



International Softball Federation XXIII Congress Manila, Philippines, 25 October 2007.

Minutes of the Congress Umpires Commission Meeting.

Commission Members Present:

Acting Chair: Kevin Quinn (CAN), Vice-Chair: Mike Jennings (GBR), Director of Umpires: Merle Butler (USA), Deputy Director of Umpires: Robert Stanton (CAN), ISF Staff Liaison: Laurie Gouthro, Secretary: Wayne Saunders (NZL), Andres Chavero (MEX), Dario Delgado (PAN), Nicky Grunauer (ECU), Tony Jones (FIN), Kenzo Kato (JPN), Margo Koskelainen (AUS), Teboho Vincent Maoeng (RSA), Bob Milosavljevic (CRO), Tirelo Mukokomani (BOT), Andrew Rindfleish (AUS), Frank Wagner (GER), Tommy Wang (TAI)

Guests in Attendance:

President ISF: Don Porter, Laurence Abraham (PAL), Manuel Tenorio (Mariana Islands), Bob Steffy (GUA), Joel Mulelu (KEN), Alison Bradley (CAN), Kiyohisa Kosa (JAP), Taoko Utsugi (JAP), Ruud Van Zetten (NET), Ong Ka Aun (MAL), Juan Arambula (MEX), Drago Chan (HKG), Johnny Lau (HKG), See Kok Wooi (MAL), Mark McAllion (AUS), Ala Lee (KOR), Ted Miller (BAH) Liew Wee Mee (SIN).

Apologies are recorded for long standing Chair of the Umpire Commission Clovis Lodewijks. It is recorded that Clovis's health has been in recent decline. A moment of silence was observed as a mark of respect for Clovis's contribution to the ISF and this Commission.

1.0 Preliminaries

1.1 The Commission Roll Call was taken and guest attendance record sheets distributed.

1.2 Written copies of the following reports were received and distributed

- Americas Olympic Qualifier, Valencia, Venezuela, August 2007.
- Africa Regional Umpire Report

2.0 Regional Co-ordinators Reports

2.1 **Oceania:** Margo Koskelainen (RUIC)

- South Pacific Games - umpires attendance New Zealand (2), America Samoa (2), Palau (1).
- PNG and Samoa have requested clinics for 2008.
- It is not confirmed if softball will be included in the Mini Games, Cook Islands 2009.
- Softball will not be included in the Pacific Games, New Caledonia 2011.
- Trans Tasman umpire exchange between Australia and New Zealand is now in its 17th year.
- The 2006 ISF Certification Seminar was held in New Zealand. 6 umpires were certified.
- Umpire exchange programme between North America and New Zealand continues.
- In region feed back from female umpires was requested and processed for the Female Umpire Forum.

2.2 **Asia:** Tommy Wang (RUIC)

- The following tournaments were held in the region: Women's Worlds Beijing 2006, 8th Asian

Men's Japan 2006, Japan Cup 2006/2007, Asian Games Qatar 2006, Asia/Oceania Olympic Qualifier Taiwan 2007, The University Games Thailand 2007, 9th Asian Women's Indonesia 2007, China Cup 2007.

- The 2006 ISF Certification Seminar was held in Japan. Tommy Wang conducted this Seminar and was assisted by Kenzo Kato, Haruhi Goto and Vincent Maoeng.

2.3 **Europe:** Bob Milosavljevic (RUIC)

- Three ISF Tournaments were held in Europe in 2006/2007: The Olympic Qualifier, Men's World Cup and the Junior Girls World Championship. Of the 30 ISF in Europe all that were available were in attendance at one or other of these tournaments.
- For the first time a European umpire officiated the plate of a World Championship Grand Final
- Umpire exchange programmes are now in action in Europe. There is a need to further extend the experience of Europe certified umpires. Further opportunities in Canada, Australia and New Zealand are to be explored. New Zealand is hosting a German umpire this year.
- There are 145 licensed umpires in Europe's 34 member Federations.

2.4 **Africa:** Vincent Maoeng (RUIC)

- Five umpires were ISF certified. Four at the clinic in Zimbabwe and the other in Plant City.
- The foundations for umpire programmes have been laid in eight countries. Progress will depend on the support and activity level in each different country.
- A "Blue" Conference was held in 2006 with the next African Congress planned for 2008.

2.5 **Latin America:** No report.

2.6 **North America:** Bob Stanton for Julie Johnson (RUIC)

- Fastpitch seminar was held in California, USA in 2006
- Canada Cup held in 2006 and 2007. 16 ISF umpires in attendance in 2007.
- World Cups II and III were held in USA in 2006/2007. 8/6 ISF umpires in attendance.
- 2007 Certification Clinic held at Plant City, Florida. 21 candidates attended of which 11 were ISF certified.
- Two day Regional Co-ordinator meeting was held at Plant City, Florida in 2007.
- The first Men's Fastpitch Challenge Series was held in the USA 2007.
- The first Female Umpire Forum was held in Plant City, Florida. Facilitator Low Beng Choo.

