

# Newsletter

Volume 43 September 2004

## CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

By the time you get this newsletter the league season will be upon us and those lazy summer days behind us. During the summer months your new enlarged committee has been working hard on your behalf as can be seen from some of the items in this Newsletter.

The summer league has again been the catalyst for this with new umpires being coached and assessed, established umpires being reassessed and coached and those with potential for progression being identified for a further progression group. The league has also seen us gain two more level 1 umpire coaches in Carolyn Britton and Justin Nicklin and my congratulations go to them.

We have also taken the opportunity to go through and formalize our complaints procedure, which is set out later in this newsletter, - something we aim not to be implemented very often. I would draw your attention to the open evening that is planned for later in the year and would urge you to attend if at all possible as this is an ideal opportunity for both you and your committee to gain each others views.

Do you feel that your club players could do with a rules refresher?? Well suggest it to them as we are more than willing to give a presentation if a venue is provided and people are will to attend (the more the merrier). All you have to do is ask.

As part of the England Hockey initiative to encourage young umpires we are currently in the process of implementing the county based element of the plan and you will get more news in the near future, but in the meantime keep an eye out for any young and budding umpires.

Finally I would like to thank all the coaches and assessors for all their hard work throughout the season and summer and hope that their batteries are charged in readiness for the forthcoming season. Have a good whistling season and I look forward to seeing you about.

Best wishes for the forthcoming season.

Gill

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## Umpires Duty of Care

These notes are based on a talk given to the committee by A.J. Smart of Redland Ladies HC. AJ is a Director of Smart Advice Health & Safety Ltd which is based in Long Ashton.

These notes are not intended to be exhaustive or to apportion responsibility to AJ. They are the committee's interpretation of what was said.

Umpires have a 'duty of care' to those taking part in a game. If someone is harmed, legal action may be taken if that person decides to make a claim.

Netball umpires, for example, are being asked to check that:

- finger nails are short and smooth
- no jewellery is being worn
- the court is safe
- the posts are in the correct position

Certainly the last three of these could be applied to hockey.

This duty of care rests upon an individual or organisation to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of any person involved in an activity for which they are responsible. This may involve both players and spectators.

A claimant would have to show that a breach of duty of care had caused them personal injury, damage or loss of some kind

Umpires must show that the standard of care they have shown is the standard of a 'reasonable person'.

### **There are several possible defences:**

- if the event could have happened anyway
- there is no evidence of the cause of the event
- contributory negligence. e.g. if a player plays aggressively and is hurt as a result of the way they play
- some injuries may be 'occupational hazards'

### **How to avoid litigation**

Demonstrate a good standard of care, by, for example, inspecting the pitch with the other umpire and stopping dangerous play immediately

Risk assessment.

Involve both captains if a decision is required on the safety of a pitch (e.g. frozen).

If a player expresses concern over the safety, then involve his or her captain in coming to a conclusion.

General enforcement of the rules.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

**Annual membership is now overdue and a membership renewal form is enclosed with this Newsletter if you have not yet renewed. The membership fee this year is £10.**

**For this you will receive:**

- **Insurance, which will cover you against public liability whilst umpiring, something that is becoming increasingly necessary in these days of litigation.**
- **Regular Newsletters.**
- **A current rulebook. (NB Latest information from Hockey England suggests that the rulebook will not be reprinted for the coming season, an addendum will be issued, so please keep hold of your 2002/2003 edition)**
- **Plenty of information and advice.**

## **OPEN MEETING**

**There is to be an Open Meeting of the Association on:**

**17<sup>th</sup> September 7.30pm  
at the UWE Students Union in Blackberry Hill**

**All members are welcome and an invite is to be sent to all clubs allowing them to send 2 members of each team.**

**Hopefully this will help with communication between the Association and the clubs.**

**Please encourage your clubs to attend**

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Due to confusion regarding complaints received your committee has decided to formalise the complaints procedure.

- On receipt of a complaint regarding an umpire, either by word, Email or letter, a formal confirmation of receipt will be sent to the club. This will inform them that the complaint will be discussed at the next committee meeting.
- The club's liaison officer will discuss the complaint with the relevant umpire/s, so that the umpire/s view of events might be taken into consideration.
- The committee will decide at the next committee meeting any appropriate action.
- The complaints secretary will inform, by letter the club and the umpire/s concerned.

**Please note: It is hoped that this procedure will not be put into practise, but it was felt that the clubs have the right to know what can be expected.**

**Clubs have been reminded, when issuing this procedure, that complaints should only be of an umpire's overall performance and should not relate to specific decisions within a game.**

### **2004/5 Committee**

**Chairman – Gill Prophet**

**Secretary – Peter Lovell**

**Treasurer – Bob Pearce**

**Committee Members – Jo Dee**

**Mandy Powell (Ne Sanderson)**

**Liz Powell**

**Margaret Hollow**

**Vicky Hollier**

**Justine Nicklin**

**Carolyn Britton**

**(Please feel free to contact any committee member for help and advice.)**