

BLUES NEWS ON LINE

Contributions to mtoft@ozemail.com.au

March Edition Vol 3 of 2004

EDITORIAL by Mark Toft

What's going on???????????

I have had the opportunity to umpire at various National championships with a wide range of umpires from a number of States, but there seems to be one thing missing,.....unity.

Yes we are all getting on well and we are doing our job on the diamond, but there seems to many different starting positions, methods of callings outs and safes and frankly I think we need to get uniformity back into umpiring in this country.

It is admitted that some of the senior umpires are trying new things, but they are not official until a Technical Bulletin is released by the National Umpiring Committee.

It is anticipated that a number of things will be changed, but until they are the junior umpires and those training our future umpires should be following the correct mechanics.

So if you are a junior umpire, stick with the basics as good basics will always see you through during your time as an umpire.

What's in this Edition

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ISF Accreditation - Well Done

Congratulations to the seven umpires who attained ISF accreditation at a Seminar conducted in Brisbane in January.

Margo's Memo



The 2002 International Umpire Development Squad, selected in 2001, are the first Australian group to go through the ISF Umpiring accreditation program which was developed in 2000 to try and regulate differing umpiring standards throughout the world – differences which are most noticeable at world events where umpires from the competing countries work side by side.

We have worked hard in Australia to bring our umpiring standards in line with major umpiring countries of ISF, e.g. Canada. Taking stock of all the key elements of officiating in these countries, asking for and listening to advice from their senior personnel and working them into our mechanics and game management has been a major focus since 1985. However, there is much that we can still learn and only giving our umpires the opportunity to work at their craft in an international environment will we continue to improve.

The elements of the ISF Accreditation Seminar comprised five components, Case plays, On-field drills, Mechanics [pitching machine], written Theory Exam and Practical [on field] game evaluation. Each component was rated individually with the overall score determining success or otherwise. The minimum for a pass was 90%.

The road to ISF accreditation for these seven started many years ago at Level 1, or perhaps Level 2, when each made a commitment to umpiring. They worked at each level at gaining valuable umpiring experience and expertise. There is no doubt that other umpires have helped along the way, giving their time, sharing their experiences and generously giving that most precious of commodities "criticism", also more softly known as "feedback".

These seven umpires are now at the forefront of the Australian Umpiring Program and it remains to be seen how they capitalise on their work thus far.

Congratulations to David, Leigh, Sue, Debbie, Bruce, Darrell and Diane, I look forward to working with you all in the future to ensure that we give more umpires in Australia the opportunity to achieve ISF Accreditation.

Margo.

Australia Adds Seven New Umpires To the International Roster

Softball Australia's National Umpiring Program continues to produce world class results with seven (7) officials from New South Wales and Victoria successfully achieving International Softball Federation (ISF) umpiring accreditation.

In order to obtain international accreditation, the umpires were put through a comprehensive two-week seminar in Brisbane at the beginning of the year. The seminar featured classroom and on-diamond sessions with each umpire tested over five disciplines; theory exam, practical game evaluation, mechanics, case play and strike-zone interpretation. A pass-mark of 90% was required for successful accreditation.

National Umpire-in-Chief, Margo Koskelainen OAM said the results from the seminar put Australian umpiring in good stead on the world stage and highlighted the continued success of the national umpiring program.

"These men and women represent the next generation of international umpires who will be available for selection at major events including world championships and Olympic Games," Mrs. Koskelainen said.

"Given our numbers compared to other softball countries, this is an excellent result for Australian softball. Achieving this result has been a combined effort nation-wide and I would like to commend our state associations for their commitment to the national program."

Mrs. Koskelainen also stressed the importance of the male to female ratio, which puts Australia at the forefront of equal opportunity in the area of softball umpiring.

"We currently have a fifty-fifty, male to female ratio which puts us on top of the world. No other softball member nation can currently boast this result and we will continue to work hard to ensure we preserve this exciting statistic."

The successful umpires are as follows (by State):

New South Wales – David Crowe, Sue Itzstein, Bruce McCahon, Darrell Shephard.

Victoria – Leigh Evans, Debbie Keogh, Diane Waller

The certification of the seven umpires is the second major international achievement for Australian softball umpiring within four months. The first being the induction of Mrs Koskelainen and South Australian umpire, Alan McAuliffe into the ISF Hall of Fame in October (2003).

