

SOFTBALL SOUTH AUSTRALIA

2009 – 2010

ANNUAL REPORT

Softball SA | PO Box 217 Henley Beach SA 5022 t: +61 8 8353 6766 | f: +61 8 8353 2480

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Government of South Australia
Office for Recreation and Sport



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CHAIR REPORT

As we come to the end of a very busy, exciting and rewarding year for Softball SA, I would like to reflect on our journey so far and also cast my eyes ahead to see where the road may take us.

Firstly, I would like to recognise the efforts of all of those who contribute to the running of Softball in SA. I would like to thank my Board colleagues, both current and past, and all of the other volunteers who routinely give their time, effort and often financial resources to ensure the survival of the sport in SA. In addition, I would like to recognise the efforts of the paid staff of Softball SA, our former Executive Officer, Julie Anderson, our current Executive Officer, Mark Howells, and their teams.

At this time last year Softball SA did not have a staff and by the time they arrived their roles had been vacant for up to several weeks. Your Board did not cut them any slack. The work of implementing the newly adopted strategic plan commenced immediately. Not to say that progress has been swift or easily seen by onlookers.

We began our journey just prior to the release of the Crawford Report on The Future of Sport in Australia. This report heralded an increase in the rate of change in the environment within which Softball SA operates. So as we struggle with internal change we are also continually adapting to the changing landscape in which we find ourselves. These changing expectations, both internally and externally, dictated the need for a radical change in focus for the Board of Softball SA.

One of the key achievements of the year has been the recruitment of a skills based board to fill the casual vacancies that have arisen since our last AGM. Your Board is now almost completely independent of the day to day operational aspects of Softball SA and is free to focus on its role of developing strategic goals and direction, monitoring achievement of the strategic goals and ensuring legal and regulatory compliance.

The work of determining the strategic direction for Softball SA was undertaken in consultation with members and was largely completed with the adoption of the strategic plan at our last AGM. Your Board has been working on plans and strategies to enable the implementation of the strategic direction, viz:

- Financial and human capacity building strategies
- Membership satisfaction and communication strategies
- Membership growth and sport promotion strategies
- Efficiency enhancement strategies

Work on developing these strategies has been slower than I would have liked. Your board has spent significant time supporting ongoing operations through the transition, while also finding their feet in the sport and recreation industry and softball in particular. I feel now we are approaching the start line with a team that is ready to go into bat.

The challenge now facing us is one of capacity. Softball SA will need the support and dedication of a large volunteer workforce if it is to achieve the goals articulated in the strategic plan. I would hope that some of this volunteer support might come from within the Softball community; however I believe that it will need to be sourced primarily from the larger community.

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Our links to the broader community are slowly developing and I am pleased to report that we are continuing to talk to our colleagues at Baseball SA about working collaboratively to achieve an upgrade of our facilities. Resource sharing within the sport and within the sporting community is a key theme of the Crawford Report and it makes good sense for Softball SA to be a leader in this area.

Another key achievement of the past year is the building of relationships within the softball community. Our relationship with Softball Australia is now one of trust and interdependence. Your board has spent significant effort rebuilding this relationship and is now seen as leading the nation in the area of best practice governance.

There has also been a focus on building relationships with you, our membership. Your board has been represented at all tournaments held at West Beach and in Mildura and I have accepted invitations to spend time with local clubs.

Furthering our relationship with members will require the ongoing commitment of time, energy and effort from your board and your Executive Officer. I understand that not every experience this past year has been positive and that not everyone will be able to make the changes necessary to grow our sport. I can only endeavour to make the transition as easy as possible and try to ensure that the door is always open for those who leave now but may want to return later.

One of the challenges that we face in growing and retaining our membership base is the ability to clearly articulate and demonstrate a value proposition. When people say that our sport is too expensive, what they often mean is that they don't know what they get for their money, if anything.

As a community, we need to build value into our offering so that people consider that they get value for money. At a state level that means communicating more regularly with our members, it means being more inclusive, it means providing more opportunities for people to play our sport and be involved in our community. It means promoting our sport, not only so that we attract new members but also so that our existing members feel good about being involved in the sport.

Your board is currently working on creating the enabling infrastructure to ensure that these types of value creating initiatives can be rolled out progressively. This enabling infrastructure is a necessary component of the puzzle of ongoing viability of Softball in SA.

In conclusion, I would like to return to one of the themes that I have previously written about and that was first discussed by Jenny Holliday, Chair of Softball Australia, in her address to the Softball Australia AGM in November 2009. She talked about the concept of 'quiet resolve'. The persistence required to achieve goals. The tenacity required to work through seemingly insurmountable problems and road blocks. The sense of achievement and progress when you look back over time and see how much has been achieved. Much has been achieved during the past year through the application of quiet resolve and I encourage you to watch with patience and tolerance as we navigate the road ahead.

Karen Hockley
Chair.

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

Transformation and Challenges

When I arrived at Softball SA the office had been vacant for a number of weeks since the retirement of Helen Baker after 22 years of service. Keith Sampson, Jane and Steve Hunt had refurbished the office to ensure a more spacious and productive working environment and continued to provide support throughout my tenure. The sport was and still is facing many challenges which were highlighted in the governance review 'Step up to the plate or we could be out' the majority of which required a radical change in our approach to managing and growing the sport.

