

Between the Lines

Softball Canada — April 2017

AUSTRALIA EXCHANGE

By Andrew Gallant



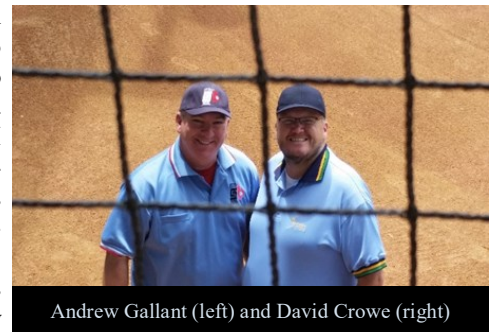
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Wow What an Experience!!!

I applied for the Australia exchange program through Softball Canada in 2016 for January 1st to the 8th for the Women's Open and January 9th to the 14th for the Men's Open in 2017. I received a call in late August from Jeff Whipple asking if I was still interested in the Australia exchange program that I applied for, there was a lot of thoughts going through my mind and using my umpire training of game control, I remained calm and said yes I am, when do I start. Jeff then told me that things would be happening fast and that I could bring my wife Gail, needless to say she was ecstatic and planning has begun. Tricia Sibraa with Softball Australia invited us "Down Under" for New Year's Eve in Sydney. We thought that was a great idea and worked our itinerary through Donna at Softball Canada, Donna was a big help, thank you Donna.

We started our planning and booked the Sydney Harbour New Year's Eve cruise onboard the Super Cat, some may have seen pics on facebook. That was an amazing excursion that we will never forget. The Steve Irwin zoo was also amazing, we got to experience a personal Koala cuddling, nice, the War Memorial Museum in Canberra amazing and sad at the same time, Bondi beach, Gold coast, Sunshine coast, was very nice. Gail got to visit Manly beach on her own as I was on the field and she enjoyed the experience thanks to Claire Austring's advice. Thanks Claire. The Brisbane Wheel and the Brisbane River Cruise was also amazing. Overall an amazing trip, taking a few days before the tournament and an extra week vacation at the end of the tournament sure helped with the sightseeing.



Andrew Gallant (left) and David Crowe (right)

[...continue reading here](#)

SOFTBALL CANADA AND WBSC PHYSICAL TESTING, A REMINDER

Below are 3 of the 4 tests being conducted at Men's and Women's FP and SP CCs this season. Are you in shape to pass them? The 4th and final test is currently being developed by the WBSC.

- ♦ **The Chair test** - a candidate starts in a sitting position on a chair, with the arms crossed and folded against the chest. The candidate is then required to stand (back straight and knees locked) and to sit again (butt fully touching the chair seat) to count as one rep. The candidates repeats this as quickly as possible for 30 seconds. **The bench mark is 20 – 22 repetitions.**
- ♦ **27 Meter Dash** – candidates must run 27 meters (88 feet) from a standing start. This is roughly the distance from an umpire's starting position at first base to the calling position on the third base side of home plate. **The bench mark is 5 – 5.5 seconds.**
- ♦ **1.6 Kilometer (1 Mile) run** – From a standing start, candidates must complete a 1.6 kilometer run. **The bench mark is 12 minutes or less.**

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is published four times a year to share great stories and features about umpires and umpiring from across the country. If you have a story to share please let us know.

Editor in Chief
Doug Cundall

Design by
Diego La Manna

French translation
Audrey Desmarteaux-Houle

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AUSTRALIA EXCHANGE (CONTINUING)

By Andrew Gallant

We left Moncton December 28 at 4 pm and arrived in Sydney December 30th at 9 am, a long 26 hour flight. The hardest part for me was San Francisco to Australia 14 hours straight flying. Our luggage didn't make it but was on the next flight, so the airline gave us 250 dollars on a credit card which we bought clothes for New Year's Eve cruise and hoping our luggage makes it in time for the ball tournament, which it did. Our pick up was for 10:30 am on January 1st and our luggage got there at 9 am, wow that's close. Our driver and fellow umpire David Crowe pulled up to the hotel with a Canadian Flag waving in the air, we had a good laugh and knew we would hit it off right away and we did and became friends as the week went on.

