

# Blue's News On-Line

*Softball Australia Umpires' Magazine*

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Contributions to - [mtoft@ozemail.com.au](mailto:mtoft@ozemail.com.au)

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*Merry Christmas and a  
Happy New Year to All*



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## **Message from the Editor**

**Well there goes another year! December is always an exciting time of the year because we are weeks away from National Championships.**

**I take this opportunity to wish all umpires good calling at the Nationals and to the candidates the best of luck.. To the Skill Share umpires enjoy the experience.**

**BNOL has always recognised the Australian Umpiring Program as a big extended family so to all the brothers and sisters within the umpiring program have a Merry Christmas and a great 2008.**

## **National League 1 - Brisbane 2007**



### **Umpiring Crew**

**Back L to R:** Stephen Gutteridge (QLD), David Casey (QLD), Mark Toft (QLD), Ian Frame (QLD), Brett Atkinson (ACT)

**Front L to R:** Diane Waller (VIC), Yvonne Kahler (QLD), Tricia Sibraa (UIC), Helen Strauss (QLD), Debbie Grove (VIC).

## **The National UIC's Call with Andrew Rindfleish**

This time of the year is a very busy time for most of us as we enjoy the holiday season with family and friends. There is also an anticipation of a busy January for those of us on the national umpire circuit, as we prepare for the first five of the 2008 Australian Championships. This height of summer sees the vast majority of umpires around Australia in the peak of their domestic and State based competitions, yet many of us find the time to be involved in our sport away from our homes.

On behalf of the umpire management team I thank all of you who have made yourselves available for tournaments in 2008, and particularly those at multiple tournaments. Without you giving so generously of your time, annual leave and dollars our sport would suffer. There have been some considerable changes to the appointments to the five January tournaments. I'd like to thank all those umpires who have been affected by these changes for their patience and understanding as the appointments evolved, particularly those who volunteered to be moved to alternate championships from those where they were originally named.

Early December saw a very busy Hawker Softball Complex in Canberra with the annual ACT Skins Tournament followed by the Pacific Men's International Series. The Skins tournament was strengthened by the inclusion of the Aussie Under 19 Squad and the Mount Albert Ramblers from Auckland. Unfortunately the weather was not kind and one whole day was lost. The umpire crew, managed by Ken Culpitt, consisted of Brett Atkinson (ACT), Kevin Broomhall (Vic), Jason Carter (Vic), David Datsun (SA), Leigh Evans (Vic), Debbie Grove (Vic), Yvonne Kahler (Qld), Ron Houison (NSW), Bruce McCahon (NSW), Damien McCauley (SA), Peter Medbury (NSW), Andrew Rindfleish (NSW), Scott Rindfleish (NSW), Jesse Smith (NSW), Kevin Tannerbring (SA), Alex Turnbull (Vic), Phil Waller (Vic), and three visiting New Zealand International umpires in Mark Macfarlane, Glen Nalepa and Dennis Smith. It was really pleasing to see umpires from five States, as well as from New Zealand, make their way to Canberra for this event.

The third annual Pacific International Series followed the Skins with two teams from the Aussie Steelers Squad, the New Zealand Black Sox and Team Japan. Unfortunately Team Samoa could not make the tournament. This was softball of an extremely high standard with the Aussie Green team beating the Black Sox for only the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> times ever, including the final of the Series. The umpire crew consisted of, Leigh Evans (Vic), Bruce McCahon (NSW), Damien McCauley (SA), Andrew Rindfleish (NSW), Darren Sibraa (Qld) and three visiting New Zealand umpires, Mark Macfarlane, Glen Nalepa and Dennis Smith. Ken Culpitt was the UIC.

We have had the first two rounds of the National League (the old Grand Prix series), held in Brisbane and in Melbourne. This year funding has allowed developmental opportunities for umpires from outside the two home States and we have had visiting umpires at both venues.

The ISF have announced that Wayne Saunders of New Zealand is the Oceania Regional Umpire in Chief. Margo Koskelainen will continue to serve our sport at the international level and has been appointed Special Projects Coordinator on the Regional Umpires Coordinators' staff. Whilst New Zealand and Australia dominate the Oceania on the International scene, there is no doubt that Oceania has to be seen as a viable, well functioning organisation offering our sport to the countries in and around the Pacific. I have no doubt that we will see opportunities in the coming years to be involved more and more in the development of umpires in the smaller countries of Oceania.

