



14TH MEN'S
WORLD
SOFTBALL
CHAMPIONSHIP
Saskatoon Saskatchewan **2015** Canada



WBSC MENS WORLD SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

SASKATOON, CANADA 2015



Mark Porteous & Lance Brown

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and mention sincere thanks to the following:

- *Our respective wives and families, friends and the wider softball community.*
- *National Umpiring Staff.*
- *Softball New Zealand in particular Eugene Gilbert.*
- *Bob Stanton, Jeff Whipple, Wayne Saunders.*
- *Bernie Burtney and his team of volunteers*
- *The WBSC Umpiring Crew.*

AGENDA

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| Friday 19 th June. | Arrived in Saskatoon |
| Saturday 20 th | Invited to attend a local tournament, held at Gordie Howie Diamond. |
| Sunday 21 st | Local tournament at Gordie Howe. |
| Monday 22 nd | Exhibition double header at Glen Reeves ballpark between Demark and Philippine's. |
| Tuesday 23 rd | Exhibition double header between Netherlands and Philippines. Australia and Great Brittan. |
| Wednesday 24 th | Exhibition double header at Delisile between New Zealand Blacksox and Delisile. |
| Thursday 25 th | Formal meet and greet of the umpiring crew. Ground inspection. Technical meeting. Management meeting and bat checks. Tournament banquet. |
| Friday 26 th . | WBSC Mens World Softball Championship Tournament. |
| Sunday 5 th | WBSC Mens Championship Medal Games. |
| Monday 6 th | Travel |

THE UMPIRES CREW

Darren SIBRAA – Australia

Serge LAFLAMME – Canada

Terry RICHTER – Canada

George FINDLEY – Canada

Pavel VYCHODSKY – Czech Republic

Jens JAKOBSEN – Denmark

Galip SONMEZ – Germany

Kenji NAKASHIMA – Japan

Renzo RUIZ – Mexico

Lance BROWN – New Zealand

Mark PORTEOUS – New Zealand

Jose RODRIGUEZ – Nicaragua

Jon HAND – USA

Keith COOK – USA

Frederick EWALD III – USA

Rafael GARCIA – Venezuela

SUPERVISORS

Bob Stanton – Canada

Wayne Saunders – New Zealand

Jeff Whipple – Canada

UMPIRE LIAISON

Bernie Burtney – Canada



BRIEF OVERVIEW

The world tournament was held at Bob Van Impe and Gordie Howe Ballparks, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The tournament had a leadership group of 40 people, managing a strong contingent of 400 + volunteers all with specific core duties. This meant for an amazingly well organised world tournament.

There were two sections with 8 countries in pool B and 7 countries in pool A due to Indonesia withdrawing late. The games were of an excellent standard as to be expected, and the cultural and language differences made for a great dimension to an already exciting experience.

The same can be said for the umpiring crew, with a Japanese umpire, a Mexican, one from Venezuela and Nicaragua respectively. All very experienced and accomplished umpires however with very limited English all added to the truly international experience.

It was the intention of WBSC UIC Bob Stanton to create a tightknit group of umpires. Encouraging umpires to communicate early with pre-world team building activities, and ensuring debriefing meetings occurred every evening with a non threatening open forum encouraging communication. Objective successful in my opinion, with the crew coming together well and quickly.

Bernie Burtney was the volunteer manager of the umpiring crew. Responsible primarily for transportation of umpires to and from the accommodation, however took on many more jobs to ensure the comfort of the umpires. On speaking with Bernie, he made it his own mission to ensure everyone was looked after and that any issue was dealt with expeditiously. Bernie was one of many locals who gave themselves whole heartedly in terms of being a wonderful host.

MECHANICS

New Zealand is up-to-date with world's best practise. There were no new mechanic and movement adjustments. However what was discussed was adjusting positions to gain the best advantage/view to make the call.

The fundamental theories behind how we call are;

1. Four Essential Elements Theory. Base, Ball, Offence, Defence.
2. Leading edge. A step in front of the leading edge of the base.
3. Throw & Positioning. 90 degrees from a thrown ball, and 45 degrees on a pick off to 3rd base.

And then we make adjustments on the run to get into, what we feel, what our experience determines and where the play takes us.

One positioning adjustment to make calls on the baserunner is "through the gap". Which is positioning accordingly to be able to look through the space between the offensive baserunner and the defensive player attempting to make a tag. This will cancel out point 2, the leading edge, and point 3, angle to the throw. An example of this is U2 moving behind 2nd base in what would be an extended line from home plate through 2nd base, in order to have the space between a middle infielder and the baserunner from 2nd and an attempted pick off from the catcher. This positioning would mean that you will be looking over top or across to the leading edge of the bag, and that you will be 180° to the throw and in direct firing line if the ball gets away. However you will be looking "through the gap" of the offensive and defensive players.

TWENTY SECOND CLOCK (refer to appendix one)

New to the Men's world tournament level was use of the 20sec clock. The sole purpose of the clock was to speed up the men's game, to an acceptable timeframe. It appeared to be successful in its task, however it would be difficult to fully quantify whether time was saved.

