

Blue's News On-Line

Official Australian Softball Umpire's Magazine

Contributions to mtoft@ozemail.com.au

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Victoria umpire Leigh Evans calling he balls and strikes at the recent World Junior Men's Championships in Canada.

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- The Ultimate Belt
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Perth SuperLeague for 2005

Perth Super League is the annual WA Open Women's selection event. Originally the brainchild of WAIS Coach Kere Johanson, the event is now in its fourth year of operation.

The event has attracted a number of Australian players in the past.

The invitation is extended to any umpire who would like to be involved in this event, which is being run over the September long weekend (Friday 23rd September through to Sunday 25th September).

Please register your interest with Warren Duff – WA SUIC – either by phoning 041 793 8468 or by email on warrenduff@tpg.com.au.

Contributions for next edition close September 15

Message from the National Director of Umpiring

From Andrew Rindfleish

It has been said that the only constant aspect of life in the 21st century is **change**. IT and technology are moving so quickly that mere mortals struggle to keep up.

Certainly mere mortals of my generation. Those "youngsters" from Gen X and Gen Y are more used to the rapid pace at which the world turns.

These are the up and coming officials in our sport. Even if it's their parents who are entering our umpire ranks, the diversity of life and the pace of life in the 21st century, the myriad of other interests that are available to us all, mean we have to continually modify the way we manage the umpire program and those within it.

As managers of the umpire program, on behalf of Softball Australia, if we are reactive to change then we have missed the boat. We have to be at least in synch with change as it occurs.

If we can be proactive and be ahead of changes then we are obviously in a much better position to support our sport and our fellow umpires. This is the real challenge – one faced by managers of any group, organization or company in this day and age.

One thing I would encourage all readers of BNOL, all softball umpires in Australia, to do is come forward with any suggestions you might have to better manage our sport.

I was very pleased to have a suggestion come from Ashleigh Matheson, a Level 2 umpire from NSW. Ashleigh's suggestion was that we have past exam papers on our web site to aid in the training of umpires.

Within days Alan McAuliffe was able to up load the last two years' papers, with answers. I urge all readers to bring up ideas with your State UIC, one of the National Staff or directly with me, as Ashleigh did.

Many hands certainly make light work, even in the 21st century and from many ideas and suggestions there will be some gems shine through.

I urge all umpires to help find these gems, for the benefit of us all and, more importantly, for the benefit of our great sport.

Rules with Big Al (Alan McAuliffe) (National Rules Interpreter)



BATTING OUT OF ORDER:

A. **Reason for the rule:** Protection of the defence.

Were it not for the batting-out-of-order rule, offensive coaches would have a field day. I recall being asked to help out at a local junior league many years ago because their umpires (strictly uneducated) were having trouble with bat ting orders. Here's a truly amazing situation:

Play: The pitcher George is batting ninth and the first baseman Jones is batting third. The coach (who also appeared to be uneducated) switches his first base man and pitcher in the defensive half of an inning just before the ninth spot bat ter is due to lead off in their offensive half of the inning. The coach informs the umpire, in all sincerity and quite innocently, that since the first baseman Jones is now the pitcher and the pitcher is batting ninth, its obvious that Jones will lead off when his team comes to bat.

Ruling: Ha, ha, I chuckled in disbelief, but apparently they had been doing that for several years and it is possible that something similar could be happening anywhere in the world even today. Believe me, when I put a stop to their line-up juggling, I was not very popular with the coaches (so what's new?) Of course, the batting-out-of-order infraction only rarely arises in higher-level games. It may occur only five or six times at any level in your entire career, but that is precisely why such a rule deserves discussion. Rules that arise infrequently generally present umpires with problems due to not keeping abreast with case book situations.

B. **Specifics of the rule:** The rule can be divided into five parts:

1. When is an appeal made?

The game was made easier for us when an early rules interpreter (baseball) dissected the rule and found that the defence could appeal too soon, too late or just right.

If the defence appeals *too soon*, there's no penalty. That is, if the improper bat ter has been appealed before he has completed his turn at bat. When that hap pens, the proper batter merely takes his place in the box and assumes the im proper batter's count, if any.

When the defence appeals *too late*, there's also no penalty. If, before the ap peal, there has been at least one pitch, either legal or illegal, then the improper batter has become legal.

It's when the defence appeals *just right* – after the improper batter has com pleted his turn at bat but before a pitch to the next batter – that a penalty, and the umpire's headache, rears its ugly head.

2. Who appeals?

Only the defence may appeal a batting-out-of-order infraction. Otherwise, the offence could appeal and nullify the action when an improper batter hits into a force out of a preceding runner.

3. Who's out?

It's logical to call out the improper batter because he's the person who should n't have batted. It's also wrong! When an appeal is made 'just right', it's the *proper* (the player who should have batted) batter who is out. (Remember also: any outs that are made on preceding runners resulting from the improper bat ter's turn at bat are retained).

4. Who stays put and who advances?

Runners who advance as a result of the actions of the improper batter are al ways returned to their original bases. They have advanced, let's say, on a teg-up, a ground out, a base hit, etc: Send them back. But if they advance on a passed ball, stolen base or illegal pitch, they will keep those bases. The im proper batter, if he reaches base safely, is returned to the bench when he is appealed in time.

