

Blue's News On-Line

Official Australian Softball Umpire's Magazine

Contributions to mtoft@ozemail.com.au May Edition 4 of 2005

May 30 May 30 May 30 May 30 May 30 May 30 May 30

NATIONAL UMPIRING EXAMINATION

Just incase some of you had forgotten the National Umpiring Examination will be held on Monday, May 30 2005.

There is a quick test of rules in the latest South Australian Newsletter - Strike Me Blue.

Strike Me Blue has been loaded onto the web site for downloading. You can access the site via the following link.

<http://sasua.softball.org.au/resourcelibrary.asp>



Successful Western Australian umpires:
Mark Dwyer (Tom Price) Level 3
Louise Stanwix (Tom Price) Level 2

Electronic Umpire Diaries

Those Level 4 and above umpires who have been filling out your electronic diaries in accordance with the NUC directive need to have them ready to be submitted to your State Director when applying for National Appointments later in the year.

These diaries will then be forwarded to the National Director.

PROFILE - Sue Itzstein

Born: Brisbane QLD – 1953

Marital Status: Single (but still hopeful)

Siblings: 3 brothers living in Brisbane and a sister who lives in Sydney

Occupation: Office Manager and has worked in the Music Industry for the last 15 years.

While playing Softball in both Primary and Secondary School Sue's primary interest was in Swimming during the early years.

Sue commenced playing again and coaching (if you could call it that) after moving to Mount Isa in the early seventies. After 8 years in the Isa she decided it was time to see a bit more of the country and had a stint in Cairns before relocating to Sydney in 1981.

It was with the North Shore Association in St Ives Sydney where Sue continued to play and reached a reasonable standard before she decided that her successes in the sport lay in another direction, and with that decided to take up umpiring seriously in 1990 under the guidance of Alan Brown, David Stanton and Marilyn Mason.

Sue has been the UIC at the North Shore Association since 1995 and remains in that position to this day. Prior to taking on the UIC role she was the registrar for the Association from 1993 to 1995. She is currently Secretary of the NSW Umpires Association a position she has held since 1996.

Sue attained her Level 2 accreditation 1992 at the NSW Junior Girls State Championship, Level 3 in 1992 at Metro League and Level 4 in 1994 at the NSW Open Championship, Level 5 in 1998 at the U16 Girls National Championship in Hobart and Level 6 in 2001 at the National Open Women's Championship in Perth.

ISF Accreditation was attained in 2004 at the Open Women's National Championship in Brisbane.

Sue's umpiring career highlights to date include making the 2002 International Development Squad, calling the championship game at the 2001 and 2004 NSW Open Women's Championship, calling the Open Men's State League Final in 2002 and calling the Gold Medal Game at the Blacktown International Softball Challenge in 2004.

Interests outside of Softball (is there any?) include reading, going to movies, music and dining out with good friends (when time permits) and collecting fridge magnets and fairies.



Looking at Rules

with Alan McAuliffe (National Rules Interpreter)



Over the next few issues, I intend to discuss several rules/situations that commonly occur in our game, along with some not so common ones. I will look at the reason for the rule, specifics of the rule, examples, and, in some instances, mechanics.

Some of the rules to be discussed are: Infield Fly; Deliberately Dropped Fly Ball; Batting Out of Order; Interference with the Catcher; One Metre (3 ft) Lane; Dropped Third Strike; Running Bases in Reverse Order; Interference; Overthrows and Obstruction.

Other topics not necessarily covered by rules will be: Runner/Fielder Right of Way; Ejections; Changing Calls and General Points Not Covered By Rule. In this issue we look at the Infield Fly Rule.

INFIELD FLY RULE:

A. Reason for the rule: Protection of the offence.

The Infield Fly rule is one of the original rules of softball, having been taken from the Rules of Baseball where it was first introduced in 1895. With runners on first & second or the bases loaded AND with less than two outs, if the batter hits a fly ball that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, the batter is out. If it were not for that rule, wily infielders could often get an easy double play by letting the ball drop untouched to the ground and then throwing for a force out at third, with the relay catching another runner before he reaches his base.

The rule also provides that an outfielder stationed in the infield is treated the same as an infielder. An Infield Fly will also be declared even when the ball is handled by an outfielder if, in the umpire's judgement, the ball could as easily have been handled by an infielder.

B. Mechanics of the call: Knowing the rule isn't enough; umpires must follow proper mechanics when making the call.

1. When the ball has reached its highest point, the umpire should declare "Infield Fly". It is also recommended for the umpire, especially in lower-level games, to add "The Batter Is Out".
2. The umpire should not "rush to make a judgement". On windy days a ball that starts out as an Infield Fly might drift out toward the outfield fence, or vice versa. Remember, the runners will be hanging around near the bases anyway, and since the purpose of the rule is not to give

the *defence* one cheap out but rather to prevent the *offence* from hitting into a cheap double play, wait: Don't signal "Infield Fly" until you are certain it is a *catchable* ball.

