



South Central Hockey

Area Officiating Committee

England Hockey Officiating – South Central Branch Annual General Meeting – 2023

The SC EHO Branch AGM was held, by Zoom, on Monday 15th May, 2023. There were 39 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.

The reports were adopted en bloc, proposed by Karen Daffey and seconded by Stephen Smyth.

Election of Officers – there were no vacant posts and, therefore, no elections.

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 2023 AGM

Jonty Rider

Mark Cumming

Gordon Wiseman

Chris Hulatt

Liz Spencer

Paul Godfrey

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Chair's Report – 2023 AGM

We have now completed our second season as the South Central Area and we are gradually settling into the new normal. Most things are working better now but we still seem to be beta testing GMS!

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 second South Central season. Without you we really couldn't have done it.

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

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

Without them my job would have been impossible – and, without them, we would not have got through this season in as good a way as we have. Their individual reports will show the extent of work that has been carried out – we, in South Central, are very lucky to have such an exceptional band of volunteers.

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 still very many clubs from whom we get little or no response. We are here to help – but we need you to get in touch with us, or just respond to us, to let us know how best we can help.

Development

Again 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 (your Monday Mixer concept has been adopted by several other Areas

now), and the Level 1 assessment team now being managed by Hatty Wood.

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

<https://umpiredev.co.uk/>

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. 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 Sam Krasner has stepped in to try to bring on our young umpires. A successful coaching session was held at Reading, watching the umpiring of a national league match followed by discussions with coaches and the umpires.

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 South Central Areas is working on the availability of kit for officials and we hope to have more news on this shortly.

Summary

Thanks to everyone who has helped us get through our second 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 2023.

Simon Milford

Chair, South Central Area Officiating Committee

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Vice-Chairman's Report – Alan Dow

The role of Vice Chair is split into two parts: support for the Chair and being part of the Area discipline team.

In supporting the chair, I have taken over attending the Officiating Working Group (OWG) meetings on behalf of South Central. This group comprises representatives of each Area and represents officials to England Hockey. The current focus is to look at why all Areas are struggling to recruit new officials and what can be done to improve this. It should be noted that South Central has significantly more officials than most Areas and appoints further down the league structure than most. However, the issues of an ageing set of officials and a slow uptake of new officials means that we need to work on recruitment.

The OWG is also looking the EHO strategy, originally created before the reorganisation into Areas, considering current experiences.

Discipline has seen a significant improvement this year in South Central. The number of Red Cards (RC) and Matchday Misconduct Offences (MMO) have significantly dropped to less than 30% of the previous season. Sadly, the majority have been for umpire abuse (although much fewer than the previous season), but the message that players/coaches must not abuse the umpires seems to have been received. This is in contrast with other Areas, where the number of RC/MMOs has increased.

Alan Dow

Vice-Chairman EHO, South Central

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Appointing

This year's appointing for South Central has been somewhat frustrating and challenging at times for various reasons:

Game Management System

- Still not fully fit for purpose however but it has improved as the season progressed.
- Not being able to create friendly fixtures due to the financing functionality which means all fixtures have to be created by GMS support.
- Not having the ability to move matches from England Hockey (Cup) / BUCS to South Central without going through GMS Helpdesk.

Other aspects of frustration have been caused by:

- Having a two week break mid half season which meant playing late December / early January then having to cancel all the games due to the weather.
- Teams cancelling the fixture at late notice for various reasons and leaving appointed umpires without a game.

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 = 3250 (Does not account for the re-appointing to the games lost to the weather)
- Appointments Indoor = 50
- Assessments Outdoor = 93 (not including L1 umpire qualification assessments)
- Coaching Outdoor = 154

Development

Overall:

Another challenging season trying to match development work with umpire ambition and performance. More coaching watchings were achieved than the previous season, with slightly fewer assessments, due to slightly reduced availability for various reasons.

Development Team:

Huge thanks to the Development Team who continue to brave the weather (and occasionally the benches) at the side of the pitch for all the work put in to help their fellow officiating volunteers improve. Some were only able to help with one or two appointments due to the overwhelming need for their umpiring skills, but their efforts are appreciated all the same.

