



December 2012



## National UIC's Call

With Tricia Sibraa

Welcome to our final Blues News Online for 2012 – it's been a busy year with many successes, and December certainly doesn't allow for any down time, as seen in this edition. We have reports from two more National Championships and an excellent article about South

Australia's "Greenshirt" program, written by Haydyn Wood, who was a member of this successful program. New South Wales have also provided us with a range of articles, from successful candidates to their 2012 Award recipients.

Congratulations are also extended to Kyira Cox (NSW) and Richard Barrow (VIC), who have been appointed as 2013's Trans-Tasman Exchange umpires. Kyira will be attending the Women's Open Club Championships in Lower Hutt, 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> March and Richard will be attending the Men's Open Club Championships in Christchurch, 20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> March. We look forward to hearing about your experiences early next year.

An addition to the Development Squad update from November's BNOL – Vicki Lansley (NSW) has successfully completed the necessary criteria to join the 2013-2014 Squad. Congratulations, Vicki!

Finally, the NUC would like to thank all of you for your dedication and support of umpiring during 2012.

The NUC wish you all a safe, relaxing, and peaceful holiday break. The NUC will be back on line on the 2nd of January, ready to begin what I hope will be a productive and rewarding new year for Australian umpires and for all of you individually.

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# National Championships

Gilley's Round Two – West Beach, Adelaide SA – 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> Nov.

As we all know, a lot of planning and support goes into any major sporting event and Gilley's Round Two was no exception. The way things flowed throughout the weekend made it not only a memorable weekend for the way umpires were supported, it was exceptional. Airport transfers were smooth with no waiting required. Accommodation, in the 'Executive Dunes' cabins at West Beach Caravan Park, a short walk from to the ballpark, was peaceful and quiet being only 100m from the beach, and there was a central outdoor space for evening 'meetings'. Pre-game organisation by Debbie, our TCU, meant we did not have to search for balls or line-up sheets and post-game we were met by a smiling Jacqui with refreshments and food prepared. Jacqui Crafter, our Umpire Liaison, went above and beyond the call of duty to support us all, from early to late each day, so a huge "THANK YOU" from the crew.

For all three days the weather was fine and hot in the low 30s, tempered by a welcome sea breeze, which meant for most of the time we didn't struggle too much out on the diamond with a mix of three and four-umpire crew games. With Jacqui providing buckets of ice water and topping up water bottles as needed we were okay. There were a few games which didn't start on time and that was only due to games having teams' playing double-headers which ran slightly over time. The fine weather also contributed to the social atmosphere in that we could spend our evenings (no night games!) discussing the finer points of the game over fine food in great company. Jacqui and her assistant Stuart demonstrated their exceptional BBQ-ing skills on Friday by putting together a great meal for a typically hungry crew, and on Saturday Jacqui demonstrated her pizza delivery skills. Conversation on both evenings touched briefly on the question of what is appropriate to include in a Blues News report. Some erudite and articulate examples were given freely, however many were easily categorised as 'unfit to print' and 'what is said on tour, stays on tour'. We eventually narrowed it down to a very limited vocabulary that included the words "umpire", "ball", "strike" and "out" - although "safe" was first thought to be ok but later, it was deemed to be unacceptable.

Being a Gilley's round weekend there were no finals games so no particular crew is singled out for special mention over the 21 games played. Steve Wallace-Yarrow, who did not complete his assessment at Gilley's Round One in Perth, joined the Adelaide crew and was successful in achieving his Level 6 – congratulations Steve!

We all worked hard supporting each other under the conditions and had a great time both on and off the diamond. We must however, single out one umpire for special mention: Darrel Paul who travelled across the 'ditch' from New Zealand to join us for his second time at a Gilley's event. A typically good humoured and gentle Kiwi umpire, Darrel just fitted in as all Kiwi umpires seem to do so easily, to be part of a great weekend of umpiring to experience the quirks an Oz crew.

