



SOFTBALL NEW ZEALAND UMPIRE

PATHWAYS FRAMEWORK

*Ehara tāku toa I te toa takitahi, tāku toa, he toa takitini
My strength is not that of one person, but the strength of many*

TEAM	Tournament	Time	Ball	Order	NAME (Surname)	Pos.
(S)						
				1	Bullock	
				2	Goda	
				3	Katherine Nikunuku	
				4	Asha Nibani	
				5	Katie Smith	
					Brooke	

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Our Vision

The softball community experiences quality umpiring and the enjoyment it creates.

Our Mission

To lead and deliver quality and professional umpiring providing enjoyment and support to all those involved.

Our Values

Passion – encompassing excellence, enthusiasm, persistence and dedication.

Honesty – implicit to gain trust and portray fairness.

Courage – having presence, calmness in how we behave and leadership in game management.

Quality – achieved through consistency, teamwork and continuous improvement.

Enjoyment – for the umpires, players, team management and spectators.

Respect – for each other, players and the rules.



Foreword

Umpiring plays an important role in supporting our elite athletes to excel on the world stage and encouraging our local communities to participate, compete and enjoy Softball.

Over the years we have made significant progress in umpire development but there is much more to be done. We need to increase the number of active umpires in Softball and support them properly if we are to become a healthier and more successful part of the Softball community. We must ensure that our umpiring workforce is properly qualified and that they have the skills and tools to work with all levels of athletes.

The Softball New Zealand Umpire Pathways Framework seeks to build on existing successes, putting in place systems which will deliver more and better supported umpires. We want Softball to be a sport where everyone who participates has access to an appropriately skilled umpire. A sport where umpires are appropriately recruited, trained, deployed and ultimately retained within Softball.

The Pathways Framework provides a clear direction and focus for our efforts to achieve a transparent, consistent and effective umpiring grading system throughout the country.

The Pathways Framework was developed by a working party in conjunction with the National Umpiring Staff to align with the Softball New Zealand Umpires Strategic Plan 2016-2021. The working party consisted of current national umpires from varying levels within the framework.



Notes

1. The following represents a guide to the minimum requirements for progression through the Pathways Framework. In exceptional circumstances only, earlier promotion may be made by the New Zealand Umpire in Chief and the National Umpiring Staff.
2. Umpires who do not meet the minimum requirements in a season will retain their grade followed by the letter "R". Special circumstances will be taken into consideration by the National Umpiring Staff. A season game abatement of up to ten games will apply for tournament chief umpires and their assistants.
3. Eligibility for Levels Four, Five and Six evaluation is by accepting a National Umpiring Staff invitation. Eligibility for Level Seven evaluation at a WBSC international certification clinic is by approval of the Umpire in Chief and Softball New Zealand.
4. Pre-assessment is recommended for Levels Four, Five and Six. This may be conducted at any Regional Director of Umpiring approved tournament including regional or Club Premier Grade tournaments.
5. All holders of WBSC certification will be graded as Level Seven. Umpires who are not available for WBSC appointments but are fully active in the umpiring programme will be graded Level Seven "A". Level Seven "R" as per note 2 will also apply.
6. In all cases conduct and dress, both on and off diamond, will contribute to overall evaluation mark.
7. Game statistics are to be returned annually for all umpire levels within an association.

Abbreviations Used In This Framework

SNZ – Softball New Zealand

WBSC – World Baseball and Softball Confederation

UIC – Umpire in Chief (Local or SNZ)

TCU – Tournament Chief Umpire

ATCU – Assistant Tournament Chief Umpire

NUS – National Umpiring Staff

RDU – Regional Director of Umpiring

Local Umpire

Has no interest in furthering their umpiring career at this stage.

Season Games	Five or more in local association
Feedback	Regular helpful hints given when passing from local UIC or SNZ umpires
Other	Recognised and acknowledged by local association Game statistics reported in annual report
Opportunities	Regional age grade and school tournaments



Umpire Recruit

A local umpire who has expressed an interest in furthering their umpiring career.

