



# Blues News On-Line

[www.umpiring.softball.org.au](http://www.umpiring.softball.org.au)

Edition September/October 2010



## National UIC's Call

with Tricia Sibraa

With the 2011 National Championship appointments published, I would like to congratulate the candidates who will be striving towards their next level. Candidates from Level 5 to 6 are Richard Barrow Victoria, Stephen Gutteridge and Matthew Blake Queensland, Kyira Cox, Leanne Gearside and Jesse Smith New South Wales.

Candidates from Level 4 to 5 are George Norrish and Sharyn Girdler New South Wales and Chris Trengrove from Victoria. I also welcome Hayden Wood from South Australia who will be the skill share umpire at the Arthur Allsopp Shield Australian Under 17 Boys.

I am pleased to announce that the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) has approved *Softball Australia's Umpire Level 2 (Basic Umpire Program) Training Program* under the National Officiating Accreditation Scheme (NOAS).

I take this opportunity to thank Debbie Grove, Ian Frame, Yvonne Kahler, Helen Strauss, Amanda Houison, Ron Houison, Howard Watt, Stacey Loveridge, Jason Carter, Phil Waller, Leigh Evans and Steve Grove who have all assisted to review the basic level manuals, development of a complaints policy and development of an introductory level manual.

As you are all aware the website has not been so friendly over the past couple of months. Richard Barrow has worked many hours to ensure all the links on the umpiring website are now active.

If you are looking for a good article to read may I recommend "Behind the Plate" by Bob Stanton, ISF Director of Umpiring which can be found later in this edition. Bob speaks about working the plate, top of the strike zone and game control to mention a few of the subjects in the article.

This edition also contains a tribute to one of Australia's most influential and well respected umpires, Vivienne Triplett, after whom the prestigious Australian Umpire of the Year Award is named. The article was written by close friend, Margo Koskelainen, and once you have read it, I am sure you will have a greater understanding of her impact on the sport, and why she will be so sorely missed.

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# New South Wales

[www.nswumpires.softball.org.au](http://www.nswumpires.softball.org.au)

## A Sea of Green at the Open Men's

Flooding rain may have fallen all across NSW at the weekend, but at Macarthur Districts Softball Association it was a different type of flood: a flood of green shirts.

Fashion experts often say that 'blue and green should never be seen', but the umpires at the 2010 SNSW Open Men's State Championship ignored this advice and donned their Pep's Auto Spares shirts.

The two-day championship was unfortunately marred by inclement weather. Nevertheless, the wet conditions did little to dampen the mood of the twelve-strong umpiring crew, led by UIC Bruce McCahon.

With grey skies and heavy rain on Sunday morning preventing games from starting until 10:30am, the high visibility green umpire shirts added some much needed light out on the diamond. Three timeslots were played Saturday before play was abandoned.

Returning Monday to the ball park, which is in close proximity to long-time SNSWUA sponsor Pep's Auto Spares – Narellan, games were soon underway. A heavy shower saw further delays to the last round game, which resulted in a decision to not have the playoff finals.

The first pitch of the Grand Final between Macarthur and Newcastle was thrown at 2:15pm. The following umpires had a highly visible (green) presence on the grand final: Ron Houison (Plate), Scott Rindfleish (1<sup>st</sup>), Amanda Houison (2<sup>nd</sup>), Andrew Rindfleish (3<sup>rd</sup>).

With Macarthur wrapping up the game in the sixth inning, and the presentation complete, the skies turned grey again and the umpires wearing the bright green shirts turned for the umpires' room where they were presented with their certificates of appreciation and thanked for their efforts.

"Thank you to all members of the crew for your patience and flexibility across a trying weekend," said UIC Bruce McCahon.

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## 75 Games, 53 Umpires, 2 Days of U12 State Championship Action

Tie breakers, home runs, double plays, remarkable outfield catches – the 2010 Softball NSW U12 State Championships had it all and watching it from the prime, on-diamond position were the 53 umpires.

75 games were played over the weekend as Jacqui Osmond Reserve, the home of Southern Districts Softball Association, played host to 22 teams of excited U12 players from across NSW.

With umpires coming from as far as Tamworth, Orange and Wagga Wagga – it was a feast of action as all were kept on their toes with many of the games on the final day going down to the wire.

For North Shore umpire James Townsend, this event was particularly special as he umpired in his first championship game on third base in the boy's final.

“This is the first time I've been on a final at a State Championship and I'm really excited; it is the highlight of my weekend,” Townsend said.

The weekend also provided Townsend with an opportunity to refine his game ahead of the Softball NSW U14 State Championships at Orange in November where he will be a Level Two candidate.

“I'm here with a lot of higher leveled umpires who provide great feedback. Their feedback allows me to focus on what I'm doing as I try to iron out all the little flaws (in preparation for Orange).”

Championship Umpire-in-Chief Ron Houison was glowing in his praise of the crew who umpired on average six to seven games each across the weekend.

“There was a wide range of experience out on the diamond, including brand new level ones and even a level six umpire that is part of the International Development Squad,” Houison said.

“We saw a lot of skills transferred with the more experienced umpires being able to mentor the less experienced umpires.

“I hope all umpires went away with a positive from the weekend, whether it be that they umpired a great game, made some new friends or got some tips which will help them umpire a little bit better.

“Overall we had an absolute blast – lots of smiles, lots of laughter and we did a lot of hard work as well.”

### 2010 Softball NSW U12 Girl's State Championship

Plate: Melissa Wallace (Cumberland Nepean)

First Base: Dermot O'Daly (Macarthur)

Third Base: Jayden Lach (Georges River)

Card: Tara Foster (North Shore)

### 2010 Softball NSW U12 Boy's State Championship

Plate: Krissi Travers (Macarthur)

First Base: Vikki Armsworth (Cumberland Nepean)

Third Base: James Townsend (North Shore)

Card: Dylan Murdoch (Wagga Wagga)

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## Basic Clinic, `a hit`, with Participants

"It would be an amazing thing for everyone when they start umpiring that they start with this type of clinic." That was the assessment of Manly Warringah/North Shore umpire Kylie Diaz following the second SNSWUA Basic Clinic for 2010.

Hosted by Cumberland Nepean Softball Association over the weekend of 18 -19 September, the clinic was a great success according to its participants and facilitators.

Nine umpires, representing associations from all over NSW, participated in the clinic facilitated by Sydney based umpires Ron Houison, Amanda Houison, Leanne Gearside and James English.

For one particular umpire, John Keleu, the weekend was not your average journey to the ball park to brush up on your skills out on the diamond. Keleu has recently travelled from Papua New Guinea to Australia and has joined the umpiring crew at Southern Districts.

After attending the 2010 NSW U12 State Championships the previous weekend, Keleu thought he could not pass up the opportunity to attend and thoroughly enjoyed his experience.

"I am looking forward to taking the skills I have learned back to PNG," Keleu said following the clinic.

Learning practical skills and enhancing rule knowledge was the focus of the clinic and participants were extremely pleased with the new skills they had walked away with.

Everything from positioning, to timing, to hustling was covered across the two days, with up-and-coming Coffs Harbour umpire Todd Winsor concluding: "I liked being able to refine and learn new skills."

The innovative use of video as a means of improving on-diamond performance, championed by the SNSWUA in recent times, was put to good use again and was positively received by all.

"The use of the video cameras helped fix the little things. It's a big improvement from [the Clinic] three years ago," said Chris Houison (Penrith City).

