

VOLUME 26

APRIL 1999

Chairman's Letter

Our 12th AGM approaches - **10th May 1999 at 7.30p.m. at Coombe Dingle** - and the end of our quietest season ever, from the Committee point of view, with fewer clubs entering the EH Cup tournaments, fewer Junior County Games, and only one PUA Course during the season .

The West has had one of its most difficult seasons ever, having to require clubs in Premier 2 Division to provide their own umpires. The 'bonus' is that some Avon umpires have had the opportunity to umpire at a higher level than would be normal for Level 1 umpires. These umpires have performed well and enjoyed, if that is strictly the correct term, the experience.

The West has also relied very heavily on Avon for umpires to cover the many tournaments and trials that the West hold each year. Our particular thanks go to Malcolm Kingshott, one of our new Committee members, who has been our representative to the West Umpiring Sub-Committee and who has done a tremendous job finding umpires to cover these various West requirements. As importantly we thank all those Avon umpires who have given so generously of their time.

The West have acknowledged our help by stating that they could not have fulfilled their umpiring requirements had it not been for the Avon umpires! Praise indeed from the West, who have always been reluctant to send bouquets in our direction!

The Summer League is being held at The Bristol University Sports Ground at Coombe Dingle on the water-based pitch. This league is for the testing, reassessment and coaching of Avon umpires. If you would like to receive some coaching during the Summer League please let me know, as soon as possible. Or if you would just like the opportunity to keep your whistle in working order during the summer, let me know.

You will find details in the Newsletter about our Open Meeting which will be looking at the 'new positioning '.

Finally, yet most importantly, I wish to express my sincere thanks to you all. Last year we had a crisis year. So many of you offered your help and support at that time, and have continued to do so. So many were the offers of help that we were unable to take them all up! [Your turn will come!!] It was so encouraging to receive the support you offered - especially the many 'phone calls just to say 'Thanks, you are doing a good job' - very much appreciated!

Please make every effort to attend the AGM. We shall have the usual AOB in the form of an Open Forum after the AGM business has been completed.

Best Wishes

John

Extract from talk given by Jane Nockolds to the AHUA

The speed of the modern game and the tactics of the players mean that umpires need to work very much as a team themselves to ensure that the game is umpired to a high standard.

There is no such thing as a "disengaged umpire", **both** umpires need to be totally focused for the whole match. Co-operation and positioning are very important aspects of team work.

Co-operation and support (Fig 1)

In open play, you should move **well over** the centre line to assist your colleague. The removal of 'offside' means that the circles often get crowded and this makes it difficult for the umpire controlling the attack to see into the shaded area. However, umpire **XI is well positioned to see and assist.**

When supporting a **penalty corner**, position **X2** is recommended and will give you a better view of obstruction down the line of the ball. In addition, it will allow you to see whether a shot was going inside or outside the post. This will enable you to give your colleague very good advice should you be asked.

Positioning (Figs 1 & 2)

When you have a crowded circle, the traditional position (close to the near-side post) will not always give you the best view. We recommend that you adopt a more flexible approach, where the position of the players is the factor that dictates your position.

Very often, especially at penalty corners, being somewhere around **O2** (Fig 1) will give you a **much better view of play** and if you read the game well, you will **not** get in the way of players.

It is very common, when an attack develops, for the umpire to quickly go towards the back-line even though the game is still being played outside the circle or close to the 23 metres line. This means that an umpire is often trying to make decisions looking back through bodies and legs and is simply **too far away** to make good decisions. When the attack develops, try not to move ahead (in front of play) every time. Look at the position of the players and the potential of play....very often the better view will be from behind the play as opposed to in front of it. We recommend that you experiment with a wider position and then follow (move with) the play as it develops. (Refer to umpire **O1** in fig 2)

Positioning is a very personal part of your umpiring and it is inevitable that from time to time you all get advice from umpire coaches and umpire managers. **Do not be afraid to experiment to find out what works for you.** This is a period of change. The removal of offside has created new opportunities for umpires to take up new positions which give **better** vision, which in turn, will provide the players with **better** quality decisions.

Mobility

The previous paragraphs on Co-operation and Positioning mean that you will have to frequently move quickly up and down the pitch. Learning to **read the game** means that you can anticipate changes in play and this will help your movement, however, there is no doubt that today's umpire does **need to be fit**.

Dear Marge

Dear Marge,

I am a retired umpire who initially passed her test in the 70's when it was the C badge. I was told recently that I have to be re-tested at Level 1 if I wanted to umpire for my club again.

Is this true?

Not Too Old

Dear Not To Old

Yes, is the short answer!

When the new Level 1 assessment came into being it fell to the counties to ensure that they were active and up to the correct standard. Avon Umpires Association therefore brought in the system of re-assessment and the six match card. The re-assessments are usually done on an informal basis but if umpires do not have the chance to be seen during the season they are offered Summer League games. The county assessors try to see each umpire every four years in an endeavour to maintain the standards in the county.

If you have retired recently then you may not have to be re-assessed - ring John James or John Burr to check.

Dear Marge,

I have had my Level 1 for about five years now and feel I would like to move on and try to get my Level 2 badge. How do I do it?

I.M.Keen

Dear I.M.Keen

Great to hear that you are keen to move on. It is only recently that the Western Counties have put into effect a system by which enthusiastic umpires can progress through the ranks.

The system is as follows :-

- *The umpire lets the county secretary know that they are interested in progression.
- *The county then put them forward for coaching by the West Umpire Coaches/Umpires. (Usually July or October)
- *The umpire attends the coaching and works on the constructive criticism offered.
- *The umpire has the opportunity to umpire at West events in February / March.
- *The county arrange a match at which the umpire will be watched before a decision is made to put the umpire forward for the Level 2 badge.
- *The umpire attends the West U21 tournament in September and is watched by the West assessors who make a decision as to whether they will progress.

It sounds long winded but it does give umpires the opportunity to meet with other enthusiastic umpires from other counties and to have a taste of the standard expected from them before the West assessors see them. Advice was taken from the umpires at grass roots level before this system was finalised.

Please contact John James if you are interested and the county will put you in touch with someone with whom to talk things through.

A.G.M.

The 12th Annual AGM of the Umpires Association will be held

Monday 10th May 1999 at 7.30pm

in the University Sports Pavilion, Coombe Dingle

Please make every effort to attend

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OPEN MEETING

'NEW' POSITIONING

Many of you have contacted us about the 'new' positioning. As a result, we have decided to have an evening during our Summer League devoted to this.

Date:- 29th July

Venue :- Bristol University Sports Ground, Coombe Dingle

Format:-

- 1. Meet in Pavillion Small Room at 6.45p.m.**
- 2. Theory Session with questions**
- 3. Observe game being umpired using new positioning 7.45p.m.**
- 4. De-brief 9.00pm.**

Finish 9.30p.m. ' ish!

The umpires who will be leading the session will be

Mike Haynes and Peter Lovell.

Mike has used the new positioning all of last season in both the men's and women's game. Peter has used it during the latter half of the season. Both have umpired together using the new positioning on a number of occasions.

We are hoping that the two teams will be prepared to send a member from each to give us the perspective from the teams point of view.

This is your Newsletter and any comments or views you may have would be gratefully received, please send them to any member of the Committee.