



OVER

The Newsletter of the WA Cricket Umpires' Association

No. 1(7)

March 2013



Celebrating Bob Watson's Career

IN THIS ISSUE:

Inside Edges	p2	UAB Report	p5
President's Report	p3	Bob Watson	p6-8
Committee Report	p3	WT20 Final Report	p9-11
Barry Rennie's Report	p4	Dickie Kneebone	p12

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INSIDE EDGES

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Thanks to contributors

The editor would like to thank all those who have contributed to this month's edition. Dean Trigg especially filled the breach with his excellent article about the WNCL T20 final. Remember that unsolicited contributions are always welcome – if you have something you want to write about, send it in to me! If you feel it can inform or assist, write it down!

Shandy's Crossword

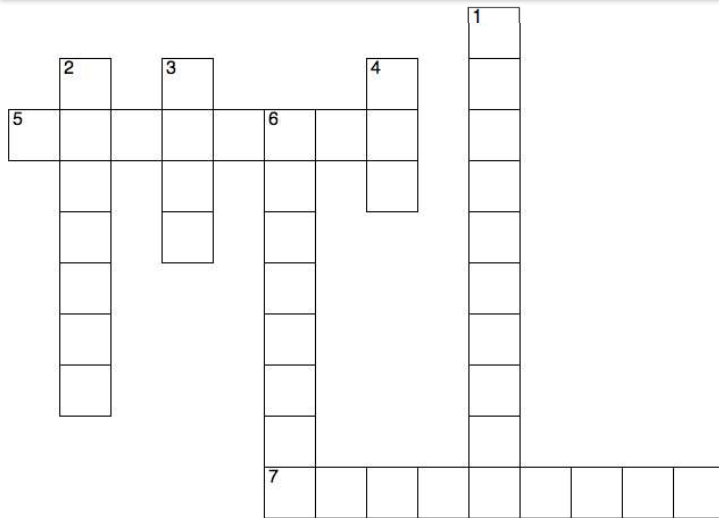
In lieu of a profile for this month, please enjoy this crossword, which might provide a bit of a profile of our esteemed President Matthew Hall.

ACROSS

- 5 They make great "coffee" here
- 7 God's Country

DOWN

- 1 The club where I plied my trade as a youngster (5,4)
- 2 Greatest batsman to ever pull on a pair of pads
- 3 A fine industry 'round these parts (see 7 across)
- 4 Replaced my shoddy old one of these (for those who remember it) with a brand spanking new one last year
- 6 Birthplace of Dickie Bird



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From the President

I can't believe how quickly this season is passing – it must be my age! [*Definitely your age – Ed.*]

We are coming to the back end of the regular season and finals cricket will be with us very soon.

Membership is now 58, and the general meetings have been very well attended this season, which is pleasing.

We had a great response to the survey we sent out, with 56 people responding. This demonstrates to me that you care about the WACUA and you are engaged with the organisation.

You provided us with some very valuable feedback telling us what we were doing well and what we could improve on. I promise you we will listen to your feedback and continue to improve the service we provide to you as a valued member of the WACUA.

There has been plenty of representative cricket since our last meeting, and I would like to congratulate Mick Martell for being appointed to the BBL final at the WACA.

Dean Trigg and Nathan Johnstone were appointed to the WNCL T20 Final with Dean being on field and Nathan as Third umpire.

It was an honour for me to be appointed to the Women's T20 Final with Dean and Nathan, and an experience I will cherish for some time.

Nathan Johnstone and Todd Rann were appointed to the KMPG T20 Final and the Sunday League Final, and Chris McCann and Wayne Barron the Colts final.

Yours in Cricket,



Matthew Hall
WACUA President

Secretary's Report

Having been in the cold of Scotland in January, I managed to miss some very hot Saturdays out in the middle. I think I made a wise move [*freeze or boil? – Ed.*]. While in Scotland I bumped into my friend Allan Haggio who umpires in the top grade over there and is also in the ICC Europe Programme.

