



National UIC's Call

With Tricia Sibraa

August's BNOL greets us packed full of news from around the country!

Firstly, you can read about the travels and experiences from Debbie Grove and Di Waller's tour with the Aussie Spirit team, as they attended the Canadian Open Fastpitch Championships and the XIII ISF Women's World Championships in Whitehorse, Canada. Included in their article is a great range of photos of crews, gifts and places travelled.

Sadly, Queensland umpire Ian Frame has announced his retirement from umpiring. This edition includes an interview about his time on the diamond and some wise words for all umpires that he has learnt during his career. On behalf of SAL and the NUC, I would like to thank Ian for his contributions to the sport of softball and especially in the field of umpiring – Ian, you will be missed.

There's also news from the ACT, calling for umpires for upcoming Championships and a range of stories from NSW.

Lastly, a technical update from Leigh, keeping us all in the loop about changes that may be seen on a diamond near you and information from SAL about a "fire sale" on some umpiring attire.

Happy reading and great calling!

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Canadian Open Fastpitch & ISF Women's World Championships

2012 Scotiabank Canadian Open International Fastpitch Championship & XIII Women's World Fastpitch Championship 2012

We met at Melbourne Airport on the morning of 3rd July. The flight path was Melbourne – Sydney – LA – Vancouver. From the time we left Melbourne until the time we arrived in Vancouver, 23 hours had passed but boy it felt much longer. As per usual when you fly to Canada, we were greeted by Byron & Judy Jones, two of the longest serving liaisons. We were driven to the Pacific Inn, affectionately known as the Pink Palace and Byron informed us that he would pick us up in the morning at 11am. The phone rang at 10.10am and it was Reception informing us that Byron was here for our pick-up; luckily we were ready to go. We dropped off our umpiring gear in the change room and then we had to pick up our accreditation bands to gain access to Softball City. These wristbands were to be worn until the conclusion of the Championship.



The Crew: Bob Henning (UIC), Al Strang, Aaron Poulin, Ian Brown, Joyce Schroeder, Sal Gara, Susan Strafford, Tim Lederman & Tonya Ribalkin-Zanon (Canada), Nicola Ogier (New Zealand), Jose Chappero (Puerto Rico), Edwin Cruz, Don Alexander, Tim Ellis, Brenda Terpstra (Part-time) (USA), Debbie Grove & Diane Waller (Australia).

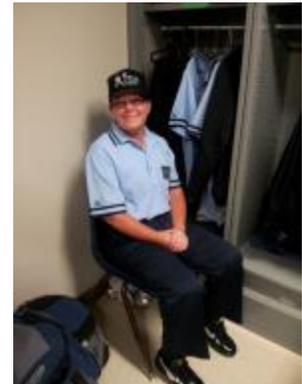
It was great to catch up with the umpires that we already knew and then to introduce ourselves to the others. Even though it had been a minimum of 4 years and some 9 years since last time we umpired together, it was if it was yesterday. It was a great crew and we all just seem to gel. We used a combination of the 3 and 4 umpiring systems.

Most of our time was spent at Softball City, but we did get a couple of chances to go for a walk. One day towards the end of the Championship we weren't getting picked up until 4pm so we spent the day walking to White Rock, having some delicious fish & chips and then we did a bit of shopping before walking back to the Pink Palace. The weather while we were in Vancouver was amazing, especially since apparently the weather leading up to our arrival was less than impressive.

The Canadian Open has always had a few different divisions and this year we umpired the Elite and the International. Some of the teams that were going on to Whitehorse played in the Elite division to gain more experience. This meant that the Elite division was boosted somewhat with the inclusions of these teams. The Canadian Open played host to 14 different countries, which involved 1300 athletes. This was a great warm up event before the Worlds. The games for the week were played out and as per usual, got more intense when it got to the business end of the week. It is always a great game when Canada is playing; the crowd is more than happy to help the umpires with all the decisions. The final game was played between USA and Japan, with Japan winning.

After the Canadian Open we had a day off before flying to Whitehorse. Jose Chappero picked us up and we went touring for the day. We drove up to Grose Mountain... we did eventually get there after a few wrong turns and managed to drive over the same bridge a number of times! On the way back we went to Cleveland Dam where we took some wonderful photos and saw the salmon hatchery along with the group of school children. It was a lovely way to spend a day off.