Congratulations to Rick Goddard and Mark Rutherford for qualifying to join the Development team – both have been very well received by those lucky enough to see them!

Promotions:

We are very pleased to hear that former SCHUA/SCO umpires Mike Boyne (men's) and Donovan Rothman (women's) have both been promoted within their L3 panels and continue to progress well in their umpiring.

Although only one nomination to NPUA was officially put during this season, we are delighted that three umpires will be put forward during the 'off' season or at the very beginning of next.

Congratulations are due to Chris Pelmore, who was nominated and has passed his L3 outdoor assessment (men's panel). Congratulations to Alan Dow and Richard Walsh who will be nominated for L3 (women's panel) and Tim Clay who will be nominated for L3 (men's panel).

Making the move from L1 to L2, congratulations are due to Jacqui Barlow and Aaron Bennett (women's panel), Nick Eva, Jason Holford and Matt Sykes (men's panel).

Several umpires continue to progress very well within their current level, which means the Development team will be very busy early next season!

Frustrations:

A continued source of frustration is not being able to show umpire panels and levels easily or at all within the GMS system, which has caused confusion and some consternation among umpires and developers alike! We are planning to have something in place on the umpiredev.co.uk website as an interim measure while we wait for GMS to catch up with

working practices.

Another frustration is the lack of progress from EH about a common assessment framework across the eight Areas. Again we will be implementing our own framework and making this available to all developers and umpires on the umpiredev website.

Successes:

The in-season Monday Mixer (Zoom meeting) continues to go from strength to strength as an opportunity for all umpires across the Area to come together and discuss/debate issues around umpiring. This has led to some lively discussion and lots of laughs, so we would encourage all umpires to try to attend at 7.30pm on a Monday evening (starting again in September) if they can.

Next season we will be making the meeting recording available for one week for anyone that can't make a Monday but would like to keep up to date with latest guidance. Questions for the Mixer can also be submitted by umpires who would like them discussed but can't attend!

Allan Notman, Lead Appointer and Ginette Tessier, Lead Developer

April 2023

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Club Liaison Officer – Rowena Shepherd

Annual Report Season 2022 - 2023

This second season of the South Central area felt much more familiar and normal. People from the north and south of the area are working together to try and offer the hockey clubs in the area the support they require.

Overall, in the 2022 -23 season more progress was made on getting to know all the clubs and people in South Central that had started in the initial season of the South Central Hockey area.

My focus was on creating and improving the links between every club and the South Central officiating committee and starting a dialogue between us. I sent an email addressed to a named person from each club in the area and asked for information about all aspects of their club's umpiring arrangements. As far as possible I contacted either or both the Umpire Liaison officer [ULO] or the Club umpire Developer [CUD].

I was hoping to learn as much as possible about umpiring provisions at each club and especially to find out whether or not they had problems or difficulties. I wanted to hear about club umpires and also to make contact with the individuals managing the club umpiring. I was particularly keen to get in touch with those developing and coaching the umpires at every club. I also wanted to make sure that everyone knew how to contact me. It was important to let every club know that help and support with umpiring issues was and remains available to them through SC. For example, umpire coaching could be arranged for a club if requested.

The response to the email was disappointing. Only a third of clubs replied. However, there has been good useful communication established between SC and some clubs. Similarly, a number of individuals have turned to us for advice throughout the season on a variety of umpiring topics.

Clubs were also asked to consider using summer hockey at the end of last season as an opportunity for coaching existing club umpires or developing new umpires. The same suggestion has been made again.

Level One assessments

I am very grateful to Hatty Wood for all the work she has done organising the Level One Assessments. She is a very effective administrator of the level one assessment system. Candidates for level one assessment contact Hatty directly and she then manages the process. Over 16 umpires have passed their

level one assessments so far this season. Thanks are also due to the level one assessors who generously volunteer their time to conduct the assessments.

I am happy to stand again next season.

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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 TOs from South Central have supported the following:

Schools and Club events at Lee Valley; Four Nations Masters events; Area Indoor events; and Armed Forces tournaments (in Portsmouth and Aldershot).

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

<https://www.englandhockey.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 2023