5. Who bats next?

After a proper batter has been declared out because an improper batter batted instead, the next proper batter is always the player whose name follows that of the batter who was called out, unless that player has been declared out on the play resulting from the improper batter's turn at bat. Always, that is, except on one occasion, which always involves multiple infractions.

Play: The batting order is Able, Baker, Charles, Dickens, etc. Able is due to hit, but Evans bats and walks. There is no appeal until after a pitch to Baker. Evans is now a legal runner, but Baker is batting out of order, since Frank follows Ev ans in the line-up. Baker pops up and is caught. There is no appeal, and a pitch is delivered to Charles. Baker is now legal. Charles, the proper batter, eventu ally walks, sending Evans to second. Now Dickens is supposed to hit, but Frank bats instead and bunts, making first safely and thereby loading the bases. The defence at last wakes up and appeals before the next pitch to George. What happens?

Ruling: If you know your rules, you know that:

- Dickens should have batted; he's out.
- Frank is removed from first.
- Evans and Charles return to second and first.
- The proper batter is now Evans, but that would be an historic feat, since he's on second base.
- So, the rule provides that Evans is skipped without penalty. The proper bat ter, then, is Frank, who just bunted for a hit. (Maybe he'll do it again, but whatever subsequently happens, the line-up screw-up is now straightened out, much to the relief of all concerned).

National Umpiring Examination - Breakdown

By Alan McAuliffe (National Rules Interpreter)

NOTE: A full break down of the National Examination was presented t the NUC Meeting in Sydney recently. Those umpires who sat the examination and wish to know more about comparisons and trends should contact their State Director of Umpiring for that information.

The 2005 Australian Umpire Theory Examination was conducted in all States on May 30, 2005.

The examination contained 100 True/False and Yes/No questions; this year there were no 2-mark or 3-mark questions.

A total number of 768 candidates at all levels sat the exam, which were 61 (8.63%) more than last year ~ this represents two consecutive years that have shown an increase in the number of candidates. This is a pleasing result as it breaks the previous trend of more candidates one year followed by less the next year.

Tasmania had the greatest increase (183%) followed by NT (100%), albeit from small bases. WA and QLD were the only two States to show a decrease in candidates (7% and 1% respectively).

The average mark for Levels 0-3 was 63.0 (2.2 lower than last year); the average for Levels 4-8 was 82.2 (2.5 lower) and the overall average for all candidates was 65.1 (2.1 lower).

There were several issues with the receipt of papers this year (listed herein), some of which resulted in a later than desired return of duly marked papers to the respective State Directors for distribution to candidates.

- Key sent directly to me in same packet with Exam papers for marking.
- All papers sent to ASF Office with Key in same packet, rather than papers sent to me for marking and the Key to the Office under separate cover.
- Current level of Accreditation not listed on Key.
- Additional paper received for marking that was not listed on the Key.
- Two Keys sent to Office from one state (one of which contained 2 separate papers for marking). One of these papers did not have a candidate number and both had candidates name printed thereon. It was

subsequently established that these papers were, in fact, Level 0-3 candidates.

- One Level 0-3 return failed to list total number of candidates.

As has been mentioned in previous years, it cannot be stressed strongly enough that State Scrutineers must be made fully aware of their responsibilities in forwarding papers for marking within agreed time-frames and the requirement for the Exam Key to be sent to the ASF Office.

STATE RESULTS

The NUC marked the papers for Level 4-8 candidates and the average mark obtained was **82.22%**.

The top mark for each State was obtained by: - (ACT) Rod Dawson, (NSW) Darrell Shephard, (NT) Yvonne Newman, (QLD) Ian Goodman, (SA) Bruce Burford & Kevin Tannebring, (TAS) Craig Williams, (VIC) Lindsay Whitehead & Dianne Waller and (WA) Graham Bancroft.

Congratulations are extended to Rod Dawson & Graham Bancroft, who achieved the highest mark of 96%.

State Directors were responsible for marking of Level 0-3 papers within their own State, consequently the leading results are not known. An average Australia wide mark of **62.98%** was achieved at this level.

At all levels, an Australia wide average of **65.11%** was achieved.

QUESTIONS THAT CAUSED DIFFICULTY

The ten (10) questions that caused most difficulty Australia wide **AT ALL LEVELS** were: -

<u>Qstn No</u>	<u>% Incorrect</u>	<u>Qstn No</u>	<u>% Incorrect</u>
82	80.08%	3	64.84%
89	70.31%	16	64.45%
84	68.62%	17	64.32%
85	67.45%	53	62.50%
45	66.93%	67	61.59%

A FURTHER BREAKDOWN FOR 0-3 AND 4-8 ON QUESTIONS THAT CAUSED THE MOST DIFFICULTY IS LISTED ON THE NEXT PAGE.

The eight (8) questions that caused most difficulty for **LEVEL 4-8** candidates were: -

Qstn No	% Incorrect	Qstn No	% Incorrect
92	71.76%	16	57.65%
82	63.53%	64	54.12%
17	60.00%	84	54.12%
67	58.82%	7	50.59%

The ten (10) questions which caused the most difficulty for **LEVEL 0-3** candidates were: -

Qstn No	% Incorrect	Qstn No	% Incorrect
82	82.28%	3	69.55%
89	75.40%	53	67.20%
85	71.60%	16	65.30%
84	70.57%	17	65.01%
45	69.99%	5	63.84%

Graham Bancroft Retires

Graham Bancroft has announced his retirement for the National scene.