3. If the fly ball is coming down near the foul line, the umpire MUST say; "Infield Fly, If Fair".
4. Generally speaking, the plate umpire should determine the status of any potential Infield Fly, since he has the better view of the whole field; however, base umpires are certainly encouraged to assist the plate umpire in this determination if they believe the fly ball is an Infield Fly by pointing to the sky with the right arm.
5. Should the base umpire give this assist, he must remain silent, as it is only the plate umpire who can make the "Infield Fly" declaration.
6. It's also good practice for the base umpire to echo the signal, if he has n't already done so, after the plate umpire has made his judgement and call in order to assist runners in recognising the call has been made. (In very low-level games, if I'm the base umpire I might say to the kid running at 2nd: "If he drops that ball, don't run!" It may not be legal to do so, but it certainly saves me plenty of grief).

C. Trouble spots:

1. Ordinary effort.

The "declared" infield fly, though one of softball's more routine occurrences is still not a simple call. That's because in every instance the umpires must judge that the ball could have been caught with "ordinary effort". Those last two words are the ticking bomb that occasionally brings about an unwary umpire's doom. Exactly what is *ordinary effort*? That shortstop in an Under 12 game and Shayne King or Natalie Ward play under the same Infield Fly rule, but there's a universe of difference between their "ordinary efforts". Here are some guidelines I recommend and teach:

a). If the ball is to come down anywhere within the infield, it's always an Infield Fly (Oh, I agree; sometimes it's not, but no one ever complains; Consistency saves the day) ... from ages 13 and up. You realise, of course, that for younger-aged players, simply walking safely on and off the infield is high adventure.

b). At all levels, if the infielder turns to run away from the infield, don't call an Infield Fly unless he finally manages to turn and stop running well in advance of the catch.

c). When the ball is to come down on the outfield grass (on skinned fields), if the infielder can square up to catch the ball facing the plate, even at the last moment, it's always an Infield Fly.

d). A little looping, soft line drive is just that; a line drive. It's never an Infield Fly. (If that ball is dropped it may well be a deliberately dropped fly ball, but we'll discuss that in a later issue).

2. Status of the ball if dropped.

Too many casual umpires confuse the Infield Fly with an intentionally dropped line drive or fly ball. There, the ball is dead. But at all levels, when an Infield Fly is intentionally dropped, the ball remains alive, allowing game situations such as this:

Play: Runners are at second and first with no outs when B1 lifts a lazy pop fly to the third baseman. F5 sees the batter is not running out the hit and, of course, that the runners are holding. So he allows the ball to hit his glove and then drop to the ground. Though he knows the batter is out automatically, he hopes to decoy the runners into thinking they are forced to advance and so get an easy tag out. Unfortunately for him, the ball hits his knee and rolls into left field, with both runners advancing.

Ruling: That's good news for them and bad news for him. The point of the Infield Fly rule is to prevent an easy double play. Since the batter is already out and runners don't have to advance, the fielder gains nothing from deliberately muffing the catch. Therefore, if the offensive team members are well schooled, the defence can only lose by trying trick plays on a declared Infield Fly.



Silent but deadly

Two little old ladies were attending a rather long church service.

One leaned over and whispered, "My butt is going to sleep."

"I know," replied her companion, "I heard it snore three times."

3 Umpire System and Mechanics

The three-umpire system power point presentation has been revamped and is now available on the National Umpire Web Site at <http://www.nuc.softball.org.au>

The concept has not changed from the original presentation designed by Matt Gowty.

This three-umpire system presentation version 3.0 2005 is aimed at all levels, basic, intermediate and advanced. It contains slides relating to pre game meeting and duties, between innings positions, rotations and movements. Included are the new movement by the umpire at first base on balls hit through the infield, out field coverage and a section at the rear on mechanics and notes including the latest bulletins. The presentation is perfect to view and study at home in your own time or sections can be used for training purposes.

Most senior Umpires, Trainers, Examiners and UIC's would be aware that the current system varies between different states and there is a need to set a standard that is uniform throughout the country.

This project has taken several versions, modifications and man-hours to develop in an effort to lock in a standard that can be taught across Australia. With that in mind the National Umpiring Committee would appreciate the content of the presentation not be altered in any way without the permission of the National Umpire in Chief.

Whilst this presentation is a very comprehensive training tool, it will not cover all possible situations and will not provide answers to all questions. Umpires are encouraged to consult with their State Director to resolve any specific issues.

This presentation and animations is best run with power point XP however it will run on power point 97 and later, or power point viewer the presentation is only 450 KB. Jason Carter our Web Master has put a power point viewer program on the web site to help any one who does not have the full program, this executable file is approx 1.8 MB. It is also available at www.microsoft.com/downloads and it's free.

If you have any difficulties or need help with the program or power point please contact Jason via the web site or email me at levans@hotkey.net.au

Leigh Evans
National Umpiring Staff.

WHEN AND HOW TO USE THE POWER OF EJECTION

By Merle Butler (ISF Umpire-in-Chief)

Some umpires seek ways to eject players or coaches. Others wonder why and when to use ejection as a means of game control. Still others never resort to ejection because they are afraid of losing friends, or worse, lack "guts." Each of those situations is packed with potential problems.

You should never "look" for ejections, but when one comes your way you have to be ready to pull the trigger, then resume the game with a minimum of fuss and bother. Relative success can be measured by your ability to recognize a developing ejection and avoid the hazard.

You are entrusted with a great responsibility every time you step onto the field. When you don the blue uniform, you become **JUDGE, JURY and EXECUTIONER**. Other than an official protest, there is no appeal of your decision. That means you must learn to judiciously exercise your absolute authority by tempering it with reason, sound judgment and common sense.

