



National UIC's Call

With Tricia Sibraa

What a busy month June has been! And the start of July is continuing in the same vein. In this edition of BNOL, we can see the amount of events occurring throughout the country – the South Brisbane Classic in Queensland and the Victorian Masters Championships, to name two.

BNOL again welcomes Roy Cox to the role of SDU for Softball WA. Roy has had an extensive involvement in softball and has some great aspirations for umpiring in WA, all of which can be found in the interview on page 2.

The SAL International Youth Cup has just wrapped up at Blacktown International Sportspark and the Australian U15s Regional Championships have just begun in Rockhampton. Thanks are extended to all umpires who have given of their time at these events and we look forward to reading about these in our upcoming editions.

Also in our upcoming edition, we'll feature an article about the 2012 SAL Theory Exam and those questions that challenged umpires nation-wide.

Internationally, the umpiring world is just as busy. Late June saw Ron Houison head to Oklahoma City for the World Cup of Softball VII with the Aussie Spirit team and we can look forward to his report for BNOL in the next edition.

Debbie Grove and Di Waller are currently umpiring at the Canadian Open Fastpitch Championships and then continuing to the ISF Women's World Championship at Whitehorse, Yukon. We wish both ladies great calling on the diamond. Keep up with all games at the World Championship online by logging on to: www.sportscanada.tv, where you can catch all games streamed live.

In this month's BNOL

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| Western Australia | 2 |
| Queensland | 3 |
| New South Wales | 5 |
| Victoria | 9 |

Western Australia

Last month, Tricia's *National UIC's Call* welcomed Roy Cox to the position of State Director of Umpiring. This month, BNOL has been able to catch up with Roy and delve into his softball history.

How and when did you first become involved in softball?

I first got involved in softball as my daughters graduated from tee-ball around 1980. Like a lot of parents, I suppose I "umpired" from the sidelines without ever considering what it might be like on the diamond. I did my basic coaching accreditation and played socially with other parents.

Given that you weren't firstly involved in umpiring, did you come to be an umpire?

I did my share of team umpiring and enjoyed the umpiring aspect. I did my first A Grade game in 1983. As an umpire I found that I could get a game every week, giving me a greater opportunity to be involved.

What has been the highlight of your umpiring career?

The most enjoyable experience on the field was officiating at an Under 19 Men's tournament at Belmont in the early 1990s. The highlight of my career has been overcoming illness and injury, which kept me off the field for several seasons, knowing that I can still contribute to the best game there is.

What would you like to see Softball WA achieve in the umpiring sphere whilst you are SDU?

It is my goal to create a pathway for all in our team and to assist anyone wishing to join our team, giving them the opportunity to contribute to and enjoy the umpiring they undertake to the best of their ability. I wish to have this team contribute to and enjoy the growth of the game that I see ahead of us. I wish for this team to grow in number and achievements and to prosper into the future.

Queensland

South Brisbane Classic – 9th – 11th June 2012

The 21st South Brisbane Softball Association Men's Club Classic and Masters Classic Tournament were held over the recent Queensland's Queen's Birthday long weekend at Carina, Brisbane. This year, along with the record 12 teams competing in the Club Classic, we saw a record number of umpires in attendance with New Zealand, New South Wales and Victorian umpires joined the locals at this premier event.

With Aussie Steelers selection on the line, players were out to perform their best, hoping for a chance to compete at the 2013 ISF XIII Men's World Championship in New Zealand. It also meant they were on their best behaviour and the standard of play was high and exceptionally competitive.

Working with our visiting umpires from over the ditch was a great experience and a highlight; it is always comforting to know we are all the same out on the diamond – although there was one major difference off the diamond. I know that Aussie umpires are famous for winding each other up, but these guys seemed to be always laughing and having fun at each other's expense! Humour is a contagious emotion and I am sure that if not the target of their jibes, everyone else felt right at home with the level of mirth displayed.

Although our spirits were never dampened, the diamonds certainly were. Rain threatened on day one but things cleared enough for at least one game to be halted for the sun - albeit for a brief few minutes.

For day two, overnight rain made the main diamond unplayable which meant it was back to the drawing board for the draw and new allocations delivered by UIC Tricia Sibraa with her usual amazing speed. Again, the rain threatened during the day, but held off. The concern about the weather at this event is well founded when, only a couple of years ago, the skies opened up and within an hour flood waters rose causing loss and damage we won't easily forget – although Yvonne Kahler was insisting it should happen again this year so she can get another new car!



Photo: John Hickham (Plate), Leigh Evans (1st Base)

Day three and the rain came, leaving only one diamond fit to play on. At least one diamond made it possible to complete play-offs between the top three teams.

