



National UIC's Call Andrew Rindfleish



In recent months the Australian Softball Umpire Program was very well represented on the world stage. In June Scott Rindfleish (NSW) and Darren Sibraa (Qld) officiated at the Under 19 Men's Worlds Championship in Whitehorse, Canada. Both were appointed to the semi-final game Australia was not playing in, with Scott on the plate and Darren at first base and to outfield lines on the final.

Then at the Beijing Olympics, Debbie Grove and Di Waller, both of Victoria, were fortunate enough to be on the umpire crew on the biggest stage. Di was appointed to first base on the Gold medal game, where Japan might just have breathed life into the softball Olympic revival. Margo Koskelainen was the Deputy Umpire in Chief at the Olympics.

I know all Australian softball umpires are extremely proud of the achievements of these five umpires.

The Board of Softball Australia has recently approved the appointment of members of the National Umpire Committee. Leigh Evans (Vic) and Debbie Grove (Vic) were re-appointed as Deputy Umpires in Chief, with Leigh continuing in the role of National Rules Interpreter. Yvonne Kahler (Qld) was reappointed as a national Staff Member with Warren Duff (WA) and Darren Sibraa (Qld) also appointed to the National Staff. My congratulations go to all five. Warren and Darren are new to these roles and replace Sue Itzstein and Scott Rindfleish, neither of whom sought reappointment. I'd like to thank Sue and Scott for their respective contributions whilst on the National Staff.

Across the country most of us will have commenced our summer seasons or soon will. I read with interest the article in this BNOL that Victoria Softball are developing a "safety first" policy, likely to include a component of zero tolerance. The NSW State League commenced three weeks ago with agreement from all male teams to a position of zero tolerance to disrespect to umpires and to players whose equipment hits the ground or any fence after leaving the players hands. I know Queensland have had a zero tolerance policy for a number of years. I commend these States for these initiatives as we need to have documented or stated positions and policies so that our umpires know they have the support of the State administrators in handling unsavoury on-diamond incidents. In those States without stated zero tolerance or the like policies, it behoves the senior umpires in those States to work with administrators to develop appropriate policies.

What's in this Edition?

- The Advanced Clinic
- Caboolture Clinic
- Successful Level 4s
- Toowoomba Level 1s
- Victoria's Safety Ideas
- Qld Forum well attended
- WA New UIC - PR
- Tom Price new Facility
- Slow Pitch umpires
- New Look Qld Committee
- Olympic Umpires

In Coming Issues

- Living the Olympic Dream
- Kiwi Officiates Beijing Final
- National Allocations
- What happened at the NUC?
- Umpire Recognition

National Umpiring Program

Website: www.umpiring.softball.org.au BNOL Submissions to mtoft@ozemail.com.au



Successful - Level 4 umpires



Three Level 4 candidates underwent assessment at the recent Queensland Open Women's State Championships at Redcliffe.

Paul Gierke (Toowoomba), Norelle Thomas (Toowoomba) and Natalie Fresser (Cairns) have joined the Level 4 ranks after successfully meeting requirements under assessment.

Successful L to R:

Norelle Thomas (Toowoomba)
Paul Gierke (Toowoomba)
Natalie Fresser (Cairns)



Back L to R: Ron Yardley (Facilitator), Graham Lewis, Josh Hartwig, Keana Homes, Elizabeth Fairchild, Hayden Selby, Helen Strauss (Facilitator).

Front L to R: Samantha Todd, Bryanna Jones-Terare, Gaye Ford, Gillian Opie, Andrew Shallcross.

Clinic @ Caboolture

A QSA Basic "2 Umpire System" clinic was conducted at Caboolture Association recently.

Participants who umpired on Saturday were observed on games and provided with feedback, and all participants attended a full day theory and practical session on the Sunday.

Well done to Caboolture for encouraging a new crop of umpires keen to be involved in softball umpiring.