Writer: Martin Turnbull



Back (L-R): Stephen Gutteridge, Jacqui Crafter (Liaison), David Casey, Warren Duff (examiner), David Datson, Neville Lawrance (Examiner), Damien McCauley, Richard Barrow, Stuart Tyler, Martin Turnbull, Trevor Murphy.  
Front (L-R): Mark Gallagher, Debbie Grove (TCU), Darrel Paul and Jay Gibson

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## Open Men's Championship – John Reid Shield – 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Dec.

**Day 0** –Every one of the crew had been umpiring at the Canberra Skins and staying at the Belconnen Hotel. With the Skins over we had to move to the Kingston Serviced Apartments and we took the afternoon to settle in, do some grocery shopping and then walk across the road to the Eastlake Football Club for dinner. After three intense days of the Skins tournament in searing heat everyone decided to have a quiet night and dispersed soon after eating a fine a la carte meal.

**Day 1** –We were all able to do our own thing for the early part of the day and some chose to visit the War Memorial, a great opportunity for those who may not have been there recently (or ever). At 3pm we met in the accommodation car park and headed back to Hawker for the management meeting, bat inspection and crew briefing. This was followed by an evening at the Kingston Hotel, which has an indoor BBQ, where we cooked our own choice of fresh meat or fish and enjoyed a relaxing evening playing pool. I think Jason Carter and Darren Sibraa proved to be formidable partnership while I seemed to get paired up with the “less-skilled” for the whole night (I can probably take a lesson away from that and let us never let the truth spoil a good story, hey?). The evening flew by and as the hotel was only walking distance from the accommodation people drifted off at their own leisure. I guess many who could sleep lay thinking about the heat of the previous few days and the eight games per day schedule that was to follow.

**Day 2** – Unlike the very short travel distance between the Belconnen Hotel and the grounds during the Skins, our daily travel was 20–25 minutes each way. We headed out for the grounds at 9am for the 11am first pitch of the tournament. The day which was made up of 4 time slots and 8 games seemed to run to schedule with the run ahead rule being applied to a few games and the first of at least four tie-breakers going into 8 innings and being fought out between arch rivals NSW and VIC. With the last session of the day commencing at 8pm it was after 10pm when we finished for the day returned to our accommodation for a late night snack and off to bed.

**Day 3** – The first round of the day was scheduled at 12:30pm so some chose to have a little lay-in, while others headed to the local shops for cooked breakfast prior to our 10am departure from the accommodation. We were soon to find out that due to an overnight storm a very large tree had fallen collapsing the right field fence on Diamond 2 and covering a large area of the deep right field pocket. Informed that the D2 games were being transferred to D3, those affected began preparing for the possibility of many home runs over the shorter fenced distance. To the credit of the ACT support crew the fallen tree was removed, the fence repaired and a firewood garage sale generated all before the commencement of the first round of the day (well done, crew!). And it was just as well they had all that firewood because the weather took a nosedive and by mid afternoon everyone was wearing on-diamond jackets (only a small amount of drizzle – no real rain). Two tie-breakers and again a late evening with those 8pm games and the 20-minute drive back to the accommodation.

**Day 4** – Another 12:30pm start and similar options for the morning leading up to the 10am departure. Another eight games, more tie-breakers and mild weather. A similar evening schedule but Alex Turnbull thought we might be able to get pizzas for our late night snack. Being a local you'd think he'd have an idea of the all night outlets – not the case – no pizzas.

**Day 5** – Although there were only six games played to complete the round robin, the evening was another late one with the first two games of the final series being played at 8 pm. An uneventful evening with many of the crew looking forward to the big day of finals ahead.

**Day 6** – An even earlier start on this the final day with the first round being played at 10:30am saw us departing the accommodation at 8:30am (probably another reason everyone hit the hay as early as possible the night prior). The big one commenced at 2pm with ACT and NSW battling it out for honours and ACT coming out victors 7 – 2.

**Grand Final Crew:** Leigh Evans (Plate), Jason Carter (1st Base), Debbie Grove (2nd Base), David Casey (3rd Base) – Congratulations.

