



NETBALL NEW ZEALAND

PERRY FOUNDATION NETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS – INVERCARGILL, 2009

UMPIRE EVENT PANEL REPORT

Following four weeks of round robin play for 1st Grade teams (during the month of September) 2nd and 1st grade teams gathered in Invercargill for finals week play.

Eight umpires were appointed to the full week of play and commenced on Monday for the start of the 2nd Grade competition.

A further twelve umpires commenced on Thursday, as did the 1st Grade teams in preparation for their finals competition. An Umpire Dinner organised for Wednesday evening allowed the two groups of umpires to assimilate very quickly and effectively into one group.

Umpires appointed to the Championships were –

Full Week:

- Angela Armstrong-Lush
- Elaine Curtis
- Tania Law
- Mary McCarthy
- Debbie Shoebridge
- Marise Stuart
- Penny Tallentire-Jackson
- Robyn Vermeeren

Part Week:

- Kristie Broad
- Anna Brookie
- Matthew Davis
- Ann Hay
- Lisa McPhail
- Danielle Maulder
- Fay Meiklejohn
- Yvonne Morgan
- Bev O'Neill
- Kim Sinclair
- Maree Smith
- Paula Wells

Congratulations

Are extended to the umpires who, at this Championship, were endorsed and upgraded –

- Elaine Curtis B Grade endorsed
- Yvonne Morgan A Grade endorsed
- Kristie Broad Upgraded to A Grade
- Lisa McPhail Upgraded to A Grade
- Kim Sinclair Upgraded to A Grade

These outcomes represent considerable work and on behalf of the umpires. We acknowledge their commitment along with that of the umpires who were appointed to key games during Thursday and Friday and those who will go forward to New Zealand Umpire Squad opportunities.

On the theme of success, however, the Panel acknowledges each umpire who attended these Championships. It is important to remember that appointment to the Championships is merit-based and therefore an achievement in itself.

In evaluating post-Championship outcomes there is real value in assessing individual performance against one's own starting point. Success is individual umpiring performance improvement, the only controllable factor available to each umpire.

Umpire Event Panel

Sheena Tyrrell (Convenor) and Colleen Bond covered the full week and were joined by Bobbi Brown and Alison Cormack from Thursday to Saturday.

The role of the panel during the week was to coach, evaluate, appoint, assess for endorsements or upgrades and complete relevant reports.

A trial umpire evaluation system was implemented at these Championships. Analysis discussion took place between umpire/panel member after each game. Subsequent to this, panel members entered comments on an Umpire Panel Report Form and allocated a rating (1-5) measured against the pre-advised Performance Grade Criteria.

At the conclusion of the Championships a Summary Umpire Report Form was collated, giving an overview of performance during the week, including *Strengths* and *Areas for Development*, plus an averaged mark over games viewed on. This summary is forwarded to the umpires for their use as they look to prepare for the 2010 season.

The process provided factual reference information on each game. As with all initiatives a review of the effectiveness of the system will be helpful.

Umpire Appointments

First day appointments are made according to previously known merit form and on a reasonably even equity spread. Feedback from Perry Foundation Round Robin games was also taken into account. Following the first day of an umpire's performance at the Championships a merit/game need appointment process is implemented, although movement in umpire rankings can occur throughout the week.

This highlights the importance of an umpire performing at their optimum level from the outset. For the part-week umpires this is even more relevant given their second day at Championships holds semi-finals play.

Equally, there are some variables which influence the reason for allocation to a particular game. Therefore it is important for umpires to focus on giving maximum performance to each game, rather than focus on perceived outcomes.

Summary of Trends

Some overall trends emerged during the week.

Opportunity to discuss some of these was taken on Wednesday morning when the full-week panel members and group of umpires met. The group of umpires was most willing to meet and contribute, with the time seeming to be valued and enjoyed by all.

The umpire group as a whole was professional in their approach and well-prepared training-wise, as evidenced by the lack of significant injury issues.

Short-term illness did occur on a couple of occasions, with each having different impacts on performance. It is a strength to recognise when one's health may impact on performance, and the needs of a game, and important to liaise with the relevant personnel to discuss continuation on a game or otherwise.

Comments below re *Strengths/Areas for Development* must be taken in the light of overall trends. Individual umpires may have other areas noted which are applicable to their game. Equally, Areas for Development indicate just that – to develop further. There are already strengths evident in those areas.