On behalf of the National Umpire Management Team I trust all umpires, here in Australia and our many readers overseas, are enjoying the holiday season with their respective families and friends. I hope 2008 brings success and happiness for all and, particularly on the diamond that it brings good timing and plenty of hustle.

# “What’s the call blue?”

## Rules Questions and Interpretations with Leigh Evans

Hi Leigh, I have a question regarding the Dropped third strike (DTS) rule with runners continuing to run to first base and drawing a throw.

My Interpretation is that this includes a Batter Runner (BR) having been called out on a dropped third strike with first base occupied running toward first base to draw the throw. This is interference and the runner who is closest to home should be called out on the interference.

Your thoughts on this one please.

Thanks Chris,

I have given some consideration to this question/scenario, this is not an easy one.

Rule 8 Sec 9 n. THE RUNNER IS OUT. When, after a runner, batter or batter-runner has been declared out, or after a runner has scored, the runner, batter or batter-runner interferes with a defensive player’s opportunity to make a play on another runner. A runner continuing to run and drawing a throw will be considered a form of interference.

If you notice the later part of this rule was added to control unfairness in runners continuing to run bases when already out causing interference by drawing a throw. It also refers to a runner not a batter runner.

Let's think about the initial reason for the rule. Like all rules in our rule book it aims to create fairness, to prevent cheating and not to give an unfair advantage to the other team.

We also do not allow a decision to be made, in which the decision will reward the team at fault.

The reason for the DTS rule is to prevent a double play by the catcher either intentional or unintentional.

I would like to break this situation down into several sections.

- With none or one out the catcher drops the third strike. If the runner was not automatically out and had to run to first, the catcher would just throw the lead runner out at second, and then second base (F4) could throw to first; thereby being rewarded with a double play. In this case because the catcher made an error or intentionally dropped the third strike, the defence would get the advantage. We have several rules in the book to stop double plays caused by errors, or allowing the ball to fall eg. The infield fly.
- When we have a runner who has been called out, then continues to run bases and draws a throw (especially if he kept running past the next base to draw a throw), he should be ruled as intentionally trying to draw a throw and therefore should attract the heavier penalty of interference. If the BR after being called out kept running and then turned after first base and appeared to be still running he should be ruled as running bases to draw a throw. I know in this case the rule doesn't say intentional but logic should prevail.
- A BR is usually focused on swinging at the pitch, making first base and he runs almost by habit. Everyone yells out run, coaches even yell out run at times. The plate umpire often does not even call out straight away and sometimes not at all, as the plate umpire hasn't noticed the DTS rule is in effect. The umpire that does call the out is behind the BR, and the BR often does not hear the out call.
- Catchers should also know the DTS rule and not make that play at first.
- This rule was not intended for the DTS play, more for the called out runner, or called out batter.
- If this happens on base, the umpire in front of the play calls the out. The runner often keeps running to the base, then strides out, runs around the base and heads for his bench area. We are not concerned about this runner are we?
- We are looking for the runner who keeps running, making it look like he is still running bases or the BR continuing to second.

I would not use rule 8 Sec 9 in the DTS situation, unless in your opinion the batter runner knew they are out, and you could prove they ran to draw a throw, if not this situation will start with a coach giving you some fairly hot dialog and most probably ending in protest

We must look to adjudicate and administer the rules for their intention in fairness and to uphold the sportsman nature of our game. It is important to umpire our game as it is played, use the rules when needed and not umpire the game by rules alone, this philosophy can and should be used in every on game situation.

Regards,

*Leigh Evans*

Leigh Evans  
Deputy UIC  
Technical Stream  
Rules Interpreter  
Softball Australia

## Tasmanian U14 Girls, U16 Boys and U19 Women State Championships

November 24-25 saw the start of the state championships in Tasmania. Unfortunately due to the lack of teams it ended up being just an U19 Women's tournament. Sunday saw an unusual event; there were more umpires than positions! Normally it is who will get a break not who will get a game! This must be a first in Tasmania.

Due to only a few games there were no dramas. But, in the grand final Fridge (Kelvin Clarke) did manage to wind up for the big strike three call, only to find after the call that the catcher dropped the ball. He later thought it was necessary to blame the catcher for dropping a waist high strike.

After having all his (Fridge) preliminary games debriefed by Bob he thought it was great when he had to inform Bob how to umpire on several occasions; he now only looks up to him because of his superior height!