With the games and presentations done the crew adjourned to the Kingston Hotel for a well-deserved dinner similar to that of Day 1. The pool table got another hiding, as did some of the players. But a pool shark emerged from our ranks with Debbie Grove seeking advice on how to hold the cue, and then rushing both of her first two shots to sink three balls. Well done, Debbie! The evening turned in to night and even into Day 7 before the “pool hearty” dragged themselves off to bed for the last time.

**Day 7** – arrived a little early for some with the Queenslanders having to depart by 7am. While the Victorian crew left for the airport about 8:30am – some who were anxious to get home were at the bus by 8am... but we all sat in the airport for nearly an hour anyway.

**Final Thoughts** – The crew welcomed David Beaumont, our Kiwi brethren, to the Open Men’s Championship. Dave fitted in really well, and we hope to see you soon Dave.

Jason Carter took charge of funds for groceries for daily food preparation and did a fine job making sure sufficient stocks of groceries were available throughout.

As some of crew are involved with the International Development Squad and others are heading off to the Open Men’s World Championships in New Zealand early in 2013, many of our games used 4-umpire system. That said there was also the opportunity provided for those who needed to hone their skills on the 3-umpire system. So, the crew’s thanks are extended to Tricia and her management crew for the effort they put in behind the scenes to provide great allocations, support and positive feedback.

I always enjoy these tournaments and I am sure the rest of you do, too. So here’s hoping I share a diamond with you sometime soon.

Writer: Trevor Murphy



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# South Australia

## Green shirt program – a reflection by Haydyn Wood

I'm a product of Softball SA Umpires [SSAU] Greenshirt Program. I think that's great, some may question my judgement on that call!

The Office for Recreation and Sport, South Australia preside over a [Coloured Shirt Program](#), which is based on the successful SANFL "red shirt" program that was introduced to address the issue of umpire retention at the grass-roots level.



The SA sporting groups that are currently involved with this Coloured Shirt Program are: Athletics SA, Baseball SA, Basketball SA, Country Basketball SA, Canoe SA, City of Tea Tree Gully - recreation centres, Dragonboat SA, Football Federation of SA, Gymnastics SA, Hockey SA, Ice Hockey SA, Lacrosse SA, Netball SA, Royal Life Saving Society SA, **Softball SA**, Squash SA, Surf Life Saving SA, SA Amateur Soccer League, SA Rugby League, SA Rugby Union, Skate SA, Touch Football Australia SA, Volleyball SA, SANFL (national program) and SA Cricket Association (national program).

I ask that you indulge me while I'll paint a picture for you.

I was a classic, indeed, shining example of a 'Drive-by Parent'. I'd drop my young step-daughter off to the ball park on a Saturday morning, sometimes only 5 minutes before her game. Well... "Why do you want to be there 1 hour before the game starts?" I'd dutifully pick her up after her games, even though sometimes she, and her coach, had to wait a 'couple' of minutes extra for me to arrive.

I reviewed the status of my Drive-by Parenthood after her club, Torrens Valley Redsox, travelled to a Canberra Australia Day Tournament weekend.

The 'other' club-mums greeted me with open arms and from that fateful weekend away, I started my Softball Parent apprenticeship which progressed from Team Bag Carrier, to Passed Ball Returner [or as the 'Yanks' say 'Ball Shagger'], to Committee Member and finally to Club President.

As an athlete in a former life - Carn the All Blacks! - I needed more...

SSAU, formerly SASUA, began a Greenshirt Program at the start of the 2005-06 season with David Datson, SSAU Training Officer, as front man. When I heard about this I thought, "That's my next step... Why not give it a go?"

I was in the first group of Greenshirts to be put through a basic two-session presentation, run by David, at Softball South Australia [SSA]. The first session was in the classroom to show a basic concept of the 2-umpire system and signals. Incidentally, I missed that one! The second was putting the classroom session into practice on-diamond by running around waving our arms and generally making fools of ourselves.

That was it... Wow! A 45 year old that only played 'lunchtime' softball at primary school and now I was a Softball Umpire!

Alan McAuliffe – “Big Al” - put his hand up to be my official mentor taking me under his wing to guide me, and still does, to be as good as I want to be. David Datson, Neville Lawrance, Kev Tannebring, in fact all the Senior Blues, have offered me feedback throughout my entire on-diamond life. You soon learn to listen to all and take heed of only a few!

