



Yorkshire Cricket Southern Premier League

www.ycspl.co.uk

2023 Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 15 November

Note of meeting

Clubs in attendance: All clubs were represented except Adwick-le-Street, Barnsley Woolley Miners, Conisbrough, Elsecar, Handsworth Junior SC, Parkhead, Rockingham, Wickersley Old Village and Worsbrough Bridge.

League officials present: David Ward (chairman), Terry Bateman, Melvyn Bond, Ashley Boothman, Gareth Davis, Chris Froggett, Nick Kendall, Brian Lowe, Lindsay Pepper, Roger Pugh, Matt Summerhill, Graham Swallow, Steve Ward, Nelson Windle

1. **Welcome** – DW welcomed all club representatives and held a minutes' silence for departed friends.
2. **Reports.** The reports from league officials provided in advance (appendix 1) were accepted without queries. GD reported verbally on YCB activity as follows:
 - he thanked all clubs for the work they had done over the past twelve months, highlighting the increase in junior participation
 - he highlighted some forthcoming changes, including training for volunteers and the intention to incorporate the Safe Hands Management System into Play-Cricket
 - the YCB are seeking help in encouraging children from deprived areas
 - funding is available for Women's & Girls' cricket which is a YCB priority
 - he asked all Premier Section clubs to support YCB activities
 - the numbers of under 9s and under 11s throughout the county have never been higher
 - he emphasised the importance of Clubmark, which is currently required down to Division 3 in the YCSPL, and hoped that one day all clubs would be accredited
 - he asked that prior to 30 April 2024, all clubs should have their Safe Hands Policy, evidence of their AGM and a copy of their Insurance Policy on the Safe Hands Management System
 - the County Grants Fund was now closed but would re-open in February 2024
3. **Adoption of financial accounts** (see appendix 2) – the motion to accept the accounts was proposed by Bradfield Village Fellowship CC, seconded by Fishlake CC, and carried.
4. **Finances 2024** (see appendix 3) - the proposals were agreed.
5. **Changes to constitution and rules**
 - i *Administrative rules.* The proposal to allow for a replacement overseas player if a team's registered overseas player returns home early to play in a competition sanctioned by the home nations governing body was discussed. The Compliance Manager took on board some comments and will revise the wording accordingly.

ii *Playing conditions.* The following proposals were voted upon:

- Proposed new rule 5.v to stipulate that where there have been stoppages due to weather, play can continue until 19.50 in games of 46 overs per side, and until 19.00 in 40-over games; and that after these cut-off times, play will cease at the end of the over in progress, unless a result is achieved before then. This was carried.
- Proposed amendment to rule 13.i to remove the 30 minutes before overs start being deducted. This was rejected.
- Proposed amendment to rule 13.v to allow overs to be reduced before the start, where bad weather is forecast, and a reduced over game of a minimum of 20 overs to be played; if captains cannot agree on the reduced overs, the status quo will apply. This amendment was carried.
- Proposed new rule 19.i to stipulate that DLS will be used to determine results in Divisions 1 & 2. This was carried.
- Proposed new rule 19.ii to stipulate that in the Senior Section Divisions 3 to 9, where the allotted overs cannot be bowled in the second innings, and provided that at least 20 overs have been bowled, the result will be determined by comparing the score at the end of the last completed over before play ceased in the second innings, with the score after the same number of overs in the first innings. This was rejected.
- Proposed amendments to former rule 19.ii:
 - two points to be awarded to both sides in any game where a result cannot be achieved – this was rejected
 - to introduce a three-tier bonus point system (2, 4 & 6 points) – this was carried
 - to introduce a proportionate scale for bowling bonus points, where overs are reduced in the second innings – this was carried
- Proposed new rule on cancellations to include:
 - that where bad weather is forecast, covering should take place at least three days prior to a game – this was rejected
 - an increase to the maximum amount chargeable for the cost of umpires' fees and all teas to £250 – this was carried
 - that where the visiting club believe that the home club have not taken all reasonable steps to get the game on, they should report the circumstances to the relevant Section Head – this was carried
 - that when a game is in doubt, it is the responsibility of the home club to keep the match umpires apprised of any decisions made under this rule was carried; the proposal to specify requirements for Premier Section clubs – this was carried

iii *Cup & T20 rules*

- a proposed amendment to 14.iv to provide for a one-hour break between the T20 Plate final and the T20 Blast final – this was carried
- a proposed amendment to rule 21 to provide for a minimum number of games for players to have played to qualify for semi-finals and finals – this was rejected
- a proposed new rule to provide that a club entered in any League cup or T20 competition that fails to field a team with less than eight days' notice, will be liable to disqualification from future cup and T20 competitions and a penalty under Admin Rule 13 – this was carried

