

THE CLUBS – WHAT HOCKEY EXPECTS

A message about Dissent and Verbal Abuse towards umpires

Our disciplinary record in Surrey over the past season or two has deteriorated, to the extent that too many Red Cards and MMOs have been issued within the County. In the majority of cases, games within the County are umpired by Club Umpires and in a minority of cases by appointed umpires from SHUA, SCHUA or the NPUA. No matter where your umpire has been drawn from, there are some general guidelines that players should always remember, because your games would not be possible if all the umpires became disaffected by player reaction and/or conduct. For this reason we circulate this note to you.

1. Umpires are entitled to total respect and civility. Dissent is one thing but as far as personal abuse is concerned, umpires are being instructed to work towards a policy of “zero tolerance” both during and after the game has ended.
2. **Captains are reminded that they**
 - a) Are responsible for the behaviour of their players (Rule 3.4) and should lead by example
 - b) Should support umpires even if they themselves do not agree with decisions
 - c) Should actively discourage “open” dissent, personal abuse and audible foul language

Any form of intimidation of the umpire, by either a **single** player or a **group** of players getting in the umpire’s space, is totally unacceptable. Only the player concerned and the captain – if he so wishes or is called over by the umpire - have any right to be privy to any conversation between player and umpire. And so:-

- d) Should dilute any such situation – even if it may have been caused by an incorrect umpiring decision.

Effectively the captain should, in accordance with Rules of Hockey, take a far more active part in any given situation regarding the behaviour of his players. Umpires will welcome this.

3. The final whistle is not a signal for players to verbally take out their frustrations on the umpires. Players who do this in any form of abusive manner or by using foul language should not be surprised to receive an MMO (Matchday Misconduct Order). An MMO is the equivalent of a Red Card and carries a similar suspension.
4. Post match conversations between players and umpires need to be controlled, disciplined and conducted in an appropriate place.
 - a) Umpires encourage a structured dialogue with the players because they know from experience that both parties have every chance of learning something.

- b) Conversations, where possible, should be over either a cup of tea or a beer by which time everyone may feel a little calmer.

Any HUA (and SHA supports very strongly the work of SHUA) takes the coaching of its members very seriously and in Surrey SHUA will continue to do so in order to provide the best possible service to you, the players when appointed umpires are received. Captains are very welcome to feed back direct to SHUA any constructive comments, good or bad, about the performance of appointed umpires.

- 5. If, in spite of the above, you receive a red card (or an MMO) from a registered umpire, you can expect the following penalties:
 - a) A **minimum** period of suspension from all forms of hockey for **16 days**. This is mandatory and the County Disciplinary Administrator (CDA) has no discretion in imposing this. There is no right of appeal against the minimum period.
 - b) The mandatory minimum will only be imposed in the least serious circumstances. If you abuse an umpire, that period will be extended and longer minimum periods are proscribed where violence is used, threatened or attempted to a player or other person (30 days) and 60 days where it is to an umpire. Again these are minimum periods and longer periods can be imposed.
 - c) A CDA has power to split a suspension, say over two halves of the season, or from one season to the next, as appropriate.

The regulations governing red cards and MMOs are the Red Card and Match Day Misconduct Regulations and you can read or download a copy from the England Hockey website.