Keith Smith (Southern Districts) agreed, "Video footage helps a lot because you can actually see where you're going wrong and fix it."

Ron Houison, co-facilitator for the weekend's clinic, summed up by saying, "from my point of view the clinic was an outstanding success". He also paid tribute to the openness of the participants to engage with the course content and the hospitality shown by Cumberland Nepean Association, particularly Colin Tutt who was "a great supporter of the clinic."

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## Hornsby Leads the Way in Association Umpire Development

The Hornsby Softball Association (HSA) is one association that has risen to prominence on and off the diamond in the past five years.

Whilst your attention is drawn to their trophy cabinet which is collecting numerous State Championship titles - an indicator of their on-diamond success; there is one trophy that level three umpire Adrian Rampoldi is rather proud of – the 2009 Softball NSW Umpires Association Affiliate Award for Umpire Development.



**New Breed: Hamish Owen, Josh King and Tylor Morley with Adrian Rampoldi**

HSA has a flourishing umpire development program that sets a standard for which other associations can emulate. You sense the amount of pride straight away when talking to Rampoldi about the program, of which he is the key driver.

“We’ve implemented quite a few initiatives at Hornsby. Very broadly what we’ve done or tried to achieve is to get an environment where a lot of our junior umpires and all our umpires can have a fun environment to umpire and learn the skills. Hopefully out of that comes an incentive for them to move on to higher levels,” Rampoldi said.

As a single-sex playing association, one of the key achievements of the program, apart from its growing popularity, is the engagement of male participants.

“It’s been amazing; in the last few seasons we’ve had a lot of boys become involved, obviously some of the brothers and even fathers. We’ve got about a dozen males now which is fantastic given we’ve come from a situation where we have had predominantly female participants,” Rampoldi said.

“Four years ago we had about 15 umpires in the program, but the last two seasons we’ve had 65 active umpires who do at least one game a weekend, with many doing more than one.”

The key to any successful program is the ability to keep it fresh and innovative. It is a challenge that Rampoldi and fellow Hornsby umpires acknowledged at the beginning of the season when they introduced the use of Facebook for the delivery of video analysis.

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“Building on the work that the SNSWUA does with video analysis, we invested in our own video resources and created a restricted Facebook page. Our umpires and umpire trainers have access to this page, and we get them to review the videos and come up with their own comments,” Rampoldi explained.

“We ask them to write down six things that they did well and six things that they need to improve on. Every time they’re picking up things they need to improve on without any input from us.

“We follow the Basic Clinic from the SNSWUA from start to finish by breaking it up over the season. So now we’re just polishing it off by utilising Facebook to aid our video analysis.”

Hornsby is also one of the few associations in NSW that can boast that nearly all club games are covered by blues – a fact that is not lost on the competing teams.

“We cover 99% of games. The blues-in-training do make mistakes and we all recognise that, but at the end of the day you have someone that is enthusiastic and keen about umpiring. From that perspective, we get a lot of comments back from teams that appreciate the umpiring effort,” Rampoldi said.

So is the blueprint Hornsby has developed easy to implement in other associations? Rampoldi believes it is.

“It really is just about a commitment and having some enthusiasm. We have about 12 trainers that are prepared to come and look after the junior umpires and provide feedback,” he explained.

“You really need a good group of senior umpires who are prepared to commit to the program.”

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### **South Brisbane Classic by Mark Toft**

The annual South Brisbane Classic rocked into Brisbane over the Queens Birthday weekend bringing some of the best male players from Australia and New Zealand.

One of the main differences at this year's tournament surrounded the umpiring crew. With Tricia Sibraa recouping from her knee reconstruction surgery, Matt Gowty took over the reins as UIC. The other main absence was Queensland State Director, Darren Sibraa who was on international duties at the World Women's Championships in South America.

The crew who performed admirably were Matt Gowty (UIC), Leigh Evans, Mark Toft, Yvonne Kahler, Ian Frame, David Casey, Matt Blake, Bridget Cameron, Jana McCaskill, Ron Yardley, Norelle Thomas, Janelle Hicks, Dave Andrews, Jamie Harries.

The presence of Leigh Evans bolstered the all-Queensland crew; Leigh was able to work very closely with Ian Frame and Yvonne Kahler two of Queensland's International Development Clinic participants.

The umpiring crew worked combinations with the three umpire and four umpire systems which was beneficial for the development of all umpires especially the more junior umpires in the crew.

The Final was officiated by Leigh Evans, Ian Frame, Mark Toft and Yvonne Kahler.

Congratulations to the entire crew and especially to Matt Gowty who showed a professional attitude to his comeback as a UIC in one of Queensland's most prestigious tournaments.

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# Queensland

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## **Queensland Blues busy during representative period** by Mark Toft

With the winter season finishing up and many associations preparing for summer competitions, Queensland Blues have been on the hop.

The representative season started with the Open Women State Championships at the Wynnum grounds. One of the highlights was the opportunity to have the three Queensland 2011 ISF Clinic candidates, Helen Strauss, Ian Frame and Yvonne Kahler working games (mainly 4-umpire systems) with other senior umpires of the State. There was one candidate, Dave Andrews who was accredited his Level 4 at this championship.

### **Open Women – Wynnum**

Tricia Sibraa (UIC), Mark Toft, Darren Sibraa, Helen Strauss, Bridget Cameron, Jana McCaskill, Ian Frame, Dave Andrews, Ian Goodman, Peter Walsh, Norelle Thomas, Keith Thorburn, Martin Turnbull, Ian Goodman, Ron Yardley, Jamie Harries, Matt Blake.

Successful Candidate – Level 4 – Dave Andrews

Queensland Cup Final – Helen Strauss, Yvonne Kahler, Darren Sibraa, Ian Frame  
State Championship Final – Mark Toft, Bridget Cameron, Peter Walsh  
President's Cup Final – David Casey, Jana McCaskill, Steve Gutteridge

Two weeks down the track it was the Under 17 teams out to shine. The Queensland Blues attended tournaments at South Brisbane (Girls) and Noosa (Boys). Rain was out to spoil the parties but organisers were able to get the games through. Three candidates were successful with Andrew Compton (Level 3) and with Danielle Bellchambers and Stewart Gesling (Level 2). The clinic at the Under 17 Girls was very informative and beneficial with no less than six senior umpires assisting the juniors with fine tuning of positioning on the diamond in two and three umpire systems.

### **Under 17 Girls Crew – South Brisbane**

Darren Sibraa (UIC), Mark Toft, Helen Strauss, David Casey, Jana McCaskill, Bridget Cameron, Danielle Bellchambers, Andrew Compton, Janelle Hicks, Ron Yardley, Colleen Thompson, Danny Griffiths, Norelle Thomas, Leanne O'Leary, Ian Goodman, Ross Winn, Kylie Knight, Letitia Jackson, Briana Larson

Successful Candidates – Level 3 Andrew Compton, Level 2 Danielle Bellchambers

State Championship Final – Danny Griffiths, Janelle Hicks, Martin Turnbull  
President's Cup – Norelle Thomas, Andrew Compton, Kylie Knight

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## **Under 17 Boys Crew - Noosa**

Yvonne Kahler (UIC) , Jamie Harries, Sally Crawford, Stewart Gesling, Steve Gutteridge, Brian McPherson, Jesse Bullock, Keith Thorburn, Kim Fayle, Neville Baggow, Cameron Ryle, Drew Pickwick, Gillian Opie, Reece Horsfall, Vickie-Ann Crane, Dave Andrews

Successful Candidate – Level 2 – Stewart Gesling

State Championship Final – Brian McPherson, Keith Thorburn, Neville Baggow

President's Cup – Kim Fayle, Drew Pickwick, Jesse Bullock

With only another two week break the Under 19 State Championships were on in earnest. Blues were in attendance in Ipswich for the men and Rockhampton for the women. Again rain wanted to spoil the events but competitions were completed thanks to some great work from the local association's grounds crews. New South Wales 2011 ISF Clinic candidate Howard Watt attended the Ipswich championships and was a welcomed member of the crew. Howard was able to get in some games with some of Queensland more senior umpires. Besides the Blues in the crew there were no less than 15 umpires making appearances on the field as players, which of course kept the crew blues on their toes.