A condescending "I am God" attitude has no place in umpiring; you should "walk softly and carry a big stick" in combination with having the "wisdom of Solomon." (That is quite a trio of clichés!) Here is some straight language to help you accomplish all that.

Earn the respect you need by looking sharp, working hard and setting a positive example for players and umpires alike. Execute your umpiring duties by believing your decisions will be accepted and without overreacting when they are questioned. Also, deal calmly with appropriate questions; deal sternly with unsportsmanlike cracks and eliminate players and coaches who deserve to exit the contest.

PREVENTING EJECTIONS

Using preventative techniques, I encourage you to:

1. Avoid direct confrontations
2. Use a third party to ease a bad situation,
3. Never challenge a coach, and
4. Take charge when an ejection is necessary.

Let us examine each of those four points.

To avoid confrontations, you might use any of a variety of tactics, which allow you to talk unobtrusively with a player. For example"

1. Dust off a perfectly clean plate when discussing an uneasy situation with a catcher or batter.
2. Wipe off the pitcher's plate when warning the pitcher about an illegal action.
3. Kick dirt off a base if you need to talk briefly to with a runner or infielder.

You can say the same things to a player when you are nose-to-nose, but say-

ing them less conspicuously and more calmly avoids the spectacle of an all-out argument even if those on the benches realize you are having a chat.

Using a third party keeps you out of conversations you don't want and makes it look as if teammates are encouraging each other. The pitchers mad because he thinks you are squeezing the strike zone. Have the catcher do the talking, especially if he knows those pitches are not strikes. Someone on the bench is a little too willing to offer an opinion about a close play on the bases? Between innings, a word to a wise coach can quickly end the comments. Variations on the theme are obvious. In each situation, it is better for someone else to quiet a complainer than it is to have an umpire and an angry player square off.

You should never challenge a coach or a player. That means no screaming, no finger pointing, no touching, no conduct that baits him into an ejection. It is sage advice: It takes two to argue. If you refuse to argue, the raving maniac appears even more foolish. If ejection becomes necessary, everyone in the park will understand why.

"Taking charge," means that when an ejection is necessary, do it and move on. If you eject too quickly, it looks as if you have a "chip" on your shoulder. If you are too slow, you may have lost control. However, when ejections occur at the "right" time, it is a sign of a good umpire who is in charge. Remaining calm and staying in charge makes a difficult situation tolerable.

AUTOMATIC EJECTIONS

Some ejections are time-honored and automatic. The coach wants to go, so he does something he knows will result in ejection. NEVER miss an "automatic." Here are a few of them:

1. After a called third strike, a batter throws a bat so high or so far that it sets a new altitude or distance record.
2. In disgust after a runner is ruled safe on a close play, a fielder tosses his glove in your direction.
3. Anyone who intentionally kicks dirt on or at you.
4. Anyone who in anger kicks dirt on the home plate.
5. That "cute" five-fingered gesture that starts with a player's thumb against the end of his nose as a way to express his opinion about your ability.
6. After an adverse decision, anyone from either team who drops to his knees "in pain."
7. The "ultimate automatic": The choke sign (holding five fingers around the neck in a choking motion).

Of course, there are other automatic ejections, including virtually any physical contact (intentional or not) with you. In addition, each umpire has his own list of "automatic" words and phrases that lead to an ejection.

There will be times when a manager or coach has a legitimate point to discuss or question about the rules. So long as the "discussion" is focused on rule inter-

pretation and does not unduly delay the game, it is your obligation to listen. That can be accomplished with your respect intact. Remember, you are there to be an impartial judge. A calm dignity must be utilized with the authority and responsibility you hold.

Do your best to keep the discussion conversational, not loud. Focus attention on what is being said and let the coach have his **entire** say before you respond. By doing that, he may realize that his "argument" is illogical. If things "heat up," turn your body slightly so you are no longer face-to-face with the coach. However, never turn away before you are "finished" listening.

When you have let him finish, answer his question or explain the rule **once**. If you need to consult your partner first, move away from the players and coaches and do it. Either way, you have listened to the coach and answered him. That should end the discussion. Make sure he understands that he has had his opportunity for input and that anything else he says will move him rapidly toward unsportsmanlike conduct.

Arch Lusterberg's book Winning at Confrontations lists eight strategies to use in the battle to communicate. Translated to your work as an umpire you should:

1. **Enlighten**, don't debate;
2. **Explain**, don't argue;
3. **Converse**, don't make a speech;
4. **Talk**, don't react critically;
5. **Speak calmly**, don't shout back;
6. **Be positive**, don't be negative;
7. **Be friendly**, don't be arrogant; and
8. **Be confident**, don't be meek.

Those strategies and concepts, along with the other suggestions offered in this column, will help you in your next "confrontation."

CONTRIBUTIONS TO BLUE'S NEW ON-LINE

BNOL IS AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL UMPIRE MAGAZINE WHICH IS WRITTEN BY UMPIRES FOR UMPIRES. ANYONE CAN CONTRIBUTE . IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING OF INTEREST SEND YOUR ARTICLE OR PHOTOGRAPH TO mtoft@ozemail.com.au

Deadline for next issue is June15

New Accreditations

Queensland

The success of Queensland Umpires in gaining new levels of accreditation continued with Darren Sibraa attaining his Level 6 at the Open Men's Nationals held in Launceston, Tasmania and Ian Frame attaining his Level 6 at the U23 Women's Nationals held in Melbourne. Well done and congratulations Darren & Ian.

