

Blue 's News On-Line

The Official Australian Softball Umpire 's Magazine

Contributions to - mtoft@ozemail.com.au

Editor - Mark Toft

Umpiring Website - www.softball.umpiring.org.au

July/August Edition 4/2007

Life Outside Softball

Contrary to popular (family) belief it is possible to have a life outside of softball. It is only occasionally though that any of us come into contact with each other through our employment or business careers.

Recently Debbie Grove was looking for a professional entertainer to perform at her local Gannawarra Shire "Business Excellence Awards" gala dinner and presentation evening.

She of course thought of another softball identity Adam Rindfleish a member of the Australian Men's squad. Adam with over 10 years experience performs his own magic and comedy show around Australia and overseas using the stage name "Adam Dean". Debbie had seen Adam perform a number of times before and new he would fit the bill.

The awards were held in Kerang on the night of Friday the 1st June with over 250 local business people and sponsors in attendance.

Debbie's business "Deblu's" was a finalist in the category for "Best Retail Business" employing less than five.

This was the first category announced for the evening and when the presenter said "and the winner is" it was Deblu's.

Debbie was justifiably pleased to receive the award which recognizes excellence in business.

After half the awards had been presented it was time for the night's entertainment. In the past a motivational speaker had been used but the committee decided this year to go for an "entertainer".

Well entertain Adam surely did. He had the audience changing continuously from fits of laughter to "how did he do that".

Adam's show combines magic and Illusion with comedy quite often at the expense of the audience. Just ask the poor person who had their mobile phone ring during the performance or the guy that decided he could not wait to go to the loo.

Part of Adam's act requires the use of a number of local participants. Adam asked Debbie to recommend a couple of "out there" ladies to help him.

Well one of them had a little too much to drink and the other decided to be a bit too much "out there" and tried to take over the act. To Adam's credit he handled them extremely well but was heard to quip "my fees just doubled now Deb".

If you ever get the chance to see Adam's show don't miss out.

All in all a great night and two excellent performances from members of our softball community.

Well done to Debbie and Adam.



AUSTRALASIAN MASTERS GAMES

ADELAIDE

5 – 14 OCTOBER 2007

The Australian Masters Games that many are familiar with has gotten bigger and is now called the AUSTRALASIAN MASTERS GAMES.

The games will be held every four years with the event being held in Adelaide this year. For those who have experienced Masters Games in any of its many and varied forms will have an appreciation of just how good it can be.

This year, West Beach will play host to 80 – 90 softball teams as they compete in the Australasian Masters Games playing 400 – 450 games of softball. It is anticipated that we will have some international teams competing.

Every team will need to have an umpire as a registration requirement. While most would prefer to “pick up” an umpire, South Australia is unable to meet the demand.

Teams will be looking for umpires and while a number have an umpire that they use whenever they compete, many don't enjoy that luxury so are or will be looking for an umpire.

Local and interstate umpires wishing to umpire at the Australasian Masters Games will need to register. You will also need to provide your own transport and accommodation. For interstate umpires, travelling and staying with the team is an option. There is a possibility that some umpires maybe able to be billeted by local umpires. You will need to get in early as beds are limited.

If you would like to come to Adelaide for the Australasian Masters Games and you are able to “umpire” for a team. I have a number of teams looking for umpires already and I can put you in touch with a team that is looking for an umpire.

If you are interested in umpiring for a team or would like some more information please contact me.

2007 Australasian Masters Games

Umpire in Chief

Neville Lawrance

21 Ariadne Crescent

MODBURY HEIGHTS SA 5092

A/H 08 82638086

e-mail: nevump@ozemail.com.au



Margo Koskelainen Victorian Umpire of the Year: Diane Waller

At the recent Victorian State Dinner, Diane Waller was awarded the Margo Koskelainen Victorian Umpire of the Year award. Di has been involved in softball for 29 years, participating as a player and coach and has been umpiring for the last 17 years. She is currently a level 6 with ISF accreditation.

Di consistently demonstrates a high level of officiating whether umpiring U/16 or an International game. She believes that "you can't beat experience and you never stop learning different aspects about the game." She feels that respect is a pivotal part of participation. "You have to make sure that you respect everyone involved in the game. The re-

spect must work both ways. Everyone has a job to do whether it is the statistician or the bat-boy/girl or your fellow umpires."



Di has demonstrated a firm commitment to both the Victorian and National program:

Allocation Manager for the VUC and advising her sub-committee.

UIC at the Ausport Classic & liaising with the VSA on certain matters.

Assessment of potential candidates.

