



Rosedale Park, Albany, New Zealand 26th November 2022 – 4th December 2022



Back: David Fortin (NZ), Jason Carter (AUS), Mike Burwell (USA), Leigh Evans (AUS), Jens Jakobsen (DEN), Mariana Prins (NED), Michal Zidek (CZE), Scott McLaren (CAN) Tony Kaiaruna (NZ), Mark Porteous (NZ)
Front: Naoya Matsuda (JPN), Genevieve Gaudreau (CAN), Christina Drumm (UIC), Wayne Saunders (DUIC), Mitsunori Kusamoto (JPN), Lance Brown (NZ), Abel Mataboge (BOT)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
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I have great pleasure in presenting a report for my appointment to the seventeenth Men's World Softball Championships in Auckland, New Zealand – November 26th – December 4th 2022.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by sincerely thanking the following people and organisations for their assistance and support.

- Softball New Zealand
- North Harbour Softball
- The National Umpire Staff
- Chris Drumm and Wayne Saunders
- My employer, the ANZ Bank
- Dynasty Sports for the shirts
- The WBSC umpiring Crew and all WBSC Staff especially Amy & Jennifer
- North Harbour Softball Association and Volunteers
- My fellow kiwi umpires and extended crew (see later photo)
- The players and fans who attended the tournament
- My wife Karen who allows me to take these great opportunities

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS, ACCOMMODATION, LAUNDRY & TRANSPORT

The travel arrangements for this tournament were relatively simple as the tournament was held in my “backyard”! We still had to supply passport details as well as complete COVID protocols etc. for this World Cup event and whilst not as stringent as Tokyo they were still a little onerous and unnecessarily costly (met by WBSC). Accommodation was at the Copthorne in the City and were certainly adequate and travel time outside “rush hour” were OK. Travel to and from the park was under strict regulations and sometime tight time frames. Rooms were in the main two to a room but I was the odd one out and had a room to myself. Laundry was provided by the hotel and worked very well with a bag provided and if it was at reception before midnight, it was back to us by 8am. Breakfast was supplied at the hotel with lunch and dinner provided either at the venue or hotel dependent upon game allocations.

Food was suitable. WBSC also supplied water, coffee tea etc and some snack food and fresh fruit at the park which was appreciated.

PARKS & FACILITIES

The grounds at Rosedale were well maintained and the ground crew did an exceptional job given the inclement weather on the first two days. Both Freeman Field and Leveloff Field were used with the drainage on Leveloff Field proving superior to Freeman Field. The creation of bullpens on each diamond was not a success but broadly speaking ALL of the facilities at Rosedale Park were top notch. The umpire rooms at Rosedale are exceptional and proved popular with the crew. They are one of the best umpire facilities in the world with everything that is needed, including laundry, kitchen and lounging facilities

THE UMPIRE CREW

There were 15 umpires appointed to the tournament plus 2 supervisors.

UMPIRE SUPERVISORS:

Chris Drumm, Umpire-in-Chief – USA and Assistant Umpire-in-Chief, Wayne Saunders – New Zealand.

UMPIRE CREW:

- MATSUDA, Naoyo – M – Japan
- KUSAMOTO – Mitsunori – M – Japan
- MATABOGE, Abel – M – Botswana
- ZIDEK, Michal – M – Czech Republic
- ATANASOVA – PRINS, Marianna – F - Netherlands
- MCLAREN, Scott – M – Canada
- BURWELL, Mike – M – United States
- PORTEOUS, Mark – M – New Zealand
- EVANS, Leigh – M – Australia
- KAIARUNA, Tony – M – New Zealand
- CARTER, Jason – M – Australia
- GAUDREAU, Genevieve – F – Canada
- FORTIN, Dave – M – New Zealand
- BROWN, Lance – M – New Zealand
- JACOBSEN, Jens – M – Denmark

This was one of the best and friendliest crews I have worked with. Of note was the inclusion of two female umpires. I believe this is only the second time that females have umpired at the Men's World Championships. The only issue this created was one of the sharing of the changing rooms. The addition of a privacy screen allowed them to fully share with the rest of the crew. Feedback from all the crew was that the facilities were great for changing, de-briefs as well as relaxation. Chris and Wayne ran a tight ship but feedback was insightful and we were all encouraged to be open and honest.