6. **Election of League officials for 2023/24**

- all LEB members had indicated that they were willing to serve for another year and were re-elected en bloc
- all Premier Section committee members had indicated that they were willing to serve for another year, in addition to which, Nick Kendall, who had been co-opted during the year to fill a vacancy, had indicated that he would be willing to continue to serve – this was agreed and the committee was re-elected en bloc
- all Senior Section committee members had indicated that they were willing to serve for another year and were re-elected en bloc

7. **Officials' recruitment & retention strategy.** RP spoke about the background to the Strategy (see appendix 4), explaining that the Premier Section had taken the lead on this in response to comments made that they did not take umpire recruitment seriously, as they were guaranteed umpires in any case. He said that the League are already 50-60 umpires short, and there are always losses due to age and ill-health. He emphasised that this is everyone's responsibility, irrespective of whether a club has put umpires into the system previously, and that this must be an ongoing strategy. The League has set up a Steering Group to oversee activity, including club, league and umpire representatives. A recruitment video has already been produced, and the Steering Group will ensure that clubs are supported with their efforts in any way practicable. Clubs are asked to nominate a person who will ensure that efforts are made to recruit officials, and who will be a point of contact for the Steering Group. RP concluded by asking clubs to contact him if they had any ideas or suggestions.
8. **Play-Cricket registration removals.** MB said that all junior players must be registered on Play-Cricket prior to the start of the season. He also said that he was currently working on clearing up the database. GS said that his job during the season was being made more difficult due to many clubs either not completing a full scorecard or not including umpires and/or scorers' details – most weeks he was sending out 80 plus emails to chase up omissions.
9. **Roles & responsibilities of captains** – DW reported there would be increased responsibility for captains in 2024, and that there would be training provided. This would include proper completion of captain's reports.
10. **Other business**
 - AB said that there was £2,844 in the Development Fund, which is available to Senior Section clubs only (it is ECB Premier League funding, from which Premier Section clubs are paid shares directly). Four clubs had received contributions to repairs/improvements during the past twelve months.
 - Andy Leiper asked if there would be any assistance in 2024 with Junior balls. DW confirmed that £750 had been agreed by the LEB.
 - MS reported that the 2024 fixtures, cup entry dates and teams had recently been sent out to clubs and he said the deadline for any re-arrangements was 22 December.
 - It was clarified that YCSPL officials cannot make changes to club officials on Play-Cricket; clubs should keep the contacts section of P-C up-to-date.
 - RP said that, to make administration easier for clubs, the League and the YCB would issue a single return to include all information required by both bodies.
 - DW reported that future Safeguarding courses had been arranged at Whiston PC in February 2024 and Whitley Hall in March 2024; full details to follow.

David Ward
Chairman
November 2023

Reports from League officials

Chair & Head of Senior Section's report

I would like to start by thanking our committee for all their effort and support during the season, and a particular thank you to our sponsors – Readers, Tiflex, Nicholas Associates, K3 Dental and Marshall Wooldridge.

In 2024 we will have 60 clubs and 129 teams, which leaves 3 vacancies. New teams are Hallam 4th XI and Parkhead 2nd XI. There are two new clubs for 2025 – Ridgeway and Waverley, both with two teams, whilst Frickley Colliery have also shown interest. There will be no clubs entering the League via the pyramid agreement with the P&DCL in 2024.

Unlike 2022, this season's weather was not the best! There were a number of issues with ground, weather and light in 2023 with some clubs not making the required effort to get games on.

In terms of grounds and facilities, a number of clubs have improved their facilities and grounds. Adwick-le-Street have a new pavilion in progress and Hatfield Town have new changing facilities. All these schemes have been supported by the YCB and we thank Gareth Davis for this. Clubs need to continue focusing on improving scorers and umpire's facilities.