## **Under 19 Women – Rockhampton**

Ian Frame (UIC), Ron Trow, Matt Blake, Yvonne Kahler, Peter Walsh, Jamie Harries, Ron Yardley, Norelle Thomas, Tina Thorburn, Rhonda Shepard, Peter Baxter, Neville Baggow,

State Championship Final - Yvonne Kahler, Ron Trow, Norelle Thomas, Matt Blake

President's Cup - Jamie Harries, Ian Goodman, Peter Walsh

## **Under 19 Men – Ipswich**

Tricia Sibraa (UIC), Darren Sibraa, Mark Toft, Helen Strauss, David Casey, Jana McCaskill, Brian McPherson, Andrew Compton, Howard Watt, Steve Gutteridge, Janelle Hicks, Martin Turnbull, Ken McIntyre.

Grand Final – David Casey, Steve Gutteridge, Helen Strauss

President's Cup – Jana McCaskill, Mark Toft, Janelle Hicks

## **Keith takes Queensland Junior Umpire of the Year Award**



Young Keith Thorburn (Level 3) was bestowed the ultimate award for a junior umpire when named Junior Umpire of the Year at the recent Queensland Gala Dinner.

Keith comes from the Maryborough/Hervey Bay region, has been umpiring for six years, and was accredited his Level 3 at the Under 16 State Championships in Brisbane last year.

Keith has attended a multitude of State Championships and has had the honour of attending three school-based National Championships. Keith attended his first State Open Championship this year and performed with distinction. Keith's mum, Tina (also an umpire) is very proud of her umpiring son.

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## Queensland umpire of the year by Cameron Leslie

Toowoomba softball umpire, Mark Toft has been recognised with this State's ultimate award when he was named the 'Tricia Bichel' Queensland Umpire of the Year Award recipient recently.

Toft was a finalist for this award two years ago, but took the top gong after a successful season on and off the field at all levels of competition.

The local umpire has been officiating for more than two decades and a national umpire for 13 years with more than 30 national championships and over 200 national games under his belt.

Toft is also in his eighth year as editor of the monthly national softball umpiring magazine "Blue's New On-line" as part of his National Committee portfolio.



**Mark Toft**

This year Toft was named in the International Development Squad which is a stepping stone for International accreditation. Those plans have been placed on hold as Toft recently missed the cut and must wait another four years for international accreditation. Of his success, Mark made the following comments:

"I feel very honoured to be considered for this award, considering the standard of umpires we have in this State. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the other nominees for this award".

"It is especially pleasing as it is the Tricia Bichel Award. Tricia recruited me over 20 years ago as a softball umpire".

"I share this award with all umpires I have worked with especially in recent times. The umpiring fraternity in this country is very close and it's their strengths which have assisted me in not only my umpiring, but life in general".

The Toowoomba Softball Association has cause for a double celebration as it was also named the recipient of the Regional Umpire Development Award, its second recognition award in three years.

Toft leads the training of junior umpire development in Toowoomba and is very proud of his band of junior umpires who are consistently coming through the National Umpiring Program.

"We run a great program in Toowoomba and I must acknowledge my deputy coordinator Anita Ryle, along with Alan Hamilton, Paul Gierke and Chris Edards all of who have assisted in our junior program for many years".

"The results we see at State and National Championships appointments indicate we are getting things right on the Downs.

BNOL wishes to thank the Toowoomba Chronicle Newspaper for their contribution

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# Victoria

[www.vuc.softball.org.au](http://www.vuc.softball.org.au)

## Future Umpire Program by Ryan Thornycroft

The Victorian Future Umpire Program (FUP) was run in conjunction with Softball Victoria's Under 14 Championship. This year run in Horsham, the Future Umpire Program has become an integral part of junior umpire recruitment in Victoria. There were nine junior umpires this year, with strong contingents from Albury, Glen Eira, Waverley and Werribee.

Participants: Tina Sassella, Elyse Clark (Albury), Michelle Liacos (Glen Eira), Kobe Dudley (Waverley), Kieran Large, Lachlan Hughes, Cameron Wilson, Connor Wilson and Bryce Williams (Werribee). Trainers: Stuart Tyler, Kevin Broomhall, Leigh Evans and Ryan Thornycroft. The UIC for the tournament was Jason Carter and his deputy was Trevor Murphy.

The main purpose of the program is to encourage junior people involved in Softball to take a part in umpiring, so we focus on base umpiring as the first step. On Saturday morning we firstly sent out the participants (with our trainers in toe) to watch a game of Softball. We returned to our facilities and discussed what we saw, identifying important steps such as equipment checks and pre-game



Back: Bryce Williams, Connor Wilson, Cameron Wilson, Kieran Large  
Front: Stuart (UIC), Elyse Clark, Michelle Liacos  
Absent: Tina Sassella, Kobe Dudley, Lachlan Hughes

meetings. More broadly we emphasised the importance of our responsibility and the finer points associated with umpiring at state championships.

We then went outside where Ryan demonstrated the various signals utilised, and the importance of them in terms of communication. Leigh's demonstrations proved exciting for the kids, where a few of them took steps back in fright (including myself!).

We then headed back into the classroom where Kev taught the 2-man rotation, emphasising starting positions, inside/outside theory and the leading edge. We then went outside again where we practiced our rotations and calls on plays made by some of the trainers (illustrating why we umpire and not play!).

Following lunch the Future Umpires were then allocated real games, demonstrating their newly-honed skills. Not an issue was had!

Despite the simplicity of the program we run, its proven success rate speaks for itself. It is our main recruitment tool for aspiring umpires, and many of the umpiring crew at the 14's were once Future Umpires themselves. The input given by Kev and Leigh was especially insightful and engaging. We'd like to thank the Future Umpires for their participation in the Program, and look forward to seeing them umpire next year at the Under 14's as part of the crew!

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## Waverley Easter Carnival 2010 by Stuart Tyler

The Waverley Easter Carnival is always a huge event every year. This, my third year as UIC – many familiar faces returned to umpire – and a few new ones too. It is a great opportunity to catch up with friends all round. A new grade of U23's was added to the tournament – and also some international visitors from New Zealand – the U19 White Sox. The pre-tournament organisation was awkward with the fixture having to be re-worked due to a mix up in the team age group nominations, and Easter being early – so no week off between the end of the summer season and the Easter carnival.

It was going to be a busy time with Mary-Anne and I billeting two of the NZ girls, and with an umpire staying at our house as well.

The weather for the whole weekend was perfect – warm with a slight breeze and overcast. Lovely.

The weekend started out with the usual Friday lunchtime technical meeting. Some minor hitches of umpires still travelling – people not knowing their association nominated them as an umpire so didn't appear. Some fast talking and offering of equipment got them on to games – thanks Greg. Another (local) umpire not knowing where the umpires rooms were – what the??? With that all sorted out games were quickly under way.

