

# Blue's News On-Line

Official Australian Softball Umpire's Magazine

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

July Edition 7 of 2005

## Happy 5th Birthday Blue's News On-Line (BNOL)

This month's edition marks the beginning of the fifth year of this publication. Without talking to every umpire in Australia it is difficult to know how many Blues read BNOL.

Of course there are many ways umpires can get a copy of Australian Umpire's Magazine. They can go directly to the website at [nuc.softball.org.au](http://nuc.softball.org.au) and read it on-line, or they can download it and read it at their leisure or get a friend to download it and send them a hard copy.

Whatever way you look at it, it is possible to have each and every umpire from Level 0 to Level 8 in Australia to catch up with all the news in the umpiring arena with Blue's News On-Line.

As the editor of BNOL I enjoy the experience of putting together the many thoughts and comments which I receive each month. But I am sure there are more stories out there to be told and pictures to be taken.

Get those articles in to me by the 15th of each month for the following issue.

Just remember, BNOL is written by umpires for umpires.

Be a part of it!

Regards

Mark Toft (Editor)



P.S. Contributions for the August edition close on August 15.

"The more intensely we feel about an idea or a goal, the more assuredly the idea, buried deep in our subconscious, will direct us along the path to its fulfillment. "

- Earl Nightingale

## Message from the National Director of Umpiring

From Andrew Rindfleish

What a bummer!! Softball is out of the London 2012 Olympic Games. I saw a report that baseball and softball, minor sports at best in the UK, would cost the London organisers 50 million, if included in the 2012 program. This being the case, one can understand the decision to exclude both sports. Baseball did not do their, and perhaps our, chances by not having the best players in the world compete. Being an Olympic sport has certainly increased the opportunities for softball umpires, not the fortunate few to be appointed to the Olympic competitions, but generally with many international and higher level domestic competitions.

Speaking of international competitors three out of our four international umpires have completed their tours of duty. Sue Itzstein was at the four national event in San Diego, Leigh Evans at the Under 19 Men's Worlds at Prince Edward Island, Canada, and Di Waller at the Canada Cup. At the U19 Worlds, Leigh was appointed to the plate on both the finals games where Australia did not compete. Well done, Leigh. I'm sure he was as pleased if not more so, not to be on the final, but rather witness the Aussie Colts win the World Championship for the third consecutive time. I'm sure umpires across the country join me in wishing Julie Richardson well as she heads to Japan for the Japan Cup with the Aussie Spirit.

The national Umpire program has had the format and structure of the documentation for the registration of umpires with the National Officials Accreditation Scheme (NOAS) of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) for some time now, thanks to the work spearheaded by Tricia Sibraa. We have begun the registration of our active umpires this year and all those who attended Nationals earlier this year have registered. Some States have also been very active in the registration of their current umpires. Some other States need to focus on this and take all opportunities they have to get their umpires registered.

We have undertaken to have our Basic, Intermediate and Advanced manuals to the ASC by the end of August for their formal approval of our training and certification process. A number of individuals have "volunteered", or been volunteered by their State Directors. These individuals, along with the National Committee and staff members will be working toward this goal over the coming weeks. Once the ASC have given us the seal of approval the manuals will then be available to all and sundry. In the mean time, if States are desperate for clinic material, Tricia has the current version of the basic Manual. NSW also have a Basic Manual they have used for clinics in recent months. Victoria have the most recent Intermediate Manual. Please contact the relevant State Directors if you need material in the next month or two.

## Rules with Big AI (Alan McAuliffe) (National Rules Interpreter)



### INTERFERENCE WITH THE CATCHER:

#### A. Reason for the rule: Protection of the defence.

Batter interference with the catcher probably occurs more often than it is called. The lower the level of play, the more often it occurs. The catcher is entitled by the rules to an unhindered opportunity to throw out runners attempting to steal. The batter must not be permitted to 'sabotage' the duel between the runner's "skill at reading pitcher's delivery point and his speed" and the catcher's "quick release and strength of arm".