I am very pleased to see that women's and girls' cricket continues to grow, both outdoor and indoor, hard and soft ball; and that Higham have been recognised as our first disability champion club.

Our grateful thanks go to all the clubs who hosted the 2023 finals; T20 Blast & Plate (Aston Hall), Whitworth Cup (Tickhill), Mick Savage Trophy (Darfield), Presidents Cup (Penistone) and Billy Oates (Oughtibridge)

Fixtures – there were over 1,500 league and cup fixtures with over 25% cancelled or abandoned due to poor weather or ground conditions. Matt Summerhill will comment on League restructure and promotion and relegation for 2024. Clubs will be notified of the arrangements at the delegates meeting in March 2024. We cannot finalise promotion and relegation until after the end of March 2024 as this is the closing date for new applications for 2025.

Venues for Finals – we have received 19 applications to host the 2024 finals and decisions will be made on these as soon as possible.

Umpire Appointments 2023 – Simon Widdup is now on the first-class panel. The Premier League exchange arrangement with the Bradford PL has worked well and will continue in 2024. A major concern is still the lack of umpires, and recruitment and retention remain a problem. We are still 50 to 60 umpires short per week. We have ongoing initiatives in place to see if we can change the present position, which we will cover under item 7. Umpires training courses are planned for over the winter.

There are three administrative issues that I would like to draw attention to. Firstly, player registration – please ensure that all juniors are registered before the start of 2024 season. Juniors will not be allowed to play if they are not registered and don't have parental permission. A number of clubs need to improve their administration, on Play-Cricket in particular. Secondly, 'Who's the Umpire' registration – please ensure that captains and secretaries are registered for 2024 season. thirdly, captain's reports – these must be completed by the captain or vice-captain within three days of the fixture. In 2023, 3% were not completed on time, 17 in Premier and 62 in Senior Section. Training will be provided in 2024 for captains on how to complete the reports. There will be feedback by me to the YPL umpires in the North and South in 2024.

There are a number of proposed rule changes for 2024, which are shown in bold under item 5 in your AGM papers.

Finally, sponsorship. This is critical to the league because it helps to keep subscriptions down, provide finance for cup final, and allows us to provide £750 of balls for junior cricket in the South Yorkshire area. If you become aware of anyone who may be interested in sponsoring the League, or a particular cup or division of the League, please contact me.

David Ward
Chairman & Head of Senior Section

Treasurer's report

A full financial statement has already been provided for item 3; in addition:

- the finances of the League are in a healthy position, mainly due to Sponsorship & ECB Funding together with good control of finances.
- it is important that club delegates & their website administrators check their clubs Play-Cricket action centre regularly as order forms and invoices go via this media.
- deadlines for payment of these is most important to help with the smooth running of the League especially ordering from our league partners

Ashley Boothman
Treasurer

Head of Premier Section's report

The contrast between 2022 and 2023 weatherwise has already been well documented. Ground conditions and weather prevented a result in 28.41% of games in the Premier Section. Despite that, some good cricket was played, and we congratulated worthy League champions in Sheffield Collegiate. The competitive nature of the Premier Division is illustrated by the fact that only 26 points separated third place from ninth. Cawthorne deservedly won the Championship, but the promotion fight went down to the final day, with Shiregreen winning their battle with Wickersley Old Village to take the second promotion place. Congratulations too to Barnsley Woolley Miners on retaining the T20 Blast title, and to Cawthorne on their Plate success.

Two issues dominated our work off the field. Without doubt, the weather influenced our determination to work on cancellations and getting the game on. We have taken on board advice to incentivise play by proposing adjustments to the points system; umpires are to have refresher training on ground weather and light issues; and we have proposed rule amendments to support action where there have been insufficient efforts to get the game on.

Secondly, it has been clear for some time that drastic action is needed to increase our umpires' pool. I know that criticism has been made of the Premier Section on the basis that our clubs will get umpires anyway, so do not take umpire recruitment seriously. That may be true in some individual cases, but it is not the view of our committee, and we are taking action to remedy the situation. I will cover our new recruitment & retention strategy at item 7; we have already produced a recruitment video to support recruitment activity; and we will set up a Steering Group to oversee this activity in the future.