Level One – Rookie Umpire

Season Games	Eight minimum
Workbook	Level One exercises completed
Annual Rules Test Entry Level	50% minimum, resit available via RuleBox
Feedback	Regular feedback from local UIC or mentor
Regional Evaluation	50% minimum over four games: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two plate • Two base
Local UIC and Delegate	One plate and one base per evaluator Evaluation games are not required to be on the same day
Skills Required	Starting positions Signals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balls and strikes • Fair and foul • Foul tip • Safe and out • Count • Dead ball and time Obstruction ruling and signal Audible calls Check swing Safety base General rules knowledge and application Refer to page 8 for a full list of criteria
General Form Only	
Opportunities	Regional age grade and school tournaments SNZ Secondary School – Division Two SNZ Under 15

Level Two – Developing Umpire

Season Games	10 minimum
Workbook	Level Two exercises completed
Annual Rules Test Entry Level	60% minimum, resit available via RuleBox
Feedback	Regular feedback from local UIC or mentor
Regional Evaluation	60% minimum over four games:
Local UIC and Delegate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two plate • Two base One plate and one base per evaluator Evaluation games are not required to be on the same day
Skills Required	In addition to Level One requirements:
General Form Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plate positioning – the slot • Strike zone consistency • Base positioning for play • Crew signals • Infield fly • Obstruction and interference • Two umpire system mechanics • General rules knowledge and application Refer to page 8 for a full list of criteria
Opportunities	Regional age grade and school tournaments SNZ Secondary School – Division Two SNZ Under 15



Level Three – Emerging Umpire

Season Games	15 minimum
Workbook	Level Three exercises completed
Annual Rules Test Entry Level	70% minimum, resit available via RuleBox
Feedback	Regular feedback from local UIC or mentor Assigned an umpiring buddy
Eligibility	Local UIC recommendation for evaluation
Regional Tournament Evaluation	70% minimum over four games:
TCU and Delegate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two plate • Two base One plate and one base per evaluator
Skills Required	In addition to Level One and Two requirements:
Demonstrate Competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-game responsibilities • Lineup changes • Moves to track hit balls • Trails batter-runner • Lead off and pulled foot calls • Illegal pitch – feet violations • Call timing • Call selling • Adaptability • Decisiveness • Judgement • Reaction • Improved rules knowledge and application Refer to page 8 for a full list of criteria
Other	Attend regional seminar
Opportunities	Regional age grade and school tournaments SNZ Secondary School – Division One or Two SNZ Under 15 SNZ Under 17 will be considered

Level Four – New Zealand Badge Umpire

Season Games	20 minimum
Annual Rules Test	70% minimum, resit available via RuleBox
Feedback	Regular feedback from local UIC or mentor
Eligibility	Accept NUS invitation for evaluation
Tournament Evaluation	SNZ Under 15 or Under 17 or Secondary Schools – Division One or Two
TCU and Delegate	70% minimum over six games: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three plate • Three base
Skills Required	In addition to all Level One, Two and Three requirements:
Demonstrate Competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strike zone edges and consistency • Working the slot • Tracking the pitch • Illegal pitch • Hustles into position • Hustles players on and off field • Communicating with peers and officials • Three umpire mechanics and rotations • Good rules knowledge and application
Other	Attend regional seminar Pre-assessment recommended Actively umpiring in prior season
Opportunities	SNZ Secondary School – Division One or Two SNZ Under 15, Under 17, Under 19 SNZ Senior tournaments will be considered International exchanges e.g. Friendship Series