He asked me if I wanted to officiate in the traditional New Year Fixture at Prestwick Cricket Club. In previous years this has gone ahead in a field covered in snow, on a pitch rock hard due to the minus 10 degrees weather or during a blizzard, when the batsmen had no problem picking up the red ball against the whiteout background.

It was interesting to hear his description of umpiring in Scotland. All umpires there have a Degree in Duckworth-Lewis as virtually every game is affected by ground weather and light. There have even been times when play has been deemed unreasonable because it is too cold!

He stated the standard of umpiring in Europe varied. In countries like Ireland or the Netherlands, the standard is good, but in places like Spain and Portugal it varied. Allan has umpired internationals between countries like Portugal and France, and likened the standard to probably around our fourth grade.

Opportunities for Scottish umpires are limited, for there is little chance of progressing to First Class cricket as the England and Wales Cricket Board like their umpires to have First Class experience.

This contrasts with here in Australia, where if you have the ability, you have the chance and pathway to reach the highest level.

Some things do not change: the game in Scotland has good teams and bad, he has to deal with sportsmen and gentlemen as well as clowns and idiots, and there are batsmen who are never out and those who will walk without prompting.

On the committee front, we are heavily involved in the Olly Cooley dinner organisation without being finally responsible for it, which is good. However, I am responsible for the powerpoint presentation so once again thanks to all those who have regularly submitted their votes. Again I would appeal to those officiating in grade cricket to send their votes to me as well as putting them into MyCricket. It makes the collating and verification of the winners so much easier if you assist me in this.



John Sherry
WACUA Secretary

WACA Umpiring Coordinator's Report

A recent incident in a WACA District match alerted me to the matter of insurance for umpires. We all accept a risk, normally a very small risk, when we enter a sporting arena. It is competitive and players will play hard within the rules. On the rare occasion that we may be injured as part of the match, the question of insurance cover becomes important.

Umpires are covered under the Australian Cricket National Club Risk Protection Programme. The ACNCRPP provides personal injury cover for non-Medicare costs and loss of income. If treatment is listed on the Medicare Benefits Scheme it is *not* claimable through the ACNCRP programme. These expenses will be covered by Medicare. The scheme *does not* cover any 'gap' expenses incurred by your treatment.

The reimbursement capacity of the cover is as follows:

Non-Medicare medical costs
85% reimbursement
\$5000 max per claim
50% excess per claim

Loss of Income
85% Reimbursement
\$500 max per week
14-Day elimination period- your own sick leave entitlements must be used first.

If you are injured during the course of carrying out your duties as the appointed umpire then you are eligible for this cover. This emphasises the need to complete the WACA Registration form at the start of each season. If you are not registered then you are not covered. If injured, report the matter to me and I will provide the necessary paper work to lodge your claim. Keep all records and doctor expenses.

Last weekend I attended the AFL Umpire Coaches' conference in Melbourne and it was very enlightening to observe how another elite sport approaches the development of umpire coaches. It has given me much food for thought and I will be implementing some changes to our Umpire Coordinator programs we are establishing in community and country regions for the development of umpires.

On the 27th of February I will be hosting the WACA Umpiring Forum to assess the state of umpiring in WA and use this as part of the materials to develop a framework for the future development of umpiring. Invited participants will include Cricket Australia (and AFL) umpiring expert David Levens, DSR representative Vince Delprette, Club representatives Mike McGlenn and Colin Minson, WACA Game Development representatives David Clear and Alan Singer, Game Development Cricket Officers, a rep from female cricket, WACA Cricket manager Ben Oliver, as well as a range of experienced and 'novice' umpires. From this a report will be developed and circulated to all stakeholders.

For most umpires their season will be completed before the next edition of *OVER* and so I would like to thank everyone for their efforts this season. The biggest challenge this season has been our inability to provide two umpires for all matches in senior cricket. The most powerful tool for recruitment is word of mouth and as such I would ask everyone to tell others of your experiences and encourage them to come and have a go. If you hear of any players who may have expressed an interest in umpiring, pass their name on to me and we will follow them up.