Despite dark skies, there were many highlights over the weekend such as:

- Meeting new friends in the umpiring community –especially those mad Kiwis – Jeremy England, John Hickham, Mark McFarlane, David Beaumont, and Bob Jones.
- Umpiring with Debbie Grove and Leigh Evans (Victoria), Andrew Compton and Krissi Travers (NSW) and Dale Kaimoana (recent import to Queensland) – thank you for travelling to the not-so-sunny Queensland.
- Catching up with old friends from local and interstate who you only see once every year or three,
- Watching the clouds and weather radar, hoping for it to either clear or bucket down – none of this in-between drizzle stuff,
- New statements such as ‘Dropping like a Starfish’ or “I’ll slap you with a stick”.

Congratulations to the Grand Final crew:

- Jeremy England, Darren Sibraa, Leigh Evans, Mark McFarlane



Photo: Leigh Evans (1st Base), Yvonne Kahler (2nd Base)

Writer: Martin Turnbull

New South Wales

Houison set to make ISF debut in the US

“It does not get much better than this!” These were the words of NSW umpire Ron Houison upon hearing of his appointment to the 2012 USA World Cup of Softball.

In his first international appointment, Houison will be accompanying the Aussie Spirit Open Women’s Softball Team to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, from 23 June – 3 July.

“I am really looking forward to my trip to North America and can’t wait to get on the diamond in Oklahoma City to umpire some of the best women’s softball in the world,” an excited Houison said.

Upon arriving in America, Houison will spend 24-25 June with the Aussie Spirit team at their training camp at Oklahoma University, the university NSW’s own Georgia Casey plays for in the National College League.

26-27 June will see him umpiring warm-up games between the Aussie Spirit and The Netherlands, before the World Cup technical meeting and umpires’ meeting takes place on 27 June.

“As of 28 June 2012 we will be into World Cup mode where national teams from Puerto Rico, Brazil, Canada, The Netherlands, Australia and America will fight it out,” Houison said.

Games played during the World Cup will be broadcast on ESPN and ESPN2, as well as streamed live on the internet.

To see the schedule of games for the 2012 USA World Cup of Softball, [click here](#).

After making his ISF debut in Oklahoma, Houison will return to Australia on 5 July 2012 – no doubt with many stories to tell.

Good calling, Ron!



Level 3 success for four NSW umpires

The current wet weather may have created dark and gloomy skies up above, but the sun was definitely shining on the faces of four NSW umpires upon learning of their success as Level 3 candidates.

Assessed over two wet and trying weekends at the abandoned U19 Women's State Championship and then the weekend's Over 35 State Championships, the four candidates performed well and were rewarded with their Level 3 Umpire Accreditations.

For new Level 3 umpires Jim Long (Georges River), Andy Birks (Cumberland Nepean), Vikki Armsworth (Cumberland Nepean) and James Townsend (North Shore), this latest milestone comes at varying stages of their umpiring careers.

As a 30 year veteran of the sport, Jim Long has provided tireless service to Softball NSW and is certainly one of SNSW Umpires greatest supporters. Recently Jim set himself a goal to achieve Level 3 and his hard work certainly paid off. Jim attended the 2012 SNSWUA Intermediate Clinic, Umpire Academy, umpired throughout the Waratah League season and has been involved in many Masters and special event competitions.

Andy Birks has been working hard in recent months and achieving great things. Earlier this year, he was appointed as plate umpire of the girls' grand final at the Blacktown Junior International Challenge. With the benefit of the Intermediate Clinic, Umpire's Academy, and further preparation during Waratah League, Andy has continued to ride the wave of success.

Vikki Armsworth and James Townsend represent the youthfulness of the NSW umpiring ranks and no doubt have many more goals they wish to reach in their umpiring careers. As enthusiastic umpires, they have been busy attending recent clinics and Umpire Academy sessions and competitions to prepare for their Level 3 assessments.

Congratulations to Jim Long, Andy Birks, Vikki Armsworth and James Townsend on achieving this latest milestone!



Photo L-R: Jim Long, Andy Birks, Vikki Armsworth, James Townsend

Waratah Leagues seasons wraps up for 2012 – May 2012

From the end of April through to the end of May, Softball diamonds throughout the Sydney Metropolitan area were occupied with players, coaches, umpires and spectators participating in the 2012 SNSW Waratah League season.

A total of 13 female and 8 male teams competed for this year's crown. With teams fighting it out for competition points throughout the regular season, the final series saw separate divisions created that allowed teams to play off for different trophies.

Congratulations to the following umpires who were appointed to Grand Finals on the weekend of 26th – 27th May for the Waratah League:

- Men's Grand Final – United vs. Canberra Giants
Plate: Rob McIntosh, 1st Base: Paul Bourke, 3rd Base: Andrew Compton.
- Women's Grand Final – Wanders vs. Sharks White
Plate: Vic Guillaumier, 1st Base: Krissi Travers, 3rd Base: Andy Birks
- Men's Cup – Mounties vs. Central Coast
Plate: Colin Tutt, 1st Base: Vikki Armsworth, 3rd Base: Craig Oberg.
- Women's Cup – Manly All Stars vs. Canberra Majestics
Plate: Mel Wallace, 1st Base: Chris Houison, 3rd Base: Alex Oberg.
- Waratah League Women's Plate – Central Coast vs. St Luke Patriots
Plate: James Townsend, 1st Base: John Walker, 3rd Base: Thomas Sutumo.

