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Skill Share/Liaison Officers at National Championships by M. Toft

One can only be appreciative of the opportunities which have come the way of a few umpires with the Liaison Officer and Skill Share appointments at National Championships.

I recall when I was Liaison Officer at the Under 16 Girls Nationals in Brisbane in 1994 and then Bus Driver/Liaison Officer at the Under 16/Under 19 Boys Championships at South Brisbane in 1995.

Just to listen to the examiners, senior umpires and UIC's gave me an insight of what was expected at Nationals. In 1995 I was privileged to get a couple of games at the National Championships when Darrell Shephard broke his hand.

I recall that I was so nervous, but after the first call I realised that it was no different than doing a club game or even a State Championship game, except the stakes were higher.

I believe the umpires who go through the system doing a liaison duty or are given the opportunity to be a Skill Share umpire have less nerves when they are under assessment for their Level 5. That was the case for me, and I am a nerve freak.

Kevin Offer was the liaison officer in Melbourne this year and Geelong last year and as a new Level 4 he has aspirations of presenting as a Skill Share Umpire or a Level 5 candidate in the near future, mainly because he has a taste for Nationals and it's now in his blood.

The crew in Melbourne discussed the Skill Share concept with Norm McGaskill (our visiting New Zealand umpire) and Norm felt it was a great idea and was able to see the benefits of the initiative.

Of the successful candidates so far this year Andrew Chapman, Scott Rindfleish as well as Marg Lee have been Skill Share umpires in the past and the experience more than likely gave them an edge while under assessment. I am not able to comment on the other candidates regarding their Liaison/Skill Share duties. There may be more umpires who have had the experience.

I know that I appreciated my opportunities and I definitely recommend that umpires make themselves available for liaison duties at Nationals.

Also, when the opportunity arises as a Level 4, I again recommend that you put your name up as a Skill Share Umpire, I know you will enjoy the experience.



10 Strategies that will assist you becoming the best you can.

Continued from last month's first five.

6. Be learning and opportunity-oriented. See mistakes as essential to development.

Individuals with leadership will see opportunity, and often failures, as windows for development. The old adage "life sends us lessons" applies here. If we are open, we are drawn to opportunities to create something new. Self-leaders know there's often 'gold' in the unknown.

7. Be committed, through behaviours and actions, to the visions of the business, group or organization. Self-leaders have integrity, commitment and a desire to work for the good of the whole, not just for their own advancement.

8. Set goals and design actions to meet goals.

Self-check regularly and involve others in the success of your development plans. To get where you are going you need to have a clear road map.

Action plans and SMART goals (S=specific, M=measurable, A=achievable, R=realistic, T=time related), are essential, as is the involvement with others in your plans for success. When we involve others, our plans take on a new reality and investment.

9. Develop effective communication skills, verbal and written.

This is a critical quality for today's virtual work world. To lead yourself and/or others, one needs to have a high level of communication skills, the foundation of such skills being -----listening. When you understand others needs and wants you can effectively determine the next step.

The speed and virtuality of today's world requires heightened communication skills to create success.

10. Demonstrate interest in the development and success of those around you. Actively support others as a peer, mentor or leader.

Self-leaders have a willingness and commitment to share knowledge and expertise with others. They offer time and resources to help others achieve their goals. Their definition of success is broadened to include sharing in the development of success for others.

Margo's wrap of the International Squad's Clinic will feature in the February Issue of Blue's News On-Line.

Larter
the best
Medicine



There is al-
ways time
to laugh!

It could only happen in
America!!

Bizarre Laws

- Michigan takes their rats seriously. You can collect a 10 cent bounty on every rat you bring into a town office.
- It is legal for a robber to file a law suit, if he or she is injured in your house.
- Any person over the age of 12 may have a license for a handgun as long as he/she has not been convicted of a felony.
- It is against the law to serenade your girlfriend in Kalamazoo.
- In Pontiac, Michigan, it is illegal to drink soda in a bag of any kind.
- Michigan law prohibits chaining an alligator to a fire hydrant.
- Couples are banned from making love in an automobile unless the act takes place while the vehicle is parked on the couple's own property.
- It is illegal to paint sparrows to sell them as parakeets.