It was great to see Queensland Umpires allocated to officiate in the Grand Finals of these championships as well. Congratulations to Frank Thomas who was appointed as the 1st base umpire in the Under 23 Men's Grand Final; and Yvonne Kahler (1st base) and Ian Frame (3rd base) in the U23 Women's Grand Final.

At the recent Under 14 State Championships the following umpires were accredited as Level 2 Umpires. Congratulations to Darryl Parker (Mt Isa), Luke Caulley (Maryborough), Ashley Riddell (Ipswich) and Damien McIntyre (Ipswich).

A number of umpires were also recommended to apply for Level 3 candidature following their performance and successful pre-assessment - Dominic Skellern (Ipswich), Neville Baggow (Mackay), Brendon Riddell (Brisbane), Michael Nilsson (Brisbane), Natalie Fleischfresser (Cairns), Evan Kaddatz (Bundaberg) and Ken McIntyre (Ipswich). Great work!

Umpire Training Initiative

A major umpiring initiative commenced on April 17, utilising the Redlands fixtures. Training clinics will be conducted over six weeks for new umpires providing an opportunity for anyone interested in umpiring to learn to necessary skills from the State's training officers.

Potential training officers will be mentored through this program. An examiners clinic has been scheduled through May that will test participants' assessment skills through actual games.

An important aspect of the program is the development opportunities that will be provided to umpires, since they will work with senior umpires and receive regular feedback.

Level 3 umpires seeking Level 4 accreditation must make themselves available during specific weeks for pre-assessment.

Further details are on the QSA Umpires website at umpiring.qld.softball.org.au, or by contacting the State! Director of Umpiring.

What's the Point of the Point? By Emily Alexander (Cactus Umpires Association Arizona, USA)

Umpire manuals, and often rules books, generally have a pictorial section devoted to illustrating the various signals used by umpires to communicate their decisions. In none of those publications is "*the point*" even depicted as a legitimate signal. Yet it is a safe bet that anyone who has umpired more than half a dozen games has used that gesture as a signal.

The ubiquitous point is not limited to any one situation or any particular call. Nor can it stand completely alone on its own merit. Rather, it is a modifier, albeit a *very powerful modifier*. Used in conjunction with other signals, it can clarify the call and stop an argument. Misused, it can humiliate and create a riot.

Shift the blame

The strength of the point is that it shifts the focus of the onlookers. When we point, people quit looking at us and look to where we are pointing. The point says, "Look! See what I see."

Use the point to indicate a *misplay*, a *great play*, or an *abnormal play* that changes an apparently obvious call or confirms a questionable one.

A heroic stretch by the first baseman who snags the throw milliseconds before the batter-runner arrives *appears* to be an out to everyone watching. When the umpire, watching with a trained eye, notices the first baseman's foot pull off the bag, if he *only* signals "Safe!" the crowd will go wild, thinking he has kicked yet *another* call.

On the other hand, if the umpire first points to the first baseman's foot and *then* rules safe, he has shifted the blame to the ball player and indicated, prior to the call, the reason for the opposite of what seemed to be a routine decision.

Another example: Let's say that on a pitch far out of the zone where the batter starts to swing and then appears to hold up, if the umpire judges the batter did not successfully check his swing, he will call a strike.

But if he simply rules the pitch a strike, with a *routine* call and a *routine* signal, he will get considerable heat for calling a "strike" on such an obvious "ball." If, instead, the umpire first points to the batter and then rings up a strike, he is telling everyone: "Hey, it's his fault. I know that wasn't a strike, but he swung at it. You *all* saw it!"

The *point* can sell an elusive missed or successful tag attempt. Coupled with the verbiage, "No tag!" or "That's a tag!" everyone clearly understands the subsequent action of the umpire.

Not for timing

The *point* is so valuable a modifier that it should never be used as a simple timing mechanism by an umpire. For a while umpires were taught, in order to slow themselves down, that they should point at a play before rendering a decision. The reasoning for that instruction was sound enough.

If we point first, we haven't tipped off our decision and still have time to change what we may have previously decided. Fortunately, the powers-that-be realized they were emasculating, by overuse, one of the most powerful tools in an umpire's bag of tricks.

There are so many other ways in which an umpire can perfect his timing that to waste such a compelling, mighty signal on timing was ludicrous.

The key...

Trained softball umpires now use the *point* only when the dynamics of a play do not clearly produce an expected outcome.

The actual point signal is the right or left arm, with the index finger extended, stretched straight out at the play or player. The other arm is held in close to the body so all attention is directed to the object of the pointing arm.

The *point* must be finished by drawing the arm back into the body before beginning any subsequent signal such as out, safe, or strike. Never continue pointing while signaling an out or a strike.

Don't humiliate or embarrass

So powerful are the connotations of being pointed at — or worse, having a finger wagged at — that the point (specifically the index finger) must be used very judiciously and only in tandem with making a call. Without a doubt, being pointed at makes one the center of attention.

The *pointer* is perceived as the dominant one and the *pointee* as the subservient one. Obviously, that is not a context a coach or player relishes. If either of those two need instruction or direction, give it quietly and verbally, without gesture; that will allow them to comply while at the same time letting them save face.