Positions Vacant on National Staff

Applications are invited for the positions of Umpire-in-Chief (currently Margo Koskelainen) and one position on the National Umpiring Committee (currently Andrew Rindfleish) for appointment for a two year period.

Applications must be submitted on Softball Australia Form 6.1.

Applications close at 5.00pm on Friday, April 30 at the Softball Australia office and the appointments will be considered at the Softball Australia Board meeting – May 15, 2004.

For further enquiries regarding these positions, please contact:-

Jo-anne Sillett
Administration & Events Co-ordinator
Softball Australia
Ph: 03 9890 8200

Allocations for April

Grand Prix 3 - Margo Koskelainen (UIC), Tricia Sibraa (UIC), Canada x 1, Nicola Ogier, Stephano Russi, Ken Culpitt, Darren Sibraa, Neville Lawrance, Diane Waller, Leigh Evans, Warren Duff, Julie Richardson, Greg Baker, Graham Boyle, David Crowe, Amanda Greggs, Ron Houison, Sue Itzstein, Bruce McCahon, Andrew Rindfleish, Scott Rindfleish, Darrell Shephard.

International - Margo Koskelainen (UIC), Canada x 1, Wayne Saunders, Nicola Ogier, Stephano Russi, Darrell Shepard, David Crowe, Sue Itzstein, Bruce McCahon, Andrew Rindfleish, Neville Lawance, Diane Waller, Debbie Keogh.

Diane Waller's Diary

Canada Cup/San Francisco Tour

Tuesday, July 1, 2003

Amy Borbiro, Peta Edebone and I flew to Sydney where we met up with the rest of the team. There was an hour's wait until we all boarded the plane again headed for San Francisco. They announced that the flight was going to take 12 hours and it was a long 12 hours. They did play movies, but there were only a few screens, so someone as vertically challenged as me had to look out in the aisle to actually see (lucky I had an aisle seat).

We arrived in San Francisco at 10.00am, but unfortunately we had a 6-hour wait until we then had to fly to Vancouver. Most of us just tried to grab a few hours sleep, not very comfortable. The flight was only 1 hour 45 min to Vancouver, but it took 30 minutes to get going.

When we were going through all the queues that we had to go through, we were given a Fridge magnet and a Canadian pin because it was "Canada Day". Bryon, who is one of the liaison officers for the Canada Cup, met me at the Airport. I was very pleased to see him. He took me to the Sheraton where five of the umpires were staying. Bryon helped me with my bags to my room and then we went downstairs into the lounge and had a Canadian beer, which went down very nicely. Today had been the longest day that I had ever endured.

Wednesday, July 2, 2003

The announcement was made in the early hours of today that Vancouver had won the 2010 Winter Olympics so there was a real hype in the air. I walked across the road to the Shopping center and got on the bus. The bus driver was chatting the whole way to the sky train station and giving me some hints. I passed a station that was named Joyce – Collingwood, which was ironic. (My mum's name is Joyce and she barracks for Collingwood). I got the bus over to Stanley Park. I went to the Aquarium to have a look. I had missed the last bus so I had to walk back to Burrard station to get the sky train back to Surrey Central station. I couldn't remember which bus I had to take so I walked back home, it was only 2kms.

Simon had invited me to go with his staff to a BBQ where the Aussie Men's team would be. The Canadian host family, who were from the Vancouver Greysoxs, put on a wonderful spread which included smoked salmon, chicken and salad. Damien McCauley was there, so of course we had a chat over a couple of Canadian beers. There were photos taken and T-Shirts given out to all of the Australians. Their hospitality was nothing but exceptional, it had been a great night.

Thursday, July 3, 2003

The Australian team was supposed to play two exhibition games, but for whatever reason didn't eventuate. Simon decided to play a game amongst themselves and asked me to umpire. We played for 2 ½ hours. This game was played at Softball City, so it was good for me to get a game in on the ground where I was going to be umpiring the Canada Cup. I had dinner with the Aussies and then we piled into the vehicles to go to Vancouver to watch the Aussie men play a couple of games against Squeamish BC.