Another issue that our committee has discussed is playing standards. We want our league to be the best in the country – on and off the field. We want to see our clubs competing to win not only our own competitions and the joint YPLN & YCSPL knock-out cup, but also national competitions, on a regular basis. We want to look at all possible ways of increasing the playing standards in our league, and we will look over the next 12 months at how to best facilitate this. Would, for example, the strength of the Premier Section be increased by dropping to two divisions of 10 clubs, all of whom were 'Premier League ready'? Are there other things we could and should do? All options will be considered.

I would like to conclude with some personal thanks. Firstly, to Aston Hall and Tickhill for their excellent hosting of the T20 finals and Whitworth cup final respectively. Secondly, to our umpires and scorers, without whom we would not have a game as we know it – we are fortunate to have some really first-rate officials. Thirdly, to our committee, who have all provided invaluable support in different and sometimes unappreciated ways, in particular to Steve Ward, for whom nothing is too much trouble, and who just gets on with all the administrative tasks that are necessary for everything to run smoothly. Finally, to my LEB colleagues, in particular to Matt Summerhill for his thankless work on our fixtures, and to David Ward, for all his support.

Roger Pugh
Head of Premier Section

Compliance Manager's report

During the season we revised the rules relating to overseas players to accommodate ECB guidance on:

- asylum seekers and refugees
- residential criteria to be considered as a Category 1 player

The global cricket calendar, particularly as it relates to T20 cricket, is constantly evolving and, for 2024, we are also proposing changes to allow for a replacement overseas player later in the season than has previously been the case.

Also for 2024, the ECB have produced updated guidelines relating to professional players on an International Sportspersons Visa. These can be found in full at: <https://www.ecb.co.uk/about/policies/regulations/overseas>. Annex 7 and the Coaching Template will be particularly useful.

In short, however, these provide for an update on:

- qualifying criteria for an International Sports Person's visa (ISP) as they relate to domestic t20
- the requirement to produce a Coaching Plan for a player on an ISP

We would also advise clubs that the ECB are reviewing the use/abuse of the Permitted Paid Engagement route for overseas players.

Chris Froggett
Compliance Manager

Disciplinary report

Despite the fact that several weekends were lost to the weather, season 2023 saw an overall increase in the number of players that received disciplinary sanctions (43). The vast majority of the sanctions issued were of the lower scale type, ie, Level One 'warnings', together with Level One and Level Two offences, as follows:

List of sanctions:

- Level One 'warnings' 20
- Level One offences 18
- Level Two offences 14
- Level Three offences 3
- Level Four offences 0
- miscellaneous offences 3

43 individual players were reported in 2023 and 58 discipline offences were dealt with. 10 players were multiple offenders, receiving more than one sanction. Collectively, they were responsible for the commission of 25 of the 58 reported offences that received sanctions. 33 players each received a single discipline sanction.

Bans totaling 99 weeks were applied across the YCSPL during the past season; and suspended bans totaling 186 weeks remain in place until the end of season 2024.

The following is a breakdown of the respective divisions in which players who received sanctions during 2023 played:

- Premier division 7 players (10 sanctions)
- Championship division 9 players (10 sanctions)
- Senior Section divisions 27 players (38 sanctions)

A handful of other players were reported for low key matters and were dealt with via final reprimands/words of advice.

It was necessary to hold two separate Disciplinary Hearings that related to Level Three allegations (Disciplinary Hearings are mandatory for Level Three and Level Four allegations). Both hearings resulted in the individuals in question receiving substantial bans.

Officials from two Senior Section clubs met with the Disciplinary Committee during the past season in order to discuss continued poor player behaviour. Final warnings were subsequently administered to both clubs in question in relation to the future conduct of their players.

Summary

Despite taking into consideration the weather and the fact that umpires were not appointed to many of the games in question, the number of players reported represented a very small percentage of the actual cricketers that played in the YCSPL.

What must also be taken into consideration in respect of the previous paragraph, is that umpires have continued to be encouraged to report players where necessary. So, although the numbers reported have increased pro rata, the Disciplinary Committee do not consider there to be an escalating issue in relation to ill-discipline within the YCSPL.