Helen and the previous Board led by Keith Sampson had made progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the governance review and produced a five year strategic plan that would assist in re-positioning the sport for success in the future. The development and adoption of the new Board Charter re-directed the focus of the Board on the strategic growth of the sport leaving the operational aspects to the Executive Officer and staff.

The staff of Darryl Rowe (Administrative Officer) and Sam Small (Finance Officer) commenced in September shortly before the start of the new domestic season. We found ourselves in the unenviable position of having to learn about the general practices and procedures of the daily operational environment as we progressed through the season. Darryl and Sam are to be commended for their efforts in dealing with the challenges that presented themselves on a daily basis.

Our members

We recognise that our greatest asset is our members (the Adelaide Clubs, Affiliates and individuals) that volunteer in varying capacities to ensure our sport continues to exist. At a time of continuous change and instability our members have demonstrated their passion and willingness to embrace the necessary change to progress and grow our sport. We will need the continued support and contribution of our members if we are to achieve our aspiration of re-positioning the Softball as a major sport.

In the past year our membership has stabilised with 2901 members which has arrested the recent years of decline. It is anticipated with a national review of membership we will be in a position in the future to attract varying categories of playing and non playing members to the sport with attractive membership packages.

Our successes

Our SA U16 and U19 Women performed admirably in the recent Australian Championships finishing 3rd and 2nd respectively. Considering our small player base this was an outstanding performance.

The Open Women's (SA Starz) and the U19 Men competed well in their respective Australian Championships with a view to long term athlete development and the future.

Congratulation to Stephanie Trzcinski and Annali Dolman for being selected in the Under 19 Australian Squad and to Maddie Cameron in the Under 16 Australian Squad.

Sunraysia hosted the Junior State Championships and did an admirable job, providing a friendly and enjoyable environment and excellent playing facilities. Mildura embraced the Championships by providing excellent service, good media coverage and support. We congratulate you.

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The annual Softball SA Sports Award Night was a resounding success with 200 attending to witness a night of nostalgia when 20 past legends of the game were inducted into the Hall of Fame. It was pleasing to receive many messages of congratulations for an excellent night where audience was treated to some memorable moments of our history combined with the recognition of the stars of the future. Even more notable was balancing the well deserved recognition within the time frame available!

Our people

The dedication, passion and commitment of our people (players, coaches, scorers, umpires, state team officials, administrators, and ground staff) who support our sport on a regular basis is fundamental to a great Softball experience, thank you for your valuable efforts.

I would like to thank our staff for their support, commitment and enthusiasm even during challenging times throughout the transition period.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Board past and present for their due diligence in their determination to re-focus on the strategic direction and growth of the sport.

Our partners and sponsors

The continued support of the SA Office of Recreation and Sport has been invaluable in providing Softball with the resources for the provision of our core activities and programs; we look forward to working with them in the future.

Our sponsors, Rising Stars, Emmsee Sportswear, John May Insurance Services Pty Ltd and Worldwide Sports Insurance, have played vital roles in the provision of financial and in kind support for our programs and activities and we thank them.

The future

I leave Softball SA confident that we are in a position to move forward over the next 12 months. However, there are many challenges ahead that will require a collective determination by the Board, staff and members.

Our strategic plan provides the direction for the next five years and will require further reforms to be realised. This will take patience, understanding and strength to go the distance but the only way to affect change is to be a part of it.

I wish Mark Howell the new EO, his staff, the Board and the members very best for the future and I will maintain a keen interest from a distance.

‘As long as we remember and recognise where we came from we will always know in which direction we need to travel.’

Julie Anderson

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HIGHLIGHTS

SA success

Our SA U16 and U19 Women performed admirably in the recent Australian Championships finishing 3rd and 2nd respectively. Considering our small player base this was an outstanding performance.

The Open Women's (SA Starz) and the U19 Men competed well in their respective Australian Championships with a view to future performances.

Congratulation to Stephanie Trzcinski and Annali Dolman for being selected in the Under 19 Australian Squad and to Maddie Cameron for being selected in the Under 16 Australian Squad.

Special Olympics softball component was held at Softball HQ and was a great success.

Governance reform

A governance review of Softball SA 'Step up to the plate or we could be out' was completed and embraced by the Board and the members as the foundation for future reform. The Board adopted a new 'Board Charter' in October 2009 with a significant change in focus from an operational to strategic role.

Volunteers

The success of our business is reliant on the coaches, officials, team managers and administrators that volunteer their valuable time every year to ensure participants are provided with an opportunity play the sport at either the community or elite level. Your contribution is greatly appreciated and valued.

Moving forward

In August 2009 the Board approved a five year strategic plan. This plan addresses a number of the recommendations in the governance review 'Step up to the plate or we could be out.' The plan is both ambitious and challenging although **Together Everyone will Achieve More.**

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STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

To develop, promote and manage the sport of Softball in South Australia providing maximum participation for all ages and at all levels through access to quality competitions and opportunities for players, coaches, officials and volunteers in a safe and inclusive environment.

