

SOUTH CENTRAL AREA OFFICIATING COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 2024 – OFFICIATING NEWSLETTER

We hope that this newsletter provides some useful information and guidance for you all to help you enjoy your officiating throughout the upcoming season.

COMMITTEE

Following our AGM your committee is:

Role	Name	E-mail contact
Chair	Simon Milford	Chair.officiating@southcentral.hockey
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A quick reminder that 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.

CONCUSSION

You should all be aware that there is an England Hockey Concussion Policy, which can be found here:

<https://www.englishockey.co.uk/download?documentId=016QX2LWJRZM2QNVPEXFBJRZ7EV7UHMLNQ>

It is well worth you all making yourself familiar with the main points of this policy but, just to be clear, umpires and match officials are not expected to have medical knowledge. If someone has taken a knock to the head, and you suspect that there might be an element of concussion, then the advice is to assume that this is a case of concussion and act accordingly.

DISCIPLINE REGULATIONS UPDATE

England Hockey (EH) has significantly updated the old disciplinary regulations to make them simpler and reduce the different options. So how does this affect umpires?

For all practical purposes there is no change to the Red Card (RC) reporting. If (and for many umpires this will be never) you give a Red Card, you download the [Red Card Reporting Form](#), complete it and send it off to the relevant discipline administrator, contact details are on the form. EH has improved the form, so that it is now a PDF editable form, and should work on all devices. The form must be submitted as an electronic document, scanned paper versions should not be submitted.

There is one significant change to the definition of violence in the new regulations. Violence can be against an object, e.g. a dugout, bench, a fence or even a goal. This is aimed at participants who react badly to decision (or lack of one).

EH have got rid of the Matchday Misconduct Offence (MMO) as it was proving unworkable. Virtually all the MMOs that were raised were within 15 minutes of the end of a match. The new regulations state that a RC can be awarded up to 30 minutes after a match has completed, for an offence that would have resulted in a RC being awarded in the match.

EH has also got rid of the old Disrepute Offences and replaced it with Misconduct Offences. This can be used for any incident that occurs and needs to be reported to EH. This includes behaviour of spectators at matches, incidents in clubhouses post-match, etc. A Misconduct Offence can be reported by anyone, not just an umpire.

The good news is that the RC Reporting Form and the Misconduct Offences Reporting Form is the same document, you just need to tick the relevant box to distinguish. A Misconduct report will need to have supporting witnesses, which is not required for a RC.

For a RC any suspension is a minimum of 16 days, except where the RC is for 2 “minor” offences in which case there is no automatic suspension. When a RC is given for actions against an umpire there will be a minimum of 30 days for verbal abuse and minimum of 60 days for threat, attempt or use of physical force. These minimums are in the regulations.

Misconducts are dealt with on case-by-case basis, but the regulations allow for an immediate indefinite suspension for serious cases.

If you are confused, need some help, feel free to contact any of the discipline team, details are on the [discipline](#) page on the South Central website.

SAFEGUARDING

Whilst umpires don't normally have anything to do with safeguarding, as on pitch issues are dealt with by coaches or team management, we all need to be aware of how we interact with players, coaches and spectators of all ages and of any gender.

We should ensure that we are "hands-off" at all times. Injuries requiring hands-on treatment should be dealt with by the team bench. We can show empathy with people (players, coaches, spectators) who may be feeling upset but we should not be, for example, putting an arm round them in order to show this.

We also need to be aware of the need to keep both ourselves and others safe from any accusations – and that means avoiding being drawn into one to one situations where misunderstandings can easily arise. When, for example, we are coaching juniors then any debriefing should be done either at pitch side (in full view of others), or with a parent or guardian present if off the pitch.

There is, generally, no need to officials to undergo safeguarding training but if you feel that you would benefit from such training then please get in touch and we will see what can be arranged.

DEVELOPMENT

For those of you new to South Central, and those not so new too, you are very welcome to attend our weekly in-season discussion forum on Zoom, called the Monday Mixer. Club umpires and those taking neutral appointments (including those who now umpire at NPUA level more than in SC) are all more than welcome.

These sessions are an opportunity for the SCO umpiring community to 'meet' and talk about best practice in umpiring. It's often where we share evolving or new ideas around umpiring and also where we reinforce how to deal with the many decisions an umpire has to make in a match.

This season we are trying out a new format, where we will spend the first 20-30 minutes on a specific topic, with focussed discussion and presentation of information. The final 30-40 minutes will be an open Q&A forum as per previous seasons.

If you are new to umpiring or new to South Central or just don't want to be on camera or join in the discussions you can still come along and just lurk! But the best Mixers are the ones where lots of people want to get involved with the conversation and everyone is open to new ways of thinking.

The first session of the new season was on **Monday 16th September, 7.30-8.30pm** and the focus of the first half of the meeting was be the **new Red Card regulations**. Alan

Dow, who has taken over as the SCO Red Card Tzar (that's not the official title, but hey) told us about the changes and what to do.

Last season's experiment with recording the sessions and having the previous one or two up on the <https://umpiredev.co.uk/> website will continue, so if Mondays are a struggle, you can still catch up.

The link to join the Mixer is always on the umpiredev website, in the top right hand corner. Just click the link at 7.30pm on a Monday and I'll see you there!

LEAD YOUNG UMPIRES

Unfortunately Phil, who took over the Lead Young Umpires role at the AGM has had to pull out of the role due to work commitments. That means that we are, once again, on the look out for someone to help with the development of young umpires around our Area. If you are interested then please get in touch with one of the committee.

EXPENSES

Given the current cost of living problems we should be doing all that we can to reduce the costs to the Area and, by extension, to the clubs and players within South Central.

For example, have a look at where you have to travel to, and who your colleague is, and see if there is the possibility of car sharing, for some or all of the journey.

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