



TRAVELLING UMPIRE
REPORT –
BRYDON WELLS

WBSC

WORLD
BASEBALL SOFTBALL
CONFEDERATION

Game Time!

Notified

- I was notified of my appointment in March – 2023, for this Tournament which was in October - 23
- There was a crew of 16 umpires appointed from 10 countries
- The tournament chief umpire was Leigh Evans – Australia and he was supported by – Paulo Martinez Tabirar

Acknowledgements

- I would like to start out by thanking the WBSC, Softball New Zealand and the NUS for providing the opportunity to participate in this tournament, as well as the North Harbour Softball Umpires Association.
- **HOSTS** Nation Japan
- Well, they were just “Awesome”! From the time I landed until the time I departed. Transport, meals, security, uniform - anything we needed our hosts accommodated without question, all of the volunteers and there was so many of them, everything seemed to flow without fault. The umpires and teams all stayed at the same hotel complex; it was the old Olympic venue, so the accommodation was first class, each umpire had their own room.

12 Teams participated in the world Champs:

- Japan (Host), Chinese Taipei, Mexico, Italy, Peru, New Zealand, USA, Puerto Rico, Czechia, Brazil, Philippines, Uganda
- The level of softball was of a very high standard for all games even for some of the emerging countries involved with the game.
- **Umpire Team**
- The crew came together quickly and apart from some language difficulties we bonded well under the leadership of Leigh Evans & Paulo Martinez Tabirar .
- The first day ½ was mainly all about Technical Meetings; the crews' expectations were outlined and the requirements expected of us for this tournament. The crew also spent time going over the pregame and post-game requirements and carrying out inspections of the two different parks, where the ground rules for each park was explained. We were advised from the outset that we would be doing Four-Man crews throughout the tournament.
- The level of umpiring was of a very high standard, and it is the same worldwide; comparing our New Zealand Umpire Program to those of other countries at this tournament, I can say when it comes to the mechanics, rules, dress (on and off diamond) our program meets best practice. I also feel that the NZ & Australian umpiring program; allows us to be more flexible and able to move and adjust to the play; to achieve the best unobstructed view for making the call.
- If I was to break that down, then I'm talking about "feet" or the 'window' that gives you, the umpire all four elements so that you can make the correct call the play needs when a decision needs to be made.

- **Game management**

- It was noticeable that we as umpires are required to have a bigger & better bag of game management skills when attending this level of tournament.
- You will need a good rounded set of skill to be able to handle coaches, managers and players when English is not their first language. Many a time I was dealing with a translator who also did not speak English that clearly, nor did he understand the game; even other umpires on my crew that couldn't speak English.
- The biggest learning for me was that our pregame readiness can always be better.

- Comradery amongst the umpiring crew was an experience I will never forget and the skills, knowledge and friendships I acquired while attending the international will never be forgotten either. The other great thing was seeing my name come up in Japanese on the big score board.



Crew Pre Game Meeting

- It is important to spend 10 -15 minutes discussing various aspects
- Invite everyone to share what to cover, should be specific, **not irrelevant items.**
- This is not the time to discuss when you put your mask on, when you give your crew signals, these are obvious.
- We should discuss at a minimum:
 - Specific Ground Rule.
 - Rotations, Fly Ball coverage – who, Tag Ups -dependant on the fly ball are and which umpire goes out, be aware of umpires that have their back to a runner to see a catch - PU may need to help.
 - Dead Ball situations, HBPB, Time plays, Appeals, TR entries,
 - Umpire to Umpire Communication,
 - Illegal Pitching - make sure Illegal Pitch is seen by plate umpire (step out).
 - How to keep game moving, Help plate while pitching changes happen, etc. Share the load.
 - Obstructions, Interferences, Managing these, Unusual situations.
 - 20 Second clock if used, the control.
- Discuss the umpire system briefly, Push pull by U1 and PU in 3 & 4 ump system, PU may come back with leader runner if the first play is at home. U1 should keep coming then back away at last minute. Back fill after 1st play at home or any base.
- Use name of umpire only. One word verbals.
- Trapped balls infield and outfield, 9-3 plays, assistance with dropped 3rd strike. PU's strike 3 dropped mechanic, check swings.
- Appeals especially if to the incorrect umpire.
- How to handle umpire to umpire discussions following a call clarification or coach request – short – sharp – The calling umpire should just say what they saw and what they ruled and ask if anyone has anything different – however if there is a lot going on the umpires not directly involved may need to slow things down – esp. if controversial.
- leaving through the winner dugout if there are any issues. Coach one on one discussions and disputes, umpire support where needed.

Ota Stadium



Setagaya Park





Umpire crew waiting for the departure order for the day