I met Bob Henning and Hans Troelsen, who would be umpiring at the Canada Cup. Damien was umpiring the games so it was good to see him. I also met Brian Van Ost who is the National Deputy UIC for Softball Canada.

Friday, July 4, 2003

I met up with Wayne and Kath Saunders, we walked across to the shops to get some lunch. I had some New York fries with the lot. My phone rang and this person asked to speak to Margo. It was Mike Hornak having a lend of me. He introduced himself and told me a few things and said that he would meet up with me at the Umpire's meeting. I went to the foyer at 5.10pm waiting to be picked up by Keith, another liaison officer. Grant Hood and Wayne Shipley had just flown in so we waited for them. Keith drove us to our meeting. We were accredited and given blue armbands, which we had to wear at all times. I was introduced to everyone, but it was hard to remember everybody's name. Mike said what he had to and then we were given our allocations for tomorrow. We went down to the park and put our gear in the change rooms, which were in the Ice Hockey arena.

Saturday, July 5, 2003

I watched the first game and noticed all the things that the umpires do differently to us back home. Chinese Taipei vs USA Elite team. Diane Waller – Tonya Rabolkin – Grant Hood The game went for 2 hours with the score being 8 – 1 to the USA Elite team. Iowa Dynasty vs White Rock Renegades. Hans Troelsen – Wayne Shipley – Diane Waller. Strange game – Hans was doing all these weird signals, that's when he signaled at all. Australia vs Schutt Hurricanes. Bob Henning – Diane Waller – Tim Lederman I had all the calls at 1st base. They were all close and I had about 8 of them.

Sunday, July 6, 2003

USA National Team vs Stratford Brakettes. Hans Troelsen – Kelly Hunter – Diane Waller. Hans has got some interesting crew signals. An infield fly is two nods of the head and a wipe off is a hand wave. On the odd occasion he will give the outs, but not very often. After the game we all had to stay in our base gear. We had lunch provided by Softball Canada, which was very tasty and then we had our photo taken. We then stood around in teams until the Opening Ceremony began. We all walked out on the diamond and listened to the speeches and then the Irish dancers, who were young children enter-

tained us. Canada was playing on Diamond One after the Opening Ceremony. There were approx. 4000 spectators and it was great when they got the wave going the whole way around the diamond.

USA Elite team vs Triple Crown Force. Tim Lederman – Diane Waller – Susan Stratford We had a good game from a crew signaling point of view. Susan and I worked well on the lines. Jen, the third liaison officer and I were sitting with Mike and just waiting for the game to be over. It finally finished at 12.50am.

Monday, July 7, 2003

The fire alarm went off at 7.38am – just great. I got up and looked out of the door. The people across the doorway were out in the corridor. Then there was an announcement that it will be OK. Shortly after there was another announcement telling us that the problem had been found and sorry for any inconvenience.

Chinese Taipei vs Schutt Hurricanes. Diane Waller – Hans Troelsen – Grant Hood. This was a good standard of a game. It blew out in the end, but it was 2-all for quite awhile. I called one low pitch, but besides that I was very happy with my game. Hans actually gave me a signal back during the game, so I thought I had a win. Most of the game I would just signal to Hans and then to Grant, but I never expected anything other than a nod from Hans. While umpiring this game I heard a voice in the crowd after the innings was completed. It was Damien McCauley.

After I changed I was talking to Damien who said that he was waiting for Bob Henning, as they were going somewhere. When Bob turned up, he said that they were just going to his house and would only be 10 or so minutes, so I went with them. We met his two dogs, one of which is very old and couldn't move very well. Very nice views. Bob told Damien and I to pour a drink while he just went downstairs to key in the allocations and print them out. 30 minutes later Bob returned. He made some toasted cheese sandwiches, which we ate and then we had to get back to the park as Bob and I were both on the 3.30pm game.

China vs Illinois Elite Force. Tonya Rabolkin – Wayne Saunders – Diane Waller. This game went along smoothly and it was kind of nice to umpire with someone who actually talks. e.g. reverse rotation. China won by the ten run rule after 3 innings.

Tuesday, July 8, 2003

Stratford Brakettes vs NJCAA . Diane Waller – Susan Stratford – David Burns This game only took 1-hour 25 minutes and should have been over before that. NJCAA is a College team and struggled just a bit. After my game I watched the Aussies play Chinese Taipei where the score was 1-0 to the

Aussies.

