

## South Central Hockey

Area Officiating Committee



### Club Umpire Development

Setting up a club umpire development scheme requires careful planning, organization, and a commitment to fostering the growth of umpires within the club. Here is a structured guide to help you establish a successful club umpire development scheme.

The first 6 steps are mainly about setting up the project (project initiation), with the subsequent steps being more ongoing (business as usual) type activities, although it is important to come back and review progress against the original plans and check whether the original assumptions need to be updated in the light of experience.

#### Project Initiation

1. Needs Assessment:
  - a) Identify the current umpiring needs within the club, including the number of umpires required for matches at various levels.
  - b) Assess the skill levels and experience of existing umpires within the club.
2. Define Objectives:
  - a) Clearly define the objectives of the umpire development scheme. Consider goals such as increasing the number of qualified umpires, improving the quality of officiating, and creating a pathway for progression.
3. Establish an Umpire Coordinator Role:
  - a) Designate or appoint a dedicated Umpire Coordinator within the club responsible for overseeing the development scheme.
  - b) Ensure the Umpire Coordinator has a good understanding of umpire education and development programs.
  - c) We would recommend that this role isn't combined with other committee roles, to ensure that an appropriate focus can be given to umpire development.
4. Partnership with Local Umpire Associations:
  - a) Establish partnerships with the South Central Area Officiating committee to use their resources, expertise, and support for the development scheme.

5. Education Programs:

- a) Arrange England Hockey or relevant governing body-approved umpire education courses for interested individuals within the club.
- b) Schedule regular workshops or training sessions to cover rule updates, interpretation, and practical skills.
- c) Review the training opportunities available via FHUmpires.com, and the Discord server community (<https://fhumpires.com/ds>).

6. Mentorship Program:

- a) Implement a mentorship program pairing experienced umpires with those in the development stage. Those experienced umpires may be from the home club, from another club (partnering with local clubs to run a joint umpire development programme could be mutually beneficial), or from the Area development team.
- b) Encourage regular communication and feedback between mentors and mentees.

**Business As Usual**

7. Promote a Positive Umpiring Culture:

- a) Foster a positive and supportive culture within the club regarding umpiring. Perhaps umpire of the month awards, awards for umpires making good progress, awards for umpires who achieve specific steps in their umpiring journey.
- b) Encourage players, coaches, and spectators to respect and appreciate the role of umpires.

8. Communication:

- a) Maintain open lines of communication with club members regarding the importance of umpire development and the benefits to the overall quality of the club's matches.

9. Practical Experience:

- a) Find opportunities for trainee umpires to gain practical experience by officiating matches at various levels, and also be practicing their umpiring skills during training sessions (for example).
- b) Gradually expose them to more challenging games as their skills progress, but be careful not to push them to far too quickly.

10. Recognition and Incentives:

- a) Recognise and reward the efforts of developing umpires through a system of incentives, such as awards, certificates, or acknowledgment at club events.
- b) Consider creating a structured progression system with defined levels of achievement (more detailed than simply being Level 1 unassessed and then Level 1 assessed).

11. Resources and Equipment:

- a) Ensure that umpires have access to the necessary resources, including whistles (Fox 40s), sets of cards, access to the FIH rules of hockey (via the FIH Rules app), educational materials, and equipment.
- b) Provide support for obtaining required officiating clothing.