**B. When it is interference:** The batter cannot step across the plate or out of his box without risking the interference call. Intent is also irrelevant.

**Play:** B2's mighty swing generates such momentum that he is carried out of the batter's box; where he accidentally interferes with F2's attempted throw on R1's steal of second. The umpire is absolutely certain B2 did not intend to interfere.

**Ruling:** The umpire is also absolutely certain that B2 has interfered and that somebody is going to be penalised.

It's tougher when the "Interference" is by a right-handed batter during a steal of third; the batter can't evaporate. Many modern batters duck when the catcher comes out of his crouch to throw. Others simply stand there. My advice: If the batter moves forward or backward in the same direction as the catcher's step toward third, call interference if contact occurs. Otherwise, let the base umpire struggle with the close call down at the base.

**C. When it's not interference:** The batter is not called for interference when the force of his follow through carries his bat all the way around into the catcher's mitt, causing F2 to drop the ball. The batter is not out; simply, time is called and runners must remain on or return to their original bases. However, here's an interesting game situation:

**Play:** With R1 at first and two outs, the count is full when B2 swings and misses for strike three. His back swing knocks the ball free.

**Ruling:** The umpire will rule the ball dead, thus depriving B2 of the chance to try for first. So, B2 is out after all. (Just pray that this doesn't happen to you)!

**D. Plays on the bases: Who's out?** As in any interference situation, the player who interferes is the player declared out. So, whenever B1 hinders F2's throw to any *base*, the *batter* is always out. No outs, one out, two outs, it mat-

ters not. If the "interference" is penalised, B1 is always out and runners return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch. One exception exists, but the pertinent question is not *how many* are out but *who*? If the batter strikes out and then interferes with the catcher, the runner closest to home at the time of the interference is out, as it is not possible to call a player, who has already been declared out, out a second time. In truth, that eventuality is penalised not by the batter interference edict, but by the rule governing interference by a *retired* batter or runner.

**E. Plays at the plate: Who's out?** An important point to remember: Once the pitch passes the plate, the batter has no legal right to remain in the batter's box. On a steal, of course, he can't disappear. But batter interference often occurs after a passed ball or wild pitch has enticed the runner at third to try to score. In that instance, the batter has plenty of time to vacate the area. If by remaining at the plate, the batter interferes even inadvertently with the pitcher covering, you will charge B1 with interference.

Currently, when the batter interferes with a play at the plate, the batter is out and the runner is returned to third. It all seems so easy, doesn't it? But one other possibility merits comment. Too many umpires become so engrossed in the looming play at home, especially on an attempted steal on the catcher's return to the pitcher, that they forget their other responsibilities. In effect they prepare for the tough play but forget the easy one: Calling the pitch a ball or strike. Call (and, if appropriate, signal) the pitch first ~ only then should you worry about safe or out or, relevant to the rule, interference by the batter.

### Letter to the Editor

Background:

Neville Lawrance and Margo Koskelainen are currently in Palau.

Mark,

Neville has worked with the Palaun umpires and we are evaluating them when we can.

Nobody, especially Alan, will be surprised to learn that we have been rained out for two days now. The satellite images are still not pretty and not much hope is held that we can finish the competition in the normal way.

We are not the only outdoor sport that is effected and everyone is sick of sitting around the hotel. It is no fun sightseeing in the rain. One thing though, the rain is warm.

More when we get back.

Margo Koskelainen

# 2005 International Sports Invitational (USA)

## Short but Oh Soooo Sweet

It all started with a phone call from Andrew Rindfleish in February 2005 to see if I would like to umpire at the PAC Rim tournament in June 2005 in Seattle which was met with a resounding yes before even checking to see if I was able to get time off work. It all looked so promising 9 Olympic events and 9 Countries from the rim of the Pacific.



How quickly things change. The Seattle organizing committee decided they did not have the funds to run the tournament and it was cancelled – just like that dreams and hopes dashed.