After having spent over 25 year with IBM, Graham is off caravanning his way around Australia.



Graham has also resigned his position as State Examining Coordinator.

On behalf of WA, I would like to thank Graham for all of his work throughout WA and wish him all the best in his (semi) retirement.

Warren Duff
State Umpire in Chief



New Level 3
Congratulations to Colin Gibb (pictured) who was successful in obtaining his Level three recently. A great achievement.

**Western
Australia**

WA Umpire toppers

Congratulations are extended to the following people who achieved 90% or higher in the exam: Graham Bancroft, Rob Harris (96), Peter Baker, Warren Duff (92), Harry McGill (91), Bill Killmurry (90).

Albert Dumaresq – as he has done many times before - acted in the capacity of State Scrutineer and did an extremely professional job which all of WA is extremely thankful.

Graham Bancroft did the lion's share of marking the papers for 0-3s WA wide, whilst Warren Duff assisted.

2005 Victoria rules report

Victoria



I have had three rules questions since last report, one question on bat requirements

Rule sessions were run on two different days prior to the National Exam. One Saturday and one Sunday, one was held at Sunshine for the North West with 15 participants and one in at Melbourne with 13 participants.

Sunshine Association held a barbeque and covered the costs of lunch and Melbourne had the canteen available. I would like to thank both Associations for their support and help.

Focus was on the 2005 exam, however Players, Coaches and Scorers were also invited to attend, we gave a broad spectrum of the rules. We covered Rule book layout, definitions, most incorrect answers to last years exam, exceptions to rules, hints for examinations, Case book, a revisit to the 2002-05 new rules of note, D.P. difficult rules, and a trial exam.

The focus was to turn it into a session with involvement and participation, working in groups etc, instead of lecture style same as last year. Unfortunately we lose some participants in the afternoon at Melbourne to games in the local competition. Twenty-eight people attended the sessions over two days, a special thank you to Di Waller and Kevin Broomhall for giving up their time and helping with individual sessions.

2005 rules exam results are as follows.

A total of 69 level 0-3, and 17 level 4-7 sat the exam from Victoria a total of 86 candidates.

I have made a small update to the three umpire system and it has been uploaded to the NUC site.

Leigh Evans - Victorian Umpiring Committee - Rules Interpreter.



Life is not measured by the breaths we take...but by the moments that take our breath away"

ENJOY Today .. things you just don't see everyday....

Officiating in Canada with the Wallers by Diane Waller

My journey started on the June 27, 2005. It's a long story as to why I had to go so early, but that is for another day. It was a cold and bleak 4c on my way to the Airport.

It was a very long flight, but I eventually arrived in Vancouver the same day. I had four days before I met any of the other umpires, so I did a lot of walking around and sight-seeing, which was great.

Friday, July 1 is Canada Day and boy do they know how to celebrate. Everywhere I went they were having a great time. I meet up with the umpires that I had previously met last time I was in Canada, but I also met plenty more to add to the family.

Over the next week or so, there were plenty of good times had by the umpires. My colleagues gave me the nickname of "The Little Wall of China". It seemed to be that whenever China and I were on the diamond together, the games went into extra innings. One day I was on the plate with China playing Florida Quicksilver. In the 3rd inning China bought a relief pitcher in to finish the game. There was only one problem in that the game went to 14 innings.



Neither team made any more changes for the rest of the game, so it became a battle of the fittest. It was a very competitive game, so it kept me focused, right to the end. The only run that was scored was on a squeeze play that China put on in the bottom of the 14th. The game went for 3 ¾ hours, not that I noticed.

It is always interesting to umpire when no crew signals are given throughout the game. I was under the impression that all umpires would be ISF

certified, but this was not the case. I think I wore my ISF shirt three times. China's umpire, Ali at the start of the tournament couldn't speak much English at all, but by the end she had learnt quite a bit. Ali was using computer that could translate English to Chinese. I learnt how to say "Thank you" in Chinese and used this when doing the equipment checks.

The Aussies were going along quite nicely during the week. They lost to USA Elite 2 – 10 the day before the final. They had to play the Canada Elite team in the morning, who they beat and then went on to win 3 - 0 against the USA Elite

team in the Final. It was good to see. It was sad when the Canada Cup was over because I had become friends with more umpires.

Phil had flown over to Vancouver with the Glen Waverley Masters team and we had lots of things to do and see before we got to the World Masters Games in Edmonton. It was great that one of the team member's is Canadian and Michelle had organized our days from morning to evening. We went to Granville Island and walked around the markets.

The next day we headed to Capilano Suspension Bridge in the morning and then headed to Grouse Mountain for the afternoon. We went up the mountain on the Gondola and then saw things like a bear, wolves, different performing birds and the Lumberjacks show. The next day we headed off to Stanley Park and went to the Canadian Casino at night.

On Thursday, July 14 we went on the BC Ferry across to Vancouver Island. The ferry trip was 1-½ hours. We spent some hours in Victoria visiting the waterfront market and Wax Museum, which was very interesting. On our way back home we saw quite a few playful whales.