Stratford Brakettes vs China. Chris Lee – Diane Waller – Hans Troelsen What a game! It ended up 2 – 1 to the Brakettes but that was in the 10th innings. That was the first time that I had been involved in an International Tie-breaker. The game went for 2 hours 55 minutes.

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

I was on the early shift today. It was supposed to be – Plate the 8.00am game and then have the rest of the day off for sightseeing.

Triple Crown Force vs White Rock Renegades. Diane Waller – Hans Troelsen – Bob Henning. Bryon's wife, Judy was taking Kath and I sightseeing for the day. We stopped at Whiterock, parked the car and started walking. We walked out on the pier and back again, the walked to the "white rock". We had lunch at Moby Dicks, we had fish and chips and I had a beer. It was about 2pm when Judy said that she wasn't feeling very well. She had recently had surgery and today was the first day that she had driven. So we were dropped back at Softball City. It was 2.20pm. I felt really bad that I was back at the park because most umpires had three games today and it was quite hot. Mike put me on a base with Kelly and David. First pitch of the game was a ball; second pitch was a foul ball that Kelly wore right in the muscle of the shoulder, which just dropped her to her knees. She didn't want to come off the game but she couldn't even move her arm.

Canada vs Blooming Lady Hearts. Grant Hood – David Burns – Diane Waller I called "Dead Ball" on a batter as she ran into a fair-batted ball, while out of the batter's box. Grant didn't see it so he called us in. I said that she was definitely out of the box. The Canada coach was not impressed so he went and spoke to Grant. As they were talking, Grant pointed at me. The coach came down to talk to me. He said that I called "Dead Ball" while the batter was still in the batter's box and that I anticipated that the batter was going to be hit. I told the coach that I only called "Dead Ball" when the batter ran into the ball on her way to first base. After the 3rd out of the inning I went to get a drink. The Canada coach came up to me and said that I had made the right call, but he had to protect his batter. I told him that I understood. Mike called me over between innings to tell me that Kelly had been taken to hospital, but she will be OK. Also that I will be working the 9pm game.

China vs Phillipines. Tim Lederman – Diane Waller – Wayne Shipley This game didn't start until 9.50pm. I felt like I was with an Australian crew. We were giving signals just about every batter, something that is very rare here. It was 11.40pm when this game finished. So much for my day of sight-seeing, oh well!

Thursday, July 10, 2003

Iowa Dynasty vs Chinese Taipei. Wayne Shipley – Diane Waller – Tonya Rabolkin We went 10 innings for this game. Bob had invited everyone back to his place for a drink, even though he would be umpiring. So after the 7pm game had finished Jen drove Wayne, Wayne, Grant, Cheryl and me to Bob's house via the liquor store. We were only going to stay for ½ an hour but when we got there; nobody was there except the dogs and Teddy, Bob's border. Teddy had been out fishing and had caught a 24lb salmon. So I went to the car and got my camera to take a photo. One hour later Chris Lee arrived with a couple of the Future umpires that were staying at Bob's in the van. Bob eventually turned up, but we left about midnight

Friday, July 11, 2003

Jen and Kelly called by to pick up Wayne and me. We were on our way for a morning of sightseeing. Our first stop was Capalino Suspension Bridge where we met Tonya who lives close by. We walked across the suspension bridge, which is the longest and oldest suspension bridge still in existence. We then headed to Grouse Mountain. Everyone except for Wayne went to the top of Grouse Mountain in the Sky bus. It was so steep, but the views were terrific. We could have spent all day at these two sites, but we had a meeting at 12 noon. Mike thanked everyone for a good job and congratulated Chris and Cheryl who were going to the Pan Am Cup. We were given the allocations for today's games.

USA National vs Teamsmith Nationals. Tim Lederman – Diane Waller – David Burns was a bit nervous because it was the USA National team I suppose. I hadn't umpired either of these two teams to date. In the bottom of the 6th innings I had a close call at 1st, which I was happy with. The Teamsmith Nationals supporters gave me a bit of stick. The next call was also a close one at 2nd. The coach came out and queried, not only that call, but the close call at 1st. A helpful man in the crowd yelled out for me to get help from the men. I told the coach that both calls were close and I called them the way that I saw them, she was happy with that.