VISION

To make softball the sport of choice.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We value the following guiding principles:

- Fairness
- Mutual respect
- Responsibility
- Safety
- Accountability
- Inclusivity
- Supporting diversity
- Integrity
- Successful
- Leadership
- Professionalism

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Governance

Administration:

To deliver “best practice” effective and compliant management and administration systems that assist member clubs and associations to build a sustainable organisation;

Risk management:

To create a safe environment that meets relevant standards for participation in all aspects of the sport;

Marketing and promotion:

To maximise opportunities that promote and market the programs and image of the sport to the whole community;

Communication:

To implement policies and procedures that creates better awareness, interaction and engagement between key stakeholders;

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People

To implement systems and processes and the skilling of our human resources that will result in delivering and managing the organisation's programs and key focus areas;

Development

To develop all aspects of the organisation's operations so that avenues to promote, grow and develop the sport throughout the state are provided;

High performance:

To maximise the opportunities to identify talented players, coaches and officials so that they can be nurtured and developed to their full potential;

Sport delivery and events:

To provide quality events and competitions in all areas of the sport that will allow participants to achieve at their desired level;

Membership

To assist and support member clubs and associations to deliver quality programs so that participation is increased;

Finance

To establish processes and ensure resources are allocated so that long term financial viability and sustainability to deliver the sport's key focus areas is achieved;

Facilities:

To provide appropriate infrastructure that provides quality opportunities for all participants;



SOFTBALL IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The sport of softball began in South Australia during the Second World War as an alternative sporting pursuit to the more familiar sport of baseball. The introduction of softball provided a new sport for girls and women. From these early days when softball was played under the banner of the Adelaide Women's Softball Association several changes of title have occurred until the present day when the sport is now administered by the South Australian Softball Association Inc.

The sport is played by both men and women with the first men's metropolitan competition being offered in 1987/88 but the success and participation in men's softball has been cyclical and the formal men's metropolitan competition ceased at the conclusion of the 1997/98 season. Men's competitions continue to be played in some affiliated associations.

Softball has been played at various 'association grounds' during its history but its home and headquarters is now based at Barratt Reserve at West Beach which is part of the Adelaide Shores complex. This is also home to other sporting organisations including Lacrosse SA and Sport SA. The site is well established and features two Softball Diamonds, spectator facilities and an office complex from where the sport has been administered since 1984. With its headquarters established at the West Beach site the sport centralised its competition structure by playing all matches there rather than the home and away format that was previously in operation.

At the current time there are 11 affiliated Associations providing competitions for over 50 clubs across regional South Australia in age levels ranging from Tee Ball at the younger age to Masters Softball for the older adults. In addition to the affiliated Associations there are 8 District Clubs and 1 Minor Club who provide over 50 teams that participate in the Adelaide Metropolitan Competition.

The sport is played as a summer sport between October and March catering for both men and women and for varying ability levels. There are two versions of the sport, namely Fastpitch (the traditional and most popular version) and Slowpitch which is played as a mixed competition.

The elite players compete in State and National championships with the ultimate representative honour being selection in National teams that compete in World Championships. State representation is possible in U17, U19, and senior open teams.

Over the years, SA has been represented at all age levels however there are certainly opportunities to gain better representation in future national teams.

Softball SA represents all facets of the sport across the state and the future vision is that this Strategic plan reflects the future direction of all levels and competitions of Softball in this state.

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SOFTBALL PEOPLE

SOFTBALL SA DIRECTORS

Karen Hockley (Chair)



Martin Frayne



Julie Kerr



Bob Nicholson



Patricia Harris



Stephen Wade



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SOFTBALL SA STAFF

Executive Officer - Mark Howells
 Finance Officer - Sam Small
 Practical Student – Jacquie Dunn

STATE HEAD COACHES

Open Women (SA Starz) Annette Fidge
 U19 Women Janell Behrendt
 U19 Men James Harris
 U16 Women Natalie Mead

STATE COORDINATORS

Coaching Janell Behrendt
 Umpiring Neville Lawrance
 Scoring Lindy Rattigan

MEMBERS PROFILE

Our membership represents a diverse range of people across a large demographic area. They make valuable contributions to Softball as players, coaches, officials, administrators and supporters. Currently we have 2901 playing and officials which remained static from the previous year.

Registered playing members:

T-Ball	Male 63	Female 107
Junior	Male 161	Female 742
Senior	Male 142	Female 1194
Slow Pitch/Masters	Male 90	Female 90

Registered non playing members:

Officials	Male 126	Female 186
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ADELAIDE CLUBS

Legends (Minor Club)
 Glenelg Rebels
 Onkaparinga Saints
 Port Adelaide Magpies
 Seacombe Tigers
 Sturt Falcons
 Torrens Valley Redsox
 Walkerville Cats
 West Torrens Eagles
 Sunraysia

AFFILIATES

Broken Hill
 Central Districts
 Gawler & Districts
 Hills
 Kangaroo Island
 Mt Gambier
 NAMSA
 Port Pirie
 Riverland

MEMBERSHIP RECOGNITION**Patrons:**

Mrs K Correll (Life Member)
 Mr H Anderson (Mayor Charles Sturt)
 Mr J Trainer (Mayor West Torrens)
 Mr K Rolland (Mayor Holdfast Bay)