Examiner at Vic State Championships – U/16 & U/19.

TEO at Vic State Championships – U/16.

Encouraged up & coming umpires to umpire with the senior umpires to gain invaluable experience.

Officiated in the National League.

Umpired at the Opens 60th Anniversary Nationals.

Examiner at the U/23 Women's Nationals.

Writing reports for the National Umpire 's Newsletter – BNOL.

Officiated at the 2nd World University Games in Taiwan.

Officiated at the X1 World Championships in Beijing.

Officiated at the Asia/Oceania Olympic Qualifier in Taiwan.

Personal Highlights

Open Vic State Championships – Base on the Grand Final.

Plate Umpire on the Ausport Classic Grand Final.

1st ever as the Plate Umpire on Grand Final at the Open Nationals.

1st International Plate New Zealand v Australia (March 01).

Being invited to join the 2002 International Development Squad.

1st International tour to New Zealand with the Aust Development Squad (Nov 02).

Officiating at the Canada Cup twice (June 03 & 05).

ISF certification (Jan 04).

Officiating at the 1st World University games in Florida (Oct 04).

Officiating at the 2nd World University games in Taiwan (Jul 06).

Just receiving an invitation to officiate in my 1st World Championship.

Officiating the game as the Plate Umpire in the Play-Offs at the X1 World Championship – China v Japan with a capacity crowd (Aug 06).

Officiated in over 100 International games.

Di 's firm belief that you need to have passion for the game to understand all aspects of it, you need to be a team member – The Blue Team and that you need to umpire to the best of your ability every time that you step out onto the diamond ring true for umpires of all levels.



Congratulations George

Recently Victorian Umpire George James was honoured with Life Membership of Victorian Softball Association.

Softball ACT Umpire of the Year

Mike Sandford is the ACT Umpire of the Year for 2006/7. Mike has been a cornerstone of Canberra umpiring since the later 1960s and provided enormous service to Softball. While Mike retired from on field umpiring at the December break, his dedication to the Tuesday night Men 's competition was renowned. He umpired the most number of games in the B Grade competition, as he has since the competition was established, and will be very much missed in his retirement.

Mike was also a very strong supporter of the women 's program and can boast a forty year record where he was in the top five on field umpire every year. It is estimated that, during this period, he umpired well over 2,500 games ranging from primary, the social (but competitive) Public Service Competition where he also worked as an administrator, ACT organised women 's and men 's competitions through to National Championship. Mike is a Life Member of ACT Softball and the ACT Softball Umpires' Association and was also acknowledged with the prestigious ACT President 's award for 2007.

Dates for Women's National League Games

Round 1 9 – 11 November 2007 Brisbane

Round 2 7 – 9 December 2007 Melbourne

Round 3 22 – 24 February 2008 Sydney

A Word from the Chief Executive Officer

With the Summer season of 2007-08 fast approaching, I trust that all softball associations are busy planning, talented players are well into pre-season training and that everyone involved is looking forward to a great year ahead.

With many club and association Annual General Meetings occurring around this time, a warm welcome to any new office bearers and sincere thanks to those who are continuing to run the sport of softball in Australia via their volunteer work on local boards. To those who have relinquished their positions, softball also thanks you for your contribution and looks forward to your continued support and involvement in softball.

To date I have had the pleasure of visiting all States and Territories (with the exception of Northern Territory) to meet with Boards and staff to discuss relevant national and local issues. Having spoken to many people and beginning to further understand the culture of softball, it is pleasing that a genuine sense of working together to grow softball in Australia exists.

The challenge now is to determine the right

direction to head and aggressively pursue our goals.

In this regard, Softball Australia has developed a number of initiatives which will assist in understanding the needs of the softball community and help set the future direction. A major project in this regard currently underway is the National Participation Survey which aims to understand softball's participants and hear their views on the future.

All softball participants are strongly encouraged to complete the National Participation Survey and also to pass the link onto other softball participants to ensure the results of the survey truly reflect the views of the softball community. The results of this survey will significantly influence the allocation of resources and the development of future programs and strategies.

Other Softball Australia initiatives currently being developed and rolled out include a re-vamped National Women's League for 2007-08 (to be launched October 2007), increased on-line club management tools available through



softball.org.au, continuing release of new coach education resources, increased promotion of Softball Australia's St George Bank partnership and further investment in membership growth programs.

On the High Performance front a very exciting year is ahead, with a men's Junior World Championship and also the final preparations and selection for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Such events not only provide an exciting time for the softballers themselves, but also for coaches, support staff, parents, etc.