A *pointed* finger **reprimanding** — or even used for illustrating — in a confrontation is one of the surest ways to delay or destroy any hope of resolution. It will instead, generate a defensive, hostile response and, most likely, lead to the *ultimate use of the point*: directing a participant to leave the game.

Plainly, this common gesture is pretty powerful stuff. It can enhance or defeat what an umpire wishes to accomplish. Used wisely its value is immeasurable.

Get the point?

STUDY, LEARN, REVISE, TEST YOURSELF..... ARE YOU READY FOR THE EXAM?

If you need more rules to discuss well here are a few. The only problem is you will need to use your Rule Book to work out the answers. The answers are not available in this edition.

After the batter hits a single, you notice that the bat is bent and flattened in one spot. You know that it would never fit through a bat ring. The PU should:

- a) Do nothing, as this is an appeal play.
- b) Call time and eject the batter for using an illegal bat.
- c) Call time and eject the batter for using an altered bat.
- d) Call time and remove the bat from the game.

F3 is using a mitt and F4 is using a glove. The defensive coach decides to put a shift on to defend against a slap hitter. F3 moves close to the pitcher's circle and F4 plays near the foul line and about 6 feet behind the baseline. F3 catches a line drive with their mitt right next to the pitcher's circle. The defensive coach asks you to enforce the rule that only the defensive player closest to 1st base can use a mitt. The umpire should:

- a) Call the batter out and disregard the coach's insistence to enforce a rule.
- b) Award the batter first base for the illegal glove infraction by the defense and remove the glove from the game.
- c) Eject F3 for using an illegal glove and remove the glove from the game.
- d) Award the batter first base and any other runners forced to advance one base for the infraction by the defense and remove the glove from the game.

R1, R2, none out. B1 hits a single to the outfield. R2 scores. F9 throws the ball towards 3rd base in an attempt to throw out R1 who was advancing. The throw hits the 3rd base bag and then contacts the on-deck hitter's shin guards that were left on the ground near the on-deck circle in fair territory. F5 picks up the ball and throws R1 out at the plate. The BR continues on towards 2nd base. You should:

- a) Rule that all play is legal because the ball first hit the 3rd base bag before it hit the shin guards. R2 scores, R1 is out and B1 is safe at 2nd base.
- b) Call time as soon as the ball contacts the offensive equipment. Score R2, R1 is ruled out on the offensive equipment interference and the BR is sent back to 1st base.
- c) Call time as soon as the ball contacts the offensive equipment. Return R1 to 2nd base and R2 to 3rd base and B1 to 1st base.
- d) Call time as soon as the ball hits the 3rd base bag. Award all runners one base from the time of the throw.

The head coach is responsible to list their name on the line-up card and sign it. In the third inning

the opposing coach informs you that the coach failed to list their name or sign the line-up card. You should:

- a) Check your line-up card and if the opposing coach is correct, eject the offending coach under Rule 4.
- b) Have the offending coach add their name and sign the line-up card without penalty, even though Rule 4 states it is mandatory.
- c) Ignore the opposing coach's request and tell them to coach and not worry about it.
- d) Check your line-up card and if the opposing coach is right, warn the offending coach and eject a player not in the game.

In the third inning, the offensive coach informs the PU that they forgot to list a substitute on the starting line-up card. The coach wants to add this player to the starting line-up. The player was not expected to attend the game but showed up in the 6th inning.

- a) Inform the coach that the player may not be added to the official line-up card because the line-ups became official at the opening plate conference.
- b) The player may be added to the team list but can only participate in a non-playing role (base coach, bat person, scorer).
- c) The player must immediately be used as a substitute for an active player or they cannot be added to the line-up card.
- d) Add the player and their number to your line-up card, inform the official scorekeeper and the opposing coach.

A coach starts the game with only nine players on the bench. In the second inning, another player arrives and the coach asks you to add the tenth player to the official starting line-up as the DEFO not batting for the 4th player listed in the line-up, the pitcher.

- a) Because the team only had nine players to start the game, you have authority to grant the coach's request to use the DP rule under these circumstances.
- b) The DP rule states that you must have ten players at the start of the game to use the rule. You disallow the coach's request.
- c) You can allow this change, but the new player must assume a position in the batting order (first nine listed).
- d) You may allow this late change if the opposing coach agrees to it.

The starting line up has the DP listed fourth. In the third inning, the coach informs you that the shortstop, Smith, batting second will now become the DP and that the player listed as the starting DP, Jones, will now play shortstop. In the fifth inning the coach wants the DEFO, Johnson (pitcher - listed tenth) to bat.

- a) Johnson can bat in any position as long as he returns to the DEFO position at the end of the inning.
- b) The DP is suspended and Johnson bats for Jones.
- c) Jones becomes the DEFO and Johnson bats.
- d) The DP is suspended and Johnson bats for Smith.

With one out in the third inning, the visiting coach informs you that he is substituting for his batter. "Number 12 will now bat for number 33". Then the home coach tells you that he wants to change the pitcher. "Number 25 for number 17". As soon as the visiting coach hears the home coach make the pitching change, he asks you to forget his batting substitution. He has changed his mind because the change had not yet been given to the official scorer.

