

BEYOND 2014

Sturt Softball Club is presently the largest it has ever been in its 50 year history, with a total of 14 teams (4 senior and 10 junior) spread over 7 different grades. The growth in player numbers and on-field success has been achieved as a direct result of the hard work from everyone in administration, the coaches and the players plus the tremendous support from parents of players to underpin the effort being put in by the various committees within the club.

You will have read in several places in this Book of the Sturt culture of senior players coaching our many juniors and how nurturing their development has meant that we have a steady flow of highly skilled and motivated players pushing for A Grade selection at all times – an extremely healthy sign which augurs well for the future.

The many areas touched on in this Book provide us with an excellent insight into what has been achieved to arrive at this point in the evolution of Sturt Softball Club, but offers no projections on not only where we might be on our centenary in 2064, but where the sport of Softball itself might be in 50 years' hence. Questions we might well ponder with unlimited imagination when gazing into our crystal ball could include:



- Will the sport grow in popularity and therefore player participation?
- Will playing standards improve in South Australia, Australia and Worldwide. Will Softball, and therefore Australia, regain Olympic representation?
- Will umpires (and batters) be provided with technologically powerful aids e.g. "hot-spot" technology to assist foul tip decisions, a virtual electronic strike zone to call balls and strikes with unerring accuracy, or live TV focus at every base to call runners safe or otherwise, and so on?
- Will there emerge in Australia a sporting ESPN-like TV Network that broadcasts top level competition in the less mainstream sports which can lead to enhanced semi-professional player participation rates, higher playing standards and therefore an enhanced level of audience interest?

Of course, the list of possibilities is endless, but if one studies the chapter "1964 was a very different time" and then compare that to where we are in 2014, who could

have predicted any more than the obvious changes such as wage and price escalation etc.? It's unlikely that the game of Softball will undergo dramatic change in terms of major rule changes or play methodologies, but if developments in technology over even the past 20 years are extrapolated out a further 50 years, the mind boggles at the possibilities. Apply even relatively recent technological and sociological developments such as Computers, the Internet and Mobile Phones to Softball and other sports and who knows, in less than 50 years we could well have a number of the technologies listed above come to fruition. Everything is possible, remembering perhaps that it has been said that if the Motor Vehicle Industry had developed as rapidly as the Computer Industry, a Rolls-Royce today would be around 5cm long and cost \$2.50...

Sturt Softball Club is in a great position to stay on the wave because our 2014 Premiership success included some highly experienced young players (only 3 over 26) who between them have already accumulated 33 appearances for South Australia and 2 for Australia. By name we have Jasmine Lee, Sarah Tonkin, Maddie Cameron, Trish Jones, Caroline Gardner, Belinda Stansfield, Katie Wiese, Hayley Norris, Caitlin Tobin, Rachael Tonkin, Hannah Thoo and Georgie Baker, all led by Belinda White and coached by the irrepressible Dick Coombe.

To close this Book it is appropriate to quote the following Press Release of 17th July 2014 relating to our A Grade Captain Belinda White and close with an assertion that we are in very good hands indeed:

"Female Athlete of the Year – Belinda White (SA)"

"Belinda White had an outstanding international campaign at the US World Cup and the Canadian Open Fastpitch International Tournament in 2013. She led the Aussie Spirit in almost every department - Batting Average (0.387), On Base Average (0.457) and Slugging Average (0.516) and a perfect Fielding Average of (1.000) in 80 defensive innings. From 31 turns at bat Belinda returned 10 singles, 1 double and a home run. Belinda was awarded the Best Catcher at the Canadian Open International Fastpitch tournament. Domestically, she was a major contributor for the South Australia Starz during the Open Women's National Championships and continued that good form into the international season"

Lorry Brown represented South Australia for 20 consecutive years as a senior player followed by 4 consecutive years as Coach, plus represented Australia for 7 years. At the tender age of 26 and already with 8 South Australian and 2 Australian senior caps under her belt is it unrealistic to suggest that Belinda White could go close to emulating Lorry's feats, someone who is widely regarded as one of the best Softball players Australia has ever produced?

During Belinda's career, will the Club itself emulate the 10 A Grade premierships we won in our first 20 years while Lorry Brown was still playing? That too is in the lap of the Gods, but records are made to be broken...

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GENERAL PHOTOS FROM AROUND THE DIAMONDS



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