Finally, I wish everyone in the softball community all the best for 2007-08 preparations and look forward to a prosperous year ahead for Australian Softball.

2007 YOUTH MEN ' S FRIENDSHIP SERIES with Jesse Smith

The 2007 Softball Australia Youth Men ' s Friendship Series was played at Blacktown Olympic Park, Sydney, from Sunday July 8 – Wednesday July 11. This year ' s series, although washed out for one entire day, produced some quality softball and an opportunity for all umpires to improve their game on the diamond.

Thank you to the following people who umpired at the Friendship Series: James English, Jesse Smith, Scott Rindfleish, Graham Boyle, Dave Beaumont, Norelle Thomas, Sharyn Girdler, Heather Bate, Leanne Gearside, Greg Zucchetti, Andy Birks, Sue Allison Congratulations to the following umpires who were appointed to the Final: Plate – Leanne Gearside, 1st Base – Jesse Smith, 3rd Base – Dave Beaumont

A sincere thank you must be extended to Vicki Lansley (TUIC) for all of her hard work and effort over both weeks of the competition. Also, thank you to Softball New South Wales and its staff for making the tournament so enjoyable for all the umpires who attended.

Australian Friendship Series with Jesse Smith

The 2007 Australian Friendship Series saw some quality softball games played at the New South Wales Softball Centre, Blacktown, from July 2 – 11. During the Australian Friendship Series, the U23 International Challenger Series was also played from July 5 – 8.

The International Challenger Series was used as a key learning environment for six umpires from New South Wales and Queensland who attended the Softball Australia Advanced Umpire 's Clinic. Natalie Freischfresser and Matt Blake joined their New South Wales counterparts, Sharyn Girdler, Peter Medbury, Leanne Gearside and Jesse Smith for the valuable clinic, which was facilitated by Andrew and Scott Rindfleish.

The clinic commenced on Wednesday night, with a theory session that forced all umpires to reflect on ' what umpiring is ' and some of the positive and negative characteristics of an umpire, among other things.

An 8.00am breakfast on Thursday morning saw some new faces arrive at Blacktown Olympic Park – Tricia (TUIC) and Darren Sibraa. Thursday was a very cold day but everyone managed to brave the unfavourable weather conditions and survived the outdoor sessions on plate and base mechanics. Indoors, all six umpires grappled with a host of other game management issues and discussed the many ways one can approach game situations in a more effective manner.

Another early morning breakfast proved to be a valuable opportunity to meet two more umpires, Warren Duff and Kevin Broomhall. An 8.30am start saw more game management issues discussed which was followed by two of the four interactive lectures presented by four of Australia 's latest ISF accredited umpires. Kevin 's presentation involved ethics in our sport and self management and was followed by Darren Sibraa 's presentation on managing the competition environment.

Saturday was used as another opportunity to put the lessons learned indoors into practice on the diamond. All umpires were provided positive and constructive feedback from other senior umpires who adopted the famous ' feedback model '. Video recordings of all games also proved to be a valuable learning tool.

Sunday, the final day of the clinic, provided a few hours to listen to the remaining two presentations from Warren and Scott. The two presentations respectively opened one 's mind to the importance of mentoring within our umpiring programme, as well as the need to develop one 's people management skills on a continuous basis. Another role-play session on the feedback model was conducted and some concluding remarks made prior to lunch and the conclusion of the clinic.

On behalf of all six umpires who participated, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to Andrew and Scott Rindfleish, Tricia Sibraa, Kevin Broomhall, Warren Duff, Darren Sibraa, Sue Itzstein, Softball New South Wales and its staff, and everyone else who made the clinic as worthwhile and valuable as it was.

Are You a 9 to 5 Umpire

Few of us would consider for a minute giving less than a full day's work for a day's pay at our regular jobs. In fact, you may often find that additional requirements of your position include travel for training, frequent meetings, studying trade journals and regular reviews by your superiors.

Yet when it comes to officiating, some of those same people either intentionally or unintentionally are content to do the minimum to get by.

What would happen to you as an official if you put the same type of effort into developing your game as you do to develop your career? Could you benefit by treating officiating more like a job?

Preparation. To do your best at your job, you need a good night's sleep, a nutritious breakfast and enough time to get there without rushing. But how many game days do we work after long weekends, rough nights or just plain fatigue? Beyond that, have you ever worked a game when you are starving, or perhaps crammed a fast food burger on the way to a game? Neither are ideal situations.

