



**SOFTBALL AUSTRALIA
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**
Gilley's Shield Round 1 Blacktown, NSW
Friday 19 November – Sunday 21
November 2010
Report - Mark Porteous



I was fortunate enough to be chosen to represent and officiate at the first round of the Gilley's Shield held in Blacktown, near Sydney, NSW, Australia.

I travelled on the 7am flight with the Auckland based players on Friday the 19th of November and due to time constraints we immediately drove from the airport directly to the ground. The facility at Blacktown is very impressive. It was the site of the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. The overall complex is huge with other facilities including the Baseball stadium, NSW Cricket facility, AFL etc all within a very short distance.



Without delay I was pressed into action and was on 2nd base for the game between NSW & ACT. Won in a tie-breaker by NSW 1-0. Then I backed up straight away for a game between WA & QLD. This time a three man team with me at 3rd. the feature of this game was the coaches were both former Black-Sox players in Kere Johansen and Fabian Barlow. This game became very strategic and despite QLD's strategy being worked to perfection a bad throw let QLD down and WA snuck in with the winning run again in a tie-breaker. With two TB's in a row no one wants to work with the Kiwi anymore!

With the games over reasonably early it was great to socialise with the umpiring crew over dinner at the Outback Steakhouse. By very good fortune a TV near our dinner table was showing a replay of the Four Nations final between the Kiwis and the Kangaroos from the week before (great timing). We then returned to our accommodation at the Sydney Gateway. The accommodation was very good and ironically the same accommodation utilised by the White Sox team.

After what had been a rather grey day on Friday, Saturday was sunny and warm. My first game was between WA & SA in what was expected to be a pretty easy game for the WA team but SA showed how competitive this competition can be and played very well and with another TB looming WA scored the winning run in the bottom of the 7th to let me off the hook. I got my first plate game of the tournament on Saturday evening with the "State of Origin" game between QLD & NSW (Cane Toads v Cockroaches). This was expected to be a very close game but QLD came out firing and smashed 6 runs in the 2nd inning and tidied it up with a close run at the plate in the bottom of the 5th to apply the run ahead rule (7-0).

Sunday was extremely hot and I was on the plate again for the big game between the two top teams, unbeaten WA and NSW who had one loss. This was an excellent game with NSW edging WA 2-1. My final game was between QLD & VIC with QLD running out winners. I was on 1st base but with three outs to go in the top of the 7th I had to depart to catch our plane.

The event was very well run and most of the games were tightly contested. My observation of the game is the speed at which it is played. There is never any dawdling and most games are completed within an hour and a half. Changes are made promptly and batters are ready to go almost as soon as the previous out has been made. I barely had a chance to clean the plate and the next batter would be standing in the box. This is a feature that would be nice to see in the local game here, especially the men's game.

This tournament was seen as a good opportunity to work with several of the Australian umpires that will be attending the ISF clinic in February and in almost every game I was paired with at least one of the other candidates and on Sunday all four umpires in both games I did will be attending. Of the six games I participated in we had four man teams in all but one game. I also got the opportunity to work with ISF umpires Debbie Grove and Diane Waller.

The Gilley's Shield is a great event and I had a blast. I would thoroughly recommend to anyone, given the opportunity, to put their names forward to participate. I certainly hope to attend again next season.

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

- Eugene Gilbert for organising my air travel and accommodation
- The White Sox management team for allowing me to share their transport
- Ron Houison for driving me to and from the ground
- The NSW Softball Association and Softball Australia
- Andrew Rindfleish and the umpiring crew for their assistance, friendliness and feedback throughout the tournament

Games

Team 1	Team 2	DIA	Plate	U1	U2	U3
Day One						
NSW	ACT	1	Helen Strauss	Stacey Loveridge	Mark Porteous	Darrel Shephard
WA	QLD	1	Kyira Cox	Darrel Shephard		Mark Porteous
Day Two						
WA	SA	1	Howard Watt	Diane Waller	Mark Porteous	Ron Houison
QLD	NSW	1	Mark Porteous	Debbie Grove	Jay Gibson	Howard Watt
Day Three						
NSW	WA	1	Mark Porteous	Helen Strauss	Ron Houison	Stacey Loveridge
QLD	VIC	2	Ron Houison	Mark Porteous	Stacey Loveridge	Howard Watt

P	U1	U2	U3
2	1	2	1

ACT	NSW	NZ	SA	QLD	VIC	WA
1	3	0	1	3	1	3



Back Row

Steve Gutteridge, Jay Gibson, Mark Porteous, Andrew Rindfleish, Ron Houison, Howard Watt, Scott Rindfleish

Front Row

Amanda Houison, Helen Strauss, Debbie Grove, Stacey Loveridge, Diane Waller, Kyira Cox,
Absent Darrel Shephard

Mark Porteous