Oxfordshire Hockey Umpires Association

Core Competencies for
Umpire Grading Panels

Version 1.1 draft

Introduction

For the first time next season (2010/2011) OHUA will introduced an umpire grading system.

England Hockey have just 3 grades of umpire; the Level -1 award which is the basic qualification for Hockey Umpires, the Level -2 award for Regional Hockey (Level -2 umpires are those who have been selected for South 2 appointments and above) and Level -3 award umpires, which covers the highest levels of Hockey (National League and International matches).

It is therefore easy to see that the Level -1 award covers a huge range of leagues/playing standards;

> A 16 year old who has just passed Level -1 award one Saturday is very unlikely to be able to umpire a Ladies or PREM1 game the next Saturday, and what about the umpire with 10 years experience, umpiring 50 games a season! Should they or can they be compared to a newly qualified Level -1 umpire?

There is therefore a responsibility incumbent upon OHUA to provide guidance. About 90% of all qualified umpires have a Level -1 award with no distinction made between their capabilities & experience. League rules say that games must be umpired by a suitable Level-1 umpire. What does that mean? An inappropriate appointment does nothing for the game. It drains the umpire's confidence rapidly, the players get upset that their game may be spoilt and so another umpire is 'lost' from Hockey. Therefore the OHUA Coaching Team has graded all our Level -1 umpires in Panels to indicate which league games they are deemed capable of umpiring. Most members were easy to grade as they were already umpiring games in a particular league quite satisfactorily. It is very difficult to set the appropriate difference between game standards for different grades, since, some umpires can cope better with the control issues likely to arise in higher level games where the skills and experience of the players at that level make particular demands upon umpires, while others find the slower pace of the lower-league games means that they lose concentration. Therefore no system is foolproof and the grading may well have to be tweaked as we go along.

That said, simply adopting Grading Panels is not sufficient and to allow total transparency we have also sought to define the requirements, in terms of core competencies for each grading panel. The information provided on the following pages is intended to provide guidance for umpires who want to move up within the hierarchy and comfort for those who are content within their panel but who are interested in what is expected of them.

OHUA aims to assess each member whilst umpiring, initially at least one a year. Sadly, with the available resources even this is an ambitious aim. We are in the

process of building upon a very small coaching team, who have previously been limited mainly to activity during the Summer Leagues, but who are dedicated and keen to see the umpires within the county develop. We need to see that standards & consistency are being maintained, who is improving and needs to go into South as Level 2 Umpire candidates.

All OHUA active members will be notified of their grading via the listing on the new web site. It is through that medium that we intend to maximise the opportunities for coaching and assessment during next season and why it is vital that the portal be used by all umpires in each panel to make clear their matches and availability.

Anyone who feels that their grading is inaccurate should contact their mentor initially. No one should umpire a league game they are not graded to do. The appointing club may well lose league points; in accordance with league rules.

The Grading Panels

There are 4 Grading Panels within the OHUA structure, they are defined as below, and the divisions to which the panels apply within the context of fixtures managed by and appointed to within OHUA jurisdiction are as shown. In addition to the panels are those umpires who are umpiring outside of OHUA controls at either Regional (South) or Higher levels:

Umpires Taking Appointments from Higher Bodies

At least South Division 2 games and possibly upwards including National Programme and FIH.

Umpire Panel Grade 1 Upper Appointments Umpire

South Division 3A games and leagues below

Umpire Panel Grade 2 Lower Appointments Umpire

BBO Premier 1 Division and leagues below

Umpire Panel Grade 3 Club Umpire

BBO Premier 2 Division and leagues below

Umpire Panel Grade 4 Candidate Umpire

BBO Division 4 and leagues below

Core Competencies

As already mentioned the ability of the team to allocate existing umpires from within OHUA membership is relatively simple as umpires either currently take appointments or they do not. However in order to make clear the behaviour that umpires within each group will be expected to exhibit it is important to define that behaviour. In this instance we have used the term “competency” to show what is required in each panel

The core competencies are broken down into 4 distinct groups; Manage Self, Manage Players, Manager Others and Manage Environment.