How often do you find yourself driving to a game with "your hair on fire" because of either poor scheduling or poor planning? On game days, make an effort to get a good night's rest, properly schedule a well-balanced meals and set your schedule so that you aren't pressed for time on the way to the game. You'll find that just those steps will increase your focus and improve your game.

Career development. If you have a job in which you are licensed, like a professional driver, an electrician, a pilot, a doctor and others, you are familiar with the concept of keeping your license current by re-testing, exams, study and schools.

Licensed officials often tend to discount similar elements. Sure, we send in our license renewals, and usually on time. But many of us would be happy if it ended there. Are you an official who complains when you are required to take the Part 2 test? Do you look for reasons to skip clinics, rules interpretation meetings and association meetings? Do you seek out things to study to improve your mechanics and understanding of the rules?

Others around you notice those things, and your lack of commitment will certainly show in your games. Have you been missing clinics, meetings and study? Kick it up a notch and watch what happens to your game.

Assessment. Most of us go through (or is the word "endure"?) annual reviews in our jobs. Our supervisors assesses our performance over the past year and gives us direction and goals for the future.

As officials, we often daydream about doing the "bigger games," but we don't speak to those who have seen us work for constructive criticism, much less plan a course of action to meet those goals.

Draw a plan of action from the experiences of others who are where you want to be. Be open to the suggestions of experienced officials who are willing to help you improve. Most importantly, listen to your observers: They work for your "bosses", and know what they're looking for in their officials.

Treat your avocation a little more like your vocation, and see the benefits you can derive from being a "9 to 5 official".

Dehydration— "No Sweat" By Nicole Crowe

What does dehydration do to the body?

Water is a highly important nutrient. It makes up approximately 60 per cent of the body. Dehydration can cause muscle cramps, exaggerated fatigue, loss of concentration/ poor decisions, loss of co-ordination, loss of muscle force, headaches, dizziness, blurred vision and irrational decisions. All affect our performance as umpires both physically and mentally.

When an individual partakes in physical activity their need for more rapid fluid replacement increases. The body's water content can greatly affect physical performance.

Without adequate fluid replacement the body's ability to tolerate extended exercise periods is reduced. Studies have shown that dehydrated individuals are intolerant of prolonged exercise and are prone to heat stress. For example a distance runner that can run 10,000 meters in 35 minutes when dehydrated will take two minutes 48 seconds longer.

What really happens?

Fluid loss decreases blood pressure which, in turn, reduces blood flow to the muscles and skin (decreasing our performance ability). The body tries to overcome this by increasing the heart rate. As the body is producing more heat it sweats. Through sweating we lose water and important nutrients. It can also make your plate equipment wet and smelly, especially if you leave it in your bag for three weeks (David Crowe). It is not uncommon for an individual to lose two to three litres of fluid through sweat in one hour. When we sweat we lose electrolytes (which are dissolved substances that can conduct electric current, these are highly important in getting the muscles to contract).

Electrolytes can be found in all commercial drinks, especially high is sport drinks, such as Powerade, Gatorade and Lucozade (see a pattern?). Even though the need to replace electrolytes is important, our need to replace body fluids (water) is greater.

What can be done to prevent dehydration?

"Prevention is better than cure". As umpires we can umpire in a variety of climates, from hot in Tweed to cold in Goulburn. Naturally our fluid intake will vary as well.

Two hours prior to your game you should consume at least 500ml of water. During the game take enough water so that you can drink 100 to 150ml of water every 20 minutes. This could mean forcing yourself to drink. Alternatively you can take a sports drink onto the game, so that your body is replacing lost electrolytes. Do not replace water before or after the game with a sports drink as water is still best for the body. If you begin to feel thirsty...it's too late! Once the game has finished continue to drink water. Continue this pattern throughout the day, of course remembering to go to the toilet or you will be in the bottom of the seventh, 1-0 team at bat is behind, runner on third and you can't move anywhere in fear that you will wet yourself!!!

If umpiring at a tournament that lasts several days in a hot climate it is a good idea to weigh yourself in the morning and then again at night. You need to drink fluid volume equal to the difference of the two weights (1 kilogram = 1 litre). For example if you weigh 85kg in the morning then 80kg at night you would need to drink 5 litres of water to re-hydrate yourself. I know that seems like a lot to drink, it should be spaced over a few hours.

Another important note, although some will find it disturbing, alcohol is **NOT** a recommended fluid replacement!!!! Although it may taste good and it may relax you, it only dehydrates you more. Sorry Guys.

References: Wilmore & Costill, Physiology of Sport and Exercise

Crowe, Sports Physiology (University of Newcastle)