3.0 **Discussion of Past and Upcoming Championships**

3.1 **Women's Worlds, Beijing 2006:** Merle Butler

- Facilities for umpiring and the state of the playing fields were in order.
- Foul poles were coloured yellow. A change of colour has been requested for the Olympics.
- Umpiring standard was good so much so that some will be invited to the Olympics.
- The currently approved ISF bat list is available from the ISF website.
- Drug testing was conducted following the Championship game. Softball remains drug free.

Olympic Qualifier, Taiwan 2007: Margo Koskelainen

- All facilities were in order. Venue had been used for the University Games one year before
- Umpires in attendance: Japan (2), Australia (2), New Zealand (1).
- The competition was very competitive. An incident in the final delayed play for 30 minutes

Olympic Qualifier, Italy 2007: Merle Butler

- Umpires in attendance: USA (1), Canada (1), South Africa (1), Europe (13).
- Visa issue for South African umpire.

- Regular bat checks were conducted before each teams first game and playoffs.

Olympic Qualifier, Venezuela 2007: Merle Butler for Santos Vazquez Ortiz

- Umpires in attendance: Latin America (8) reduced from 15 due to size of competition as only three teams were involved; Venezuela, Puerto Rico and Cuba.
- Facilities for umpiring and the state of the playing fields were in order.

Junior Girls, Netherlands 2007: Bob Stanton/Merle Butler

- There were 18 umpires in attendance. Quality of umpiring continued to improve throughout the tournament
- The tournament was severely affected by inclement weather. With the assistance of ISF delegate Mike Jennings and ISF Competition Director Laurie Gouthro this intrusion was overcome.
- Game time management was handled well without the need of a time clock. Recording changes during the game took excess time. A system to handle line-up changes will need to be in place before the commencement of future tournaments. A system will depend largely on the facilities available at each tournament

4.0 Presentation on Regional Preparation Clinics and Certification Seminars

4.1 Power Point presentation by Bob Stanton. Further Merle Butler outline the following additional points

- The Certification Examination structure and marking is:- Rule Examination (30%), Field Evaluation (50%), Pitch Machine Evaluation (10%), Case Play presentation (5%) and Mechanic Play presentation (5%). Minimum pass mark required from completion of all the foresaid categories for ISF certification is 90%.
- Certification programme schedule to be finished in consultation with National Federations and published on the ISF website.
- It is not mandatory to attend a Regional Preparation Clinic, however it is recommended for umpire preparation prior to attendance at a subsequent Certification Seminar. An umpire must be at the appropriate highest level within their National programme to attend a Certification Seminar. Umpires not meeting this requirement may attend as observers.
- Candidates wishing to attend an out of Region Certification Seminar must have the approval of their National Federation UIC, Regional UIC and the host Regions UIC.
- ISF only assists with the payment of facilitators attending Regional Clinics or Seminars.

5.0 Presentation on the proposed Re-Certification Programme

At the Regional Co-ordinators meeting it was proposed that a new re-certification programme be introduced from 2008.

- This will require currently certified umpires to provide confirmation on a periodical basis that they still meet a current level of rules knowledge and field involvement that meets the requirements of certification.
- It is proposed that a certification or re-certification will be valid for a period of between seven to ten years.
- Annual activity report will be required to be submitted to the Regional UIC.
- Final details of the proposed re-certification programme will be available for National Federation review in early 2008.

6.0 Discussion on Women's Forum on Umpiring

Margo Koskelainen briefed the meeting on the following outcomes. This subject is a matter of

further presentation at a workshop to follow.

- Input was received from all six regions. Pre-forum surveys were conducted and presented.
- There is no list of umpires worldwide. This data is required to formulate systems to monitor and research demographics within umpiring
- Evaluators will be instructed on gender difference between umpires. Particular focus will be on to points of difference between genders as one model does not fit all.
- Merle Butler added that there will be a 6/6 gender split for the umpires selected to the next Olympics. Female umpires will be invited to the Junior Boys which is expected to lead to female umpires being further invited to the Men's Worlds. It is expected that there will be a continuing and growing participation of females at the Women's Worlds

7.0 Discussion on Training Aides

Bob Stanton/Merle Butler briefed the meeting on the following points

- An ISF Umpire Manual is near completion with graphics updates yet to be completed. Draft copies were circulated so member could see current progress. ISF approval is required for translation to other languages. This manual will be available in the New Year. An online copy will also be available from the ISF umpires webpage.
- A video on plate mechanics is now available. A base mechanic video is under development.
- It is proposed that updated copies of the Rule Book, Case Play Book and the Umpire Manual will be available on the same four year cycle. These are expected to be available at a combined cost of USA \$8-10 plus postage and handling costs.
- Technical Bulletins are to be issued regularly. Included will be update rules interpretations and associated case plays, essential rule changes required for safety and or on ISF instruction.
- Evaluators training manual is currently under development. Andrew Rindfleish has offered Australia developed electronic resources to assist with the development

Don Porter addressed the meeting noting that there had been measurable development within umpiring, an improvement in the time required to complete games with Media expressing there approval and a continuing growth in female participation. He further added that modern day TV coverage of softball has highlighted the need for our officiating to be as near perfect as possible.