- a) The visiting coach is correct. The changes only become official when given to the official scorer.
- b) The visiting coach is correct. The changes are not official until a pitch has been thrown, legal or illegal.
- c) The changes became official as soon as they were given to the umpire, even though they were not given to the official scorer.
- d) The changes are not official because the home coach was also making changes at the same point in the game and they were not given to the official scorer.

Shortstop Bennett started the game, was substituted for a pinch-hitter in the second inning and returned to the game. In the fourth inning, was again substituted for a pinch-hitter and returned to the game. All of the substitutions were given to the PU except for Bennett's return to the game in the fourth inning. In the sixth inning Bennett bats, singles and advances to 2nd base on a wild pitch. The defensive coach then notices that Bennett is an illegal substitute and immediately brings it to the PU's attention.

- a) Bennett is safe at 2nd base but he and his coach are ejected from the game. A legal substitute is placed at 2nd base.
- b) Because Bennett was discovered after his turn at bat and after a pitch had been thrown, Bennett is replaced by a legal substitute. Bennett is declared an illegible player and removed from the game.
- c) Because Bennett was discovered after his turn at bat and after a pitch had been thrown, Bennett is replaced at 2nd base. He and his coach are ejected.
- d) Because Bennett was discovered after his turn at bat and after a pitch had been thrown, the infraction is disregarded. There is no penalty.

Bases loaded, two outs. B1 hits the ball for a double. B1's helmet is intentionally removed while leaving the batter's box. The hit scores R3 and R2 easily. R1 is attempting to score, when the throw from the shortstop hits the helmet in front of the plate. F2 had a play on R1.

- a) Rule R1 out as F2 had a play. B1 is returned to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
- b) The ball remains alive and in play as this is not interference.
- c) Call "Time" and return R1 back to 3rd base because the thrown ball hit offensive equipment. B1 is returned to 2nd base.
- d) This is an appeal play for offensive equipment causing a blocked ball.

Throughout the game, members from the offensive team are quietly heckling the umpire. Later, one player is loudly disputing the base umpire's last out call. The umpire should:

- a) Call time and ask the bench to be quiet.
- b) Call time and warn the player for disputing calls
- c) Call time and warn the team for disputing calls.
- d) Call time and eject the offending player.

A coach calls time and walks directly to the plate umpire to make a pitching change. After making the change, his pitcher crosses the foul line leaving the field. The coach can then legally:

- a) Speak only with the new pitcher.
- b) Speak only with the new pitcher and catcher if in the pitcher's circle.
- c) Speak with any defensive player anywhere during the warm-up pitches.
- d) Speak only with the new pitcher and/or other team coaches.

In the bottom of sixth inning, a team with only 10 players is using the DP rule. Anderson is the DP batting fifth and Charles is the DEFO, pitcher. The second baseman, Hendricks is batting leadoff. He gets into it with the BU by disputing and then loudly swearing about a called strike. The BU ejects Hendricks. In order for the game to continue, the team must have a minimum of nine players.

- a) Charles can take Hendrick's spot in the line-up.
- b) Anderson can take Hendrick's spot in the line-up.
- c) Charles bats for Anderson and Anderson then takes Hendrick's spot.
- d) The game is a forfeit.

R2, R3, 2 out. B1 hits a single. R3 scores. R2 is attempting to score. The throw from F8 hits the discarded bat next to the plate. F2 had a play on R2.

- a) Rule R2 out as F2 had a play. B1 is returned to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
- b) Call "Time" and return R2 back to 3rd base because the thrown ball hit offensive equipment. B1 is returned to 1st base.
- c) Ignore the throw hitting the bat and keep the play alive.
- d) This is an appeal play for offensive equipment causing a blocked ball.

R2, R3, one out. B1 hits a single scoring R3 and R2. R1 ends up on 2nd base and B1 at 1st base. B2 steps into the box using the same bat. The defence appeals to the PU that the bat is illegal.

- a) B2 is out and all other advances by B1 and the runners are now legal.
- b) B2 is out and return the runners to 2nd and 3rd. B1 is returned to 1st base.
- c) B1 and B2 are both out. Return R2 and R3 to their bases held at the time of the pitch.

d) B1 is out. Return R2 and R3 to the bases they held at the time of the pitch.

The batter steps into the batter's box with an altered bat. The umpire notices the bat is altered when the count is 2 balls and 2 strikes.

- a) The batter is out and the new batter assumes the ball and strike count.
- b) The batter is out and is ejected from the game.
- c) The batter is out and the batter and coach are ejected from the game.
- d) Take no immediate action because this is an appeal play.

Which is not an illegal substitution?

- a) Using any unannounced substitution.
- b) Using a declared ineligible player.
- c) Using a substitute wearing the wrong number.
- d) Using a declared illegal player.

manager makes a defensive pitching change, Lewis. But the visiting manager fails to notify the umpire of the substitution until the player comes to bat. The visiting manager notifies the umpire of his mistake. The home manager appeals that the Lewis should be removed from the pitching position as an unreported substitution or ejected as an illegal player.

- a) There is no violation of the substitution rule.
- b) Lewis is removed from the pitching position but is allowed to continue playing any other position.
- c) These are considered simultaneous substitutions because no pitch has been thrown. Lewis is ejected from the game and is declared an illegal player.
- d) Lewis is removed from the game and declared ineligible, but may remain on the bench as a coach, scorer or bat person.

