one front leg in the air the person died as a result of wounds received in battle.

If the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.

	NAME	POS	UNI.		NAME	POS	UNI.
1	Adams P	9	22	1	Adams P	9	22
2	Bills F (T DP)	2	32	2	Bills F	2	32
3	Clisby D	1	24	3	Clisby D	1	24
4	Davies L DP 2	6	52	4	Davies L DP 6	6	52
5	Edwards R	4	15	5	Edwards R	4	15
6	Francis K	7	74	6	Francis K	7	74
7	Gordon M	8	18	7	Gordon M	8	18
8	Hall E	5	99	8	Hall E	5	99
9	Inglis A	3	40	9	Inglis A	3	40
10	Jones C	6	69	10	Jones C	6	69

**DP FIELDS FOR F2**  
**NOT A SUBSTITUTION**

**DP FIELDS FOR DEFO**  
**DEFO HAS LEFT THE GAME -**  
**BACK TO 9 PLAYERS**

**MAY RE-ENTER**  
**ONCE**

	NAME	POS	UNI.		NAME	POS	UNI.
1	Adams P	9	22	1	Adams P	9	22
2	Bills F	2	32	2	Bills F	2	32
3	Clisby D	1	24	3	Clisby D	1	24
4	Davies L DP 52	6	69	4	Davies L DP 52	6	69
5	Edwards R	4	15	5	Edwards R	4	15
6	Francis K	7	74	6	Francis K	7	74
7	Gordon M	8	18	7	Gordon M	8	18
8	Hall E	5	99	8	Hall E	5	99
9	Inglis A	3	40	9	Inglis A	3	40
10	Jones C	6	69	10	Jones C	6	69
					Morris N	6	01

**DEFO BATS FOR DP**  
**DP HAS LEFT THE GAME -**  
**BACK TO 9 PLAYERS**

**SUBSTITUTIONS FROM BENCH**  
**ORIGINAL STARTERS MAY RE-ENTER**  
**ONCE**

**Davies May re-enter once**

**Jones and Davies may re-enter once**

Attachment to Technical Bulletin – August 2002

## DESIGNATED PLAYER

When using a designated player (DP)

1. A team starts the game with 10 players.
2. The DP bats for the DEFO (Defence Only), who is listed in the 10th place in the Line-Up.
3. The DP and DEFO may be substituted using players from the bench.
4. The starting DP and DEFO may re-enter once.
5. The DP may field for any player, at any position, at anytime.
6. The player that the DP fields for must still bat, and becomes a 'temporary DP'.

7. The DP fielding for any player, other than the DEFO, is not a substitution, as no player has entered the game from the bench.
8. If the DP fields for the DEFO, the DEFO has left the game. The game continues with 9 players. The starting DEFO may re-enter once or a substitute may resume, as the DEFO, and the game then reverts back to 10 players.
9. The DEFO may bat but only in the place of the DP, and this is not a substitution, as no player has entered the game from the bench.
10. If the DEFO bats for the DP, the DP has left the game. The game continues with 9 players. The starting DP may re-enter once or a substitute may resume, as the DP, and the game then reverts back to 10 players. The DEFO goes back to fielding only.

# TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Issue Date: August 2002/July 2002

TO: STATE DIRECTORS OF UMPIRING

CC: STATE ASSOCIATIONS

As a result of the actions of several players at recent National Championships and to assist implementing a consistent approach to ejection of players and officials, it has been decided to re-issue some of the information included in the following guidelines, a Technical Bulletin issued in September 1993.

Guidelines have also been included for action that umpires may take in the event of a misdemeanour occurring after the last out of a game.

Although recognising that all individuals have a different tolerance level, this does not absolve an umpire from the responsibility of ensuring that developing incidents do not escalate to a point that an ejection is required. The following ideas explained here are offered to assist individual umpires to review and set their own standards for managing confrontational game situations, and to assist with implementing a consistent approach within the Umpiring Program to dealing with handling players and officials. coaches

## **DEVELOPING A CONSISTENT APPROACH TO DEALING WITH PLAYERS AND OFFICIALS**

During the 1993 National Championships umpires considered the direction that the Umpire Program should take to develop a more consistent approach to ejection of players and coaches.

It was generally recognised that a few umpires issue the majority most of the ejections, others manage to diffuse the emerging incident while the remainder fail to recognise the incident needed an ejection. while others wondered why and when to use ejection as a means of game control It was agreed that Umpires need to identify situations that may lead to the ejection of team personnel and take steps to standards to judge situations against and that ways should be sought to prevent such action ejections from being necessary.

