ISSUE 1:

2025

"On the diamond"



BASEBALL VICTORIA

UMPIRES' NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to our first edition of "On the diamond" -A Baseball Victoria Working Group newsletter for all BV Umpires.

This newsletter is for you! We hope that you will get involved in future editions, helping us create a newsletter that contains information and articles that you are interested in.

🚺 All-umpire MEETING – this Wednesday!! 🐠



Bar open



· The 'Heat Policy'

• The summer season start

Date: Wednesday 5th November **Time:** 7-8.30 pm

Location: Melbourne Baseball Club



- Discussion of 'Playing Conditions'

We understand this meeting is on short notice - but please try to get there if you can.

Alan Sutherland -State Umpire: Operations Bio page 2

Denis Dalzotto -State Umpire: Technical Bio coming next issue





Meetour 2025/26 **Baseball Victoria Umpire** Working Group (BVUWG):





Casey Cooke -State Umpire: Development Bio coming next issue

Jenelle Stafilis -**State Umpire: Communications** Bio page 2

UMPIRES' NEWSLETTER

Meet your 2025 / 26 BV Umpire Working Group:



Alan Sutherland has been a dedicated contributor to Victorian baseball for over three decades, earning respect as a coach, administrator, and, more recently, as a committed umpire.

After a long and successful coaching career that included Victorian State teams, Kookaburras international tours, and numerous junior development programs, Alan turned his focus to officiating in 2021. Beginning as a Green Shirt umpire, he quickly advanced to Association and State level, culminating in his selection to umpire at the 2024 Australian Youth Championships.

In 2023, Alan was appointed State Umpire - Communications and in 2025 State Umpire - Operations, with the Baseball Victoria Umpires Working Group. He contributed to the Umpiring Blueprint for the Future and supported recruitment and training initiatives across the state. His leadership extends beyond the diamond, promoting respect, development, and professionalism within the officiating community.

With more than 30 years of continuous service, Alan exemplifies dedication and integrity in every role he undertakes - coach, mentor, administrator, and now, a driving force in strengthening the future of baseball umpiring in Victoria.

Alan received Life Membership with Baseball Victoria in 2024.





WHITTHIN .







Jenelle Stafilis is a passionate and dedicated umpire, bringing more than 20 years of baseball experience to the diamond. Having played across esteemed clubs including the South East Warriors, Sandringham, Malvern, Moorabbin, and Waverley - competing in both Women's Division 2 and Masters - Jenelle has developed a deep understanding of the game. Her involvement extends beyond playing, having scored at Little League Major Nationals in Lismore.

After retiring from playing last summer, Jenelle embraced "the dark side," embarking on a new chapter as an umpire. In her first year, she progressed from her green shirt to becoming a State Level Umpire, officiating at the U16 National Championships in Geelong. She proudly represented Victoria on the first all-female umpiring panel at the 2024 Women's National Youth Championships, under the mentorship of highly respected umpires Fiona Lambert, Janine Thompson, Stuart Howe, Geoff Boyse, and Greg Howard.

Jenelle now regularly officiates Senior Premier League Firsts, Senior Women's Premier League Firsts, and State League 1 & 2 games, relishing the challenge and camaraderie that umpiring brings. Her love for the game continues to shine through her commitment, enthusiasm, and leadership - both on and off the field. She looks forward to another rewarding summer on the diamond and to contributing in her new communications role within the umpiring community.

Jenelle Stafilis -State Umpire: Communications Off the field, Jenelle is a Registered Nurse. Baseball has long been a family affair she met her husband, Trifon, on the diamond, both playing for Ormond-Glenhuntly. Their sons, Zak and Sam, have both represented Baseball Victoria at national level and aspire to continue their baseball journeys at college in the USA.

UMPIRES' NEWSLETTER

Alan Sutherland on the 2025/2026 Summer Season:

Welcome to the First BV Umpiring Newsletter Operations Report:

Hi everyone,

Welcome to the first edition of our BV Umpiring Newsletter — a great initiative led by Jenelle. We hope this becomes an informative and educational space that helps strengthen our umpiring community and keeps everyone connected.

We're a few weeks into the season now and starting to find our rhythm, although things will soon get busier with mid-week games beginning. Please make sure your availabilities are up to date.

As many of you know, we currently have a small group of umpires covering games — and while experience is our strength, we also need to focus on bringing in and supporting new officials. If you see a club umpire showing potential, have a chat with them and pass along my contact details. From time to time, we may need to work solo or alongside developing umpires in unfamiliar grades. The goal is shared growth — as the saying goes, a rising tide lifts all boats. We will be looking for Umpires to get to club games where we have New umpires from the last seminar of club community course. If you are able to help with some of these Evening of Sunday morning games, I would love to hear from you.

