

# Umpiring at the Canadian Men's Slowpitch Championship

Pete Saunders



It was a great honour to be nominated for this tournament and I was proud to represent the ESF in Canada.

At the Canadian Senior Men's Slowpitch Championship in Dorchester Ontario, I umpired 18 games, 13 as field umpire and five as plate umpire, and would have been second base umpire in the "if" game if that had been played. I would have been Umpire 2 on that crew and was quite surprised to get that.

The crew could not have been more welcoming and helpful and I received advice from each umpire that helped me in some way. I have been in touch with most of the crew since my return and think of them as friends now.

The Umpire-in-Chief and Deputy Umpire-in-Chief provided valuable feedback on umpire performance during the round-robin stage that helped us improve our game as the level of the tournament got higher.

The biggest difference between the games in Canada and in Europe:

- The speed and intensity of the games and the power of the batters was considerably higher than I'm used to. Also, they play with a five-man infield that gives you little room as a field umpire to get into position; occasionally you had to adapt to the situation and ensure that you didn't get in the way while making sure you could get the best angle on a play.
- We used the three-man system with going out on fly balls during the round-robin games and four-man with going out during the knockout stage. I have trained with this system but we do not generally go out on fly balls in European tournaments.

The facilities were excellent, with eight diamonds at the location, two of which had floodlights; this meant that when we had a rain delay we simply kept going until the games were finished, and on two days we completed our assignments after midnight.

### **Day by day**

Day 1 started at 8.00 am and I did wonder if I should have been there, as the speed and intensity of the games caught me by surprise. The day finished at 12:30 am under floodlights due to rain delay (see photo above).

On Day 2 I upped my game, put more energy into everything and realised I could cope and started to enjoy the tournament. I was glad not to let myself and BASU down.

By Day 7, I didn't want the tournament to end.

Overall, it was a fantastic tournament I and look forward to bringing the experience gained into my umpiring in the UK and Europe. It was a tough week, with several long days. Rain stopped play on two days, but we played on the diamond with floodlights and got the games finished.

### ***From Jeff Whipple (Softball Canada Umpire-in-Chief):***

“Pete's abilities and confidence grew exponentially throughout the week and he impressed his crew mates and his supervisors. Well done! On a personal note, it was a pleasure to meet Pete and be able to watch him work for the two days I was at the event. A great member of the crew!”