One thing they do different in Australia, all teams bring their bats to the umpires. The umpires break up into small groups and each group has a bat list and the serial numbers for each type of bat. Once we check them we put a green sticker on the bat that it passed. At the Women's Open and the Men's Open all games started at 1 pm so there was time to sightsee and we took advantage of that. Some days I didn't have my first game until 3:30 pm and I always worked two games a day. We always used the 3 umpire system and 4 umpire system in the play-offs. Heat was a factor in the tournament, but keeping hydrated was the key. It was very hot and humidity was high. One day 42o and they have a heat policy that anything over 35o we take a break for 5 minutes at the bottom of the 3rd and 5th and 7th if it goes extra innings. One game I recall that we started the game with no heat policy and after the plate meeting the temperature went up 4 degrees and had to put the heat policy in play. Water just wasn't enough, I used gatorade and a gatorade syrup that you squirt into your water and make it the strength you want. In the Men's Open one umpire went down with heat exhaustion and another was a combination of heat and muscle cramps. Overall I had a great tournament and the ball was very competitive. In the Women's Open I worked the plate in the semi-finals and 1st base in the finals. After the final game, one of the management team came to me and said that this was the 70th year for the Women's Open and the first time an international umpire was in the finals. I was very honoured that they respected me enough to put me on 1st base in the finals of their tournament. In the Men's Open I worked second base in the semi-finals and second in the finals. The Men's was a very competitive tournament that seen a lot of close games and a bench clearing that I was on. Lots of fun! Just like back home mate, I said lol.

I would like to thank Softball Canada, ODC and the Board for selecting me to represent Softball Canada on this exchange program. I believe that I represented Canada well. THANK YOU SOFTBALL CANADA!!

I'm glad Gail and I got to experience this trip of a lifetime together. A big shout out goes out to Softball Australia and the Umpires as they sure know how to make you feel at home and couldn't do enough for us. They made Gail feel like one of the crew. We sure have a lot of memories. Thank You Softball Australia!!

In closing I would like to say that I have been a member of Softball Canada since 1986 and only Softball Canada, I traveled throughout Canada to numerous championships. in 2012 went to Colombia for the Pan AM world qualifier Sr. Men's and was selected for the gold medal plate, and this year the Australia exchange was the highlight of my umpire career. I believe Softball Canada Umpires are so successful, is because of our program and the leadership we have from the top as well as the leadership in each Province and Territories, we as umpires are respected wherever we go, proof our program is working and I believe second to none.

Also thank you Softball New Brunswick for all your support, for a small Province we sure get around and continue to develop great umpires, let us keep working hard and support each other in this great game.

Cheers Mate

Andrew Gallant
Level V WBSC Umpire, Softball Canada

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WHY GETTING IT TOGETHER MATTERS

By TONY GENCO

I am an old guy with a new love for umpiring. My 10 year old has by virtue of his love for softball got me started and now 4 years later here I am. He has moved on to Baseball and I have taken lots of courses to help out his Rep team but I am now a Softball Canada Level 2B umpire and continue to serve and do my best. That's what a 50 year old newbie who never really played the game does- in my case anyway.

I still get nervous when I take the field to ump a game. The perfectionist in me takes over, wanting to do the right thing all the time. And the techniques we are taught all are supposed to get us in the right position to make the right call. But we are all human and sometimes we just can't get 'er done. I take those moments to heart when I know I shouldn't I still do. I can't help myself.

That's why I find it really helpful to attend the recent Instructor Training Conference held in Burlington. I had intended to do so last year but at the last minute couldn't. But this year I was so happy to have gone. I arrived and was able to meet and learn from experienced peers and experts in a very comprehensive way, share great insights and engage all those who have so much experience at so many levels. As a 2B, I was dwarfed by all the Level 4 and 5's in the room. But from the point of view of the interaction we weren't seen to be of a lower class. Rather we were welcomed as another group of folks that simply wanted to be perfect.

