



South Central Hockey

Area Officiating Committee

England Hockey Officiating – South Central Branch Annual General Meeting – 2024

The SC EHO Branch AGM was held, by Zoom, on Wednesday 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, and no report from TAP (due to family life intruding on hockey).

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.

Jacqui Barlow, on behalf of the South Central Area, thanked the AOC, and the many others who have helped in the officiating arena, for their hard work through the year which has allowed us to develop umpires and appoint to as many fixtures as we did.

Natasha Wilson, representing England Hockey, echoed those sentiments.

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 2024 AGM

Karen Daffey

Jason Holford

Steve Hills

Jim Patel

David Boyle

Gordon Wiseman

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Chair's Report – 2024 AGM

We have now completed our third season as the South Central Area and we are still 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 another 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 third 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 being managed by Hatty Wood.

Steve "Goddards" Godwin and Simon Watkins have also worked tirelessly to support Officiating this season. Goddards has led the roll out of club training night sessions, intended to help encourage and support new umpires. Simon has been the driving force behind the "pre-match chat" guidance document which can be found here:

<https://umpiredev.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/SCO-Prompts-Introductory.pdf>

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

Sadly the Lead for Young Umpires post is still vacant and we remain keen for someone to join us to help support the development of our Young Umpires. Please get in touch if you feel able to help – we have people from all around the Area willing to help as members of a sub-committee, but we really do need someone to lead.

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.

Summary

Thanks to everyone who has helped us get through our third 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 2024.

Simon Milford

Chair, South Central Area Officiating Committee

South Central Hockey

Area Officiating Committee

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 attend 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 activity of the OWG has been limited, due several reasons. EH have struggled to understand and define the role of the OWG in the EH family and availability of the key individuals has not helped.

This issuing of a document by the OWG in relation of the use of cards, is now acknowledged to have been a mistake and has led to a significant review of what is the purpose of the OWG. The OWG has been agreed to be the main committee for EHO, therefore next season more work will be done of supporting club umpires.

Discipline continues to see improvements with South Central having one of the lowest numbers of Red Cards and MMOs for any Area. The sad news is that too many of them have been given for umpire abuse. The guidelines have been updated this season so that umpire abuse now results in a minimum of a 30-day suspension.

Alan Dow

Vice-Chairman EHO, South Central

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APPOINTING & COACHING / SELECTION REPORT

This year' 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 without going through GMS Helpdesk. This looks like a function that won't be introduced as it means amending areas within finance
- 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.
- Lack of pre match contact from the ULO's

We would personally like to thank the 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.
- Indoor

achieving the following statistics (from GMS, so may be slightly different to actual numbers):

- Appointments Outdoor = 3,009
- Appointments Indoor = c. 43
- Assessments Outdoor = 81
- Coaching Outdoor = 119

Development

A great season for many, including successful nominations to Level 3 (NPUA) for Hatty Wood and James Bartrip (women's panel) and Paul Godfrey, Simon Gibbons, Tim Clay (men's panel).

Richard Stanley is nominated to Level 3 (women's panel) for the 24/25 season. Sam Howard is also nominated to Level 3 (men's panel), after returning to us briefly!

We promoted several umpires to L2 panel, including Tom Simpson, Nick Gage (men's panel) and Anna Luxton (women's panel).

There have also been umpires who have worked hard to progress and will be receiving continuity coaching at the beginning of next season as we continue with this model that has been so successful this season.

We have asked Rob West to formally take on the role of looking after development for Level 1 umpires taking neutral appointments, so that there is someone dedicated to achieving similar results to those we have seen at Level 2.

Not all umpires have achieved what they wanted to this season. For some, there have been personal events including injuries that have affected timings; for others, they have struggled to demonstrate what is needed from them just yet. However, we will continue to support all umpires taking neutral appointments, including providing 'MOT' type watchings for umpires who wish to remain at their current level for as long as they can.

Particular thanks must go to our increasing army of development support – coaches and assessors – who often complete either two matches in one day or forgo umpiring themselves to carry out the development work needed. We are very fortunate in South Central to have some incredible development experience and some really good interest in joining the development team. There are so many ways to support our sport and we work hard to help everyone who wants to be involved and have fun doing it!

There is still much work to be done with development, including making the assessment criteria between and within panels much more clear for umpires. Creating even more transparency in the way promotions and nominations are conducted. Ensuring umpires are given clear and unambiguous guidance on what they need to do to achieve what they want.

Not every umpire will be able to achieve promotion – not every umpire wants to. We will continue though to reinforce the importance of personal responsibility in achieving aims, whatever those aims are. While we can provide guidance and advice, ultimately it is up to the individual to work at what they need to, to understand their potential and accept that.

We will continue to offer the Monday Mixer sessions in season, with a few planned changes to the format to test next season, as we are building a good library of clips we can use to spark discussion and promote better understanding of the nuances of umpiring.

Allan Notman, Lead Appointer

Ginette Tessier, Lead Developer

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Club Liaison Officer – Rowena Shepherd

Annual Report Season 2023 - 2024

Rowena Shepherd - Lead Club Liaison

The indications, from this third season of the South Central area, are that everyone in the region is working well together to support hockey and hockey clubs in the area.

I have been pleased to support the most significant and important evolution in umpire development in the south central region. Steve Godwin from Fareham Hockey Club had the initiative to create a coaching and development session especially for the development of club umpires. The sessions are very popular. The development sessions have already been taken to several clubs in the South Central Area such as Wallingford, Staines, Maidenhead, Alton and Trojans.

In brief: In response to a request from a South Central club, Steve Godwin, accompanied by other south central umpire coaches and developers, attend a club training session. Various administrative arrangements are sorted out before the session. The sessions are for any club umpires at the club - as well as people who think they might be interested in becoming an umpire. All the club umpires are then offered intensive support while they umpire a training type match.

The feedback from these intensive development sessions has been good and some clubs are already hoping for another session next season.

It remains quite challenging to contact club umpire development officials. I rely on communicating through GMS which only offers a limited range of club contacts. Emails are addressed to both the club secretary and the club liaison officer with the explicit hope that they will be forwarded to club umpire developers. This means that information about events such as Steve Godwin's sessions or details about the recent seminars given by Keely Dunn may not percolate through to the appropriate club official.

It would be helpful if club umpire developers could let me know their contact details at the start of next season. If it is easy to contact you - then your club will not miss out on future opportunities.

Level one Assessments

Level one assessments continued to work well this season. Hatty Wood administers the arrangements very effectively. Thanks to Hatty and also to the level one assessors who generously volunteer their time to conduct the assessments.

There were 22 successful L1 assessments this season (Richard Wood top of the L1 assessor table, with Rowena and David Boyle joint third!).

Using Trojans and Hawks summer leagues for assessments over the break – get in touch with your club umpire developer or myself if you feel you are ready for an assessment.