These have been chosen quite deliberately as they encompass the basic feedback areas that are sought for both Level 1 and Level 2 umpires shown below and cover the wider aspects and responsibilities that umpires have to managing the game as a spectacle for players and supporters.

Level 1 Basic Assessment Criteria: Decision Making, Management, Advantage, Positioning and Mobility.

Level 2 Basic Assessment Criteria: Decision Making, Management, Flow and Timing, Presentation.

Each level assumes that the core competencies of the previous level have been accomplished and are being demonstrated on a regular basis. The onus, as has always been the case, is on the individual umpire to look after his or her own advancement. Every member within OHUA has a mentor appointed to them but the mentors in all cases are still active umpires, this means that their availability will be limited. Assessments must therefore be mutually agreed and with sufficient notice to ensure proper preparation by all parties.

Umpire Panel Grade 4 Competencies

Evidence of Core Competencies should be shown at the Level 1 course pre–assessment / coaching day. Following this the candidate umpire will be expected to umpire at least 3 matches before applying for a Level 1 assessment. The 3 matches should all be of a competitive standard. The Level 1 assessment will be carried out by a qualified Coach/Mentor/Assessor with the ability and authority to assign a Level 1 umpire according to EHL Policy. Movement to Panel Grade 3 will be made automatically on achieving the Level 1 Umpire Award.

Umpire Panel Grade 4 Competencies: Candidate Umpire	
Manage Self	1. Attain a minimum level of Level 1 Umpire Candidacy - Have attended Level 1 course - Have passed written paper 2. Is Dressed as an umpire and equipped for umpiring 3. Is Prepared both physically and psychologically for umpiring 4. Displays a positive attitude to towards umpiring 5. Is able to receive and respond to feedback from Coaches and Assessors.
Manage Players	6. Able to apply basic rules of the game of Hockey (Current Version) 7. Can demonstrate correct use of Whistle 8. Can demonstrate correct signals 9. Can respond effectively to dangerous play 10. Is not intimidated by concept of managing players
Manage Others	11. Apply a positive and co-operative attitude towards others (i.e. coaches, managers, supporters, U18-player parents) 12. Able to Communicate effectively with Umpiring Colleague
Manage Environment	13. Ensure environment is safe for Hockey to be played 14. Abide by England Hockey Code of Conduct

Umpire Panel Grade 3 Competencies

Evidence of Core Competencies should be shown in every game managed (as a Level 1 Award the umpire is at the basic level of umpiring as prescribed by EHL). Umpires may request to be assessed for movement to Panel Grade 2. It is the ultimate goal of the OHUA Coaching Team to watch every Panel Grade 3 Umpire at least once per season.

Umpire Panel Grade 3 Competencies: Club Umpire	
Manage Self	1. Attain a minimum level of Level 1 Umpire 2. Prepare physically and mentally for umpiring 3. Attain a level of Fitness appropriate to the standard of Hockey (at the highest league level permissible) 4. Exhibit correct positioning in relation to play and colleague at all times for the duration of the match. 5. Review you own performance including response to feedback from Coaches and Assessors.
Manage Players	6. Interpret and apply the rules of hockey, encouraging flow 7. Exhibit correct signaling for all rules 8. Display appropriate whistle technique, including timing and force of whistle 9. Respond appropriately to player behaviour leading to dangerous and/ or illegal play 10. Communicate with team captains to create a co-operative match environment
Manage Others	11. Apply a positive and cooperative attitude towards coaches, officials, team management and spectators 12. Provide signaling support to colleague 13. Conduct pre-match, half time and post-match discussion with colleague 14. Identify and apply appropriate conflict resolution strategies
Manage Environment	15. Able to Identify and act upon potential risks within the playing environment. 16. Assess an injury and respond accordingly by requesting specialist medical assistance or Ambulance. (unless professionally qualified Umpires should not personally deal with injured players) 17. Understand legal responsibilities for safety of players

Umpire Panel Grade 2 Competencies

Evidence of Core Competencies should be shown in every game managed (as a Level 1 Award the umpire is at the basic level of umpiring as prescribed by EHL). Umpires may request to be assessed for movement to Panel Grade 1. It is the ultimate goal of the OHUA Coaching Team to watch every Panel Grade 2 Umpire on at least two occasions per season.