Barry Rennie
WACA Umpiring Coordinator



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Umpires Appointment Board News

with Terry Prue



Non-verbal communication

Umpiring is meant to be enjoyed. It is good to set and achieve goals but it takes time and hard work to be a successful umpire. However, you must not put umpiring ahead of what is really important in life - family and work. Keep things in perspective and you will see life with better balance.

Know how to handle people and remember that listening is an important skill. If you are asked a reasonable question then give a reasonable answer. Treat everyone (on and off the field) with the same respect you expect from them.

Regardless of how hard you work or how much talent you have, moving 'up the ladder' is not guaranteed. Always be alert to your development and endeavour to be the best umpire you can. Your development can be viewed in many ways, but most of it must be measurable by you. It is difficult, but don't be obsessive about things you cannot control, e.g. appointments (really, non-appointments!). In his early days Terry Prue certainly allowed things like inclement weather, poor pitches and other external factors to affect him. It is easy to say but not easy to do - don't worry about things you cannot control! You will often be criticised even though you are 100% correct, e.g. application of playing conditions. It may not seem fair but it's another facet of the job you must accept. Your development will not be affected.

Remember, the qualities that make a good umpire also make a person a good employee, spouse, parent and friend. Teamwork, loyalty, sacrifice, study, decision making and accountability are lifetime skills.

'Only look to the past to gain knowledge to help avoid mistakes in the future' - Sara Henderson

Terry Prue
UAB Chairman

RECENT AND UPCOMING DISTRICT APPOINTMENTS

KMPG T20 Semi Finals: Matthew Hall, Todd Rann, Dean Trigg, Nathan Johnstone (**Final:** Rann and Johnstone)

One Day League Semi Finals: Matthew Hall, Todd Rann, Dean Trigg, Nathan Johnstone (**Final:** Rann and Johnstone)

Colts Semi Finals: Chris McCann, Wayne Barron, Neil Holland, James Hewitt (**Final:** McCann and Barron)