**Final Allocation  
U19 Women**  
L to R:  
David Lipscombe  
Kelvin Clarke  
Bob Cluley



### State Championship Crew

**Back L to R**  
Bob Cluley  
Scott Bartlett  
Dennis Law  
Rosemary Stuart  
Peter Clarke

**Seated L to R**  
Ian French  
Leigh Johns  
Cindy Clarke  
Wayne Clarke

**Front**  
David Lipscombe

Absent  
Kelvin Clarke

# New South Wales Umpires in Action with Ron Houison

At NSW's recently held AGM the Executive elected for 2008 were as follows:

NSW Director of Umpiring: Darrell Shephard  
NSW Deputy Director: Bruce McCahon  
Secretary: Sue Itzstein  
Treasurer: Greg Zucchetti  
Training Co-ordinator: Scott Rindfleish  
State League Co-ordinator: Nick Beashel  
Special Events Co-ordinator: Vicki Lansley  
Information Co-ordinator: Ron Houison

Thanks to Heather Kennedy (Treasurer) and Kyira Cox (Information), who stood down this year, for their significant contributions to the association over the last 12 months.

The awards and scholarships for 2007 were presented over two nights: The Andrew Rindfleish Umpire of the Year and Director's Award for Services to Umpiring were presented at the NSW State Dinner; with the remainder presented over our own celebration after the AGM.

## The 2007 Andrew Rindfleish Umpire of the Year was presented to Sue Itzstein.

The recipient of this award, recognises the umpire who has made outstanding contributions to the game at all levels – International, National, State and Association; has been involved in management, group training and personal mentoring. This is NSW's highest accolade, and in Itzy we have a most worthy recipient.



Andrew Rindfleish and Sue Itzstein



## The Director's Award for Services to Umpiring was presented to Jim Long.

This award is presented by the Director to a person who has performed outstanding service to umpiring in NSW. Jim is a constant participator at championships, State and Waratah League, and has been for many, many years. Well done, Jim!

Jim Long (left) and Harvey Milson

## The Individual Award for Umpire Development was presented to Vicki Lansley.

The recipient of this award is selected by the NSWSUA Committee and recognises an individual for their State- and Association-level umpire development. Vicki has completed the NSWSUA "Train the Trainer" course, has participated as an instructor at formal clinics over the past two years and provides effective training at Cumberland Nepean Softball Association.



Scott Rindfleish (left) and Vicki Lansley

## New South Wales Umpires in Action Continued

The [Affiliate Award for Umpire Development](#) was presented to **Penrith City**.

The recipient is selected by the NSW SUA Committee and selection criteria includes having a formal development program in place, a structured recognition program and demonstrated success in umpire development as measured by umpires progressing to higher levels and new umpires recruited.



*(L – R) Ron Houison, Sue Itzstein, Amanda Houison and Leanne Gearside*



The [Encouragement Award](#) was presented to **Sharyn Girdler**

Current Level 2 and 3 umpires are considered for the Encouragement Award. The successful umpire must demonstrate an above average skill in umpiring coupled with a willingness to learn and approve.

*Sharyn Girdler and Darrell Shephard*

Finally, the [Junior Development Scholarships \(Metropolitan and Country\)](#) are awarded each year to assist promising young umpires cope with the expenses involved in developing their skills to an elite level.

Congratulations **James English** (awarded the Metropolitan Scholarship) and **Jay Gibson** (awarded the Country Scholarship).

In November, Manly hosted the NSW U/14 State Championship. This championship was held at a time when rain had washed out the majority of sporting events in Sydney. The work that the Manly Association put into their grounds over the course of the days leading up to and during the championship saw a very successful weekend of softball played. A large crew was on-hand to oversee the games.

### NSW U/14 State Championship Crew



For the sharp of eye you'll notice someone who's uniform is a bit more formal than others, George Norrish is an Ace amongst Jokers and every U/14's he manages to do something to create mayhem for the group photo. If you ever want to know how to call "Play Ball" then ask George for a demo. We do suggest you stand, maybe, 3 diamonds away!!!

2007 is drawing to a close and this is a time for celebration. It also is the time that so many umpires nationally gear up for Nationals. Our best wishes go to the Candidates and Skillshare Umpires who are all taking on the next, exciting challenge in their careers.

Finally, we wish all of our friends in the umpiring family a very merry Christmas, a safe and happy New Year.

See you in 2008!!!





# Memorandum

**To:** State and Territory Associations

**From:** Mark McAllion

**Date:** 21 December, 2007

**Subject:** Illegal bats

The International Softball Federation (ISF) has introduced a new ruling regarding the certification of legal Bats for international competition. The new ISF certification will replace the current certification definition from 31 August 2008.