USA National vs Canada. Tonya Rabolkin – Grant Hood – Diane Waller
USA National won 7 – 0 in 5 innings.

Saturday, July 12, 2003

Canada vs Stratford Brakettes. Hans Troelsen – Chris Lee – Diane Waller – Tim Lederman. In the 2nd innings we had a protest. Brakettes ended up losing the protest, but ended up winning the game in 6 innings. Australia vs USA Elite was supposed to start at 7pm, but it was delayed due to rain. The game started at 8.15pm. This was a top game with good batting; some great defensive plays and great catches. There was a protest in this game as well. From the stands, it looked like it was an easy obstruction call at the plate that wasn't called. Simon went off his tree and protested. He lost the protest, but

after 3 hours he won the game in the 11th innings. It was an exciting game.

Sunday, July 13, 2003

Our meeting was postponed until 1pm because the last game last night didn't finish until 2am. So we had our meeting and Mike once again thanked everyone and then Keith handed out the allocations. I couldn't believe that I was not on the first game. It was USA National vs USA Elite and I honestly thought that I had umpired well enough over the week to actually be given the plate for this game. I was upset and disappointed. It was a good game with USA Elite winning with a home run over the fence. I went and spoke to Mike. He asked me if I was disappointed? I said, of course I am. We sat down and chatted for a while. He said that it wasn't that I wasn't capable of doing the job, just that there weren't enough positions on the diamond. It started to rain but the 6pm Championship game still started on time. It was the Australians vs USA Elite. It was a top game with so many diving catches from the Aussies. It went into the 10th innings when a batter from the USA Elite team got on base. The next batter put the ball over the fence and that was the ball game. It was a great game.

Monday, July 14, 2003

Sue bought up an "Aussie Spirit" shirt for me to wear, which was great. We headed off to Vancouver Airport to fly to San Francisco. We arrived at the Doubletree Hotel by 5pm. I went for a walk along the waterfront, which is San Francisco Bay. The phone rang and it was Merrill Petersen, who is the UIC for the first 4 games that the Aussies are playing against the USA Elite squad. The game is to be at Stanford University. He told me that he had spoken to Cheryl Simmons and that she had spoken highly of me.

Tuesday, July 15, 2003

We all met in the foyer and we had to pick out a name. This person is to be your secret sister and you had to buy them something small to the value of \$5.00. Kere and Lloyd were the drivers and we decided to drive into San Francisco. We all went with the exception of Simon and Ed who had to make a visit to the dentist. Our first stop was the Golden Gate Bridge, which is a great tourist attraction. There were clouds actually down so low, that they are lower than the top of the bridge. We drove across the bridge and got out to take some photos. Then we just drove around looking at things like Lombard Street, which is a Zig Zag street. A lot of the streets are very steep. We drove to Pier 39 where we had 3 ½ hours to do whatever we pleased. There were plenty of shops and attractions to see. We went out for dinner at the Elephant Bar.

Wednesday, July 16, 2003

After breakfast we got all the washing together and went down to Bubbles, which is the closest coin laundry. Then we went to Hillside shopping centre for the next couple of hours. We were all given a box which contained a sand-

wich, a cookie, a banana and a bottle of water. We soon left for Stanford University.

Don & Steve introduced themselves to me as I was walking in. I then met Merrill who was the UIC. Soon after, Calvin arrived so the crew walked the diamond.

Thursday, July 17, 2003

After breakfast this morning, I went for a long walk. I saw some kids fishing and also saw three otters in the water. I sat and just watched the planes flying in for about half an hour. I then walked back home. At 2pm we went to the Elephant Hut for a late lunch.

We left at 4.30pm headed for Sonnyville. Apparently they had been working all day on Diamond One to make it level and it did look good. They have 10 diamonds here where they play Slow Pitch Monday to Friday from 5.30pm until 10.10pm.

We were to play two games, but as the first game went for 4 hours (15 innings) they decided, after the 10th innings, that one game was sufficient. Cheryl and I were very pleased about that.