RECENT AND UPCOMING INTERSTATE APPOINTMENTS

16 Jan BBL S/F Scorchers v Stars
Simon Fry, **Mick Martell** and Geoff Joshua (3rd)

19 Jan BBL Final Scorchers v Heat
Simon Fry, **Mick Martell** and Paul Wilson (3rd)

19 Jan WNCL T20 Final WA v NSW
Dean Trigg, Matthew Hall and **Nathan Johnstone** (3rd)

24 Jan Sheffield Shield SA v VIC
Ian Lock and Paul Wilson

29 Jan PM's XI v West Indies
Stuart Grocock, Tony Ward and **Ian Lock** (3rd)

9 Feb Ryobi Cup SA v VIC
Ian Lock, John Ward and Ash Barrow (3rd)

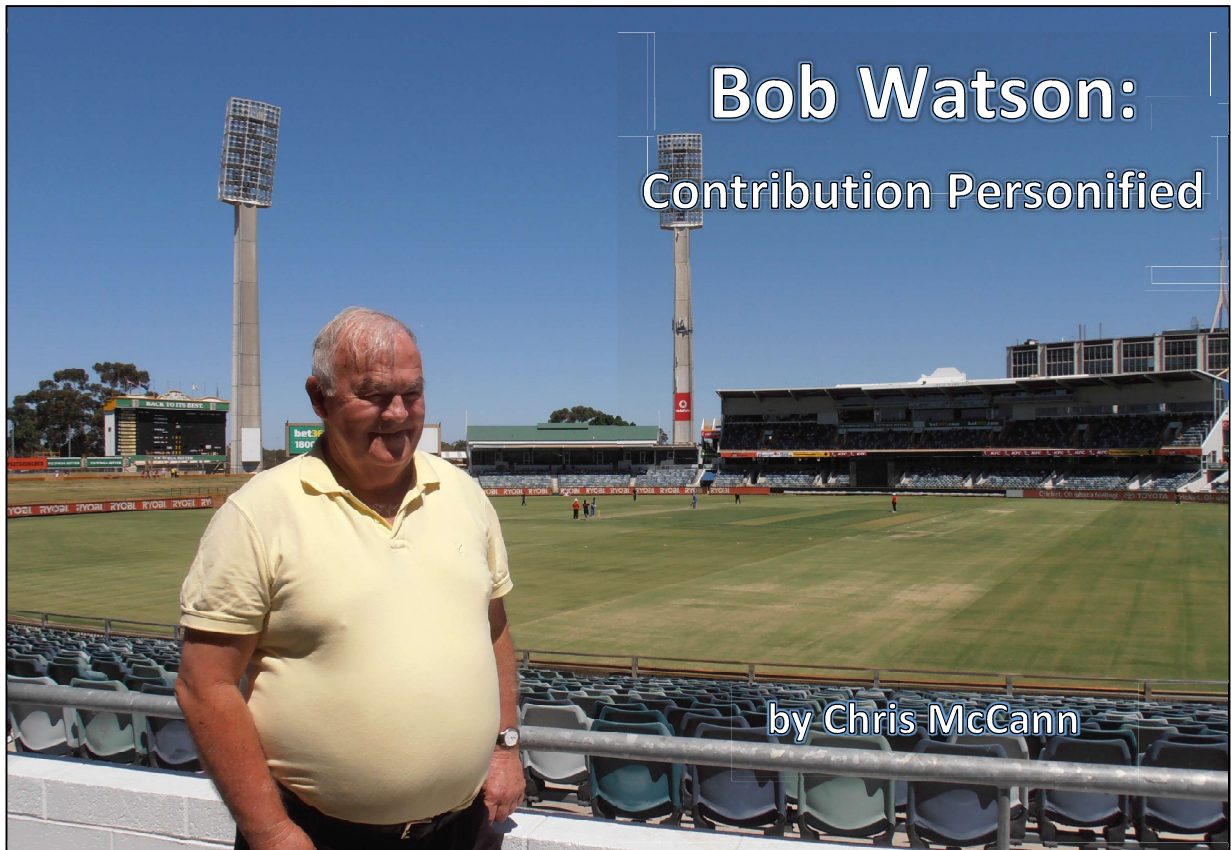
16 Feb Ryobi Cup VIC v QLD
Ian Lock, Tony Ward and Ash Barrow (3rd)

17 Feb Ryobi Cup SA v NSW
Simon Fry, **Mick Martell** and Geoff Joshua (3rd)

19 Feb Ryobi Cup WA v TAS
Ian Lock, Sam Nogajski and **Nathan Johnstone** (3rd)

19 Feb Sheffield Shield SA v NSW
Geoff Joshua and **Mick Martell**

21 Feb Sheffield Shield WA v TAS
Ian Lock and Sam Nogajski



January 5th, 2013 saw two notable retirements in Western Australian cricket. In Sydney, Michael Hussey was midway through his final Test match for Australia. Over 3000 kilometres away, in a match that received rather less publicity, an umpire was standing in his final club match.

Bob Watson called time on his long umpiring career, and even longer association with WACA District cricket, when he left the field at the end of his final grade match. According to Bob's own statistics, which include non-district matches, it was his 743rd game.

That's a hell of a lot of LBWs.

Bob's retirement was notable not only for his on-field contribution, manifest in the sheer number of games he stood in, but in his off-field contribution as a member of committees and in other voluntary work he performed in Perth cricket.

When Gideon Haigh delivered his Bradman Oration last year and emphasised the importance of volunteers to cricket at grassroots level, Bob Watson was exactly the sort of person he was referring to. Granted, Haigh was speaking more in terms of cricket clubs – but umpiring is the same in many respects. Yes, umpires are paid. But the vast majority of umpires do it for the love of cricket. There are also umpires' associations that need volunteers for committees, and Bob has

served on a great number of those over the years. The game itself needs umpires, and the men and women who fill that requirement give up their Saturdays (and Sundays) week in, week out for an entire summer.