Level Five – Senior Badge Umpire

Season Games	30 minimum
Annual Rules Test	75% minimum, resit available via RuleBox
Feedback	Assigned a mentor Regular feedback from RDU
Eligibility	Accept NUS invitation for evaluation
Tournament Evaluation	SNZ Under 19 or Senior tournament 75% minimum over eight games:
TCU and Delegate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four plate • Four base
Skills Required	In addition to all Level Four requirements:
Demonstrate Advanced Competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four umpire mechanics and rotations • Advanced rules knowledge and application • Confident in close calls • Conflict resolution • Good communication with peers and officials • Contributes and actively mentors within local association
Other	Deliver regional seminar segment Pre-assessment recommended Actively umpiring for the prior two seasons (including current season) as a Level Four
Opportunities	SNZ – Any tournament International exchanges e.g. Friendship Series Local UIC RDU



Level Six – Senior New Zealand Umpire

Season Games	40 minimum
Annual Rules Test	80% minimum, resit available via RuleBox
Feedback	Assigned a mentor
Eligibility	Accept NUS invitation for evaluation
Tournament Evaluation	SNZ Senior tournament 80% minimum over eight games:
TCU and Delegate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four plate • Four base
Skills Required	In addition to all Level Five requirements:
Demonstrate Mastery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced knowledge of three and four umpire mechanics and rotations (including backfill) • Advanced rules knowledge and application • Advanced game management skills • Adaptable to any given situation • Contributes and actively mentors within local association • Available for TCU or ATCU at SNZ tournament
Other	Deliver regional seminar segment Pre-assessment recommended Actively umpiring senior level games for the prior two seasons (including current season) as a Level Five
Opportunities	SNZ – Any tournament Domestic and international tournaments, tours and exchanges RDU



Level Seven – WBSC Softball Division Certified Umpire

Season Games	50 minimum
Feedback	Assigned a mentor
Eligibility	Approved by UIC and SNZ for evaluation at a WBSC international certification clinic
Pre-qualification	90% minimum WBSC-SD UmpSchool online open book rules examination
WBSC International Certification Seminar	90% combined minimum (five measurements) For full details please refer to: http://www.wbsc.org/softball-umpire-area/becoming-a-certified-softball-umpire/
WBSC Delegation	WBSC fitness tests (four measurements) For full details please refer to: http://static.wbsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Softball-Fitness-testing-protocols-September-1-2015.pdf?x11520
Skills Required	In addition to all Level Six requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCU or ATCU at any SNZ tournament • Active mentor at national tournaments
Other	Deliver regional seminar segment Actively umpiring senior level games for the prior two seasons (including current season) as a Level Six
Opportunities	SNZ – Any tournament Domestic and international tournaments, tours and exchanges WBSC World Series RDU SNZ–UIC



Softball New Zealand Umpire Pathways Summary

Start Level									
Season 1	Season 2	Season 3	Season 4	Season 5	Season 6	Season 7	Season 8	Season 9	Season 10
Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4	Level 5	Level 5	Level 6	Level 6
Umpire Recruit									

Games Required									
5	8	10	15	20		30		40	Level 7 - 50

Other Requirements For Progression										
					Attend Regional Seminar					
L1 Workbook	L2 Workbook	L3 Workbook				Deliver Regional Seminar Segment				
						Local Mentor			TCU or ACTU	

Entry Level Rules Test Result				Annual Rules Test Result				UmpSchool		
N/A	50%	60%	70%	70%	70%	75%	75%	80%	80%	90%

Regional Evaluation				National Tournament Evaluation						
N/A	50%	60%	70%	70%		75%		80%		90%
Local UIC	Local UIC	Local UIC	RDU Approved	SNZ U15, U17		SNZ U19 or Above		SNZ NFC or		WBSC Clinic
Hints Tips	and Delegate	and Delegate	Tournament	Secondary Schools		TCU and Delegate		Open Clubs		WBSC Tournament
	Any 4 Games	Any 4 Games	TCU and Delegate	TCU and Delegate		4 Plate 4 Base		TCU and Delegate		WBSC Delegation
	2 Plate 2 Base	2 Plate 2 Base	2 Plate 2 Base	3 Plate 3 Base				4 Plate 4 Base		

