

Creating an environment in which clubs can attract and retain officials

Background

One of the strategic objectives of the Midlands Area Officiating Committee 'MAOC' is "To Support clubs in creating an environment in which they can attract and retain officials within the club network".

To do this clubs need to ensure that they know the best practices for doing so.

The critical starting point is to ensure that a constant rhetoric is used that **the umpires are the most important people on the pitch**, because without them, there would be no game. Whilst there are 11-16 players per team, there are only 2 umpires. Finding regular umpires is a lot harder than finding regular players.

Financial Support

Radios

All umpires should have the opportunity to umpire using radios. Not only does this increase the quality of the umpiring - you can gain much needed input from your other umpire - but it also builds confidence and makes it more fun and interactive for the umpires. Clubs should ensure they have invested in good radios. The best use of radios is when more experienced umpires are paired with more junior umpires and they can give coaching support during games in real time.

Rewarding umpires

It is important for treasurers to budget for some sort of financial incentive to reward umpires for matches. Whilst we recognise not all umpires are looking for incentivisation it is important to have a process in place for those who may need support to be able to umpire e.g. fuel, match tax (no fee for a game), reduced annual subs, free annual dinner tickets just as a few examples

Umpire Uniform

Once a club member has managed to become L1 assessed, the club should offer to subsidise them purchasing an England Hockey Umpire shirt. An example can be found on the EH website. Below is a link to the [England Hockey Officiating store](#)

Logistics

Notifying Umpires of match day information

Clubs should take the responsibility to notify umpires about match day information. Umpires should be aware of the time, location and any important logistical information such as parking restrictions if there are any. This is to ensure umpires are able to be on time without added stress or delays.

Updates

In the event that a game time changes, or is cancelled, Captains should personally contact umpires to advise them, as well as GMS and the league.

Changing Facilities

Umpires and officials should be notified of the changing facilities available to them and specific information added to the match day confirmation.

Culture

Upholding the Spirit of Hockey Code of Conduct

All clubs should be aware of the Code of Conduct and work actively to ensure that the core message and values are upheld within their club.

- When it comes to Officiating there are two very important statements made that clubs need to ensure they embed within their organisations.
- The code of conduct is designed to ensure that everyone in our sport, from players and coaches to umpires, officials, and spectators, contributes to an environment that is safe, respectful, and enjoyable for all.
- Hockey is a sport rooted in inclusivity, mutual support, and respect, where passion fuels participation and challenges are met with resilience. Winning gracefully, accepting losses with dignity, respecting officials and their decisions are fundamental values we want to continue to be upheld.
- [England Hockey Spirit of Hockey Code of Conduct](#)

Assigning umpires to the right level

Club Umpire Coordinators and Captains must ensure that umpires are allocated to a suitable match for

their experience level. This ensures that umpires and teams have a positive experience and will reduce the instance of umpires being “put off” doing future games.

Manage feedback/complaints from other clubs/teams appropriately

From time to time there may be complaints about officials or instances that have occurred during matches. Clubs need to make sure they have a formal way of capturing this feedback (e.g. a web form or email address) and that it is handled in a professional and sympathetic manner. Where there is opportunity for development of an umpire and they need upskilling or support, then the Umpire Coordinator should assess the situation and decide whether to contact their in-house Umpire Developer or ask for external support, such as via the Club Cluster Lead or Club Liaison Lead. It may be that MAOC can help to run a Club Umpire Training Event (CUTE) and carry out some skills refreshing for multiple individuals. Clubs may consider having some feedback forms although they should be rolled out with caution as feedback must be managed appropriately. Information shared between the individual completing the form and the individual receiving the form, must be kept confidential, to ensure there is no fear of reprisal or disincentivising the umpires. Examples below.

- [Umpire Welfare Report](#)
- [Club Umpire Development](#)
- [Umpiring Recognition Form](#)

Regular informal recognition

Clubs should encourage praise, thanks and shout-outs on a weekly basis to their club. Not only should clubs be posting their team sheets on social media and via email, they should be posting news of which umpires are allocated and wishing them luck too.

Formal recognition

Whilst it is understandable that the majority of the end of season awards would be player or coaching focussed, it is essential that officials are also recognised at these events. We recommend there should be annual awards for the umpire of the year, technical official of the year (if relevant) for both young officials and adult officials. This recognition should be a trophy as a minimum.

Umpire coordinators

The club umpire coordinator should be a committee member or at least on the management team or selection committee of the hockey club, so that they can ensure they are addressing concern, feedback and challenges with umpiring.

Club Cluster Leads

The adult league and junior league contacts as well as the Umpire Coordinator should know who their Club Cluster Lead is (refer to ‘Contact and Support’ below) and make sure there is regular (3 times a season minimum) contact to understand all the support and products that MAOC can offer to clubs and individuals

Development

It is the responsibility of club to have a development mindset for umpires. This means ensuring standards are maintained, as well as developing those with ambition and potential.

Within the club simple tactics such as pairing more experience officials with less experience can really help development

Clubs should also identify suitable individuals to become club umpire developers or County Umpire Developers

Umpire Assessors need to have completed the England Hockey Umpire Development Course (either online via a module or via a course

For young umpires, the Club Umpire Coordinator should put the individuals in touch with youngumpireslead@midlands.hockey

Adults who wish to progress to Level 2 for the purpose of umpiring independently, meaning outside of their own club, should contact umpiredevlead@midlands.hockey

Midlands Area Umpire Development covers both coaching and assessing for umpires taking neutral appointments within the Midlands area. We run an extensive programme of events, covering all aspects of umpire development.

Contact and support

Clubs’ primary point of contact for centrally managed Midlands Hockey information and resources is via **Becs Roycroft** officiatingclubliaison@midlands.hockey

Additionally Midlands clubs have been appointed a **CCL (Club Cluster Lead)** who has more local club knowledge and represents the Club Liaison Lead for MAOC. If a club is unsure who their CCL is please contact officiatingclubliaison@midlands.hockey

Clubs need to maintain their own point of contact - their Umpire Coordinator who will be the internal POC for Captains and Umpires but also the route to external contacts such as the **Midlands Umpire Appointer** appointments@midlands.hockey

CONTACTS

Becs Roycroft
officiatingclubliaison@midlands.hockey

Midlands Umpire Appointer
appointments@midlands.hockey