Umpires lose track of the number of outs. After the second out of the inning, the home team on defence leaves the field and the visiting team, finished offensively, takes their positions in the field. The visiting team manager appeals to the PU that they only received two outs during their last at bat. The PU confirms with the official scored that the manager is correct.

- a) It's too late for the visiting team to appeal because all of the defensive players had crossed the foul line and entered their dugout.
- b) The previous inning is considered complete, so the home team will only get two outs this inning due to umpire error.
- c) The appeal is not too late and the home team at must return to play defence and get a third out.
- d) None of the above.

Bases are loaded, one out. B1 hits a deep fly ball to F9 who dives, skids along the grass and catches the ball. R1 and R2 leave their bases early before the ball was first touched by F9. R2 and R3 score. The defence makes a proper appeal of R1 leaving early.

- a) R1 is the third out and no runs score.
- b) R1 is the third out and one run scores.
- c) R1 is the third out and two runs score.
- d) None of the above.

The pitching rule now states that pitchers are only allowed three warm-up pitches in each inning after the first unless they are a new pitcher. In the fourth inning a visiting team pitcher takes six pitches while you are taking a substitution from the opposing manager.

- a) Three balls are awarded to the batter.
- b) These pitches are allowed by rule.
- c) One ball is awarded to the batter.
- d) The home team should be given six pitches in the next inning.

R2, R3, one out. Count is two balls and one strike. Bottom of the 7th inning, home team leads 3-1. PU calls an illegal pitch. The batter hits a deep fly ball to right-centre field. F8 dives, skids along the grass and makes the catch for the second out. R3 and R2 both tag and score. PU gives an option to the offensive coach. The options given are a choice of the batter being awarded a ball, all other base runners awarded one base and the batter returning to hit or:

- a) B1 is out, R3 scores and R2 is returned to 3rd base because base runners can only advance one base on the illegal pitch. Two outs.
- b) B1 one is out. R2 and R3 score. Two outs.
- c) B1 is out. R2 and R3 are returned to the bases they held at the time of the pitch.
- d) None of the above.

While B1 is in the batter's box and about to be thrown a pitch, the PU observes F5 moving radically back and forth, waving his hands and verbally trying to distract B1. The umpire should:

- a) Warn F5 that any further disruptive actions will result in his ejection from the game.
- b) Eject F5 immediately for deliberate unsportsmanlike conduct.
- c) Speak to F5's coach and issue a team warning
- d) Call an illegal pitch even though a pitch had not been thrown and eject F5.

R3, two out. The pitcher is standing on the pitching rubber in the pitching position with both feet in contact. The coach instructs F1 to appeal the previous play that a runner had left 3rd base early on a fly ball. The BU had observed that the runner had left 3rd base too soon. The pitcher threw the ball to F5 who was standing on the base. Ruling:

- a) The previous runner is called out for leaving too soon. Three outs, inning over.
- b) It's too late to accept the appeal because the pitcher was in the pitching position.
- c) Illegal pitch is called and the successful appeal at 3rd base is nullified.
- d) Illegal pitch is called and the appeal at 3rd base is granted for the third out of the inning.

Bases loaded, two out. Count is three balls and two strikes. F1 is about to begin the pitch. F1's hands break to begin the pitch. B1 steps back completely out of the batter's box and asks for time, but notices the PU going down to call the pitch. B1 stepped back into the batter's box and hit the pitch for a home run. Ruling:

- a) Batter is ruled out for being out of the batter's box before coming back in to hit the ball. Three outs.
- b) Ignore the batter stepping back because he was legally in the batter's box when the ball was contacted. Grand slam home run. Score four runs.
- c) No pitch should have been called when the batter had asked for time.
- d) F1 and his coach insist that the home run should be nullified because the batter vacated the batter's box completely. You agree.

R1, one out. F1 begins her windup and is in the process of delivering a pitch. For some reason, the pitcher fails to release the ball. R1 leaves 1st base before the pitch is released. PU calls an illegal pitch.

- a) BU calls "time – no pitch – R1 is out for leadoff"
- b) PU calls "no pitch" and warns the pitcher.
- c) BU and the PU should call both a and b above simultaneously.
- d) PU calls "illegal pitch" and gives the delayed dead ball signal.

In the bottom of the first inning you notice the 3rd base coach is wearing sandals. You ask him to wear proper footwear. He replies that he doesn't have any other shoes available. You should:

- a) Allow him to continue in the game with a warning.
- b) Remove the coach from the field but allow him to continue coaching from the dugout.
- c) Remove the coach from the field and not allow him to continue coaching from the dugout.
- d) Allow the coach from the other team the same option to wear sandals for that game only.

Catchers must wear a mask, helmet and throat protector (extended wire protection is approved in lieu of a throat protector) at all times, even when receiving warm-up pitches. Umpires should insure that:

- a) A mask, helmet and throat protector are worn at all times only on the playing field.
- b) Fast pitch catchers are prohibited from wearing a plastic face mask/guard in place of a mask, helmet and throat protector.
- c) A mask, helmet and throat protector are worn at all times by catchers not on the playing field

or in the designated warm-up areas.

- d) All of the above

Bases are loaded, none out. B1 hits a deep fly ball. All the runners are away with the pitch and figure there is no way a catch will be made. F7 goes high over the fence to make a spectacular legal catch. F7 fires the ball in to F4 who tags 2nd base and then F4 throws to F3 who touches 1st base. Three outs.

