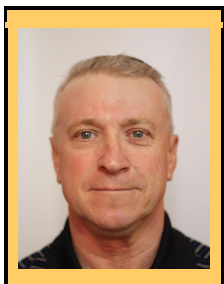


UIC News
Issue No1 2014
SNZ AGM UMPIRES REPORT 2014

Again it is my privilege to report on the activities of your Softball New Zealand umpiring programme. It remains a pleasure to work with your National Umpiring Staff, a group of volunteers that continue to give freely of their time to staff games, mentor and development, and grow the **“The Programme”**. Last year I touched briefly on succession planning and the development of future leaders. At February’s Oceania ISF Umpire Certification Seminar, Wiremu Tamaki and Nicola Ogier were introduced as ISF Evaluators thus gaining valuable experience working alongside the ISF Director of Umpires Bob Stanton and myself. Last season’s new appointments were Regional Directors Mark Porteous (Northern) and Dave Beaumont (Southern) and Nicky Ogier as a Deputy Director.

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. I can report that this season we had success at both ends of **“The Programme”**. At the top, five umpires gained ISF Certification and a very healthy number of forty three passed the Rules Examination. Recognising that those that umpire do so voluntarily and the role of a good umpire is very important to the game, all umpires are challenged to be well prepared; game focused and are very strongly encouraged to enjoy themselves whilst umpiring.



At the 2013 SNZ AGM Mark Porteous, North Harbour was named “Umpire of the Year”. Mark is the President of the North Harbour Umpires Association and in 2013 was appointed the Regional Director of Umpiring for the Northern Region. He was appointed to his first ISF World Championship the Junior Men’s held in Parana, Argentina where he officiated with distinction. Assignments included plate on USA v Canada and first base on the Grand Final between Argentina and Japan. During the 2012/13 season Mark was a member of the umpire crews to officiate the National Fastpitch Men’s and the Men’s Open Grand finals.

Last season started with the traditional September Regional Clinics as umpires prepared for the new season. A well organised and well attended Central Region Clinic was held in the Hawkes Bay while an equally well organised and well attended Northern Region Clinic was held at North Harbour’s new Stadium.

The Level 7 group mentoring programme led by Lindsay Edwards has again seen measurable results. With an increase in ISF certified umpires and the continuation of this programme we can look forward to further success in the development of top end umpiring experience. Nicky Ogier has successfully continued her leadership of the development of female umpiring. With a decline in female participation globally it is important that females are given support and encouragement to be involved with umpiring. Nicky with the assistance of Tara Harris and Jeremy England compiled the new SNZ Rulebook for 2014/2018.

From my perspective **“The Programme”** would not run as it does without the valued support from 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 Nicky Ogier. We were joined

by Regional Directors: Dave Beaumont (South Island), Wiremu Tamaki (Central) and Mark Porteous (Northern). Notable among our many tasks: Lindsay continues as convenor of the Level 7 Advisory Group and manages Merchandising; Nicky was Rules examiner, SNZ Rulebook co-ordinator, female umpire development and UmpSchool Administrator; Wiremu Website Manager; Cass Seeling Clinics and RDU coordinator and Wayne National Tournament appointments. Whilst senior umpires Mark McFarlane, Bill Smith and Dennis Smith joined members of the NUS as National Tournament Chief Umpires.

The annual National Rules refresher is held in the first week of October and has now been running for over twenty years. The rules examination is available to anyone to sit and local associations are encouraged to communicate this to their membership. The “open book” format continues to attract a greater level of participation with 98 papers returned for marking. 43 candidates successfully obtained a pass mark for a first time Level 2 grading. This success has created a new challenge for the NUS and will result in a review of policy to create more opportunity to undertake the Level 3 Qualifying Examination. Unfortunately this growth is not evenly spread. Recruitment and development in most major associations still remains a long-term challenge.

NATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

This year's National Tournaments were fully staffed to meet or better SNZ staffing expectations. National Staff members with the assistance of other senior umpires mentioned above were used as Tournament Chief Umpires. Again the ability to appoint from an increasing pool of experienced umpires has provided measurable consistency with evaluating and reporting. National Tournament's 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. Fully staffing, all National Tournaments in March with suitably experience umpires, remains a challenge.

A total of 100 umpires (down from 104 last season) worked this season's National Tournaments. This season we played host to Australian umpires Richard Barrow, Bridget Cameron, Leigh Evans, Helen Strauss and Tricia Sibraa (SAL-UIC) at the Gilley's Shield at North Harbour, and Kyra Cox, Richard Barrow, Bridget Cameron, David Casey, Leanne Garside, Jay Gibson, Jana McCaskill, Trevor Murphy, Jesse Smith and Alex Turnbull along with the ISF Director of Umpire Bob Stanton at the ISF Oceania Certification Seminar/NFC in Christchurch.

INTERNATIONAL APPOINTMENTS AND INVITATIONS

Recorded for the record is the following

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| ■ ISF X World Junior Women's, Brampton, Canada | Riki Tourangi |
| ■ Gilley's Shield, North Harbour, New Zealand | Les Haslam, Lance Type, Nicola Ogier, Tara Harris, John Hickman, Andrew McManus, Mark Porteous, Brydon Wells, Wayne Saunders (UIC). |
| ■ Trans Tasman Exchange | Tony Kaiaruna |
| ■ ISF Oceania Certification Seminar (part of the NFC) | Tony Kaiaruna, Dave Fortin, Dave Beaumont, Tara Harris, Joe Okada, Gavin Shepherd, Wayne Saunders (ISF). |
| ■ ISF X World Junior Men's, Whitehorse, Canada | Gavin Shepherd |
| ■ 2014 ISC Exchange | Jeremy England |
| ■ ISF XIV World Women's, Haarlem, Holland | Nicola Ogier, Glen Nalepa |
| ■ International Youth Series, Sydney, Australia | Ben Horn |

A healthy level of interest and applications for International field umpiring appointments continues. Appointments 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. In addition to the above appointments an increasing number of umpires are receiving invitations to umpire in Australia.