The next morning we were picked-up nice and early by Judy Jones and driven to the Sheraton where the Aussie team was staying. We loaded our gear into the bus and we headed to Vancouver Airport. When we arrived in Whitehorse we were met by Bob Stanton, our TCS and Bill, the liaison officer. We waited for a few more umpires and our luggage, then packed the cars and headed off to the grounds. In the change rooms we each had been allocated locker areas that contained all of our ISF gear. The things that we received were: pants, shirts, belt, caps, shoes, socks, ball bag, brush & brush bag. There were a few umpires that swapped some gear, but most of it was a good fit. When the Championship started we also received an on-diamond jacket, which did come in handy on some of the night games.



Diane's locker



ISF on-diamond jacket

Another group of umpires arrived at 11pm that night. We were still awake because it was still so light and it didn't seem like 11pm at night. This group was going to the park to drop off their gear so we went as well. Some of the umpires we knew, but some we didn't so it was great to finally meet them. When we all were initially appointed to the Worlds we had to submit a photo for our accreditation, which they never ended up using. Bob set up a contest where he sent the photos out to everyone and we all had to put a name to a face. Some were easy, some were on Facebook and others were a pure guess. At least when we eventually met the crew we knew their name by their face. A couple of umpires didn't make it to the Championship, which was a pity and Roberto Sanchez arrived a few days later.

After Roberto arrived a few days into the Championship, we decided it was a good time to have the traditional exchange of gifts meeting. Some people are so clever and artistic when it comes to gifts. We received polo shirts with our name on it, other polo shirts with the ISF Championship logo on them, a floor mat that nobody used because it was too good to place on the floor. Others had coins made up and we even had an indicator made out of a solid piece of stone, which was very special.

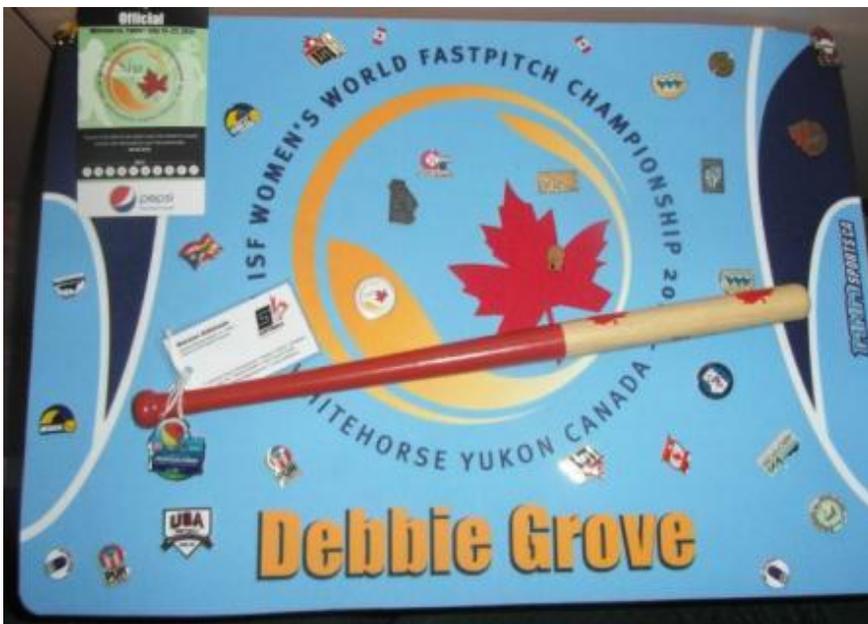


Diamond 1 – 11pm (still light!!!)

In all games we used the 4-umpire system and on Diamond One we used the 20-second clock. We had a debrief after every game which was either conducted by Bob or Julie depending on the diamond allocation. Julie had recently acquired an iPad so there were plenty of photos and videos to support her words of wisdom.

If you were allocated on the first 2 games you were picked up in the morning otherwise you could take the shuttle bus that was scheduled at certain times of the day. This shuttle bus had designated pick up points, but if you were feeling energetic, you could walk to the grounds which was only 35 minutes by foot, just up one big hill.