Saturday followed and started very early. So early that the lights were turned on diamond 1 for training or diamond marking – who knows? It just makes a good story. With 8 full rounds during the day and one night game everyone got to see plenty of action. In fact there was not any daylight wasted on the Saturday. Games were played from sunrise to sunset.

Changes were the order of the weekend with several umpires having a hard time of it.

Chris Nelson decided that his body is just not up to the strain and heat and announced his retirement. Chris is a long time Victorian umpire and will be missed around the traps. Thank you Chris for your help throughout the tournament. Chris stayed on to cook the BBQ for the day. This was hampered to a clogged gas valve and was a particularly long cooking session the first day.

Natasha Shelvey taking a ball to the throat. After finding out everything was okay – there were many suggestions about keeping your chin down and ensuring you use the throat guard for protection.

Sam Beales being very sick overnight but still being able to do a few games while not 100%.

Graham Cherry – well apparently he set a new record for the tournament by apparently being hit more times in a region no-one wants to be hit in. That not being enough – Graham then started having back spasms the last day. Hope you get well.

This should remind us that umpiring is a tough job and not always easy going. Mental and physical stamina is required to make it through a tournament – many umpires doing 14 games in 4 days.

The warm weather always brings a challenge to the umpire's room. After hard working games and all that sweat on the equipment and it all starts to get a bit smelly. By the Saturday evening it got all a bit

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hard to take with the UIC having to stop the spread of rancid smells by using up a can of Glen20. Also young boys not knowing how to tidy up resulted in an Incident Report being posted on the 'pig sty'.

The regulars have come to know that the umpires room is well provided for with cakes and treats – and Mary-Anne (my wife) provided well with chocolate cake and yoyos the Saturday, and carrot cake and banana cake on the Monday. There appeared several extra treats of chocolates and lollies from others to supply umpires the sugar fix to get through four to five games each day. Thanks for the treats.

The BBQ was fired up on the Saturday, with another on the Sunday. Although someone forgot to tell me that the shops are not open on Easter Sunday! Sorry about the frozen bread – but it just had to do.

Sunday is another full day with 7 full timeslots and 1 evening game. Finally the final day on the Monday with 4 rounds plus Grand finals.

Some quick numbers about the 2010 Easter Tournament.

4 days, 9 finals, 12 diamonds, 26 time slots, 48 teams, 58 umpires, 270 games, 569 umpiring allocations, Lots of softball. 35 umpires doing 6-10 plates and 10-14 games.

The best of all is the great friendships that I get to share with everyone for the weekend. Great conversations and laughs all round. At the end we got through it all. The quality of softball was fantastic and many of the junior developing umpires loved doing quality games.

If this was not enough Softball, the tournament was extended with a 3 game test series between NZ and Australia U19s. I was fortunate enough to do all three games and enjoyed the experience very much. With a tournament this size there are always issues to deal with. I would like to thank Chris Trengove on being the DUIC for the tournament and handling plenty of sticky situations – it was great to have someone to share the workload with. Chris was even able to get in a few games on the diamond too.



## National Umpiring Program

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# Victoria

[www.vuc.softball.org.au](http://www.vuc.softball.org.au)

## **Admin work continues (or, The Winter Blues) by Richard Barrow**

While the winter freeze takes hold of us all down in Victoria and the ball games are few and far between, the administrative side of the Victorian Umpire Committee continues to work. On Sunday June 20<sup>th</sup> we gathered to share information and ideas, pass on news, begin preparations for the upcoming summer, and generally keep the machine ticking over.

On the agenda were items for discussion and/or action, including:

- Inward and outward correspondence;
  
- State Championship dates along with other items on the upcoming softball calendar;
  
- Information from the recent Softball Victoria assembly;
  
- Discussion around communication methods to members;
  
- A review of material currently in our document register;
  
- Preliminary discussions on likely development activities and training clinics.

Among the outcomes of the VUC Meeting was the decision to start engaging with our members via social networking. The 'Victorian Softball Umpires' Facebook group has now been launched. It will be a great source of information and communication for and between umpires in Victoria. For this initiative to be effective, we need members.

So if you have Facebook, please join and encourage others to do the same. We are currently in the building stages, but this group will become one of the primary sources for Softball Umpires. Photos, suggestions, events and discussion items can be sent to our moderator, Ryan Thorneycroft, at [thorney\\_01@hotmail.com](mailto:thorney_01@hotmail.com), or his Facebook page (rthorneycroft). Your input will be instrumental in its success.

Following a brief lunch break, we reconvened as an Assessors Meeting. Led by Debbie Grove, we reviewed the latest updates to the Assessment Manual, and then went through an exercise where sample feedback was analysed and categorised accordingly.

This, as expected, generated a healthy level of discussion, the aim being to bring about as much consistency as possible.

So, while some winter hibernation might be desirable, the volunteer work required to keep the state umpiring program in motion continues.

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In my recent travels I have been fortunate to observe a number of softball tournaments and discuss a number of softball issues with many people. There were some umpire traits that I noticed were happening consistently.

Working the plate:

**Strike Zone** – there is an old adage or saying, especially with respect to elite fast pitch, narrow the zone from top to bottom and widen it out, especially when the ball is belt high.

I think we have taken this too far. The strike zones that I was observing were fine with respect to height but were far too wide. Some umpires are now calling 'strike' on pitches that are two or three ball widths off the plate on the outside.



Strikes should only be called if a portion of the ball is over the black outline of the plate. If you change your plate position and mental concept of a strike, your strike zone will become more consistent and appropriate.

**Top of the strike zone** – Some Umpires are taking the same position regardless of the height of the batter. Umpires need to adjust the level of their eyes so that the eyes are at the top of the strike zone and they are looking down through the strike zone.

Strike calling will get better and more consistent if you adjust your set position to have your eyes at the top of the strike zone. You have to be constantly checking this or you will slip into the habit of setting at the same height every time.

Working the Slot – For the most part, umpires I observed are too far behind the catcher. I feel this is one of the reasons why our strike zone has gotten too wide.

Umpires need to be more out and up into the slot to see the entire plate and better judge the strike zone.

Use the heel to toe stance, with the foot behind the catcher located behind the catcher's foot that is closest to the batter. You can best align your body by having the centre of your body (use your belt buckle if worn properly to determine this) with the middle of the side of home plate closest to the pitcher. Set your eyes at the top of the strike zone and you are set to establish a good strike zone. Use the same set-up on both sides of the plate.

To be consistent in doing this, step behind the catcher first then step up into the slot using the heel and toe stance.

**Game Control** – I was really pleased to see umpires working with coaches and players.

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It is important to develop a rapport with players and coaches. Everyone has a role to play in the game and the more we recognise each other's roles and treat each other with respect, the more enjoyable the experience will be.

The game is the sum of the parts and no part is more important than any other.

There has been lots of discussions about the new ISF pitching rule, remember, the rule is written to allow pitchers to pitch.

Leaping is allowed and when pitchers land there will be a secondary twist and push. This is part of the permitted pitching style. Umpires should not be analysing the leaping pitching style.

If there is an obvious second push off, it will be very noticeable. A twist and follow through should not be considered illegal. The same applies to the arm movement. We want to see a smooth and continuous movement prior to and at the time of release.

Arm movement and the time of hand separation are indicators but it is the obvious second push off that is the violation.

Landing, twisting with a follow through having a slight push is not illegal.

Remember the rule is written to allow the pitchers to pitch and as umpires we should not be looking to find illegal pitches, we should only call them if we see them and have no doubt.

