

EDUCATION OFFICER'S AGM REPORT 2013

The education team has been busy as usual over the last year.

Last November saw the second running of a Level 1A course in Leicestershire and Rutland. Twelve qualified umpires moving on from the Level 1 course contributed to a very stimulating six weeks of discussion and learning. Following assessment of their work-books in the New Year they were elevated to the next level of qualification.

Level 1, running as usual in two locations through the Spring, produced newly qualified umpires to add to the Associations ranks. Of twenty three students, seventeen completed the course and passed the examination. It was particularly pleasing that the groups accurately reflected the ethnic structure of our cricket playing community. I hope you have had the chance to stand with some of these new umpires and enjoyed their company.

I would stress the need for every experienced umpire to welcome new colleagues and support, where necessary, the formative months of their careers. While we do not have the resources to constantly monitor and assess the progress of new members, it is incumbent on each of us to help and advise when appropriate. A simple exchange of ideas and thoughts before and after a game will assist the novice but also enable the experienced umpire to assess his own performance in a match, preventing staleness or apathy creeping into our officiation. A full mentoring programme is beyond our capabilities at present but, informal help when apposite must be to everyone's benefit.

Our plans for the forthcoming training season contain one radical departure, at least to our association. It has always been a concern that a course running over thirteen or fourteen weeks, is too much of a commitment for some potential umpires. With work and family responsibilities taking so much time many new umpires have been lost to us. For the first time we have planned a more intensive weekend course at Kibworth C C. It will cover the same areas of Law, management and field technique but will be held on four Saturdays in March and finish with the same examination leading to the level 1 qualification. This type of course has been successful run elsewhere and we have taken particular note of the experiences of our colleagues in Lincolnshire before embarking on this route ourselves. The danger is that the intensity makes it more difficult to successfully pass the course and step onto the field as competent novice umpires but that is a danger we recognise and will address. The alternative is to again let keen volunteers slip through our fingers. The interest in this course is already very encouraging and we will see how it develops.

If students want to do a longer, less intensive evening course, we are still going to run the traditional one at Electricity Sports C C from Wednesday 8th January to 9th April, 2014. So there remains a choice and we can compare the results in due course. I would ask all members to promote the courses and encourage those retiring players of whom you are aware, to put something back into the game they have loved, by enrolling onto either course.

At the time of writing this report we are about to commence on the Level 1A course. Only five students have committed to attending at this point but, we expect a lively discussion on the syllabus topics nevertheless.

In addition, thanks go to my fellow tutors who give up a vast amount of their time to benefit what were the local leagues but are now the single structure. I hope they all enjoyed their successes in 2012/13 and will again rise to the heights in 2013/14. You have a very talented and dedicated group of tutors who serve you well. Finally, my thanks to Chris Lawman for doing all the administration

involved in this area and of course the Chairman for his support as well. Without either of them the courses would be impossible.

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