IN THE BLEACHERS

BY STEVE MOORE



Rules Challenge

Big Al's Tester

RULE 10 SECTION 1—A VERY HANDY RULE.

This is another of those situations not specifically covered in the Rule-book, and refers to a ruling in relation to a really fast pitcher who is consistently hitting and injuring batters.

While it is correct to state there is nothing in the Rulebook to cover this situation, umpires owe a "Duty of Care" to the players. The umpire can use Rule 10 Section 1 to make a ruling on matters not covered in the Rulebook.

It would be prudent to tactfully advise the coach in question that it is a pitcher's responsibility to pitch the ball through the strike zone - NOT the batter's box.

If it is apparent that the pitcher is deliberately pitching the ball at the batter, then use Rule 4 Sec12a and EJECT the pitcher from the game for un-sportsmanlike conduct.

On the other hand, if it is apparent that the pitcher has simply lost, or does not have control, then the coach should be requested to replace the pitcher with someone who does have some control. The batter's safety should be paramount.

The above may help add a little to your armoury in dealing with matters not covered directly by rules.

Wanted
Full time position.
Experienced print
journalist. Will relocate
to any State.
mtoft@ozemail.com.au

DATES TO REMEMBER

Feb 8-10	McCarthur Shootout—Sydney
Feb 22-24	Aust v Japan Test Series—Melbourne
March 10-16	Open Men's—Perth
March 29– Apr 1	Australia Cup—Sydney
April 13 –20	South Pacific Classic—Perth

The Littlest Fireman

The 26-year-old mother stared down at her son who was dying of terminal leukaemia. Although her heart was filled with sadness, she also had a strong feeling of determination. Like any parent she wanted her son to grow up and fulfil all his dreams. Now that was no longer possible. The leukaemia would see to that. But she still wanted her son's dreams to come true.

She took her son's hand and asked, "Billy, did you ever think about what you wanted to be once you grew up? Did you ever dream and wish what you would do with your life?"

"Mommy, I always wanted to be a fireman when I grew up." Mom smiled back and said, "Let's see if we can make your wish come true."

Later that day she went to her local fire department in Phoenix, Arizona, where she met Fireman Bob, who had a heart as big as Phoenix. She explained her son's final wish and asked if it might be possible to give her six year old son a ride around the block on a fire engine.

Fireman Bob said, "Look, we can do better than that. If you'll have your son ready at seven o'clock Wednesday morning, we'll make him an honorary fireman for the whole day. He can come down to the fire station, eat with us, go on all the fire calls, the whole nine yards! And if you'll give us his sizes, we'll get a real fire uniform for him, with a real fire hat - not a toy one - with the emblem of the Phoenix Fire Department on it, a yellow slicker like we wear and rubber boots. They're all manufactured right here in Phoenix, so we can get them fast."

Three days later Fireman Bob picked up Billy, dressed him in his fire uniform and escorted him from his hospital bed to the waiting hook and ladder truck. Billy got to sit on the back of the truck and help steer it back to the fire station. He was in heaven.

There were three fire calls in Phoenix that day and Billy got to go out on all three calls. He rode in the different fire engines, the paramedic's van, and even the fire chief's car. He was also videotaped for the local news program.

Having his dream come true, with all the love and attention that was lavished upon him, so deeply touched Billy that he lived three months longer than any doctor thought possible.

One night all of his vital signs began to drop dramatically and the head nurse, who believed in the hospice concept that no one should die alone, began to call the family members to the hospital. Then she remembered the day Billy had spent as a fireman, so she called the Fire Chief and asked if it would be possible to send a fireman in uniform to the hospital to be with Billy as he made his transition.

The chief replied, "We can do better than that. We'll be there in five minutes. Will you please do me a favour? When you hear the sirens screaming and see the lights flashing, will you announce over the PA system that there is not a fire? It's just the fire department coming to see one of its finest members one more time. And will you open the window to his room?"

About five minutes later a hook and ladder truck arrived at the hospital, extended its ladder up to Billy's third floor open window and 16 fire-fighters climbed up the ladder into Billy's room. With his mother's permission, they hugged him and held him and told him how much they loved him.

With his dying breath, Billy looked up at the fire chief and said, "Chief, am I really a fireman now?" Billy, you are, and the Head Chief, Jesus, is holding your hand." the chief said.

With those words, Billy smiled and said, "I know, He's been holding my hand all day, and the angels have been singing." He closed his eyes one last time.

Busy times for International Squad Members/ISF Umpires

The next couple of months will be a hectic time for our ISF Umpires and 2001 International Squad Umpires.

This year's Squad Members and the ISF accredited umpires will be asked to officiate at the Test series between Japan and Australia in Melbourne on February 22, 23 and 24, as well as the South Pacific Tournament in Perth, April 13 to 20.

The tournaments continue at the Olympic Stadium in Sydney for the Australia Cup which will be held March 29 to April 1. Umpires required for this tournament are to be advised at a later date due to the number of international teams attending.

Lets not forget those umpires who are also traveling to Perth for the Australian Open Men's Championships on March 10-16. Busy, busy busy!!!!



GET HIM: Visiting Wynnum Umpire, Darren Sibraa is in the thick of it as Devils' runner Michael Gorman is caught in a 'run down' play by Dodgers players at the Kearney's Spring Sports Complex in Toowoomba recently. Pic Courtesy of Toowoomba Chronicle Sports.

Letter to the Editor

An illusionary concept

Many umpires spend a great deal of their spare time umpiring the game they love—Softball. Some have an illusion that when you umpire at a higher grade of competition the players are better skilled, better tempered and highly competitive. In some areas that is not the case and in fact the temperament is much to be desired.

I am sure that an umpire has the same feelings as a player or a coach. Why? Because he/she is human, just like the player and the coach.

If an umpire makes a call it is likely that only 50 per cent of the crowd will agree with the call, the other 50 per cent will disagree (even if it is a correct call).

Umpires will get blamed for lots of things especially because a team lost the game. Certainly a call by an umpire may change the game but it is not the umpire's call which changes the course of the game, it is the mentality of the persons not wishing to accept the call in the first place.

When a coach sends a runner home and the runner is nailed at the plate I am sure that the umpire runs up to the coach and tells him how stupid he was for killing the runner, then stands there and laughs at him three innings later. Or, when a player lets a ball go through their legs and three runs score and they lose the game I am sure the umpire goes up to the player and tells him that it was his fault his team lost the game.

I don't think that happens. What does happen is that some players and coaches insist that the game was lost due to umpiring errors. That I am afraid is a load of rubbish. Use any little saying here which fits—Get a Life! Build a Bridge and get over it!

Australian Masters Championship Easter 2002

Keilor Park Association is hosting the Australian Masters Championships and all Umpires are welcome.

If you know of any umpires that would like to umpire at this event, perhaps you could suggest they contact Lindsay Whitehead in the first instance.

Lin_P_Whitehead@allegiance.com.au

Victorian Masters Championship June 2002

The Victorian Masters Championship will be held, at Keilor Park Association.

Umpires who would like to umpire at this event are welcome to contact Lindsay Whitehead.

Lin_P_Whitehead@allegiance.com.au

Welcome to the National Scene

Assessment for a higher accreditation can be a daunting task but once your through it, so many doors are opened to you.

Congratulations to Scott Rindfleish (NSW) and Nicole Crowe (NSW) for gaining their Level 5 accreditation in Adelaide at the Under 19 women's championships.

Andrew Chapman (NSW) attained his Level 5 at the Under 16 Boys in Sydney. This was a great effort considering "Chapo" has just returned to the diamond after a broken jaw.

Our Northern Territory's State Director has advanced to Level 4 following the Under 16 Boys in Sydney. Marg Lee has been working hard for the program for many years and a worthy recipient of her higher accreditation.

At the Under 16 Girls in Tasmania, Rod Dawson (SA) attained his Level 5 accreditation.

Congratulations to all the new Level 5 umpires and of course Marg who picked up her Level 4.

To the Skill Share umpires Ian Bunston and Ron Houison, well done. It is hoped that you enjoyed your experience and have stirred a hunger to present as a Level 5 candidate in the near future.

Level Six

Greg Baker (NSW) and Kevin Broomhall (VIC) fulfilled a dream when they were presented their Level 6 accreditation at the Under 19 Men's Championships in Melbourne in January.