National Umpiring Program



Queensland

www.umpires.qld.softball.org.au

2008 Queensland Umpiring Forum Participants



Front L to R: Michael Trost (Bundaberg), Bridget Cameron (Brisbane), Kim Fayle (Noosa), Ron Yardley (Brisbane), Danny Griffiths (Ipswich), Peter Baxter (Mackay).

Middle l to R: Darren Sibraa (State Director), Dave Andrews (Hervey Bay), Leith Whittaker (Central Highlands), Mick Gorman (Logan City), Bill Buckley (Caboolture), Ian Bunston (Suncoast Hinterland), Col Lee (Lockyer), Cheryl Hobday (South Brisbane), Mark Toft (Toowoomba), Natalie Fresser (Cairns), Matt Hendricks (Redcliffe)

Back L to R: Noell Kotara (Gladstone), Mathew Brooks (Gladstone), Brian MacPherson (Mt Isa), Matt Blake (Redlands), Sally Crawford (Recorder is taking the photograph)

The QSA Umpires Forum held recently was well attended by District Association representatives. Matters covered over the 2 days included:

- * 2007-08 SDU Report
- * Umpire development
- * State Championship procedures
- * Umpire training
- * National examination review
- * District Association coordinator responsibilities
- * District Association reports and issues

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New look Queensland Umpiring Committee

The membership of the Queensland Umpiring Committee has not changed, it's just become bigger. State Director Darren Sibraa was returned for his fourth term unopposed.

David Casey and Ron Yardley received the nod from the Queensland Board for another term. Current members Tricia Sibraa, Yvonne Kahler and Trevor Pascall will continue in their roles for another 12 months.

The big news in Queensland is the appointment of two fresh young faces on the committee in Matt Blake (Level 5) and Natalie Fleischfresser (Level 4). The appointment of these umpires has opened the committee to a younger approach to umpiring with younger ideas. Both umpires are very popular and well respected within Queensland umpiring circles. Matt and Natalie have taken the step up after leading their own District Association Umpiring Committees for a number of years.

Umpire Crew attended Queensland Masters at Logan

UIC - Patricia Sibraa

Deputy UIC's - Ron Yardley - Sally Crawford

Umpire Crew

Darren Sibraa, Taryn Whiley, Matt Pratt, John Dyer, Leigh Torrens, Amie McIntyre, Ryan Sippel, Ted Gross, Kerrod Jones, Melissa Gorman, Sharee Betts, Jamie Milsom, Jamie Harries

Ian Bunston, Justin Rosenberg, Vicianne Crane, Robert Murphy, Vicki Markey, Bill Buckley, Kim Fayle, Kevin Woodbury, Michael Nilsson, Jana McCaskill, Bridget Cameron

Jeffrey Hooper, Ken McIntyre, Emily McBride, Spence Williams, Kelly Ireland, Danny Griffiths, Belinda Jenkins, Reece Horsfall, Daphne Bickle, Charles Wright, David Andrews

Rachel Wilson, Ian Goodman, Ron Trow, Jon Pohle, Paul Gierke, Dom Skellern, Neville Baggow, Sean Francis, Shaun Lynch, Stacy Webber, Ian Frame, David Casey, Paul Ross

Stuart Fort, Drew Pickwick, Shea Llewellyn, Norelle Thomas, Geordie Long, Janelle Hicks, Luke Bunston, Paul Gutteridge, Steve Gutteridge, Ross Tickle, Sarah Hanisch, Allison Sternes

Andrew Pollard, Caitlin Borchert, John Jones, Luke Raynor, Morton Ward, Wayne Swile, Ben Keily, Tricia Cochrane, Debbie Curnow, Tony Ringrose, Sarah Saunders, Aimee Saunders, Kassidie Spencer

Recognition of new Level 1 umpires from Toowoomba

Myles Davis, Winston Ford, Darleen Davis, Stephanie Gierke, Nathan Alexander, Hayden Davis, Emma Thomas, Lachlan Bloomfield, Troy Bloomfield, Myria Pasfield, Dan Townley, Chris Townley, Ray Philbey, Michael Ferguson, Ben Freeman, Megan Toft, Cherie Pratley, Chris Rodgers, Tammy Senescall.

