

Michael Gourlay – a reflection on a huge contribution



Recently, one of the long-time servants of the sport, Cheltenham stalwart **Michael Gourlay**, retired from his involvement in Baseball Victoria committees. Upon hearing this, the club felt it appropriate to reflect on Michael's achievements and contributions to the sport at club, state and national level over the past 23 years.

Both Michael and wife Sandra, have been long standing supporters of the Cheltenham Baseball Club and can be seen each week at Kingston Heath Reserve taking up their positions on the concourse outside the pavilion supporting the Rustlers teams out on the diamond. However, Michael first became associated with baseball when sons and long-time Chelt players, Matthew and Stephen, took up tee-ball upon its introduction at the club back in 1991.

Michael was very actively involved as Matt and Steve progressed through the junior ranks and then into senior baseball as the scorer for his sons' teams and on to Cheltenham's No1 scorer and statistician for the summer firsts.

As part of his Senior Scorer role, Michael conducted many scoring classes for junior team scorers, inducting generations of club scorers over the years – a crucial role. Extending this, Michael also spent time in various state and national Junior and Senior scoring roles, was the Head Scorer for the Claxton Shield tournament in 2008, and acted as National Assessor for level 3 and 4 scoring accreditations.

At Cheltenham, Michael was a member of the Kingston Heath Advisory Committee headed up by Councillor Ron Brownlees, whose name appears on the Pavilion at Farm Rd. Michael also served as Chairman of Selectors at the club, including a tenure during a difficult rebuilding period. This is one of the most demanding roles in the club requiring a special level of commitment and communication.

As Michael's seniority and knowledge of baseball expanded he was nominated for a position on the Victorian Baseball Association Pennant Committee (17 years total) and over a period of years graduated to the position of Chairman of the Tribunal; a challenging role he performed for 10 years.

As a result of his Association duties, Michael subsequently moved into the Australian Baseball Federation, running various junior tournaments with great success as ABF Tournament Director, and TMC representative for all National championships held in Victoria for the past 8 years.

Over the years, Michael has built up excellent relationships with other clubs and is an extremely well regarded and respected person in the wider baseball community at club, state and national levels. He is a wonderful ambassador not only for the Cheltenham Baseball Club, but for the game itself.

All in all, Michael's service has stretched over a period of 25 years with continuous club involvement as well as State and Australian baseball duties and his service and commitment clearly warrants recognition.

Well done Michael, you deserve our thanks.

Some of Michael's achievements and roles in baseball:

Cheltenham BC

- Club Life Member
- Scorer for teams from under 12 through to club firsts in summer and winter for over 18 years
- Senior Club Scorer
- Chairman of Selectors
- Past member of the Summer Committee
- Junior League delegate
- Organised auction to clear club debt
- Member of the Kingston Heath Reserve Advisory Committee
- Teacher of scoring and rule explanations (still always first consulted when tricky ones arise during games)
- Assisted with Interstate visiting teams during Development series

Victoria

- Member of the Victorian Junior League for three years
- Member of the Pennant Committee/SLC for 17 years
- Member of the Victorian Tribunal Panel; 10 years as Chairman
- Victorian State scorer for junior State teams over a number of years

- Scorer for schoolboys, Varsity games, Under 23s & Women championships
- Executive officer for State Under 13s development teams

Australia and National

- ABF Tournament Director and TMC representative for all National Championships held in Victoria for the past 8 years
- Technical Commissioner of the Council of Australian Baseball Scorers
- Member of scoring panels for National Junior and Senior Tournaments and Pre-Olympic games
- Head scorer Claxton Shield December 2008
- Statistician for broadcast of ABL games in Melbourne
- Media Liaison officer for the Melbourne Reds in the first ABL
- Clinic facilitator for National scoring accreditations and exams
- Nation assessor for level 3 and 4 scoring accreditations
- ABL scoring panel member for Melbourne Aces since 2010/11