

**L & RCL Umpires
Minutes of Meeting
Held at Electricity Sports, Leicester**

Meeting commenced at 7.07 pm on 3rd November 2014

Present:

Chairman: Gordon Hubbard (GH)

Members: Lawrie Anthony, David Barnett, Peter Bates, Paul Bearpark, John Bown, Michael Challands, Virsen Chauhan, Trevor Colver, Anthony Cox, Huw Davies, Christopher Day, Maurice Deacon, David Goodacre, Geoff Farmer, Carl Gurney, Robert Gunn, Shashikant Guray, Eric Hanson, John Harrop, Stephen Horner, Bob Inchley, Christopher Johnson, Ray Jones, Alan Jordan, Derek Jordan, Alex Mofford, Neil Palmer, Mush Patel, Kishor Patel, Alan Pearce, Derek Pearson, Dan Pedley, Peter Pickard, Graham Pickering, Greg Polkey, Graham Pratt, Mohammad Rahaman, John Redwood, Brian Riddle, SM SAifuddin, Colin Samuels, Andrew Sarratt, Michael Shipman, Robert Sizer, Andrew Smith, Kevin Smyth, Balkrishna Solanki, Alan Sommer, Dick Spiers, Hugh Stubbs, Julian Sutherley, Melvyn Swingler, Keith Towers, Tony Upton, Rodney Watts, Robin Whait, and Dave Whittles

Apologies

Ian Armitage, Phil Barston, Julian Cartwright, Simon Clark, Roy Clark, Maurice Deacon, Graham Dexter Richard Fowkes, Alan Gates, Peter Hammond, Michael Hextall, Philip Palfreyman, Dave Perry and Paul Whiteman.

Welcome and Introduction

GH opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the first post-season meeting of the Leicestershire and Rutland Cricket League (L&RCL) Umpires Panel. The following persons were introduced to the meeting:

Colin Samuels (CS) . Secretary L&R ACO
Chris Johnson (CJ) . Education Officer L&R ACO
Kevin Smyth (KS) - Appointments Secretary Tier 1&2
Mike Challands (MC) - Appointments Secretary Tier 3
Robin Whait (RW) - Appointments Secretary Tier 4

Minutes of last meeting

Approved, then signed by GH

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

GH then spoke on the following:

The first season of the new League was always going to be testing one on how the appointments went, how marking of all umpires was accepted by both the umpires themselves and by the clubs doing the marking, where this had not been done before.

Remember umpires in the old Senior League and Leicestershire League had never been marked before nor had their clubs marked umpires before.

Those issues aside the biggest contention by the clubs and the players was the distribution of umpires within the League.

This was explained to the clubs at their pre-season meeting how we would be operating initially but as usual they didn't take any notice.

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103 umpires officiated in the League last season.

Over the past few weeks, since the end of the season, the Umpires Panel Committee has met three times to address the issues that the League Management has raised regarding umpiring issues.

They would like to see:

a] All umpires to be members of ACO

This we have started to address - and from the start of the 2015 season all umpires on the Panel will have to be members of ECB ACO.

At the moment we are down to only 7 members of last year's panel who have not yet joined ACO. Four of those are over issues with either DBS [that's the old CRB's new name] being out of date or change of Bank details not allowing the Direct Debit to go through.

So in reality we have only three umpires to persuade to become members of ACO.

ACO membership subscription is just less than the expenses that you receive for umpiring one game. Membership gives you the satisfaction of knowing that you have adequate insurance cover and the association is there to help and offer support should you require it - including Umpire Development and Education.

b] That we appoint umpires to matches from the Premier League downwards until we run out of umpires.

Our proposal to address this is as follows:

To make life easier in trying to explain this to you I will refer to Divisions as being at a Tier Level.

For this purpose the Premier League is Tier 1,
Divisions 1 to 3 are Tier 2,
Divisions 4, 5 and 6 are Tier 3.

The Premier Division down to Division 3 [Tiers 1 and 2] to have two umpires per match each week.

Last year we had situations where Club 1st XIs in Division 3 had no umpire whilst their 2nd XIs in Divisions 5, 6 or 7 had two umpires.

All umpires officiating in Tiers 1 and 2 to be ACO qualified to at least Level 1.

Tier 3.