A few sports had pre sold a number of tickets so the US Olympic Committee went into action and these sports were relocated to the US training centre in Chula Vista about 20 minutes south of San Diego near the Mexican Border.

After a few days of R and R in LA (which I must say was very interesting) I flew to San Diego on Monday June 6<sup>th</sup> however I was left stranded at the Airport. After a couple of hours I met up with Sharon Bell who was flying into join up with the team, we had just worked out how we were going to get to Chula Vista when our driver finally caught up us. It doesn't really matter what Country you are in 3 hours in any Airport is far too many.

My first international overseas and I thought this was not off to a good start. We finally got down to Chula Vista and checked into our Accommodation which was very nice and I was in a double room by myself which is a luxury all umpire's can relate to. Tuesday and Wednesday I was left to my own devices so I spent the day by myself on Tuesday doing the exciting stuff looking around Chula Vista and doing laundry.

Wednesday I spent at training with the team and then doing some shopping at the factory outlets right on the Mexican Border that really is an experience, the border is a huge black fence with barb wire on the top and there is a massive

Mexican Flag just on the other side. We really do not know what traffic is like, that day there were 21 lanes open coming back into the US from Mexico and there was still an hour's delay. I could not believe the prices in the US for clothes and everything really. One could really go crazy if they had the money.

After attending the Technical Meeting on Wednesday Afternoon all teams were invited to watch the San Diego Padres play the Cleveland Indians and experience not to be missed as we were taken onto the field of play and introduced to the crowd. It was a shame that the Padres lost that game as the atmosphere went out of the stadium.



Games finally got under way on Thursday and as there were only two games per day and six umpires you only got to umpire one game per day so not very taxing. I was pleased that I was on the first game so I could get rid of the nerves early on. Just to make everyone a little bit jealous there are no lights at the Olympic Training Venue so there were no night games and with only one day that the games started before lunch we were able to test the local cuisine, which I must say put a new flavour on Mexican Food.

While we have always had communal change rooms I was very surprised at the lack of discreet in the umpire's room by some of the umpires and learnt very early that when you heard getting naked you kept your head down.

With the tournament only running for four days it seemed to be over before it even started however it is the most enjoyable and exciting time I have had and it pointed out that we are a unique group of people and the same wherever we are in the world.

We did not fly out of San Diego until the evening of Monday June 13<sup>th</sup> so a couple of us spent the day at the infamous San Diego Zoo. I might be a bit biased as they tell me it is the best in the world however I think Taronga Zoo is far better.

I can honestly say I have added 6 more friends to my umpiring family and an experience I am so glad I had.

Sue Itzstein



## Do you know?

Reference: Appointment to the 2006 Nationals.

### Traveling Dress Code

The dress standard for traveling to and from Nationals, and for functions at nationals has been modified in two ways

The taupe umpires' jacket is to be now used exclusively. The sky blue jacket is no longer acceptable for National Championship use.

The white off-diamond polo shirt is to be worn. Plain white shirts and blouses, with or without ties/scarves are no longer to be worn.

### The Levy

The umpires' levy to attend National Championships has been increased by Softball Australia to \$220.00, inclusive of GST. Ongoing, the levy will increase on an annual amount inline with cost of living adjustments.

### Code of Ethics

All umpires who nominate for nationals will have submitted their NOAS application form. In signing these application forms, the individual umpire has agreed to abide by the Umpires' Code of Ethics. There is no need to have umpires who are applying for nationals to sign an additional Code of Ethics.

### Softball Australia Agreement

This is the Softball Australia agreement that all athletes have to complete and sign prior to Nationals each year. Umpires are also required to sign the same agreement. State Directors should ensure all their respective State umpires sign this document. .

### Passport Photographs

Please have digital passport photographs of all umpires new to Nationals taken and sent to Bruce McCahon at [bmccahon@bigpond.net.au](mailto:bmccahon@bigpond.net.au) . This will mostly mean new skill share umpires and Level 5 candidates. New photos of non-first-timers should also be emailed to Bruce.