The Disciplinary Committee regularly assess the disciplinary system that is in place. We always seek to be consistent when finalising individual cases and will proactively continue to 'tweak' the rules and regulations in order to benefit players, clubs and officials alike.

Throughout season 2024, the Disciplinary Committee are to take a closer look at captains and their conduct/behaviour in games where any of their players have been reported. Each report will be looked at on an individual basis and if, on the balance of probabilities, it is felt that a captain ought to have done more to prevent the poor behaviour of his/her player(s) then sanctions will follow for the captain in question.

The online disciplinary report form is to be amended to introduce a section where the umpires are asked to consider and detail the role of the captain on each occasion that it has been necessary to report a player.

In addition, the Disciplinary Committee would like to remind all clubs and umpires about their safeguarding responsibilities in respect of junior cricketers. Players found to have 'crossed the line' in relation to junior cricketers will be dealt with accordingly.

Finally, thanks go to all who have supported us throughout the past season - it is greatly appreciated.

Neil Vaughan & Mick Bocking
Disciplinary Committee

Equity and Diversity (EAD) Group Report

Following on from a successful start to the group with good engagement through its members and the wider league and its teams, players and officials the EAD has reached a point where it requires fresh impetus and direction. This comes at a time of the release of the ECB Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC) report. This report will provide areas and direction that the EAD can implement into its action plan going forward.

Waiting on that ICEC report and through discussion with the YCB are the major reasons why the EAD Group had paused its Action Plan.

This is not to dismiss the progress and success that the EAD have had in the areas of:

- assisting and supporting the league disciplinary panel
- assisting the league around matters such as EID and fixture issues
- working alongside the Yorkshire Cricket Board (YCB)

The immediate areas to be covered by the EAD will include but not limited to:

- recruitment of members to the EAD Group
- finalising 2023/24 meeting dates
- finalising and publishing an action plan, taking into account the ICEC report
- continue to support the league on disciplinary and matters requiring EAD input

Like any volunteering group, commitment at times can provide a challenge and it is important that we manage this going forward, to enable the collective group to provide the best support, information and guidance that it can to all that engage with and utilise it.

Next steps:

- recruit new members and confirm EAD team for 2024
- identify key themes for EAD Action Plan
- publish EAD Action Plan prior to 2024 season

We are still a relatively new group and proud to have been the first in any cricket league in the UK to be set up. We look forward to all your continued support as the EAD grows and continues to provide key support and input across our league.

Milton Samuels
EAD Group Chair

Participation Manager's report

Over the past season we have now set up the Women & Girls Committee as follows:

- Chair/EDI lead: Nicola Saunders – email: nicola.saunders@veolia.com
- Vice Chair & Treasurer: Tracey Helliwell – email: traceyjanehelliwell@hotmail.co.uk
- Fixtures & Disciplinary: Brian Hepworth – email: anchorrecords@googlemail.com
- Play-Cricket leads – Ros Miller – email: ros_miller@outlook.com
Pauline King – email: paulineking@sky.com
- Umpires lead: Wendy Crabtree – email: wendycrabtree@tiscali.co.uk
- Safeguarding: Eleanor Barber – email: eleanorbarber41@gmail.com

The committee met for the first time on Monday 19 June and will continue to meet on a regular basis during the summer and winter season. A bulletin will also be sent out to all clubs with any relevant information/decisions.

The committee will report any issues that may require LEB intervention or support via me and I will report back to the LEB as appropriate.

We have had a brilliant season and have expanded the W&G's indoor league to over 50 teams this winter season and look forward to this expansion carrying forward to the outdoor summer season.

We have also secured some great sponsors and should any clubs require funding for W&G's Cricket equipment or training – please contact a committee member to submit a request.

Mel Mahmood
Participation Manager

Safeguarding Manager's report

Safeguarding continues to be a priority of the YCSPL in these ever-changing times. Safeguarding Officers are in place at all our clubs and work continually hard to keep everyone safe.

YCB have appointed a new team to support Ray Knowles, the County Welfare Officer, who is a familiar face to our clubs. The new YCB team are as follows:

- Joy Walker – Head of Safeguarding
- Kim Corson – County Welfare Officer
- Colin Steele – County Welfare Officer

I attended The League Safeguarding Officers Network Event held at Headingley Stadium on Thursday 23 September. It was an opportunity to meet the newly formed YCB team and other League Safeguarding Officers from the Yorkshire region.