Who knew that that would never happen even though the guys like kept hoping I could at some point get there.

There was an important commitment to the application of the Long Term Athletic Development concept to umpires. I found that refreshing and interesting especially since I don't consider myself an athlete or Long Term. But after this philosophy was espoused, I really started to feel individually like an important contributor to that process. I was reinvigorated by my imperfections and the notion that I had a future.

What really added tremendous value to this concept was none of the learning actually. It was the ability to talk to folks I had met on the field like Marshall Lee and Howard Kornbluth who I have taken courses with or have given me real opportunities through evaluation to improve. I benefited from meeting people I didn't know before yet seem to go through the same thing I do, wanting to be perfect or at least better and hoping in telling our stories we can get there.

It's wonderful to know that this guy- new to the umpiring world can count on a new family of brothers and sisters that work together to ensure that their work in applying the rules does the game a service and results in enjoyment, satisfaction and truth- for the most part.

I can't wait until the next time we get together as a team to learn and grow together. Go Umps Go!

Tony Genco
Softball Ontario umpire

*DO YOU HAVE AN AN IDEA FOR AN ARTICLE ?
SUBMIT YOUR THOUGHTS TO THE BTL EDITOR!
DOUG.CUNDALL@SYMPATICO.CA*

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SUPPORTING OUR PROGRAM

By SUSAN STRAFFORD

Softball Canada is recognized around the world as one of the premier programs and we are looked at to be leaders. You make ask yourself, how can I help? Our program has reached this level through the hard work of umpires of all levels from across the country!

For our program to continue to be successful it is going to take all of us. There are many events every year that need help! Softball Canada is there to support umpires from all levels and provinces. It is not just about Canadian Championships and elite level umpires.

If there is a local tournament, zone/district play down, provincial championship or a Canadian Championship, if you are not umpiring find a way to volunteer! Each tournament requires numerous people to make it run smoothly and make it the best experience for the participants. If the level of ball is something you aspire to it is the perfect opportunity to watch the umpires at that level.

What can you do? Learn to be a scorekeeper, work concession, be a liaison for the umpires (refill water bottles, run errands if necessary, etc.), help with the grounds, help the UICs, etc.

We also need umpires to mentor newer umpires. This can be done at all levels, not just for our elite umpires. Maybe you are a 4th year umpire with limited experience but you still have more experience than a 1st year. Offer support, talk about issues, go watch them work a game!

There are also many administrative items done in the background that need input. Are you a “rules hound”? Submit rules for the exam or offer to proof read them before they are released.

Do you like instructing? Take the Instructor/Evaluator clinic and offer to help out at local clinics to get the experience. We all have a role and together we keep our umpires growing!

Susan Strafford

Level V WBSC umpire and ODC Member

RULES UPDATE, A REMINDER

By SOFTBALL CANADA

There were several rule updates approved at the AGM in Whitehorse. They include:

Slo-pitch Only

- ◆ The addition of a non-optional, two-out temporary runner for the pitcher
- ◆ Moving the batter's box back one foot from current (3' in front, 4' back from plate) and widening the box to 42" (3 ½')
- ◆ When there is no batter's box, the batter's back foot must remain behind the front of the strike mat until contact is made with the ball. In addition, the batter's front foot must remain in front of the back edge of the strike mat.
- ◆ Redefining defensive conferences to include any meeting between two or more players (does not have to include pitcher or manager) that is deemed to delay play. A fourth defensive conference will result in the pitcher being removed from the pitching position

Fastpitch - Orthodox Only

- ◆ The pitching rule was updated to include references to the position of the ball (cannot be outside the wrist, palm cannot be angled away from the body) and the feet (step foot cannot cross in front of pivot foot).

