



National UIC's Call

With Tricia Sibraa

Great news for Australian umpire Program

The following Australian umpires have been selected to officiate at the XIII Men's World Championship in Auckland, New Zealand in March 2013.

Congratulations are extended to Leigh Evans (Victoria), Darren Sibraa (Queensland) and Scott Rindfleish (New South Wales).

National Championships

Gilley's 1 and Gilley's 2 have been conducted with George Norrish (New South Wales) and Stephen Wallace-Yarrow (South Australia) attaining their Level 6 accreditation. Congratulations George and Stephen.

New Zealand umpires Andrew McManus and Darrell Paul have attended Gilley's 1 and Gilley's 2 respectively, with Dave Beaumont currently umpiring at the Open Men's in Canberra and Jeff Weber attending Gilley's 4 at Waverley, Victoria.

We are currently in Canberra at the John Reid – Open Men's National Championships. Over one night, we had a tree fall on Diamond 2 in the right field fence area. Thanks must go ACT grounds staff for ensuring we could still start the games on time.

Photos kindly supplied by Harvey Milson.



At the recent ACTEW Canberra Skins Tournament the following umpires officiated at the A & B Grade competitions:

From Victoria: Debbie Grove, Leigh Evans, Kevin Broomhall, Jason Carter, Trevor Murphy, Ryan Thorneycroft and David Addlem; from Queensland: Darren Sibraa and David Casey; from New South Wales: Andrew Rindfleish and Jesse Smith; and from New Zealand, Dave Beaumont. Tricia Sibraa acted as TCU.

The following umpires umpired the B grade, Under 15 and Under 13 competitions:

From Victoria: Richard Dodds and Brett Tyler; from South Australia: Kevin Tannebring and Haydyn Wood; from Western Australia: Grant Morton and Mark Wareham; from New South Wales: Craig Myers, Vic Guillaumier, Dylan Murdoch, Chris Maybin, Chris Houison and Brett Atkinson; and local ACT umpires: Alex Turnbull, Nathan Levy, Dick Gallagher, Andrew Dixon, Rob Dixon and Billy Dixon. Alex and Brett acted as joint TCUs.

Thank you to all umpires involved in this year's Skins Tournament.

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National Development

Australian Development Squad announced

The 2012-2013 development squad has recently been announced. Congratulations to the following umpires:

Alex Turnbull - ACT
Bridget Cameron - Queensland
Chris Trengove - Victoria
David Casey - Queensland
Jana McCaskill - Queensland
Jay Gibson – New South Wales
Jesse Smith – New South Wales

Kyira Cox – New South Wales
Leanne Gearside – New South Wales
Mark Toft – Queensland
Richard Barrow - Victoria
Ryan Thorneycroft - Victoria
Stuart Tyler - Victoria
Trevor Murphy - Victoria

Update from Play by the Rules

New Play by the Rules promotional booklet

How we're helping to create safe, fair & inclusive sporting cultures

Play by the Rules provides information, resources, online training and promotional campaigns, but it is so much more than this . . .

. . . it is an ethos or a way of thinking - that everyone involved in sport should be able to do so in an enjoyable, safe environment, free from discrimination, harassment or bullying.

We've produced a new free promotional booklet which outlines the work we're doing to make your sport safe, fair and inclusive and how you or your organisation can utilize Play by the Rules effectively.

You can download the booklet at www.playbytherules.net.au/resources/promotional-booklet or if you would like a hard copy sent to you please send an email to rhonda.turnbull@ausport.gov.au with your address details.