So I quickly got the idea of calling SAFES & OUTS. I then discovered that I was allowed to also call “DEAD BALL... LEFT EARLY...RUNNER’S OUT!” No one, other than my mentors, questioned me. However, I did soon realise that the groans from the bleachers, after some of my ‘better calls’, meant that perhaps I needed to learn a bit more and hone the skills that I was rapidly picking up. Cool, eh?

This is where I wanted to be. The senior umpires, nay, all the umpires, quickly made me feel like I was indeed an umpire and that this was the best place to watch a game of softball from. Strangely enough I found a plethora of willing Blues only too happy to offer an opinion on any play scenario that I’d come up with...

*Did you know that to be a Badged Level 1 Umpire you don’t need to be particularly fit and you only need to know 50% of the rules? How cool’s that! “No, sorry coach, I’m a Level 1 Blue. I only know 50% of the rules and that’s one I don’t know...” Ever used it?*

Here’s a summary of my umpiring. Since my first season, 2005-06, I have:

*Received:*

- SA Rookie Umpire - Marg Abbott Trophy;
- Level 1 Accreditation;
- 2012 SA Director of Umpiring Award - The Lyle Tyler [OAM] Trophy; and
- Level 5 in Hobart at the 2012 National U17 Girls. Big Al announced my successful candidacy and shook my hand at the Final Night dinner.

*Attended:*

- Overwhelming majority of SSA State Championships;
- State team scratch matches/training;
- Waverley Easter Carnival;
- Australian Masters Games, Adelaide;
- Australian Secondary Schools Championships, Australian Primary Schools Championship;
- 2009 Advanced Umpire Clinic at Blacktown, NSW with Andrew and Scott Rindfleish. Umpired 1<sup>st</sup> Base on the U17 Boys Friendship Series Grand Final on Diamond 1 with the Australian and Kiwi National Anthem followed by the HAKA! (This really is heaven!);
- 2010 Special Olympics, Adelaide where the Australian Squad for the Athens Special Olympics were selected and the display of amazing sportsmanship and spirit was truly inspirational;
- ‘Skill-Share’ at a National U17 Boys, Adelaide;
- 2011 ASA Umpire Advanced Camp, thanks to my travels with TV Redsox Team; and
- 2012 U15 Regional Championships at Rockhampton as one of the Umpire Mentors.

*Umpire Liaison/Management Crew:*

- Umpire Liaison Officer in Adelaide at a National U16 Boys Championship;
- SSAU Committee member & Umpire Rostering Officer of the Adelaide Competition;
- Helped run various Clinics for SA Affiliates and Adelaide-based umpires;
- Deputy TCU at the 2012 Waverley Easter Carnival;
- Taken on an official ‘Mentee’ within our association; and
- TCU for 2012 Adelaide Labour Day Junior Carnival.

and it ain’t over yet...

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If it wasn't for our Greenshirt Program, I don't think I would've ever considered umpiring. The protection, the expectation, the training, the mentoring and the subsequent pathway provided by the National Umpiring Program, has given me the opportunity to become an active member of the Blues Family.

- PROTECTION from those nasty coaches and sometimes nastier spectators
- EXPECTATION of making mistakes
- TRAINING by having Badged Blues allocated to my games
- MENTORING, either officially or unofficially, by some of the world's best umpires
- PATHWAY to full Blue status and to wherever I want to push myself to

Along with a system that supports new umpires, there also needs to be people willing enough to answer those insane questions and scenarios offered up to them every weekend. Our program in SA would not be alive without people like Big Al, Neville Lawrance, David Datson, Kev Tannebring (aka 'KT' or 'Mr T'), Bruce Burford and Dave Roberts, just to drop a few names! The wisdom and time that these Senior Blues give back to our program is invaluable.

