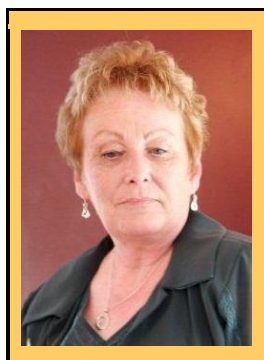


UIC News
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SNZ AGM UMPIRES REPORT 2013

It is my privilege again to report on the activities of your Softball New Zealand umpiring programme. Your very experienced National Umpiring Staff continues to work very well as a team and all have a positive focus on the continued development and growth of the **"The Programme"**. When appointed as Umpire-in-Chief for the second time some six year ago I was tasked with, as a priority, to set in place a transparent succession plan. For any plan to succeed, future leaders have first to be identified, then given support to develop a credible practical track record whilst being exposed to and given responsibility to administrate key sectors within an organisation. For a number of years now Lindsay Edwards, Wiremu Tamaki and Nicola Ogier have been encouraged to and have taken up this challenge. We are still faced with over the next few years of ensuring that the next group of administrators that are appointed to the National Umpiring Staff have the same positive outlook, a proven track record and the technical skills to be a respected team member.

Our **"Mission Statement"** requires your National Umpiring Staff to maintain, and further develop, an umpiring programme focused on quality delivery to all participants. To create an environment which enables successful recruitment, retention and recognition of all involved with umpiring at any level and to seek continuous improvement by both developing and adopting world best practice. All umpires are also challenged to be well prepared; game focused and encouraged to enjoy themselves whilst umpiring. The longer you are on this planet the more you come to realise how important enjoying what you do is, this is even more important if you are a volunteer.



At the 2012 SNZ AGM Daph Turner, Hutt Valley was named "Umpire of the Year". In 2012 Daph did not seek re-election to the National Umpiring Staff for health reasons, thus completing an eight year term as a Deputy Director of Umpiring after previously serving as the Central Region Deputy Umpire. Daph was appointed to the 1991 ISF Junior Girl's World Championship, Australia. Daph is one of New Zealand's most accomplished female umpires both on and off the diamond. Before her recent retirement she was a regular face on many a Women's National Tournament final. Daph continues to serve as an Executive member of the Hutt Valley Umpires Association a position she has held since the 80's and continues as a National Tournament Chief Umpire.

Last season started with the traditional September Regional Clinics as umpires prepare for the new season. The highlight was the very well organised and attended Central Region Clinic staged at the Army's Davis Field facilities, Trentham. Well done Phil Packer and your Hutt Valley team for funding and hosting the CRC.

Among this season's highlights is the continuing success of our Level 7 group led by Lindsay Edwards. Lindsay has engaged all our active ISF certified umpires in a mentoring programme for the next generation of certification candidates. This resulted in the NUS recommending all nine lead-in candidates be invited to attend the next Oceania Certification Seminar subject to meeting the ISF prequalification criteria. Another highlight was the efforts of Mark Porteous who demonstrated his leadership skills with organising regional input leading up to the Men's World Championship.

From my perspective **"The Programme"** would not run as well as it does without the valuable assistance of the staff at SNZ and the tireless efforts of Eugene Gilbert.

NATIONAL UMPIRE STAFF

AGM reports are the main source of recording umpiring history. Your NUS for last season was Wayne Saunders (UIC), Deputy Directors: Cass Seeling, Lindsay Edwards and Mark McFarlane. We were joined by Regional Directors: Nicky Ogier (South Island), Wiremu Tamaki (Central) and Bill Smith (Northern). Notable among our many tasks: Lindsay continues as convenor of the Level 7 Advisory Group; Nicky was Rules examiner and UmpSchool Administrator; Wiremu Website Manager; Mark

McFarlane Merchandising and UmpSchool registration; Cass Seeling Clinics and RDU coordinator and Wayne National Tournament appointments. Whilst senior umpires Daph Turner, Ray Dyason, Don Poy and Denis Smith joined members of the NUS as National Tournament Chief Umpires.

The National Rules refresher is held in October every year and has now been running for over twenty years. This "open book" rules test is available to anyone to sit and local associations are encouraged to communicate this to their membership. Again the questions paper will be accessible online through the SNZ website at <http://www.softball.org.nz/Domestic/SNZ+Umpires/Resources.html#Exams and Answer Papers>. Increase rules knowledge benefits all.

NATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

This year's National Tournaments were fully staffed to meet SNZ staffing expectations. Again National Staff members with the assistance of other senior umpires mentioned above were used as Tournament Chief Umpires. The ability to appoint from an increasing pool of experienced umpires has provided measurable consistency with evaluating and reporting. National Tournaments are still the ideal environment for umpires to gain experience and continue to develop their knowledge and learn the culture of umpiring from their more experienced colleagues.

A total of 104 nationally graded umpires (up from 89 last season) worked this season's National Tournaments. This season we played host to Kyira Cox and Richard Barrow (Australia - Trans Tasman Exchange) and Jay Hart (Canada – International Softball Congress).

