

## **The Beginnings of Winter Baseball in South Australia.**

Winter Baseball in South Australia had its origins in the late 1960s when the South Australian Baseball League (SABL) made the decision to change its fixtures to become a predominantly summer sport.

This decision was obviously made in the best interests of the game since that nature of baseball is best suited to dryer conditions.

However there were a number of people and some clubs that this change did not suit. This included many cricketers who previously could alternate seasons between baseball and cricket. It also did not suit the two university clubs who had teams entered in the South Australian Baseball League including Adelaide University Baseball Club and the newly established campus Flinders University (where a Baseball Club had begun 1966) as a summer season created challenges for university clubs as it coincided with the longest academic break.

Not surprisingly the drive to form a Winter Baseball competition came from one of these clubs; Stan Scarman from the Adelaide University Baseball Club contacted the existing Baseball Clubs and the baseball community seeking expressions of interest in continuing the Winter competition which would stand alone from the South Australian Baseball League now scheduled for the summer months.

There had been a lot of discussion between the players of the existing clubs both within themselves and between other teams as there was certainly interest in a competition as some players didn't want to play in the newly scheduled summer season (e.g. those who had cricket commitments) and there was also a number of players who wanted to continue to play baseball all year round.

Internationals being in the existing SABL Competition nominated a team, as did both Adelaide and Flinders University Baseball Clubs. With these beginnings the SA Winter Baseball Association was born and has been responsible for conducting Winter Baseball in South Australia ever since. The first season was held in 1969 with Adelaide University Baseball Club becoming the inaugural Premiers.

Stan Scarman acted as the inaugural President and Administrator of the competition. Accordingly its structure was created to create an efficiency of responsibility so that one person could conduct the competition singlehandedly- hence the clubs and teams were responsible for sourcing their own grounds and providing umpires. It was also intended that Winter Baseball should be affordable to ensure participation was encouraged.