

## Minutes of the EHUOPC Meeting Held on 2 April 2025

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### Attendees:

Liz Pelling (Chairman Elite) (LP), Dawn Bonner (Chairman Conference) (DB), Sean Edwards (NPUA Chair) (SE), Lee Barron (EHUSSC Chair) (LB), Simon Gillett (SG), Charles Hallows (CH), Matt Harrison (MH), Ann Hopkins (AH), Rob Jenkins (RJ), Louise Knipe (LK), Peter Mackintosh (PM), Chris Peart (CP), Gary Stent (GS)

The Meetings opened at 19:30 on Wednesday 2 April via Zoom conferencing.

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Debbie Garner (DG)

### 2. Minutes of 10 December 2024

No matters arising not covered elsewhere in the meeting.

### 3. Updates from NPUA Exec/EHUSSC

#### NPUA Exec Update: SE

SE updated OPC on NPUA business following recent meeting. Noteworthy for OPC:

Members will have received noticed that the NPUA Conference will be held on August 30/31<sup>st</sup> in 2025 and attendance requests going well. Hoping to increase EHO members who attend on day 2. Jaime Cox is this year's main conference organiser, and all financial matters are being handled as usual by Richard Kirk (treasurere@npua.co.uk)

#### EHUSSC Update: LB:

EHUSSC has been working on a draft proposal for a revised panel structure for NPUA that will be introduced by the NPUA Conference in August. Prior to sharing with members, EHUSSC will revisit the plans and share with Exec and OPC for further input ahead of going live.

Fitness: EHUSSC has also been looking at options for updating the NPUA fitness test criteria for Season 2025 /26 onwards for Exec to consider.

#### International Update - HJ/LK:

FIH has introduced a quota system for appointing based on location of tournaments which will limit European places at certain events. 60% of appointments will go to the Host Federation and 40% to the rest. This will further limit the number of appointments for GB/English umpires.

The importance of umpires attending tournaments fit and ready to go was stressed, given the lack of opportunities. HJ and LK will continue to liaise closely with our International umpires.

### 4. GMS Update - MH

Ongoing discussions with EH regarding GMS solutions **ACTION: Ongoing by EH/WTU/ MH as NPUA Webmaster / SE / LP / DB**

### 5. Umpire Support: Coaching & Assessing Update: LB /MH

Thanks were given to all Umpire Support (US) for helping NPUA to develop its members

Number of assessments - 454

Number of coachings - 188

Most umpires received at least 1 assessment with only a handful missed for a variety of reasons.

Grant Douglas and Andy Higgins are now L3 Umpire Assessors. MH continues to recruit new US members to swell the ranks and increase the opportunity for members to be seen.

A request was made for US appointments to be made quicker, versus on a weekly basis and this will be taken into mind as we restart the season in September

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Umpires are reminded to complete the feedback on GMS for their coach / assessors following each appointment to aid the development process for US. If umpires are unable to see the icon to do this on GMS next to each fixture, please let panel leads know. **ACTION: Umpire members**

### 6. **Appointments Update – RJ/CP/PM/LP/DH**

OPC expressed its sincere thanks to all appointers for their hard work, week in week out. Special thanks to Rob Jenkins and Chris Peart who both retire from their appointing roles at the end of the season having served 7 years in their roles.

RJ remarked that despite large numbers on the men's panels, appointments had been challenging, with lots of opportunities for A star and latterly A panel umpires, and some cross-over appointing too. Women's panel opportunities extended to the B panel too. Appointing was especially towards the end of season when appointments that are in draft need amending when umpires withdraw availability, accepting that illness and injury cannot be helped.

CP found this season particularly challenging and was grateful to Areas for support, especially the Northeast where many games are very far North, and in the Midlands. Thanks to those who travelled far and doubled up making the jigsaw less difficult.

PH enjoyed his first season and working with PH and CP. Towards the end of season, some umpires became more injury prone, maybe an overload of umpiring two games and midweek.

BUCS – thanks to Julian Warburton for coordinating the BUCs appointments again and to those umpires who support the competition. Finals were held at Loughborough University as follows:

Women's:

Championship – Julian Warburton and Donovan Rothman

Vase – Nikki Butcher and Lewis Gibson

Trophy – Annette Golding and Chris Seeley

Men's:

Championship – Robert Brownbridge and Chris Duerden

Vase – Aaron Campbell and Jonathan Gillespie

Trophy – Michael Farmer and Ben Garrod

Varsity:

Oxford v Cambridge Varsity Umpires:

Women's: Mia Dewing and Sophie Parker

Men's: Max Davidson & Harry Raffan

During April and May, the finals of the EH Cups and Masters competitions will take place, with the Mixed finals being in June. Appointments will be issued shortly.

Opportunities for junior events for NYUPL and NPUA members also throughout the spring and summer.

### 7. **Panel discussion (all):**

See Appendix for selection strategy, fitness notes and taking a break from umpiring.

#### **Milestones:**

Congratulations to the following members on milestone matches (**Bold** = new since last meeting):

**Umpires:**

Rob Jenkins – 600

Nick Lockhart – 300

Neil Smith – 300

Martin Twist – 300

Nick James – 300

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Sean Edwards – 200  
**Hannah Harrison - 200**  
David Monger – 200  
**AJ Small - 200**  
Julian Warburton - 200  
**Amar Chudasama – 100**  
Johnny Downer 100  
Chris Duerden – 100  
**Jack Harris - 100**  
**Chris O'Hagan – 100**  
**Lou Robinson – 100**  
**Paul Sexby – 100**  
**Liam Sutton - 100**  
**Neil Tallentire– 100**

**Umpire Support:**  
**Nigel Lander -100**

### **Panel updates:**

All panel leads provided comprehensive updates to panels during the meeting. Notable highlights are below.

