



South Central Hockey

Area Officiating Committee

England Hockey Officiating – South Central Branch Annual General Meeting – 2025

The SC EHO Branch AGM was held, by Zoom, on Wednesday 14th May, 2024. There were 24 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). Thanks, especially, to Sophie Parker for producing the first ever Young Umpires report for South Central.

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 2025 AGM

Karen Daffey
Andy Craig
Hatty Wood
TJ Galloway
Jim Patel
Linda McCormack
Chris Hulatt
Eilish MacBean
Lesley Potter

South Central Hockey

Area Officiating Committee

Chair's Report – 2025 AGM

We have now completed our fourth season as the South Central Area and life as an Area seems to be settling down and, dare I say, even GMS!

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 fourth 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.

Upcoming developments from England Hockey

Following the England Hockey AGM recently, and the vote for the new membership structure, there are good things coming for officiating in the new season, with free umpiring courses and also, hopefully, free access to match official training too. This should make it easier for anyone to access umpire and officiating training with, hopefully, an increase in the number of people undertaking these courses.

There is also work being done currently to update the Level 1 course, to develop the whole umpiring development process (it may not be called Levels 1, 2 and 3 next season) and work is also going into documenting the skills required to be an umpire, with a view to improving consistency across the country.

What we in South Central are doing

Our development team, lead by Ginette, are busy developing an on-line training course for those people who are thinking about picking up a whistle for the first time, as well as those people who have been umpiring for a while and just want to improve their umpiring so that they can support their clubs better.

We are also developing a video library, with video clips taken, mostly, from South Central matches which will help to see how to, and possibly how not to, develop your umpiring skills.

Head over to <https://umpiredev.co.uk/> to see what is going on here.

So looking like good news for next season – enjoy the break, if you are having one, and come back refreshed in September.

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.

We have continued to develop the South Central Hit Squad, run by Steve “Goddards” Godwin, to try to help clubs to develop more umpires. Many clubs have held successful sessions and we have been asked back to several to run either similar courses or extension courses.

Without clubs carrying on umpire development it is clear that the number of umpires will dwindle away, very much to the detriment of our sport. We really need ALL clubs to stand up and operate an umpire development process. Get in touch if you need any help setting up or running such a system – your game needs you.

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 some 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 and the Level 1 coaching sessions run by Rob West.

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

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

Appointing

Appointing has been even more of a challenge this season, given the reducing number of umpires making themselves available to cover neutral appointments – 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

We have been very fortunate this season to have the services of Sophie Parker as our Lead for Young Umpires. Sophie has been leading on appointing young umpires, where possible and with suitable support, across both indoor and outdoor sessions.

Congratulations too, to Sophie, on being appointed to the Premier Panel in NPUA, showing that she can also be a real role model for our younger 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.

Summary

Thanks to everyone who has helped us get through our fourth 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 2025.

Simon Milford

Chair, South Central Area Officiating Committee

South Central Appointing and Coaching/Selection Report 24-25

Some of this may sound familiar to last year – mainly because some things have frustratingly still not moved on! Frustrations with GMS:

- 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 = 3,015
- Appointments Indoor = c. 43
- Assessments Outdoor = 99 (2023-2024: 81)
- Coaching Outdoor = 173 (2023-2024: 119)

Development

A great season for many, including successful nominations to Level 3 (NPUA) for Aaron Bennett (women's panel) and Jonty Rider (men's panel).

Several umpires were promoted to L2 panel, including David Copus (men's panel) and Simon Gibson-Sexton and Kate Summerfield (women's panel).

A number of umpires also achieved promotions within their current grade including Emma Hartley, Nick Eva, Nathan Butler and Michael Preece (men's panel) and Conrad Hall, Jason Holford, Anna Luxton, Nick Eva, Avtar Hunter-Singh, Pip Hart and Nathan Butler (women's panel)

We welcomed Alex Cornborough to neutral appointments within South Central.

Outside of formal coaching and develop at matches, we tested the format of the Monday Mixer sessions by introducing specific topics to discuss at most sessions, which were well received. We were supported once again by Keely Dunn, using her incredible experience and knowledge to work with countless umpires on both positioning and communication. We are delighted that Keely will continue to offer us support into the 2025-26 season.

After being asked to take on management of development resource for Level 1 umpires, Rob West has done a sterling job so far, without dismissing the amount still left to do. We remain short of development resource towards the north of the Area.

Huge thanks to the appointing teams and all the developers, including those who only got limited practice this season.

We have lots of plans to improve our offering even further in the next season – watch this space!

Allan Notman, Lead Appointer

Ginette Tessier, Lead Developer

South Central Hockey

Area Officiating Committee

Club Liaison Officer – Rowena Shepherd

Annual Report Season 2024 - 2025

Rowena Shepherd - Lead Club Liaison

Once again I started the season with a round robin email to every club in South Central using GMS and addressed to several of the contacts listed for each club on GMS. Apart from providing my contact details and a point of contact with SCO - I use this email to try to engage with individual club umpire developers.

The success of this method of communication is mixed. Several clubs reply with details of their progress on umpire development, others respond requesting support and advice - but it seems that the email does not get through to every club and/ or few club umpire developers. It is very challenging for me to get in touch with every club umpire developer. This means that it is very difficult to share information with all the appropriate people about planned coaching and information sessions.

The sterling work of Steve Godwin [Godders] and the Hit Squad on the coaching and development of club umpires continues. In the same way as last season, Godders offers an evening of club umpire coaching to any club that requests it. Many senior umpires and umpire coaches from South Central have been happy to give their time to support Godder's initiative. These sessions offer one- to - one , or very small group coaching to club umpires. Clubs from all parts of South Central area have been supported. The feedback from these sessions is excellent.

Godder's work is very impressive and I try to offer support wherever I can and also advertise the possibility of receiving a concentrated evening of umpire coaching far and wide.

I attended the inaugural session of the National Officiating Club Liaison Leads meeting in April this year. This was a meeting of all the Club Liaison officers from each of areas. It was useful to meet each other and to find out how other areas operate. We made a start on discussing the problems we encounter. A further meeting will be held in due course.

The level one assessment programme works very well thanks to the efficient administration of Hatty Wood. Thanks are due to Hatty and to the level one assessors who generously volunteer their time to conduct the assessments.

I am happy to stand again next season.

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 for 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.

In previous years, locally we have supported a number of events. Sadly in 2024/25 late notice and lack of Technical Officials has meant that we have been unable to support when asked.

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 2025

South Central Young Umpire Lead Report 2025

I feel it has been a successful first season of being the lead of SC Young umpires. Although we have only appointed to three events, we are starting to build a 'catalogue' of Young Umpires that are keen to learn and progress.

Events that we have appointed to are:

Girls and Boys U16 Regional Indoor Finals – 2 x YUs

Girls U15 JAC at Basingstoke – 2 x YUs

In2Hockey Regional Finals – 10 x YUs

I am reliably informed that this year was the first time since the formation of South Central that Young Umpires have been centrally appointed to In2Hockey finals. It was an incredibly successful day, with compliments from team coaches as well as the parents of umpires who commented on how well supported their YUs had been.

Looking forward to next year, I would like to provide some training for developers, and potentially some of our Level 2 umpires, on how best to support Young Umpires when appointed with them.

I would also like to continue building a network of young umpires that we can call upon to appoint to junior events.

It's been a slow start, but I think we're definitely moving in a positive direction.

Many thanks,

Sophie Parker

South Central Young Umpiring Lead