Our aim is to build enough depth to consistently cover Men's Premier 1, Women's Premier 1, and eventually Premier 2 games with full crews. Keep an eye out for opportunities across these levels as the season progresses.

We also now have an Umpire Assessor attending games. Please take on the feedback as an opportunity to get better. If you have questions around the feedback please reach out to Casey, who can help you with it.

Finally, thank you to everyone who submitted nominations for the AYC - these have now been sent to Baseball Australia for consideration. **Expressions of Interest for other State and National Championships will be released soon.**

Here are a few notes on what the BV Umpire Working Group is about, and in turn, what my role as the State Umpire - Operations is about.

Baseball Victoria Umpiring Working Group and State Umpire Operations:

The Baseball Victoria Umpiring Working Group (BVUWG) plays a vital advisory role in shaping and delivering the strategic direction of umpiring across Victoria. Reporting to the BV Technical Officer and CEO, the group oversees the promotion, development, and management of the State Umpiring Program. Its key functions include education, training, accreditation, communication, and engagement initiatives that strengthen the umpiring pathway from grassroots to elite levels. The BVUWG also coordinates the delivery of umpire hubs and junior development programs, ensuring consistency and professionalism across all BV competitions.

Working within this structure, the State Umpire - Operations supports the effective administration of umpiring activities statewide. It contributes to policy development, assists in umpire selection, and maintains operational databases in collaboration with the Technical Officer. Acting as a vital link between the BVUWG, Umpires, and competition organisers, the State Umpire - Operations helps ensure that all officiating functions run smoothly and align with Baseball Victoria's standards and development goals.

Thank you all for your continued commitment to Victorian Baseball Umpiring.

Alan Sutherland

"Eat, sleep, baseball Repeat"



UMPIRES' NEWSLETTER

Umpire Development & Recruitment Update: Casey Cooke:

2025 Umpire Seminar @ Newport Baseball Club

This year's Umpire Seminar was another great success — held over two days at a brand-new venue, the Newport Rams Baseball Club.

We welcomed 50 participants, including umpires of all experience levels, and were thrilled to have 10 new Community Umpires complete their accreditation. They're now ready to pull on their green shirts for the summer season! We want to extend a warm welcome to all our newest members — we're excited to see you out on the field. Reach out to us anytime!

Ongoing Training Initiatives

Our commitment to development continues through a mix of formal and community umpire training sessions, as well as informal club-based training. These sessions aim to support parents and club members who step up to officiate home games.

If you know a club interested in hosting a training night, get them in touch with Casey, who can help guide them through the process and equip their team to umpire with confidence.

Have you umpired alongside a great "clubbie" or know someone ready to take the next step and become an accredited umpire? Check out the info below to help them get involved and start their umpiring journey.



BV Umpire: Patrick White

Know someone who wants to become an umpire?

We are constantly on the lookout for *unique and dedicated* individuals who may be interested in joining us as Umpires.

Here is some info to get them started:

- Baseball Victoria Umpire site: https://baseballvictoria.com.au/umpire/
- 'Behind the Mask' PDF:
 https://baseballvictoria.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Behind-the-Mask-Umpire-Program-Overview.pdf
- Baseball Umpire 'Expression of interest' form: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024VSBLUmpires

Or *get in touch with Casey* @ bvumpiredevelopment@baseballvictoria.com.au







UMPIRES' NEWSLETTER

A word from Denis Dalzotto: BV Umpire - Technical:

Non-Nationals - Premier 1 & 2 and Women's Premier

A reminder to clubs: on the Non-National rules for match day - Playing Condition 6.24 and 6.25.

- Maximum Number of Non-National Players in a game: A club may have no more than two (2) Non-National players in its active lineup at any time, defined as the nine players currently participating on the field, including the designated hitter (DH) during any regular season or playoff game.
- Designation of a Non-National Player: Any non-national player listed on the lineup card and match sheet must be identified with a designation of "NN" placed after their name.

Pitching restrictions for Non-Nationals during regular season

Senior Premier 1 and 2:

- Before 1st of November (before mid-week rounds start) Non-nationals may only pitch a total of 21 defensive outs in any one round.
- After the 1st of November (after mid-week rounds start) Non-nationals may only pitch a total of 21 defensive outs across any two consecutive rounds of the Premier 1 and Premier 2 divisions.

This restriction applies across each team's collective import pitchers who pitch in Premier 1 or Premier 2 divisions: not an individual pitcher. In the case of a final play being made where more than one out is recorded (therefore puts the pitcher over the 21 outs) this will not be considered as a breach.

