

SEPTEMBER 2026 – OFFICIATING NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the new season 2026/27. Hopefully you are all well rested after the summer break and ready to get the new season started.

COMMITTEE

Just as a reminder your committee is:

Role	Name	E-mail contact
Chair	Simon Milford	Chair.officiating@southcentral.hockey
Vice Chair	Hatty Wood	ViceChair.officiating@southcentral.hockey
TAP Lead	David Rigby	LeadTAP.officiating@southcentral.hockey
Lead Appointer	Allan Notman	LeadAppointer.officiating@southcentral.hockey
Lead Developer	Ginette Tessier	Leaddeveloper.officiating@southcentral.hockey
Club Liaison	Rowena Shepherd	Leadclubliaison.officiating@southcentral.hockey
Young Umpires	Sophie Parker	LeadYoung.officiating@southcentral.hockey

Your committee is here for you as an official (either umpire, match official, coach or assessor) at whatever level of the South Central organisation you operate at. If you have an officiating related question, need some help with umpire coaching or development, or just have officiating related questions that you can't find the answer to – then get in touch with us and we'll see if we can help.

HOW TO UNSUBSCRIBE

If you do not want to receive any further e-mails from the South Central AOC then please send an e-mail to chair.officiating@southcentral.hockey with the subject line Unsubscribe. Then we'll remove your address from the distribution of future AOC e-mails. We'll be sad to see you go but it is important that you have a choice.

DEVELOPMENT

The Monday Mixers will restart on Monday (!) 14th September, 2026, at 19:30 and are open to any umpires at any level, even if you don't take neutral appointments. You are very welcome to come along and just listen or join in the discussions. The first session will cover the important rule and regulation changes for this season. As usual the link for the Zoom meeting can be found in the top right hand corner on <https://umpiredev.co.uk/> and we look forward to seeing you there.

We are delighted to say there is an early season development opportunity coming:

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Saturday 12th September 2026

Trojans Hockey Club

This is particularly relevant for **umpires in South Central taking neutral appointments**, however, we are very happy to welcome **any club umpire developers**, or **club umpires who would like to consider neutral appointments** this season.

The day will predominantly be run around understanding and observing the updated rules in practice, but there will be plenty of developers on hand to help with any other questions you may have.

Because this will be during the time many friendlies are being played, along with the first weekend of Women's Prem 2 matches, we will be running the rules session twice on the day as well as covering it during the first Monday Mixer of the new season (14th September).

The rough timings are as follows:

11.15am: early attendees meet in the Function Room at Trojans

11.30am: New Rules, session 1

12.15pm: prep for observing game 1 (developer/umpire groupings)

12.30pm: Trojans W2 v Southampton 1 (Women's Prem 2 level friendly)

1.30-2.15pm: buffet lunch available in function room

2.15pm: prep for observing game 2 (developer/umpire groupings)

2.30pm: Trojans W1 v Oxford Hawks 1 (Nat League Conference level friendly)

3.45pm: New Rules, session 2 (repeat of session 1)

4.15pm: prep for observing game 3 (developer/umpire groupings)

4.30pm: Trojans M1 v Indian Gym 1 (Nat League Conference level friendly)

If you can only make a rules session but not the matches, this is absolutely fine! If you are able to join us for some or all of a match or two (or three!), then that's great too. You do not have to be part of a group working with a developer if you'd prefer to just come and go as your other commitments dictate.

Because of the tight timings, we will not be doing observed umpire debriefs after the matches, so please bring any questions you have to the Monday Mixer on 14th September!

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Obviously some of you will be umpiring that day and trying to fit this in as well – if you can't make the session OR the Monday Mixer, the rules session will be recorded and made available afterwards.

To register your interest in attending (and to receive the emails confirming the plans), please head over to <https://umpiredev.co.uk> and complete the relevant form.

INDOOR

For those of you who are interested in umpiring Indoor (Shed) hockey there are plenty of opportunities – for experienced shed umpires and for those interested in giving it a try for the first time.

Graeme Cooke (graeme.whc@live.com) will be leading for us again this season so please get in touch with Graeme and let him know that you are interested.

I appreciate that this might seem very early but given the number of tournaments in a short period of time and the need for numerous umpires to cover them I am seeking availability for help with the Schools Indoor Tournaments.

So far, we have a request from Berkshire for their qualifiers alongside the South-Central Finals and we often get asked by Canford School to assist with their Dorset/West Round. Hampshire generally cover their own county round with school staff.