Technical Update – with Leigh Evans

2012 Rules Examination and Technical Report

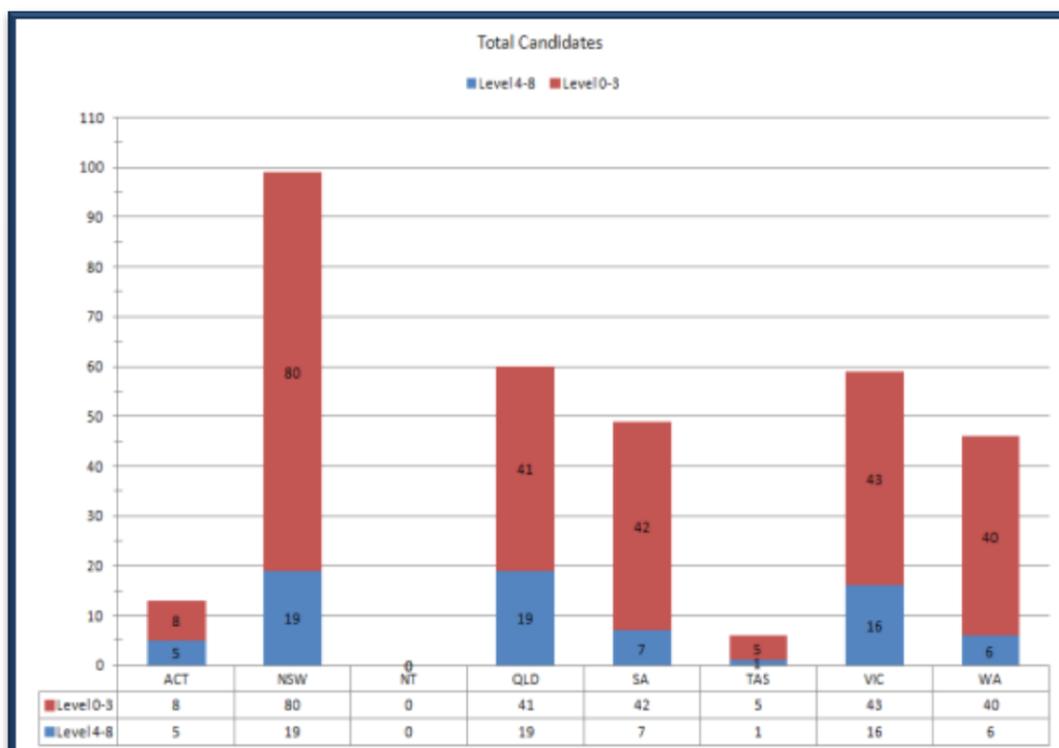
There were four technical bulletins, one policy and one update published and circulated during the year:

- SAL Mechanics Bulletin Outfield coverage three umpire system SAL_MB_2011-1
- SAL Australian Championship ISF Bat Certification Verification Procedure. SAL TB 2011-6 UPDATE (end of phase in and penalties for use)
- SAL Technical Bulletin batter's box markers SAL_TB_2011_7 Update (removing option of extended line across the back of the batter's box)
- SAL Technical bulletin Rules Exam Flexibility SAL TB 2011-5 (adding sup exam flexibility for less than two marks)
- SAL Guidelines for Lightning Strikes v3 (policy)

Version 2 of the ISF Pitching POE PowerPoint Presentation and video has been produced and put up on the International Softball Federation's web site and YouTube.

Darren Sibraa, Kevin Broomhall and Leigh Evans sat on various panels and provided ISF with assistance on rules and mechanics.

A total number of 331 candidates at all levels sat the 2012 Australian Umpire Theory Examination, which was a decrease of 16% on the previous year. A state by state breakdown of candidates who sat the exam is as per the below table:



The 2012 exam was developed by Leigh Evans and proof read and edited by Darrell Shephard and Alan McAuliffe.

Darren Sibraa supervised the development of this year's Basic Exam, with assistance provided by Jesse Smith and Bridget Cameron. Thank you!

Thanks are also extended to Graham Bancroft, who updated both the Supplementary Exams and Online Reference Exams, as well as proofing the Basic Exam rule references.

Finally, thanks also to Matt Gowty, who developed the exam analysis program that had the capability of producing informative charts and data that was used extensively when reviewing the results of the examination.

For this year's open exam, the average mark for Levels 0-3 was 66.8 and the average for Levels 4-8 was 84.2. The overall average for all candidates was 70.7.

QUESTIONS THAT CAUSED DIFFICULTY

The ten (10) questions that caused most difficulty Australia wide **AT ALL LEVELS** were:

	Level 0-3		Level 4-8		All Levels	
	Question number	Percentage incorrect	Question number	Percentage Incorrect	Question number	Percentage Incorrect
1	Q. 47	83%	Q. 47	66%	Q. 47	79%
2	Q. 2	78%	Q. 86	66%	Q. 2	75%
3	Q. 86	72%	Q. 2	62%	Q. 86	71%
4	Q. 13	71%	Q. 60	62%	Q. 13	64%
5	Q. 91	69%	Q. 72	56%	Q. 91	63%
6	Q. 70	67%	Q. 70	48%	Q. 70	63%
7	Q. 84	66%	Q. 42	47%	Q. 84	57%
8	Q. 58	61%	Q. 64	45%	Q. 42	55%
9	Q. 14	58%	Q. 89	41%	Q. 72	55%
10	Q. 46	58%	Q. 91	40%	Q. 64	54%

Following is a summary of these questions with rulebook statements, reasoning and discussion points. Thanks to Jason Carter and Howard Watt for helping to compile the following report.

