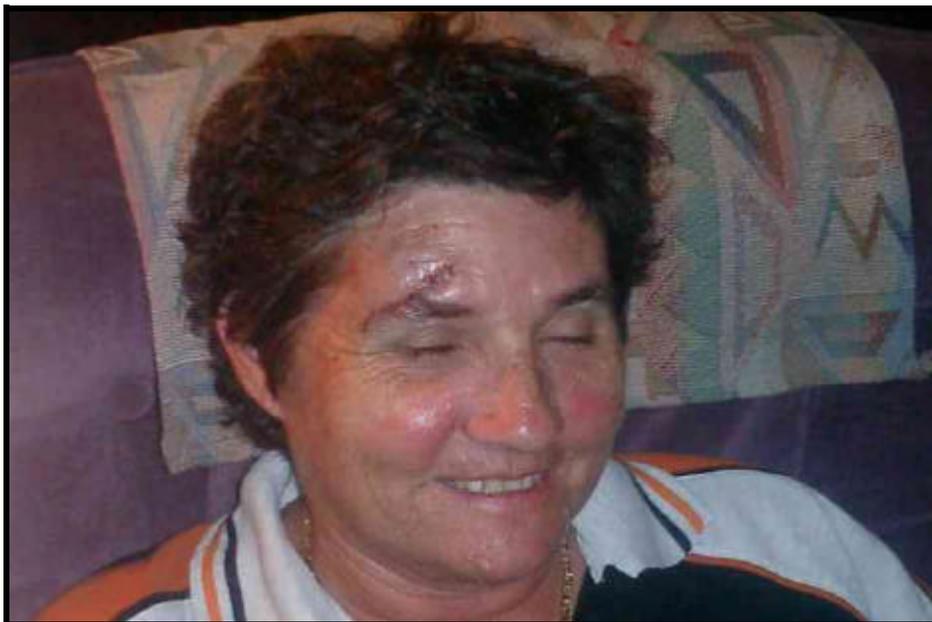


BLUES NEWS ON LINE

Contributions to mtoft@ozemail.com.au

June Edition

Vol 5 of 2003



Darwin or Bust!!!!!!!

Just to make the front page of BNOL

**MARGO'S
MEMO**



Opportunities to experience various types of competition are given to many umpires within the program and the biennial Arafura Games is one such event.

Unfortunately, like many other sporting events scheduled for the Asia Pacific region recently, the NT Government cancelled 2003 event because of the world-wide spread of the SARS virus.

However, many sporting organisations went ahead with a modified domestic competition and softball was one of them with the NT Association creating the "Southern Cross Fastpitch Challenge" to accommodate both US College team and the ADF Men's and Women's teams.

Alan McAuliffe and I traveled to Darwin to conduct a modified umpiring clinic which originally had David Crowe and Mark Toft as the presenters. Cathie Allen [Alice Springs] joined her Darwin colleagues, Margaret Lee [SDU], Ian Lee, Derek Quong, Yvonne Newman and Leah Schwartz, for the four evening sessions prior to the commencement of the competition. Jason Carter [WA], also decided the opportunity was too good to miss and joined the NT crew for the "Challenge".

It is a well known that "Blues" just 'fit in' - wherever in the world they may be - and Darwin was no exception. Two ADF umpires also joined us, Trevor Murphy [VIC] and John Prioli [ACT], and were most enthusiastic about have the opportunity to learn more about umpiring.

I am sure that Margaret Lee [NT Umpiring Director] will give you a more detailed report on both the clinic and the competition in due course.

Congratulations to Softball NT on making the best out of a difficult situation and for the hospitality extended to the umpire crew.

We are assured by ISF that the Jr. Women's World Championship will take place - where and when is still to be absolutely confirmed. With the Championship scheduled for China, Softball Australia is mindful of the "Duty of Care" it has to members of the Jr. Women's contingent, including umpire Debbie Grove, and is monitoring the SARS situation very carefully. News from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [DEFAT] and the World Health Organisation [WHO] is that the epidemic has run its course and the travel warnings are soon to be lifted for all areas. For all those traveling overseas this is good news indeed.