Relatives Success in an umpire's ability to manage more intense games can be measured by the ability of the umpire to recognise emerging situations and the taking of action to prevent a developing situation that could lead to an ejection. It is understood that it is not always possible to foresee every confrontation that develops due

to the spontaneous reaction of some players. and taking action to prevent the situation escalating to a point where ejection becomes necessary.

### Prevention of Ejection's:

It is recommended to use preventive measures, where possible, When dealing with situations. using preventive techniques Umpires are encouraged to: -

- Avoid direct confrontations;
- Use a third party to ease a bad developing situation;
- Never challenge players or officials coaches in an aggressive confrontation manner/way; and
- Take charge when an ejection is necessary;
- Maintain composure..

Practical ways to prevent ejection are often based on a variety of measures, which allow the umpire to talk unobtrusively with a player. It may be useful for the plate umpire to dust off a perfectly clean plate so that an uneasy situation can be discussed with a batter or catcher.

Similarly, the pitcher's plate can be swept when warning the pitcher about an illegal action base umpire, when warning the pitcher about an illegal action, can sweep the pitcher's plate. The bases can be straightened-up or cleaned if there is a need to talk to a fielder or runner. Saying things calmly and inconspicuously demonstrates that an umpire is in control, avoids the spectacle of an all out argument

Using a third party keeps the umpire away from unnecessary out of unwanted conversations and makes it look as if players team mates are encouraging each other. The catcher's assistance could be sought to quieten down a the pitcher, who is unhappy with the size of the strike zone. , especially if the catcher knows the pitches are not strikes. A quiet between inning comment to a wise coach can quickly end inappropriate bench comments on a close call. Other similar approaches are obvious and . In each situation it is preferable better for someone else to quieten silence a disgruntled team members. complainer.

An The umpire should never incite challenge a player or official coach by pointing the finger, touching, raising the voice screaming or using any actions that could lead to an baiting to the point of ejection. Listening and allowing the player or official to make his point will generally ease the situation. The umpire should then give a response, at which time the game can continue. If the player or official continues to argue then ejection may be necessary. It takes two to argue; if the umpire refuses to argue, the player or coach will quieten or look foolish in the extreme if the anger increases In the latter case ejection becomes necessary and everyone at the game understands why

The idea of taking charge means that if when an ejection becomes necessary, the umpire deals with it in a calm and controlled manner and moves on with the game. Ejecting too quickly, or not at the appropriate time, displays a lack of control. If the umpire ejects too quickly, it looks as if the umpire has a 'chip' on his shoulder, while

being too slow indicates a loss of control. When ejections occur at the 'right' time, it is a sign of good umpiring. When the umpire remains calm and stays in control, charge a difficult situations become more tolerable.

#### Situations That Require Ejection When to Eject:

Certain incidents requiring ejection are well understood and should be automatic. Here are some: -

- When a player or official coach uses foul or abusive language to an umpire, spectator or any person involved in a game after a close call;
- When a player or official acts 's behaviours in an unsportsmanlike manner, e. g., dropping the shoulder in a tag, kicking, fighting, tagging with intent to hurt, intentional spiking, showing dissent etc;
- Equipment abuse, e.g., throwing bats, helmets, gloves etc in any manner that displays displeasure with an umpire or a call; After a called third strike, a batter throws the bat so high or so far that it sets a new distance record;
- The fielder throws his glove in the umpire's direction in disgust, after a runner is ruled safe on a close play;
- When any person/player intentionally kicks dirt on an umpire, or home plate, after a close call;
- Any other actions, which may bring the sport into disrepute.

#### Misdemeanours Occurring After The Last Out of a Game:

If, after the last out of a game and up until such time as the umpires have left the vicinity of the playing area leave the field on their way to, any player or team member commits any misdemeanour act of unsportsmanlike behaviour, or any act that would bring the sport into disrepute, and such act would, in the normal course of a game, lead to the ejection of such person, then the umpires can, and should, place such person on report.

The report should contain all relevant information (similar to an Ejection Report) surrounding the events that led to the reporting of the player or team member and should be delivered to the appropriate authority as soon as possible after entering the dressing room.

Should the umpires, having left the playing area, be harassed or abused by a person not involved in the game, then that person, and the incident, should be reported to the off-field management for further action to be taken.

Margo Koskelainen  
National Umpire-in-Chief

Alan McAuliffe  
National Rules Interpreter

## UMPIRING CLINICS NT STYLE!

Prior to the NT Championships in August, Debbie Grove once again journeyed to the NT to run clinics. Alice was first on the line and, as the photo shows – who needs a whiteboard?

After that success Deb journeyed on to Darwin to run another clinic for up to 15 participants including Robyn Pellenat from Nhulunbuy who was able to fly over to participate.