INTERNATIONAL APPOINTMENTS AND INVITATIONS

Recorded for the record is the following

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| ■ ISC Exchange | Mark McFarlane |
| ■ ISF XIII Women's Worlds, Whitehorse, Canada | Nicola Ogier |
| ■ Black Sox North America Tour | Wiremu Tamaki |
| ■ ISF IX Junior Men's Worlds, Parana, Argentina | Mark Porteous, Jeremy England |
| ■ Gilley's Shield R1, Western Australia | Andrew McManus |
| ■ Gilley's Shield R2, Adelaide | Darrel Paul |
| ■ Gilley's Shield R3, Sydney | Jeff Weber |
| ■ Trans Tasman Exchange | Dave Beaumont |
| ■ ISF XIII Men's Worlds, North Harbour, New Zealand | Wiremu Tamaki, Lance Brown, Mark McFarlane, Lance Type, Wayne Saunders (Ass't UIC). |
| ■ International Youth Series, Australia | Bob Jones |

I am pleased to report Mark McFarlane (ISC), Nicola Ogier, Mark Porteous and Jeremy England were all assigned to their respective World Championship Grand Finals, with Mark Porteous' performance being highly commended. Whilst we all join in congratulating the Black Sox on their sixth World Championship victory and their eight straight grand final appearance, I am pleased to report our umpires also continue to perform creditably at the Men's World Championships. International field umpiring assignments continue to have a self-funded component however your umpiring programme is very grateful of the support from SNZ for umpires attending ISF World Championships and our established exchange programmes.

INTERNATIONAL UMPIRING

As the ISF Regional Umpire Coordinator for Oceania it has been another active season participating in the many tasks the International Umpiring Staff (IUS) undertake. The Regional Co-ordinators Marlies Struyve (Europe), Wayne Saunders (Oceania), Santos Vasquez (Latin America), Teboho Vincent Maoeng (Africa) met with the ISF Director of Umpires, Robert Stanton in Plant City, USA in June 2012. Selected points of interest from this meeting include:

- ISF President Don Porter briefed on progress with the campaign for Olympic reinstatement.
- Revised three/four umpire mechanics uploaded to UmpSchool.
- Oceania ISF certification Seminar confirmed for February 2014 in New Zealand. (Follow-up preparations are well in hand with budgets presented and an organising group recently established)

- Rule period recertification will be effective from 1st January 2014. All ISF certified umpires will be required to be recertified by undertaking the rules update examination and obtaining a pass mark to be considered for future ISF World Championships from and including 2014.
- All active ISF umpires are encouraged to be registered on UmpSchool. Last season SNZ extended this to include all SNZ umpires Level 5 and above by paying their registration fee. This was reviewed at the SNZ NUS meeting in June and will not be supported next season due to the lack of engagement.

The next ISF Congress (a rules change Congress) is scheduled for Cartagena, Columbia in October 2013. Rule change recommendations have been discussed and prepared for presentation by the IUS. Again much focus is on strengthening rules and the code to help eliminate time wasting.

GRADING ADJUSTMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS PASSES

As a result of National Tournament evaluations and NUS recommendations the following grading adjustments for the 2012/2013 season are advised.

Level 5 to Level 6 – David Fortin (CB), Les Haslam (AK), John Hickman (NH), Tony Kaiaruna (WN), Darrel Paul (HB), Chris Radford (AK) and Sutton Dawie (OG).

Level 4 to Level 5 – Ngawhetu Dickson (WN), Rex Dyason (MN), Robin Griffiths (CB), Rebecca Taylor (OG) and Kevin Gorman (CM).

Level 4 Badge Examination - the following were successful in the practical NZ Badge examination. Mark Andrell (ML), Steff Chambers (NH), Lisa Dawson (CM), Ben Dyason (MN), Phil Easdown (CB), Tristan Hutchinson (NH), Reipa Kelly (CM), Simon Lindsay (NH), Robbie Sadgrove (AK) and Kieran Williams (NH).

Level 3 Qualifying Examination - the following were successful in the practical NZ Qualifying examination.

Grant Bavin (ML), Jill Farquhar (SL), Leon Hopa (SL), Heath Lyttle (MC), Tamati Montgomery (CM), Jack Myers (CM), Ian Priesig (HV), Charlie Ratahi (HV), Phil Smith (CM), David Taiwhanga (CM) and Caleb Watts (MN).

Level 2 NZ Rules Examination - the following candidates sat the NZ Rules examination and exceeded the minimum pass mark.

Lance Billings (BP), Simon Bramley (AK), Graeme Chapman (HB), Toby Charnley (NH), Wayne Dixon (CB), John Hall (CM), Zarnia Holloway (BP), Joanne Hyde (HV), Heidi Leathart (AK), Lynette Leathart (AK), Peter Loach (BP), Ron McMillan (AK), Stewart Murray (MN), Te Mona Osborne (PB), Joshua Ratcliffe (NO), Graeme Roberts (HV), Lil Saunders (BP), Honi Tainui (HV), Di Tulloch (ML) and Mark Waters (NH).

Grading List Summary - the overall number of graded umpires remain relatively constant expect for the L1 and L2 grades which regularly fluctuate from season to season. Grading numbers were as follows: **L7** - 15 unchanged, **L6** – 18 up from 11, **L5** – 20 down from 23, **L4** – 41 down from 42, **L3** – 17 down from 20, **L2** – 26 down from 41 and **L1** - 82 up from 166. L1 umpire returns were not received from all associations and the figure of 82 significantly under reports the number of L1 umpires active throughout New Zealand.

My personal thanks to the National Umpiring Staff. Deputy Director of Umpiring since 2007 Mark McFarlane did not stand for re-election. Mark's commitment and passion for the programme will be missed. Nicola Ogier Regional Director for the South Island was elected as the incoming Deputy Director. Thank you to all who contributed to **"The Programme"**. I hope you enjoyed your umpiring experience enough to return again next season.

Wayne Saunders

Umpire-in-Chief

Our people are the foundation of our success