End Level										
Season 1	Season 2	Season 3	Season 4	Season 5	Season 6	Season 7	Season 8	Season 9	Season 10	
Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4	Level 5	Level 5	Level 6	Level 6	Level 7
Local Umpire	Rookie Umpire	Developing Umpire	Emerging Umpire	New Zealand Badge Umpire		Senior Badge Umpire		Senior New Zealand Umpire		WBSC Certified Umpire



Please refer to notes and level specific information on pages 2-6 for full details

Regional Evaluation Criteria

Level One

Demonstrates generally

Plate:

Starting position

Signals

- Balls and strikes
- Fair and foul
- Foul tip
- Count

Check swing request

Base:

Starting position

- No runners on
- Lead runner on 1st
- Lead runner on 2nd
- Lead runner on 3rd

Check swing response

Safety base

Both Plate and Base:

Good presence

Position between innings

Calls audible

Signals

- Safe and out
- Dead ball
- Time
- Obstruction

Obstruction ruling

General rules knowledge and application

Level Two

ALL Level One criteria PLUS the following:

Demonstrates generally

Plate:

Working in slot

Heel toe

Gap

Eyes at top of zone

Strike zone consistent

Base:

Ready stance

Set position for call

Inside / outside

Angle to play

Distance to play

Both Plate and Base:

Crew signals

Infield fly ruling

Infield fly signal

Interference

Two umpire mechanics



Level Three

ALL Level One and Two criteria PLUS the following:

Demonstrates competency

Pre-game:

Dress / presentation

Bat / helmet check

Plate meeting

Plate:

Lineup changes

- Clearly recorded
- Coach communication
- Scorer communication

Moves to track hit balls

Trails batter-runner

Base:

Button hook

Lead off calls

Pulled foot calls

Tag up position

Illegal pitch (feet violations)

Both Plate and Base:

Call timing

Selling call on close plays

Tag call

Adaptability to secondary plays

Attitude and approachability

Decisive

Judgement

Physical reaction

Pressure reaction

Softball New Zealand Umpire Evaluation

Level Four

Level Five

Level Six

Name: Association: Tournament: Dates:

Tournament Games Umpired: Plate: Base: U1 U2 U3 Total:

Key: **E** = Excellent – exceptional performance = 5% **G** = Good – performance exceeds minimum standard = 4%
S = Satisfactory – meets minimum standard = 3% **F** = Fair – does not meet minimum standard = 2%

Guide: Tick the appropriate letter column ✓ and enter numerical value in % column. Half marks may be awarded.

*Categories 17 and 18 attract double values: e.g. **E**xcellent = **10**

Category		Covers	E	G	S	F	%
1	Pre-tournament / work with TCU	Attitude, co-operation, reception to critique, workload					
2	Appearance and physical condition	Uniform, grooming, stamina, movement, equipment					
3	Work with partners	Crew signals, support					
4	Pre-game duties	Crew discussion, field and bat checks, coaches meeting					
5	Between innings conduct	Relaxed, approachable, dignified, correct position					
6	Post-game conduct	Leaving field, crew discussion					
7	Mental / physical reaction	Reacting quickly and correctly to any situation					
8	Work with teams	Coaches and players, subs, discussions, attitude					
9	Awareness	Alert to outside influences, on field situations, loose equipment					
10	Attitude	Umpires, spectators, tournament staff					
11	Adaptability	To unusual situations					
12	Reaction to pressure	Composure, control, demeanour					
13	Decisiveness	Use of voice, purpose, control, hard calls					
14	Judgement	Safe / out, fair / foul, catch / no catch					
15	Rules knowledge	Application, interpretation					
16	Position before play	Pre pitch, set, movement					
17	Plate mechanics	All round competency and consistency*					
18	Base mechanics	All round competency and consistency*					
Required pass mark:	Level 4 – 70% Level 5 – 75% Level 6 – 80%	Current Level:		Total Possible = 100%			

Specific comments:

Recommendation:

Evaluator Signature: Umpire Signature: Date: