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Happy Birthday Blues News On-Line

Well who would have believed it, one year on and still going strong. This is exciting news for umpires throughout Australia and those privileged overseas umpires who have access to BNOL.

BNOL has been one of the talking points in Softball Umpiring circles. Some controversial, some humorous, but hopefully it has been about different aspects of umpiring in an informative nature.

From the day, at the 2001 SDU forum, when Andrew Rindfleish said that Blue's News On-Line is one of the most positive things the Australian Umpiring Committee had done in the last 12 months I knew we were on a winner.

The first Blue's New On-line was published in July 2001 and the response from all sectors has been brilliant, especially the State bodies.

The State Directors, Neville Lawrence (SA), Denise Culpitt (ACT), Tricia Bichel (Sibraa) (QLD), Darrell Shepard (NSW), Peter Baker (WA), Margaret Lee (NT) and Lindsay Whitehead (VIC) have either personally contributed or organised a senior State Umpire to send in contributions. To this I am truly grateful.

It would be good if we could get a direct contact with the SDU of Tasmania and then the entire country would be covered each month.

The National Staff have come up with numerous articles of information, which has been vital to the success of the Magazine. Margo's Memo is one of the first things read; Laughter with Larter is a good break from the norm; Big Al's Tester is keenly read each week (especially by me); David Crowe's, Andrew Rindfleish's and Tricia Bichel's input, some serious, some humorous and has added spice to the Magazine. Of course this is all possible with the work Matthew Gowty puts in after I have sent it to him.

I take this opportunity to also thank some of the senior umpires in Australia who have given up their time to write or edit or co-write articles for BNOL. Leigh Evans (Victoria), Sue Itzstein (NSW) and Darren Sibraa (QLD) come to mind and none of these umpires are responsible for the input of the States, their input is something extra.

I am currently looking for approximate figures from each of the States in regards to distribution of BNOL and I hope to have that to the SDU meeting later in the year.

In regards to response, I have had some negative responses, but these are greatly outweighed by the numerous positive responses. It gives me a great feeling to receive words of encouragement from a wide range of umpires and other softball fanatics.

There are month's that some States just do not have anything on, but they are prepared to assist in anyway to get their flag flying in this truly National Magazine.

I believe this is a good concept, which has created interest in umpiring circles, and frankly that is what it was designed for and we are achieving that at this time.

Articles regarding umpires doing their job are what other umpires like to read about. In my opinion we need to SPREAD THE WORD of BNOL so we can be more creative and get a wider cross section of contributions.

Finally I would like to thank the National Umpiring Committee for entrusting me to spread the word about umpiring though this medium.

N.T. UMPS IN PARTY MODE!

A busy and hectic couple of weekends left the Darwin umps a bit flat so they decided to liven things up with a "New Orleans" party. All (except 3 including Ando who was in Sydney coaching) congregated at "mum's" for a BBQ and try out the spa in the cooler (20 C) nights.

A great time was had by all and if one ump couldn't find his glasses for a week well it didn't matter! The beads being worn by the female umps were earned in typical New Orleans fashion. All decided it was a good practice run for Arafura and for Debbie Grove coming up this week.

Katherine Softball competition successfully began on June 30 and Ian & Marg Lee & David Binder traveled down to officiate. This was very much appreciated by Katherine who are sending a team to the NT Championships on 3 August.

Debbie Grove is currently in Alice Springs running a clinic and will travel on to Darwin to officiate at the NT Championships and assess candidates.

Robyn Pellenat is flying in from Nhulunbuy for the championships and Cathie Allen is coming up from Alice Springs. So this is a great chance for all umps to get together and swap experiences.

Larterthe best
Medicine



There is always
time to laugh!

Keep your eye in your head

A man is dining in a fancy restaurant, and there is a gorgeous redhead sitting at the next table. He has been checking her out since he sat down, but lacks the nerve to talk with her.

Suddenly she sneezes, and her glass eye comes flying out and towards the man. He reflexively reaches out, grabs it out of the air, and hands it back.

"Oh, my, I am so sorry," the woman says as she pops her eye back in place.

"Let me buy your dinner to make it up to you." They enjoy a wonderful dinner together, and afterwards the theatre, followed by drinks.