Further news from ISF is that they have approved Australia's request for an ISF Certification Seminar in 2004. Henry Pollard [ISF DUIC - Training] will conduct the seminar and certification evaluation. Plans can now be progressed to incorporate the Seminar in to the 2004 championship season.

For our touring umpires, Diane Waller [Women] and Damien McCauley [Men], good luck and good calling. Both leave with their respective Australian teams for competitions in the Northern Hemisphere early in July. Neville Lawrance also leaves for the Americas Olympic qualifier, to be held in Puerto Rico, in July. Our best wishes for a good tournament also go to Neville.

Margo.

Previous editions of Blue's News On-Line are available from the Resource Library on the Umpire's Website
nuc.softball.org.au

Making Rules Simpler

with Alan McAuliffe (Big Al)



You Learn 'em Al: Darwin and visiting umpires took the opportunity to learn a few pointers from Alan McAuliffe during a clinic in Darwin recently.



Last minute: Northern Territory Blues got in some study before doing the examination, which was part of the clinic held in Darwin recently.

THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION

by Tim Carr, *Referee*, January 2003.

Many of us are attracted to officiating by the idea that we are making the world a little bit better by helping young people develop into adults who possess strong character and a sense of values. We like the idea of “giving back” to the game and athletic experience that did so much for us when we were kids. But that begs the big question: As referees and umpires who only have contact - and limited contact at that - with the players during the game itself, do we really have any effect on kids?

I always believed that we officials could have a positive impact on student-athletes, but I was never really sure we did, that is until one beautiful autumn night when I showed up to officiate a high school varsity football game.

I went to the visiting team’s sideline to meet with the captains and ultimately bring them to the ceremonial coin toss. I always try to remember the captains by name and address them accordingly. This particular night one of the captains had a Yugoslavian name that started with a “J” but was pronounced “ya”. As I called him by name and asked how he was doing, he smiled and replied, “I’m doing great, ref. How do you always remember my name? You’re the only ref who pronounces it correctly.” I said, “Oh, I remember you, I’ve done a couple of your games before. You work really hard and are a great captain. You’re always helping your teammates.” I’ll never forget the chill that ran up my back when he replied to what I had said. I would never again wonder if we really did have an impact on players.

The captain looked me right in the eye and said, “You know ref, I remember you, too. In fact, you reffed the first game I ever played in when I was nine years old.” He went on to tell me how scared and nervous he had been. He recalled to me how late in the game, the coach put him in and the first thing he did was to jump offside.

“All my teammates started to yell at me and give me a hard time,” he told me. “You walked over and told them to knock it off. You told them I didn’t do it on purpose – ‘You guys should be helping him out, teaching him how to play the game; you’re a team.’” He then told me something that answered my question forever. “You know, ref, you’re the reason I’m a captain. I never forgot what you said, and I have always tried to help my teammates. Thanks.”

That has kept me coming back year after year. I remember that I am helping young people become responsible value-laden adults. In the chaos that can sometimes be the game, I try to make contact with the players because I know the answer to the question. We can have a tremendous and positive impact. Remember, that’s one of the primary reasons why we are there.

**“PLAY ‘M BALL”
A SEQUEL TO “ONE GONE WALKABOUT”**

Yes, folks, it happened again! The Merrepen Arts Festival at the Daly River Community included a sports festival as well, just like last year.

However, this time there were 8 teams competing in softball, 6 from Aboriginal communities and 2 from schools in Darwin. Teams competing were Naiuyu (Daly River), Merrepen, Peppimenati, Wadeye (Port Keats), Timber Creek, Belyuen, St Johns College and Marara Christian School.

Five umpires from Darwin attended – Ian, Margaret and Leah driving down on Thursday evening and Derek & Yvonne arriving Friday. Mark unfortunately had to stay in Darwin as he still had relations here. Derek had organized a rope diamond layout for quick marking and Marg, Leah & Kelly from Naiuyu had the diamond marked out in record time.

