



South Central Hockey

Area Officiating Committee

England Hockey Officiating – South Central Branch Annual General Meeting – 2022

The SC EHO Branch AGM was held, by Zoom, on Thursday 12th May, 2022. There were 33 people in attendance.

There were a number of apologies for absence (list attached).

The various Committee reports had previously been circulated (all available reports are attached to these minutes). There was no Young Umpire report this year.

Election of Officers – the only post being vacated was the Lead for Young Umpires. The only proposal for Lead Young Umpires received was for Sam Krasner, and he was elected as the Lead Young Umpires for the coming season.

The Chairman was required, by Area rules, to stand down. The only proposal for the Chair role was Simon Milford, and his name will be put forward to the South Central Area AGM as the recommended Chair for the following season.

There had been no items of Any Other Business formally notified in accordance with the AGM calling notice.

The business meeting was, therefore, closed, to be followed by a general Q&A session.

Simon Milford

Chair, South Central Area Officiating Committee

Apologies for 2022 AGM

Angus Porter

Neil Wainwright

Adam Swann

Graham Beck

Liz Spencer

Gordon Wiseman

Chris Bond

Jim Patel

Sam Krasner

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Chair's Report – 2022 AGM

This past season has, as I'm sure you'll all agree, been a challenging one! We've had a combination of the biggest re-organisation in our sport's history, and the on-going impacts of a global pandemic which are still affecting many.

Regions and Counties have been reorganised into Areas, a whole new set of league rules have been introduced, new committees have been formed, and we've all been beta testers of the new Game Management System.

But, against that background, we have managed to complete a season of league hockey in the south Central Area, a lot of junior hockey has been played, we've had winners and losers, promotions and relegations and end of season celebrations just as usual. For which thanks must go to each and every one of you – players, coaches, officials, and committee members across the Area, for helping us to get through our first South Central season. Without you we really couldn't have done it.

Huge thanks must also go to the committee that has helped to run South Central Officiating this year – their names are on our newly minted South Central website:

<https://southcentral.englishockey.co.uk/officiating>

Without them my job would have been impossible – and, without them, we would have got through this season in as good a way as we have. There are nearly 7,200 matches listed under South Central on GMS; with nearly 3,200 umpire appointments; over 150 umpire coaching appointments; and over 100 umpire assessor appointments.

Club Liaison

South Central Officiating has in its remit officiating at all levels throughout the Area, not just the relatively small number of matches which receive appointed umpires. In order to reach everyone we need the help of clubs – Umpire Liaison Officers and Club Umpire Developers. Our Club Liaison Lead (Rowena Shepherd) continues to contact all for whom we have contact details but there are very many clubs from whom we get little or no response. This is something that we'll need to work on improving for next season and beyond.

Development

We've helped many officials progress this year, many to Level 1, a lot to Level 1 assessed, quite a few to Level 2, and even a few to Level 3. Well done to all those who progressed, and many thanks to those who helped them along the way, at both club and Area levels. Especial thanks to the development team, run by Ginette Tessier (thanks for the introduction of the Monday Mixers, an excellent on-line forum for umpires to chat about issues which arose in the previous weekend's matches), and the Level 1 assessment team run by Ray Hipkin.

If you want to see more about umpire development then head over to:

<https://southcentral.englishhockey.co.uk/officiating>

and have a look around. There is a resources page where we list many resources which are available to support umpire development, at all levels:

<https://umpiredev.co.uk/umpires/development-resources/>

This is very much a work in progress document but have a look around, you might find the answer to a question that has been bugging you for a long time.

Appointing

Appointing, also known as “human jenga”, has been the usual challenge this season – trying to get the right umpires, to the right games, whilst taking into account travelling distances and ever changing availability (thanks Covid). But appoint we have, all thanks to Allan Notman and his team of David Boyle, James Bartrip and Huw Richards.

Young Umpires

For our Young Umpires Chair O’Hagan has continued to provide his usual level of support to help bring our young umpires on. Thanks Chris – young umpires are the future of officiating and their development and encouragement is vital to the future health of hockey.

Technical Officiating

David Rigby is also available to support anyone who wants to think about the match official role, one which allows an involvement in higher levels of hockey, sitting right at the pitch side for national league matches.