My guys have set me right on numerous occasions. Big Al has poured over, analysed, poked and prodded numerous videos, thanks *DartFish*, and by doing so is still giving me the opportunity to improve my on-diamond work (ya reckon I would've got it by now, eh?). Neville and Big Al have sat me down in the back office and treated me to some 'healthy' feedback sessions with the associated pressures of assessment games nearly all of my umpiring life.

Both Neville and Alan have said that they will continue to provide this service to anyone who puts their hand up, as long as these people listen and put into practice what advice they're given.

I know that any person can reach their full potential in whatever they pursue as long as they are first given the opportunity. After that it's a passion and commitment and a willing network of people around to nurture and guide them through all stages of their journey.

We all understand that there is a need to bolster the numbers participating within our sport. Let's ensure that the focus is not only on player groups. If we don't keep the flow of umpires continuing through our associations and onwards to National and International levels, we will not only suffer at the 'grass-roots' but in turn we will lose Australia's well-earned, and deserved, reputation of producing some of the world's best Softball Blues.

There is a vast pool out there of wanna-be umpires, dads & mums, uncles & aunts, brothers & sisters, boy & girl friends. We've all heard them from the sidelines! These people just need a BIG STICK and the promise of a SAFE ENVIRONMENT so that they come-out and play with the rest of us kiddies.

The BIG STICK is all of us pushing to get the message out there. The SAFE ENVIRONMENT? Well, that's the Greenshirt program!

I recommend all adopt and support a Novice Umpire Program, to ensure that the pool is tapped so that it cannot dry up!



Crew Chief, Tony Condous [West Torrens President and Level 1 Blue] accepts the mission of looking after our newest Greenshirt, Big Al!

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# New South Wales

## George Norrish achieves Level 6

“Oh what a feeling!” These were not the words of a Toyota ad, but the words of NSW’s newest Level 6 umpire, George Norrish, upon learning of his success.



If being appointed to Round 1 of the 2012-2013 Gilley’s Shield in Perth as a candidate was not enough of a thrill for George, then learning that he would be working the competition with ten ISF umpires certainly was. From 26-28 October, NSW’s resident funny man and practical joker exchanged his sense of humour for a sense of purpose on the diamond as he completed his six examination games.

Under the watchful eye of his examiners, and with the support of his fellow crew members, the three-day competition proved both challenging and rewarding for Norrish. Hailing from the Central Coast, and often working games at Newcastle District Softball Association, George has had to go the distance in more ways than one to achieve his Level 6 accreditation, a

goal he set for himself shortly after receiving his Level 5 in 2011.

Norrish attributed his success to the great support network that he has enjoyed throughout his umpiring career, which began in 1974 umpiring school softball games.

During the early years of his umpiring career, “Darrell Shephard, Graham Boyle and Howard Watt helped and influenced my umpiring,” Norrish said. “In recent times I have been able to gain valuable development from all the senior umpires in NSW, such is the camaraderie and support within the umpire fraternity.”

“People have always been prepared to help, advise and give feedback. The moral support, which is always great to have, especially under exam conditions, has always been generously forthcoming.” When reflecting on words he would offer future candidates, Norrish said: “never feel like you are isolated or on your own; you are part of a team and support is always there.”

Having experienced the support of others, George is always one to give back to the sport and also to the umpiring programme as a mentor and trainer of junior umpires.

In the future George looks forward to continuing his work in the umpire development space, particularly through Special Events and SNSWUA training initiatives.

Norrish’s future umpiring goals also include umpiring softball in every state in the country, being appointed to a National Championship final and, perhaps one day down the track, to umpire overseas.

The future looks as full as George’s bank of jokes and tales!

Congratulations, George!

## NSW Umpires Celebrate Success in 2012

The Softball NSW Umpires Association celebrated another successful year at their Annual General Meeting on Friday 14 December.

### [READ THE 2012 ANNUAL REPORT](#)

Umpire development took centre stage in 2012 with the Train the Trainer course complimenting the existing clinics and Academy program, leading to the growing number of successful candidates at all levels.

“2012 has been another outstanding year for the NSW umpiring family where we have continued to focus on bringing Our House to life,” NSW Director of Umpiring Scott Rindfleish said. “One of the real highlights has been the unprecedented level of candidate success which is a fantastic result from a very large and growing pool of engaged and determined umpires.