Life Members:

2009 Mrs Helen Baker	1976 Miss R Adey OAM
2009 Mrs R Robinson	1975 Miss M Laing
2008 Mr K Sampson	1975 Miss J Cahill
2005 Mrs J Williams	1972 Mrs M Pollard*
2003 Mrs L Birks	1969 Mrs L Mildren
2002 Mr A McAuliffe	1963 Miss M Parslow*
1993 Mr R Coombe	1962 Mrs O Radloff*
1989 Miss V Scarman*	1961 Miss K Sims*
1987 Mrs L Brown	1958 Mrs K Correll
1982 Mr L Tyler OAM	1951 Miss J Irwin
1977 Miss N Whittingham	1950 Miss E Summers*

(*deceased)

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Hall of Fame Inductees 2009:

Mrs B Bawden
Mrs Brown
Ms J Stevens
Ms N Whittingham
Ms R Adey OAM
Ms L White
Ms L Martin
Ms R Strapps
Ms S Tomlinson
Ms J Cheesman

Mrs K Sims*
Ms M Laing
Mr J McAuliffe
Mr A McAuliffe
Ms T Connolly
Mrs J Dale
Ms K Maloney
Ms B Phillips
Mrs D Mason
Mrs M Pollard*

(*deceased)

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MT GAMBIER

Mt Gambier had a very successful season in 2009-10, both on and off the Diamond. Concorde's Club, who had not won an A grade premiership in 25 years, took out top prize this season.

Whilst we only have 4 clubs we were able to offer A B and C grade competition for seniors and U/16, U/14 and U/12 for the juniors.

Mt Gambier is very proud of its state representative players this year being Maggie Breen and Amber Hood. In addition, 4 players have recently been named in the State SAPSASA team. They are:

Amber Hood
Georgia Hood
Jenna Burstone, and
Mary Wilson

Off the Diamond we are working in conjunction with the Women's Soccer Association to extend our facilities. We currently have a lease arrangement in place for winter but in future we will have a partnership arrangement. This will help to provide funding for facility extensions.

I am personally excited about the future for Mt Gambier Softball.

Di Humphries
President

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ADELAIDE COMPETITION

Season 2009/10 commenced in October 2009 with 33 Senior and 31 Junior players registered. This represented an increase of 5 Senior and 7 Junior teams compared with entries from 2007/08. The number of individual registrations has increased each season with almost 100 more than in 2008/09, and the Clubs are to be congratulated for their efforts in recruiting and retaining players.

A total of 356 Senior games and 246 Junior games (including finals) were programmed for the season. The number of games lost due to adverse weather was minimal although the cancellation of a round of junior games following a spell of excessive hot weather highlighted a need to improve the notification process and this is something the Adelaide Competition Committee are continuing to resolve.

For the first time in many years Adelaide Competition were able to field representative teams in all women's grades in the Senior State Championships and I thank the coaches and team organisers who contributed and made this possible. Softball SA provided replace the playing tops that has been in use for many years and was in a state of disrepair.

The members of the Adelaide Competition Committee worked tirelessly to ensure that the Competition functioned effectively and to each of you I offer my sincere thanks for your commitment and dedication. You each have club and/or team responsibilities yet give your time freely to enhance the competition. Thank you. To the volunteers who assist willingly on match days, club maintenance days and working bees, thank you. Members of the operations sub-committee, working quietly in the background thank you, your work is imperative to the success of the competition.

A special mention to the ground crew, Roo Lyle and Alan, who have worked tirelessly all season in all kinds of weather, many days during each week, to maintain the diamonds and surrounds. The efforts of these gentlemen cannot be overstated, they are priceless. The current members of the ground crew however cannot go on forever and it is imperative that their replacements (either volunteer or paid) are identified to learn and assist from them to ensure this important function is not lost.

We can look forward to the coming season with a high expectation and excitement as at the time of writing this report several changes are either under consideration, or already agreed to by the Adelaide Competition Committee. A major change was the alignment of the underage grades in the junior competition with Softball Australia's recommendations, Under 13 (previously U12) Under 15 (previously U14) and Under 17 (previously U16). The introduction of an Under 11 developmental grade with modified rules added another dimension to the competition.

We look forward to the coming season and beyond in our efforts to continue to improve the Adelaide Competition and retain its standing as the premier softball competition. This will require the continued contribution and support of all members and Clubs working together to achieve more.

I look forward to working with and for you in the coming season.

Keith L Sampson

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HIGH PERFORMANCE PROGRAMS

OPEN WOMEN'S NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP (Gilley's Shield)

The Gilley's Shield is the premier women's softball competition in Australia. In the 2009/2010 season the competition was expanded to include the New Zealand White Sox team and the best Australian State teams representing 6 states. The competition was played over four rounds (including finals) at various locations throughout Australia.

During the four rounds of the Gilley's Shield, South Australia's premier women's Softball team was represented by the SA Starz.

Our young side this season, while enthusiastic at the challenge of competition against the best athletes in the country, were lacking in experience at the senior national level. South Australia is embarking on a re-building phase at the elite level, following a series of retirements of experienced players over the past few years, and the current playing group provides us with a solid foundation to build potential as a top four side.