For thirty summers, in Bob's case.

In fact, Bob contributed to WA cricket for around 750 Saturdays (assuming not every Saturday fixture was a two-day match). Let's not forget the 135 Sundays. And while we're at it, let's chuck in 226 other match days as well. And that's only as an umpire, leaving aside his long career as a player and coach at the Melville Cricket Club.

Yes, that is what is notable about Bob's retirement – the sheer size of his contribution, which will be missed when he is gone.

Bear in mind that we're only talking about cricket, too, and forgetting that Bob was a soccer referee for thirty years and assisted in coaching referees.

So Bob *is* that person that Gideon Haigh was talking about. He has been recognised by life membership of three organisations. But now as his cricket career winds down to a close and he completes his duties, selflessly as ever, as the WACUA treasurer, we must truly acknowledge Bob's career and commitment to cricket and umpiring in Western Australia.

Thanks, Bob, for your enormous contribution to Western Australian District cricket.

Bob Watson: In His Own Words

Prior to umpiring, I played cricket for about twenty years, for Melville. It would be [mostly in] Fourth Grade as we know it.

I started coaching when I was twenty-five years old, with Melville – just the Melville teams that played in the WACA competitions. A few years we had surplus numbers in the WACA so we had teams playing in Suburban Turf.

I coached the Under 16s for sixteen years, during which time I would have [umpired] at least a hundred games as well.

I had one season umpiring in 1976/77 while still connected with Melville. 1982/83 was the first year [as an umpire] after that. I quit the umpiring the first time because while coaching a team, I didn't feel I was doing the right thing by the fact that I had to leave the game prior to the finish of the day. That's why I had that gap.

I took up umpiring to keep involved in the game.

In my first few years, obviously being accepted by players [was a challenge]. I don't know that I had any particular problems that players associated with me – except of course my non-decisions, for normal umpires. [Although] there was one major incident that occurred in a game between Fremantle and Claremont-Nedlands. I'm not sure whether it was second or third grade, but Peter Sumich was playing for Fremantle. He was batting, and I was at the bowler's end. He got into a bit of a confrontation with the wicketkeeper for Claremont, and they were about to trade blows. So, I got down that end and stopped it. [In those] years we didn't report [many] players. But, my co-umpire said that it was just as well I got down there first because otherwise, he would have landed some blows if he'd got there.

The top umpires at that time when I first started were – well, Peter McConnell would be one in my early career. But I can't put names to any particular umpires that [were mentors]. He was just your co-umpire, that was all.

I was a soccer referee for thirty years in WA. I came close to being assaulted once. The keeper came out with the ball and shaped up with his fists at [another player]. I ran to the goalkeeper and told him to watch himself because he could get sent off for that sort of thing. When I went

The Statistics

Matches per grade/competition

Second Grade: 90
Third Grade: 86
Fourth Grade: 204
Total pennant matches:
380

Sunday League: 6
Colts: 42
Under 17: 3
Senior T20: 1
Total District matches:
432

Masters: 85
Snr. Country Week:
117
Jnr. Country Week: 45
Junior Grades: 37
Under 16 National: 6
Other matches: 19

Total non-District
matches: 311

Total matches
umpired: 743

Life Membership:

Melville CC – 1979
Soccer Referees –
1981
WACUA - 2009



back to start, there was a noise at the goalkeeper's end, and the coach of North Lake was on the goalposts. So, I ran back to tell him to get away from that area, and as I went past the goalkeeper he kicked me on the thigh. So, the goalkeeper got sent off, and that was the end of the game because there was a bit of a melee between spectators. I had to be escorted off the ground, and during the escort this coach apparently came from behind and was making a beeline to me – and it took about four people to hold him down.

The highest-level game that I had was involved in the under-16 national championships played in WA. That's the top-level game I ever did. There were people who became top players [in that carnival].