Women's Premier:

Non-nationals may only pitch a total of 15 defensive outs in any one round. This restriction applies across each team's collective import pitchers who pitch in Premier: not an individual pitcher. In the case of a final play being made where more than one out is recorded (therefore puts the pitcher over the 15 outs) this will not be considered as a breach.

Speed-up rule:

Here is some clarification regarding how the SPEED UP RULE: Rule 6.20 of the VSBL Senior and Masters Playing Conditions 2025/2026 is used.

The rule states: it is *compulsory* to use it in **Premier 1** and **Premier 2** games with a **2-hour time limit** (Mid-week games), but it is *optional* for all other grades.

Premier 1 & Premier 2 Mid-week games:

- With less than two out, it is optional to use a substitute runner for the catcher and or pitcher after they reach base.
- With two out, it is compulsory that a substitute runner replace the catcher and or pitcher.

In all other grades and all other games of two hours:

The use of a substitute runner for the catcher and or pitcher is optional.

*** The speed-up rule is NOT to be used in Premier 1 & Premier 2 games with a 3-hour time limit ***



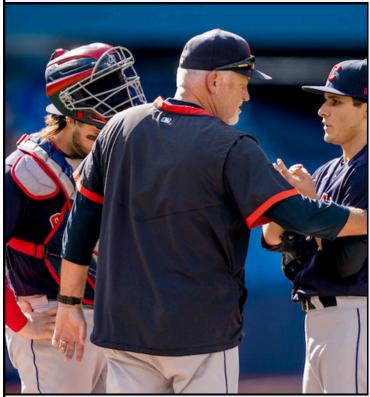
UMPIRES' NEWSLETTER

A word from Denis Dalzotto: BV Umpire - Technical:

We've had a few questions about mound visits — particularly around when a pitcher needs to be taken out of the game or moved to another position on the field.

Mound visits:

Rule 5.10(I) Visits to the Mound Requiring a Pitcher's Removal from the Game - in conjunction with Rule 16a & 16b of the 2024/25 VSBL Playing Conditions and 5.10(m) Limitation on the Number of Mound Visits Per Game:



Mound Visit Clarification

The attached document (Page 13 - Annexure 1) provides a detailed explanation of mound visit procedures, including how visits are counted, who is charged with a visit, and when a pitching change is required.

A pitcher must be removed from the game or moved to another position when a manager or coach makes **two** visits in the same inning to that pitcher.

Any player who leaves their position to confer with the pitcher will be charged with a visit.

Exception: An exception applies to catchers, who may make a brief, quick visit to the mound without it being considered a formal visit.

*** This exception is at the umpire's discretion ***

The full document is also available on WebRef, located in the Documents folder.

For clarification on any rules, contact Denis: bytechnical@baseballvictoria.com.au

New BV Umpire Uniform Shirts: Black and Grey



*** For illustration purposes only***

TEAM STYLE

We're pleased to announce the introduction of the new Black and Grey Umpire Shirts, which will serve as our official uniform for the next three years.

You may continue wearing the Navy shirt throughout the current season; however, all umpires are expected to transition to the new Black and Grey shirts by finals.

Important sizing information:

- These shirts are designed to be worn over plate gear and are approximately two sizes larger than your regular shirt size.
- If you currently wear a Smitty shirt from ABU, please order one size smaller in this new style.
- Be sure to refer to the sizing chart before placing your order to ensure the best fit.

Purchase your new Umpire shirts here:

https://teamstyle.com.au/shop/ols/categories/baseball-umpires

When ordering, please select the VSBL logo for Summer.

UMPIRES' NEWSLETTER

BV Feature Umpire Interview: Janine Thompson:



What first motivated you to step into umpiring?

I was pulled into it by the then Victorian Director of Umpires, Mark Gooding, after highlighting to him that his annual report did not mention any female umpires. I was not involved in baseball before that, so Mark took me through the Level O in the office at work. Next thing I know I was out there umpiring my first game, not knowing much at all! Haha. I am a much more knowledgeable umpire now. I am a Blue Jays fan (go Jays) but at the time I did not even know Baseball even existed in Australia.

How long have you been calling balls and strikes?

I have now been umpiring for approximately 19 years. I started in 2006.

What levels of baseball have you officiated?

I have umpired Division 1 Women's and Men's Summer and Winter League. Over the years I have umpired at multiple Women's National Championships, Little League Championships and Junior State Titles. I have umpired in Taiwan in the Phoenix Cup in 2009 and 2010. I attended a MLB Mini Camp in Raleigh, North Carolina, USA 2011. Which was an multinational camp for player and umpire development.