Kit

The most frequently asked question of the whole season is “what about kit?”. At a national level the various Areas have been working with England Hockey to seek to agree on a kit supplier able to provide, amongst other things, umpire shirts. We’ve also been trying to agree common colours and a logo for each Area, which has taken a surprisingly long time. We are further delayed now because the England Hockey deal with Adidas, as preferred kit supplier, is coming to an end and will need to be re-tendered. Which means, of course, that we are still waiting...

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

EH has recently produced an EDI Framework document and we need to work to establish how we can improve the ED&I situation within our Area. That will be an important task for the Branch committee in coming months and years.

Summary

Thanks to everyone who has helped us get through this first season in the new organisation. Having supported so many hockey matches has been no mean achievement and one of which we should all be proud. Plenty more to do next season, of course, so we can’t sit on our laurels too much – but enjoy the summer (whether it involves hockey or not) and come back ready to face the new season in late summer 2022.

Simon Milford

Chair, South Central Area Officiating Committee

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Vice-Chairman's Report – Alan Dow

The role of the Vice-Chairman is split into two distinct parts. Firstly, to support the Chairman in their work, and secondly to be part of the Area discipline team, acting as a Deputy Discipline Administrator.

In the first part, there has been little to do, except for conversations with Simon as when required about various matters which have led to further discussions at the committee level.

In the second part, as a DDA, I have had to deal with some of the Red Cards or Matchday Misconduct Offences (MMOs) issues by SC Umpires throughout the season and/or been involved in some of the appeals that have resulted from the suspensions that that have been imposed.

Sadly, about two-thirds of all Red Cards or MMO have been for umpire abuse. In a number of cases this the red card has been issued because a player has received a yellow card, and then abused the umpire. There seems to be an increasing number of coaches who have received a Red Card or MMO for umpire abuse.

In all cases where a Red Card or MMO is issued for a umpire abuse, then the Area's normal policy is to suspend the reported person for a minimum of 30 days. We know how rare it is for RC or MMO to be submitted and as such we accept that what the umpire saw and/or heard is correct.

At the time of writing 36 Red Cards or MMOs had been processed by the Discipline team.

Alan Dow

Vice-Chairman EHO, South Central

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Appointing – Lead Appointer, Allan Notman

The inaugural appointing for South Central has been somewhat frustrating and challenging at times for various reasons:

Game Management System

- Not being fit for purpose from the onset but it has improved as the season progressed.
- Not being able to create friendly fixtures due to the team's functionality which is still ongoing therefore having to input data retrospectively.
- Registration of umpires through EHO.
- Not having the ability to move matches from England Hockey (Cup) / BUCS to South Central without going through GMS Helpdesk.
- Lack of start times / venues due to all team ULO's not having access.

Other aspects of frustration have been caused by:

- Late notification for Regional Reserves to support National League Conference fixtures.
- Teams cancelling the fixture at late notice for reasons other than COVID.

I would personally like to thank my appointing team for their effort in appointing to as many games as possible within the following Leagues / Competitions:

- Men's / Ladies Premier Division 1 & 2.
- Men's / Ladies Division 1 North.
- Men's / Ladies Division 1 & 2 South.
- National League Conference.
- British Universities, Colleges & Schools.
- Varsity Matches.
- England Hockey Cup Competitions.

achieving the following statistics:

- Appointments Outdoor = 3370
- Appointments Indoor = 46
- Assessments Outdoor = 106
- Coaching Outdoor = 133

Particular thanks also go to the many umpires who have completed double headers – sometimes at very short notice – in order to help us fulfil our appointing commitments.

Development – Lead Developer, Ginette Tessier

After a bit of a rocky start to work out who was available and what was required, we also had to navigate a few months of not being able to input reports on GMS either! Thankfully that was all resolved and we have been able to work with lots of umpires to get them upgraded either within their Level or to the next one.

From the total number of assessments completed as listed above,

- Four umpires have been nominated to NPUA, and three have been assessed and accepted
- Seven umpires have achieved Level 2 status on the men's panel and five umpires have achieved Level 2 status on the women's panel
- A number of umpires are on the 'promising' star list

As yet, we are unable to show the relevant panels within the Levels as this functionality is not yet 'switched on' in GMS. We are hopeful that the replacement for David Elworthy will see this as a priority for the new season.

We are also hopeful that there will be greater movement on the agreed standards for assessment – we are comfortable that we are operating to the levels previously set by Counties and SCHUA, requiring the same standards to be shown by umpires for promotion. We have had to take some risks in the number of times we ask an umpire to demonstrate those standards, but so far this has not created too many issues.