Umpire Panel Grade 2 Competencies: Lower Appointments Umpire	
Manage Self	1. Be prepared to take appointed matches throughout local counties 2. Attain a level of Fitness appropriate to the standard of Hockey 3. Exhibit correct positioning in relation to play and co-umpire to provide support and correct decision making 4. Review you own performance including response to feedback from Coaches and Assessors.
Manage Players	5. Always ensure that you look at players as visual communication is often more effective that verbal. 6. Always ensure advantage is clearly signaled and communicated loud enough for everyone to hear. 7. Develop a rapport with players by showing empathy
Manage Others	8. Demonstrate understanding of zones of control 9. Provide timely and accurate signaling support to colleague 10. Convey a professional and co-operative attitude towards players
Manage Environment	11. Conduct a thorough pre-match safety check of the field and equipment with colleague

Umpire Panel Grade 1 Competencies

Evidence of Core Competencies should be shown in every game managed (as a Level 1 Award the umpire is at the basic level of umpiring as prescribed by EHL). Umpires may request to be assessed for movement to higher level appointments by requesting an assessment for nomination as a Level 2 Umpire candidate. It is the ultimate goal of the OHUA Coaching Team to watch every Panel Grade 1 Umpire on at least two occasions per season.

Umpire Panel Grade 1 Competencies: Upper Appointments Umpire	
Manage Self	1. Be prepared to take appointed matches within South (West) Region 2. Attain a level of Fitness appropriate to the standard of Hockey 3. Demonstrate a high level of integrity in conducting umpiring duties and roles 4. Demonstrate awareness of correct positioning at all times. 5. Critically review you own performance including response to feedback from Coaches and Assessors.
Manage Players	5. Demonstrate effective use of 'tools' to manage the game 6. Implement strategies to manage and resolve conflict 7. Exhibit signals with appropriate timing and application 8. Communicate decisions confidently to players 9. Ensure body language is positive
Manage Others	10. Demonstrate on-field cohesion with colleague 11. Show the ability to assess the practical competence of a lower level umpire
Manage Environment	12. Adhere to any ethical responsibilities of an official and applicable laws affecting sports.

Umpires Taking Appointments from Higher Bodies: Competencies

Umpires who are taking appointments from higher bodies are all at least Level 2 Candidate umpires. However this classification covers all higher level umpires (up to and including FIH) as the responsibility for; appointing, coaching developing and assessing umpires at these higher levels is outside of the OHUA remit. The competencies listed below are seen as the minimum criteria for Level 2 umpires. We will seek to advance umpires from the Panel Grade 2 pool as appropriate to allow advancement to the higher levels of the game without prejudice.

Umpires Taking Appointments from Higher Bodies	
Manage Self	1. Attain a minimum level of Level 2 Umpire Candidacy 2. Be looking to prepare for the role of an umpire at a national under age or senior national competition level 3. Attain a level of fitness appropriate to the standard of hockey 4. Exhibit correct positioning in relation to play and co-umpire 5. Demonstrate professionalism and integrity in conducting umpiring duties and roles 6. Illustrate knowledge of advanced hockey skills and techniques used at the regional level 7. Review umpiring performance with Umpire Coach and implement changes required
Manage Players	8. Interpret and apply the rules of hockey at regional level 9. Display a range of body language techniques in order to promote and enhance an air of authority/ presence 10. Demonstrate effective use of all control tools to manage the match 11. Implement strategies to prevent, manage and resolve conflict 12. Encourage and promote an inclusive environment, ‘a game for everyone’
Manage Others	13. Communicate in a professional manner towards others 14. Present feedback to colleague that is encouraging and provides constructive criticism 15. Demonstrate effective communication and interpersonal skills to deal with on and off field situations
Manage Environment	16. Establish any communications or relationships with other officials