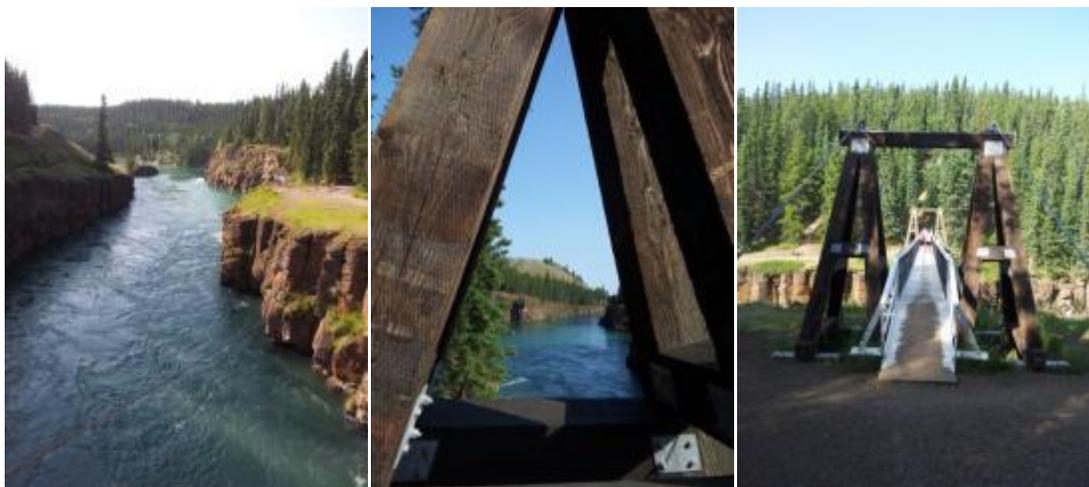
Whitehorse in July is when the sun only sets for 5 hours a day so it feels so strange feeling the sun beat down on you when you are umpiring the last game of the day. Also when the last game of the day is completed it is time for dinner. There is only one restaurant that is opened late at night, so it was Bonston Pizza or BP for dinner most nights.



One night after dinner we decided to go for a walk up the hill to get a nighttime view from up above. It was so amazing that at midnight we could still see without any light. Our biggest disappointment that night was that McDonalds wouldn't serve us a chocolate sundae because we weren't in a car and only the drive-thru was opened at that time. We did have one night where we had an early finish so we went to a Chinese Restaurant; we took up the whole dining room.

Just a sample of the many gifts we received from the crew members! They stayed open later than they would normally just for us. On the second last day we had a late start so Bob and Bill

took us to do some sightseeing. We went to Miles Canyon, which was absolutely beautiful. There were lots of photos taken by the crew; some of us even went to great extremes to get to the highest point to take photos.



Photos of Miles Canyon

Over the Championship there were plenty of photos taken and uploaded onto Facebook. Facebook is such a great tool for communicating with all your family, friends and fellow umpires all over the world. The crew became Facebook friends with each other and everyone was tagging each other in their own photos.

During the week the teams played in 2 pools and when it got to the play-offs the pools crossed over to play each other depending on where they were placed in their own pool. As you would expect, the games started to heat up. On the 2nd last day Australia beat Canada in a great game to proceed to the final day of play. Unfortunately (for us umpires, at least!), because Australia had a chance to make it to the final game it meant that we were not going to be on the allocations for the final day which was such a pity, but that's the way we know it works.

Unfortunately the Aussies were beaten by Japan and, in turn, Japan beat USA in a tie-breaker for the Gold Medal game.

After the Championship we said our goodbyes that night as some were leaving early morning. We went touring for a few hours with Cindi and Leanne who had a hire car. It's amazing what you can see and do when you have only a small amount of time. We were picked up by Kelly Hardie and off to the airport we went. We had no problems checking in or boarding the plane. The problems started when they announced that we were waiting for approx. 6 people to board before we could take off, which just happened to be 45 minutes. When we arrived in Vancouver Airport they made an announcement that the Australian softball team had to catch a connecting flight and we all disembarked first. Only to find out as soon as we walked down the pathway that we were going to miss our connecting flight to San Francisco. Chris Clough and Kellie Hardie spent the next few hours consulting with United Airlines as to when the next

available flight was. We were told that we would be put up for 2 nights as we waited for the next available flight to San Francisco.

