

**Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting of the National Umpiring Staff (NUS) of SNZ held at
Sportsville, Hutt Park, Lower Hutt,
Saturday 1 July 2023 and Sunday 2 July 2023 commencing at 9.30am.**

Present: Lindsay Edwards, Mark Porteous, Dave Beaumont, Rikki Thompson, Kevin Gorman, Gavin Shepherd, Ray Dyason, Dawie Sutton, Nicola Ogier, Wiremu Tamaki

Apologies: Eugene Gilbert (SNZ)

Opening: Wiremu offered the mihi whakatau and welcomed everyone. Acknowledged health and well-being of our current membership sending best wishes to Kevin 'Sheesh' Sheehy's wife for a speedy recovery and Beverley Smith for keeping in touch with our softball whānau.

Acknowledged those that have passed away amongst the membership.

Notified bereavements: Dennis Smith, Normal McCaskill (passed 3/7/2023), Scott Rindfleish (Australia).

Round the house whakawhanaungatanga: Health and wellbeing check-in with the team and what they want to achieve from the weekend. Congratulations to Dawie Sutton and Nicola Ogier for their appointments to the NUS. Further congratulations to Nicola Ogier for SNZ Umpire of the Year.

1.0	Minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting Confirmed as true and a correct record. Porty/Rikki	Action
1.1	Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil 	
1.2	Strategic Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carried over. 	Action <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NUS Team to discuss in season
2.0	Reporting	Action
2.1	Northern Region – RDU Mark Porteous <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report taken as read by the NUS • Overview provided by Porty • Working alongside Counties to support their administration • North Harbour have collaborated with Northland. Programme in place to support umpiring targets. • Strong assessment attendance from the region at national level. • Regional clinic set in stone – September 16, AUT, North Harbour. • As it relates to regional budget support, given the Northern region have little or no significant costs, it was agreed that the overall regional clinic budget can be apportioned on a non-even basis to support other regions. With the Northern region only receiving funds to cover incidentals this season, subject to annual review. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Budget consideration for UIC to note 2. UIC to note exchange programme and other umpiring opportunities as part of NUS schedule of operations with SNZ CEO.
2.2	Central Region – RDU Gavin Shepherd <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report taken as read by the NUS • Overview provided by Gavin with local association verbal reports submitted by Lindsay and Ray • Congrats to Sans Staiger as a member of our Canadian exchange programme. • Regional clinic to be held in Wellington. Date to be confirmed. 	

2.3	<p>Southern Region – Rikki Thompson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report taken as read by the NUS • Overview provided by Rikki with local association verbal reports submitted by Nicola and Dawie • Congrats to Nicola Ogier as a member of our Canadian exchange programme. • Regional clinics – upper south, mid and lower to be confirmed. 	
2.4	<p>Tournament Chief Umpire Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports taken as read by the NUS. • Reports reflected good summary of umpire performance. • Notable umpiring observations for on-going sharing, learning and development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regular standup ○ Pitchers’ pause (at least 2 seconds) ○ Watch the height (top and bottom) of the strike zone ○ Base mechanics, particularly at 2nd base. 	<p>Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New TCUs to partner with seasoned TCU to raise level of induction. 2. Programme to give thought to providing TCUs with feedback.
2.5	<p>Tournament Chief Umpire Standard Operations</p> <p>Porty and Lindsay drafted a TCU SOP document to better serve our TCUs with a handbook on how to perform the role and presented it to the group. After much discussion it was agreed to adopt the manual with alterations to mirror our current state.</p>	<p>Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Porty/Lindsay to review the draft document for adjustment and send to UIC for team endorsement.
2.6	<p>SNZ CEO Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tony Giles, SNZ CEO joined the meeting at 1130. Provided an overview of the last 12 months’ activities and a lens to the future. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An extraordinary softball season which kept the entire softball community extremely busy ○ With the result of the Men’s World series, SNZ face many challenges fiscally and operationally. ○ SNZ Board engaged with the community early April to reimagine itself. Presentation of the findings to go to the AGM in August 2023. ○ Lens to the future includes reestablishing partnerships, business operations, a refocus and reset of the strategy going forward. ○ Events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Next year February 2023 will be the last NFC to be replaced by a National Softball League for the 2024/205 season. ▪ U18 Women’s qualifier in November 2023, American Samoa ▪ Men’s Open qualifier December 2023, American Samoa. ▪ Both events support entry into the Pool Group. ○ Committed message from SNZ is that we need to host tournaments to support teams and world rankings. 	<p>Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UIC to include events (+ Trans-Tasman/Canada Cup/National Teams) into NUS schedule of operations with SNZ CEO 2. UIC to explore pathways for members to support national coaches going on tour or taking a national squad.