The next day was a big day because we went to Whistler. Some of us went to the top of the mountain and touched the snow, which was awesome. I was very proud of Phil as he doesn't like heights and he went up the mountain in a Gondola and then an open chairlift. We met a couple from Texas who were celebrating the wife's birthday, so of course we all sang Happy Birthday to this lady.

We drove straight to the football match from Whistler. After watching AFL for many years and seeing the speed at which it is played and then watching their football is very different. They seemed to be more interested in all of the promotions and races and giveaways than the game. It took nearly 3 hours to play 60 minutes of football.

The next day Phil & I were dropped off at the Airport because we had to pick up another rental van. I navigated us back home saying "Tight Right and Big Left". It was now time to leave Vancouver and head for Kelowna. We only stayed there for the night and then headed off to Banff, which took most of the day. On Tuesday, July 19 we went to Lake Louise. The scenery is just beautiful and you could sit and gaze out into the water all day. We headed off to Mt Sulphur where we took another gondola up the mountain. There was a wooden trail that went up to the lookout, so of course we had to walk up there. We saw things like mountain goats, squirrels and chipmunks on our travels.

The next day we went to the Ice fields and got on a bus that took us out onto the Glacier. These vehicles cost \$1million each. We drank the ice-cold water,



which was very refreshing. We then went to the Athabasca Falls, which was very picturesque.

The next day some of us went to Maligna Canyon, which was awesome and we took some great photos. We left there and headed for Lake Maligna, which was a beautiful place. In the afternoon one of the girls organized a White Water Rafting expedition, which was a disappointment because of the lack of white water.



It was Friday, July 22 and we had an Umpire's meeting in Edmonton so four of us left at 5am. We saw quite a few Elks just on the side of the road and crossing the road. We caught up with George, Rob & Rhonda at the Technical meeting. The umpires had our meeting and we were given our allocation for the week. I was named on the Protest committee, which was nice to know that they recognized me and my International experience. We went to the Opening Ceremony, which was spectacular.

Phil and I decided to hire a vehicle for the duration of the games. The softball was held at two different venues and they were 20 minutes apart. The morning games were postponed due to the rain that fell overnight. Most of the games that were played in the round robin were one-sided affairs.

I umpired one game, which was over 45 women and had to call a strike if I thought the batter had any chance of hitting the ball, otherwise I would be still there. Phil & I were teaching a few of the Canadians about the 3-umpire system. They actually use 3 umpires, but don't go to the outfield. Getting towards the end of the week I had an over 45 men's game, which was played at an immense pace with two very competitive teams.

Terry Ritcher invited all of the umpires back to his house for a BBQ. Terry also got us VIP tickets to another football match. We were in a VIP tent on ground level. Phil and I had our photo taken with the mascot from the Edmonton Eskimos and the Football mascot. Terry also got a footy for us.

The games were evenly matched in the play-offs. I ended up calling the over 45 women's final and Phil called the over 35 C grade women's final. The Canadians called the other games. We met some great people and hopefully some of them are planning for Sydney in 2009. Overall I had great times at the Canada Cup and the World Masters Games and we experienced the sights of Canada and the Rocky Mountains. At great place to travel through and lots to see and do on the way.

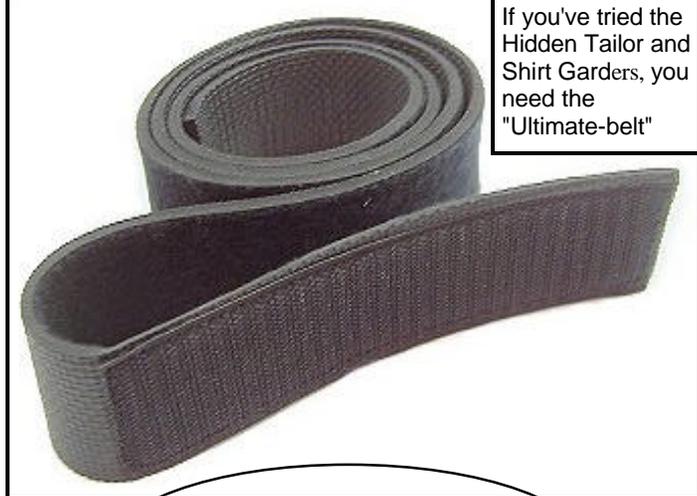
THE ULTIMATE BELT

As a multi-sport official with over "25" years officiating, I have experienced the frustration of having to keep my shirt tucked in.. Haven't you??

That's why I have developed the "ULTIMATE-BELT" the next generation sports-belt.

It can be worn by male/female officials.

- No holes to break
- Infinite adjustments
- Soft fabric laminated to "gripping" rubber
- Odorless



If you've tried the Hidden Tailor and Shirt Garders, you need the "Ultimate-belt"

Keeps your clothes neat and tidy while umpiring!

Letter to the Editor

Orders - mtoft@ozemail.com.au

Dear Mark,

I have read your Umpiring Magazine and I thought you may like to include the Ultimate Belt in your pages. Look professional using the Ultimate Belt while officiating.