Division 4 matches to have a minimum of one umpire per game each week.

The League Management Committee has made a significant change here by increasing it to three divisions – East, West and Central.

All umpires officiating in Division 4 to be ACO Qualified to a minimum of Level 1.

New umpires i.e. those attending ACO Training Courses during the off season to be placed in Division 4 and to be paired each week with an experienced colleague.

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Division 5. [which is also Tier 3]

The only stipulation for umpires in Division 5 [the lowest Division where umpires will be appointed] is that they are members of ECB ACO.

Up to yesterday we did feel that we had enough umpires left to cover this level with one umpire per game but in my notice of a League Management meeting for tomorrow night it looks as if there is a possibility that Division 5 might also be increased to 3 divisions.

This is to try and get more promotion and relegation of clubs trying to find the right level for them to play at.

These arrangements do need some of the unqualified umpires amongst you to become qualified by attending a training course as we do not have enough qualified members to cover Division 4. Plus it does mean that any umpire officiating in Division 5 and feels he would like to progress to umpire in Division 4 and above he must be qualified to do so.

For those without any Educational Qualification it does mean that you will be limited to umpiring in Division 5.

To assist any current member of the L&RCL Umpires Panel who is not qualified and he would like to attend a Training Course - L&R ACO will be holding a Training Course, over three Saturdays in March, especially for addressing this issue.

The course fee for this Training Course will be met by using part of the grants given to L&R ACO for Umpire Education and Development by the League and the Cricket Board, that's Leicestershire Cricket Ltd.

I hope that you appreciate we have a duty to the League - and the players - that the umpires we appoint each week are suitable and competent to umpire at their respective level.

The L&RCL and Leicestershire Cricket Ltd are giving us £1,500 and £500 respectively for Umpire Development and Education annually to ensure that their officials are trained to the highest degree and that they maintain that level.

All umpires have been banded by the committee as to where - i.e. which divisions - they will be umpiring in the 2015 season.

In order that we provide two umpires to games in Tier 2 it has meant that 12 umpires from Tier 3 have been promoted to Tier 2.

60 umpires will compose the panels for Tiers 1 and 2. [48 umpires will be required each week]. We have found that availability is about 72% each week.

We have allocated 25 umpires to Division 4 [18 umpires being required each week] with the remaining umpires [about another 25] being placed into Division 5.

c] Playing Conditions and Special Regulations

These are currently being amended by the League Management Committee.

One of the Umpires Panel Committee meetings was given to reviewing the Rules affecting umpires and umpiring, namely Rules nos 17 [Disciplinary Matters], 21 [Umpires], 22 [Scorers], 25 [Hours of Play], 26 [Duration of Play] and Rule 31 [Bowling Restrictions].

We not only tidied up a number of points but also proposed several significant changes.

These have been presented to the League Management and are due to be discussed at the League Management meeting tomorrow night.

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According to the papers that I have received some of our suggestions are being recommended but some have been thrown out.

Concern has been made by the League Management that there were many umpires at all levels, including the Premier League, who went into games not knowing the playing conditions.

It is every umpire's duty to fully understand the Playing Conditions and Special Regulations of any match in which they officiate.

I might also add here as well as - the Laws of the game.

At the Pre-Season Umpires Panel meeting next April these issues will be addressed when the following will be discussed and explained in depth.

Disciplinary Reporting

Hours and Duration of Play

Reduction of Overs due to rain

Bowling Restrictions

The Toss and Captains' briefing

Reporting of no scorers in Premier and Division 1 matches

Ground, Weather and Light along with 30/30 rule on lightening

Please make sure that you all attend that meeting. I would think that will be Monday 13th April – put in your diaries now.

During the summer you may remember that ECB carried out a National Survey on cricket. 7,000 cricketers and past cricketers completed it.

One disturbing statistic that came out of it was that of the 600 players in Leicestershire and Rutland who completed the survey only 58% were satisfied with the umpires in the LR&CL. That is an issue that we have to address.

Last Saturday seven Principal Officers of L&R ACO attended the ECB ACO Midland's Regional Conference at Nottingham - where the main workshop was on Umpire Education, and Player and League expectations of umpires.

One of those officers attending that Conference was the L&R ACO Education Officer, Chris Johnson (CJ), who I would like to ask to address you for a moment on the outcome of that workshop.