BNOL would like to acknowledge ISF for this article

## Several Ceremonies Held for ISF Hall of Fame inductees



ISF Hall of Famers have been inducted in four different countries recently. All elected at the XXIV ISF Congress last October, the honorees were honored in formal ceremonies in their home country.

In Lower Hutt, New Zealand, Rhonda Hira (player), Wayne Saunders (umpire) (pictured left), and Naomi Shaw (coach) were joined by a large group that included family, softball supporters, media, and ISF 2nd Vice President Bob Leveloff at the Softball New Zealand "Sportshouse" Complex recently for the inducting ceremony.

Wayne Saunders is currently the UIC of the Oceania Region.

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# Passing of a Legend

## **Vivienne Triplett – Softball Umpire and Administrator**

Compiled by Margo Koskelainen



Vivienne Triplett's contribution to many organisations during her lifetime was inspirational; she was a pioneer in the progress of women's sport in this country – specifically the world of umpiring in Softball. She was an inspiration, educator and mentor with her Professional Society the Australian Production and Inventory Control Society (APICS), to Toastmasters and a very loyal and outstanding employee for Kodak, where she spent all of her working life.

Vivienne was born on the January 8, 1945. In the early years of her life she lived in Bentleigh along with her brothers Ted and Greg. She excelled at school and was dux of the school in her last year at

Methodist Ladies College.

Vivienne completed a Bachelor of Science in 1967 – this was not common at all for a female in those days. She didn't have a plan for what career path she might take and found it quite difficult to find a job once she had graduated. Australian employers in the 60's had not really endorsed Equal Opportunities for women and so when Kodak came along she was pleasantly surprised to find an employer who did. So then began her long career with Kodak.

### **The Kodak Years**

Vivienne joined Kodak in 1966 as a Graduate Trainee in the Information Systems field then known as Data Processing. She quickly rose through the department to become a Senior Systems Programmer. She then moved into the Manufacturing Systems group working on developing systems for the Manufacturing Division. This led to her involvement in a new system Kodak decided to develop. It was a common set of systems to be used by all its manufacturing operations around the world and they were calling it MICOM.

This was a major project and it would include planning systems and included a World Wide project development team which was based in Mexico. Vivienne was the Australian representative on the

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team.

As usual Vivienne really knew her stuff. She wasn't afraid to say what she thought and when she did, it was clear she had data and knowledge to back it up. It was also very clear she was going to do everything she could to ensure the "common system design" did not disadvantage the Coburg Plant in Australia.

Vivienne was one of the very few members of the International team to be confident enough to drive in Mexico and she seemed to have a very good grasp of the local language as well.

The system development was a very large project and Vivienne and subsequently the core team moved to the company headquarters in Rochester as the program code was being written and tested. The system was rolled out world wide and was a big success.

This was a very impressive achievement and over the next 25 or so years Vivienne continued with her very hard working and professional approach. A good example of this was when she decided she needed to learn more about planning and announced she was going to take some evening classes at APICS. In typical Vivienne fashion she did a bit more than a just a few classes. She actually completed their full program and reached their highest level of Professional certification.

She didn't stop there; she joined several of their committees and started teaching classes as well. Ultimately Vivienne became the Education Officer for the Victorian chapter, a position she held for quite a few years. Vivienne is the Victorian Chapter of APICS only Life Member.

This personal development proved to be extremely helpful to Kodak as by the late 80s the MICOM systems had run their course and this time Coburg decided to take a very different tack to the rest of the manufacturing sites and install a new PC based planning system called 4th Shift. Vivienne was right in the middle of this successful implementation and it enabled the Coburg Plant to have the lowest cost information systems of all the Kodak plants worldwide. This contributed to the survival of the plant in 1989 when it was threatened with closure.

Vivienne then moved onto projects associated with achieving operational excellence. These were

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initially internal corporate programs, measuring and judging Planning and Operations excellence and again Vivienne did very well and was involved in audits at many sites around the world. Kodak then started to pursue ISO certification. There is a lot of complexity and hard work involved in putting an ISO system in place and this was a task Vivienne really took to with great enthusiasm.

These skills were then used to assist Kodak's new sister companies in China help train the local staff. This naturally involved more overseas travel for Vivienne.

By late 2000 Vivienne had achieved more than 34 years of service and then moved into retirement. This was a great personal achievement. Such long service was not unique at Kodak but at the professional level it couldn't be achieved without a great level of ability and passion for the company. Vivienne had both these qualities in great measure.

## **The Softball Years**

Vivienne's involvement in the sport of softball was lifelong – 46 years – and she maintained her interest until the end. It is a testament to her love of and commitment to the sport.

Vivienne came to softball later than most, having first played baseball. She started playing softball in 1964 for the Wingers Club in the Melbourne competition based at Fawkner Park, South Yarra. Wingers coach at that time was to become the first Australian Softball Federation Chief Umpire, Marj Dwyer. Marj insisted that her players understood the rules of the game and everyone in her team was expected to umpire and attain, at the very least, a State umpire qualification.

Vivienne gained her Victorian Badge in 1966 and her All Australian badge in Sydney in 1968.

In those days there was only one annual National Championship – the Open Women – and Vivienne umpired at every Championship from 1968 until 1984, including appointments to 11 consecutive Australian Championship Grand finals – nine of those as the plate, or main, umpire.

When the Under 16 and Under 19 Australian Girls Championships were introduced, Vivienne participated as an umpire or in the management role of Tournament Chief Umpire.

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Vivienne continued to play until 1974, representing Melbourne at the Victorian Championships for many years, and, while at Monash University, established the Monash University Softball Club and playing in the Melbourne competition. Monash continues to participate in the Melbourne competition to this day. Monash University Softball Club recognised Vivienne's contribution with Life Membership.

Vivienne's international umpiring career included her first Women's World Championship in Connecticut, USA in 1974. At that time Australia's umpiring program was not as it is today and the umpiring methods were vastly different than those used at World Championships. Her performance at this world event was extraordinary in that for her to comply with the international umpiring standards of the time she had to study a borrowed umpiring manual prior to each game assignment to know what was required. A significant achievement given the intensity of the competition.

Further Women's World Championships followed where she was better prepared: San Salvador in 1978 and Taiwan in 1982 and the first Junior World Championships – combined U19 Boys and U19 Girls – in Edmonton, Canada, in 1981.



**Viv umpiring at Women's Nationals in 1984 her last tournament.**

Other international experiences were Australia / New Zealand test Series in 1973, 1975 and 1977, Australia /Canada Test Series in 1974 and 1976, the inaugural South Pacific Classic and the Mini World Series in 1980. In an era where Australia only participated in international events in the lead up to the World Championship held every four years, Vivienne umpired more than 100 international games during her career.

You will not be surprised to hear that, while umpiring at the highest level, Vivienne held many administrative positions within softball at various times – Secretary of the Victorian Softball Umpires Association and Secretary of the Australian Softball Umpires Association, President of the Victorian Softball Association, two terms as Australian Softball Federation Vice President and, for 10 years, Deputy Chief Umpire of the Australian Softball Federation, resigning from these latter two positions in early 1985 to take up a Kodak assignment overseas.

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# Passing of a Legend

Whilst the career move to the US officially ended her umpiring and administrative involvement in softball in Australia for a number of years, Vivienne's association with the Australian Umpire Program resumed on an ad hoc basis on her return to Australia. She facilitated the annual National Umpiring meeting for many years and played a large part in the success of the four International Umpire Development Seminars between 1990 and 2002. She very strongly believed that umpires representing Australia should be better prepared for world tournaments than she was herself.