Everyone agreed the best part was the practical with “players” doing all sorts of things. Not all was work however as a large group went out on the Thurs evening prior to the Championships starting. Also some (not mentioning names) managed to be “dirty stop outs” a couple of times!

At the Championships Yvonne Newman was successful in gaining her Level 3 and our newer umpires gained a lot of experience! Whilst the planned Indigenous carnival didn't happen we did have an Aboriginal team come from Port Keats and they learned heaps and really enjoyed themselves.

A feature of the Championships was a men's game – Kiwis v Aussies played in great tradition with both National Anthems played prior to the game. This game was plated by Marg Lee with Cathie Allen (Alice Springs) on First and Tony Barnes (rookie!) on Third.

The Grand Final game was plated by successful candidate Yvonne Newman assisted by Derek Quong on First and Ian Lee on Third.

A great week had by all and this time nobody missed their plane flight home!!!



ABOVE: Yvonne Newman receives her Level 3 from International Umpire Debbie Grove alias Groover.  
LEFT: No whiteboard lets just draw it on the ground.

# TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Issue Date: August 2002

This Bulletin contains the following topics:

1. Designated Player Rule
2. Slap Hit/Bunt Interpretation
3. Alternate Base Mechanic for First Base Umpire

## Designated Player Rule

The introduction of the Designated Player Rule and abolishment of the Designated Hitter Rule represents a major change in how coaches will manage their players and line-ups. It also presents a challenge to umpires to ensure they have a complete understanding of the workings of the rule.

While many coaches will continue to use the DP as a pseudo DH, many will not, and as the coaches become more familiar with the rule, so it will be that umpires must be alert to what can, or cannot, be done with the DP and DEFO.

The Rulebook contains several case plays and Points of Emphasis with regard to this rule that are designed to assist umpires in understanding the complexities of the rule. The attachment is also provided, with thanks to Rob Harris in WA, to further assist in educating umpires in how to manage DP & DEFO situations.

## Slap Hit/Bunt Interpretation

A definition of a Slap Hit was introduced to the Rulebook to explain the difference between a Bunt and a Slap Hit. While nothing has changed with regard to a bunt (*a batted ball not swung at but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly within the infield*), there appears to be some confusion with players and umpires in the interpretation of the words of the Slap Hit definition.

When reading point (b) of the definition, the words must be read in conjunction with the opening sentence of the definition, i.e. for a slap hit to be ruled, the batter, when taking running steps (within the batter's box) toward the pitcher before making contact with the pitch, must make contact with the ball with a controlled, short chopping motion (or sweeping action).

If the batter simply assumes a bunting position, takes running steps toward the pitcher, makes contact with the ball by tapping slowly within the infield, without any swinging, chopping or sweeping motion of the bat, this action should be interpreted as a bunt, and if the ball becomes foul on a third strike, the batter would be out.

The action of the batter running through the batter's box toward the pitcher, in itself, does not necessarily constitute a slap hit ~ there must be some physical movement of the bat!

## Alternate Mechanic For First Base Umpire

Following the successful trial of a new mechanic for the first base umpire in the four umpire system, it has been decided that the mechanic can be used as an alternative to the 'button-hook' at first base in the three umpire system.

The basis of the mechanic is that the umpire, rather than moving into the infield and button hooking to pick up the batter-runner at first base, moves down the line, in foul territory, toward home plate (See Fig. 1). The initial movement should not take the umpire any further than the front of the coach's box, i.e. 15 feet toward home plate from the base.

When to use: Any time with no runners on base, or a runner on first base only, and the batted ball is a ground ball through the infield (i.e. the third base umpire does not 'go', but stays within the infield area to cover any play at second base).

Benefit: Since the ball is through the infield, by moving down the line toward home it is considered easier to pick up the batter-runner touching first base than it is to cut into the infield (sometimes across the line of the runner from first base) and button-hook, especially if there is a possibility of a throw from the outfield to first base. (Many outs have been missed by umpires failing to observe batter-runners missing first base, due to incorrect buttonhook mechanics, e.g. turning the wrong way to pick up the batter-runner, or being too slow to move into the infield and turning as, or after, the batter-runner has reached first base).