Friday, July 18, 2003

We headed off to the Elephant Bar at 2pm for lunch. I received two presents from my secret sister. It is a magnetic photo frame and a chocolate nut caramel. We left the Hotel at 4.30pm for Hayward because we were told that it would take 1 hour – well it only took half an hour, so we played footy for half an hour. I was introduced to so many people and I saw all of these people walking in with blues that I was wondering how many umpires per game.

It was a regulation type game with the USA Elite winning 3 – 0. Some of the umpires gave me gifts. After the game Jill, who was the UIC for the night, gave me her USA jacket. The ladies from Hayward softball put supper on for us, which was gratefully appreciated.

Saturday, July 19, 2003

Lunchtime was 11.30am in Sue's room, where you had to make up your own sandwich and take it back to our room. We left at 12.30pm for the softball ground, which was only a couple of minutes up the road. I had a softball that I ask all of the Aussie girls to sign for me, which they did. I met Mike who is the UIC for today.

Salinas Storm had the USA under 19 pitcher pitching for them. Not bad for an 18-year-old – she was striking a few of the Aussies out.

After the games we came back home to get ready to go out for dinner, which we had Elephant Bar. On our way home we called into the grog shop to pick

up some drinks. We met in room 534 where most of the team was. I was only there for about 10 minutes when there was a knock at the door and it was a staff member from the Hotel telling us that we had to keep the noise down. So we decided to take our drinks and go across the road to the water-side, where we were just drinking and singing. The last of us finally went back home at 2am.

Sunday, July 20, 2003

We left at 11am headed for the baseball. The baseball was awesome. The crowd was 42,000 and most were rooting for the Giants. I had a giant dog with the works and a diet coke so that I could souvenir the cup. Then later I had to have a Budweiser, which cost \$7.25USD. The game went for just over three hours.

We were leaving at 6.50pm for dinner at Sizzlers.

When we returned home, I started to pack, I was just watching TV when Sue came in and told me that we were all doing the secret sister thing. My secret sister was Simon. We all took numbers and then could go and pick an item from Trish's bed. I was no. 3, but all of the clothing was large sizes so I chose a polo shirt for Phil.

Monday, July 21, 2003

Well today is finally our last day. We had to take our luggage downstairs and then there were 14 of us that went to Alcatraz.

We had our photo taken before we left. The trip across to the Rock only took 7 minutes but it was a bit rough. We spent 2 hours on the Rock in which we all went on the audio tour and then just had a look around. We got back on the fiery and headed for the shore. We had an hour to shop and get some lunch. We met back at the van and headed home.

The only room that we now had was Ed's. We all had to have a shower and change into our travelling clothes. We left for the Airport at 7pm. By the time we all went through the checkout it was 8.30pm. Simon was upgraded to 1st class for an extra couple of hundred dollars. It was time to board the plane headed for Australia. We took off about 11pm.

I had a really great time and the Aussie staff and players were all good to me, but I was glad to get back home.

NOTE: Looks like Diane had a wonderful trip and BNOL appreciates her time in writing her diary of her trip. Thanks Diane.

DEADLINE FOR APRIL'S EDITION - APRIL 2

Publication date - APRIL 5 Get your articles in early.

Making the rules easier With Alan McAuliffe - National Rules Interpreter

Situation:

There is one out with the tying runner at 3rd. The batter lays down a bunt and a squeeze play is on. The catcher jumps out in front of the batter to retrieve the bunt. The batter, not wanting to get in way of the play, steps back away from the ball to allow the play at the plate in which the runner scores. After the runner scores safely, the batter finally realises he needs to run to first base. The BASE UMPIRE then calls the batter-runner OUT for moving backwards away from first, and sends the runner back to third. There was no obstruction at the plate.

Question:

Should the runner's score stand? If not, why not?

Response:

If there was obstruction, the runner would not have been called out and the run would score. In the above scenario, the batter-runner has stepped back to avoid a fielder attempting to field a legally batted fair ball. Therefore, the run should have been allowed to score since the batter-runner didn't step backwards TO AVOID OR DELAY A TAG. Just stepping back is not a violation of the rule (Rule 8 Sec 2i refers), you must have a play on the batter-runner for an out to be considered. Even if the batter-runner did step back to avoid a tag, if the umpire didn't kill the play and make the call until AFTER the runner crossed the plate (as indicated in the scenario), he cannot be returned to third. Run scores.