In recognition of her contribution to softball in general and umpiring in particular, Vivienne received many national and international honours; she was elected to the Victorian and Australian Softball Hall of Fame and is a Life member of the Victorian Softball Association.

In 1993 she was elected to the International Softball Federation Hall of Fame, the first Australian umpire to be so honoured, and in 1995, the Vivienne Triplett Award for excellence in umpiring was introduced by Softball Australia in recognition of Vivienne's outstanding contribution to umpiring.

In 2000 Vivienne was also honoured with the Australian Sports Medal.

Over the years Vivienne saw a great many positive changes in the way umpires, players, coaches and administrators approached the game in order to make a good game even better. Of course, there were the "now, in my day" comments but always she acknowledged how the changes in umpiring had progressed her sport.

Vivienne was erudite, logical, analytical and meticulous, with a keen eye for detail; generous with her time and always prepared to share her knowledge. She enjoyed debates regarding the rules of the game, especially the pitching rule, and was adamant about the value of goal setting, preparation, mentorship and positive feedback.

Softball in Australia and the Australian Softball Umpire program owes much to Vivienne and her remarkable leadership skills.

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# Passing of a Legend

## Retirement Years

It was during Vivienne's time at APICS that it was suggested that she join Toastmasters. Vivienne joined the Kodak Toastmasters club and she excelled.

Much of Vivienne's retirement was taken up with Toastmasters and Probus clubs.

At one stage she not only belonged to three Toastmasters clubs but was also on the Executive of each of them. Her talents for organising and leadership were amazing. She also held District roles and assisted in Club Officer Training sessions. Members usually rang Vivienne if they needed clarification about any of the Toastmasters rules. She loved rules and enjoyed reading the book from cover to cover. She found security in following set rules and regulations.

Over the years Vivienne presented some great speeches and always gave a professional presentation even on short notice. In her most passionate and memorable speech she detailed how people had died fighting for women to have the right to vote and it is a privilege we should all treasure. She gained second placing in the third level of the International contest with that powerful speech.

However, Vivienne as a sportswoman believed in being a winner. Coming second in any contest was never good enough for her. It was first placing or you had lost.

Vivienne was one goal short of achieving her 5th DTM, the highest award in Toastmasters, and probably the only Toastmaster in the world to ever do that. She planned to start a club at Doreen when she settled into her new house.

Retirement also allowed Vivienne time to "smell the roses" so she joined the Montmorency Combined Probus Club and, as usual, she became involved and once again enjoyed being on the committee – organizing the bus tours. She diligently researched different and interesting places for the members to visit.

Vivienne was a very disciplined and organised person – one wonders if this was something established in her early years. Anytime Vivienne joined a group she would end up on the committee.

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# Passing of a Legend

That was how she was – if she could contribute - she would. She had focused views and was strong and confident.

Vivienne was an extremely intelligent woman, very astute in many matters. She was the most utmost loyalist you could ever meet. If Vivienne made a promise to do something, nothing but nothing, would prevent her from completing the task.

She was a complicated person, very precise, stubborn, persistent, quite shy in many ways – which at times made her seem aloof. She didn't suffer fools lightly and didn't let many people get too close to her.

Vivienne had an exterior of steel and efficiency. Underneath, if you were lucky to be one of the ones close to her, she was insecure and self-conscious. She had a quirky sense of humour, would read every single word of any document she had to sign – just ask the developer on signing for the building of her new home in Doreen – it was a 40 page document and she read every single word of that agreement until she was sure she understood it.

Vivienne was a very studious person and usually read books of a more serious nature. She found security in following set rules and regulations and loved nothing more than spending time reading them to have a thorough understanding. She loved James A. Michener or James Herriot and loved reading about space travel and NASA. Her love of music was quite eclectic – from the Beatles to John Farnham, ABBA and Neil Diamond.

Vivienne was a very keen photographer. She had more than 30 photograph albums documenting various times in her life along with several boxes of prints that had not yet been put into albums. She was very much into digital photography and made a DVD of her photos from her trip to the Antarctic for herself and Ted. In recent times she was working on a presentation of her trip to Italy.

Things that annoyed Vivienne – were bad management and incompetence and the AIS funding to football, which was such an aggravating annoyance to her. To the point that she simply refused to watch AFL because of it!

What excited Vivienne was to watch someone under her tutelage progress to a high standard, and of

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# Passing of a Legend

course her love of the Olympics – where Margo and she would be on ‘Olympic time’ – no matter where they were held.

What was most important to Vivienne was the continuous improvement of women’s sport administration and management and making sure her family was comfortable and cared for – she was very protective of her older brother, Ted.

She had only one regret and that was that she didn’t get to enjoy more time in her beautiful place out at Doreen that she shared with Ted.

Vivienne died knowing there were no boxes left unticked.

She was a person who gave much in her life for the betterment of others. She lived with integrity and she lived in tune with what she believed in and was always ‘true to herself’.

The measure of real success in life is leaving this world a richer place than you found it, and Vivienne has certainly done that. She left many gifts in this world, which will continue to be enjoyed.

It is Vivienne’s attitude – her essential self, lived through a life of strength, courage and will – that will survive through time in the things she changed and implemented during here life and I suspect this will be felt long into future generations.

The passing of Vivienne Triplett will leave a void in many lives. Vale Vivienne.



**Double celebrations: Vivienne is pictured left with three good friends in 1994.**

**The Gala night saw Vivienne inducted into the ISF Hall of Fame.**

**While good friend Margo Koskelainen received her Life Membership of the Australian Softball Federation.**

**L to R: Felix Menke, Vivienne Triplett, Margo Koskelainen and Alan McAuliffe.**

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## Mechanics Bulletin

**Subject:** SAL MB 2010-1 Base mechanics  
**Date:** 19/08/2010

Note: Supersedes bulletins  
Ready position 2009-9  
Positions for calls at 1<sup>st</sup> bases 2009-7

### The Ready Position

The Ready Position is the body position of a base umpire pre pitch, during and prior to the pitch reaching the batter and/or catcher.

As the pitcher assumes the Set Position (hands together), the umpire should step into the ready position, stopping just prior to the start of the pitch with his feet a comfortable distance apart (at least shoulder width), staying relaxed but still.

Before the pitcher releases the pitch, the umpire should adopt the 'ready' position by unlocking the knees slightly, with the weight resting **lightly** on the balls of the feet and the hands drawn in close to the belt line in front of the body, or with **relaxed** open hands and arms bent at the elbows approximately 45 degrees.

Note: In this stance the umpire's upper body should be relaxed and the umpire should **not** be in a semi sitting position. A good example of this is the fielders; they go into a Ready Position every pitch with the pitcher

The umpire should stay in this position until the ball reaches the catcher or is hit by the batter. If the pitch is hit or the catcher throws the ball to a base, the umpire pushes off on the balls of his feet and moves to position for a potential play. Umpires at 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base should push off with the outermost foot.

All umpires should assume the position simultaneously. This is best done by the umpire at either first or third base.

Umpires at second base should take the timing from the umpire at either first or third base.

.

### Starting Depth

- With no runners on base, the umpires should stand approximately 5-6 metres (16-20 feet) behind the base in Foul Territory, with the inner foot approximately 150 mm (6 inches) off the fair/foul line.
- With runners on base, the base umpires should assume a Ready Position by facing **square to the batter**, approximately 4-5 metres (13-16 feet) behind the base in Foul Territory at 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>, or from the base line when at 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

In all cases umpires should be close enough so the umpire can move and rotate inside or to the next position when required, without rotating during the play or being late to position. This will depend on each umpires mobility, reaction time and the speed of the game.

