

Midlands Hockey – Umpire Selection and Progression Policy

With the re-organisation of hockey across the UK, Umpire selection and progression now has a unified approach under the auspices of the Midlands Area Officiating Committee (MAOC). The advantage of this is that all umpires taking independent appointments below National Level are members of the same organisation, thus leading to a simplified approach to selection and progression and making it easier for umpires to understand the selection process. The person within MAOC who has responsibility for independent umpire selection, development and progression is the Development Lead.

With the amalgamation of the previous Regional and County Associations, the MAOC has established panels to which umpires have been assigned. The structure is illustrated below.

Men	Women	Comments
A Panel	A Panel	These panels are the panels transferred from MRHUA. L2 (Regional) Umpires. Umpires on these panel are appointed to Premier and Div. 1 (subject to comments below)
B Panel	B Panel	
C Panel	C Panel	
D Panel		Comprises Umpires transferred from the A Panels of BCHUA and EMHUA
E Panel		Comprises Umpires transferred from the B and C Panels of BCHUA and EMHUA

Any L1 Assessed umpire wishing to take independent appointments may join the E panel and, after assessment will be assigned to a panel commensurate with their ability.

Panel Appointing

Below is the level of appointments that a panel member can expect:

A Panel. An umpire who has reached the highest standard in the Area, who is capable of Umpiring Midlands Premier League matches and any other games or events to which MAOC appoints and who may be considered for nomination for promotion to National level. A Panel umpires are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of umpiring in the Area.

B Panel. An umpire capable of umpiring Midlands Premier League games, if appointed with an A Panel colleague. Umpires at this level may also be appointed to some Cup, Plate or Trophy games and other Area tournaments.

C Panel. An umpire in the first band of Level 2 ability range, capable of umpiring Midlands League Division 1 games; some Cup, Plate or Trophy games; some Area Tournaments and Junior higher age group events.

D Panel. Umpires at this level will generally be appointed to Midlands Division 2 matches (Men's) but may be appointed to higher level games (Women's Prem) in the case of shortages.

E Panel. Umpires at this level may be appointed to Midlands Men's Div. 3 and Women's Div. 2 matches. Umpires may be appointed to higher level games (Women's Div. 1) in the case of shortages.

It should be noted that whilst the above sets out the requirements for each panel, appointments may be made outside of the above parameters in the event of a shortage of

numbers at any given time. However, umpires will only be appointed to matches that the appointers and selectors think that the umpires might be capable of handling.

The Review Process

There are two selection committees: Level 2, which deals with the A, B and C panels for both genders and Level 1 which looks after the D and E Panels. The Development and Appointments Leads sit on both committees to ensure that there is continuity between the two and, especially in the lower panels, talent can be identified and developed.

The Committees meet at regular intervals with three meetings recommended each season, typically in the first half of November and February and after the end of the league season.

In preparation for each of these meetings, a summary of the Club website reports is prepared for each umpire. These tell us what our customers think of individual umpires and are used by the Selectors as a guide to how the Clubs rate the umpires they have had. The system on the website also provides a "Weighted Average" for each umpire so that the marks from Clubs that always mark low or high are adjusted. These reports give the Selectors an insight as to whether an umpire is doing well in the leagues they umpire, whether there are points that an umpire needs to work on and if the umpire needs coaching help.

A summary is also prepared of all the Selection reports received on each umpire by the Selection Committee. It is on these reports that a judgement is made on whether to promote the umpire to a higher panel, leave the umpire to gain more experience at the current panel or, in occasional cases, to return the umpire to a lower panel to allow time to consolidate and re-group.

Umpires tend to be watched more often if they are making rapid progress or are close to achieving the next panel up. Umpires being watched are not always grouped together and on occasions some umpires may receive extra watchings when the assessor is sent to look primarily at the umpire's colleague.

As a general principle the Selection Committee will wish to see regular reports on an individual umpire with an assessment of 'Umpiring above current panel' in order to consider promotion or nomination to the next level.

Details of the marking scheme and what constitutes an above/below panel can be found at Appendix 1.