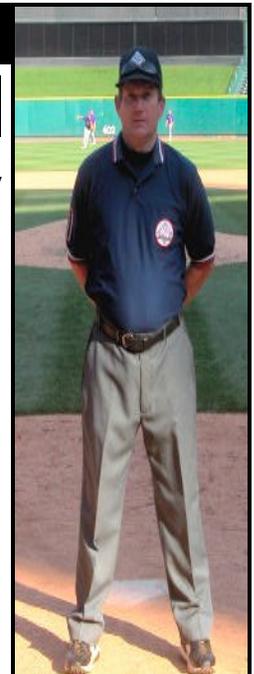
The Ultimate Belt is very popular in softball and baseball umpire circles. At a cost of A\$12.00 it is good value.

Enclosed is a picture of the belt and a picture of me at Bush Stadium using the belt. St Louis Cardinals

Let me know if you need anything else. For a small charge we can put your label on each belt including a small set up fee.

Thanks again for your interest in the Ultimate-Belt.

Vince Evans



2005 VII Junior Men's World Championships

by Leigh Evans

The following is a report on my tour to the Jnr. Men's World Championship in Canada June 24 – July 3, 2005, including a pre tour through southern Ontario including games against Canadian All-star teams and clubs. The World Series was played in Summerside, Prince Edward Island east coast of Canada.



What a blast and rush all in one when you get that call you have been hoping for, from the National Director of umpiring, Leigh have you ever been to North America? Funny, after that you don't remember much more of the details and find yourself ringing back to ask to go through it again! Then you have to ask you're boss if you can have 5 weeks off work to go to your very first World Championship with the Australian Under 19 Men's Team.

An emotional time, leaving on journey to one of my life's long term goals, to umpire at a World Championship, to leave behind my family who have all been part of that dream. I flew out of Melbourne to Sydney with the Victorian players on June 9 and we were to stay overnight in Sydney as we had an early international flight. I helped load and unload buses 24 times equipment, luggage, team gear, physio gear.

We arrived in Kitchener out of Toronto, Ontario, at approximately 1.30am Canada time, a total of 31 hours traveling time from Sydney, I think I had around four hours interrupted sleep the whole flight. We first flew to Honolulu Hawaii, disembarked the plane, through American customs, finger prints taken, photo taken, then around the security and then back on the same plane, what a waste of time, although the leg stretch was good, actions of September 11 all too obvious. Darren Hepditch (assistant coach) harassed every stop by security because of the radar gun he was carrying. There were several mix ups with flights and times, Air Canada seemed to be very disorganised.

It is a real challenge to the mind to get off a plane after 30 hours, wait 45 minutes for our three buses, or as Canadian say "vans" get into the left hand side of the vehicle and drive a bus on the wrong side of the road. After around 50 minutes of driving in the pitch black at 1 am in the morning I released my death grip on the steering wheel, George a local Canadian, one of Bob Harrows mates from the old days was my co-pilot he was a elderly gentleman, I asked him at one stage which turn off do I take, he replied "don't know I haven't been this way before, Lindsey Carroll Team Coach gave a little giggle and on we drove, several times I asked George questions and received no answer, the funny thing was when we arrived in Kitchener he said " oh, I should have told you I am deaf in my left ear!

All our transport to ground and accommodation and around Toronto was by 3 x 11 seater Vans. I was also a nominated driver and helped out driving as the need arose.

The accommodation in Kitchener for the pre tour was at the Conestoga Residence two bedroom university apartments, I was rooming with Darren Hepditch and was pleased to see two double beds, Lang and Lindsay were ribbing Darren talking of the rookie

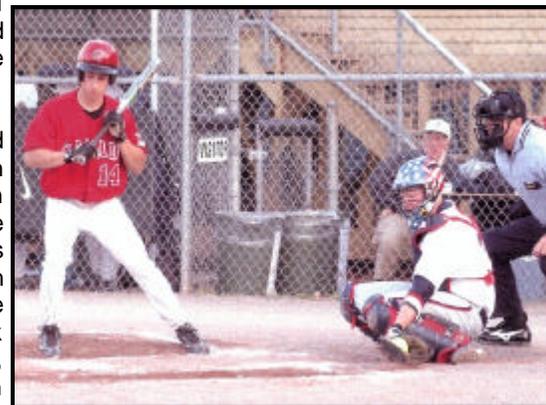
(meaning me) doesn't get the double bed, I had pinched the double bed off Darren in Sydney.

After arriving in Kitchener at 1.30am and unpacking the buses it was 2.30am to bed, we were up again at 6.30 to have breakfast and travel 1 ½ hours to Mitchell to play in the men's skins tournament, I did 4 games that day and 3 the next, it was hot with high humidity. By the time we finished the last game and had dinner it was late again so by the time we were back to the accommodation, (I also helped Maxine with the washing), a 2.00am bed again, and back up at 6.30am for the last day of the tournament. We were all very tired. The competition at this tournament was very good. I did seven A Grade men's games including a base in the final in two days with very little sleep. It was incredible, sleep deprivation was at the max, the horizon if you stood still, seemed to move like the balances in you head were all blocked up.

After that, things settled down a bit, although with playing 2 games a night then dinner and travel we were never to bed before 1.00am. Pre tournament games were very good for my own practice and game management, I believe I also helped with team development and rule situations.

In general meals were good, continental breakfasts D.I.Y at the Conestoga Residence were just adequate polystyrene bowls and plates with plastic utensils, cereal, bagels and tea coffee, never had bagels before. Although every morning was a bit like Ground Hog Day. The meals with the team were good, at times hampered by the time of night. Maxine Cleary (Team Manager and Scorer) did a great job in organizing meals

Every town we traveled through had at least one diamond, fully skinned and lush green outfields and home run fences.



