



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS, ACCOMMODATION, LAUNDRY & TRANSPORT

PARKS & FACILITIES

THE UMPIRE CREW

BRIEF OVERVIEW

MECHANICS

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

TWENTY SECOND CLOCK & CHANGES

SUMMARY

PHOTOS

I have great pleasure in presenting a report for my appointment to the WBSC Asia/Oceania Olympic Qualifier in Shanghai – September 24th – 28th 2019.

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
- Vincent Maoeng & Carolein Stadhouders (TCU & DTCU)
- The WBSC umpiring Crew
- Chenxi Jiao (our translator)
- China Softball Association and Volunteers
- Tony Kaiaruna "TK". A great travelling companion
- The players and fans who attended the tournament
- My wife Karen who allows me to take these great opportunities

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS, ACCOMMODATION, LAUNDRY & TRANSPORT

Given that this was an Olympic Qualifier all of the travel arrangements were done via the WBSC Office in Lausanne, Switzerland. TK and I were given a couple of flight options and I chose to fly directly to Shanghai from Auckland on Air New Zealand. TK was not given this particular option so was forced to stop over in Sydney.

Visas were required for this trip and the cost was borne by us (\$145). There is quite the rigmarole to obtain a travel visa to China and it required a visit to the consulate and also a specific letter of invitation from the Chinese Softball Association.

My ticket duly arrived and stipulated on it only one bag. I contacted Air New Zealand myself and they assured me that the standard fare on an Air New Zealand flight to Shanghai included two bags. I checked this with WBSC and it was confirmed via email that "yes", I could take two bags.

Just as I was about to leave for the airport I received a text that my flight had been delayed for 8 hours, meaning I had to wake at 3:00am to get to the airport for 4:30am and a 7:00am flight. Upon arrival at the airport I was advised that my ticket allowed only one bag! They managed to sort that out and in hindsight I probably should have checked then that it was sorted out for the return as well. It was not!

Upon arrival in Shanghai I was picked up by van and taken directly to our hotel on Chongming Island, about an hour and twenty-minute drive through one of the longest tunnels and over one of the longest bridges I have ever been in/on.

My room was great and once again we are not sharing rooms which is nice. I soon caught up with the Aussie crew who had been out sightseeing through the day. I joined the Aussies for dinner and TK arrived a couple of hours later.

The hotel was great for all of our needs with suitable meeting rooms, laundry facilities (arranged by WBSC), eating and recreational areas. The small downside is that we were spread over multiple floors and multiple wings. The distance from the park was also an issue and there was nothing in the immediate vicinity of the hotel e.g. supermarket etc.

Uniforms are duly handed out, sizes are good but once again there is no facility to hem trousers.

A stringent transport service is organised with the expectation that you only depart or return to the hotel on your specified shuttle. The travel time to and from the park is about thirty minutes

Parks & Facilities

The park at Shanghai Sports Training Centre are fantastic. The games are played on a single diamond that is first class. As well in the area are two other training diamonds, an

undercover training facility and a baseball stadium. Additionally the facility caters for hockey, tennis, track & field and multiple other indoor and outdoor sports. Security is very tight and everyone is scanned at every entrance. The men's changing facility is a short walk away at the baseball stadium, whilst the women change in two small changing rooms at the softball stadium. This was a minor problem when trying to deal with pre-game and post-game debriefs. Game times were well spread and we were lucky with the weather which meant that for the entire week there was no delays. One downside of the facility was nowhere for the umpires to relax when not involved with the games. The grandstand had no shelter and with the weather being warm and there being no room inside we were often located under a tree in the outfield. Lunches were provided by the crew each day but this was either KFC or pizza and chips. The park itself had no food facilities for anyone including fans. There was a small drink station outside the park. However, there was a constant supply of water for the crew.

THE UMPIRE CREW

There were 14 umpires appointed to the tournament plus 2 supervisors.

UMPIRE SUPERVISORS:

Vincent Maoeng, Umpire-in-Chief (South Africa). Carolein Stadhouders Assistant Umpire-in-Chief (Netherlands)

UMPIRE CREW:

Japan – Ayaka Kato

Japan – Matsunori Kusamoto

Japan – Miki Yabe

Chinese Taipei – Yu-Sung Lin

China – Zhiling Yu

China – Ali Jia

China – Xie Xin

South Korea – Mun Sook Jeon

Philippines – Paulo Tabirara Martinez

Australia – Amanda Houison

Australia – Kyira Cox

Australia – Scott Rindfleish

New Zealand – Tony Kaiaruna

New Zealand – Mark Porteous

The crew was a 50/50 mix of gender and for a change there were less English (as a first language) speakers here than in any World Tournament I have participated in before. That made for some interesting debriefs but in all cases, we were all able to make ourselves understood sometimes using drawings or hand gestures. We also had the use of a Chinese translator, Chenxi Jiao for some situations. She was a softball player who had spent time at a US college so her English was very good.

