



SOUTH CENTRAL AREA OFFICIATING COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 2025 – OFFICIATING NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the new season 2025/26. 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 (!) 8th September, 2025, 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 and an update on the new Red Card/Misconduct reporting process. 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.

All umpires wishing to take neutral appointments with South Central are invited to complete the 'Umpire Wishes' form on the umpiredev.co.uk website too, so that we can plan allocation of Developers. You do not have to want to get up to National League to qualify for support! Even if you just want to go as far as you can for as long as you can, we are here to support you - but only if we know what you'd like to achieve.

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>

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

WHISTLE TO START PENALTY CORNERS

You should already have seen the new guidance that umpires should start PCs using their whistle, rather than saying “play” or some other form of words. There is still no requirement to stop time for a PC, although time may be stopped for an injury or if awarding cards, but the injector should inject the ball immediately (within a second or 2) of the umpire blowing their whistle.

As this is new it will be worth reminding captains when you meet for the coin toss, and also to remind players at the first PC, at least, in each half. If time has been stopped then there you only need to blow the whistle once – to restart time and to initiate the injection.

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 2025/26 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.

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) now have the option to choose to play four 17.5 minute quarters. The home team decides which option they wish to go for and they should inform the opposition, and the officials, well before the day of the game.

RED CARD REPORTING

There is a new red card reporting form this season. Hopefully not many of us will need to use the new system but it is important that we are all aware of it.

The new form is currently being launched and should be available in time for the start of the league fixtures.

The new form, when it goes live, will be available from here:

<https://www.englandhockey.co.uk/governance/rules-and-regulations/discipline-and-misconduct>

There will be more information on the Area website once the new process has formally been introduced.

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 hope that the start to the new season goes well for you all – if you have any questions or queries then please get in touch.

Simon Milford

Chair, South Central Area Officiating Committee
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