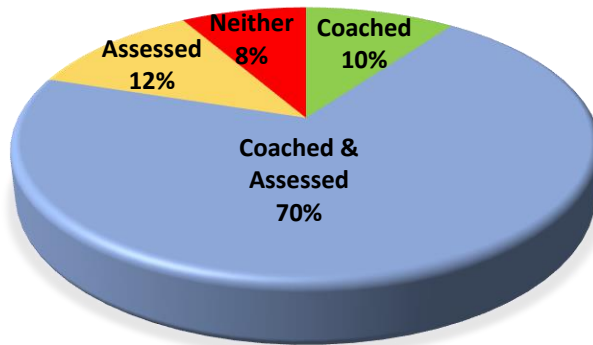
We have used a number of new initiatives to move umpire development forward, including Monday Mixers – a weekly in-season meeting for umpires over Zoom to discuss the previous week's games and any questions that arise. We have also recently nominated 20 umpires to receive access to FH Umpires membership and all the development resources contained in there.

In the first half of the season we held a Development Day at Trojans HC for umpires and developers. We are also holding a couple of informal development sessions at Hampshire Day on May 2nd.

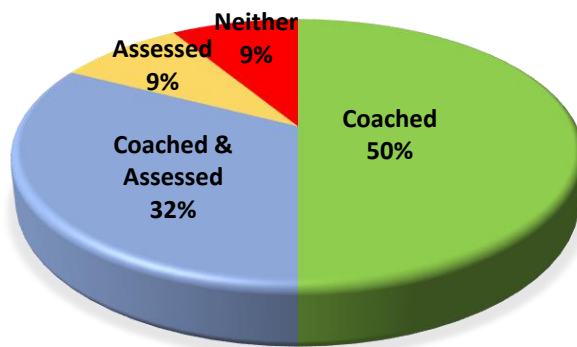
Next season, we will once again ask umpires to self-nominate for the Development Group, Maintenance Group and Alternative Involvement Group in order to prioritise our resources.

My thanks to the Development team for their support, attention and at times patience as we navigated both the new structure and the new system.

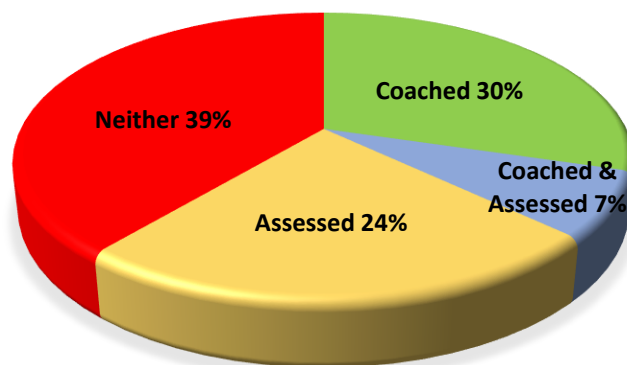
PREMIER DIVISION (54 UMPIRES)



SOUTHERN DIVISION (46 UMPIRES)



NORTHERN DIVISION (54 UMPIRES)



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Club Liaison Officer – Rowena Shepherd

Annual Report Season 2021 - 2022

The inaugural season of the South Central Area has been a steep learning curve for Club Liaison. The problems have outweighed the successes. I am, however, hopeful that it will improve next season.

It has been very challenging to establish effective communication with the clubs in the area. I think this was caused by a number of factors. First of all, the role of Club liaison is new and therefore clubs are not attuned to looking out for messages from a 'liaison person'.

Initially, it was very difficult to both identify a club umpire liaison official for each club and then obtain their contact details. It was even harder to establish contact with club umpire developers. Despite messages and appeals in newsletters and direct emails to clubs, reliable contact information was not obtained for every club in the Area. It seems quite likely that some clubs do not have an official dedicated to umpire development and perhaps some clubs have no need for club umpire liaison officers. In many clubs the person responsible for developing umpires has several other roles too.

A simple straightforward and reliable method of communicating with club officers has only existed for the second half of the season. Relevant permissions were obtained from England Hockey officials, allowing me [and other Club Liaison officers] to use GMS to contact hockey clubs. This represents a massive improvement. It has made communication with hockey clubs much simpler and more effective. This was demonstrated by an improved response to my last message which was sent by GMS.