The average age of the team was between 18 and 21 with the oldest player being 24, with four players included from the SA Under 19 representative team, and relying on 6 interstate players recruited through the national draft system. For the first time in a number of years, the team had four home-grown pitchers available and were the key to its increasing consistency against much more experienced teams.

The 2009/2010 season ended with WA celebrating success of both their men's and women's teams after the two teams won their respective Australian titles in Canberra over the finals weekend in February. The WA women broke through for their first title since 1959, defeating NSW 3-2 in the final of the Gilley's Shield, breaking the QLD & NSW stranglehold over the title for many years.

For South Australia's young side, 3rd Base Lana Martin, was awarded the team's Most Valuable Player Award, with consistent performances across 3 of the rounds at 3rd base, and with the bat. Lana has been a Starz player for the past 3 seasons, and has developed into a solid performer and team leader.

Annette Fidge

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U19 WOMENS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP (Elinor McKenzie Shield)

The Elinor McKenzie Shield was held in Altona, Victoria.

Playing in the Grand Final is the goal of every coach. I advised the team that I had expected to finish in the top 2 but I'd be happy with top 4 position as it still meant we could play our way into the Grand Final, and they met my expectation.

We won 6 of our 12 minor round games, losing 1 game by 2 runs, and the remaining 5 games by 1 run (one was a 10th innings tie break against NSW). We scored 65 runs off the opposition which was second only to NSW.

We finished 3rd after the minor round and our first final was against WA. We won this 5 – 3 in a very tight game. The next morning we played Victoria and won 2 – 0 in another tight game. Abi Priolo only gave up 4 hits in the total for this game, and really dominated.

Coming up against NSW in the Grand Final was always going to be a challenge, even more so after such a tight game against the Victoria. Our record against them was good; we had only lost by only 1 run in both our minor round games, one of which was the tie breaker, we were confident.

Unfortunately it showed early in the game that we may have run out of energy with a few errors that were capitalised upon. The girls gave everything they had but it wasn't enough on the day.

We had many outstanding performances for the week but I would like to mention just a few:

- Sophie Hoyle hit an amazing 412;
- Hayley Norris hit in 10 RBI's and was a major contributor in the field, making only 1 error;
- Georgia Bevan had a great tournament, as a rookie she may not have expected much game time, but played her way into the starting 9 including the finals;
- Annali Dolman stepped up to play under 19's as well as under 16's and did a terrific job playing her way into the starting 9;
- Sophie King played very well at Short Stop she was involved in 70 plays making only 5 errors; and
- Sophie and Annali made an impression on the selectors making the Australian under 19 Squad.

The MVP for the Under 19 this year was awarded to Abigail Priolo. Abi hit consistently, ran the bases aggressively, and was a major contributor in every game especially the finals, pitching 59% of the teams total innings, with 275 batters faced for 40 strike outs.

Janell Behrendt



U19 MENS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP (Nox Bailey Shield)

The Nox Bailey Shield was held in Perth, Western Australia.

25 players (18 from four leagues in SA and Mildura plus 7 draft players) expressed an interest in playing for SA. Initially we had the opportunity to draft four players with Softball Australia (SAL) providing a further two players through the draft which I reluctantly declined. However, as circumstances changed we accepted the offer from SAL for a further two draft players. In hindsight it was the right decision as injuries and extreme heat conditions forced us to rotate players to help cope with the conditions.

Generally they were all well behaved young men however; Jesse Taws and Tye Gould were exceptional both on and off the diamond.

The SA players all performed admirably and beyond expectations. It was a huge commitment from such a broad base of players and deserves recognition of all of the players and I thank them.

Scott Humphrys, Jarryd Farrell and Kaelym Laird are the future of our sport and are already outstanding players in their own right in the SA men's competitions where all are playing in both NAMSA and Hills associations. All are showing signs of leadership and should be encouraged to continue with their softball especially at the highest level.

Damien Boxer and Corey Villiers are players that have the potential to excel; they displayed good skill and are already playing at a high standard in their respective Men's competitions. Both players have just completed high school and should mature greatly over the next year. Coen McLeod is dedicated to the sport and will provide our future under 17 team some much needed experience.

The three young men from Mildura, Brad Gowers, Alister Sluiter and Mitch McGlashen were all great assets and are pioneers of our sport in Sunraysia. We hope they influence more young men to play the game and make themselves available state reps for state teams.

I was blessed to have the 'Sluiter family' involved and part of the management team. Ian was amazing and continually inspired me to continuously improve, ensured the players were ready to play, was always supportive of the decisions I made and had the knowledge and expertise to accept a head coach's role in the future.

Heather was a revelation and I feel very lucky to have had a manager to her outstanding quality. She was thorough and always managed a smile. Caroline deserves praise for assisting Heather and proved to be quite capable of managing the team whether Heather departed.

It was a successful and inspiring National Championships for me personally. I am proud of each of the players and the officials and they all should be encouraged to represent SA again in the future.

James Harris

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U16 GIRLS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP (Esther Deason Shield)

The Esther Deason Shield was held in Sydney, NSW.