I participated in 5 games at the tournament. 1 Plate, 1 U1, 2 U2 and 1 clock. Obviously with so many umpires and relatively few games it was difficult to be appointed to many more

games but this was the most disappointing feature of the tournament from a personal perspective.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

This was a particularly well-run tournament with excellent facilities and a strong organisational structure. Language difficulties were easily overcome and the standard of the facilities, transport and accommodation were excellent. There were 8 teams in attendance with the tournament run in two sections with the top two teams from each section meeting in a super round with their points from the first round carried through. There was no specific final. Whilst there were a couple of upsets the level of competitiveness from the top three to the bottom five was glaring. Australia came out deserved winners and will take their place in Tokyo in 2020

Mechanics

We were sent updated four-man mechanics prior to the tournament and asked to review. It is obvious to me that SNZ are operating under the current and World's best practice. Vincent and Carolein had encouraged pre-game and post-game briefings which were extra important with the language barriers in effect. This sometimes meant whiteboard usage to ensure we were all on the same page. Mechanics were utilised correctly.

Points of Emphasis

At a pre-tournament meeting Vincent outlined the points of emphasis for the tournament. These were the same as for the World Championships in Prague but the primary ones for this tournament were:

- Stepping foot for pitchers being stationary
- Two second pause
- Quick umpire conferences
- Watch for Obstruction and Interference with some guidance on what constitutes O & I
- Controlling Time-outs between Catchers and Pitchers

TWENTY SECOND CLOCK

The twenty second clock was in use for all games and all teams and umpires were provided with the [20 second clock protocols](#). At this tournament the control of the clock was allocated to one of the crew which had the effect of ensuring the protocols were followed. The pitchers were well aware of the need to commence the pitch before the expiration of the time. This being a women's tournament there was very little issue with pitchers complying with the protocols with the number of "violations" being probably under five.

Changes

Changes were made by the plate umpire via walkie talkie with the statisticians being located behind glass behind the backstop. This system worked well with the scorer visible and able to give a "thumbs up" when they had received the substitutions etc.

SUMMARY

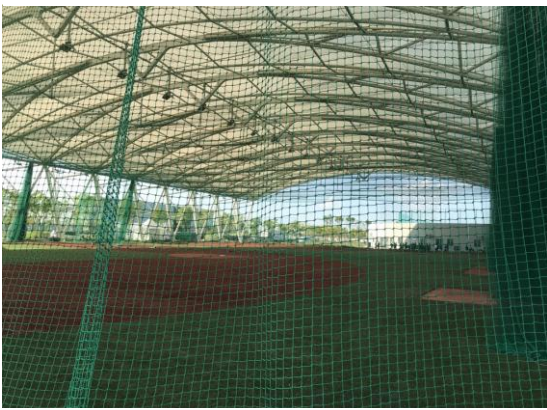
This was a very well-run tournament. The increased level of professionalism with the input from the people at WBSO is a major factor in this. The facilities were fantastic. The weather had no impact which helped to ensure that games were always on schedule. The provision of food, transport, accommodation, laundry and hydration was exceptional. The supervisors were a great support as were the Technical Coordinators. This was appreciated by all of the crew.

Mark Porteous

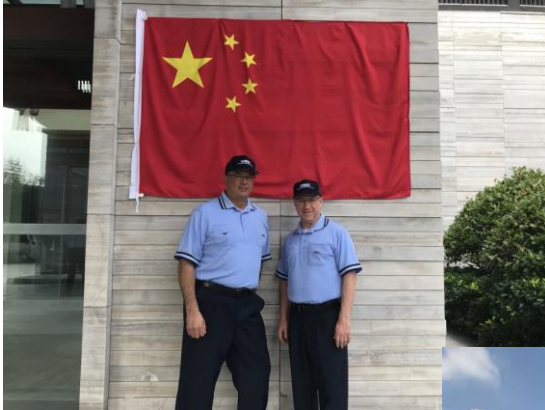
PHOTOS



Shanghai Sports Training Centre 1



Undercover training area 1



Main Diamond 1



Sight Seeing 1