3.0	<p>Assessments Framework – Lindsay Edwards and Rikki Thompson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lindsay provided an overview of the framework with a lens on the requirements of the role, the tool and expectations. • Feedback from the team clarified the submission process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessors to complete their assessments and send to RT ○ RT to collate and send to Leads – LE and WU for review ○ Preliminary results shared at NUS annual hui. • The team welcomed Darryl Paul to the team who attended the Women’s Open as an assessor. • It was noted that our recruitment process for new candidates needs to be transparent. • Group discussion about our notification process to candidates who pass level 5 and level 6. The view held that waiting for the NUS meeting was too long of a wait. • Level Four assessments to be completed at the tournament. 	<p>Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lindsay to lead a review of the assessment tool for wider team review with a lens to upgrade and be fit for purpose. 2. Team to provide final recommendation to NUS for endorsement 3. Assessment framework to follow a transparent recruitment process for NUS endorsement 4. Reframe of the notification process for L5 and L6 assessments. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assessors to complete and send in forms to RT within two weeks of the tournament end date. b. Rikki to collate and send to leads LE and WU c. NUS to convene an online hui to review assessments d. Candidates notified by the end of April 5. UIC to ensure relevant badges are available for assessment tournament.
3.1	<p>Pathways Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Porty provided an overview of the framework confirming Level 1 and 2 workbooks are in motion and working well in the regions. • Level 3 has been completed and ready for distribution. • A huge mihi to Jill Farquhar for her heavy lifting with this resource. 	<p>Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gavin to liaise with the web team to load on to the site and send a message to Jill thanking her for the heavy lifting. 2. Gavin to send a comms to the fraternity
4.0	<p>Grading</p>	
4.1	<p>Grading Review of 2022/23 Assessments – Ratified and Endorsed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doug Hill, Tarsha Raina-Nash- Level 3 to level 4 - endorsed • Kevin Sheehy, Eli Lesperance, Simon Lindsay - level 4 to 5 endorsed • Kam Kwong, Sam Mickle, Heath Lyttle, Michael Lee, Casey Smeekes, Ben Dyason - Level 5 to 6 endorsed. 	<p>Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UIC to organise certificates and/or badges for RDU distribution

4.2	<p>Recommendations for the upcoming 2023/24 season</p> <p>The group were fortunate to be presented with 13 candidates to consider for next level assessment. Taking into consideration a number of factors the group prioritised each candidate. The selection criteria used was based upon reassessment, regrading, and service. In selecting our final eight candidates, the group wishes to acknowledge those members who were not successful and will be reconsidered for the 2024/2025 season. The group also recognises that should a selected candidate be unable to fulfil their nomination, the group will move to the next candidate in the cohort to fulfil the offering.</p> <p>Candidates recommended for their next level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ross Emerson, Willie Sadlier, Keith Marsh to be assessed for Level 6 • Eric Horsham, Jo Edwin, Rochelle Watson, Dave Tawhanga, Himi Orupe to be assessed for Level 5. • Liam Stewart, Brody Donald, Chris Murdoch, Paddy O’Sullivan, Trevor Jones to be assessed for Level 4. 	<p>Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UIC to call candidates and confirm acceptance 2. UIC to send confirmed invitation
5.0	<p>Rules</p> <p>Rules Test</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dave B provided a good overview of the last rules test for 2022. Notable observations were the drop-in participation rates in comparison to previous years and the actual uptake amongst our umpiring members. - The structure of the questions and allocated time to complete the test were suitable. - Deep dive discussion from the group on the data and how we might be able to lean in on increased participation. - The ‘Chase’ was a great initiative and supported as a continued offering. Feedback for the NUS is to identify participants who align to an umpiring association. - Rules test to maintain its current format – 50 questions and same time limit. Maintain preamble as part of the introduction with no time clock or penalty. - Rules test release – first week of August to coincide with the release of the national tournament application process. 	<p>Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rules group to commission research into comparing previous years. 2. UIC to raise level of participation from L6/L7 members.
6	<p>National Tournament Application Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dave B provided an update on the application process and notable challenges. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We had less umpires apply to cover the tournaments ○ Booking flights earlier to minimise cost and maximise more membership attendance is a must do. ○ General travel and per diems for food while at a tournament needs a revisit ○ Lessons learned continue to fall under managing umpire expectations, continuing to improve communications between SNZ and our TCUs/members and travel/accommodation. • National tournament application process to be released 1 August and close 31 August 2023. 	<p>Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UIC to include travel, per diem and accommodation as part of NUS schedule of operations with SNZ CEO 2. DB and WU to meet and discuss mapping of flights for candidates and assigned senior umpires for our cardinal tournaments.