The Under 16 program started very early with winter training sessions in June to provide players with essential preparation prior to trials. We selected five train on players who I hope enjoyed being part of the state program and developing their skills in readiness for possible selection in future years.

Troy Bettineschi was engaged to manage the girl's conditioning and with sessions each Sunday morning. Troy ensured the girls reached their limits physically in addition to encouraging team work by having the girls compete with one another and support players who found it difficult to sustain the same level of work rate.

Liz Knight and I worked on the defensive elements of the game with the players. The players slowly learnt the relays after many weeks of practice and instructions. It was great to witness the transformation of our very quiet catchers into players that were able to take control of game situations.

Ian Chapman coached offensive skills. Knowing that the New South Wales and Queensland pitchers would be throwing around 100km/h, Ian ensured that the pitching machine was always set to match this pace and we were highly impressed when the girls were able to get good contact off this speed not only from 40 feet but from 36 feet.

In the weeks leading up the tournament we took advantage of the school holidays to have all girls practicing in small groups hitting and fielding. Their commitment to training was infallible and I believe all of the girls were well prepared prior to the tournament.

In the first round we won all the games we were expecting to win to place us comfortably in 3rd position. On the Tuesday we experienced two disappointing losses to ACT and NSW. After a couple of team building activities, to lighten the mood, the girls were able to bounce back the following day with a convincing win against WA. We finished in third spot after the minor round.

Our elimination final against ACT was a closely fought contest with both teams making basic errors and forcing the game to be decided by a tie-breaker. We were able to hold ACT scoreless with Jordan Lambert turning a bunt play into a double play getting the tie-breaker runner out at home. Maddie Cameron was able to hit a single in our tie-breaker to score Kayla Rocco as the winning run ensuring a place in the preliminary final against Queensland.

The game against Queensland was just as exciting, with the lead changing numerous times, even when Queensland managed 4 runs to go ahead, the players showed tremendous spirit to slowly get the runs back to force another tie-breaker. Unfortunately, we were unable to match the scoring of Queensland in the tiebreaker knocking us out for a very credible third place.

Our Most Valuable Player Award went to Stephanie Trzcinski who had a batting average of .333, 6 RBI's, a fielding average of .981 and ERA of 0.854. Steph trained with a cast on her arm for the final seven weeks of our program and it was removed the week before the tournament. She showed great determination and team spirit whilst on the sidelines due to injury but throughout the tournament showed great maturity on the mound for her young age.

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Congratulation to Stephanie Trzcinski and Annali Dolman for being selected in the Under 19 Australian Squad and to Maddie Cameron for being selected in the Under 16 Australian Squad. Many other players were under the watchful eye of the selectors and I hope to see a few more names added to these squads in the future.

I would like to thank my fantastic support staff, with this being my first time as a head coach their help and guidance was greatly appreciated. I would especially like to thank Sandra Franke who replaced Liz Knight who was unable to go away with the team, Julie Rocco who was elevated to the assist coach role as a result and Ivan for his role as our all important statistician. Each official possessed a high level of professionalism and a great sense of humor that helped us all to endure a long ten days away.

I would also like to thank the players for their commitment not only to the state program but to one another. They are each a credit to the clubs which they represented and I hope their friendships and memories are everlasting. Given the age of the players, I would finally like to thank the player's families who transported the players to trainings as without them it makes it pretty hard for us to put a well prepared team on the diamond.

Natalie Mead

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TECHNICAL

Coaching

This year we once again promoted many things on the coaches page of the Softball SA website that were of interest to coaches such as; Softball Australia coaching opportunities (Friendship Series, Invitational Challenge); Rec & Sport Grants; Australian Sports Commission Grants; NCAS online accreditation; and Softball Australia Accreditation. As the new website changes take effect shortly we will continue to use this page as a source of information to coaches and encourage coaches to look at it regularly.

Accreditation

The levels 1 and 2 are still very popular as they are available through the at home program of CD/DVD, while we do still offer the face to face delivery of these courses, getting a group of 10 together can be difficult at times, which is why people have chosen to do their accreditation using the CD/DVD. Level 3 ready to be rolled out and I envisage there will be a few coaches looking to complete this when it becomes available. Unfortunately Softball Australia hasn't had the opportunity to complete levels 4 – 6. There are a few coaches, who are hoping to complete these levels, and to those coaches I encourage you to apply for SA Development coaching positions, or the Friendship Series coaching positions as levels 4 – 6 are heavily based on experience and practice at these levels. This way you'll be getting a head start on the practical side of the criteria.

Currently there are 103 accredited softball coaches in South Australia, with 12 coaches obtaining or updating their accreditation in the last 12 months. It is anticipated that there will be a number of coaches undertaking the next level of coaching in the coming year with level 3 now on offer.

National Pitching Schools - In 2008 Softball Australia started to establish National Pitching Schools around Australia to address the need of identifying and developing young pitchers for the future. The National Pitching Schools program will be linked into the AIS pitching program to ensure consistency and continuity of development.

Softball Australia is continuing their work with Cindy Bristow, from Softball Excellence, in the US to develop Satellite pitching schools, which incorporates standard goals, objectives, curriculum, learning outcomes and teaching methodologies. Cindy has been at the forefront of softball pitching development internationally for the past 30 years and has developed a Whole-Motion based teaching program.