At the Mitchell Tournament they did not use safety bases at first base, oh yea after seeing the light switches in their houses and accommodation are up side down, (switch down means the light is off not on) they drive on the wrong side of the road, they drive from the wrong side of the car, walk on the opposite side of the footpath, and water goes anti clockwise down the drain, I gotta tell you I was relieved when after I called "**play ball**" the batter hit the ball and ran to first base not third! HA!

Not all grounds had change rooms for the umpires, most got changed out of the back of their cars. Which is what the photo I sent back during tournament to BNOL was all about. Monday saw us travel to Niagara to play against their men's teams, of course we got to see Niagara Falls, wow what a sight, so much water, so much pressure. These games were live to radio and played under lights with great atmosphere.

On Tuesday the 14 June we traveled to Milverton Lang Harrows home town, Country side was very green and lush, Farm land, Corn, Peas, Amish country, it was interesting

to see the Amish living in a world with out Power, Cars or Motor driven machinery, driving horse a cart, down the side of the same freeway we were using dressed in black. We arrived in Milverton, Two Skinned international diamonds in the middle of nowhere, teamed up with a local umpire. In the second innings it poured with rain, water ended up flowing over the top passed me at first base, needless to say we were out of there, after getting changed into civvies and heading for the tent, all the locals got together and started raking, digging trenches and squeegeeing water off, in an hour we were back in umpires clothes and back on the diamond, incredible.



There were games every night so many stories to tell, so little room in this article. Australia played very well, they only lost 2 games out of 18 and most were against open men's all star teams, they are so fast between bases, and play a slap bunt game, while the other teams play stand and deliver game, you could see the frustrations on the other teams faces, at times becoming a little physical, I umpired 22 games over 20 days and it was great I met and made new friends and shared experiences, times I will remember forever. Tuesday we traveled to Toronto to see the Toronto Blue jays play Baltimore in the Baseball at the Rogers stadium, wow that was a great night.

Next day off to the World Championships, am I ready? Have I prepared? Will I handle the pressure? The day has come, our flight into Charlottown Prince Edward Island on the far east coast of Canada, was on a dash-8 prop plane. When we arrived into Charlottown we were told all our luggage did not arrive, I got nothing, no equipment, no luggage, no toiletries literally the clothes on my back. We had to line up and report our luggage missing. 70% of the team did not get luggage either. We later found out that all teams, including New Zealand and Japan did not get luggage either, some for up to 2 days. The planes were not big enough and so the problem filtered down the line with each flight. We were transported to the accommodation on a yellow school bus with a big black strip just like in the movies.

At Prince Edward Island in Summerside the umpires, were accommodated in single rooms with 2 double beds and were quite good. The average time to the ground for the World Championships was 10 minutes. Mark from NZ Minoru from Japan and I caught a taxi to our accommodation from the athletes accommodation and later met up with the rest of the crew, Its funny how umpires can come from all over the world and met each other for the first time and get on well straight up. We all had to travel to the town center and register, we only had one vehicle at this point which arrived with one of our liaison officers, so 11 of us piled into one SUV, a 7 seater really, Merle and all. A great way to get to know each other.

At the Championship ISF provided umpires with a meal allowance for the entire time which was more than adequate, we had continental breakfast at the accommodation and ate meals at restaurants and had take away. At the World Championship all umpires attended the technical meeting with team administrators and Coaches. The Umpires meeting was held after the Managers meeting in the same venue. It was attended by the President of ISF Don Porter, Secretary General Andrew Loechner, Director of development Cindy Bristow, Umpire in Chief Merl Butler, Deputy U.I.C Henry Pollard, and the umpires.

We all had to give a short speech about ourselves and what we do and or have done. We discussed all the new rules; the ISF umpire mechanics and 4 umpire system to be used; intentional walk was to be used; The 25 second clock was not going to be used however we were to keep them moving and hustle the batters; how to announce changes; pre game coaches meeting; we were to call illegal pitches from the first game etc.

Our on diamond clothing and shoes were sponsored by Mizuno and were to be handed out, our shoes were still lost in transport and hadn't arrived. My pants were half way up my calves with no cuff to let down and the shirts were to big, Mark from NZ was my roomy, his pants were to long, so we both looked at each other and said what waist size are you, same, great a quick swap and almost perfect. We and 3 other umpires went to find a tailor after several hours we were dressed to kill.

During the pre tournament the umpires used much the same system as us in Australia. We used 2 man mostly, however I was lucky enough to get in 3 three mans and two 4 man games with local umpires helping out by providing me with practice.

At the World Championships straight after the umpires meeting we traveled to the grounds for rotation practice. We walked the ground and discussed ground rules. We



then carried out 4 umpire rotations around each base. Talk about having to be adaptable, two rotations I have been practicing for months were changed at that session, surprise to all of us. Two of the umpires did not speak any English at all from Japan and Argentina. It was rather amusing doing charades and

drawing like pictionary to communicate, we still managed to get on very well.

Games were very good and the caliber of the umpires was very high. The biggest game I did before the finals was the plate on USA V Canada, the local derby, grudge match, the crowd and noise was awesome.