To achieve promotion, the assessment of 'Umpiring above Current Panel' needs to be achieved as follows:

To achieve promotion from/to	Level of game umpired
E to D Panel	Men's Div 2 or 3, or Women's Div 2
D to C Panel	Umpires need to be assessed on a Midlands Div 1 game and achieve the criteria set down by EH. D Panel umpires achieving an 'above panel' mark on a Men's or Women's Div.2 match will be put forward for a L2 assessment on the relevant gender panel
C to B Panel*	Men's/Women's Div.1 or equivalent level of game for the relevant gender
B to A Panel*	Midlands Premier Division games or equivalent for the relevant gender
NPUA Nomination*	Midlands Premier Division games or equivalent for the relevant gender

*Promotion to a higher panel or nomination to NPUA is subject to completion of a fitness test to the standards required at the relevant time.

NPUA nominations have two alternatives:

National Panel Development Panel (NPDP)

Umpires nominated for NPDP are those who Midlands consider to have the potential to achieve National status within a period of two years and who meet the criteria for inclusion within NPDP. Current criteria and further details can be supplied on request. Candidates for the NPDP programme are nominated by the Area in May/June, ahead of the forthcoming season. In exceptional circumstances, entry to NPDP will be allowed at other times during the year. NPDP personnel will be supported with coaching and mentoring throughout the programme for a period of up to two years.

Candidate

The Candidate Programme is aimed at those umpires performing at a standard which means they can give valuable service to the National Programme immediately. Such candidates will get a one off assessment game. To be successful, Candidates need to achieve a mark of C3 or above on their assessment game. Nominations may be made at any time.

In the unfortunate case of being downgraded an umpire will have received a panel mark of 1 on a single assessment or two panel marks of 2 on consecutive assessment games

All umpires are expected to offer regular availability to Midlands Hockey and/or a higher authority/association in order to maintain their panel.

All umpires returning to the panels after a lengthy period of inactivity or injury shall be assessed by an approved assessor before being returned to an appropriate Panel, as determined by the relevant Selection Committee.

In exceptional circumstances, the Selection Committee may, at its sole discretion, vary an umpire's panel without the necessary reports outlined above.

At the end of each season, each umpire is sent a report giving a consolidated view of what the Selectors feel the umpire has done well, the things the umpire should work on to improve and a summary of the Club's reports. The relevant Panel Lead or Chair of Selectors is happy to discuss your End of Season Report if you feel that any comments made need enlarging. Any umpire who would like an interim verbal report during the season, should telephone the relevant Panel Lead, who will be able to discuss the situation and pass on any relevant comments.

Appointments for individual matches

The relevant Appointments Lead attends the Selectors meetings and uses the comments and decisions made by the Selectors to provide suitable appointments for each umpire for the next tranche of appointments. Not every umpire is available every week and our first priority is to provide umpires for all games. This inevitably means that umpires will not receive the perfect appointment every week. We must remember that we are here as servants of the game as well as for our own enjoyment.

If you feel that you are appointed to the same Club too often, please ring the relevant Appointments Lead to discuss the issue.

Notwithstanding the publication of Appointments, the Selection Committee, through the relevant Appointer, may amend or change individual appointments if this is considered necessary.

It should be noted that in the case of emergencies or at short notice, Appointment Leads have the absolute discretion to appoint an umpire to a game that might be above that umpires grade.

Appointments for Tournaments

The selectors identify the panels which are best suited to each tournament. Other factors in the mix which affect the final appointments made include a) the need to find the right blend of experience, potential and solidity for each tournament; b) the wish of the selectors to see more of umpires with identified potential; c) the desire to reward "stalwarts" who do a good job week in, week out; and d) the need to give umpires with upcoming higher level tournaments the best possible preparation.

Coaching

We like our umpires to ask for coaching if they think that this would help them to improve. These requests should be sent to the Development Lead.

Some of our umpires are happy at the level they have achieved and prefer not to be coached. Sometimes, Club reports and Selectors reports suggest that coaching would benefit some of our umpires. In these instances, the Selection Committee will recommend that the umpire receives some coaching.