The Softball Australia Umpiring Program staff and Board considered the issue and released a Technical Bulletin in September 2007 advising that a consistent ruling will be adopted for all Softball Australia events and competitions from 1 January 2009.

Further information was discussed by the Softball Australia Board in December 2007 which has resulted in a change to the position previously advised.

The Softball Australia Board's policy in regard to Illegal Bats is outlined in the following Technical Bulletin, TB2007-01 Ver 2.2. It is to be noted that for Softball Australia events and competitions the ruling will now be adopted from **31 August 2008**. Softball Australia is also recommending that all state/territory and local associations adopt a consistent ruling at the same time.

Many factors have been considered in making this decision which include the ISF's position, the Amateur Softball Association (of America)'s current situation, the legalities, the impact on all stakeholders and most importantly the safety of softball participants.

This decision was not taken lightly and it is recognised that many players may have recently purchased bats which may become illegal and that wholesalers and retailers may also have stock which may ultimately be impacted by the ruling. However, the Board made the decision with the strong belief that it was in the overall best interests of Softball in Australia.

If you have any queries on the Technical Bulletin attached please contact Mr Leigh Evans, the National Rules Interpreter [leighevans@westnet.com.au](mailto:leighevans@westnet.com.au), or myself on the number below.

Kind regards,

Mark McAllion  
Chief Executive Officer Telephone (03) 9818 6144



# TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Supersedes version 1.0 09/09/07.  
Note: Changes are in italics.

30<sup>th</sup> November 2007

**Subject: Legal and Illegal Bats, New Batted Ball Speed (BBS) Test Certification.  
TB2007-1 Version 2.2**

## **Background**

ISF have been certifying bats since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002. ISF publish a list of “approved bats” – essentially a list of bats that are legal for use at ISF events. Initially, the ISF certification process was based on a mathematical “bat performance factor” (BPF). Certified *BPF* (legal) bats are labeled with an “ISF BPF 1.20” mark.

Currently a high-speed batted ball test is being used (BBS) using the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM).

*Amateur Softball Association (ASA)*, the peak softball body in the US, have been conducting testing and certification of bats since 2000. ASA have always had a test process built around a batted ball speed (BBS). *This is purely a safety issue. BBS is the speed of the ball coming off of a bat (limit of 98 MPH/157.72 KPH), The BBS is the speed of the ball as seen by the fielder taking into account the fielders reaction time.* ASA publish a list of allowed bats and a list of bats that are not approved by ASA. Other high profile softball countries, for instance Canada, follow the ASA published lists.

ISF have determined and published notice that August 31, 2008 will mark the end of the period during which bats that complied with the previous ISF bat performance standard (1.20 BPF) shall be permitted to be used in ISF play and the new BBS standard will be adopted. *After this period Bats with BPF of 1.2 may still pass the BBS testing method.*

## **The Australian Scene**

Australia have always followed the ISF certification process and used the ISF approved bat list. The question around legality of bats not on the ISF approved list has always been a contentious one.

*There is also a case that not all bats on the market will be used at ISF World Championships, Olympic Games or ISF events, so not all bats on the world market will be put forward by manufacturers to ISF for approval. The ASA publish a list of approved bats widely used through the US in competition which may not appear on the ISF list as previously mentioned above.*

*There is some concern that bats ruled illegal by ISF and ASA may make the market in Australia.*

Whilst Softball Australia has direct responsibility only for the conduct of National and other tournaments its runs, there is no doubt that there is a flow-on effect to the State run and other competitions and tournaments. By implication, a decision on use of legal and illegal bats by Softball Australia should set the scene for the rest of softball in Australia.

### **Procedure for Use of Softball Bats *amended***

At the recent Softball Australia Board Meeting the following procedure was adopted and is effective immediately. Please follow these steps in order:

1. A bat is considered legal if it is listed on the current ISF Certified Bat List
2. A bat will be considered illegal if it is on the ASA banned bat List.
  - 2.1 If the same bat is on the ISF Certified List and on the ASA Banned Bat List, the ISF list shall take precedence and as such a bat shall be considered legal.
3. *Any bat not listed on the ISF approved list nor the ASA banned list will be considered legal if listed on the ASA approved list.*
4. *Bats certified under the 1.2 BPF testing method will be legal until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008.*
5. *After the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008 a bat certified, and labeled, under the ISF BPF 1.2 testing method shall be considered legal if that bat satisfies the testing described in Point 1, 2, 2.1 and 3 above. All bats shall then comply with the ISF/ASA BBS test and certification process.*
6. Any bat manufactured prior to 2000, falling outside the requirements of Points 1 to 3 above, shall be evaluated by the umpire or umpire management of the game in which it is to be used and determined fit or unfit for use.
7. Should a new bat not be covered by Point 1, 2 or 3 above, advice should be sought from the Softball Australia UIC prior to its use in Australia.
8. The responsibility for use of any softball bat that falls outside the requirements of Points 1 to 5 above, rest solely with the user of the bat.