Games were played Friday, Saturday & Sunday. All teams quickly picked up the rules and learnt the infield fly rule, legal pitching and all catchers wore helmets & facemasks.

All teams played well and the grand final between Wadeye and Peppimenati was great. Marg was “adopted” by Peppi as she taught them to score (very basic).

The enjoyment of the players, the yells of “pull up” (don’t over run the base), “catch ‘im”, were a wonderful experience for all. One umpire even found himself saying, “Play ‘im ball”. Next year is already marked on the calendar!!



Pure Talent: Marg Lee Northern Territory’s Director of Umpiring is a jack of all trades as she helps Peppi score during the final at Daly River earlier this year.

Play Ball: Yvonne Newham (Plate) called the final at Daly River recently with Derek and Leah assisting on the bases.



**Attention!!!
This is an advertisement.**

HELP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

It would be appreciated if more umpires would contribute to Blue’s News On-Line every month.

This month’s issue looks like the Northern Territory’s own edition, which it is not. They just send a lot of information in each and every week.

Hey guys and gals help me out!

You don’t have to be the State Director of Umpiring or even on your State’s Committee. If you have some news send it in and we will publish it.

mtoft@ozemail.com.au

We can learn a lot from our kids... here are some good ones to have a chuckle about.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHO TO MARRY?

You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dip coming.

(Alan, age 10)

No person really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with.

(Kirsten, age 10)

WHAT IS THE RIGHT AGE TO GET MARRIED?

Twenty-three is the best age because you know the person FOREVER by then.

(Camille, age 10)

No age is good to get married at. You got to be a fool to get married.

(Freddie, age 6)

HOW CAN A STRANGER TELL IF TWO PEOPLE ARE MARRIED?

You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids.

(Derrick, age 8)

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR MUM AND DAD HAVE IN COMMON?

Both don't want any more kids.

(Lori, age 8)

WHAT DO MOST PEOPLE DO ON A DATE?

Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each other. Even boys have something to say if you listen long enough.

(Lynnette, age 8)

On the first date, they just tell each other lies and that usually gets them interested enough to go for a second date.

(Martin, age 10)

WHAT WOULD YOU DO ON A FIRST DATE THAT WAS TURNING SOUR?

I'd run home and play dead. The next day I would call all the newspapers and make sure they wrote about me in all the dead columns.

(Craig, age 9)

WHEN IS IT OKAY TO KISS SOMEONE?

When they're rich.

(Pam, age 7)

The law says you have to be eighteen, so I wouldn't want to mess with that.

(Curt, age 7)

The rule goes like this: If you kiss someone, then you should marry them and have kids with them. It's the right thing to do.

(Howard, age 8)

IS IT BETTER TO BE SINGLE OR MARRIED?

I don't know which is better, but I'll tell you one thing. I'm never going to have sex with my wife. I don't want to be all grossed out.

(Theodore, age 8)

It's better for girls to be single but not for boys. Boys need someone to clean up after them.

(Anita, age 9)

HOW WOULD THE WORLD BE DIFFERENT IF PEOPLE DIDN'T GET MARRIED?

There sure would be a lot of kids to explain, wouldn't there?

(Kelvin, age 8)

"And the #1 Favorite is....."

HOW WOULD YOU MAKE A MARRIAGE WORK?

Tell your wife that she looks pretty even if she looks like a truck.

(Ricky, age 10)

I don't know how many times we need to ask all umpires to send in stories regarding umpires and events, so I decided to try one last time. ANY UMPIRE WHO HAS SOMETHING OF INTEREST OR EVEN A JOKE OR TWO PLEASE SEND THEM TO THE EDITOR OF BLUE'S NEWS ON LINE C/- mtoft@ozemail.com.au Remember that BNOL is a monthly magazine written by umpires for umpires. Send your email today so we can publish in June.