This method is opposed to the current method of teaching pitching which focuses on small-part based instruction and drilling. The advantage of the "Whole –motion" style of teaching is that it prevents young pitchers from becoming overly dependent on instruction, overly self-critical and generally less dominant.

This joint venture will provide the opportunity for Australian coaches and players involved with the program to spend time in the US training, competing and developing at the Softball Excellence Pitching School in Florida.

Softball Australia commenced the establishment of the program in July 2008 during the time of the International Friendship Series in Sydney and continued to develop this program further in July 2009.

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Australian Coaches visit SA

In 2009 the Australian Women's Head Coach, Fabian Barlow come to Adelaide on two separate occasions to train AIS squad members. During one of his visits Fabian gave up some of his time and ran a training session for pivot players from the SA Starz and SA Under 19 state team. Coaches were invited to attend and observe this training, and I was thrilled to see 10 coaches from all across SA come along. This is the first time in my eight years involvement at state level (and it may be the first time ever) that an Australian coach has come across to South Australia and run a training session for players and to allow the coaches to observe was a great opportunity. Fabian spoke to the players at the end of training and took questions from the group. It was a terrific experience for the players and coaches to have someone of his expertise run a session here in South Australia and hopefully this is something that we can offer again.

On the 5 June 2010, the Australian Under 19 Women's Head Coach, Paula McGovern will be visiting Adelaide to meet up and train with the three SA based Australian Under 19 Squad members. Following on from the success of Fabian's visit, Paula has also offered to make her training session open to all coaches to come and observe. There will also be a game played in the afternoon where Paula has invited some coaches to come and participate, and for other coaches to observe.

These opportunities are very valuable for players and coaches as they allow us to see what we need to be working on in order to represent our country. I strongly encourage coaches to attend these sessions and observe and learn from the Australian Head Coaches when given the opportunity.

Janell Behrendt

Umpiring

SA Softball Umpiring Association (SASUA)

Australian Theory Exam Preparation Nights

Dave conducted three sessions with 23 umpires attending from the Adelaide clubs. These sessions were repeated at CDSA under the direction of Kevin Tannebring with a similar number of umpires attending.

Preseason Basic Rules / Umpiring Clinic

This was the fourth year that we have conducted a "GREEN SHIRT" program with the continued assistance of SA Sport Institute (SASI) who has been providing the polo shirts, posters and support material. We had five people involved in the program at West Beach this year which was a decrease on last season. However, we did receive a number of requests for the program to be conducted late in the season. Due to the nature of the training required for these courses there is a need to conduct them at the start rather than the end of the season. There is continuing support offered by the affiliates that have introduced the program and are now starting to benefit with new umpires being introduced to the game.

A preseason clinic was conducted for a group of our more senior level 1, 2 and 3 umpires from Adelaide and surrounding affiliates with a focus on the pitching rule, this will continue again this season as the full extent of the new rule changes come into effect. Of interest to the group was the opportunity to more deeply discuss application of playing rules and infield rotation work. While a lot of

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work is done in this area during the season, very often a clinic environment where thoughts and ideas can be more wildly explored and more detailed explanations given is very helpful in the development of umpiring skills.

It is anticipated that this sort of session will be repeated prior to the new season with coaches being invited to attend a special rules segment to allow discussion and explanation of the rule changes occurring this season.

Alan McAuliffe spent several weeks at CDSA conducting assessments and provided some feed back to a number of umpires as he has done in Adelaide over the past few seasons.

Kevin Tannebring was involved in the umpiring at the schools championship conducted at West Beach and was very impressed with a number of junior umpires. After further discussions arrangements were made to allow them to sit the Basic Umpires exam and level 1 umpire accreditation was awarded to the umpires involved.

Leah Schwartz had two trips to the APY Lands in conjunction with the SANFL who are running football and softball programs. SASUA have been asked over the last two or three years to be involved in the Softball part of the program, umpiring finals in the beginning and now focusing on the training of the local umpires.

Accreditation Advancements

In total 16 umpires were awarded level 1 or advanced their current level of accreditation, while this is a small decrease this season it still represents an increase over 2008/09 season. Accreditation advancements can be achieved at State Championships, October weekend if examiners and suitable games are available or within your own affiliate for level 1 or at West Beach for level 1-4 umpires.

State Tournaments

Once again we had three major events held within the State these are great opportunities for umpires to work with umpires from outside of their own associations and I would encourage umpires to make themselves available for these events. They provide excellent learning/development opportunities for all umpires and we generally have a number of senior umpires on hand to watch and discuss games situations and difficulties with you.

The first of these events is the October long weekend Junior Tournament and this is conducted each year and there is always a need for umpires at all levels. It is particularly useful for development purposes and match practice after a long winter recess. The level of play is variable and the coaches are generally easy to liaise in their official capacity.

This year 25 teams were involved with 25 full time and 12 part time umpires working 116 games over three days. The most games umpired by any umpire was 11 games and while this is higher than we would like to see it is due to the shortage of available umpires.