It was my birthday while I was away, we had a thunder shower which threatened play for the day; however crews worked hard and after an afternoon sleep I came back and umpired in the last game that started at 11pm and finished at 1.15am the next morning. There goes my birthday, seemed I aged a whole year in one game, not even a celebration and no cake!

The heat and humidity was high during the start of the world championship average 28 - 30 degrees. Hydration was mandatory if you wanted to umpire the next day.

The umpiring crew for the World Championships were.

Umpire-in-Chief: Merle Butler
Assistant U.I.C: Henry Pollard

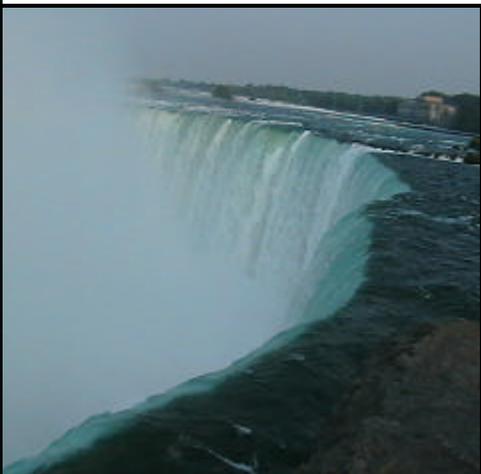
- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. Keith Cook | USA |
| 2. Joe Massaro | USA |
| 3. Lyle McGowan | Canada |
| 4. Gary Skjerven | Canada |
| 5. Mark Gough | Canada |
| 6. Lou Davis | Canada |
| 7. Jan Hora | Czech Republic |
| 8. Mark McFarlane | New Zealand |
| 9. Oscar Dibur | Argentina |
| 10. Minoru Oshino | Japan |
| 11. Leigh Evans | Australia |



I umpired 37 games in total, 22 Games during the pre tournament, 15 games during the World Championships. The life long friendships that I have made while participating in my life's passion is incredible, the umpires and staff that I will remember for ever at my first World Championships will live with me forever, Thanks Guys.

It was great to watch Australia win the World Championships and to be part of the travelling team. The support provided to me by the Team, the Australian Softball Federation, and the ISF management at the worlds was fantastic.

I would like to thank Softball Australia for giving me the opportunity to attend the 2005 VII Jnr. Men's World Championships. It was a most enjoyable and memorable experience and I was proud to be a part of the tour and to represent Softball Australia. I would like to thank Maxine Cleary for making it easy, for keeping me informed and making me feel part of the group.



The training, support and direction I have had over the years from every single umpire in one way or another, senior members of the National Umpires Committee, and the experience as part of the Umpires Development Squad gave me this opportunity and was instrumental in my opportunity to umpire two finals plates at my first World Championship.

My wife, Sandra and I then traveled to Niagara and then to the Rocky Mountains on a 5 day holiday, lost my luggage again for 4 days, I think it was just following me around Canada, one flight behind. However a great time was had, what a blast.

PLAY BY THE RULES WEBSITE

Sport and recreation should be fun, safe, fair and respectful – and for most people this is their experience. However for some people sport is not enjoyable due to abuse - by coaches, other players and spectators – or favouritism, bias and other harassment.

Everyone in sport – players, coaches, officials and administrators - have the right to be in an environment free of these behaviours. We all have a responsibility to make sure that this happens, particularly where children are involved. This is a legal as well as an ethical requirement.

Play By The Rules www.playbytherules.net.au is a website that deals with the prevention and management of inappropriate behaviour around sporting clubs.

First launched in 2001 this highly popular site has recently undergone a significant update. It now includes more information on child protection as well as new sections on risk management and dealing with complaints.

The new-look Play By The Rules now provides for the specific needs of governing bodies (including associations), clubs and groups, coaches and officials, players and participants, parents and children.

While the look and feel is different some things have remained the same:

- It is a resource for grass roots and community sport and recreation (so the information is easy to read and relevant)
- The information, resources and publications are free - and now we have a shopping cart facility to collect your information as you browse through the website!
- The free online training is still available and has even been expanded to include three new child protection courses - this is for busy people who lack the time and resources to attend training.

This unique Australian website is proudly supported by the Australian Sports Commission, the federal Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and all State and Territory sport and recreation and anti-discrimination agencies.

With nearly 5 million hits and over 8,500 people registering for the online training since it began why don't you click onto www.playbytherules.net.au and see how it could help you or your club.

This Website was brought to the attention of Blue's News On-Line by Western Australia's Director of Umpiring Warren Duff. Thanks Warren. It's worth a look!

Umpire Training in Victoria

By Kev Broomhall

Training Coordinator - Victorian Umpire Committee

Victoria

July sees the commencement of Victorian Umpire Training. Over recent years, we have not been able to provide training in a timely manner for umpires to consolidate their skills prior to pre-assessment and eventually assessment at state championships. This has been in part due to the need to wait on the release of results of the annual ASF examination and the change from the end of the season to the beginning of the season of the Open Championship.

This year eligible umpires were advised that they had gained sufficient marks to be eligible to attain the next level and subsequently were invited to candidates and intermediate courses held July 9 and July 23 respectively. I would like to thank the Melbourne Ball Park who hosted both of this year's Courses where we had a total of 20 eligible candidates attend.