Comment:

If an umpire considers a batter-runner has stepped back to avoid or delay a tag, the call of "Dead Ball - batter-runner out" must be made IMMEDIATELY the batter-runner takes the backwards step. It is not an option for the umpire to delay the call waiting to see the outcome of the play as described in the above scenario.

PERSEVERANCE

What the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve.



Successful candidates from Victoria's Under 19 State Championships: Left to right, Trevor Murphy Level 2, Trevor Hair and Stacey Evans Level 3.



Receiving their accreditation from UIC Kevin Broomhall

At the recent Victorian Under 19 Championship at Waverley on February 21 & 22, we saw some excellent games played.

We also had Umpires going for the next level of accreditation and we would like to congratulate Stacey Evans (Sunshine) and Trevor Hair (Knox) achieving Level 3 and Trevor Murphy (Werribee) for successfully gaining Level 2.

Well done once again and all the best in your future.

The final allocations were:-

A Women- Plate : Leigh Evans, Base: Diane Waller

A Men - Plate : Phil Waller, 1st Base: George James, 3rd Base: Lindsay Whitehead

B Women - Plate : Meredith Curie, Base: Vanessa Flemming- Bailey

B Men - Plate : Kevin Offer, 1st Base: Stan Tolmie, 3rd Base: Richard Barrow

DEADLINE FOR APRIL'S EDITION - APRIL 2

Publication date - APRIL 5 Get your articles in early.

Hot!

Hot!

Hot!

A brief look at the 2004 Open Women Championship by Sue Itzstein

Friday, January 2nd and after spending four days at the ISF Clinic everyone was looking forward to a day off before the commencement of the Open Women National Championship. It was suggested that we all take it pretty easy and not do anything too strenuous as we had a big week of umpiring ahead of us, none of us realized what good advice this would be.

Well amid bells and sireeens the championship got under way and the weather was 3 degrees HOT, HOTTER and HOTTEST if that is possible and oh I think we might as well just throw in a little bit of humidity just a small amount like over 80% on most days. We still managed to get through the championship without too many mishaps and have a little fun on the way.

"Old Rascal" made diamond 2 out in the cabbage patch his own and I think few other umpires were hoping that maybe they could claim it as their own as it felt about 10 degrees cooler.

"Little Bits" gained a cheer squad (striiiiiiiiiike) out in the cabbage patch and earned a new nickname – "squeaky".

Which umpire decided to take Henry literally when he said really get in there and sell those safe calls? However I don't think he meant by praying "please let me get this one right" or was it just the umpire getting down on their knees to get their nose in there and make sure they were part of the action?

Another one of the umpires took to the bouncing theory so much that he earned the nickname of "Tigger" although I am not sure that he was aware of it. His reasoning was that once he got the body mass bouncing it was pretty hard to stop.

The cooking competition was in full force during the clinic and the championship with the first Boys room throwing out the challenge, which was met with gusto from the Girls. Not being biased or anything I think the Girls got their nose in front with the dessert. Not to be out done the leaders room (Margo, Trish and Matt) provided a spectacular meal with the Tournament Chicken (thanks Jason Carter) making an appearance and Matt displayed his skills with a Salmon Risotto.

Once again the dessert being a winner with Margo coming up with goods, providing one of the mouth watering recipes she had talked about at previous tournaments. The second Boys room finished off with a great Aussie favorite "Bangers and Mash" gourmet sausages no less, no common food for this group.

Margo broke out the champagne to celebrate her 40th wedding anniversary and once again celebrated with her softball family.

If you are ever visiting Richmond, Virginia and you see a strange man in the street in tie and hat pointing a crooked finger towards the sky, don't be alarmed, it is only Henry Pollard practicing to be the man in the middle of a cricket game while shopping with his wife.

Finally if anyone finds Itzy's brush could you please return it to her as her hair is a mess?

It doesn't pay to be rude

A friend of mine was telling me her flight from Boston to New York was delayed, which meant she missed her connection home to Seattle. She joined a group of other passengers, all in the same boat, each hoping to book seats on the next flight out.

All of the passengers waited patiently except for one man who treated the ticket agent very rudely. "I had an aisle seat reserved and I BETTER get an aisle seat when we get on another plane," he ranted and raved.

