



ACUSA REGIONAL TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT

SEASON 2009/2010

INTRODUCTION

The trend of increased numbers standing and appointments made which first emerged in season 2007/2008 continues, and looks to continue into next season.

Some 51 umpires stood during the season at all levels of club and associated ACA fixtures – age group tournaments, development group matches, Aces and Hearts Trials, U17 and U19 Trials, U19 World Cup warm up matches etc. Such represented an increase of 9 standing umpires on last season.

Appointments increased – 1077 were made compared to some 940 last season. Members also, on a voluntary basis, supported Blind Cricket Development, Deaf Cricket Development and Cornwall's successful 100 hours of continuous cricket Guinness World Record event.

The average turnout on a club playing day was 30 – peaking at 34; again up on last season.

Our representation at NZC level remained unchanged with 9 members appointed to NZC Panels. They, I have no doubt, performed with distinction.

Attendance at meetings was improved, and is to be applauded. Please remember that commitment on the field and attendance at meetings are considerations NZC/NZCUSA take into account when looking at appointment to NZC Panels.

I believe the standard of umpiring overall was very good; and is improving each season. This appears reflected in Captain's Reports, and from field sightings and anecdotal evidence. As previously said, there is no room for complacency though. I believe we remain the pre-eminent umpire group and we must continue to maintain and build on that.

I now, as usual, review several aspects of the season.

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Ten new umpires joined ACUSA at the beginning of the season, and we saw the return of 2 former members during the course of the season. Some 12 expressions of interest in umpiring next season have been received, and are being followed up.

Recruitment from Secondary Schools, which had been initiated in season 2008/2009 (with a limited return) did not really get off the ground in a structured way this last season, and the concept will be re-visited during the off- season.

Members of ACA age group squads again stood in the Xmas age group tournaments – a continuation of ACA's desire to see this happen.

Retention was not an issue.

Word of mouth and hits on the ACUSA website seem to remain the primary sources of recruitment. However the NZCUSA Board has been active in discussing recruitment initiatives with umpiring associations – each association has an Executive member who liaises with the Board member holding the Recruitment and Retention portfolio. I expect that we will see a more aggressive initiative in the season ahead.

TRAINING AND EXAMINATIONS

New umpires completed the NZCUSA Level 2 course pre-season. A similar programme will be run for new umpires this year.

The pre-season Training Weekend was held in September 2009 and was well attended and successful. It is an established part of the training programme and is pencilled in for 18 – 19 September 2010.

The format during the season was changed a little, but will be further reviewed. The proposed meetings of individual NZCUSA Panels did not eventuate but will be implemented. Mentoring of new umpires was established and will be developed.

Five members passed the NZCUSA Level 4 examination; and we have 3 sitting this year. To those candidates – all the best – and to Phil Jones, my thanks for your continued invaluable input as mentor/tutor to the candidates.

Two members passed the Level 3 examination pre-season; and a further 3 are in the process of undertaking it as this is written.

I can but repeat my belief that irrespective of any desire or otherwise to advance through the umpiring ranks, the examinations form an essential part of an umpire's development. I therefore encourage all members to undertake them.

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

This Committee again undertook its role with commitment and diligence. All standing umpires were boundary assessed. Captains Reports were reviewed and clarification sought from Captains if considered necessary. Feedback was obtained from discussion with Captains, senior respected players, coaches and administrators in an effort to get as rounded a picture as possible. I received constant feedback which enabled "issues" to be addressed whether with members as whole, or with individuals.

Mid and end- season Reports were compiled and the ACUSA Panels reviewed, with Panel movement occurring.

I am aware that many members are wanting to see more information in their Reports in order to try and gain a better appreciation of how they are going, and what they need to address. I propose reviewing the reporting process with the Committee, as I do see a need to provide more than at present. I also believe that there are other factors that can be built into the overall process which members can provide – goal setting for the season, and undertaking self assessment. These are

all to be considered in the off season with a view to having an expanded system come into effect next season.

The Committee deliberated on the Top 10 names for consideration by NZC/NZCUSA. It took the view that 11 names required to be submitted. Those persons submitted (in batting order are : Wayne Knights, Hiran Perera, Raoul Allen, Peter Gasston, Kevin Manley, Tony Gillies, Peter Spall, Kath Geaney, Jayath Batuwangala, Brian Pullen, Diana Venter.

Congratulations to those members. As in past years our NZC Elite Panel umpires – Brent Bowden, Barry Frost, and Phil Jones were not required to be considered in the Top 10 process: and again, as in past years, there are others considered by the Committee to be very close to inclusion.