**Andrew Rindfleish**

National Umpire in Chief  
Softball Australia

## Power Point updated

The 3-umpire system power point show has been updated with a couple of changes version 3.1.

Slide 15 had plate umpire coming home with U1 coming home as well on some versions of power point. Animation no quite right.

Slide 19 had umpire one at second with runners on 3rd only.

Training umpires should update the changes.

Leigh Evans  
National Staff

## Cathie Allen takes over as Northern Territory SDU

Cathie Allen has recently just been appointed as Softball Northern Territory's Umpiring Director.

Cathie hails from Alice Springs and is a Level 5 umpire, having gained her Level 5 at the Under 16 Girls in Perth in 2004.

Cathie's contact details are:

[cathie.allen@nt.gov.au](mailto:cathie.allen@nt.gov.au)  
Phone 08 8951 7956 (Work) or 0403 0255 81 (Mobile)

We take this opportunity to congratulate Cathie as she takes on this challenging role.

## Darren Sibraa reappointed

Queensland State Director of Umpiring Darren Sibraa has recently been re-appointed by the Softball Queensland.

Darren, a very busy man, has not been able to settle in to his third term at the top. With business as usual Queensland have just completed it's annual umpiring forum.

A report from the issues raised at the State Forum will be published in the August edition of BNOL.

The Queensland umpiring committee will not be ratified for another two weeks and those details will be available in the next edition.

## 10th Australian Masters Games

7th - 16th October 2005 (Adelaide)

# UMPIRES WANTED

Umpires are required for the Australian Masters games. Any accreditation level is welcome to nominate.

Venue: Barrett Reserve WEST BEACH SA

There are several interstate teams asking if anyone would be interested to nominate as their registered umpire. If you are interested please contact either Neville Lawrance (08 -8263 6086 a/h) or Raelene Robinson (08-8298 5914 a/h) .

Come and enjoy the fun.

Please circulate this message to anyone who may be interested in umpiring

For more information  
<http://www.australianmastersgames.com/index.cgi>

## National Umpiring Conference

National Umpiring Staff and State Directors of Umpiring will meet to discuss the Umpiring Program later this month.

This year the meeting will be held in Sydney on August 25 and 26.

With plenty of issues to discuss a brief summary will be available for the next edition of BNOL.

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

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## 2005 Awards of Excellence Dinner

Saturday, 22 October, 2005, 7.00pm Rydges Hotel, Capital Hill, Canberra  
\$60.00 per person (Table of 10 \$580) Includes 3 course meal — Drinks at bar prices

Dress - Lounge Suit

Contact Softball Australia Ph. (03) 9890 8200 Fax. (03) 9890 8295  
Email: [shane.cantelmi@softball.org.au](mailto:shane.cantelmi@softball.org.au)

Australian Softball Administrator of the Year  
Australian Softball Statistician of the Year  
Australian Young Female Softballer of the Year  
Australian Young Male Softballer of the Year  
'IT in Softball' Award  
Australian Softball 'Spirit' Award  
**Viv Triplett Award - Australian Softball Umpire of the Year**  
Australian Softball Coach of the Year

## Committees formed

The following committees have been established, from those who volunteered, to help finalise the documentation for our three-tiered training program.

To those on the committees, I know many of you have been very active at the State level. I thank you very much for agreeing to help as we consolidate our efforts for the national good.

The efforts will be managed by Tricia Sibraa, who has been instrumental in the efforts so far to have our programs accredited by the Australian Sports Commission. Tricia will liaise directly with the other two chair-persons to get things rolling.

**Basic** - Scott Rindfleish (chair), Raelene Robinson, Brett Atkinson

**Intermediate** - Kevin Broomhall (chair), Mark Toft, Martin Turnbull

**Advanced** - Tricia Sibraa (chair), Debbie Grove, Yvonne Kahler (Part time, as available – Darren Sibraa)

## Andrew Rindfleish

National Umpire in Chief  
Softball Australia