Leanne Gearside, Waratah League Umpire Coordinator, extended her thanks to every umpire who participated in the servicing of the Waratah League season in 2012.

"I trust all of the umpires involved were able to take something away for their own development because we were very conscious of the need to maximise feedback opportunities throughout the season," she said.



Photo L-R: Waratah Men's Grand Final Crew: Paul Bourke, Rob McIntosh, Andrew Compton

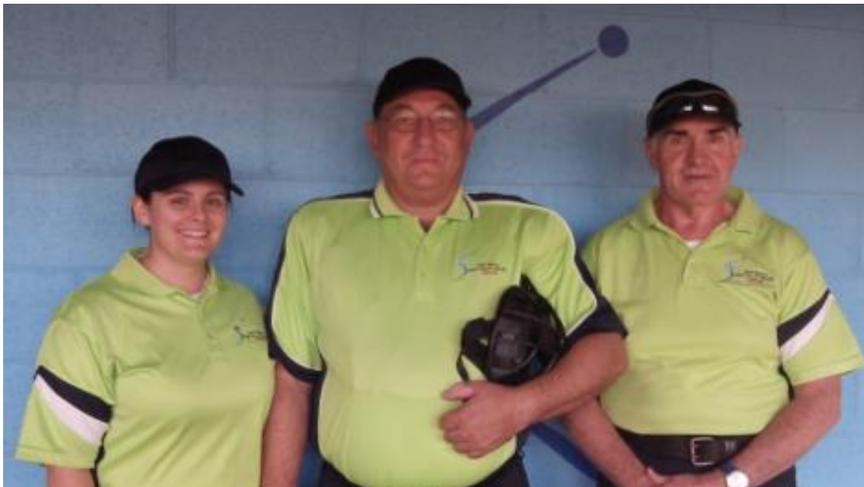


Photo L-R: Waratah Women's Grand Final Crew: Krissi Travers, Vic Guillaumier, Andy Birks

Victoria

Victoria Masters Championships – 9 to 11 June

As the Tournament Chief Umpire at the 16th Victorian Masters Championships, I am pleased to announce this was another successful tournament. This year, the 'team in blue' headed up to Regional Victoria, at Shepparton for the Queen's Birthday weekend to apply their knowledge, training and experience to the Masters games. This year was one of the most successful; only 1 protest, no ejections, and only 1 argument between player and umpire.

In the days leading up to the tournament, we saw news coverage across Melbourne indicating the heavens opening up in Melbourne and heading towards northern New South Wales. Our fingers were crossed as we hoped that it was not going to be another 100-year flood, 2 years in a row... As it turned out, another lovely weekend – the weather was great, the sun was shining upon us and no sign of frost, just one morning of mild fog. Faces were burned and sunscreen was dragged out of the kitbags. Not a raincoat in sight. Beautiful one day, perfect the next.



Photo: Amelia Thomas



Umpires thrive on the friendships they form each year and keep coming back. This year saw the up and coming umpires, Lachlan Hughes, Adrienne Hnatjuk, Simon Ross, Jonathan Sassella, Hayden Croft, Kate Pristov, Heather Watts and Talia McDonald promoted to 'A' Grade games to test their ability to handle the 'heavies' and they did us all proud. The new recruits onboard and from abroad included Amelia Thomas, Angela Post (Tasmania), Jordon Wood, Jeremy Jardine, Tom Greer, Matt Spiers, Tazmin Dodds and Louise Trickett, who all fitted in extremely well with mixed personalities.

The 'oldies' that keep on coming back including Ian McLaren, Stan Tolmie, Scott Rutherford, Roy Arscott, Richard Dodds, Vicki Dornom, Ryan Thorneycroft, Brendan Shatwell, Stuart Tyler, Brett Tyler and Danni Baxter chipped away at the games umpiring some C & D grade games to make way for the newbies coming up the ranks. Our oldest umpire is 76 yrs (Ian)

with 30 years of umpiring experience and our youngest was 13 yrs (Taz) with 3 years experience (Photo below).

Spence Williams took off for a couple of games to play with Hard Knox between his umpiring commitments, only to be brought back limping and out of action for the rest of the tournament. A big thank you to Graeme Young for filling in for Spence after his injury. Around the same time, Mick Thorneycroft went out to fill in for a team that was short of players and in his first game, dived sideways to catch a ball. While airborne, he was thinking, "OMG, why am I doing this?"

This tournament is great to provide opportunities for junior examiners to watch umpires and give feedback on their performance and offer assistance to develop the up and coming future umpires. These new umpires thrived on everything that was said and worked tirelessly to achieve best practice. We welcomed back Matt Poynter after his 10 year absence while living in Queensland.

Thank you goes to Fiona Wilson, Steve Lloyd and Roy Arcscott for providing lots of yummy cakes, slices, biscuits, lollies and other fattening food.



Photo: Jonathan Sassella



Writer: Tournament Chief Umpire – Deb Keogh