

UMPIRE CLUB ASSOCIATION: “Too Close For Comfort” Guidelines

This is NPUA's guidelines on the question of what level of association or affiliation with a club, or clubs, it is appropriate for an NPUA umpire to have.

As umpires our integrity and independence, and the perception of those attributes by others, is crucial. NPUA strongly recommends that umpires exclude themselves from umpiring any game involving a club, or clubs, where their relationship with the club could be seen as being “too close for comfort”, or where it could put them, or NPUA, in an awkward situation: principally where their independence or integrity might be open to challenge.

Common reasons for declaring an association with a club might include:

- A club where you are currently a member, or have been a member in the past, where officiating at that club could lead to others seeing it as “too close for comfort”.
- A club where a close relative or partner is a member, and there is a possibility that they could be involved in a match which you could be officiating.
- For clarity, an association could include (but is not limited to): present or past player, club umpire, committee member, honorary member or social member. This applies equally to an umpire or his/her close relative.

Umpiring restrictions:

- Umpires who currently play for a club in the National League (indoor or outdoor) may not umpire any game in the division in which they also play.
- When an umpire has declared an association with a club, but is not playing for them, the relevant NPUA Umpiring Performance Committee (indoor or outdoor) will consider whether or not that umpire officiating within the same division as the associated club is acceptable.

Generally speaking, any association that ended more than three years ago need not cause an umpire concern. However, we would never insist that an umpire should take an appointment involving a club where they have been a member unless they were happy to do so. It has to be the individual's choice.

Should either of the Umpiring Performance Committees, or the EH Umpire Selection Strategy Committee (EHUSSC), feel that a situation may have arisen which could be seen as having been “too close for comfort” for an individual umpire, the chairman of the relevant committee is authorised to approach the umpire concerned and discuss the situation. This may lead to a suggestion that they exclude themselves from umpiring a particular club for an agreed period. Should an umpire choose NOT to self-exclude in this circumstance, they may be assessed while umpiring the club concerned. The relevant Performance Committee will then make a judgement about whether or not it is appropriate to appoint them to matches involving that club, based on the outcome of the assessment.

No club can dictate who does, or does not, umpire their matches. Equally, no umpire has a right to umpire any particular club or match. For the avoidance of doubt, NPUA fully supports umpires socialising with players and club members, this is about ensuring that we maintain our independence, and integrity at all times.

If you wish to declare an association with a club, or clubs, this can be done through the ‘Your Profile’ section on the GMS website, under “loyalties”. If you declare an association this will be treated in confidence. You will not be appointed to this club, save in exceptional circumstances, which will always be discussed with you in advance.

Anyone seeking further guidance should consult the chair of the relevant Performance Committee or their Panel Lead .

For National Programme tournaments and Indoor leagues, please note that you should ensure that your umpire manager(s) is aware of any club associations, because, at present, they do not have access to the relevant information via the website.