I used GMS to raise with clubs the possibility of using summer league hockey to develop existing club umpires and encourage new ones. This is a 'work in progress' this season. There is ample scope for working up this idea ready for next summer.

The profile of 'Club Liaison' will also be helped by national efforts. There has been one meeting of a national forum organised by England Hockey. This was useful because it enabled all Club liaison officers in England to exchange ideas. [successes and failures!] A future meeting programme will hopefully be reinstated in due course.

Level 1 assessments

Ray Hipkin the Area's Level one Assessment manager has handled a steady stream of candidates for level one assessment. Ray manages the whole level one assessment process and reports the following successes based on records from the start of the 2021/2022 season.

- As an area we have established a good management level to the progress of umpires from candidate to Club Umpire Assessed. We seem to be unusual in our approach, but other areas clubs are asking for info from me.
- All of the assessments have been set up with assessors in touch with their candidate at least 10 days before the assessment game.
- All assessments were set up by the assessment criteria we published at the start of the process. This information I understand has been well received and is understood by those who actually read it.
- There have been no issues regarding the quality of game being appointed for the assessments.
- Club Umpire Developers should take an awful lot of credit for the quality of the candidates they have asked for assessments this season. All bar 2 umpires have passed well above the pass mark, there were only 2 that just made it.
- We have supported 20 clubs this year by providing assessors for 37 candidates.
- I have also visited 12 other possible candidates and supported the Club Developer at 5 clubs in the area, who is not actually an umpire but landed with the job.
- Only 2 umpires were asked to re-present next season
- 35 umpires have been passed to their level one.
- In the assessment process, we have identified 4 possible candidates that, with some little effort on their part, will be ready for appointments this next year.
- Big thank you also should be given to the assessors who turned out for the assessments. Some having done multiple numbers of games. Some assessors [Elaine Spear as an instance, but also Andy Stalker] have gone out of their way to do assessments.
- We have just 2 umpires outstanding awaiting assessments that we know of.

Happy to do it all next season. One area we need to look at is the number of assessors. We relied on a small number really out of a quite large list. We hope that some senior umpires could also slip an occasional assessment in, which will give even more support/ contact with clubs.

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South Central Area Officiating Committee – AGM Technical Appointments Panel Representative’s Report

As part of the re-structuring of the Corporate Governance of hockey in England, the Technical Appointment Panel were invited to have a representative on the Area Officiating Committees in each of the eight areas. As the former Area Technical Officers Liaison for the former South Region I took up the new post within South Central.

There are **four main roles** in Technical Officiating, these are:

Tournament Director – the individual who ensures that the overall competition is operating within the rules and regulations for all participants

Technical Officer – is pitch side for each game of a tournament to ensure the games run smoothly, working with both team managers, benches and umpires.

Judges – are pitch side for each game of a tournament, administering and recording events from the game accurately and timely. They also manage the game time to ensure that the competition runs in accordance with the rules and within the allotted time on the day.

Match Official – this role is only available during the English Hockey Leagues, where Match Officials conduct a mix of the Technical Officer and Judge roles on a match day.

For some Officials, there is the opportunity to quickly progress up the career path within the English Hockey Leagues and Tournaments to ultimately reach European or even full International level, as well as taking charge of some of England Hockey’s top events.

Technical Officiating is a great way to be involved in hockey, being close to the action and experiencing a different side of the game. The best thing is...anyone can get involved! Whether it’s being involved in the National Programme of competitions, or locally at a junior competition at club level, the role of Technical Officials is key to the game day experience being so high for all involved.

At a National Level, Technical Officials (acting as Match Officials) work alongside their umpire colleagues as part of the officiating team within the England Hockey League Structure and at various EH Competition Tournaments. In a few of the Area Leagues, notably in the North, Match Officials undertake a similar role within the Premier Divisions. Locally, over the last year TO’s have supported Area Indoor events; Armed Forces tournaments (in Portsmouth and Aldershot); County Cup Final Days; Regional Masters Finals (at Reading) etc.

The Technical Appointment Panel are always looking for more volunteers to become Technical Officials. Details can be found on via this link.

<https://www.englishhockey.co.uk/deliver/officiate/technical-officiating/how-to-get-involved>

Or just phone me (07740 699855) for a chat about the role and the commitment involved.

David Rigby
April 2022