

Canberra International Skins & ISF World Series Qualifier

Hawker International Softball Centre,
Walhallow St, Hawker, ACT 2614

Friday 2nd, Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th December 2011
Tuesday 6th and Wednesday 7th December 2011



Report - Mark Porteous

After achieving my ISF qualification in February this year, the next step on my umpiring career path was to officiate at an ISF sanctioned tournament. I was lucky enough to be selected to participate in the World Series Qualifier in Canberra in December. Making the trip even more special was that I was joined by my mentor umpire Glen Nalepa also from North Harbour.

To warm up for the qualifier Softball Australia also invited us to participate in the annual Canberra International Skins tournament. This tournament has been going for nearly 30 years and is considered one of the preeminent club tournaments in Australia. This year the New Zealand Black Sox also played in the event.

We travelled to Sydney via Aerolineas Argentinas and were met at the airport by Barry Blanchard (a former Australian coach) who drove us from Sydney to Canberra. We stayed in Canberra at the Belconnen Way Motel & Serviced Apartments, a very short walk to the park with most amenities close by.

The tournament itself commenced on the Friday and after a quick briefing on the unusual rules I had my first game on the plate along with Alex Turnbull (local umpire) and my good mate from the ISF Clinic, Jason Carter. The first game pitted two local rivals against each other and with Adam Folkard being one of the pitchers it was a great game to get my feet wet.

After a day of play I was fairly used to the rules and was impressed with the standard of play and how important it was to move things along quickly. Most games were completed in the 90 minute time limit with a full 7 innings albeit declarations were made and ties were allowed. The number of teams and umpires meant we were all worked reasonably hard with three games the first day, four the second and another three on the final day. The tournament itself went particularly well with no major issues arising for me. Both Glen and I were lucky enough to be appointed to the final, Glen on 1st and me at 3rd and what a game that turned out to be with the local team, Upstarts coming from behind to beat the Mariners from Western Australia 4-2.

After the final the umpires all got together over snacks and drinks to discuss the tournament and other topics. The camaraderie between the Kiwis & Aussie umpires is great and it was fantastic to share the experience with some of the up and coming umpires in Australia as well as some of the experienced guys as well.

The Monday after the tournament was a free day so Scott Rindfleish, Glen and I headed in to Canberra itself to visit the Australian War Memorial Museum. What a great place. The history and drama plus the quality of the exhibitions were just fantastic and I highly recommend to anyone visiting Canberra to go there. We then drove around the Parliament

Buildings and then took some lunch. We were due to have a Technical meeting at 5:00 but then got a phone call that Wayne had arrived and wanted to do the diamond inspection at 3:30. Luckily we were not too far away and made it back on time.

The first game of the qualifier was also my first full international and was between Samoa & Papua New Guinea. I was on 2nd base. Despite some obvious nerves I was familiar with many of the Samoan players who mostly play in the AFC. I think the Samoans were also quite nervous and it took them some time to get started before taking the game late with the run ahead rule.

After the game there was a “formal” opening ceremony, which included all the teams, the umpires and officials. Immediately after that Australia took on PNG with me on 1st. There was an obvious difference in the playing standard and Australia took the game easily. I was not on the late game but Glen was on the plate. By now it had gotten bitterly cold. After the games we headed out to grab a late bite.

On the final day of the tournament I was at 3rd base for the PNG v Samoa game and then I had the final game of the tournament between the host and PNG. My first full International on the plate went smoothly and without controversy although the biggest talking point of the game was when one of the PNG players hit a big home run!

I was reasonably pleased with my performance at the tournament although I do acknowledge that the standard of play was not of the highest order and there will be significantly more pressure in future internationals that I may participate in.

The evening finished off with a nice meal and more conversation. Our room was even visited by a few of the Australian players who were happy to provide us with some feedback. All positive of course.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following:

- Eugene Gilbert and SNZ for organising our air travel, I know things were a bit trying there for a while and a special thanks for arranging the additional luggage allowance
- SAL for their hospitality
- Barry Blanchard for driving us to and from Sydney
- The ACT Softball Association
- Scott Rindfleish for giving us a tour of Canberra
- Both tournament umpiring crews for their assistance, friendliness and feedback throughout the tournament, with a special mention to Tricia Sibraa for her unwavering support and enthusiasm
- The ISF and Wayne Saunders for giving me this great opportunity and
- Glen Nalepa for being a darn good buddy and room mate



Games - Skins

Team 1	Team 2	DIA	Plate	U1	U2	U3
Day One						
Storm	Strikezone	1	Mark	Alex		Jason
Bucks	Mounties	2	Jason	Mark		
Sharks	Southside	2	Mark	Leigh		
Day Two						
Strikezone	Sharks	1	Trevor	Mark		David
Mounties	Upstarts	1	Debbie	Mark G		Mark
Bucks	Upstarts	1	Mark	Mark G		Scott
Strikezone	Monarchs	1	Debbie	Mark		
Day Three						
Bucks	Raptors	1	Alex	Trevor		Mark
Storm	Upstarts	2	Mark	Kevin		
Southside	Upstarts	1	Scott	Glen	Leigh	Mark

Games – ISF Qualifier

Team 1	Team 2	DIA	Plate	U1	U2	U3
Day One						
PNG	Samoa	1	Scott Rindfleish	Darren Sibraa	Mark Porteous	Glen Nalepa
Australia	PNG	1	Debbie Grove	Mark Porteous	Leigh Evans	Scott Rindfleish
Day Two						
Samoa	PNG	1	Leigh Evans	Glen Nalepa	Debbie Grove	Mark Porteous
PNG	Australia	1	Mark Porteous	Debbie Grove	Scott Rindfleish	Darren Sibraa

Games – Totals

P	U1	U2	U3
5	4	1	4



Mark Porteous