CJ then stated the following:

There has been no change in the course materials for level 1 and 1A.

Leicestershire compares really well to other Midlands counties with regard to the volume of courses delivered at level 1A, the number of candidates attending those courses, and the number of newly qualified umpires created by them. By the end of this year we will also compare favorably with our closest neighbours in terms of the number of accredited tutors and the quality of our delivery.

It seems that at that level the Umpire Education is healthy and in good hands.

What happens after that?

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The results of the recent National Playing Survey show that across the country 64% of cricketers are satisfied with the standard of umpiring in their county.

In Leicestershire, however, that figure is 58%. To add some context to this we find that similar surveys carried out in other sports, notably football and rugby have shown a much lower level of customer satisfaction.

That does not mean that we can be complacent or ignore the statistic. While it is true that there are “lies, damned lies and statistics” and we don’t have a satisfactory breakdown of the 644 Leicestershire cricketers who completed the survey the fact remains that 42% of cricketers in Leicestershire are not satisfied with the standard of umpiring!!

What can we learn from that?

It seems that at the base level we are doing really well at recruiting and training new umpires but where we need to improve is in the area of continued development.

What can we do to rectify this?

In 2015 we plan to put the following in place:

- 1) Using time at the regular Monday meetings to run refresher courses for existing umpires.
- 2) Setting up a discreet level 1 course specifically for those umpires who are already officiating in league cricket but do not have an ECB or ACU&S qualification.
- 3) Increase the number of trained boundary assessors so that more umpires can benefit from their feedback.
- 4) Follow up and feedback for newly qualified umpires. No new umpires to be appointed on their own.
- 5) Where possible newly qualified umpires to be paired with an experienced colleague.
- 6) Newly qualified umpires to be mentored by experienced umpires where possible.

All of the above to be delivered under the umbrella of “supported development” in a move that is seen to be positive and definitely not motivated by negative attitudes.

It must be pointed out, however, that while the Education team and other officers on the committee can arrange the above it is every umpire’s responsibility to look after their own game and development. Planning, preparation etc. are important aspects of that.

GH then continued:

It is our intention to use the Monthly Meeting slot that ACO used to use [i.e. the second Monday of each month] in January, February and March as a Refresher Course for all umpires. Different topics will be discussed each month.

Some of you will have seen that Ian Armitage and I have been doing Boundary Assessments last summer, mainly for exam purposes [eg Level 1A and Level 2].

We hope to expand on this next summer as we have some more experienced umpires coming on board as Boundary Assessors.

Boundary Assessment is not an examination - it is a mentoring tool. It is there to help you become a better umpire. If man hours permit - umpires in all divisions could be subject to a Boundary Assessment.

One of the points put forward to the League by clubs for Playing Rules and Regulation Changes is –

Improve umpiring standards – the gulf between the best and the worst is growing.

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The money is there for Umpire Development and Education – let's use it.

Finally I would just like to remind you that the L&R ACO AGM is a week tonight, here at Electricity Sports 7pm start, when the L&R CL Umpires Panel Committee is elected.

There are six places to be filled - Appointment Secretary and Deputy for Tiers 1 and 2 and for Tier 3. The chairman of the committee is the County Performance Officer who is also elected at the L&R ACO AGM and the vice chairman is appointed by ACO from its committee.

If you wish to stand for any of these offices, both for the League Umpire's Panel or any L&R ACO office - it is your right to do so at the L&R ACO AGM.

However you must get yourself nominated and seconded by ACO Colleagues - so please go along fully prepared.

I will now ask the three Appointment Officers to give their Reports then we can have a Question and Answer Session on my Report and theirs.

The three appointment officers then informed the meeting that the last season had had its problems which had resulted in some very last appointments, but on the whole it had gone well.

There were a few questions about coaching ACO members who failed their level 1A and how mentoring was to work.

The question of league overs cards was raised, and GH said that this was in hand.

GH explained how the Appointment officers were elected and that expenses were to be £40 for games in the Premier League and £35 for all other league matches.

A discussion took place about the omissions in the League Handbook, but GH pointed out that this was the first season, and these were really only teething problems.

There being no further business, GH closed the meeting at 8.40 pm.