I	B	R	E	A	S	T	P	L	A	T	E
M	N	G	A	B	L	L	A	B	U	N	T
A	S	T	R	I	K	E	E	O	O	C	R
K	G	O	E	K	O	S	S	I	S	O	K
S	F	L	Y	R	A	A	T	A	B	N	R
A	T	L	E	B	F	C	L	U	O	F	E
M	E	E	M	E	U	E	L	A	S	E	T
E	L	E	I	R	N	I	R	E	W	R	N
C	L	T	T	B	A	L	L	E	I	E	U
A	A	S	P	A	C	N	P	E	N	N	O
F	B	R	U	S	H	O	A	M	G	C	C
O	D	E	A	D	B	A	L	L		E	E

Shade in all the clues and you will reveal this month's "Powerword". A prominent umpire in Australia.

BALL
BALL BAG
BAT
BASE
BELT
BREASTPLATE
BRUSH
BUNT
CAP
CONFERENCE
COUNTER
DEAD BALL

FACEMASK
FLY
FOUL
INTERFERENCE
OUT
PEN
SAFE
STEEL (CAPS)
STRIKE
SWING
TIME

Strawberry Manure

A little boy runs across this farmer who has a truckload of cow manure. The boy asks him what he is going to do with all that cow poop. The farmer tells the little boy, "I'm taking it home to put on my strawberries." The little boy looks up at the farmer and says, "I don't know where you come from, but where I come from we put cream and sugar on our strawberries."

Congratulations! The word on the grapevine is that Western Australian Umpire Jason Carter tied the knot on the weekend. Warren, photos please for next edition.



Now we are lost: It doesn't surprise many that Margo (above) is at the helm of yet another Olympic Sport while in Darwin.



This is a shot of Jason Carter from Western Australia while on the sunset cruise in Darwin recently.

They tell me they earned a day off to go on the cruise??????

Have a go at the tourist:

Very versatile is our Jason - talking on the telephone, taking a photo and making sure his Crownys is close at hand all at the same time. Not a bad effort for a sand gropper

Believe It: You Are a Role Model

by Jeffrey Stern

Referee, December 2002

At one time, and not so long ago, a person who was labelled a role model would have been flattered. To be a role model meant being held to a higher standard.

Some modern athletes, entertainers and others in the public eye try to avoid that label, feeling that it prevents them from being human or opens them to scrutiny that reveals they are less than noble. It is easier to be a follower than a leader. Few people care if a follower trips and falls, but a leader who errs draws unwanted and sometimes damaging attention.

Although the position carries an awesome responsibility, officials can and should be role models. A job description for an official would include such qualities as honesty, integrity, impartiality and hard work. Those terms could also be used to describe a role model.

If you've helped a struggling or less-experienced official by offering counsel or using constructive criticism to correct an error, you've demonstrated how those in the officiating avocation take care of one another. Taking your turn in leading a pregame discussion or serving as a clinician or instructor at local association meetings exhibits your willingness to pass on what you've learned and improves the overall officiating product.

As long as winners and losers are determined in athletic contests, there will be angry coaches. But you can control how you deal with them. A calm demeanor may not make the coach happier, but at least it won't make the situation worse. That is a life lesson in conflict resolution for any players who might be watching.

Your appearance and your manner can send positive messages as well. An official who knows the rules and mechanics and exercises good judgment will be a shining example of the avocation.

Proper enforcement of violations and fouls exhibits to youngsters that there are consequences for mistakes. Sometimes those penalties affect only the wrongdoers and sometimes they negatively affect an entire team. An official who ensures that neither team gains an advantage through illegal acts has performed a service that will last long after the game is over.

It isn't easy being a role model. That's why there are seemingly so few of them. But there may be one more than you realize. Think about that when you look in the mirror tomorrow morning.

Make Room for Yourself

by Anthony "Corky" Carter

Referee, January 2003

When I see what I think is a missed call on a banger by my veteran partner, I almost always chalk it up to him being too close to the play. How can you be "too" close? For more experienced umpires, getting too close is a result of simply getting into a bad habit. Granted, that can be influenced by the confines of the playing fields. We can obtain that valuable space *if* we make room for ourselves.