### Position for Calls on Bases (set position)

The Set Position is similar to the Ready Position; it is the body position of a base umpire prior to a call. This position allows umpires to be set and nimble to move to a secondary position if required.

On a force play, the umpire moves to the best position to see the play; approximately 4-5 metres (13 16 feet) back, 90 degrees to the throw.

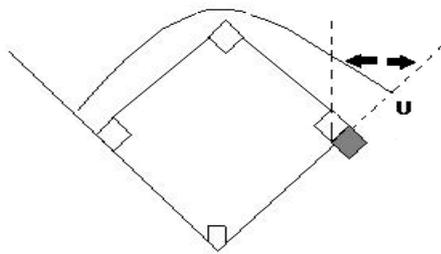
The umpire should go to the Ready Position as the play at the base unfolds and stay still in this position for the duration of the play before rendering a decision, unless obscured by a player, in which case they should move to see the play.

The Ready Position allows the base umpire to quickly react to overthrows, errors, and secondary plays. While in the set position, the umpire should focus on the ball until thrown. When the ball is thrown, track the ball by turning the head with the flight of the ball.

Prior to the thrown ball reaching the fielder, change your focus to the runner, fielder and the ball, watching the three come together, having the **Four Essential Elements** in front of you, **the runner, the ball, the base and the defensive player.**

Once you have made your decision on the play, rise from the Set Position verbalise and signal your call, using appropriate emphasis and voice.

Note: Using the following timing will help with good calling. Stop at your set position. **Watch, Wait, Call and Signal.**



On all infield force plays at 1<sup>st</sup> base, umpires should set 90 degrees to the throw, using the area from the fair/foul line to a position 45 degree off the base line. (see diagram).

In this position be aware of the Batter Runner who may round the base.

Exception to 3 & 4 umpire systems:

On an infield play, you are permitted to make a call from Foul Territory, if the thrown ball is coming from first base Foul Territory (such as a dropped third strike).

## Mechanic for tag plays at first, second and third bases

On tag plays, move to the Set Position approximately 3-4 metres (10-13 feet) from the play. (This may depend on the system being used). Watch the thrown ball into the fielder's glove and follow the ball and glove to the area of the tag, picking up the runner in your field of vision as the fielder begins to move towards the area where the tag will happen.

With the Four Essential Elements in front of you judge whether the tag was made prior to the runner touching the base. Rise and make the signal and verbal call, using the appropriate emphasis and voice. If required you may adjust your position to best see all the Four Essential Elements.

Note: Using the following timing will help with good calling. Stop at your set position. Watch, Wait, Call and Signal.

## Mechanic at first base in the 3 & 4 umpire system.

1. On a tag play with a runner at first during a play back, move to a position approximately 3 metres (10 feet) back and 90 degrees to the runner's base path, in the Set Position and make the call

Note 1: In some cases this may be in Foul Territory.

Note 2: This is usually a swipe tag situation and this position prevents overthrows hitting the umpire.

Note 3: On a run down play or when a runner gets a long lead, the play may be a slide back into the base, get to the leading edge for a slide in tag.

## Mechanic at second base.

On a steal play at second base, the umpire should move to a position approximately 3 metres (10 feet) away from the play, to the leading edge of second base to view the tag.

## Mechanic for U3 at third base in the 3 & 4 umpire system.

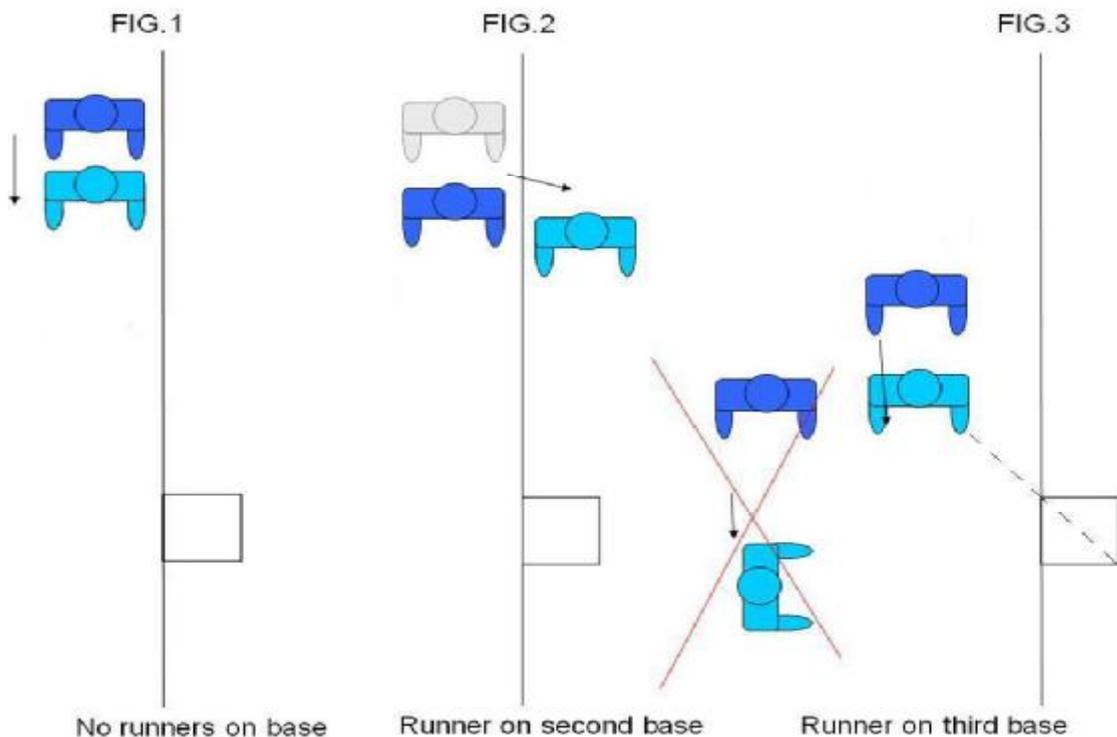
Fig.1. No Runners on, starting position 5-6 metres (16-20 feet) from the base with the inner foot 150 mm (6 inches) off the fair/foul line, in Foul Territory in the Ready Position (close enough so the umpire can move and rotate inside or to the next position when required without being late to position, this will depend on each umpires mobility and reaction time).

Fig. 2. With a runner on second base, assume the "ready position" 4-5 metres (13-16 feet) from 3<sup>rd</sup> base with the inner foot approximately 150 mm (6 inches) off the fair/foul line, in Foul Territory. On a steal or when the runner from second advances, take a further step forward and into fair territory to the leading edge of third base in fair territory to make the call. Umpires should use the Set Position while waiting for the play to develop.

Fig. 3. With any runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base, U3 should be 3-4 metres (10-13 feet) behind 3<sup>rd</sup> base in Foul Territory and up to 2 metres (6 feet) off the line. U3 must not have his vision to home plate blocked by the runner so he is able to make calls on dead ball situations and judgements on check swings, enabling him to assist the plate umpire when requested.

On a pick off (throw back) at 3<sup>rd</sup> base, U3 should take a further step forward from the starting position to a ready/set position, approximately 3 metres (10 feet) back and on a 45 degree line through 3<sup>rd</sup> base in Foul Territory, so the Four Essential Elements are in front of the umpire to make the call.