“As I look ahead to 2013, I am extremely optimistic about what we can achieve as a group and I have absolute confidence we can continue to support every umpire in their quest to achieve success.”

The AGM also honoured those members that have made an outstanding commitment to the program in 2012 with the presentation of the annual awards.

### **Congratulations to the following winners:**

- Andrew Rindfleish Umpire of the Year & Individual Award for Umpire Development: **Ron Houison** (Penrith) - [read the citation](#)
- Director’s Award for Services to Umpiring: **Jim Long** (Georges River) – [read the citation](#)
- Affiliate Award for Umpire Development: **Cumberland Nepean** - [read the citation](#)
- Encouragement Award: **James Townsend** (North Shore) – [read the citation](#)

### **Congratulations also to the following umpires who were elected to the Executive for 2013:**

- Director of Umpiring: Scott Rindfleish
- Deputy Director of Umpiring: Andrew Rindfleish
- Secretary: Vicki Lansley
- Treasurer: Jay Gibson
- Executive Member: Kyira Cox
- Executive Member: Leanne Gearside
- Executive Member: Amanda Houison
- Executive Member: Ron Houison
- Executive Member: Jesse Smith

## 10/10 at U15 State Championships

Success was in the air on the Northern Rivers over the weekend of 24-25 November as 26 teams descended on Lismore to compete in the 2012 U15 State Championships.

The weather was hot and so too was the softball action. The best young softballers from across the state, as far as Wagga Wagga in the south and Orange and Tamworth in the west, were proving themselves on the diamond.

Also feeling the heat on the diamond was a crew of 35 umpires led by TCU Howard Watt. These umpires ably supported the ten candidates and performed strongly across the entire weekend in temperatures well over 30 degrees.

The vast majority of the ten Level 2 candidates were recent graduates of the NSW Umpire Academy. The latest Academy wrapped up only 2 weeks ago, marking the end of a two-month development program facilitated by senior NSW umpires on Wednesday nights.

It was most fitting for the Academy Coordinator, Leanne Gearside, to be on hand at the U15 State Championships to congratulate all ten candidates on achieving their next level of accreditation.

“Each of these candidates has worked hard over recent months, particularly during the Academy sessions, to improve their performance – and clearly their work has paid off,” Gearside said. “Their success is also a testament to the contribution so many mentors and senior umpires have made to their development.”

“We congratulate each of these umpires on their latest achievement – you cannot get any better than 10 out of 10! – and look forward to their continued involvement in our umpiring program.”

### **Congratulations to the following new Level 2 umpires:**

- Tony Beard – Manly Warringah
- Katrina Bulmer – North Shore
- Rebekah Edwards – Cumberland Nepean
- Rhett Eldred – Cumberland Nepean
- Maryke Gyzen – North Shore
- Joe Kellermeier – Southern Districts
- Darren O’Neil – Penrith City
- Phil Wardley – Marcarthur
- Brianne Watt – Penrith City
- Lindy White – Central Coast



Back Row (L-R): Rebekah Edwards, Tony Beard, Rhett Eldred, Maryke Gyzen, Phil Wardley  
Front Row (L-R): Katrina Bulmer, Lindy White, Joe Kellermeier, Darren O’Neil, Brianne Watt.

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Congratulations to the following umpire appointed to Grand Finals:

**U15 Boy's State Championship – Macarthur (7) def. Campbelltown (0)**

- Plate: Colin Tutt (Cumberland Nepean)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Base: James Townsend (North Shore)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Base: Brooke Whitfield (Penrith City)

**U15 Girl's State Championship – Manly Warringah (4) def. Macarthur (2)**

- Plate: Mel Wallace (Cumberland Nepean)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Base: Narelle McIntosh (Hawkesbury)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Base: Craig Myers (Orange)

**U15 Girl's State Cup – Central Coast (4) def. Far North Coast (2)**

- Plate: Mark Carter (Macarthur)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Base: Tony Moncaster (Tamworth)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Base: Gai Cohen (Manly Warringah)