I umpired two particular matches in which I saw outstanding performances. One was in 2004 [in a 4th grade game], when Melville set a club



record 9th wicket partnership of 198 unbroken. They had been 8 for 97 at one stage, and 8/120 at tea – they finished up being 8 for 295. The other was in a one-afternoon game in 2011. Scarborough were 10th and came up against Bayswater-Morley, who were first on the ladder. Scarborough made 1 for 267, with an opening partnership of over 200, and defeated Bayswater who only made 182.

From January 1st to February 2nd, 1986, I umpired on 21 days – including 14 consecutively. It was in the period when we had the National under-16s over, and they were two-day fixtures; there was an ordinary match on the Saturday; there may have been a junior country week game, and there was senior country week on during that period; and I think there was a Masters game. So, there were about 5 different types of competition in that [two week] period. So that's a good example of where you need to know your different rules.

In one game, early in the day a bail had been damaged, and following another hit, the bail completely broke. We only had about two or three overs to play in that particular session. Much to the amazement of the players, and even my co-umpire, I ordered the bails to be removed from

the whole set. It was an automatic reaction – it wasn't thinking, "oh, what do I do?" It was just something that you know. The reason [for removing all the bails] was that it was down at Tompkins, and to get a bail would take another five minutes!

I suppose the thing I enjoyed most about umpiring was the general fellowship, even when we were amongst the players.

Is there anything I'll miss [about umpiring]? At the moment it's too early to say. I've got to get used to doing things on the weekend that you didn't used to do... I'm not missing being out in the hot temperatures. No, not at this stage. Probably next season [it] will be more noticeable.

If I was to give advice to a new umpire, I would say to be fully aware of the rules of the competition, and know that some of the things that can occur may only occur once in your career. ■

Bob continues to serve the WACUA and District cricket as our association's treasurer. And so, while his on-field career has come to an end, without doubt he will continue to be a fixture around the WACUA for many years to come. Congratulations on a fantastic career, Bob.



***An account of the WNCL T20 Final Experience
by Dean Trigg***

***Above: the WACA scoreboard indicates the names of
umpires Dean Trigg (left) and Matthew Hall***

Wednesday, 16th January. One ball remains in the Big Bash Semi Final, and Mike Hussey and Adam Voges scamper through for a single bye, failing to score the three required for victory. The Stars will host the final in Melbourne. But instantaneously, this result is turned on its head with Mick Martell's outstretched arm at the bowler's end. James Faulkner's front-foot infraction, a fielding restriction blunder; whichever way, the Stars have snatched imminent defeat from the jaws of victory and left the Scorchers to score one run from the final ball – a free hit at that.

It could not be set up any better for 'Mr Cricket', Mike Hussey, who steps up to face the final delivery. The odds are indisputably with the Scorchers now. The ball is delivered, hit over the top, the crowd goes wild, and the Scorchers have made the final again. Just like that, the final will now be played at the WACA on Saturday the 19th.

What's more, the Women's National Cricket League T20 final will be played as a curtain-raiser to the Big Bash final on the same day, and the Western Fury's participation gives them the unexpected home-ground advantage over the New South Wales Breakers.

Thursday morning back at work, with my thoughts moved on from the excitement of the previous evening, I received a call from Barry

Rennie. He sounded excited and pleased. Barry was ringing to notify me that Cricket Australia had called and had appointed Matthew Hall (PC) and me as on field umpires to the WNCL T20 final. I had to take a deep breath.

Barry informed me that the game was going to be televised on Foxtel prior to the Big Bash final and we would have full access to the third umpire. At this stage the announcement had not been made on who the third umpire would be, but was congratulations all around! Immediately after getting off the telephone to Barry, I called PC to congratulate him too.

Suddenly, the day's work paled into unimportance. Later that day, a formal notification was sent out by Cricket Australia for the weekend's finals appointments, which indicated that Nathan (Magic) Johnstone would be performing third umpire duties alongside PC and me. This announcement was exceptional for WA umpiring, with five umpires of the six partaking in the finals coming from WA umpiring stocks (claiming Paul Wilson, who was third umpire for the BBL final).