First base. We have about 235 feet beyond first base in which to work. Unfortunately, many umpires position themselves only six to 10 feet from the bag. If the umpire makes a move toward the infield on a throw to first, he often decreases that already short distance, unknowingly compounding the problem. Positioning yourself only 10 feet from the bag doesn't even get you beyond the first baseman in many situations.

Fifteen to 20 feet from first is the better approach. I like 20 feet, but it's a hard sell and moves most umpires out of their perceived comfort zone. That is hard to understand since many of their calls at second and third, and even at first, when they are on the infield are made from more than 20 feet away. Being close to first also usually puts you close to the first baseman. If he makes a quick reaction to a sharply hit ball down the line, a line drive or even a fly ball in foul territory beyond first, your close proximity can make your job much harder as you try to avoid his movements.

Bottom line? Get well beyond first base in foul territory, which also gives you a chance to react when a lefthander's rocket comes blasting your way.

Second base. If you are standing outside the diamond, we've been taught to be on the second-base side of where the second baseman is playing; staying ahead of the runner. When you do that, you tend to get closer and closer to second base. When that happens, you decrease your overall view of the first play at second base. When you are too close, it is easy to get disconcerted when the throw is high and pulls the shortstop or second baseman off the base as he is making the play. Most of the time, the play at second isn't that close anyway and is almost always a force out.

I recommend staying just a bit on the first-base side of the second baseman. That enables the second baseman to clear out of your line of sight as he goes to cover the bag for the throw from the shortstop, pitcher or third baseman. If you are too close to second, the second baseman will actually partially block your view of what is happening around second.

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.....From page 6

If you are positioned inside the diamond, it is important to make room for yourself by backing away from the pitcher, up the middle. With today's bats and balls, at higher classifications, I use a modified "inside the diamond" approach which is actually about four to five feet beyond second. Positioning beyond second also keeps me from getting lazy because I know I have to quickly move inside the diamond on most situations. After all, we have more than 4,000 square feet to find room for ourselves inside the diamond. And the perspective for the play at second is the same whether you are inside or outside the diamond. So back up and make room for yourself.

Third base. Whether you are making the call at third base as the plate umpire or the field umpire, making room for yourself shouldn't be a problem. About the only time you could find yourself too close to the play as the plate umpire is when calling a play on a second runner at third or taking the batter-runner into third after the base umpire releases him at second. Similarly, the only time the base umpire should find himself too close to the play at third is when he takes a single runner or batter-runner into third. On all other plays, you should be a good distance from the play just by the nature of most first plays at third.

Make room for yourself! Back off and see everything unfold. After all, you know the fan in the third row of the bleachers sees it clearly and look how far away he is.



Life's tough in the top end: Karl Koskelainen and Marg Lee (NT SDU) sipping champagne at sunset, on a yacht during a break from umpiring. You really have got a hard job Marg!

European Language Directive

The European Union commissioners have announced the agreement has been reached to adopt English as the preferred language for communications, rather than German, which was the other possibility.

As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a five-year phased plan for what will be known as EuroEnglish (Euro for short).

In the first year, "s" will be used instead of the soft "c".

Certainly, sivil servants will reseive this news with joy.

Also the hard "c" will be replaced with "k".

Not only will this klear up konfursion, but typewriters kan have one less letter.

There will be some publik enthusiasm **in the sekond year**, when the troublesome "ph" will be replased by the "f". This will make words like "fotograf" 20 persent shorter.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expek- ted to reach the stage where more komplikated khanges are possible. Governments will enkourage the removal of double letters, which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling.

Also al wil agre that the horrible mes of silent "e"s in the languag is disgrasful, and they would go.

By the fourth year, peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing "th" by "z" and "w" by "v".

During ze fifz year, ze unesesary "o" kan be dropd from vords kon- taining "ou", and similar khanges vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombina- tions of leters.

After zis fifz yer, ve vil hav a reli sensibl riten styl.

Zer vil be no mor trubls or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi tu under- stand esh ozer.

Ze drem vil finali kum tru