Q47. Tape applied to any bat must be continuously spiral. It must also be a solid layer that shall not exceed two layers.

A. FALSE – Rule 3 sec 1k Note

“Tape applied to any bat must be continuously spiral. It does not have to be a solid layer of tape. It shall not exceed two layers.”

Although the tape must be continuous it does not have to be a “solid layer”.

Q2. None out, R1 on 3rd and R2 on 1st, with F3 playing behind the baseline. B3 hits a line drive ground ball that strikes R2, who is still standing on the base, before it passes a fielder other than the pitcher. F3 picks up the ball and tags R2, who by now is off base, then touches the base to force B3 out. R1 advances home on the play. RULING: All plays are legal, so the run scores on the double play.

A. FALSE – Rule 8 Sec 1e Effect 3

“THE BATTER BECOMES A BATTER-RUNNER...When a fair ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of the umpire or a runner...If the contact is made...before passing a fielder, excluding the pitcher, without being touched, the ball is dead.”

Rule 8 Sec 10m

“THE RUNNER IS NOT OUT...When he is struck by a fair, untouched batted ball while in contact with his base, unless he intentionally interferes with the ball, or a fielder making a play.”

There are two important aspects to this question:

1. The batted ball has struck a runner BEFORE passing a fielder other than the pitcher. Therefore the ball is dead and the batter becomes a batter-runner.
2. R2 was hit while standing on the base and is therefore NOT out.

Based on these pieces of information, the ball is dead, the batter-runner is awarded 1st base and R2 is forced to 2nd base. So we are left with R1 on 3rd, R2 on 2nd and B3 on 1st.

Q86. With no runners on base, F3 recovers a wild pitch and throws the ball to F5, who then proceeds to throw the ball around the diamond.

RULING: The umpire should award an additional ball to the batter.

A. FALSE – Rule 6 Sec 6b

“THE CATCHER... Shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, including after a foul ball.”

This rule only applies to the catcher, not to the other fielders. Also note that there are additional exceptions to this rule where this does not apply:

- After a strikeout;
- When the batter becomes a batter-runner;
- When there are runners on base;
- When a foul ball is fielded close to the foul line and he throws to any base for a possible out; or
- When, a checked swing on a dropped third strike situation, he throws to first base to retire the batter-runner.

Q13. A force out can only be accomplished by the fielder, in possession of the ball, touching the base to which the runner is forced to advance.

A. FALSE – Rule 8 Sec 9c 1-3

“When, on a force play, a fielder

- 1. While holding the ball, contacts the base to which the runner is forced to advance.*
- 2. Touches the ball to the base before the runner reaches the base.*
- 3. Tags the runner before he reaches the base.”*

As a result, there are multiple ways in which a fielder can accomplish a force out under definition. Remember also:

NOTE: If a forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason toward the base he had last occupied, the force play is reinstated.

Q91. B1 hits the ball with an illegal bat and reaches 1st.

RULING: B1 is out and ejected from the game for using an illegal bat.

A. FALSE – Rule 7 Sec 9c

“THE BATTER IS OUT... When he enters the batter's box with, or is discovered using, an illegal bat.”

NOTE to Sec. 9b & c: The bat is removed from the game.

The ball is dead, the batter is called out and each runner must return to the base that, in the umpire's judgement, was touched at the time of the pitch. The bat is removed from the game. If the batter was using an Altered Bat they would be ejected.

Q70. R3 on 2nd, when B4 hits a sharp ground ball to F5, who lets the ball pass, untouched, between his legs. The ball contacts R3 just as F6, who is backing up, is about to field the ball. F6 had ample time to throw B5 out at 1st. Should R3 be declared out for interference?

A. YES - Rule 8 Sec 9k

“THE RUNNER IS OUT... when he is struck with an untouched, fair-batted ball in fair territory while off the base, and in the umpire’s judgement any fielder had an opportunity to make an out.”

Although the ball had passed a fielder, clearly F6 could have made an out. Therefore this is interference. Had F6 (or any other fielder) not been in a position to make an out, the ball would have remained alive.

Q84. When the physical structure of a legal bat has been changed, the bat is considered to be an Illegal Bat.

A. FALSE - Rule 1 Sec 1

“ALTERED BAT...a bat is altered when the physical structure of a legal bat has been changed.”