Coaching reports are only seen by the umpire being coached, the coach and the Development Lead. They are not made available to the members of the Selection Committee.

In Conclusion

We seek to provide umpires with interesting and varied appointments for continued enjoyment of umpiring and a pathway to further success. Some of these appointments will test the umpire's abilities and stimulate them to improve their umpiring. Some appointments are made because we need a more experienced umpire to help a colleague improve.

We are aware that on occasions it is difficult to judge whether individuals are able to make the step to the next level. The relevant Selection Committees therefore reserve the right to give certain individuals the opportunity to umpire games involving teams at a higher level when league points are not at stake.

As you improve, we will watch you, coach you and when ready, upgrade you to a higher panel so that you can be appointed to faster and more competitive hockey. We want our umpires to enjoy their umpiring and we take care not to ask them to umpire a game too far above their ability as a disappointing performance can undermine confidence and is often not enjoyable.

When promoted to a higher level, umpires will be given time to establish themselves at this new level and should not be unduly worried if an assessor is appointed soon after being promoted.

Midlands Area Officiating Committee
June 2022

Appendix 1: Midlands Officiating – Umpire Assessment Marks

The marking scheme is similar for all umpire panels where a mark is awarded to an umpire relative to that umpire's Panel.

The marks are as follows:

Level of Performance	Panel Comparison	Mark
Very Disappointing	Below Panel	1
Disappointing	Below Average for Panel	2
Acceptable / Good	Expected for Panel	3, 4, 5
Very Good	Above Expected for Panel	6, 7, 8
Excellent	Above Panel	9, 10

The multiple marks for Acceptable / Good, Very Good & Excellent mean that selectors and assessors will be able to 'shade' performances in those categories, so that we do not end up with a huge number of umpires getting the same mark for performances, making differentiation across a full season's marks very difficult.

For ease of reference, the marks will be distinguished between panels by adding the initial letter of the panel to the mark. So, a mark of 8 for a C panel umpire will be designated C8 and a mark of 8 for an A panel umpire will be designated A8.

Any umpire performing in band 1 is a cause for concern and may be demoted. Any umpire performing in band 2 is likely to receive a critical watching. Umpires consistently performing in bands 9 & 10 bands may be considered for promotion.

Level 2 Candidate Assessments

There are two types of candidates: a level two candidate and a transfer candidate. The latter are either umpires qualified at level 2, or equivalent, transferring from another area or country, or existing level 2 umpires seeking to umpire matches for the gender other than that in which they gained their level 2 qualification. An existing level 2 umpire seeking to be added to the panels for the gender other than that in which they already umpire may do so with the support of the L2 Selection Committee.

The 'pass' mark for candidates of all types is C3. A candidate being marked at C2 will be given one further watching opportunity. A candidate being marked at C1 will be returned to the D Panel, or, in the case of transfer candidates, placed on the D Panel for further support. A panel transfer candidate seeking to umpire games in a second gender being marked at C1 will retain their existing panel in the appropriate gender but will not be added to the panels for the second gender.

Candidates of any type scoring C9 or C10 may be put straight onto the B panel, or higher, depending upon the assessor's comments and recommendations, and whether or not the candidate has passed a fitness test to the required level. This will be a decision made by the relevant Selection Committee in its absolute discretion.

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There is no separate marking band for B* panels. Umpires on the starred panels will receive marks based on the B panel range and will be expected to achieve average scores of between 6 and 10 to retain their starred status. To be promoted, umpires on the starred panels must achieve **TWO** marks of 9 or 10 in the same season. These two games must be on Premier Division games.

Marks will be made according to panel and will not be directly comparable across panels. However, under this system if a B panel umpire performs better on a game than their A panel colleague, **relative to the expectations for their panel**, then the respective marks will make this obvious to selectors – i.e. if two umpires on the same game get marks of B8 and A3 it will be very obvious who had the better game.

It is hoped that this is clear-cut, but if you are unsure of anything, please contact the Chair of your selection committee or the Development Lead