Education of volunteers continues with face-to-face ECB Safe Hands courses and needs to be refreshed every three years. Numerous online courses are available to clubs and their officials. Richard Wilkinson, YCB Head of Region continues to deliver the course locally. A course has already delivered at Elsecar CC post-2023 season and was well attended by club Safeguarding Officers, and there will be more courses available pre-2024 season. Booked in the diary already are:

- Tuesday 27th February 2024 @ Whiston Parish Church CC 18:00 - 21:00
- Monday 18th March 2024 @ Whitley Hall CC 18:00 - 21:00

Many thanks to the clubs for allowing the YCSPL to use their facilities to deliver the courses.

Safeguarding continues to be major part of ECB Clubmark. Safeguarding information has to be updated and uploaded to the portal to achieve the accreditation. It is essential that records are kept up to date to support the process.

As a league we have been involved with safeguarding investigations but with no evidence to take further action by the league. Safeguarding is everyone's business and we all have a responsibility to keep everyone safe.

To all our ever growing, progressive clubs, I personally thank everyone for their continued support and encourage clubs to encourage the recruitment of more safeguarding volunteers.

Lindsay Pepper
Safeguarding Manager

Scoring Manager's report

The onus on scorers is ever increasing, and with Division 1 and 2 games affected by rain to be decided by DLS in 2024, the onus on scorers will increase even more.

As a result of this, there will be an increase in training opportunities in 2024, even more than the offerings that Clubs took advantage of in 2023.

In 2023, 93.50% of games in all divisions were scored electronically, with 53% of games scored on a laptop., and 40.50 % scored on a tablet or phone. Many scorers who used a tablet or phone reported issues with the software. When it was initially produced, it was never suitable for a 90-100 innings game, and more and more scorers have enquired about laptop scoring in the last month or so.

Issues with Play-Cricket in 2023 proved to be an issue for scorers. Hopefully things will improve in 2024, as ECB are encouraging more and more leagues to utilise the system.

My congratulations go to Monk Bretton's Zac Cooper, who was awarded the League's Scorer of the Year award. Zac is a young man who has done really well in 2023, and the award is richly deserved.

More and more of our scorers have been given opportunities to score Yorkshire CCC age-group cricket at all levels, and if your clubs scorers would like more information, please ask them to contact me.

Please keep an eye out on social media, the League's website and your email inbox for details of scorer training in the coming months. If your club requires any help at help in all aspects of scoring going forward or want to set up some training at your club, please get in touch on 07919 241148.

Steve Ward
Scoring Manager

Yorkshire Cricket Southern Premier League

Income and Expenditure Account
Year Ended 30 September 2023

	2021/22 (£)	2022/23 (£)
Income:		
Cricket ball orders	53,869	56,509
ECB Donation	12,334	16,087
Sponsorship	5,124	7,975
Subscriptions	12,065	12,065
Penalties	3,406	7,050
Handbook advertising		825
Merchandise	5	
Presentation Evening	8,400	9,303
Bank interest	2	132
Total income	95,205	109,946
Expenditure:		
Cricket ball purchases (See Note 1 below)	49,937	56,047
YCB affiliation fees	3,160	3,140
ECB Club Funding	8,500	10,211
Presentation Evening	10,121	7,966
Presentation Evening 2023 - advance payment		500
Awards and Trophies	1,347	1,164
Merchandise		680
Development Grants Awarded		3,250
Cup final expenses	3,259	3,158
Cup final medals	2,462	1,626
League expenses	5,447	5,382
Officials expenses	2,240	2,643
Honoraria	1,500	1,700
Donation to SY Umpires Ass'n	240	750
Website / Zoom	851	833
Administration	362	1,551
Total expenditure	89,425	100,601
Surplus of income over expenditure	5,779	9,345
2022/23 Summary:		
Opening bank balances 1 Oct 2022		47,459
Surplus of income over expenditure (above)		9,345
		56,804
Closing bank balances 30 Sep 2023:		
Current account		32,028
Deposit account:		
Development Fund		2,844
Contingency Fund		21,932
		56,804

Note 1 - Stock of cricket balls as at 30 Sep 2023 is valued at £1293. The expenditure figure shown above has not been adjusted for this.