Issues with the operation of the clock were numerous. One was mechanical, whether it be the battery pack or the remote control. One was the plate umpire getting use to timings of starting the clock in synch with the positioning of pitcher, catcher and batter. Another being the timings between plate umpire and clock operator.

It was part of the plate umpires role to put the ball in play with both verbal and action. This was to happen during at the start of the inning, with a new batter and in every dead ball situation.

There where some considerations as the plate umpire. One being ensuring that the clock operator can visually see the plate umpires mechanics of putting the ball in play, because they wouldn't be able to hear the verbal of "play". Another consideration is in what order, among a plate umpires natural routine of mechanics to ensure that the plate umpires rhythm is not put out of sync with the extra responsibilities. And then of course watching the clock along with the second base umpire, and enforcing the penalty should the clock expire.

Important that WBSC/ISF umpires take on this information as the clock will probably be at every world tournament and other major Softball events.

OFF FIELD UMPIRE (refer to appendix two)

Another speed up management tool was the use of the Off Field Umpire. An assigned umpire, with the responsibility of receiving substitutions and positional changes from the teams, and then relay this information to the scorekeeper and opposition.

I do think that this speed up initiative was successful in saving some time. Again this would be difficult to totally quantify time saved, however I do know that supervisors were happy with how this role worked out. I also believe that this initiative will be used in all WBSC Softball Division world tournaments and other major Softball events.



Bronze Medal Crew- Jens Jacobsen (DEN), Mark Porteous (NZ), Lance Brown (NZ), Keith Cook (USA), Serge Laflamme (CAN)

The twenty (20) second clock will begin:

- a) when the umpire says "Play Ball",*
- b) when a new batter enters the batter's box with one foot and the pitcher, catcher and umpire are in position and time has not been called*
- c) when after a pitch, the catcher is in a position to return the ball to the pitcher.*
- d) when the umpire indicates "play ball", after the batter leaves the batter's box as a result of one of the Exceptions listed below. The umpire shall indicate "Play Ball" as soon as the batter is close to and ready to return to the batter's box and the pitcher and catcher are ready to resume play.*
- e) when there is no longer an opportunity for a play or attempted play by the catcher, with runners on base. The pitcher has twenty (20) seconds to begin his wind up after the twenty (20) second clock begins. If the twenty (20) second clock expires prior to the pitcher beginning his/her wind-up, the ball shall be declared dead and a ball award to the batter.*

Once the twenty (20) second clock has started the batter has ten (10) seconds to enter the box and must keep one foot in the box between pitches. Failure to keep one foot in the box shall result in a strike being called on the batter. The batter may only step out of the batter's box with both feet in the following circumstance:

- a) Ball is hit*
- b) On a swing provided it is the momentum of the swing that takes them out of the box*
- c) If forced out to avoid a pitch*
- d) On a wild pitch*
- e) On an attempted play at the plate or by the catcher on an advancing runner or by any player.*
- f) If time has been called, or the plate umpire leaves his position to perform other duties not directly connected with the calling of plays.*
- g) If the pitcher leaves the pitching circle*
- h) On a 3 ball pitch that the batter thinks was a ball.*

A delay of the game caused by the failure by the batter to keep one foot in the batter's box between pitches will result in the ball being declared dead and a strike awarded against the batter. If time is called during the twenty (20) second time period, the clock will recommence at the point where it stopped after the umpire is sure the batter and pitcher are ready. The umpire will indicate 'play ball' and the clock will restart. No time shall be granted in the last five (5) seconds of the twenty (20) second clock run down

Protocol – Use of an Off-Field Umpire to manage line up cards and substitutions Rationale: In order to speed up the game, an off-field umpire will be assigned to each game with the sole responsibility to manage the line-up cards including substitutions. The following guidelines will apply to the off-field umpire:

1) The off-field umpire will be dressed in umpire uniform and at the pre-game plate meeting will stand beside the plate-umpire. During this meeting the plate umpire will introduce the off-field umpire as the umpire who will take substitutions. After the plate umpire verifies the line-ups, the plate umpire will keep the original line-ups and the off-field umpire will work with an exact copy of the line-up.

2) The off-field umpire will locate her/himself in a visible area behind the backstop. Line-up changes should be taken from team coaches/managers at the closest gateway. Once the changes have been given to the off-field umpire, the off-field umpire shall signal the plate umpire to resume the game.

3) The coaches/managers are obliged to report all substitutes to the off-field umpire. This meets with the all requirement to inform the Plate Umpire of any changes, offensively or defensively including Replacement Players and Temporary Runners. All other rules applying to substitutions, re-entry etc., remain in effect.

5) The off-field umpire will immediately inform the scorekeepers and the opposing team of all changes reported. Between innings, if time allows, the off-field umpire will advise the plate umpire of the substitution(s) that have occurred. The plate umpire will keep a record of all conferences.

6) All appeals of batting out of order, illegal substitutes, illegal re-entry etc. must be made to the plate umpire. The plate umpire shall consult with the off-field umpire and then make a determination as quickly as possible.