- a) This is a "time" play and R3's run counts. One run scores.
- b) This is a triple play with the third out coming at first base. No runs score.
- c) This is not a "time" play, therefore R3's run can't count. No runs score.
- d) None of the above

Bases are loaded, none out. The pitcher who is in the pitcher's circle, lays her glove down with the ball in it in order to tie a shoelace. All the base runners advance one base.

- a) Call "time" and return all runners to their original starting positions.
- b) Call R3 out for lead off. One out.
- c) Call all three runners out for leadoff. Three outs
- d) This is a legal advance by all three base runners.

R1, none out. As the pitcher begin the pitching motion, the batter steps backwards away from the plate and steps outside the batter's box. The pitcher sees the batter's movement and does not deliver the pitch because of the batter's actions.

- a) Time - No pitch is declared as the most equitable way to handle this.
- b) Illegal pitch is called on F1 for starting a pitch and failing to deliver it. Advance R1 to 2nd base.
- c) The pitch is called a ball even though it was not delivered because of the batter's actions.
- d) Time – No pitch is called. Advance R1 to 2nd base, but no ball on the batter.

A replacement runner is legal for a catcher who gets on base? Which of the following is not true?

- a) There must be two out.
- b) Use of the rule is mandatory.
- c) Re-entry and substitution rules are waived for the replacement runner.
- d) The replacement runner is the last player put out in the inning who is not on base.

A regulation game consists of seven innings, however a mercy rule was put in place to limit lop-sided games. Which of the following is not true?

- a) The mercy rule is used for all games.
- b) The mercy rule is 15 runs after 3 innings or 2 ½ if the home team is ahead.
- c) The mercy rule is 10 runs after 4 innings or 3½ if the home team is ahead.

d) The mercy rule is 7 runs after 5 innings or 4½ if the home team is ahead.

Which of the following is true?

- a) The pitcher may ask the umpire to intentionally walk a batter without throwing any pitches.
- b) The pitcher may roll the ball so that the batter cannot hit it.
- c) The pitcher may pitch all four balls way over the head of the batter so they cannot hit it.
- d) The pitcher may bounce the ball intentionally off the ground so that the batter cannot hit it.

R2, two out. During the pitcher's windup, the ball slips from the pitcher's hand and rolls towards second base. R2 quickly advances to 3rd base. The PU should:

- a) Call "Time", award a ball to the batter and return R2 to 2nd base.
- b) Call "Time – No pitch" and return R2 to 2nd base.
- c) Award a ball to the batter and allow R2's advance to 3rd base because the ball was not in possession by F1.
- d) Call No-pitch but allow R2's advance to 3rd base because the ball was not in possession by F1.

Men's NW Championships Heats up to a Brilliant Weekend!

By Julie Richardson

In the far north of Western Australia, in the small mining towns located in the Pilbara region above the 26th Parallel, softball is still thriving in the dusty outback.

Kalgoorlie, who traveled from the Eastern Goldfields (Adelaide is a bit closer!) participated at the invitation of the North-West Softball Association hosted by Mt Tom Price. Each year, this event is hosted by one of the towns in the Pilbara. These include, Paraburdoo, Karratha, Wickham, Dampier, Newman, Tom Price, Exmouth, and Port Hedland.

In 2005, there were five teams participating in the Championships of which two were from the host town, with one being a development team. The other towns involved were Paraburdoo, Kalgoorlie, and Dampier. The UIC for the championship was Barry Sargeant (Wickham) whom unfortunately was ill during the tournament and was only able to participate in a limited capacity. We had two candidates to assess, Mark Dwyer (Tom Price) vying for Level 3, and Louise Stanwix (Tom Price) for Level 2. As the Chief Examiner, I was joined by Betty Maass (Perth) and assisted by Keith Cairnes (Dampier). Other officials included Grant Morton (Paraburdoo), Colin Cook, Mitchell Barrett and John Pyke all from Tom Price. There were a couple of others that assisted on one or two games during the Championship.

The weather was turned on in spectacular form. The afternoons were an atmospheric display of lightening and thunder, though this did not thwart the games or the participants. Only one monsoonal downpour occurred, fortunately though, during the lunch break.

There were three diamonds in use, with four time slots. The games were 80 minutes with 20 minutes break in between. Diamond (1) was the main diamond, and is semi enclosed with a fixed back net and dug outs for the teams, portable home run fence.

The bases were cut out and filled with red sand, though spectacular, were somewhat soft to run on especially the base cutouts.

A great initiative from the Host Association, Tom Price allocated large chests with ice and cold bottled water for each of the diamonds providing plenty of fluid replenishments for the players and officials during the weekend. Lunch was also provided for the umpires from the host association.

The umpires room was large and more importantly, with air-conditioning! There was another room for sitting around and where games could be observed.

Probably one of the more memorable events of the Championships was the number of skydivers/parachutists that continued to land in the out-field of each of the diamonds – during the game!

Congratulations finally to both candidates in successfully passing their respective levels. Their performances were outstanding under some difficult conditions.

As visitors from Perth, both Betty and I were well received by all participants at the North-West Men's Championships.

The interaction, questions, approachability and cooperation between umpires and team officials was very refreshing.

The weekend was well organized by the host association, Tom Price – congratulations on a successful tournament!