Both umpires were appreciative of the other crew members in their assistance during the championship. The final night dinner was a great celebration following a week of examinations.

These two gentlemen are a part of the new wave of Level 6 umpires who will be coming through the National system. Well Done Greg, Well Done Kevin.

National Championship Game Allocations

Under 16 Girls—Hobart—S. Itzstein, N. Lawrance, F. Thomas
Under 16 Boys—Sydney—A. Rindfleish, D. Grove, T. Pascall
Under 19 Girls—Adelaide— D. Keogh, A. McAuliffe, P. Baker
Under 19 Men—Melbourne— D. McCauley, K. Franklin, A. Greggs
Open Women—Canberra—L. Evans, D. Culpitt, S. Itzstein

What a difference a few years makes!

By Andy Rindfleish

Following my article in December's BNOL, I'd like to relate the following two vastly different approaches to our game.

At the National Men's Championship in 2001 the teams readily agreed to play a strictly "home and away" competition. The double round lent itself to this arrangement, with each team being home or visitors in the first round and vice versa in the second.

The order the teams as printed in the published draw had to be reversed for one game only. Everybody was happy and the need to do 40-50 tosses was averted.

At the Under 16 Boys Nationals just completed in Sydney, a double round was again played. When the option of tossing for the first round and playing the reverse bench in the second round was offered, the teams howled the idea down.

I was staggered at this approach, so much different to that displayed by the men some nine months earlier, where the much more respectful approach was readily accepted.

However, I then witnessed a much further bigger show of disrespect for the game when the decisions to bat or field were announced. It was my belief that batting second was the best place to bat.

Would you believe that of the 42 tosses, the toss-winning teams chose to bat on only 11 occasions? Almost to a game, the stronger States chose to bat against what they expected to be the weaker States.

There are two possible solutions, as I see it. ASF can "legislate" and do away with tosses when a double round is played by having the teams play home in the first round and away in the second.

The best solution, one that would be really beneficial for our sport, is for the management of these National teams to develop an understanding of what is *really* important in playing our sport at this and any other level.

That is the game itself – let the respective abilities of the teams, on an even a footing as possible, decide the winner of games and of tournaments.

Lets not get distracted by harmful practices like batting first against weaker States and rubbing their noses into the dolerite. We need Tasmania and South Australia to keep sending teams to the Under 16 Boys.

They were not at the 19s!!

WORLD MASTERS GAMES Be a part of something grand Come umpire!

October 2002 will see a multitude of participants descend on Melbourne for the 2002 World Masters Games, covering 29 sports, of which, softball is expected to have the largest number of participants.

At this time, we have over 1400 expressions of interest in Softball, and are planning to play Fastpitch at 2 venues, Jells Park Waverley and Gilbert Park Knox, with the slowpitch component being played at Melbourne Softball Association (Fawkner Park).

Just imagine being part of a crew of umpires totally more than 120 Blues. The prospect of that is just mind blowing. The only down side to that is the UIC's job to allocated umpires to three different venues. That would be a nightmare in itself.

To make the job easier contact John Larter as soon as possible so your name can be added to his list. Teams are required to supply an umpire, but that does not mean you cannot just come along and officiate that week.

Despite any gossip to the contrary, there are no qualifications (other than age) to enter these Games, and we have not limited the number of teams that can enter.

Should you wish to obtain further information, then this can be found at www.2002worldmasters.org, and information specific to Softball can be found at worldmasters@softball.org.

At the 2002 World Masters site, you can enter your team, or as an individual, on line.

We are hoping to have up to 200 teams competing at the Games, so if there is anyone who wants to volunteer their services, as an umpire, statistician, grounds person, or anything else, then the Organising Committee contacts are -

Chair **John Larter** jonvon@ozemail.com.au

Waverley Representative **Leane Wilkinson** leawilkinson@hotmail.com

Knox Representative **Graeme Young** gmyoung@ozemail.com.au

Melbourne Representative **Elaine Duyvestyn** melbsoft@sx.com.au

Please do not hesitate to contact one of the above if you have any question relating to the 2002 World Masters Games.

The Travelin' Umpire - Matthew 'Matt' Gowty By Mark Toft

A number of States in this country all lay claim that Matt Gowty is an umpire from their State. Over the years Matt has served as an umpire and served in the Royal Australian Air Force in Queensland, Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales.

Well the long and the short of it is that Matt is a Victorian umpire (that's where he started his career many years ago), in fact it is 27 years ago this year.

In 1975 Matt started umpiring aged 12 at Jells Park, Waverley after spending Saturday afternoons there with his father watching him umpire. Matt's early mentors were his father Bill Gowty, Les McLean and Ian Snowball.

Matt attained his Level 1 accreditation (Waverley Badge) in 1978, Level 2 (WA Grade 3 Badge) in 1984, Level 4 (WA State Badge) in 1985, Level 5 at the Australian Under 16 Girls held in Knox, Victoria in 1986, Level 6 at the Australian Open Women's in Darwin in 1987 and was presented his Level 7 at the National Umpiring Meeting in Melbourne in 1998. (No there is no mistake. Matt bypassed Level 3)

When Matt takes the diamond in Perth this year at the Australian Open Men's championships he will have attended a staggering 30 National tournaments since 1986. One of those, (1998) was in Hobart where he was appointed as UIC for the first time at the National Level.

Matt has represented Australia at a number of international tournaments highlighted by three World Championships in 1997 (Junior Men's - Canada), 2000 (Men's - South Africa) and 2001 (Junior Men - Sydney).

Besides his on diamond work Matt has also been involved with administration.
1986-1987 - Deputy Director of Umpiring - Western Australia
1989-1994 - State Umpiring Committee - Queensland
1995 - 2001 - National Umpiring Staff
2001 - ISF Umpiring Manual Committee

Matt and his lovely wife Margaret (a Queensland girl) were married on May 2, 1992 and they have two children Adam (5) and Sarah (3).

Currently Matt and his family have returned to Newcastle due to one of those service postings. So for now, NSW can claim him as their umpire once again.

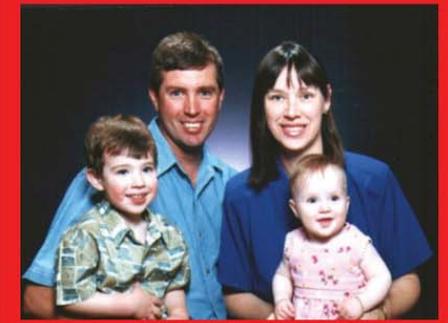
Matt also works hard as the NUC Webmaster and is responsible for getting this publication onto the net for all to read.

Great career Matt, it is hoped that you achieve all your goals. Good Luck.

Awards

1997 - ISF Accreditation
1997 - NSWSA Official of the Year
1997 - NSWUA "Andrew Rindfleisch"
Umpire of the Year

2000 - Victoria Softball Official of the Year
2000 - Australian Sports Medal



One on One with Matt Gowty

BNOL: Who has been the biggest influence in your umpiring career?

MATT: My Father, Bill Gowty. He started me off in Waverley in 1975.

BNOL: What has been the highlight/s of your umpiring career?

MATT: Being appointed the plate umpire in the preliminary final at the Junior Men World Championship in Sydney last year.

BNOL: What has been the best tournament in regards to fun and why?

MATT: I would have to say the 1990 Open Women's championship which incorporated the first International Elite Clinic. We had all sacrificed a lot to be there and we decided to have a lot of fun.

BNOL: Who's your favourite umpire/s and why?

MATT: There are three. Alan McAuliffe because he has such a great knowledge of the game and shares that knowledge so well. John McAuliffe because he told me what I needed to know about my umpiring at the right time and not just what I wanted to hear. Lyn Bishop because she has always set a wonderful example on how to treat other umpires regardless of level.

BNOL: What made you become an umpire?

MATT: I watched my Dad umpire every Saturday afternoon and I thought it looked easy. It was also good pocket money at the time.

BNOL: Has travel ever been a problem during your career?

MATT: Not really. The only travelling problem I had was when I lived in Townsville and I needed to do some better games before an international series, so I came to Brisbane for a weekend to do some club games.

BNOL: What are your short term goals?

MATT: To umpire my next game as well as I can.

BNOL: What are your long term goals? .