Examples of altered bats include adding material inside the bat, or adding a flare or cone grip. This can be easily confused with an Illegal Bat, which is a bat that “does not meet the requirements of Rule 3 Sec 1.”

Q42. R1 on 1st. He attempts to steal on the next pitch, as B3 deliberately blocks F2’s attempt to throw to 2nd. The throw is successful and R1 is tagged out. **RULING:** The umpire should declare a dead ball, call B3 out and return R1 to 1st.

A. TRUE - Rule 7 Sec 9k 2 & Effect

“THE BATTER IS OUT...when he intentionally hinders the catcher, while standing in the batter’s box...The ball is dead and each runner must return to the base that, in the umpire’s judgement, was touched at the time of the interference.”

By intentionally hindering the catcher, the batter has caused interference and therefore the ball is immediately dead and he is out. What occurs after that point is irrelevant, as runners will return to the base they held when the interference occurred.

Q72. An Illegal Pitch should be declared when a pitcher, after commencing the wind-up and taking one hand off the ball, does not release the ball because he hears the offensive coach call "Time".

A. FALSE - Rule 6 Sec 10e 1

"NO PITCH... shall be declared when a player, manager or coach

1. Calls 'Time', or

2. Employs any other word or phrase, or

3. Commits any act while the ball is alive and in play the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit and illegal pitch."

This rule is clearly to prevent the offensive team for employing tactics to create an illegal pitch; in this case, the pitcher heard 'Time' and stopped his windup. The defensive team was not at fault and therefore should not be penalised by the actions of the offensive coach.

Q64. The umpire shall forfeit the game if any player disputes his call, after having given a team warning.

A. FALSE - Rule 4 Sec 10

"DISPUTED CALLS...any team member disputing any judgement decision by an umpire will constitute a team warning. Any repeat offence shall result in the ejection of that team member."

Forfeiting a game because a player disputes a call is clearly over the top. See Rule 5 Sec 4b 1-10 for a list of reasons why the plate umpire may forfeit a game.

Q58. The batter-runner is out, when a fair-batted fly ball is eventually caught by an outfielder, after having been first touched by an infielder and deflected onto a runner.

A. FALSE - Rule 8 Sec 2b

"THE BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT...when a fielder legally catches a fly ball before it touches the ground, or any object or person other than a defensive player"

As the ball deflected off a runner, who is an offensive player, the batter-runner is not out.

Q14. If the third out of an inning is made on a runner prior to the discovery of a batting out of order infringement, can an appeal still be made in order to re-instate the correct batting order?

A. YES - Rule 7 Sec 2c-d Effect 2e

"If the third out is made on a runner prior to the discovery of the infraction, an appeal may still be made in order to re-instate the correct batting order. This appeal, if made, does not result in an additional out."

This rule ensures that the correct batting order is re-established for the next offensive inning, preventing the potential for the top of the line up batting again.

Q46. There is one out with R3 on 3rd and R4 on 2nd. R4 leads off on the pitch as B5 hits a fly ball to F8, who catches the ball. R3 scores on the catch. F8 throws to F4 and plays 2nd before R4 can return. Is the out made at 2nd considered to be a force out?

A. No - Rule 1 Sec 35

"A force-out is an out which can be made only when a runner loses the right to the base which he is occupying, because the batter becomes a batter-runner and before the batter-runner, or a succeeding runner, has been put out. On an appeal play the force out is determined by the force situation at the time the appeal is made; not at the time of the infraction"

This is an important rule to get right, as the run will, or won't, count depending on the ruling. In this case, there was no force play on R4 therefore the run would count.

Q60. A batted ball goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batter's head, to the catcher's glove, hits the chest protector, rebounds and is then held in the glove for a catch. RULING: This is a Foul Tip.

A. TRUE – Rule 7 Sec 8

"A foul tip is a batted ball which goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batter's head, to the catcher's hands and is legally caught by the catcher."

The deciding factor here is that the ball must go "directly to the catcher's hands" therefore, even though in this case it rebounds off the chest protector, this happens AFTER travelling to the catcher's glove. This still constitutes a legal catch.

Q89. The umpire may give permission for a metal knee brace to be worn, as long as all metal is covered by soft material and taped.

A. TRUE – Rule 3 Sec8f Note

“Any exposed metal (other than a cast) may be considered legal if adequately covered by a soft material, taped and approved by the umpire.”

The Umpire must ensure that all metal is covered adequately and that no participant is likely to be injured as a result of the brace being worn.