Players, coaches, parents, team managers, administrators *and suppliers* play important roles in preventing avoidable safety issues to the players of the game.

Reference to the following web sites will assist in understanding the procedure and testing process.

[http://www.internationalsoftball.com/english/rules\\_standards/certified\\_bats.asp](http://www.internationalsoftball.com/english/rules_standards/certified_bats.asp)

[http://asasoftball.com/about/certified\\_equipment.asp](http://asasoftball.com/about/certified_equipment.asp)

*Leigh Evans*

**Leigh Evans**

Deputy UIC

Technical Stream

National Rules Interpreter

Softball Australia

## **Deadline for January BNOL**

**In 2008 Blue's News On-Line will be looking to publish an edition every month, so it is important that we get our contributions in early. I feel we can extend the usual deadline of January 15 to January 20 which will take in four National Championships.**

**This way we can have news from the Nationals in the January and February editions. Also it will give the local and State umpires a chance to get their contributions in during the holiday period.**

**Contributions may be forwarded to the Editor, Mark Toft at [mtoft@ozemail.com.au](mailto:mtoft@ozemail.com.au)**

**Thank you.**

# RULES EXAMINATION REPORT

A total number of 535 candidates at all levels sat the 2007 Australian Umpire Theory Examination. The average mark for Levels 0-3 was 65.71 the average for Levels 4-8 was 82.9 and the overall average for all candidates was 67.99.

## 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> |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 9              | 76%                | 52             | 67%                |
| 35             | 72%                | 32             | 64%                |
| 68             | 70%                | 69             | 60%                |
| 95             | 70%                | 79             | 60%                |
| 18             | 68%                | 57             | 59%                |

Over the next few editions of BNOL I will cover the top 10 incorrect answers and provide some reasoning and discussion points. Last edition we covered Q18 and 52

Q32. R1 on 3rd when B2 bunts the 3rd strike. The ball pops up in the air, over foul territory, toward F5, who is in a position to catch the ball. R1, in attempting to return to 3rd, collides with F5, who is on foul territory and the ball falls safely on to foul ground.

RULING: B2 is out for bunting foul on the 3rd strike. FALSE: Rule 7 Sec 9f Exception.

If a runner interferes with

1. A fielder attempting to catch a bunted fly ball in foul territory, or
2. A foul fly ball, which a fielder is attempting to catch, the runner is out.

The batter-runner will then return to bat with an additional strike on the foul ball, provided the count prior to hitting the ball was less than two strikes.

In this case a runner interfering with a fielder about to catch a bunted foul fly ball is the harsher penalty than the batter out on bunting the third strike, the ball becomes dead as the interference happens.

Q69. R1 on 1st, when F7 catches a foul fly ball near the dead ball line. R1 legally tags up and advances toward 2nd on the catch. F7 intentionally runs over the dead ball line, after R1 touches 2nd.

RULING: R1 is awarded 3rd and the ball is dead. FALSE: Rule 8 Sec 7k & Effect. When, in the umpire's judgement, a fielder intentionally carries, kicks, pushes, or throws a live ball from playable territory into dead ball territory.

EFFECT - Sec 7k: The ball is dead and all runners are awarded two bases from the last base touched at the time the fielder entered, or the ball was kicked, pushed, or thrown into, dead ball territory.

There are several variables in regard to dead ball lines and runners, if the fielder accidentally carries a live ball over the dead ball line eg. After a catch, (his entire foot out side the line touching dead ball territory) the runner would get one base from the base they last legally touched at the time the ball is carried into dead ball territory. If the fielder intentionally carried the ball dead the runner would get two bases from the last legally touched base at the time the ball was carried dead.

If you have any questions regarding these rules or any other question please drop me an email.

*Leigh Evans*

**Deputy UIC  
Technical Stream  
Rules Interpreter  
Softball Australia**