The confirmed dates so far are:

Berkshire GU18 Qualifier	Wednesday 14 October	Wellington College, Crowthorne
Berkshire GU16 Qualifier	Friday 16 October	Wellington College, Crowthorne
South Central GU18 Final	Thursday 12 November	King Edwards Southampton
South Central BU16 Final	Friday 13 November	Kind Edwards Southampton
South Central BU18 Final	Thursday 19 November	King Edwards Southampton
South Central GU16 Final	Friday 20 November	King Edwards Southampton

Please log availability on <https://forms.gle/wiwh3acKGCZwVCaKA> and once finalised appointments will be made via GMS. We appreciate for some that due to work commitments you will not be in a position to help midweek but this is the easiest way to keep the indoor mailing list in one place to contact you again when the clubs tournaments details are known.

CLUB LIAISON: ROWENA SHEPHERD

In previous seasons, I have tried very hard to get in touch with every club umpire developer in South Central. I have been very unsuccessful! Occasionally, someone gets in touch with me..... very pleasing.... It makes my day!!

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This coming season, as the club liaison officer for South Central, I am going to try a different approach. I intend to visit clubs throughout the area to discuss umpiring matters. I want to improve my understanding of umpiring within clubs. I would like to find out first hand what problems and issues clubs have to find umpires, develop them and keep them in the game. I want to meet club umpire developers at their clubs and discuss the challenges they face.

Although I get to a number of clubs during the season as a neutral umpire - they are exclusively in the south of the area. Generally, I only chat with the teams I've umpired and don't seem to speak to or contact club officials and members. Very rarely, I have the chance to talk to a club umpire. Obviously, club umpires are usually on another pitch officiating when I am sitting in the club house!!

So - even though I might have visited your club - you may not have been aware that I was there - and there certainly wasn't any opportunity for us to have a chat.

I don't pretend to have all the answers - but the more I discover about problems and challenges the greater the chances of suggesting solutions.

If you would like me to visit your club - please get in touch with me using the contact email address below.

Obviously- please get in touch any time with all questions / issues about club umpiring.

Leadclubliaison.officiating@southcentral.hockey

RULES OF HOCKEY

You'll be aware that there have been some rule changes announced, which will be in effect for the coming season. The guidance provided by England Hockey can be found here:

<https://southcentral.englandhockey.co.uk/officiating/documents>

RULES OF HOCKEY APP

Many of you may use the FIH Rules app on your mobile phone, but you may be aware that the app is now out of date as it doesn't contain the latest FIH rules.

There is an alternative app (Hockey Scores), which is another app from FIH, which, apart from providing scores of live hockey matches (from some national schemes and from FIH events), also has the up to date rule book available via the app.

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ICE FOR UMPIRES

No, not for your G&T, but In Case of Emergency.

Where umpires are at neutral games, and pick up an injury, it would be good if emergency contact information were readily available.

This could either be via a luggage type label attached to your pitch side bag, or by using the emergency contact facility on your mobile phone (which can be used without knowledge of the PIN for your phone).

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO OF HOCKEY MATCHES

Many of you would like to either take photos or to video your games, for the purpose of post-match analysis and self-coaching.

It is important that we seek permission from both teams before game day, and to be able to explain clearly what the images will be used for, how they will be stored, and who will have access to them. For example, I often use a GoPro (other video cameras are available...) to record my umpiring. The video will be used for post match analysis of my officiating. The footage will be stored locally on my laptop, to which only I have access, and may be uploaded to my personal YouTube channel, with access set to either private or unlisted.

Many clubs record their games using Veo or similar and you can enquire whether the club would be happy to share the footage with you.

Please go ahead and complete the course, which should take you around 30 minutes.

FACEMASKS AT PENALTY CORNERS

You will probably know that wearing facemasks for defenders at a penalty corner is mandatory at international (e.g. ProLeague) level. England Hockey has decided to not adopt this rule for the coming 2026/27 season so there is no change for us – facemasks remain optional.

Although you should be aware that some junior competitions regulations continue to mandate the use of facemasks when defending PCs. You should always be aware of any competition or tournament specific regulations.

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QUARTERS OR HALVES?

The general rule remains the same for most of us – games will still be two 35 minutes halves.

However, teams in the Premier divisions (Prem 1 and Prem 2 in South Central) will now play four 17.5 minute quarters, with 2 minute quarter breaks and 5 minute half time. The home team may decide that they prefer to play 35 minutes halves and they should inform the opposition, and the officials, well before the day of the game.

SAFEGUARDING

England Hockey is keen to encourage all officials, umpires and match officials at whatever level, to undertake the Introduction to Safeguarding course. More information can be found here:

<https://www.englandhockey.co.uk/deliver/coach/develop/coaching-courses/safeguarding-awareness-module>

Simon Milford

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