I would like to thank Dave Roberts for his work at this tournament a job he seems to end up with most years and to Rod Dawson (ACT) and Kevin Tannebring for their work as examiners.

The Open State Championship was under the control of Neville Lawrance with Dave Roberts traveling to Sunraysia for the Junior State Championships. The following chart shows the combined figures from the State Championships as well as the last three years and provides an indication of how the two events are going.

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Assessments:	2010	2009	2008	2007
Level 1 candidates	1	0	2	1
Level 2 candidates	3	2	3	0
Level 3 candidates	0	1	1	0
Total candidates	10	1	6	1
No Games	125	158	144	124
No Teams	24	48	43	26
No of 2 Umpire systems	125	114	86	91
No of Umps used	69	85	68	45
No used as examiners	7	6	7	4
Umpire appointments	134	363	367	136

Umpire appointments at National Championships

Arthur Allsopp Shield	Neville Lawrance Steve Wallace-Yarrow	Examiner Umpire	Plate 1 st Base
Elinor McKenzie Shield	Kevin Tannebring	Examiner	1 st Base
Nox Bailey Shield	David Datson Dave Roberts	Umpire Umpire	
Gilley's Shield	Kevin Tannebring	Umpire	
Gilley's Shield	Neville Lawrance Kevin Tannebring	Examiner Umpire	

International Appointments

AUST Vs NZ	Kevin Tannebring	
ARAFURA GAMES	Kevin Tannebring	TCU

Theory Examinations

2009 Basic Paper

The 2009 Basic exam paper is available to all Associations, Clubs and State Teams. It is an ideal means of assessing general rule knowledge for players and coaches it is also available for umpires wishing to advance to level 2 or as a means of attaining a theory mark for level 1 umpire

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accreditation. If any groups would like the opportunity to sit the exam it can be made available on request. All affiliate associations have the opportunity to sit the paper late in November.

2009 Australian Paper

46 umpires (5 level 4's and above and 41 level 0-3) sat the National Umpires Exam which is a small increase on last year and we need to promote and encourage more potential umpires to sit take this exam.

4-8 umpires sat the level 5 exam in just two locations this is a further reduction on past years and is a reflection of our declining numbers at the National level. A pleasing aspect is the fact that all umpires were able to obtain a mark to maintain or advance. While the marks for our level 0-3 umpires are still being collated I understand that most have been successful in obtaining a mark that will allow them to at least maintain their current level of accreditation.

A special mention should be made of the effort by Dave Roberts who lead the three study sessions leading up to the exam and was able to obtain a 99% pass mark.

A comparison of the last 4 years:

Aust. Theory Exam	2009 Pas s	% Pass	2008 Pass	% Pass	2007 Pas s	%Pass	2006 Pas s	%Pass	
L 4 – 8 umpires	5	5	100%	7	6	85.7 %	8	5	62.5 %
L 0 – 3 umpires	41	n/a	n/a	37	36	97.3 %	57	43	75.4 %
Totals	46	n/a	n/a	44	42	95.5 %	65	48	73.8 %

Due to the timing of this report the 2010 exam reports are not available as facts and figures surrounding the exam are generally not available at this time.

I would like to thank the umpiring committee and especially welcome Leah Schwartz as secretary replacing Raelene who retired after 20 years service and I thank her for her work. Thanks to Dave Roberts for accepting increasing roles and responsibilities and David Datson for his continuous work on the training program. The support of Toula Connolly as Treasurer and the assistance of Alan and John McAuliffe as well as Kevin Tannebring in the examination of our candidate umpires is gratefully appreciated.

Neville Lawrance



Scoring

Accreditation Clinics were scheduled across Levels 1, 2 and 3 within Adelaide and surrounds during 2010. Level 1 was held at Marion Sports Club, Level 2 at Softball HQ and a beginners session was hosted by the Glenelg Rebels.

Congratulations to the following people, who all achieved accreditation:

Penny Adkins – L1
 Tessa Chaplin – L1
 Danielle Ridgway – L1
 Ray Castree – L2
 Sue Knuckey – L2
 Derek Milne – L2
 Tania Wilson – L2

After an extended transition period, the transition to the Australian Sports Commission National Officiating Accreditation Scheme is now complete. Current scorer and statistician details are:

Accreditation Level	Total	Male	Female
Level - 1	44	6	38
Level - 2	5	2	3
Level - 3	18	3	15
Level - 4	4	2	2
Level – 5 (National Award Recognition)	2	1	1
Total	73	14	59

The Special Olympics, held in April 2010 on Barratt Reserve, was a highlight of the year. SASA provided scorers for all games and generated the reports and statistics for the awards ceremony and for national team selection.

The Special Olympics plays slowpitch and the rule differences this involves provided some challenges to the talented team of scorers appointed to the event. I would like to thank all of those who provided their services to ensure a memorable event, in particular Derek Roberts and Jill Williams.

Looking to the year ahead, accreditation clinics are being planned for Mt Gambier, Central Districts, Gawler and for the Adelaide area. Scoring accreditation opens the door to many opportunities to make a difference and lean an exciting and ever changing technology. I urge you to embrace these opportunities as they arise over the coming year.

Lindy Rattigan

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FINANCIAL REPORT

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