6.1	Confirmed National Tournament Schedule - Identified and Appointed TCUs and Candidates					
2023/24 Tournament	Abbreviation	Park	City	Date/s	Tournament Chief Umpire - DRAFT	Candidates
SNZ u19 Girls	u19G	Colhouqon Park	P.North	4-7 January 2024	Ray Dyason	Nil
SNZ u19 Boys	u19B	Fraser Park	Lower Hutt	4-7 January 2024	TK	(L4) Liam Stewart (HV)
SNZ u17 Girls	u17G	Starling Park	Auckland	11-14 January 2024	Andy / Cass	(L4) Brody Donald (NH), Chris Murdoch (NH), Paddy O'Sullivan (FRK)
SNZ u17 Boys	u17B	Dynasty Ballpark	Christchurch	11-14 January 2024	Mark McFarlane	(L4) Trevor Jones (OG)
National Fastpitch	NFC	Rosedale Park	Auckland	15-18 February 2024	Wiremu Tamaki	Nil
NZ Open Men's Clubs Championships	MO	Fraser Park	Lower Hutt	6-10 March 2024	Wiremu Tamaki	Willie Sadlier, Keith Marsh, Eric Horsham, Ross Emerson, Himi Orupe
NZ Open Women's Clubs Championships	WO	Dynasty Ballpark	Christchurch	7-10 March 2024	Dave Beaumont	Rochelle Watson, Jo Edwin, Dave Tawhanga
	Secondary School Tournament Chief Umpires to be confirmed.					
7.0	Orange Shirt Programme Porty presented a well drafted Orange Shirt Programme document used in the Northern region. It ties in our Pathway's literature to support connection to new comers and growth in the softball community. A huge thanks to Kevin Sheehy and the team at North Harbour for designing and sharing this document. The NUS likes the tool and supports the document availability to other associations.					Action 1. UIC to reach out to Kevin Sheehy to formalise document and discuss shared availability.
8.0	Website					
	A huge thanks to Jaidan Bell from the Manawatū Association who has taken on the role of Website Manager. Jaidan has already revamped parts of the site and made some cosmetic changes. For any specific cosmetic updates please reach out to Jaidan. For complex updates please reach out to Gavin.					
9.0	Apparel – on and off diamond <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apparel has experienced some challenges and headaches over the past 12 months from end-to-end ordering, payment and delivery. Going forward the NUS has agreed for associations to engage with our known suppliers and to coordinate their own orders and pay! 					
10	Awards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguished Service Award (DSA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NUS received two written nominations - Mark Porteous on behalf of the North Harbour Umpires' Association and Rikki Thompson on behalf of the Canterbury Umpires' 					Action <ol style="list-style-type: none"> UIC to update DSA policy UIC to fix up honours board. UIC to put on the calendar schedule a call