Fast Pitch (All)

- ◆ Only four people can be in pitching warm up area if it is inside the field of play – catcher, pitcher, spotter and coach. Spotter may carry one extra ball.
- ◆ Update of Run Ahead Rule to 15 runs after 2.5 or 3 innings, 10 runs after 2.5 or 4 innings or 7 runs after 4.5, 5, 5.5 or 6 innings.

Read more on the application, interpretation and enforcement on the Softball Canada Umpires Toolbox.



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RULES UPDATE (CONTINUING)

By SOFTBALL CANADA

Each rule change cycle the ODC collects suggested updates to the rule book and proposes them to the Board under a collective group of proposed updates that are considered to fall under the general umbrella of “housekeeping” items.

These proposed changes do not make changes to the core function of the way the game is played, but rather seek to bring together a series of changes that seek to clarify poorly worded sections, correct conflicts or errors in the current rulebook or better match current interpretation of the playing rules. What follows are some significant housekeeping items introduced in the 2017 / 2018 Rulebook.

Rule	Amendment	Rational
1.2 FP & SP	Reworded for clarity: <i>A play upon which an umpire cannot make a decision until requested by a manager, coach or player of the non-offending team. A coach or manager.....</i>	This serves to reinforce the current interpretation that only the non-offending team can make an appeal as the offending team could benefit from an appeal. Aligns with WBSC.
1.2.d.8) FP & SP	<i>‘hitting a ball with an illegal or altered bat’</i> has been removed as an appeal. Pre-existing penalties remain.	These bats are potentially unsafe and umpires should be permitted to remove them and apply appropriate penalties <i>whenever</i> they discover them. Changes related to this removal were also made in rule 7.6. Aligns with WBSC.
4.6.a - c EFFECT 2. SP only	Corrected the terminology used from ‘illegal player’ to ‘illegal substitute’. <i>Violation of the re-entry rule is treated as an illegal substitute.</i>	By definition, an illegal player is someone entitled to legally occupy the position but who has not been announced, which is not necessarily the case here. Illegal substitute is the correct term.
7.2.c.2.b.5) in FP 7.2.d.2.b.5) in SP	The following NOTE was added: <i>NOTE: If the player who was the improper batter was called out, his turn at bat shall not take place in the same inning, until all other batters in the batting order have completed their turn at bat. If his turn at bat occurs before this happens, go to the next batter.</i>	NOTE was added to clarify that a batter who had already been declared out does not come back to bat in the same inning until subsequent batters have completed their turn at bat. Aligns with WBSC.
8.2.g EFFECT in FP 8.2.f EFFECT in SP	Added at end of EFFECT <i>All outs made prior to the infraction shall stand.</i>	Aligns with a previous ODC ruling stating that any outs made prior to the batter-runner stepping back are retained.
8.2.h - k EFFECT in FP 8.2.g - j EFFECT in SP	Changed to time of the ‘pitch’ rather than ‘infraction’. <i>The ball is dead and all other runners return to the last base touched at the time of the pitch.</i>	Corrects a previous conflict within our rules for a batter-runner. Now aligns with 8.8.c. EFFECT which states ‘time of the pitch’. Aligns with WBSC.
8.7.m added in FP 8.7.k added in SP	<i>When a ball is lodged in:</i> 1. <i>Umpire gear or clothing, or Offensive player’s clothing.</i> <i>EFFECT – Sec. 7m: The ball is dead and the runners are advanced to the base or bases they would have reached, in the umpire’s judgment, had the ball not been lodged.</i>	This was lacking in our rule book and will serve to clarify our current rule interpretation. Aligns with WBSC.
9.1.f - g FP & SP	The following NOTE was added. <i>NOTE: When a runner is hit by a fair, untouched batted ball while in contact with their base (unless they intentionally interfere with the ball or a defensive player making a play) the ball may be ruled dead or remain live, depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base.</i>	Added a NOTE to clarify our current interpretation when the runner is hit while on base. Aligns with WBSC.