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Victoria

www.vuc.softball.org.au

Victoria Safety First

The Victorian Softball Association (VSA) recognises the importance of providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all those who participate in softball in Victoria.

To that end, the VSA has put together a panel of all stakeholders from representatives of player, coach and umpire groups to discuss and consult on this issue.

State Director, Di Waller has commissioned Jason Carter as Chairperson, and a sub committee of Kevin Broomhall, Richard Barrow and Leigh Evans to develop policy from the umpires perspective. This policy is to be put to a group of player, coach and board representatives, under the guidance of Bryan Edwards, State President.



Jason Carter

Over the next few weeks, the policy group will discuss the guidelines, issues and proposals in order to provide everyone a clear and common sense policy that will be applicable to all participants throughout the state in all competitions and leagues. The key message is that the new zero tolerance policy will be fair, easy to implement and easy to manage.

We hope that all stakeholders will support this initiative to make our game safe and enjoyable without losing the essence of the game that makes it such a great sport.



Beijing Olympic Crew

Back L to R: Bob Stanton, Jai Leming, Wiremu Tamaki, Javier Penarroya, Rob Veldkamp, Gianluca Magnani, Greg Pipher.

Front L to R: Traci Russell Stoelting, Nancy Morrison, Debbie Grove, Diane Waller, Jia Ali, Lori Bish, Margo Koskelainen.



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Western Australia

www.waumpires.softball.org.au

WA Umpires Heading for Tom Price

On November 20-22 Western Australian umpires will make the trek to Tom Price for the Northwest Championships. The Tom Price Association has just recently spent between \$10,000 and \$20,000 turning their diamond around with an upgraded fence and lighting.

The Diamond Club has done a great job building a new Club House. It is a fantastic facility for a small town.

It is the intention of the Western Australian Umpiring Committee to fly (with the assistance of Pilbura Iron) four umpires to Tom Price to officiate at the championships. While there examinations will be conducted on two candidates, one for a Level 4 and one for a Level 3.



Left: Julie Richardson, Peter Richardson and Warren Duff at the managers' meeting of a State League game last week.

Right: Peter Richardson in action at the plate during last week's State League game.



Profile WA State Director – Peter Richardson



Peter Richardson was born in Gibraltar 54 years ago. Before moving to Perth in 1973 Peter lived in Sussex for 13 years. He was married 36 years ago to the love of his life, Julie. They have two children Samantha (33) and Sarah (30). Peter and Julie also have two grandchildren Jamie 4 and Skyla 2.

Peter has been a Professional Bricklayer for 34 years and is multi-lingual, speaking Spanish and a little French, but struggles with the English language (ha-ha)

Likes: Cold beer on a hot day, nice red or white, game of cards, all sports.

Dislikes: Liars, Computers that don't work.

Umpiring career: Started umpiring 1985, obtained National Level 5 in 1993 (Darwin) and Level 6 1997 (Hobart) Peter has attended 15

Nationals and was appointed to tour with the Australian Men's team to Wellington (NZ) in 2000. Peter retired from Nationals in 2006.

Peter is currently umpiring within the State and took on the roll of SDU to see if he could make a difference within Western Australia.

Peter recently started playing indoor beach volleyball with Julie and Sarah in a six person team.

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2008 Advanced Clinic

The 4th of July – American Independence Day!
What were you doing? And for the four days that followed?

Well if you weren't in Sydney with Bridget Cameron (Qld), Jay Gibson (NSW), Steve Wallace-Yarrow (SA), Stuart Tyler (Vic), and Trevor Murphy (Vic) you weren't at this year's Advanced Umpiring Clinic.