Checked and found correct

John Wilson ACMA,CGMA, FInstLM

Financial information for 2024

1. Subscriptions per team for 2024 (including any YCB fees):

- Premier & Championship - £105 per team
- Divisions 1 & 2 - £100 per team
- Divisions 3 to 6 - £95 per team
- Divisions 7 to 9 - £90 per team

2. Cricket ball costs 2024:

Tiflex:

- Red Windsor - £21.00
- Pink Windsor - £28.20
- Pink Magna - £15.60

Readers:

- Sovereign - £18
- League Special - £13
- County Pink - £10
- Red Youth - £10.80

3. The 2022 AGM approved £1,600 in honoraria, to be distributed as agreed by the LEB. For 2023, we propose the same payments as made in 2022, with two minor amendments as follows:

• Mick Bocking	Disciplinary officer	£200*
• Melvyn Bond	Play-Cricket manager	£400 (increase from £350)
• Ashley Boothman	Treasurer	£250
• Lindsay Pepper	Safeguarding officer	£200
• Linzey Scothern	Trophy steward	£200
• Steve Taylor	IT support manager	£200
• Neil Vaughan	Disciplinary adjudicator	£300 (increase from £200)
	Total	£1,750

* this figure was incorrect and should have read £250, to provide for a £50 increase on 2022.

Match officials' recruitment & retention strategy

Introduction

We are currently 50-60 umpires short of being able to cover all YCSPL league games each Saturday, and the position is worsening, rather than improving. Currently, clubs are expected to provide umpires for the League panel, and failure to do so results in a levy being applied under administrative rules 58 & 59.

Some clubs in the lower divisions have nominated an umpire, but do not necessarily benefit, because umpires are allocated firstly to cover the Premier Section and then as far down the Senior Section ladder as is possible. So, despite having nominated an umpire they may themselves rarely get one. There is also discontent that all Premier Section clubs are guaranteed an umpire, at least for their first team, even if they have never provided an umpire themselves.

The current approach is not working. The League Executive Board (LEB) believes that we need to take positive action to address this problem before it gets even worse. There has to be acknowledgement that the umpire shortage is an issue for us all, and we need a joint strategy involving the clubs, the umpires' associations and the League to address it. We need to recruit for all levels, not just for umpires to progress to the Premier Leagues panel, and including the women's and girls game.

As a League, in relation to the recruitment and retention of match officials, we need to:

- nominate specified individuals whose responsibility it is to take action
- give better guidance on what we are asking people to do, and support to do it
- emphasise this is an issue for all of us – our clubs, the umpires' associations, and the League
- reward efforts made by clubs
- encourage a positive approach to perceived barriers like discipline
- look critically at rule complexity
- ensure accountability and reporting on activity undertaken – if there are no specified responsible individuals, and no reporting back, the necessary actions are less likely to be carried out
- ensure that any concerns brought to our attention are properly investigated

In summary, a three-pronged strategy is necessary to co-ordinate activity throughout the year; involving the clubs, the umpires' associations, and the League, where we work together to address issues, support each other, and where good practice is shared and rewarded.

Proposed strategy

1 Clubs

All clubs to have a nominated person on their committees, part of whose specified responsibility is to proactively ensure that efforts are made to recruit officials – this could be the volunteer co-ordinator, or other club official – it does not matter who, so long there is someone in every club who has officials' recruitment as part of their role.

Their role should include:

- identifying and approaching individuals to see if they would be interested in becoming a match official, whether recent former players, players nearing retirement, injured players, parents, regular spectators, etc, and ensuring that approaches are made not just to the 'usual suspects' but also to juniors, who may not have the aptitude to play but may be interested in umpiring, not forgetting women & girls too
- offering to set up a discussion with a contact at the umpires' association or scorers' officer, as appropriate
- identifying any local community centre or establishment where there may be potential umpires, perhaps colleges, universities, working cricket programme centres, or community centres or hubs, and making contact
- ensuring that their contact details are readily publicised in the club, on the club's Facebook page and website, for anyone to contact them if they are interested in becoming an official
- recording actions taken and providing a very short annual report to the League