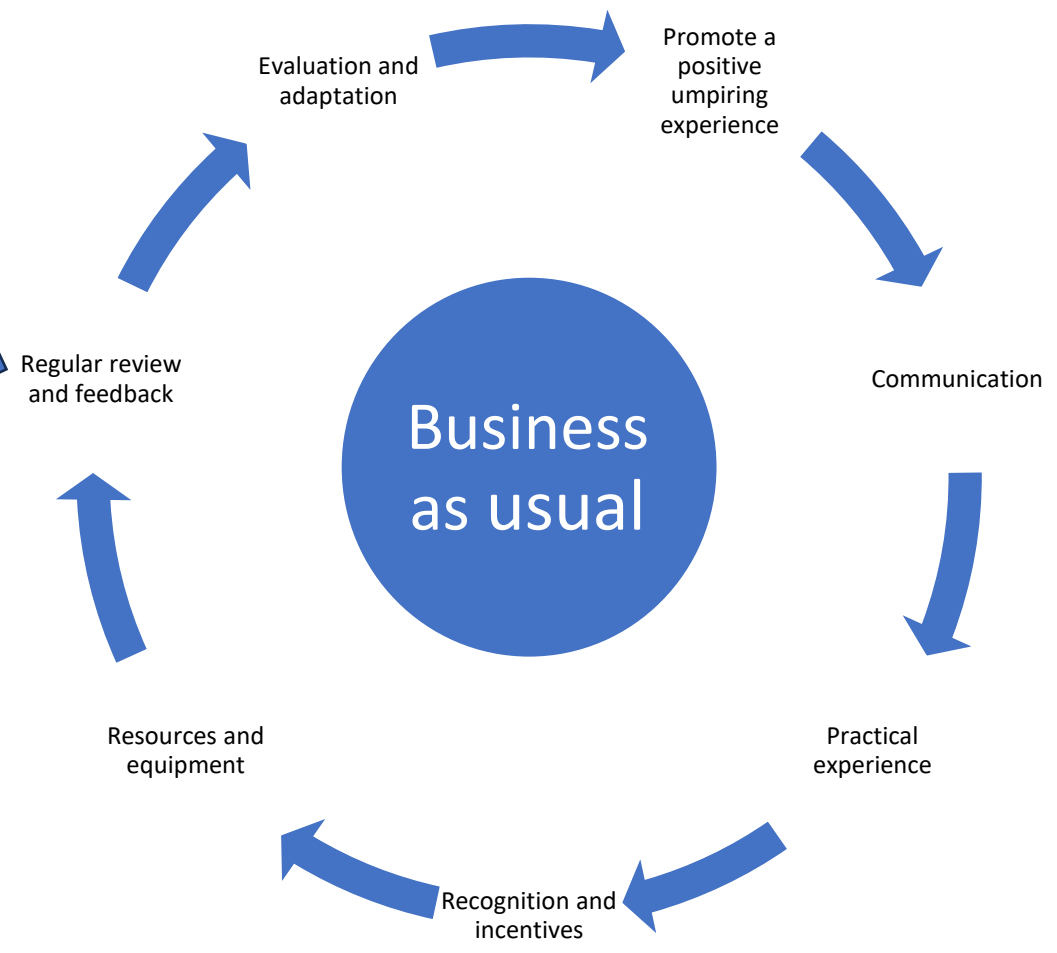
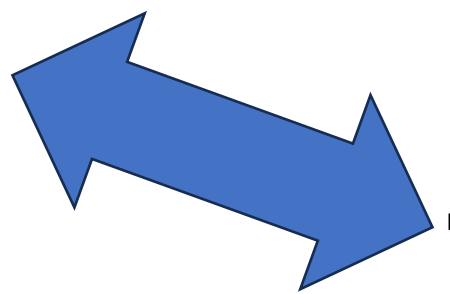
12. Regular Review and Feedback:

- a) Establish a system for regular review and feedback on umpire performances.
- b) Conduct debrief sessions after matches to discuss decisions, identify learning points, and provide constructive feedback.

13. Evaluation and Adaptation:

- a) Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the umpire development scheme.
- b) Be open to making adjustments based on feedback and changing needs within the club.

By following these steps, your club can establish a structured and effective umpire development scheme that contributes to the growth and improvement of umpires within the club, enhancing the overall quality of matches and fostering a positive sporting environment.



Annex (with thanks to Newbury and Thatcham Hockey Club):

Possible actions to help with umpire development. This list isn't meant to be comprehensive, but is an example of what one club has done to try to help address the lack of umpires.

We have taken the following positive actions to attempt to solve the umpiring problem:

- A) **LEADERSHIP** : Appoint a committee member to be responsible for the umpires in the club and the clubs umpiring policy and culture
- B) **ADMINISTRATION** : Appoint an Umpire coordinator who can manage the umpire rota for every game every week
- C) **TARGET** : Target players to become L1 qualified umpires. To do this NTHC club pays the £50 course fee for the England Hockey Umpire L1 course for a candidate, on the quid pro quo that the successful new umpire agrees to umpire at least 4 games per season – most umpire more !
- D) **KIT** : Buy club umpires who are L1 qualified a Club Umpire Lime Green Shirt – branded and smart, to wear with pride when they umpire at the club
- E) **REWARD** : Any player umpire who umpires is either able to claim their £10 match fee back (if they play a game that weekend) or receive payment of £10 for umpiring a game
- F) **TOOLS** : Create a tool that allows umpires to self select games they wish to umpire during a season. This can be a sheet in the clubhouse or a Google Sheet available online or an online app tool. We know in advance all the fixture, time and locations, so by publishing the requirement online at the start of the season umpires can organize their diaries well in advance to volunteer for games
- G) **MENTOR** : Each new umpire is given a more senior umpire mentor and the mentor and mentee are encouraged to work together and feedback back to each other progress and learning
- H) **COACH** : Engage with your Area Umpiring association and get their umpire coach to visit your club and do some 1:1 or group work with the umpires
- I) **RULES** : Keep up to date with rule changes and distribute rule changes to all umpires, perhaps have an annual umpires meeting to discuss the rule changes
- J) **KUDOS** : Give the club umpiring community some kudos in the club, talk about them positively with the captains, make it cool to be a good umpire
- K) **CULTURE** : Create a WhatsApp group for umpires, post footage of play and umpires decisions, then allow umpires to debate their interpretation of a particular situation
- L) **EQUIPMENT** : Buy 2x sets of radios for the club and ensure there are sufficient card sets and whistles for each club umpires