By the time we were settled in at the Sandman Signature Hotel it was well and truly time to eat dinner. Denny's was the restaurant of choice for the next couple of days as we had meal vouchers. We made the most of our time the following day by getting on the Skytrain and heading for Vancouver. We walked around for a while and then got back on the Skytrain and went to the Queen Elizabeth Gardens that was truly amazingly beautiful. We then decide to walk back to the accommodation, which took us a few hours, and we were glad to finally get back.

The following morning we were back at Vancouver Airport and things all went well. We arrived in San Francisco and had a wait over of approx. 7 hours, so we asked some questions as to what we could do. On the train we went into San Francisco and then we walked to Lombard Street and then UP Lombard Street along with many other tourists taking photos. We then walked to Coit Tower and took some more photos from high up above. We then walked back to the train station and went back to the Airport. We eventually took off at 10.45pm and headed for Sydney. We then had a connecting flight to Melbourne where we were met by Steve and Phil. We were very glad to finally be back home.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank SAL and ISF for our appointments to these wonderful Championships.

Debbie Grove and Diane Waller



Back Row: (left to right)... Haruhi Goto, Japan; Debbie Grove, Australia; Diane Waller, Australia; Joyce Bellini, Canada; Julie Johnson, Asst. UIC, USA; Bob Stanton, UIC, Canada; Nicola Ogier, New Zealand; Cindi Brunot, USA; Dora Martinez, USA; Lisha Xing, China; Susan Strafford, Canada; Noreen Atkinson, Canada

Front Row: (left to right)... Gianluca Magnani, Italy; Bobby Shelton, USA; Rob Veldkamp, Netherlands; Javier Penarroya, Argentina; Jose Chaparro, Puerto Rico; Yu Sung Lin, Chinese Taipei; Juan Maestre, Spain

ACT

National events – looking for umpires

ACT will be hosting the following National events. If you are interested in umpiring any of these tournaments, please get in contact with Alex Turnbull alex_turnbull87@yahoo.com.au

Primary Schoolsport National Tournament (Boys and Girls)

Sunday 11 November to Friday 16 November 2012.

Travelling umpires may be entitled to some subsidies for this event

Canberra Skins and Junior Fastpitch Tournament

Friday 30 November- Sunday 2 December 2012. Seeking umpires for B grade Men, U15 & U13 Boys. Travelling umpires for this event will receive complimentary accommodation, a tournament shirt and match payments for some grades

Retirement – Ian Frame

Recently, Queensland umpire Ian Frame announced his retirement from softball. Ian has been involved with umpiring for many years, and he will be missed around the diamonds at all levels.

Below is an interview with Ian, conducted by Helen Strauss.

- *When, where and why did you start umpiring?*

I'm not sure when I first umpired a game of softball. It was a long time ago, but I do remember the game. It was an Under 16 girls' club game at Ipswich, where I first got involved in Softball. I was coaching in those days and like most competitions clubs were given umpiring duties. After doing that first game, I guess I didn't mind doing my share of umpiring. Matt Denkel and Yvonne Kahler were the two people who actually got me interested in taking it further.

- *How long have you been umpiring at local, state and National level?*

I guess I have been umpiring for about 25 years. It sounds like a long time, but with so many good memories, where has the time gone...



The first-ever State titles I attended were in 1990. It was in Townsville and I was presenting for my Level 3. Ignorance can be a great ally at times. I had never done a 3-man system before going there, it was an experience I will never forget. I still remember my first game of the tournament. It was a plate and the two teams eventually played off in the Final, what a game.

My first experience at National level, I think it would have been 1994 at the Under 19 Men's at South Brisbane. I was a Skill Share and I successfully presented for my Level 5 the following year in Melbourne at the Under 16 Boys/Under 19 Men's Championships.

- *What has kept you in the game for as long as you've been?*

The people, their different personalities and the relationships with those people. I have met so many wonderful people during my time in the sport, many of whom I am proud to be able to call friends.

- *What has changed in umpiring (if anything) since you first started?*

I'm not sure if the umpiring has changed to a great extent. If anything, I think it has become a little less formal, but more professional.