Rear: Stuart Tyler, Leigh Evans
Middle: Trevor Murphy, Jay Gibson, Darren Sibraa
Front: Steve Wallace-Yarrow, Bridget Cameron

The Advanced Clinic was conducted from 5 – 8 July in conjunction with the 2008 Youth Development Friendship Series at the Home of NSW Softball – the Blacktown Olympic Park Facility. The crew was required in Sydney by 2000 hours on the July 4 and accommodation was at the Prospect Hotel, Great Western Highway, Prospect.

Steve and Trevor arrived in Sydney early on the day and found their own way to the accommodation and settled in. Sue Itzstein arranged to meet the remaining crew members at the Airport that evening and coordinated transport to the Hotel.

With all crew in location and introductions complete, including meeting our very competent tutors for the clinic - Leigh Evans and Darren Sibraa - all had a relatively quiet night. Just as well because we needed to be ready to travel to the training facility by 0715 hours the next morning – July 5.

However, come 0700 hours Darren was hurrying us along to get there early so we could enjoy our breakfast before taking to the classroom. The morning was bitterly cold and let me tell you my feet were still cold when we finished for the evening.

The clinic was structured primarily with theory aspects covered in a classroom environment over the first two days, which allowed Leigh and Darren (Darren was actually in transit on his way home from the World Championships in Canada), to depart Sunday evening to get back to their families. Then over the following two days we spent our time on the diamond, working with other crew members and receiving valuable feedback from Sue Itzstein and her very competent assistant assessors.

The clinic reviewed aspects covered during Basic and Intermediate Clinics and expanded on many topics including the umpire as a game manager, arbiter and communicator. As the clinic evolved these three aspects seemed to resurface continually throughout the theory phase. We had the opportunity to role-play, which exposed us to the experiences of giving and receiving feedback that will prepare us better for the future.

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2008 Advanced Clinic

CONTINUED...

Overall, I believe the five of us enjoyed the clinic very much and the opportunity to network and share experiences with each other and the tutors will prove valuable in the future.

On behalf of all the crew I must offer our thanks to many people including Leigh and Darren for the time they allowed us during their lengthy homeward bound trip, Kyra Cox for transporting us between the Airport, Hotel and the Blacktown venue, Sue Itzstein for her support, feedback and game allocations (and doing my washing), and it would be very remiss of me not to again thank the canteen staff led by Jody Neilsen without whom our meals would not have been available.

Finally, thanks go to Sarah who kept the umpires room a cheerful place to be and to all the other umpires who worked with us over the period – I won't remember everyone but here are a few LG, SA, AH, GG, SS, SG, AB, SWe, and Kiwis RT and JH.

The clinic finished on the Tuesday, but there was another three days of Friendship Series games being played and Steve and I were fortunate enough to be able to take the whole week to stay on and do some extra games. During this time I shared accommodation with Steve and a Kiwi umpire (Rikki Thompson). We managed to have some good times and Rikki allowed Steve and I to become honorary Kiwis for one game, when we all turned up wearing the fern leaf.

WANTED.....DEAD OR ALIVE (ALIVE PREFERRED)

Can you umpire slow pitch softball....that's ok there are people who will give you a crash course as soon as you arrive at the venue....if not the players will tell you anyway, just like they do in fast pitch so you don't feel too left out.

Australasian Police & Emergency Games

Venue: Coffs Harbour

When: Monday 13 to Wednesday 15 October 2008.

Competitions: Women's, men's and mixed

Why: Any help by umpires would be greatly appreciated.

Contact: Leanne Gearside (02) 96897370 Email gear1lea@police.nsw.gov.au

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Contributions to BNOL

Blue's News On-Line is the official Australian Softball Umpiring magazine which is written by umpires for umpires.

Contributions to the BNOL magazine are a simple process. If you have any worthwhile story about an umpire, either on or off the field send it to the editor. Photographs always help in telling the story.

The deadline for each edition is the 15th day of each month and edition should be available from the NUC website by the first week of each month.

Contributions are not restricted to the elite umpires. We are looking for articles about all umpires from Level 1 through to our international representatives.

Recognition of umpire achievements is a major part of BNOL and it's this recognition that we hope will inspire umpires to develop through the National Umpiring Program.

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