BV Umpire: Janine Thompson

Have you ever played baseball yourself?

I have made a short appearance as a player, when I needed to start enjoying baseball again. As umpiring is not always fun. I was by no means a very good player but I was out there to have fun and I did just that.

What do you enjoy most about being out there in blue?

I enjoy expanding my knowledge of the game, I believe we never stop learning. If you think you know everything, then it's most likely that you do not, and you will come across as arrogant.

What's been one of your best or most memorable umpiring moments?

I enjoyed the MLB camp in the USA the most. I got to meet other female umpires from around the world, and we still keep in touch. It has definitely had the biggest impact on my umpiring life.

What's been one of the toughest challenges or situations you've faced on the field?

Sexist remarks, comments, and old-school ideas of it not being a job for females. These days, these things are much less occurring compared to when I first joined the "Boys in blue". These came from players, coaches, spectators, and fellow umpires. Thankfully, we have turned a corner and become a much more inclusive cohort of umpires.

Do you have any advice or words of wisdom for new or developing umpires?

Just keep having fun. Find yourself a mentor and try to work with them and learn from them.

Anything else fun or interesting we should know about you?

I am a full-time Registered Nurse, a part-time carer for my folks, and I rescue animals. My life is very busy ALL of the time.









UMPIRES' NEWSLETTER

Clean the Plate! - Nominate an "Umpire of the Round":

Did you work with an Umpire who did a fantastic job recently?



How about you nominate them for:

"Umpire of the Round."

Scan the QR code or click the link below to let us know who you're nominating and why:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx? id=h51u2w5MZOSfneZAI JBS12 zifrRmtKIFGpxeSIA6FU Nk5NOFJEV0pOUkQzVExSNUcxQVdZWkpFTy4u



Proposed Umpire Social Event 2026:

Want to get together for a social gathering in 2026?

The BVUWG are keen to promote an inclusive and social get-together once or twice a summer season. Please have your say in what interests you:

Scan the QR code or click the link below to fill out this quick survey:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx? id=h51u2w5MZOSfneZAI JBS12 zifrRmtKIFGpxeSIA6FUOVJGSEdTMFc0M0FHNzVSM1RVOVhXRFpZTS4u













UMPIRES' NEWSLETTER

Meet our biggest supporter: Brooke Penfold:





BV Technical Officer -Brooke Penfold Brooke is the Technical Officer for Baseball Victoria, supporting the BV Umpire Working Group.

With more than 15 years of experience spanning pathway development, high performance, and talent identification, Brooke brings extensive expertise to her role.

A three-time Olympian and World Championship representative in softball, she draws on her elite sporting background to promote growth, professionalism and integrity across all levels of the game.

Passionate, organised, and highly driven, Brooke is committed to supporting the ongoing development of umpires and strengthening the broader baseball community in Victoria.



Thank you, Brooke, for your continued hard work and invaluable support of the BVUWG and our umpiring group.



Send in your Umpire photos:



We'd love to see more photos of our Umpires.

Please send your pics to Jenelle @

bvumpirecommunications@baseballvictoria.com.au

Like father, like son: Opening round: 4 October 2025





Footscray v Newport: BV Umpire: Barry Field

Photo credit:
A Life Moment
Made Sports Photography



PHOTOGRAPH

Photo credit:
Days in the Sun
Photography

Premier League 1 First Nine: Upwey FG v Melbourne: BV Umpire: Taylor Field



UMPIRES' NEWSLETTER

Have your say: What do you want?

This Umpire Newsletter is for you! Please let us know what you'd like to see included.

Scan the QR code or click the link below to fill out a quick survey:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx? id=h51u2w5MZOSfneZAI_JBS12_zifrRmtKIFGpxeSIA6FUOTJKUFVDVFJIVEhWUUFJQzc4VzZGNEVRWS4u



Get in touch with us: BV Umpire Working Group:



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Jenelle Stafilis:

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UMPIRES' NEWSLETTER

Annexure 1: Visits clarification: Rule 5.10:

Visits clarification Rule 5.10:

At the start of the game, the defensive team has 4 visits to the pitcher available:

4 total Visits XXXX by a team during a 9-inning game, scenario as follows:

• XXXX - Remaining:

2nd inning, the pitcher is struggling, and the first baseman goes to the mound and confers with the
pitcher on his performance. If the umpire adjudicates that this is an official visit, then the player (1st
Basemen) is charged with a visit. The defensive team are now down to 3 visits remaining.