The Candidates Course is designed to engage and prepare level one umpires for assessment to level two. This is an all day course which started at 9.00 am (sharp) and finished at 5.00 pm. Level two is the first assessed level for umpires in our system and so these umpires receive information about the assessment system, together with valuable reinforcement of more common aspects of the game.



These included two-umpire system rotation, calling balls and strikes (plate work), position and angles on a call, rules and more. Unfortunately due to inclement weather only practical plate work could be demonstrated and feedback provided. Nevertheless prospective candidates got plenty from the day, following are a few of the comments extracted from their evaluations:

Most Enjoy

- The talking about the plays
- Hint's, insights on what is expected at higher level, practical training
- Going over the mechanics and rotations again & the awarding of bases
- The practical part and the two - man animation
- Interpretation of the rules
- Good pace, clear concise instruction without going off on too many tangents
- It was all very good and explained very well

Value to you

- Provided a little more understanding of how things have changed
- The talking about the plays
- Clearing some problems
- Interaction with quality, experienced umpires that I can't get at my association
- Good revision on practical & theoretical aspects
- Clarified several items for me
- I learnt a lot that will help me in my future umpiring
- Yes, it informed me and clarified some rules
- Made question areas clear

I would like to thank **John Larter and Jason Carter** for their assistance in training this group.

The Intermediate Course is designed for level 2 and 3 umpires who have decided to progress their umpiring career to level 3 and level 4. Level 4 is the highest-level accreditation provided at state level as such are some of our states finest. The umpires are typically those you will have seen umpiring for several years at association level and more specifically at state championships. The course is designed to provide a deeper understanding of umpiring, not just the balls and strikes albeit their importance, but the "one percenters".



Those things like communications skills, liability, game control, and player/coach/umpire interaction. We also discussed goal setting and more difficult rule interpretations. Although many of these umpires are familiar with the three-umpire rotation system, we also reviewed these positions. Fortunately the weather was kinder this week than two weeks ago and we were able to use the excellent facilities of the Park for both Pitching and rotation work. At this level umpires need to be comfortable when calling faster, moving pitches.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank **Andrew Evans and James Loverage** for their time in providing "Live Pitching" for this purpose. Here are some of the comments from the participants:

Most Enjoy

- Interaction With Others - Live Pitching - Live Plays
- Open Discussion & Rule Interpretation
- Being able to discuss difficult rotations
- The outside session with pitcher and catcher

- I enjoyed plate umpiring and working on my mechanics - even though it was scary I did learn a lot
- Live calling of balls and strikes
- Debates on rules & different positions
- Plenty of scope for free discussion - Practical pitching exercise - New presentation & New presenters

Value to you

- Confirmed some of the things, learned new ones especially in relation to positioning
- Because I learnt things
- I have been able to identify incorrect rotations that I make helped with the 3-man presentation and attitude to the game.
- Definitely - I learnt what my strengths are in plate umpiring and got to work with umpires I've never worked with.
- During the drills outside learnt the "new" position at third with a runner on 3
- 3-man positioning, legalities & how we should be putting back into softball umpiring
- Consolidation of knowledge from past training/umpiring. Confirmation of areas I feel are okay & areas I feel need
- Yes - Mechanics - Rotations



I would like to thank **John Larter, Jason Carter** and **Rick Lverage** for their assistance in training this group.

I would also take this opportunity to farewell John Larter and express my deepest appreciation for his work with Umpires over the many years of his umpiring career, not the least of which the involvement of training most of the current Victorian umpires (including myself.) I wish you and Von the time you now deserve to spend together and trust that you will never be a stranger.

Now that you have completed these courses both squads will participate with practice games with the Victorian development squads. This will provide them with valuable practice prior to their pre assessment and their assessments as candidates. At these sessions participants will be provided with further coaching, mentoring and feedback. It is also hoped that later in the year that some of these umpires will participate with state representative teams.

Next Scheduled Training – Basic Course:

This course is to be held as soon as the season starts (October) however no exact dates or venue have been set. Association representative and Individuals should contact me expressing interest in participating in this course.

The course is designed for umpires who are either level one umpires or have been umpiring for at least one season. This course is necessary for those umpires who would like to umpire at State Championship.

What you can expect to learn and do at a Basic course includes:

- General Information: like uniform and equipment, pre and post Game duties and responsibilities and Umpire do's & don'ts.
- Signals and Mechanics: in these sessions you are shown how to, and practice, good basic signals like safe and out calls. You also are shown the "Set" position for calling balls and strikes and again practice these in small groups. This is also where you learn about "crew signals" "Infield Fly" "Ground Rule Double" "Home Run" and many other useful signals that you need to run your game correctly.
- Rules: where we demonstrate and discuss some of the more common rules from the rulebook eg; DEFINITIONS, FIELD, EQUIPMENT. PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTES, THE GAME, PITCHING, BATTING, BASERUNNING
- Two Umpire Rotation: a considerable amount of the second day is taken up with explaining, demonstrating and mainly practicing the Two Umpire System. This system is used at most associations and is the main system used at U14 & U16 State Championships. These sessions cover before play positions, rotations, responsibilities and Basics of calling a play. Participants seem to all agree that this is the most enjoyed and the most valued part of the course:



Hope to see you at the next Training course.

Footnote:

All quotes in this report have been extracted from participant's evaluations.