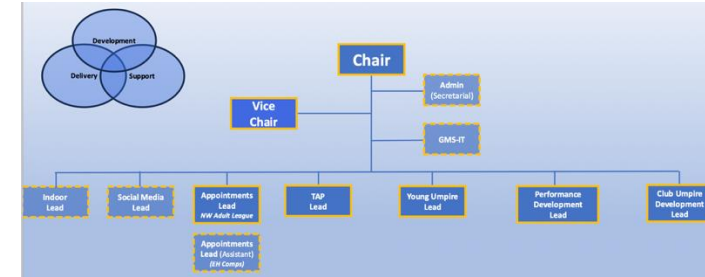


# North West AOC Briefing and Guidance to Umpires 2025-26



# This document (August 2025) sets out the key things that can help your development as an umpire, coach and/or assessor



- ❖ Chair **Tony Shutt** Email: [officiatingchair@northwesthockey.co.uk](mailto:officiatingchair@northwesthockey.co.uk)
- ❖ Vice Chair, GMS & Tech Support **Chris Reece** Email: [officiatingvicechair@northwesthockey.co.uk](mailto:officiatingvicechair@northwesthockey.co.uk)
- ❖ Performance Development Lead **Nick Kearsey** Email: [performancedevlead@northwesthockey.co.uk](mailto:performancedevlead@northwesthockey.co.uk)
- ❖ Club Umpire Development Lead **Jane Evans** Email: [umpiredevlead@northwesthockey.co.uk](mailto:umpiredevlead@northwesthockey.co.uk)
- ❖ Appointments Lead **Tony Shutt** Email: [appointmentslead@northwesthockey.co.uk](mailto:appointmentslead@northwesthockey.co.uk)
- ❖ Appointments Lead Assistant **Graham Morrison** Email: [graham@heritage-paints.co.uk](mailto:graham@heritage-paints.co.uk)
- ❖ (EH Competitions)
- ❖ Young Umpire Lead **Joy Elliot-Bowman** Email: [youngumpireslead@northwesthockey.co.uk](mailto:youngumpireslead@northwesthockey.co.uk)
- ❖ Technical Official Lead **John Dixon** Email: [technicalofficiating@northwesthockey.co.uk](mailto:technicalofficiating@northwesthockey.co.uk)

# Contents

---

- **Pre-, During, and Post-Match Advice**
- **Game Management and Skills**
- **Use of Radios**
- **Keeping up to Date – Maintaining consistency, accuracy**

# Pre - and Post Match

---

- Aim for consistency of performance.
- Look after yourself – umpiring is rewarding but also challenging mentally and physically.
- **Maintain physical fitness**
  - Ensure Regular fitness training
  - Include match warm ups and cool downs
  - Don't ignore injuries – rest and treat
  - Ensure sufficient nutrition and hydration.

## Maintain umpire performance

- Maintain knowledge of Rules and FIH Umpire Guidance.
- Work on Game Management skills – signals, communication, presentation, positioning
  - Access information and courses via the EH Hockey Hub.
- Reflect and learn from performances.
- Reflect on what went well, or less well, and what to improve on for next game.
- Discuss incidents with other Players, Captains, Coaches and Umpires after the match.
  - Use video clips and films of others and yourself.

# Game Management – Pre Match Advice

---

- **Good pre-match preparation** & discussion with your colleague on the day
  - Arrive in good time, look the part
  - Allow time for preparation – pre match chat, physical warm up and checking the pitch,
  - Meet your colleague 1 hour pre-match for your chat and/or make contact during the week
  - Engage with teams and any Captain/Coach/Assessor.
- **Cover everything You need personally in The Pre Match Chat**
  - Areas of control
  - Own area and supporting role for colleague
    - E.g. PCs, direction of play towards centre of pitch
  - ‘What if’ scenarios, Plan A, B and C
  - Timing of the match
  - Management of suspended players – award, timing, extension of time, returning to play
  - Raised balls and danger
  - Radios – how, what to expect/hear
  - Adapting management during the game, if required
  - Reflect on previous games and team feedback post-match.

## **Working with the Match Official (MO)**

- Timing of Cards
- Bench/Technical Area Management
- Management of suspended players – award, timing, extension of time, returning to play

# Game Management – Applying Rules & Using Skills

- **Read the game**
  - Positioning and timely movement contributes to the accuracy and acceptance of decision making.
- **Employ good Game Management Skills** – aka the “Control Curve” or “Ladder of Control”. Does everything match up?
  - Recognise the phase and temperature and style of the game for appropriate management
  - Recognise player actions, intent and skill ability
  - Set tolerance levels early (tackles, 5m, dissent/challenges)
  - Vary the message from Soft/hard and to match the level of infringement
  - Use variations in Whistle Tone/length of blow
  - Demonstrate Open and Confident Body Language
  - Use the Voice – tone and loudness convey the appropriate message and help players
  - Make accurate and timely decision making and use clear signals
    - Arena umpiring
  - Don't go from nothing to personal penalties (cards) should not come as a surprise.
  - Cards:
    - Show them clearly and obviously to all
    - Award the card at an appropriate time (allow any advantage to continue and go back).



# Game Management – Advantage, Flow & communication

- **Judge early** what is the 'best advantage' for game flow.
  - Possession isn't necessarily an advantage - can the player take advantage of 'the advantage'?
    - Is a quicker whistle better on occasions, to allow for the quick self-pass or even a PC?
    - Is the player having to work too hard for the advantage – e.g. often easier away from the sideline.
  - Does the game need to be stopped at that point if play can continue with benefit?
  - Is there a need to go back to address a previous infringement?
- **Communicate with Respect**
  - Use your voice (to the individual or team), along with whistle and body language skills.
    - Arena - how widely does the communication need to be conveyed?
  - Player 'Verbals' and dissent – use the voice to manage initially
  - 5 m - set this from the start. Then use of positive reaffirmation can follow e.g. "thanks, that's great, let's keep to that" "make sure – the full 5m please", "another metre, please".
  - Stick offences. Set tolerances from the start and be proactive "take care" and "let's not have that today", or "No More".
  - Judge and communicate Unintentional vs Deliberate Breakdowns and deliver the appropriate 'message'
  - Position of free hits – be more precise in the 23m. Communicate before it's taken!
    - Stationary ball for free hits.
  - Use of the voice to be proactive and to back up some decisions is welcomed by the players – even when not blowing.
    - Let them know you're looking at the same thing.

- **Whistle tone** says everything – use the full range and reflect the message being given
  - Use short peeps to set the ball or players at free hits
  - Standard blow for technical infringements
  - Louder/longer whistle for more serious/deliberate infringements.
- **Body language/demeanour** - Non Verbal Communication can be key
  - Looking relaxed through to appearing more 'assertive'
  - Use of eye contact and facial expressions – a smile, glare, or frown
  - Having an open and confident stance, avoiding aggression
  - Displaying an interest in, and respect for, the game and players.

# Use of Radios

- Radio communication is a welcome tool for an umpire
  - As an addition to the game; not as a replacement for existing communication and management skills.
- Whether new to using radios, or more experienced
  - Discuss use of radios pre-match with umpire colleague
    - What to say and how to communicate potential for radio malfunction/availability during a match
    - What not to say and avoiding running commentary.

## [Instructions for pairing radios](#)

## [Umpire guidance when using radios](#)