Strengths

- Protocols professionally and accurately handled.
- Injuries and stoppages well managed overall, noting that it is the umpire's role to decide whether/when to grant time (avoid stoppage timing which will break down game momentum which is not impacted on by player request).
- Contest often well allowed. It is positive to see allowance of player skills implemented within the framework of the rules.
- Contact – often high level of accuracy with regard to moving contacts, open court contacts.
- Advantage – often well applied and good awareness of need for application. Some aspects for development are referred to in Areas for Development.
- Minor infringements – high level of accuracy overall, although some increased accuracy required around footwork (refer further comments).
- Penalty Setting – often well managed. Ensure early clarity re setting to avoid re-set or pedantic movement of players.
- Openness to feedback, collegial, professional approach to week.

Areas For Development

- Virtually without exception there was a need for umpires to implement **stronger sideline position and movement in relation to play**: in line, rather than ahead (looking backwards) or arriving behind the goal-line before play.

A sideline position appropriate to play supports effective vision (forward, wide, deep and close, as one action rather than separate actions), effective timing to the goal-line, effective advantage application and increased decision-making accuracy.

Consistent application of sound techniques provides a structure from which to manage every style of game. Security of techniques is particularly vital in relation to tight, one-on-one, contesting or more static play. It is helpful for an umpire to be where the play is complex.

Strong sideline position in relation to play, and avoiding moving off too soon, allows for management of either player re-set of play or drive to goal circle.

- **Goal-line position**: take depth and appropriate angle to play (use apex of triangle). Avoid 'in line' position with play – can take wider position first and then move closer to post.
- **Transition sideline to goal line**: let play dictate movement. Use change of pace (sprint) to far side of goal circle.
- **Vision**: avoid ball focus or narrowing to one area of play, retain ball carrier in view. Keep eyes sweeping over play at all times with width/depth behind goal circle to view play off the ball, obstruction distance in its first phase.

Behind goal circle – look through players rather than eyes high or low.

- **Obstruction distance, goal circle**: if player actively defending within 0.9m it is important to penalise quickly at start of phase. Link to effective techniques, knowledge/recognition of distance. Unpenalised short distance can lead to contacts/turnovers by infringing team. Ensure first infringement is dealt with. This is a key area for development to a level of increased consistency of application.
- **Obstruction distance through court**: continue to develop position which allows for astute, accurate assessment over all three channels.
- **Contact**: be aware of contact off the ball (particularly goal circle, at times ahead of play) which interferes: push, lean, hold at a level which impacts on non-offending player.
- Consider action re **repetitive or dangerous infringing**: firstly ensure consistent, clear benchmark has been set by umpire. Penalising, as required, first part of first phase assists safety of players/tone of game.
- **Advantage**: consider benefit of:
 - penalising offside (goal circle). Advantage may be better option? In this, and some other situations, is it an advantage to non-offending team to have two defence on one shooter in goal circle, and other shooter only able to take a Free Pass? Repetitive actions may be handled with other options.
 - Contact v advantage: ensure there is an advantage to non-offending team, consider wearing down of non-offending player.
 - Effective forward vision will limit breakdown of play through court (by awarding penalty where advantage could have been applied).

- **Footwork:** – link to Vision comments, ball carrier in view at all times, clarity re first grounded foot (as for obstruction distance). Some footwork missed, some penalised when no infringement.

Appreciation

- 1 To my co-Panel Members. To Colleen Bond for her full week's support and to Bobbi Brown and Alison Cormack who fitted in very quickly and effectively mid-week.

The Panel does work very hard, over long hours, and I acknowledge with very grateful appreciation the stamina, knowledge and skill each brought to their role. It is very much a combined approach and workload and, certainly as convenor, I valued the umpire-focus and dedication of each member.

- 2 To Jan Skilton, Netball New Zealand Squad Co-ordinator and attendee at the Championships as Umpire Liaison. Thank you Jan for your care and concern for the umpires and panel members and for taking care of administrative arrangements to free others up for their key tasks.
- 3 Demonstrating the volunteer qualities without which no tournament could operate was Maree McMillan who assisted also with the umpire group and mini van travel to and from the venue. Maree was quietly and effectively willing to assist whenever required and we do thank her for travelling a considerable distance from home to be available.

- 4 I do thank also Netball New Zealand key personnel who I liaised with frequently before and during both the Perry Foundation Round Robin Competition and Finals Week.

Thank you to Kate Agnew, Roseanne Murray and Gemma Ryan for your support, replies and information. It was appreciated as was your manner of response and flexibility around volunteer time.

- 5 Finally, on behalf of the panel, I thank the umpire group. You were a pleasure to work with and we look forward to tracking your progress and pathways in 2010 and beyond.

Please note that a banded list from these Championships is not published, however you are welcome to make contact with any of the Panel Members for further follow-up clarification regarding performance should you so wish.

Panel

Sheena Tyrrell (Convenor)
Colleen Bond
Bobbi Brown
Alison Cormack