



Presidents Report 2010-2011 Season

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the 2010-2011 Auckland Baseball Association's AGM. I took over as President in February due to the resignation of my predecessor, Craig Malcolm. I would first like to acknowledge Craig and thank him for his many years of dedicated service to the Auckland Baseball Association. I would also like to thank the ABA committee for all their support and assistance this past year. In particular I would like to thank our treasurer Terry Dartnall, secretary Keith Wilson, divisional co-ordinator James Hughes, college baseball co-ordinator Brian Faunt, our Chief Umpire Warren van Rooyen, for their valuable contributions over the past year. I would also like to acknowledge Jason Mitchell for his assistance with the schedule and Mike Long his assistance with the web site. Everyone has done an outstanding job and put in a lot of work to make sure that baseball runs smoothly in Auckland.

This past season has been a very successful season for Baseball in the Auckland region. We had an increase in playing numbers with 8 U11 teams, 7 U13 teams, 5 U15 teams, 4 U18 teams, 15 Divisional teams, 4 Premier teams and 10 College teams. Our Championship teams are listed below.

2010-11 ABA Champions

U13 - Central City Padres

U15 - Bayside-Westhaven Black

U18 - Bayside-Westhaven Bisons

Divisional - The Angels

Premier - Howick-Pakuranga Black

College Baseball Champions

2010 Term 4 - Howick College

2011 Term 1 - Auckland Grammar School

We welcomed new teams from the North Shore and Te Puru this season and we are looking forward to the growth of baseball next season with new clubs - The Sharks Baseball Club and the Te Puru Coasters Baseball Club joining the Auckland Baseball Association.

We currently have approximately 1000 baseball players in our competitions, and this could easily grow to 3000 over the next few years with the development of new facilities, such as the permanent diamonds approved for the Bayside-Westhaven club, College Baseball, and the growth of interest in baseball around Auckland.

We had a number of MLB players visit Auckland during the season. First we had a visit by Mark Melancon (Houston Astros) who ran a training session for pitchers at the Howick-Pakuranga Baseball Club in December. We then had a visit by Curtis Granderson (NY Yankees) in January who ran training sessions at the Howick-Pakuranga Baseball Club. The BCO 17U Championships were also hosted by the Howick-Pakuranga Baseball Club with the opening games shown live on Sky Sport. I want to thank all the volunteers from the Auckland Clubs who made these events possible and in particular the Howick-Pakuranga Club.



On the field, one of the major changes the ABA made last season was to eliminate the half-sized field (used by U15s in previous seasons) and move our U15 age group to a full size field used by U18, Divisional and Premier teams. This seems to have been very successful and has helped our players improve their skill level.

This season saw the first full season of our Auckland College Baseball competition, run by Baseball NZ, but utilising the resources of the Auckland Baseball Clubs. I want to thank all the clubs, umpires and volunteers who have contributed to the success of this competition. This has the potential to grow quickly and the current plan is for the ABA to run this competition with funding provided by Baseball NZ. This is something that the incoming committee will need to discuss fully with Baseball NZ. This is a very exciting competition and it is hoped that it will accelerate the growth of Baseball in our region.

It is also vitally important that the clubs continue to grow their T-Ball programs. This is the most important recruitment age for all clubs as it provides the majority of our long-term players. It was pleasing to see the growth in this area with some of the clubs, and must remain a focus of the ABA to support the clubs in this area going forward.

The Financial position of the Association, as detailed in the Treasurers report remains steady. Traditionally it has been policy for us to charge on a user pays basis to cover the costs incurred to run the season. In future we are going to have to look at developing our own funding streams to assist the clubs in their growth and develop opportunities for Auckland teams to represent their region. This should be another priority of the new committee.

One of the biggest issues we face is the development and retention of top quality coaches. It has long been the aim of the ABA that all clubs have a full time Development Coach to train and support the team coaches at each club. It is imperative that we find the funding for this going forward. Other challenges we face include the ability to attract and retain umpires to the game. Thanks must go to Warren Van Rooyen, our Chief Umpire for all the work he has put in running training programs and mentoring new umpires. Also, a big thank you to all the volunteer officials out there who tirelessly give of their time, either coaching, scoring or umpiring, week in week out, and to all the club families, who run the clubs and provide services at the games. They prepare the playing fields and run the tuck shops. Your hard work makes baseball possible.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the ABA committee for all their hard work this past season and I look forward to planning for next season.

Regards,

Chris Akroyd
ABA President

June 14, 2011