- *What are your memorable moments and your favourite moment?*

Most memorable... so many. Probably being told I had got my ISF certification. Pride just doesn't describe how I felt.

My favourite moment was being appointed to my first Championship plate at a Senior State Championship. I had just got my Level 4 two weeks prior at the State Open Men's and was feeling good. It may have been a "B" grade ladies game, but I was so nervous. Also, just prior to the game Tricia (Sibraa) asked if I could go to New Zealand with the QLD U/23 Women to do a tour. It was hard to focus on the game at hand and the tour. The game went 11 innings in what seemed to be no time.

- *What words of encouragement would you give to umpires coming through the system now?*

Look, listen and ask questions of other umpires.

Remember everyone has a role to play in this game (even coaches).

Be honest, especially to yourself. It's too easy to make excuses.

Don't be afraid to make a mistake. As long as you learn from it, you have achieved something.

Above all, have fun.

- *What would you tell umpires about umpiring at a high level?*

Enjoy the experience at whatever level you umpire.

The higher the level, the bigger the buzz when you nail it.

New South Wales

Nine umpires achieve Level 3 – 23 July 2012

The past two months have been very busy for SNSW umpires and particularly for the level 3 candidates at recent state championships.

Following the weekend's SNSW U17 State Championships at Georges River the SNSWUA now has an additional five Level 3 umpires, which brings the total of number of newly accredited Level 3 umpires to nine.

Congratulations to our newest Level 3 umpires:

- Wayne McGrath (George River)
- Tony Moncaster (Tamworth)
- Dylan Murdoch (Wagga Wagga)
- Colin Tutt (Cumberland)
- Mel Wallace (Cumberland)

These umpires join Jim Long, Vikki Armsworth, Andy Birks and James Townsend, all of whom were successful candidates in June, as the newest Level 3 umpires in NSW.

Vicki Lansley, TCU of the SNSW U17 State Championships, praised the individual commitment made by each of these umpires as well as the suite of development initiatives provided by the SNSWUA in recent month. "Over the last 2 months, the SNSWUA has seen very positive results from its development initiatives, most notably the benefits stemming from the Umpire Academy and Clinics."

"I was very pleased to listen to one of our newest Level 3 umpires speak of how helpful the Umpire Academy was in reinforcing the content and mechanics learned at the Intermediate Clinic. The use of the newly purchased Zooka pitching machine and the other equipment and practical activities used during these development opportunities were principal contributors to each person's success."

"This is very positive feedback for all our trainers who work tirelessly and unselfishly to see [Our House](#) grow. It is also representative of the individual commitment each of these umpires has made to their own success and development – it is great to see," Lansley said.

Joining the successful Level 3 candidates on the diamond was a 32 strong umpire crew. Across the weekend 42 games were played in relatively good weather conditions, with the competition attracting 7 male teams and 11 female teams.

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

Boys' Final Crew – Georges River (11) defeated Penrith City (4)

Plate: Robert McIntosh
1st Base: Chris Ioannou
3rd Base: Paul Bourke

Girls' Final Crew – North Shore (7) defeated Macarthur (0)

Plate: Andrew Compton
1st Base Sharyn Girdler
3rd Base Adrian Rampoldi



(L-R): Vikki Armsworth, Colin Tutt, Melissa Wallace, Jim Long, Tony Moncaster, Andrew Birks, Dylan Murdoch. Absent: Wavne McGarth

Sharyn Girdler Retires - 23 July 2012

The Softball NSW Umpires Association wishes Sharyn Girdler a very fond farewell as the SNSW U17's State Championships marked her official retirement from umpiring.

Umpiring her last championship at Georges River, it was most fitting that Sharyn officially records her last game as the State Championship grand final, umpiring first base.

"On behalf of the NSW Umpiring community, and personally, I acknowledge Sharyn's tremendous service to our sport for over 44 years and extend great thanks for her contribution to the NSW Umpiring Program. Sharyn's influence has been seen in many ways over the years and I am grateful and proud to have had the opportunity to work with her," said Scott Rindfleish, Director of Umpiring.



Photo: Sharyn Girdler

Sharyn has always had a wonderful skill to encourage and develop many umpires at her local association, throughout the special events in NSW and at state championships.