A few minutes later the ticket agent announced that there would be room for everyone. "And, sir," she said, addressing the rude fella, "I'm happy to tell you that I was able to get you an aisle seat, sir."

The man, still mutter, picked up his carry on, grabbed his boarding pass, and headed through the door.

The agent continued, "And I'm also pleased to announce the rest of you will be seated in First Class."

Men's World Championships Christchurch New Zealand



Adelaide is pie floater time as seen in the pics to the left and below the crew experienced a pie floater in Adelaide, led of course by the locals.



By the way: Julie Richardson is seen here eating a pie floater. Don't be fooled. She is posing for the photograph, but she did not eat one of Adelaide's finest foods.



This my friends is a pie floater. When I was in Adelaide in 1999 I was taken to this exclusive roadside restaurant to sample their wares and I ate 2 and half of these pie floaters and I can tell you the next day they worked as good as any laxatives the medical fraternity has ever invented or probably will.

The three teams line up prior to the Under 19 Men's National Grand Final in Adelaide.

**Victoria
ACT
The Blues**



LEFT: A section of the crowd at Christchurch. Have a good look and see who you can pick out from the crowd. Note: Frank is always complaining about the cold, but he has no socks on.

RIGHT: Our boy from Kangaroo Island, Damien McCauley in the thick of things at the Men's World Championships in Christchurch.



LEFT: This is not an ideal stance to adopt. It could be said that many umpires can not even spread their legs that far let alone get up again.

RIGHT: Wash out: Will we or won't we? Aussie management in discussion with Merle Butler & Henry Pollard after the heavens opened up during the game.



**Photos courtesy of
Alan McAuliffe**

Umpire sure is good sport!

By Peter Hardwick

TOOWOOMBA softball identity Mark Toft is so much part of the game, it's sometimes referred to as "Toftball" in these parts.

However, Toft found himself looking for home plate on Saturday night during the Sports Darling Downs annual dinner.

His expressions said it all, of more than 500 people in the room, he was the "unlucky" one chosen to share the stage with guest performer - renowned illusionist Phil "Trust Me" Cass.

What can you do? It's either run for the hills or submit yourself to being one of Phil's props.

To his credit, the Darling Downs spirit shone through and Mark showed just what a good sport he is.

Not only did Phil cut Toft's tie in half and subject him to hypnosis by a duck, but somehow retrieved a \$100 note - "donated" temporarily by K & R Plumbing Supplies' Paul Reedy - from his fly, and excruciating experience going by the look on Toft's face.

Through it all, Toft exhibited the serene calmness of a softball umpire under fire but in charge.

Column 4 salutes you!

(Article and pictures appeared in the Column Four of the Toowoomba Chronicle on Friday, February 13, 2004. BNOL wishes to thank the Chronicle for the use of their material)



Trust me!" The calm before the storm.



Duck hypnosis.



Oooh, your hands are cold!

Local umpire makes it three by Neil Brown

Toowoomba softball umpire has taken out the Sports Darling Downs Umpire/Referee of the Year award for the third time in four years.

Mark Toft accepted his third award in four years at the annual dinner on Saturday night. The category of Umpire/Referee of the Year was introduced in the year 2000 which Toft won. He was a finalist in 2001 and made it back to back wins in 2002 and 2003, a great achievement.

Toft was selected from all officials from all sports in the Darling Downs region.

"It's a great honour to win this award, I accept it on behalf of all officials who give up their time week in week out.

"I was stoked to win the inaugural award in 2000 but to win three I am over the moon," Toft said.

Toft recognised the difficult job umpires and referees have week in week out and said he believed that there seems more acceptance of decisions made by officials.

"You can't please everyone but I believe we are keeping 85 to 90% of the spectators happy which is far better than 50% as it has been," Toft said.

(BNOL wishes to express thanks to the Toowoomba Chronicle for the use of their material in this article)

GOOD NEWS

The Blue's grapevine has informed me that Ian Lee from the Northern Territory is feeling a lot better.

On behalf of all the Blue's family throughout Australia I take this opportunity to wish Ian and Marg all the best for a speedy recovery.



Three from four: Toowoomba Softball umpire Mark Toft picked up his third Umpire/Referee of the Year Award in four years at the recent Sports Darling Downs Awards. Pictured with Toft is the Coach of the Year.