

The New Year has begun and we are straight into the age grade National Tournaments. Since the last UIC News much has happened. Annual Regional Clinics were held in September in Central Otago, Marlborough, Hawkes Bay and Counties. To our many facilitators and attendees thank you for making these clinics a success.

The National Rules Examinations/Refreshers in October is a permanent fixture on our annual calendar. Congratulations to the following umpires who obtained their **Level 2 Rules examination pass**.

Graeme Charteris (AK); Howard Namana, John Wilson and Matthew Ogier (CB); Graeme Chapman and Steven Cooper (HB); Joe Tangitutu (HV); Ian Dittford (ML); Graeme Love (MN), Brydon Wells, Guy Kawe, Martin Hunt, Ray Lowther, Sandra Shelford and Tauhiki Taimai (NH); James Musso and Shirley Harvey (NN); Aran Bailey and Shawn Saunders (OG); Garry Tokoa (PB) and Tony Kaiaruna (WN).

Thanks again to Nicky and Mark and the team of checkers for putting the Rules Refresher together. It is now 16 years since the introduction of a National Rules Examinations/Refreshers for all. The measurable success of New Zealand umpiring at International level and a very noticeable decrease in protests at National Tournaments can in some way be the result of greater rules knowledge. **Continual improvement** is an ongoing challenge for all, so visit the website and test and grow your umpiring knowledge.

The current round of National Tournament and International recommendations and appointments have all now been finalized. We are very pleased to have **24 field examinees** this year. There have been some challenges to stay within a very tight umpiring budget. I thank all umpires for their total support and acceptance of these changes. We have been able to achieve more than first looked possible through financial support of good friend and former legend in the sport.

Most of you will have noticed a major change to our website. This is thanks to **new Website Manager** Wiremu Tamaki who takes over this role that I had undertaken since the website inception in 2002.

I am please to advise that **Wiremu Tamaki and Mark McFarlane** have been recommended by SNZ to the ISF for selection consideration for the Men's World Series, Saskatoon, Canada in July. An Official's Prime Minister Scholarship funding grant has been approved for the World Series Umpires while Mark has had been awarded an individual grant to further his international umpiring career. Field umpires **Greg Taylor, Lance Brown, Lance Type** and I (as TCU) will attend the Pacific Series in Samoa in February. **Tara Harris** is our Trans Tasman exchange umpire and will attend the combined men and women's Championships in Sydney while **Phil Waller** will attend our Men's Open.

Television through the Maori Sport Awards brought more very positive exposure to umpiring. This year the **Te Aratiatia** (Maori Sports Umpire/Referee of the Year) went to the **SNZ Softballer and Umpire of the Year - Wiremu Tamaki**. Please join me again in congratulating Wiremu who had an outstanding 2008.

"That following an initial warning to a pitcher. Any discussion on subsequent infringement of the pitching rule with a pitcher shall involve the head coach. This is recommended to apply for all U19 and under grades". This request from the National coaching Staff has been implemented. I can confirm from the U19 boys that this game management approach was well received by players, coaches and umpires.

Two SNZ Technical Bulletins have been recently issued and maybe downloaded at <http://www.softball.org.nz/content/thegame/snzumpires/umpirefiles/toolbox/323/tcu-tool.aspx>

- SNZ Bat Policy (8 September 2008).
- SNZ Designated Runner (DR) Rule (11 December 2008)

We hope you enjoy visiting our website as it continues to go through change and grow. If you have a question we hope you can find most answers there. Visit the website first before you contact your Local Chief Umpire or Regional Director of Umpiring to seek assistance.

Oceania Update

Bob Stanton ISF Director of Umpiring has advised the following **Oceania** ISF certified umpires have been appointed to the newly formed ISF sub-committees.

- **Rules** – Leigh Evans, Nicky Ogier
- **Mechanics** – Wayne Saunders –Co-chair, Scott Rindfleish
- **Women in Umpiring** – Margo Koskelainen – Co-chair, Debbie Grove, Nicky Ogier
- **Education** – Andrew Rindfleish, Wu Tamaki
- **Administration** – Margo Koskelainen – Co-Chair, Diane Waller

A Regional Coordinators Meeting is scheduled for February 19-22 in Plant City. The Co-chairs will be reporting at this meeting on their sub-committee findings to date. Should any **Oceania** Umpire-in-Chief have ISF related umpiring matters they wish raised, would you please email them to me no later than 30 January.

The Oceania calendar notes that Umpire Clinics are proposed for Palau and Guam in 2009. Details for both are yet to be confirmed through ISF. The 2009 ISF Certification Seminar to be held in Australia has now been rescheduled to 2010 at the request of the ISF Director of Umpiring to allow the rules examination to include rule changes approved at the October ISF Congress. Dates and venue are yet to be confirmed with Australia and will be advised when confirmed. The Pacific Series between Japan, Samoa and the New Zealand Blacksox is scheduled for 11/14 February in Apia, Samoa and will involve umpires from Samoa and New Zealand.

In finishing I would like to share with you this thought from Kevin Quinn, President of the Board of Directors, Softball Canada and chairman of the ISF Umpires Commission.

- Let's take a moment to contemplate this thought. In order for any of us to succeed, we need to invest a great deal of time and energy. It is important to remember **"The most important minute you will ever spend is the one you invest in someone else!!"**

Wayne Saunders
Umpire-in-Chief