The Committee also considered the award winners for umpiring awards for the season. The following awards were made, and the recipients are to be congratulated:

ACA Umpire of the Year	Barry Frost
Club Umpire of the Year	Fred Nathras
Novice Umpire of the Year	Jason Hoyte
Most Club Umpiring Days	Simon McNamara

The Committee also considered the candidates for the various exchange programmes which ran during the season and which are referred to below.

The Committee, as always, pushes the case for Auckland umpires at all levels; and remains, in my view, the best umpiring brains trust in the country.

My thanks to the Committee – Ken Hjorth (Convenor) Roger Guttery, Brian Windler, Barry Frost, and Phil Jones.

As a final note on umpire field assessment: our exchange umpires were in the main field assessed at the request of NZCUSA; and at NZCUSA's request I assessed 2 of our members. Brent Bowden also assessed some members at my request providing them with a detailed assessment report.

EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES

The traditional exchange with Cricket Victoria occurred, Tony Gillies being our man to Melbourne. Tony was a fine ambassador for the ACUSA, and found the experience one not to be forgotten. Tony's on- field performance was of an excellent standard.

We hosted Russell Stanley who stood during the National Club Championships. This culminated in his standing in the final with Wayne Knights. Russell was a delight to host, and a fine ambassador for Cricket Victoria umpires.

This exchange is invaluable. In the words of Bob Parry, Cricket Victoria's Umpiring Manager in a recent e-mail to me:

“The exchange continues to offer members of our respective panels a great opportunity to experience different conditions, partners and players. This can only benefit their umpiring and I look forward to continue working with you next season and beyond.”

My sentiments entirely.

Ian McCormick and Kath Geaney were our exchange umpires to Central Districts. They travelled to Wanganui in February to stand in the Chapple Cup weekend. Feedback showed their umpiring to have been of a high standard; and I believe they found the experience valuable.

We hosted Alan McLean (Nelson) and Robert Murphy (Palmerston North) as the Central Districts exchange umpires here – they stood in a weekend club round in March; performing with distinction and valuing the experience.

We were able to arrange an exchange with Wellington late in the season which saw Kerry Dawe standing there over 3 days – an experience he will not forget. Again, we received good reports on Kerry's umpiring.

In return we hosted Bruce Jenkins from Wellington who stood for 3 days at the National Club Championships; an experience he found invaluable.

We also hosted Glen Walkin from Napier who stood in a weekend club round; Glen being the Hawkes Bay inaugural exchange umpire under the Graeme Webster Memorial Exchange which we established following Graeme's untimely death. That will be a 2 way exchange from this point on.

I noted in last season's report that NZCUSA was looking at developing an exchange programme funded by NZC for umpires in each association who were nominated in the Top 10 but did not reach an NZC Panel appointment. This occurred to a limited degree, partly due to a limited budget, and will no doubt be reviewed for future seasons.

I remain firmly of the belief that exchanges are integral to an umpire's development, and remain committed to expanding the programme in whatever way we can.

THIRD UMPIRE APPOINTMENTS

Appointments were again made to the First Class One Day and Twenty/20 competitions at men's and women's levels. Feedback continues to be positive – there is much to be learnt from the experience. To my knowledge all umpiring associations are now making these appointments to the extent to which they are able; and I believe NZC and NZCUSA see the benefit in it.

As noted in previous Reports, the goodwill and support of the "on field umpires" is crucial to the success of the programme. They are fully supportive and my thanks is again extended to them.

PLAYER BEHAVIOUR

This season members regrettably needed to invoke reporting procedures for breaches of the Code of Conduct and/or Spirit of Cricket by players. There were probably incidents that should have been reported that were not.

Of concern to me was that this occurred in a season where the ACA had launched a Spirit of Cricket campaign with awards involved. Equally of concern to me were the number of first class players concerned in the reported cases. The ACA, I believe, needs to look closely at these aspects.

NZC has made it clear that player behaviour must not breach Codes of Conduct or the Spirit of the game. Umpires at all levels have an obligation in this area, as unpalatable as it may be. This is an area which I believe the ACUSA has to address before next season.

CONCLUSION

A very busy season for members both on and off the field; and a successful one in my view. As always there are things that need to be addressed and every effort will be made to do so before next season.

I cannot perform my role without the unequivocal support of many others. My thanks to Peter Spall and the ACUSA Executive; Andrew Eade , Chris Lander and all at the ACA; the NZCUSA Board ; and Rodger McHarg , National Umpire Manager.

And my sincere thanks to all members for your commitment and work during the season. You should feel proud of what you achieved, and be looking ahead to an even better season in 2010/2011.

Winter well.

Kevin Manley
R.T.O.
28 April 2010