2 Umpires' associations

Recruitment

- i. The umpires' associations to ensure that they have a publicised list of contacts for clubs to:
 - refer details of potential new umpires
 - support clubs by providing any information they require about umpiring
 - as part of their 'day-to-day' match duties, helping to identify possible recruits

- ii. Follow up by contacting anyone who has been referred, to sell the role, explain the support and training available, including mentoring, and offering to stand in a first game with them.
- iii. Promote a flexible approach, whereby potential umpires can do as much as little as they want, perhaps even trialling by standing only at the striker's end in the first instance

Retention

- iv. In order to retain umpires, particularly in their early years, it is important that a supportive environment is created, and that umpires who are experiencing issues, have access to advice and support. The 'drop in' sessions for new umpires initiated by Terry Bateman and Bryan Lowe are an excellent initiative that enable new umpires to share experiences and obtain guidance. These could be built on by opening them to anyone who would like to attend, and enlisting the help of other experienced officials.
- v. A 'welfare officer' role could be introduced to support umpires who are experiencing difficulties and who may not be able or willing to attend 'drop-in' sessions. That way they could access support and talk through issues rather than simply deciding umpiring is not for them – everyone needs a little support from time to time!
- vi. Actively invest in creating a welcoming and positive environment in the umpiring community, including addressing any personal animosities and clashes.
- vii. Ensure clarity in all forms of communication with umpires, in order to ensure that they know exactly what is expected of them, particularly in relation to changes.
- viii. If an umpire does decide to call it a day, talk to them to find out why. Could it have been prevented? Are there lessons to learn?
- ix. Positivity! It is often said that people don't want to take up umpiring because of 'all the hassle'. But I talk to many umpires and most say they experience few problems.
- x. If umpires encounter disciplinary issues, they need to be nipped in the bud. Key messages must be strongly reinforced to all existing umpires along the following lines, for example:
 - 'always report conduct breaches – if you don't, another umpire will undoubtedly suffer at a future stage'
 - 'your job is simply to report all the facts as clearly and honestly as possible – the League adjudication officer then decides the action to be taken, ensuring adherence to the GCRs and consistency across the League – and that action is sometimes hampered by inadequate or even contradictory reports'
- xi. The ECB is introducing a brand-new training package. The first part of this will be an online *ECB Umpires Course*, which will enable potential umpires to start their training whenever they want, doing as much as they want whenever they want. All umpires need to be aware of what is available, so that they can advise potential recruits.
- xii. The umpires themselves are the best recruiting ambassadors for umpiring. Exhibiting a professional, friendly approach with an obvious enjoyment of the role will make it more attractive to others.

3 League

- i. Appoint a responsible official at LEB level to co-ordinate activity on recruiting and retaining match officials, including:
 - creating a joint League & Umpires Association steering group to oversee activity and ensure that the right support is in place
 - creating a network of club and umpire recruitment officers to meet by Zoom on a periodical basis to share good practice, find out what issues there are, and to seek solutions
 - identifying what additional support can be given by the League
 - reporting to LEB on network activity
- ii. Review existing rules 58 & 59 to create a system whereby:
 - those clubs that have been successful are rewarded - for example, a £100 incentive payment to the nominating club once umpire has completed 20 games, plus a further £100 on completion of 40
 - clubs that have made efforts but were not successful are not penalised; refocus on efforts made, for example, has the club nominated recruitment officer been appointed and what activity have they undertaken?
 - clubs that have not made any efforts should pay levies to help support incentive payments
 - levies are used for rewards for clubs (above) and to support officials' recruitment
- iii. Collate a report on activities undertaken by clubs, in order for the League to use it to reward good practice when considering distribution of ECB funding, Development Fund applications, and allocation of prestige games.
- iv. Ensure that there is a publicised channel for match officials to report any concerns and that they are properly investigated.

- v. Consider rule complexity. Set up a small working group to look at whether we can simplify league rules in any way. For example, to ensure we are as consistent as possible across our competitions, and to remove any unnecessary complexity.
- vi. Produce a promotional video that can be used to support recruitment activity.
- vii. Equip a gazebo for officials' recruitment, to be used at finals days, etc. Ensure that a couple of suitable experienced umpires and a scorers' officer are available to promote officiating and to answer questions.

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