They talk, they laugh, she shares her deepest dreams and he shares his.

She listens. After paying for everything, she asks him if he would like to come to her place for a nightcapand stay for breakfast. The next morning, she cooks a gourmet meal with all the trimmings.

The guy is amazed!! Everything had been SO incredible!!!!

"You know," he says, "you are the perfect woman. Are you this nice to every guy you meet?"

"No," she replies, "You just happened to catch my eye."

INVESTMENT ADVICE

If you had bought \$1000.00 worth of Nortel stock one year ago, it would now be worth \$49.00.

With Enron, you would have \$16.50 of the original \$1,000.00.

With Worldcom, you would have less than \$5.00 left.

If you had bought \$1,000.00 worth of Budweiser (the beer, not the stock) one year ago, drank all the beer, then turned in the cans for the 10 cent deposit, you would have \$214.00.

Based on the above, my current investment advice is to drink heavily and recycle.



Rules Challenge

Big Al's Tester

SORRY!!!!

Due to the act that I have lost the article Big Al sent me before he went away there will be no Big Al's Tester this month. This of course is purely my fault and I am in the wrong. See I can admit when I am wrong, regardless what other people have said. Regards Tofty

Oouch!!!!

Gabe Babineau was hit in the face last night while umpiring at the 10th ISF Women's World Championship being held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada from July 26 to August 4, 2002.

He was struck by an on-deck batter that was taking a full swing while making changes during the game. This is living proof that we all must be careful when around on-deck batters.

I'm not sure who hit him, but from the picture it would appear it may have been Lisa Fernandez. There is video of the incident that will appear one day once Gabe is well and in a good mood.

Gabe is mentally tough and wanted to continue umpiring, but the supervisors figured he should get some medical attention. It took at least 16 stitches to stop the leaks :-)

Anyway, Gabe reports he is feeling much better now and was back on the diamond umpiring today.

One tough, lucky French-Canadian, eh?

CANADA'S OWN BAT-MAN



Why do umpires cop abuse? By Mark Toft

The protection of umpires has been an on going issue for many years in many sports, but who really is protecting the officials on and off the diamonds?

Someone told me the other day that there are a small band of players who feel they have the right to abuse umpires because of who they are. For example a State or Australian representative player or squad member. I find that hard to believe as I have found that these players are more tolerate of decisions made by umpires and in fact I have a good report with most State and Australian representative in the games I officiate.

But if this is true, it must be happening to our non-National umpires who are learning the game as they are coming through the ranks. This is where we need to protect our umpires and ensure the District Associations are aware of its responsibility in regards to abuse of umpires.

I understand that we do not have take any abuse from any players, coach or spectator and we have the option of dismissing them from the game or arena, but only as the last resort.

I see it as a two-way street. In the first instance I have learnt over many years that game management is the dominate part of the game which umpires need to do a lot of work. If you have used every aspect of game management and it does not curb the abuse well ejection is the only avenue left.

Ejection of a player or a coach could dramatically change the course of the game and of course we are left open for further abuse off the diamond. This is where the administrators need to be on top of the situation and protect the umpires' decision.

But let's look at it in a different view. Yes umpires do not need to be abused by anyone, but why are these people abusing us? Is it because we make the wrong decision or is it that they got out of bed on a Saturday and said I am going to abuse whichever umpire is doing my game today?

Players and coaches put a lot of time into training and the playing of the game week in, week out, but do umpires do the same training, do we do any training? Do we practice to be that little bit better on our next game, generally no we don't!

I don't mean read a rule book once a week or go for a run to get fitter, I mean actually train in the aspects of the game in which we need to improve.

This can go back to our last game and self evaluate that before going any further in preparation for the next game.

Look I am not saying that I am the perfect umpire, far from it. What I am saying is that I have to constantly work on my game and raise the standards of my game.

There seems to be and is a difference between doing a Saturday afternoon club game and umpiring the same players at a National Championship. I don't think so.