The remainder of the day, I received countless e-mails, text messages and Facebook posts congratulating us on our appointment to the weekend Final.

Despite the joy of these appointments, a logistical nightmare was suddenly presented to

Barry, who now had to reshuffle a number of grade cricket appointments – all three final umpires were standing in current district matches. Barry's hair pulling and expert juggling did give a few umpires an excellent opportunity to step up a grade, though.

In preparation for the final, Matthew, Nathan and I arranged to meet up for dinner and drinks that night to go through the intricacies of doing a televised match with the use of the third umpire. It was great having Nathan's experience to provide us with the ins and outs of televised matches and the use of the third umpire.

On the Friday evening after getting home from work, everything was taken out of the cricket bag – it was time for a clear out and clean up to make sure everything was spick and span. After a great deal of cleaning and organizing, I was ready to go. All I had to do now was have a good night's sleep, of which there was no chance! Too excited, I think I slept only about four or five hours.

On the morning of the match, I was up early after this restless night. I was able to spend a little time with the children in the morning, playing just to make the time go by. I left the house heading towards PC's flat to pick him up, and on arriving, I found that he too had a sleepless night from the excitement of doing our first national final and our first televised game.

We headed into East Perth and stopped at a café for a great breakfast – although the third person at our table was not Magic, but a stranger who chewed the ear off PC for the hour that we were in there. After all that I think that PC was happy to make a move. Upon arriving at the WACA, as we passed the famous scoreboard we noticed with some surprise that our surnames appeared on the bottom left corner of the board.

Below: *The Western Fury girls celebrate running out Sarah Coyte of the Breakers*



Above: *Rachael Haynes loses her bat in the process of being caught and bowled by the Fury's Suzie Bates*

We went through our pre-match preparation: all of our kit put into the lockers and laid out, drinks in the fridge, met with the match referee Ric Evans, and out onto the ground to do a pitch inspection with Cam Sutherland's input. On the pitch came the usual toss of the bail to decide of which end we were going to stand, and I was to be at the Prindiville End with PC at the Lillee-Marsh Stand End.

As the minutes passed leading up to the start, we did an equipment check, making sure the radios were attached and turned on. Five minutes to go, we were ready; four minutes to go, we headed out of the umpires room, down the stairs and waited in the tunnel; three minutes to go, we walked out onto the ground, crossed the boundary and wished each other good luck – finally the moment had arrived. We would be starting from the Lillee-Marsh end. PC gave guard to the Fury batter, we completed a player count, PC signalled to the scorers, but we had to wait for Foxtel to give us the OK to start - a first for us. The call came through and PC called play.

The Western Fury girls got off to a rapid start and looked like posting a reasonable score. In the 18th over, PC referred a stumping appeal to Nathan in the third umpire's chair, the first third umpire referral. PC's initial thoughts were that Suzie Bates was out, but due to the wicket keeper fumbling the ball it was best to go upstairs. Nathan confirmed that she was out. Good bowling and fielding by New South Wales pegged the Fury back, and the final score for the Fury was 5/126.

Coming off at the innings break happy, we were aware that concentration still needed to be kept up as only half the job was done so far. Coming back out for the innings of the Breakers, this time it was me that had to wait to get the signal from Foxtel to get underway. It's a strange

feeling being out of control, the timing of the match out of your hands and into those in the production trailer. Finally the instruction was given and we were underway. The Breakers came out all guns blazing, hitting consecutive fours in each of the first two overs. From the first ball of the seventh over, Emma King's first, the ball was delivered and hit straight back, deflecting off the bowler's and hitting the stumps. As the appeal for a run out went on, my instinct said that Leah was not out but because it was such a tight call, I signalled for the 3rd umpire. The replay showed that Leah Poulton's bat came down just before the wicket was broken; my first third umpire referral resulted in a not-out decision.

