

Umpiring Commission



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PE Umpiring Commission Executive:

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The Commission continues to provide an umpire for each national event, but this year we have struggled to meet this requirement. Had it not been for members of the Commission Executive who volunteered at the last moment to attend an event, it is likely we would have seen at least 4 national events without an umpire.

Although we organise a national course, open to all candidates, it is at the regional, and perhaps club, level where recruitment happens and training should begin. Indeed it has always been the expectation of our governing body that this would be the case, leaving the examination to be managed by the Umpiring Commission ensuring consistency and fairness in the qualification.

The umpire in England is mostly the player choosing umpiring to improve their knowledge of the rules and to help their club. Some will umpire one or two times a year and limit themselves to their current qualification. A very small number of umpires will make it a career, looking to umpire as often as they can and perhaps work towards qualifying as a European and International umpire.

The main profile of our umpires is the "retired" umpire, the most common profile of umpire in Europe, who are more often involved in the social side of their club, offering their services both for umpiring and other responsibilities.

Currently, the age of umpires in England range from 44 to 81 years, which means the average age for an active umpire is 66.

To sit the European or International umpire exam, a candidate must be 60 years or less, additionally after reaching 65 years an International umpire will not be assigned to umpire a world championship. So, you can see why we desperately need younger umpires who will want to make umpiring their career in our sport!

At this present time, we have two trainee "club" umpires who, supported by their regions, are very close to receiving their full accreditation, two more umpires have improved their grade to "National" and are now working towards taking the European Umpire exam, and we have one candidate patiently waiting for a national course to be arranged as there are no umpires in his region... but that is all!

According to a recent survey of our umpires, not one umpire has been asked by their region or club to organise a training course and only two umpires have actually umpired a regional event.

More recently three umpires have announced their retirement from umpiring, with age and health being the prime reasons. This reduces our already depleted numbers to 16, although I hasten to add it is perhaps only 7 of these who are actively umpiring. So, we need to make some changes before it is too late, and we have no umpires!

Umpires need to be more proactive, rather than reactive, and ask their region to organise recruitment and umpiring courses.

Regions need to be more supportive of our discipline, by encouraging the umpires in their region to run courses, train candidates and umpire regional events. Those regions without an umpire should contact our Commission to discuss their options.

The Umpiring Commission also needs to change its approach by providing training material and support for the local umpire and regions.

Change does not stop there, not so long ago, under a different president, our commission was made some promises, which were to improve the relationship between umpiring and the board of directors and for the board to communicate directly with umpiring... needless to say neither has happened, so perhaps it is not surprising that umpires continue to feel undervalued!

We are in a difficult place - we need more umpires, umpires need competitions to improve their knowledge and gain experience and you, the member of PE, should expect your club and region to ensure you have an umpire!

Change will not come about unless we all work together!