From this alternate position, it is also a simple movement (1) into the infield for a possible play-back on the runner who has rounded first base, or (2) to rotate to home plate in event of the plate umpire having rotated to third base for a possible play. (See Fig. 2)

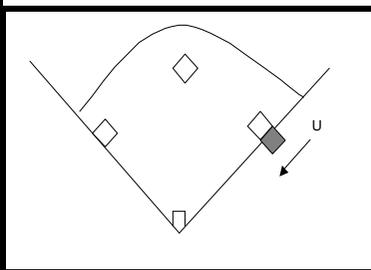


FIG. 1

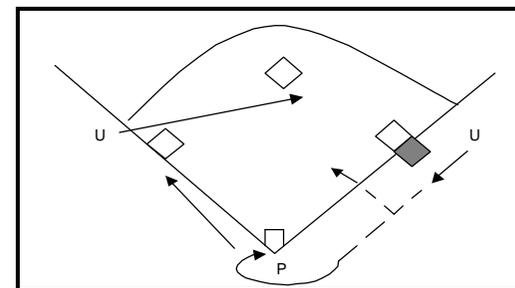


FIG. 2

This is an alternate mechanic and it is acceptable for an umpire at first base to use this or the standard buttonhook mechanic.

## WA Umpires look to Duff for guidance

W.A. State Umpiring Board Committee Appointments

At the August Western Australian Softball Association Board meeting, the following positions were ratified:

<b>State Director of Umpiring:</b>	<b>Warren Duff</b>
<b>State Education and Training Coordinator:</b>	<b>Peter Richardson</b>
<b>State Rules Interpreter:</b>	<b>Rob Harris</b>

Still to be appointed are the Administration Officer and the State Examining Coordinator, which will hopefully be filled within the next month. The appointments follow on from the reform process that has been occurring over the past 18 months.

The Western State Umpiring Board would like to extend its thanks to Peter Baker who as served as the position of State Director for the past two years.

Congratulations also to Dave Searle who attained his Level 2 accreditation at recent examinations during the Men's Winter Competition. Dave has been umpiring in an official capacity for two seasons now and his efforts to improve have obviously not been wasted.

## ACT busy even without fixtures

Things are quiet at this time of the year in the ACT with no winter softball played. Recent and 'as we go to print' happenings:

- Ken Ryan announces his on-diamond retirement after 50 years involvement in Softball - but will continue with Junior Umpire development in Canberra.
- Ken & Denise Culpitt and Martin Turnbull attended the August NUC meeting.
- Michael Hurrell (ACT's inaugural Umpire of the Year), Adam Hurrell, Brendon LeLeivre and Alex (Wally) Turnbull are attending the Advance Clinic being run by NSW.
- Nathan Levy will be in Albury over the weekend 31 Aug - 1 Sep supporting Junior ACT teams.
- Martin Turnbull completed the NOP Officials Coach Training course (an ASC course run by ACT Bureau of Sport & Recreation) and attended the Canberra leg of the National Fair Go For Official's Forums.

## NUC Observer's Report

by Martin Turnbull

A couple of months ago I was asked by the ACT SDU (Denise) if I would like to accompany her to Melbourne to attend the National Umpire Committee meeting. Over the last couple of years she has been trying to pass on some of the SDU's workload to others so that they may benefit from the experience and be prepared for the day when she, and Ken, retire north.

So I agreed (to come to the meeting - but not yet take over her job). As the weekend drew closer I started to receive emails with attachments to read before the meeting. There were reports from all sorts of people - the names of umpires I recognised from tournaments or championships I had watched in Canberra.

Then, one day, the agenda arrived. With 32 items, and over 75 sub-items listed, I suddenly realised this was going to be a busy weekend! The day finally arrived and it was off to Melbourne (well at least as far as the motel near the airport).

We arrive at about 7:30pm, check in, and then off to a room for the meeting and greeting with the other participants from each state & territory. I find myself sitting with senior umpires, most of whom I have seen on the diamond and find that, as the newcomer, I am accepted as if I had always been part of the group.

The next morning, at 8:30am sharp, we start at agenda item one. By 5:30pm the team has struggled through many items and deserves a break. Dinner that evening is at the motel and an opportunity to socialise and hear many a war story from the more experienced members of the team - none of which I would dare to repeat here.

Sunday sees us all back hard at it from morning to mid afternoon when its time to say farewells and catch flights home. Most of what was discussed in the meeting will, after due process, filter down to all members. There in not enough room here to even summarised the things that were discussed at the meeting, such as State reports, past & future events, policy, rule& mechanics changes, training, etc.

After attending this meeting it is clear to me that this group of volunteers does a huge amount of work behind the scenes to keep the National Umpiring Program running. We are very lucky to have such a dedicated group and I thank them for all their hard work.

I went to this meeting as an "Observer" and, although had no voting rights, managed to participate in at least some small way, by giving a short presentation on Mentoring and the use of a pocket-guide I had written.

Rather using the term "Observer" I came home with the through that it was more like "Skill-share for umpiring administrators", so I thank Denise for talking me into it and to Margo and her team for allowing me to attend. I would certainly recommend that anyone interested in administration take advantage of any such offer.