As the UIC at Sutherland Shire Softball Association, Sharyn achieved outstanding growth to promote new training initiatives that resulted in the accreditation of many new umpires. As an Executive Member on the SNSWUA Executive Committee, Sharyn provided great service to Special Events and State Championships.

Sharyn's last day in the blue uniform drew many tears and emotional farewells as NSW Umpires wished the Girdler family well as they move to Kiama in southern NSW. It was most fitting that Softball NSW acknowledged Sharyn at the State Championships having her present the State Champions with the medals at the presentation ceremony.

Best wishes and thank you, Sharyn!

Level 6 caps presented at Open Women`s - 6 August 2012

A dream became a reality for four NSW umpires at the weekend's Open Women's State Championship at Blacktown International Sportspark. Kyira Cox (# 157), Leanne Gearside (# 160), Jesse Smith (# 161) and Jay Gibson (# 163), were presented with their Australian cap and number in recognition of their achieving Level 6 Accreditation.



L-R: Andrew Rindfleish, Jay Gibson, Kyira Cox, Leanne Gearside, Jesse Smith.

These umpires now form part of the group of 165 umpires who have achieved [Level 6 Accreditation in the history of softball umpiring in Australia](#).

It was very fitting for this presentation to be made by Level 8 umpire, and Australian cap number 82, Andrew Rindfleish, who played a pivotal role in the formation of each of these umpires. State Director of Umpiring Scott Rindfleish, when speaking at the presentation, congratulated each of the umpires on this fine achievement.

"I am extremely proud of Kyira, Leanne, Jesse and Jay and I extend congratulations on behalf of the NSW umpiring community. All four umpires bring a fresh new look to umpiring at this level and their future success is set to be outstanding. I wish them much luck and enjoyment as they hope to step up to the next level in their already impressive careers."

This presentation wrapped up an enjoyable weekend on the diamond at the NSW Open Women's State Championship. The Championship decided proved to be a nail-biter, with North Shore and Sutherland battling it out right through to the bottom of the seventh inning. North Shore proved too strong in the end, winning their third consecutive State crown 2-1.

With two members of Australia's *Aussie Spirit* team pitching for each team, the game was great to see but even better to be a part of.



L-R: Jay Gibson, Leanne Gearside, Amanda Houison, Vicki Lansley, Jesse Smith.
Congratulations to the following umpires appointed to the Grand Final:

Plate: Amanda Houison

1st Base: Leanne Gearside

3rd Base: Vicki Lansley

LF: Jesse Smith

RF: Jay Gibson

Photos courtesy of Donkin Gook Photography and Sue Christie.

Technical Update

An update from Leigh Evans, SAL UIC Technical

Subject: Metal cleats for Under 19 grades.

To all SDU's, State Associations and coaches,

At the 2011 International Softball Federation congress, the ISF approved the use metal cleats for age 19 and under players in all upcoming Junior World Championships.

In their reasoning for change ISF made comment that 'at elite International competition most 19 and under age players were playing in open age competition in their countries'.

It's important to note that SAL are **not** proposing a rule change for our SAL Rule Book and will not be making a change in our next edition regarding Metal Cleats for Under 19 grades. There will not be a SAL Technical Bulletin issued to cover this either. However SAL will be adding words to the Australian Championship rules along these lines:

Metal Cleats

Following the 2011 ISF Congress Equipment Standards Commission Review, it will be legal for junior players age 19 and under to wear Metal Cleats for elite international competitions as well as open age.

To prepare Australian athletes for International **elite** competitions, Metal Cleats can be worn by players at **Australian** Under 19 and Open Championships only.

SDUs and umpires should check with their own state and local competitions by-laws and regulations on this matter.

Fire Sale!

From the SAL Office

Get in quick to update your umpiring attire!

White off-diamond polo shirts - \$25; white undershirts - \$10 (prices exclude shipping)

Limited quantities available so place your orders promptly. Contact the SAL Office directly at: office@softball.org.au

Sizes Available:

Off-diamond shirts – Women's 10, 12, 14; Men's XXS – 6XL

Undershirts – Women's 10, 12, 14; Men's XS, S, M, XL, 3XL - 6XL