Umpires can view the swipe tag better from this position, looking into the swipe.



## Starting positions

### 2 Umpire System

With no runners on, U1<sup>s</sup> preliminary starting position should be 5-6 metres (16-20 feet) behind the base, with the inner foot 150 mm (6 inches) off the fair/foul line in Foul Territory (measured from the outside of the foot closest to the foul line).

With a runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base only, U1 moves to a position 4-5 metres (13-16 feet) back no closer than halfway but not more than two-thirds from 1<sup>st</sup> base, between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> bases. In both these cases, U1 should adjust his position prior to the pitch dependent on possible play back or steal situations, and the infielder's positions.

It is important that the base umpire positions himself behind the fielder, so as not to obstruct their view of the play, but still be able to have a clear view of the runner, the batter and the pitcher.

With a runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> base, U1 starts approximately halfway between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases 4-5 metres (13-16 feet) behind the base line.

U1 should adjust his position prior to the pitch dependent on possible play back or steal situations, and the infielder's positions.

It is important that the base umpire positions himself behind the fielder, so as not to obstruct their view of the play, but still be able to have a clear view of the batter and home plate.

With a runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base U1 starts approximately halfway between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases no further than two-thirds from 2<sup>nd</sup> base and 4-5 metres (13-16 feet) outside the base line. This position may vary slightly, dependent upon the position of the shortstop. It is important that the base umpire positions himself behind the fielder, so as not to obstruct their view of the play, but still be able to have a clear view of the runner, the batter and the pitcher.

### 3 Umpire System

With no runners on, U1 and U3's preliminary start position should be 5-6 metres (16-20 feet) behind the base, with the inner foot approximately 150 mm (6 inches) off the fair/foul line in Foul Territory (measured from the outside of the foot closest to the foul line).

With a runner on 1<sup>st</sup> base only, U3 moves to a position 4-5 metres (13-16 feet) back, on the 1<sup>st</sup> base side of 2<sup>nd</sup> base, just short of the leading edge. U1 moves forward to a position 4-5 metres (13-16 feet) behind 1<sup>st</sup> base.

With a runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> base, (or 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base), U1 moves to a position 4-5 metres (13-16 feet) back no closer than halfway but not more than two-thirds from 1<sup>st</sup> base, between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> bases.

In both these cases, U1 should adjust his position prior to the pitch dependent on possible play back or steal situations, and the infielder's positions.

U1 must not set-up in a position ahead of any infielder and must also be in a position to have clear vision to home plate.

With a runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base, U3 moves back to his original starting position but only 4-5 metres (13-16 feet) behind 3<sup>rd</sup> base.

Exception: With any runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base, U3 should be 4-5 metres (13-16 feet) behind 3<sup>rd</sup> base in Foul Territory up to 2 metres (6 feet) off the line. U3 must not have his vision to home plate blocked by the runner so he is able to make calls on dead ball situations and judgements on check swings, enabling him to assist the plate umpire when requested.

With a runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base only U1 moves back to the original starting position.



## 4 Umpire System

With no runners on, U1 and U3's preliminary starting position should be 5-6 metres (16-20 feet) behind the base, with the inner foot approximately 150 mm (6 inches) off the fair/foul line in Foul Territory (measured from the outside of the foot closest to the foul line); U2's preliminary starting position should be 5-6 metres (16-20 feet) back, on the 1<sup>st</sup> base side of 2<sup>nd</sup> base, just short of the leading edge.

With a runner on 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base only, or runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> base, U2 should be 4-5 metres (13-16 feet) back, on the 1<sup>st</sup> base side of 2<sup>nd</sup> base, just short of the leading edge.

With a runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> base only or runners on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base, U2 is 4-5 metres (13-16 feet) back on the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side of 2<sup>nd</sup> base, just short of the leading edge.

With a runner on base, U1 and U3 should be in their original starting position but only 4-5 metres (13-16 feet) behind the base.

Exception: With a runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base U3 should be 4-5 metres (13-16 feet) behind 3<sup>rd</sup> base in Foul Territory up to 2 metres (6 feet) off the line. U3 must not have his vision to home plate blocked by the runner so he is able to make calls on dead ball situations and judgements on check swings, enabling him to assist the plate umpire when requested.

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This is an Approved Softball Australia Limited Umpiring Program Mechanics Bulletin for use in Australia and is current as of 15/09/2010. For the most up to date version, visit [www.softball.org.au](http://www.softball.org.au).

## Technical Bulletin

**Subject:** SAL\_TB\_2008-1 v3.1 Approved and Non Approved Bats, New Batted Ball Speed (BBS) Test Certification

**Date:** June 2008. **Re issued after expiry of SAL policy Aug 2010.**

### Background

ISF have been certifying bats since 1st January 2002. ISF publish a list of "approved bats" essentially a list of bats that are legal and used for ISF competition and events. Initially, the ISF certification process was based on a mathematical "bat performance factor" (BPF). Certified BPF (approved) bats were labelled with an "ISF BPF 1.20" mark.

ISF currently use a high-speed batted ball test (BBS) using the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) test procedure with a limit of 100 MPH/160.93 KPH.

The Amateur Softball Association (ASA), the peak softball body in the US, has been conducting testing and certification of bats since 2000. ASA use a 98MPH/157.72 KPH BBS test.

ISF determined and published notice that August 31, 2008 marks the end of the period during which bats that complied with the previous ISF bat performance standard (1.20 BPF) shall be permitted to be used in World Championship and Olympic play and the new BBS standard will be adopted.

*After the 31st August 2008 bats certified, and labelled, under the previous ISF BPF 1.2 testing method shall be considered approved if they satisfy the ISF BBS certification process and are tested. Such bats will therefore be listed by ISF as approved bats.*

### The Australian Scene

Australia have always followed the ISF certification process and used the ISF approved bat list. The question around legality of bats not on the ISF approved list has always been a contentious one.

There is also a case that not all bats on the market will be used at ISF World Championships, Olympic Games or ISF events, so not all bats on the world market will be put forward by manufacturers to ISF for approval. The ASA publish a list of approved bats widely used through the US, and other countries, in competition which may not appear on the ISF list as previously mentioned above.

Softball Australia has direct responsibility only for the conduct of National Championships and other tournaments it runs. There is, no doubt, a flow-on effect to the State run and other competitions and tournaments.

## Procedure for Use of Softball Bats

Softball Australia has recently adopted the following policy which is effective immediately:

**a) A bat will be approved for use in Australia if it is listed on the current ISF Certified Bat List.**

Or

**b) Any bat not listed on the ISF Certified Bat List will be considered approved for use in Australia if it is listed on the ASA Approved Bat List.**

The compliance with this Technical Bulletin rests with all participants of the game not just the umpires, as the practicality of checking bats with separate lists prior to games at all levels is not feasible.

It is of utmost importance that Players, coaches, parents, team managers, administrators, State and local associations, understand they play an important role in this requirement.

Reference to the following web sites will assist in understanding the procedure and testing process.

Bats are continually being retested to ensure they comply with the International standards please visits the following site.

Note: the ISF BBS standard is 100 MPH, the ASA standard is 98 MPH

[http://www.internationalsoftball.com/english/rules\\_standards/certified\\_bats.asp](http://www.internationalsoftball.com/english/rules_standards/certified_bats.asp)

[http://asasoftware.com/about/certified\\_equipment.asp](http://asasoftware.com/about/certified_equipment.asp)



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