

Officiating Update – August 2023.

With the season shortly upon us and some friendlies already being played, it would seem an ideal time to update everyone on the situation with plans for the season ahead.

We would thank you for your patience whilst waiting for this update especially given the uncertainty following recent events.

Rod Cook and Alison Cook (not related) are no longer committee members and The Board at West Hockey would wish to publicly extend our gratitude to them for the many hours they have committed to Officiating in our Area.

Looking to the start of this season, David Lillywhite and Graham Woolcock are working extremely hard on the neutral appointments front and we are pleased to say that it is anticipated we will be supplying umpires to both male and female games in the Premier Divisions. David and Graham will also continue working with umpires wishing to achieve their Level 2 qualification and additionally with those wishing to progress to NPUA.

Rich Hill also remains in position and will be carrying out his technical duties as normal.

The Board have been in regular dialogue with England Hockey in recent months and are in the process of developing a strategy for officiating in the West, which broadly aligns to what is anticipated nationally. It is of paramount importance that this strategy is right and fit for the future and with that in mind, we do not anticipate any announcements on the confirmed strategy this side of the Christmas break.

In recent weeks we have held a number of incredibly useful meetings with a range of stakeholders and from this we will be developing working groups to look at key areas of officiating, with deduced themes all aimed at increasing the number and quality of our umpires of all ages and also addressing the gender imbalance both in neutral pools and club umpiring circles. If you wish to be involved in these groups, have a positive disposition and are keen to drive change, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact adminsupport@westhockey.co.uk

David Lillywhite is currently leading on a pilot scheme with our Ladies Division 1 North, which we hope will prove fruitful and give us further feedback for future development.

We will provide updates as and when they are available and as soon as we have news to share with you all.

David Chard is standing in as temporary Chair of the Officiating Committee until such time that the new strategy is fully developed. Any queries or questions you may have, please don't hesitate to contact David, who will be happy to assist wherever he can.

We do hope you all have a great start to the season and that you are looking forward to seeing some positive changes to officiating in the West.

West Board

27th August 2023

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