• XXX - Remaining:

 Still in the 2nd inning, the pitcher walks the next 2 batters. The Manager or Coach goes to the mound to further counsel the pitcher. The manager is charged with a visit, but does not need to remove the pitcher, because it is the first visit by a Manager or Coach. Visits remaining is now two.

• XX - Remaining:

• Still in the 2nd inning, the pitcher walks the next batter and the Manager comes to the mound. At this point, the pitcher must be removed, and no visit is charged. Visits remaining are still two.

• XX - Remaining:

 In the 5th inning, the pitcher is struggling and the third baseman goes to the mound and confers with the pitcher on his performance. This is an official visit; the player (3rd Basemen) is charged with a visit. The defensive team is now down to 1 visit remaining.

• X - Remaining:

In the 6th inning, the pitcher is struggling, and the Manager goes to the mound and confers with the
pitcher on his performance. This is an official visit; the Manager is charged with a visit. The defensive team
is now down to 0 visits remaining.

Note: Additional Scenario, let's go back to the 5th inning:

• XX - Remaining

 In the 5th inning, the pitcher is struggling and the third baseman goes to the mound and confers with the pitcher on his performance, this is an official visit, the player (3rd baseman) is charged with a visit.
 The defensive team is now down to 1 visit remaining.

• X - Remaining

- Still in the 5th, 2 batters later, another player decides to confer with the pitcher. This is another visit by a player, and now all 4 visits have been used
- o 0 Remaining: At this point there have been a total of 4 Visits XXXX by a team during a 9-inning game:
- Any visit thereafter by a Manager or Coach will result in the Pitcher being replaced. This applies up to the completion of the bottom of the 9th inning.
- If a position player makes a visit after his team has exhausted its allotted number of mound visits, he may be subject to ejection for failing to return to his position when instructed by the umpire; however, an impermissible visit by a position player shall not require the removal of the pitcher.
- If the game goes into extra innings for example, 10, 11, 12, etc., then one more team visit is allowed per inning.

Note: these visits do not accumulate. If there is no visit in an extra innings, they are forfeited; they do not accumulate.

If you're still struggling to understand mound visits, send Denis an email or text message, so you can discuss it further.



UMPIRES' NEWSLETTER

Annexure 2: Umpire's Code of Conduct:

Baseball Victoria UMPIRES' CODE OF CONDUCT:

I understand that as an integral component of my accreditation, I must maintain a standard of behaviour and conduct in the best interests of the game and the players in my care. In representing myself in an honest manner, and without bringing the coaching profession or the game into disrepute, I will endeavour to uphold the following to the best of my ability:

- 1. Umpire in accordance with the laws of the game.
- 2. Maintain a working knowledge of the laws of Baseball in Victoria.
- 3. Ensure the game is played in a fair manner and a spirit of true sportsmanship.
- 4. Treat all participants as they would like to be treated.
- 5. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of the gender, ability, cultural background or religion.
- 6. Never engage in any type of violence either on or off the field.
- 7. Control their temper. Verbal abuse of players, officials or spectators is not acceptable or permitted behaviours of an Umpire.
- 8. Accept all match appointments in a positive manner.
- 9. Advise Baseball Victoria as soon as practicable should they be unable to officiate any match due to illness or injury and seek appropriate treatment.
- 10. Maintain a high reputation and not do any act or thing calculated to or which might otherwise have the effect of prejudicing the reputation of your League or Victorian Baseball.
- 11. Not contrive or attempt to contrive the result of any match or any aspect of the match in exchange for any bribe, benefit, or reward.
- 12. Perform on their merits and officiate to the best of their ability at all times. Not give or allow any person any recorded or other interview for broadcast or write any article related to Baseball for publication without first obtaining consent from Baseball Victoria.
- 14. Not discuss any aspect of any report made in accordance with the rules of Baseball or otherwise with any person without the prior consent of Baseball Victoria.
- 15. Be prepared to be responsible for their actions.
- 16. Be an ambassador for and of the game at every opportunity.
- 17. Present to games, training, and seminars appropriately dressed and in a timely manner.
- 18. Only wear Baseball Victoria apparel and logos for official purposes.
- 19. Report incidents to the Tribunal in the appropriate manner.

I agree to the following terms:

- 1. I agree to abide by the Baseball Victoria Umpires' Code of Conduct.
- 2. I acknowledge that Baseball Victoria, or a body affiliated with Baseball Victoria, may take disciplinary action against me if I breach the code of conduct. I understand that Baseball Victoria, or a body affiliated with Baseball Victoria, is required to implement a complaints-handling procedure in accordance with the principles of natural justice, in the event of an allegation against me.
- 3. I acknowledge that disciplinary action against me may include deregistration by Baseball Victoria.