The Fury managed to tighten things up to get the game to go to the final over. With this close finish, they were about ten minutes down on their over rate, despite all of the reminders by PC and me, and constant monitoring with Ric Evans as match referee.

With tension mounting, on the second ball of the last over, Alex Blackwell hit the ball over Suzie Bates' head for the winning runs and New South Wales were the champions, winning by a five wicket margin. The crowd played a great part in the game, adding to the tense atmosphere in the last five or six overs.

PC and I shook all of the players hands and congratulated each other on a job well done; all that was left was to name the player of the match – Alex Blackwell, who scored a well-compiled 41 not out and effected a run out. She certainly led by example.

Ric Evans and Nathan Johnstone joined us on the ground for the post match presentations, with congratulations and handshakes all round – it was a great team effort by all the officials to ensure that all went so smoothly.

None of us will forget this day – and it would never have come to pass had the final delivery been a legal one three nights earlier! ■

WACUA BBQ 2013



2013

MARCH

Tuesday 19th – Monthly Meeting



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Committee!

What you get for being a member of the WACUA:

- A body to negotiate your match payments with the WACA
- A friendly environment to network with umpires of all levels and different experiences
- Quality training to improve your umpiring skills
- A support network of umpires to help you
- A buddy system for new members
- An Advocate to represent you at players tribunal meetings
- Social events for the membership
- Discounted Membership merchandise



Dead Balls

With Reg
“Dickie”
Kneebone



A graduate of the Goldfields Cricket Association’s world-renowned umpiring program, Reg “Dickie” Kneebone umpired 34 Test matches between 1975 and 1989. Since retiring from international cricket, Reg has established himself as the foremost world expert on umpiring, writing several books, including his famous 1996 autobiography, “A Kick in the Bails”. Here he contributes to OVER as our resident “Agony Aunt”.

Dickie,

You would have played in the era of uncovered pitches in the Goldfields. With all the hubbub these days about cricket being a batsman’s game, can you tell us what it was like batting on uncovered wickets?

*Jeremy,
Leeming*

Dear Jeremy,

I played a lot of cricket on uncovered wickets. In the Goldfields when I first started, we never covered wickets. It didn’t seem to faze the batsmen. In fact, I would say that a great number of them actually seemed to score more heavily when the pitch wasn’t covered than when it was, as it later came to be. I remember “Stampy” McFlynn made over a thousand runs one season, every one of them on an uncovered pitch.

Of course, it helped that it never rained in summer.

We first played on covered pitches in Kal when the local hardware store donated a set as part of their sponsorship. We were obliged to use the bloody things, but they were a nuisance. One summer it did rain once or twice, and by the time we got the covers on, the rain would stop; then as soon as we got them off, it would start raining again. So we all took a vote at the next association meeting, and it was unanimous that the covers had to go and we would continue playing on uncovered wickets.

The covers didn’t go to waste, though. They ended up as shade cloth over the tote at the Golden Mile trotting track.

In the following years we saw some wonderful cricket played on uncovered pitches. But then “Grumpy” McGuinness, the groundsman, put a faulty second-hand radiator in the heavy roller. From that point on, unbeknownst to him, he was watering the pitch at the same time as rolling it.

We played on some rough tracks under Grumpy as a result. Stampy went from averaging 1045 to only about 50, and a few bowlers ran amok. Terry “Bung” Smith took about 70 wickets at six apiece that year.

Towards the end of my playing career, the times were changing in cricket and the association decided that all pitches were to be covered. I think that was really when the Golden Era of Goldfields cricket ended. Stampy McFlynn couldn’t handle the change, and retired to go prospecting east of Wiluna.

But that wasn’t the end of the story. Just before the ’68/’69 season began, the original set of covers blew off the tote in a heavy wind and they were never seen again. Some say that they blew all the way to Broome, carried by the Esperance Doctor – and 1969 saw the lowest aggregate by a leading run scorer in Broome’s history.

Coincidence?

Dickie

*Send your questions to Dickie! Email
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