I participated in 12 games at the tournament. Unfortunately, on day 4 (my birthday as it happened) I suffered an injury to my finger which meant I could not continue that day or the subsequent day. It also meant I could not do any further plate games.

2 Plates, 3 U1, 5 U2 and 2 U3.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Once again SNZ and the North Harbour Softball Association ran a fantastic tournament under trying circumstances and still in the shadow of COVID. The facilities were excellent. Unfortunately, the weather had a major impact on the first two days but the commitment of the players and officials to get the games done was a credit to all and especially the Kiwi “can do” attitude. Shifting between diamonds was not considered a problem nor was playing in wet and slippery conditions. This is the second time North Harbour has run the World Tournament and they had learned lessons from the previous one in 2013 that held them in good stead. Unfortunately, the demise of the Black Sox did not assist with the expected crowds. However, the overall competitiveness of the tournament was evident with both NZ & Japan not making the Super Round and the last spot in the Gold Medal game decided in a tie-breaker. In the end Australia prevailed over Canada in the Gold Medal game with the USA defeating Argentina for the Bronze.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

At a pre-tournament meeting Chris outlined the points of emphasis for the tournament. These were:

- Stepping foot for pitchers being stationary
- Two second pause
- Quick umpire conferences
- Controlling Time-outs between Catchers and Pitchers

In the main these were controlled well. Only one team consistently flouted the stepping foot. The two second pause is anathema in the men’s game with the desire to come to a “full and complete stop” rather than a two second “pause” being preferred. The pause was called occasionally but if it did not get called there were never any complaints from players or coaches.

TWENTY SECOND CLOCK

Whilst the 20 second clock was in operation, unlike other tournaments I have attended this was run by local volunteers who did well under some trying circumstances. Kevin Sheehy established good protocols and Standard Operating Procedures and apart from the odd technical issue the clock operation was good. It is my contention that this should be how all World Cup events are run as far as the 20 second clock goes. The Off-field umpire was not used. No issues arose with this. In fact, it remains my preference not to use an “off-field” umpire.

SUMMARY

It is quite a different experience attending a tournament of this magnitude at my home ground. However, it needs to be said that the operation of these World Events is now very structured and leaves very little to chance. It is possible that the structure around transport could be loosened a little with some of the crew preferring to stay to watch games but needing to be transported back to the Hotel missing some opportunities to see their mates working or their home teams playing. The accommodation was good, the provision of food and hydration was suitable and having good laundry facilities was an improvement on every other tournament I have attended. Once again there was no arrangement for hemming trousers but I believe everyone at the tournament already had pants from previous tournaments and did not need their pants done. The late games especially on the first two days, due to inclement weather, meant that post day de-briefs were sometimes late at night. The work done by Amy & Jennifer to keep us in line was exceptional and they should be congratulated for their hard mahi throughout. Chris & Wayne were fantastic Umpire Coordinators and I thank them for my appointments. It was unfortunate that I suffered the finger injury that took me out of action and I appreciate Gen stepping in to my place in the Denmark v Venezuela game noting that she got hit as well! We also had an improved and closer relationship with the Technical Coordinators. This meant there were no major issues with overall game management. It was useful on a couple of occasions to be able to use them as translators also. I really enjoyed myself and the crew were fantastic.

Ngā mihi nui.

Mark Porteous

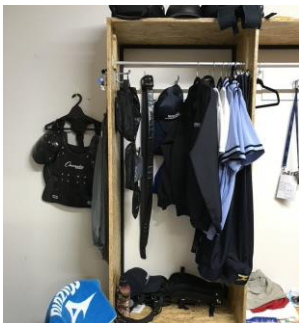
PHOTOS



Full NZ Crew



NZ Umpires



Portyville



Thanks Denmark!



Freeman Field