For example, our strike zone (a very grey area of the game)

I have heard of an umpire saying to players, (in defense of their strike zone) that it changes from competition to competition. Let's say that I umpire a Under 19 Youth at my home Association in Toowoomba, then umpire him again at the State Championships and then at Nationals and then again at a qualifying game for a World Championships. If I change my strike zone for each time this player comes up to bat at different levels of competition, he is not going to have any idea where the strike zone is and he would probably think very seriously of abusing me and rightly so.

What we need is consistency across the board. I don't mean Level 8 umpires should umpire the same as Level 1 umpires or vice versa, that's ridiculous I mean we need to teach and use our basics for what they are..... Basics.

Strike zones don't change, the set up should be the same for the club game in Toowoomba as it is at the Nationals in Perth. You will be surprised the respect you get from players when you are consistent not only in a game, but from championship to championship.

Hey, I have had my fair share of abuse over the years, some very much bought upon myself and yes I have ejected many a player or coach. I have spent a lot of time learning about game management and understanding of the game more.

I now have a good friend who is a coach and when I first came on the scene in Brisbane I must have ejected him three or four times. We spoke the other day and I must admit that his ejection was warranted, but the real the problem on the games were me. The big problem was when leaving those games I did not analyse what had happened and kept doing the same things wrong.

I was officiating on an Under 19 game which involved a team from the United States and a coach was ejected. Following that game the umpires, the State Director and the umpire in charge of the tournament sat down and discussed the issue, especially the issues which led up to the ejection.

This was a beneficial session and actually cleared up a lot of things and taught the umpires on the game the benefits of assessment and self assessment. I would still have ejected the coach, but it may have been handled a little different given a second chance. The problem we don't always have that second chance do we.

We need to work just as hard as the players when preparing for game!



WORLD MASTERS GAMES UPDATE



October 5 is rapidly approaching, and that is the date of the commencement of the Melbourne 2002 World Masters Games.

At present, there are over 10,000 participants registered for the Games, and, with entries closing of 5 August, we expect to see the number of participants reach a staggering 20,000!

Of the 29 sports involved in the Games, softball is leading the way, with over 100 teams, and 1400 participants, meaning that the organising committee will be working very hard to arrange the draw, allocate umpires, and ensure that all runs smoothly.

On the subject of umpires, it has been disappointing to find a number of teams entering without an umpire, as this just makes it more difficult for the organising committee. It may also make it difficult for teams, as those without an umpire will be rostered to officiate, and it may well be in the time slot that the team is playing.

The Rules for the Games are now on our website, <http://worldmasters.softball.org>, for anyone who wants to view them before arriving in Melbourne.

We will have the draw on the site as soon as we can, and would expect that this would be around the end of August.

It promises to be an exciting week of competition, and we are certain that there will be some very good ball played during this time.

We are equally certain that there will be some extremely good partying taking place, probably every day and night, but isn't that what Masters do? Play hard, on and off the park!

We are deeply indebted to Wilson Sporting Goods, who will supply the balls to be used in this event – they will be Wilson Optic Yellows, and we are sure that all players will enjoy using this equipment

There will be available at the venues, equipment from our sponsor, Ausport, who are able to supply almost everything that a competitor could want – in fact, I suspect they can actually supply everything!

We are looking forward to welcoming our many visitors to Melbourne, and we know that a good time will be had by all.

Victorian Umpiring Committee

The Victorian Umpire Committee has seen a number of changes over recent months with Kerry Franklin being appointed as the new Director of Umpiring for Victoria. Lin Whitehead has held the position for the last two years and has worked tirelessly to continue on with the good work of the previous Director, (John Larter having held the position for 7 years prior.)

The V.U.C. would like to thank Lin for all the hard work and dedication he has given to the position in the last two years and I am glad to say that we will not be losing his knowledge and experience as he has agreed to continue his work with the V.U.C. in another role.

With the number of Umpires in Victoria declining over recent years, the V.U.C. is looking to review all areas of administration and Umpire development.

It is no secret that Kerry places a great deal of emphasis on training and development, having spent most of her time on the V.U.C. as the training coordinator and in the review of Umpire Training Manuals within the State.

The V.U.C. over the next two years will be looking to focus on the following initiatives:

- Increased communication with Affiliated Associations through individual Umpire Coordinators.

- Increased support in the training of Umpires at the entry level (i.e. within the Associations.)

- Increased number of Umpire training courses at all levels. (This includes both group training and on an individual basis.

- The implementation of an "Introduction to Umpiring" Instructors Manual to be targeted at Association Level for use by Umpire Administrators. (Includes training in the use of the manual.)

- The re-introduction of Regional based V.U.C. training courses, (including an increased presence in Country Areas.)

- The re-introduction of the Junior Umpire Development Program.

While it is acknowledged that it will be difficult, it is hoped that the increased support and training initiatives will provide Associations with the type of assistance required to build Umpire numbers and get Umpiring in Victoria moving in the right direction.

Letters to the Editor

Hi Everyone,

I just wanted to fill you in with the latest regarding Macarthur Softball, as well as thanking you for your support.

The letters that you wrote were great and from all reports when coupled with the 120 members who couldn't even fit into the Council Chambers, played a large and influencing role in the final decision of the council.

The council has agreed to search for a solution and while it will be a difficult road to complete the process including liability among other things everyone involved in MDSA and Camden are relieved that part of the solution will be that the grounds will stay and Softball at all levels will continue.

I have included a story that is posted on the MDSA website and it explains in better detail what happened on Monday night.

Once again, thanks for answering the call for help as well as passing the messages on to others in your address book. I know how happy I was when many of you copied me into your emails and from what I hear it amazed many MDSA members and other locals just important Softball is to us all and how highly regarded MDSA is.

Thank you again and I hope that no one else has to face similar issues but if you do please don't hesitate to call upon myself of Macarthur Softball to give you a hand. Thanks again and I will see many of you when I get home in a few weeks.

Regards

Mark Long

PS: Unfortunately I don't have everyone's email address so please feel free to pass this onto anyone you may think should see this. Thanks

COPY OF STORY ON WWW.MACARTHUR.SOFTBALL.ORG.AU

22/8/02

People power and a pure passion for softball has seen Camden Council agree to search for a solution in the complex issue relating to the home of Macarthur Softball.

The Associations efforts have been supported by so many people and Softball will survive.

MDSA will have their first meeting on Monday next week to sort through a number of complex issues surrounding the future of the facility.

While it is acknowledged that the process will not be easy many thanks should be noted for everyone that helped.

Thanks are also extended to the Mayor and other Councillors who noted the great support from around the world and locally for the sport.

Their efforts made a difference.

The local members who spoke to Councillors by phone really made an impact on all councillors.

Over 120 members attended the Council. So many in fact that they could not all fit into the Council chambers.

The Councillors were impressed with the social effect softball is having on building a better community.

Once again thank you for your helped and ensuring that Macarthur Softball will continue to provide great opportunities in this game for local players as well as the many visiting guests from around NSW, Australia and the World.

So, you want to be an umpire!

Following is an extract reproduced from the Active Australia website on officiating in Australia.

While softball is not a sport that currently provides opportunities to officiate full-time, the extract does provide some insight into the requirements for a sports official.

Is a career in officiating for you?

Sports Officials assists athletes in developing to their full potential. They are responsible for training athletes in a sport by analysing their performances, instructing in relevant skills, and by providing encouragement. Officiating can be a rewarding but intimidating experience. Consider why other people pursue a career in officiating:

- To achieve success in a chosen field
- To belong to a group
- To gain friends
- To maintain involvement in their sport
- To gain information, knowledge and skills
- To enhance fitness levels
- To seek extra income

Be aware of

- Difficult clients (athletes, coaches, administrators)
- Lack of job security
- Sometimes a heavy schedule and long hours
- Pressure to be consistent and professional in adverse situations

Sports Official – Job Description

Sports Officials facilitate individuals and teams during the course of a game or competition to ensure it is safe and played within the spirit of the rules. Sports officials usually specialise in a particular sport. The degree of personal proficiency required to officiate a sport varies widely.

Sports officials may perform the following tasks:

- Demonstrate knowledge and application of the rules for the sport
- Write reports and prepare other documents requirement for the management of particular events
- Settle conflicts and disputes between players, coaches and adminis-

trators

- Ensure the playing area is safe and free of hazards for competitors
- Provide evidence at tribunals and other dispute hearings
- Evaluate and monitor the performances of other officials
- Liaise with and advise other event management staff to ensure the smooth conduct of the event
- Communication difficult and unpopular decisions to players, coaches and administrators
- Carry out an after-competition analysis of the competition

Personal requirements:

- Possess a thorough understanding of your sport
- Well-developed communication and interpersonal skills
- Knowledge of the rules and the spirit in which they are applied
- Enthusiastic, confident, disciplined and dedicated
- Flexible and innovative when dealing with others
- Must be prepared to travel and to work long hours, including evenings and weekends
- Take pride in ones personal presentation

Further information is available at the following site: <http://www.officiatingaus.org/fgforums.htm>

HELP

The Sutherland Mens Team attending the World Masters in Melbourne this coming October needs an umpire.

They are offering free transport by car, accommodation and a daily allowance to cover meals and other expenses.

If you are interested in umpiring at this fantastic tournament, or you know someone that is, please get back to me as soon as you can. Unfortunately it will have to be first in first served so think fast.

Kindest regards

Scott Rindfleish

New On Diamond Jackets

- Each Jacket costs \$85 which includes GST
- Quilted lining for each jacket is \$12 extra (incl GST) per jacket – please specify on the order form the number of quilted jackets you want in which size
- Available in Small, Medium and Large Sizes
- Our collective minimum order quantity is 10 jackets. If we don't reach that minimum a 15% surcharge will apply to your order. We will notify you if this is the case and will require the extra payment before any orders are processed.

Qty x \$85 ea Qty x \$12 quilted Total

Jacket 1 \$

Jacket 2 \$

All cheques or money orders are to be made out to: NSW SUA

Send to Fax: (02) 9555 7070 or Post to: 55 Grove St, Birchgrove NSW 2041

Name:.....

Address:.....

..... Post Code:.....

Phone Number:(.....)..... Mobile.....

JACKET 1 – On Diamond Please list your size here:

Would you like quilting? Y / N

Qty?

JACKET 2 – Button style Please list your size here:

Would you like quilting? Y / N

Qty?

There is a picture of the new jackets but I can not download for BNOL, I will have that available on the National Umpiring Website soon. nuc.softball.org.au

Apology

With the more senior members of the umpiring fraternity out of the country this Birthday Edition has been a bit of a rush.

The editor apologises if there are items of interest which have not made this edition, but ensures that those items will be given the utmost priority in the August edition.

The editor also thanks those who completed the task to be published in this edition.

Hope to see you all on diamond in the very near future and good calling.

Pre and Post Game discussions

Why do we have a pre and post game discussion? Some umpires believe it to be a waste of time, some actually benefit from it.

It is so important that umpires (especially those who have not worked together before) have a pre-game discussion so they can work out the fundamental movements on the diamond which lie ahead in the game as each person has their own idiosyncrasies. Many times umpires that have not worked together before hardly even know their names, let alone what their movements will be.

The old saying "Familiarity breeds contempt" is very true. Don't assume your partners are on their game. Run through the various responsibilities each and every game to ensure that every member of the crew is switched on for the game.

Most pre-game discussions should include:

- Outfield responsibilities of the base umpires (3 or 4 umpire system) or the inside/outside theory in a 2-umpire system.
- Rotation and reverse rotation and responsibilities
- Using each others names.
- Who will call leaving early (2 umpire system)
- Who will call play back at 1st base with runner at 1st and 2nd or 3rd. (2 umpire system)
- Hit by pitched or batted ball situations.
- Tag up responsibilities
- Fly ball to right field, play at 1st base who's call? (3 or 4 umpire system)
- Timing of crew signals
- Difficult situations. Possible blocked ball situations, holes in fence etc.

Post-game discussions should take in

- Rotation problems
- Rule interpretations
- Any difficulties that you may have experienced during the game.
- Game control situations.

It is important that during these discussions, you have an open mind and contribute with truthful discussion, it is not an attack on your crew or on yourself. It is about "Keizan" (continual improvement). Umpires who practice these methods, will improve not only their own game, but also the game of other members of the crew, which ultimately improves our game.

This article is not to be confused with "the pre game meeting" held at the plate at the commencement of the game with coach's.