INTERNATIONAL UMPIRING

As the ISF Regional Umpire Coordinator for Oceania and SNZ UIC I attended the XXVI ISF Congress held in Cartagena, Columbia; serving on the Rules Commission (chaired by Rex Capil), Umpires Commission (as Vice Chair) and Equipment and Standards Commission.

The Rules Commission considered 106 proposed rule changes, of those 18 were withdrawn and 14 were rejected. Many of the approved changes were to eliminate time wasting and these changes will appear in the new SNZ rulebook for this season. Also approved was a review of the ISF Playing Rules to take place over the next 4 years and will involve the re-organization of the rules and a rewriting of the rules in a simpler and clearer language. Post Congress a Project Review and Rewrite Committee (PRRC) was established and is Co-chaired by Marlies Struyve and myself. Measureable progress has already been achieved on a proposed change and by way of consensus the restructured rulebook will consist of five headline chapters; The Game, Equipment, Participants and Substitutes, Offense and Defence. A draft is programmed to be presented to the 2015 Congress.

Selected points of interest emanating from Umpires Commission include:

- Revised ISF three/four umpire mechanics (now includes 5 and 6 umpire mechanics); ISF Rulebook and Casebook have been uploaded to UmpSchool.
- Rule period recertification will be effective from 1st January 2014. All currently ISF certified umpires will be required to recertify by undertaking the rules update examination (available on UmpSchool) and obtain the pass mark to be considered for any future ISF World Championships from and including 2014.
- World Championship/Olympic Competition Umpire Crew photographic records are now available on the ISF website under the umpire's page.

Congress also saw the President of the Oceania Confederation Rex Capil elected ISF Vice President Oceania.

GRADING ADJUSTMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS PASSES

As a result of International and National Tournament evaluations, and NUS recommendations the following grading adjustments for the 2013/2014 season are advised.

Level 7 (ISF Certification) - Tony Kaiaruna, Dave Fortin, Tara Harris, Joe Okada, Gavin Shepherd,

Level 5 to Level 6 – Kevin Gorman (CM) and Brydon Wells (NH).

Level 4 to Level 5 – Grading promotions to be confirmed at the 2014 NUS meeting and were not available at the time of writing this report.

Level 4 Badge Examination - the following were successful in the practical NZ Badge examination. Tamati Montgomery (CM), Phil Smith (CM), David Taiwhanga (CM), Grant Bavin (ML), Warren Herd (ML), Jill Farquhar (SL) and Leon Hopa (SL).

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

Jade McClutchie (HB), Tikao McClutchie (HB), Mark Morgan (ML), William Saddler (PB), Geoffrey Simmonds (CM) and Heidi Leathart (AK).

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

Reagan Bourgeois (AK), Michael Ford (AK), Tracy Hallett (AK), Mark Hallett (AK), Christine Rawlings (AK), Taura Rountree (AK), Sandy Shelford (AK), Taimai Tauhiki (AK), George Tuhura (AK), Cody Brown (BP), Leon Himiana (BP), Sam Holloway (BP), Chris Boyce (CM), Tridan

McClutchie (HB), Mose Ray (HB), Leigh Grinlinton (HV), Daniel Flanagan (MC), Rob Flanagan (MC), Brian Jonas (MC), Apirana Mason-Takoko (PB), Apirana Takoko (PB), Jamie Barnett (PB), Keita Boyd (PB), Lisa Collier (PB), Stormy Gardner (PB), Carmen Hihi (PB), Duane Hihi (PB), Nazreen Hihi (PB), Tina Holmes (PB), Dallas Joseph (PB), Alys Mauheni (PB), Cory Reihana (PB), Reid Reihana (PB), Challise Rutene (PB), Charnelle Rutene (PB), Lee Stewart (PB), Jason Taianui (PB) and Shane Williams (PB). In addition Jade McClutchie (HB), Tikao McClutchie (HB), Mark Morgan (ML), William Saddler (PB) and Geoffrey Simmonds (CM) who also undertook the Level 3 Qualifying examination

Grading List Summary - the overall number of graded umpires remains relatively constant except for the L1 and L2 grades which regularly fluctuate from season to season. Grading numbers were as follows: **L7** – 21 up from 15, **L6** – 15 down from 18, **L5** – 19 down from 20, **L4** – 40 down from 41, **L3** – 14 down from 17, **L2** – 46 up from 26 and **L1** - 47 down from 82. L1 umpire returns were not received from all associations and are significantly under reported.

My personal thanks to the National Umpiring Staff. In June Wiremu Tamaki was appointed to replace outgoing Deputy Director Cass Seeling, who served in that position for the last fifteen years. I would like to record a sincere vote of thanks to Cass for long and valued service. 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

Post issue of this report to SNZ

Incumbent Deputy Director Nicola Ogier has resigned. Nicola joined the NUS in 2004 as the RDU for the South Island’s “Lower South”. Whilst softball has been *“a great love & passion”* to Nicola, for personal reasons she has finally accepted the need to step back. I would like to record a sincere vote of thanks to Nicola for her valued service.