	<p>Association. Both nominations were ratified and endorsed. Congratulations to both Porty and Rikki.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It was agreed that the DSA literature on the website be updated to reflect the correct members. Further the policy to be updated to be in line with current best practices. ○ A strong reminder to associations to put forward nominations for their members to be considered. Written applications must be received one month prior to the NUS hui. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SNZ Umpire of the Year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Congratulations to Nicola Ogier as this year's recipient. ○ It appears this award calls for nominations prior to our annual NUS hui. The NUS supports the call for nominations from associations to be submitted by the end of March of each year. 	<p>for SNZ Umpire of the Year nominations to the membership.</p>
11	<p>NUS Structure</p> <p>The NUS welcomed Nicola Ogier as Deputy Director of Umpiring (DDU) and Dawie Sutton as Assistant Regional Director of Umpiring (RDU) – Te Waipounamu.</p> <p>The structure of the NUS is made up of ten positions – a UIC, three DDUs, three RDUs and three Assistant RDUs. The UIC role is up for re-election at the end of the 2024/2025 season. Two DDU roles are up for re-election at the end of the 2023/2024 season.</p>	
12	<p>Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are five policies requiring renewal as they have expired - the grading, the annual test, the touring guide, the DSA and the Bat Test. ● The touring guide requires more input to align with current offerings from SNZ i.e., travel, insurance, notification to international federations. 	<p>Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UIC to renew policies and provide to NUS for endorsement
13	<p>Diversity/Inclusivity</p> <p>Nicola gave an overwhelming great summary of umpiring for our female members and the challenges they have faced. It is fair to say that some of our best intentions have not supported our female members greatly. Nicola provided an overview of the work she has been doing to build a pathway for our members to develop their skills, experience and contribution to the overall umpiring programme. Nicola spoke of a targeted programme of tournaments she has created focusing on attraction, collaboration, assessment, support and growth.</p> <p>For this programme to continue she asks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That local umpiring associations identify their talent and link in with her for a development and growth pathway. - Local umpiring associations lean in more to support local female tournaments. Notably Saints, Roper and Otago. - The NUS to continue supporting opportunities for female members to contribute and participate at all levels with a wraparound support process that provides honesty, constructive feedback and courage. <p>The NUS acknowledged Nicola's contribution and thanked her for sharing these findings with the team.</p>	<p>Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UIC to pick up with the SNZ CEO our contribution to diversity and inclusion

14	<p>Talent management</p> <p>The NUS discussed its talent management pool for WBSC certification. With the increase in Level Six candidates the NUS supports a wider candidate pool for a proposed certification clinic targeted for the 2024/2025 season.</p>	<p>Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UIC to set an EOI to L6 candidates outlining the criteria to be assessed 2. UIC to reach out to Softball Australia for a targeted WBSC certification.
15	<p>Round the House</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jetstar travel hmmm! Not the preferred airline of travel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NUS to book in advance to avoid Jetstar! • A general reflection amongst the team is that this season we are more intent and deliberate about actioning the things we said we would do. • Enquiry about u15 pitching distances. At WBSC level, for u15 women the distance is 38ft (11.58m). There is no set value for u15 men. Distance from home plate to centre field 220ft (67m) outfield, home plate to left and right field 200ft (61m). Five (5) innings games. Extra innings starts at 6th inning. Run rule applies at the 3rd and 4th inning as per a regular game. • Proposed repository shared space for sharing resources applicable to regional clinics. • Bat wrap enquiry. While the rule book is not clear on what is exactly acceptable there is a query on getting more clarity. Thanks to Nicola for the resources, she shared identifying a bat wrap versus a donut. • Assessor uniform. The NUS supported the team's request to acquire a walk out uniform. • Bars and Badges - Nicola to project manage this portfolio to pick up on outstanding members who have not received their tags. • WBSC appointments. The NUS discussed the topic of WBSC selection for international assignment. Current members feel there is no transparency or pathway to participate in this process. Further, aspiring candidates may not get an opportunity to attend an international assignment. • SNZ CEO mentioned earlier in his report of more opportunities for umpires to travel with teams on overseas appointments. Members would like this to be raised with the CEO in the UICs scheduled catch-up. 	<p>Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UIC to lean in on SNZ CEO schedule of operations to book in advance to avoid Jetstar! 2. UIC to set an EOI to L6 candidates outlining the criteria to be assessed 3. UIC to reach out to Softball Australia for a targeted WBSC certification. 4. UIC to reach out to WBSC, Laurie Guthro for bat wrap confirmation and pitching distance for u15 men if available. 5. UIC to draft a letter to the CEO to enquire with WBSC about WBSC appointment. 6. UIC to raise umpiring opportunities with SNZ CEO in schedule of operations and keep him abreast of overseas appointments.
<p>Meeting Closed Sunday July 2nd 2023 at 2.30pm</p>		