MATT: To Umpire at an Olympic Games. I would also like to retire before someone tells me I should. I would not like people to say, 'He used to be a good umpire!'

BNOL: Who is/are the best player/s you have umpired in your career?

MATT: Glenn Knight, Kris Kiefel, Jenny Halliday.

Umpires required for Tournaments

Victoria

Aust. Masters Fastpitch - Keilor Park - March 29 - April 1 - Contact John Larter - jonvon@ozemail.com.au

Dandenong Primary, Under 12, Under 16 and Under 19 Boys - March 30 - April 1 - Contact Henry - desachau@bigpond.com

Waverley Girls Tournament - 30 March to 1 April
Contact Lindsay - lwhitehead@allegiance.com.au

World Masters Games - October 5 -13
Contact John Larter - jonvon@ozemail.com.au

N.S.W.

New Levels - Well Done!!

Heather Randall - Level 4, Heather Bate - Level 2, Carol Jones - Level 2

Questions people ask????????????

If you throw a cat out of the car window, does it become kitty litter?

If you choke a Smurf, what colour does it turn?

Is it OK to use the AM radio after noon?

What do chickens think we taste like?

What do people in China call their good plates?

What do you call a male ladybug?

What hair colour do they put on the driver's license of a bald man?

When dog food is new and improved tasting, who tests it?

Why didn't Noah swat those two mosquitoes?

Why do they sterilize the needle for lethal injections?

Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of the bottle?

Why is it called tourist season if we can't shoot at them?

Why do you need a driver's license to buy liquor when you can't drink and drive?

Why isn't phonetic spelled the way it sounds?

Why are there flotation devices in the seats of planes instead of parachutes?

Why are cigarettes sold at gas stations where smoking is prohibited?

Have you ever imagined a world without hypothetical situations?

How does the guy who drives the snowplow get to work?

A man rushes home, bursting through the front door of his house yelling to his wife.

"Pack your bags honey, I just won the lottery! All \$10 million of it, Woooooohooo!"

"That's great, sweetie!", she replies, "Do I pack for the beach or for the mountains?"

"Who cares," he replies, "Just rack off!!!"

Qld Blues have a day out on the golf course

Queensland

A Two Man Ambrose golf day was held by the Queensland Umpires on December 16 with approximately 40 people teeing off in light showers.

After 18 slow holes and many strange things happening, such as Yvonne Kahler being hit by a wayward ball, (it was thought to be hit by Rick or Sandra Gill), Ron Trow throwing his club and jumping on Rick's ball (while he was not watching).

The day was won by the State Director, Tricia Bichel and her partner, Rick Gill.

The Bradmans was won by Ted Gross and Maxine Bullion (who incidentally played in a foursome with the winners (very strange)).

Frank Thomas won a ball for spending more time in the water than any one else. Darren Sibraa and Keith Hardman won the closest to the pin awards.

A great day was had by all and it was decided (which has not been passed by a committee meeting yet) that there has to be two golf days a year. One in the North and one in the South.

A very enjoyable BBQ was had at the conclusion of the day, cooked by Marg Gorman and Mrs Hicks (can't remember her first name, too many to drink).

Qld Umpires on Tour

The Queensland Umpiring Committee have appointed the following umpires to the following tournaments/tours this year.

Jamie Harries - Tour to New Zealand with the Queensland Under 18 Boys.

Steve Gutteridge - Tour to New Zealand with the Queensland Under 18 Girls.

Maxine Bullion - Tournament in Canberra -Under 15 Girls

Matthew Blake - Tournament in Canberra - Under 15 Boys

Ron Trow -Tournament at South Brisbane - Under 23 Women - February 19-21

Ian Bunston - Tournament in Sydney - Under 23 Men - February 19-21

National Umpires

Congratulations to all the Queensland umpires who have attended Nationals this year. Mark Toft (Melbourne, Under 19 Men), Frank Thomas and Ted Gross (Hobart, Under 16 Girls), Robyn Pittman (Sydney, Under 16 Boys), Yvonne Kahler (Adelaide, Under 19 Women) and Ian Bunston (Adelaide—Skill Share). Well done Frank Thomas who officiated on the final in Hobart. Good luck to Mark Toft who is a Level 6 candidate in Perth at the Open Men's, March 8-16.