National Championships

Gilley's Round One – Mirrabooka, Perth, WA

Friday 26 to Sunday 28 October 2012

Is it my imagination, or does the idea of attending a National Softball Competition in October make Christmas get here that much sooner?



Thanks to Warren Duff for his local knowledge and hospitable nature. Sienna's at Leederville was a great choice for a Friday night meal. What does "Fat Yak" have to do with beer anyhow?

Warm regards to our visitor and new friend from New Zealand - Andy McManus. Would you believe somebody made reference to Andy being a good looking guy? Who said that I wonder? Can anyone guess how many years it has been since Steve Suckling has been seen on the diamond at a National tournament? Guess what, it took Steve a while to figure this one out as well. Welcome back old mate.

Perth was kind enough to turn on some great weather that helped make some good games. Unfortunately, this did not continue into Sunday with some games being rain affected. Who said the Victorians bought this weather them?

Kings Park at night continues to impress memorable thoughts upon those visiting from interstate and further abroad.

It would appear that a good time was had by all, particularly those that did not want to go home, and decided the last game did not need to end on Sunday afternoon. Coming your way Adelaide.

Writer: Damien McCauley

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Queensland

2012 Under 19s Men's and Women's State Championships

Toowoomba played host to a combined Under 19 Men's and Women's State Championships. This was the first time in many years that the Men's and Women's Under 19 divisions were combined.



Photo: Norelle Thomas as plate umpire

Toowoomba Softball Association was a great host venue considering the number of games and teams involved. The Queensland softball community also supported the championship given there was a greater number of people in attendance.

This championship provided the umpires with an opportunity to conduct an Examiners Clinic. The clinic was led by Darren Sibraa and supported by recently accredited ISF umpires, Helen Strauss and Yvonne Kahler.

The active involvement by all participants was a reflection on every umpire's willingness to learn and develop additional skills, particularly when assessing and providing constructive feedback. Of particular interest were the classroom sessions which included all attendees presenting on rules and demonstrating the rotation system. I must admit I lucked out on my rule interpretation as it was easy with only one rule applying. I am glad I didn't have to present the scenario that combined the unannounced substitute, illegal re-entry and batting out of order. Thanks are extended to Darren Sibraa (who presented and organised the clinic), Helen Strauss, Yvonne Kahler, Tricia Sibraa and Matt Gowty.

The games during the weekend also provided an opportunity to put into practice our skills developed throughout the clinic. I am sure that this additional feedback received as part of the clinic was valuable in our on-going development.

The umpiring crews for the championship games are as follows:

Men's Crew: David Casey (plate), Darren Sibraa (1st), Jamie Harries (2rd) and Mark Toft (3rd)



Photo: (L to R) Mark Toft, David Casey, Jamie Harries and Darren Sibraa

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Photo: (L to R) Bridget Cameron, Yvonne Kahler, Helen Strauss and Jana McCaskill

Women's Crew: Helen Strauss (plate) Yvonne Kahler (1st) Jana McCaskill (3rd) Bridget Cameron (2nd)

I must make a special note that considering the number of games officiated over and championships attended together - Yvonne, Helen, Jana and Bridget (noting that these four women come from the Brisbane Softball Association) the allocation to the women's grand final was the first time that they all

worked together on the same game! Hence why the next photo...

Finally, thanks are extended to the TCU, Tricia Sibraa, and the management crew of Darren Sibraa, Yvonne Kahler, Bridget Cameron and Helen Strauss for your assistance provided throughout the tournament.

Writer: David Casey



2012 Under 17s Boys State Championships

Over the weekend of 22–24 September Noosa played host to the 2012 Queensland Under 17 Boys State Championships. Noosa is a great venue for a state tournament, with the association pulling out all stops to ensure that the tournament was a success.

We had great weather for 2½ days, but unfortunately we were hit with a storm on the last day of the tournament. This resulted in the grand final being washed out after playing 4 ½ innings. Redlands was declared as state champions having gone through the preliminary round games in first position.

The games at the tournament were of a high standard, which brought out the best of all umpires in attendance. The following umpires staffed the grand final games:

- State Championship Final – Alan Walsh, Brian McPherson, Steve Gutteridge
- President's Cup – Yvonne Kahler, Gillian Opie, Oliver Frye.

Congratulations are also extended to Simon Wadie (Caboolture) and Michael Pedler (Redcliffe) for successfully achieving their Level 2 accreditation. Finally, I would like to thank all umpires who officiated at the tournament as your level of enthusiasm and dedication is appreciated.

Writer: David Casey