As per 'taking a break' in the appendix:

Umpires who have not umpired in the NPUA league programme for 12 months will be moved to the reserve panel. Return to 'old' panel possible subject to performance, with fitness test for the panel and following assessment on an appropriate game.

Reserve umpires (and umpire support) who have not taken NPUA appointments for 18 months will be removed from NPUA panels. Return to NPUA umpiring is possible with Area nominations.

In light of the planned panel recalibration and possible fitness test update it was agreed not to move umpires with the incorrect fitness test at this time. Updates will be made ahead of the new season. In general, umpires without appropriate fitness tests for panels will be moved to appropriate panel for test or to reserves. Return to 'old' panel is possible if the correct level test is achieved with an appropriate mark for the panel.

**ACTION: Panel leads to notify umpires of changes not previously communicated**

### **Men's Panels**

- a) **Premier / A\* – HJ**  
Matt Claxton has returned to Australia and is moved off the men's premier panel.
- b) **A Panel / B\* – GS**  
Chris Pelmore and Rowan Tejura are moved to the men's A\* panel  
Clare Barwood, Dougal Perfitt, Neil Tallentire, Dan Wheawall are moved to men's A panel  
AJ Small is moved to men's B panel
- c) **B Panel – DB**  
Jade Bloomfield, McKenzie Brailsford, Sam Doran. Mike MacDowell, Jono Gould are moved to men's B star
- d) **C Panel CH**  
Rodrigo Rivadeneira, Sam Howard are moved to men's B panel  
Tomas Holbrook moved to reserve

### **Women's Panels**

- a) **Premier/A\* – LK**

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Viv Carveth, Tom Cox, Mia Dewing, Abby MacArthur and Sophie Parker are moved to women's Premier panel and achieve their National Badge

**b) A & B \* Panel -AH**

Chloe McCall is moved to women's A\* panel

Mark Oldfield, Martyn Shuttler, Peter Tovey moved to women's A panel

Saul Shohet has retired from umpiring and is thanked for his long service. Saul will continue as Umpire Support for NPUA.

**c) B Panel – AH**

Chris Seeley is moved to women's B\* panel

**d) C Panel – DG (Shared ahead of meeting)**

Paul Reeves is moved to women's B Panel.

Robert Cann, Richard Kendall and Angus Porter have retired from umpiring in the NPUA and are thanked for their service.

**GROUPS:**

**a) Candidates and NPDP (SG)**

A successful candidate year with a total of 34 successful assessments.

Robert Dummer, Tim Forte, Harry Braginton Paul Chapman-Hackett, Jason Horne, Lawrence Kimberley, Thomas Pilgrim, Jonty Rider and Colin Reed passed their L3 assessments and are added to the men's C panel.

Aaron Bennett, Nick Kearsey, Eleanor Hall passed their L3 assessments and are added to the women's C panel.

**b) NYUPL**

A paper regarding NYUPL strategy is being prepared for review by EHUSCC – **ACTION: Mason Wright**

**c) NPUA /AREA RESERVES**

NPUA reserves: Gary Ryding has not umpired in the National Programme for 18 months and is moved off NPUA reserve panel.

Area Reserves – once again, a big thank you to Areas who have been supporting the National Programme with a total of 73 appointments to the women's conferences.

Yorkshire North East – 25; North West – 11; Midlands – 11; East – 9; South Central – 6; South East – 3; London; 7; West 1

**8. AOB**

CH raised that FIH tests will need to be videoed from May 2025 and asked whether any special attention or advice to watchers was needed. **ACTION: Exec**

**9. Date of next meeting:**

w/c May 12th, 2025, at 7:30pm via Zoom **ACTION: LP to poll OPC**

The meeting Closed at 10:00pm. With thanks to Dawn Bonner for Zoom access

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Appendix:

### **Selection strategy, fitness notes and taking a break from umpiring**

As a reminder to members, EHUOPC noted that when measuring performance for panel promotions, marks from prior seasons also form part of the overall consideration. The guidance for A star, is that two marks of 9 or 10 on Prem games is needed for promotion consideration and usually 'within' a season. Final ratification of promotion based on continuously high performance is at the discretion of EHUOPC. Membership on both A star and B star panels is over a maximum of two full seasons.

Movement between panels - it was acknowledged that there needs to be more fluidity to enable progression for those performing well, and those who do not, especially on the star panels. The marking system has clarity around the bands required, and should be referred to by umpires, as well as assessors regularly. Outside of the marking system, EHUOPC has authority from NPUA Executive to move umpires between panels and may, from time to time, make changes outside the bands, meaning that a mark 'in-panel' may not be enough to remain.

A reminder to members that active Premier or A star panel, on the panel at the Christmas break, need to have completed a second fitness test to Premier level, one of which needs to be in person. Those without two fitness tests will not be appointed to Premier League matches and will be moved to the A panel.

Fitness on games: Members are also reminded that for games where coaching and assessment takes place, a mark is given for fitness (fit for purpose physically and mentally during the game) as per the NPUA's Key Characteristics of High Performing Umpires. This is marked as good (an umpire shows a good level of fitness for all the game), satisfactory (an umpire has a satisfactory level of fitness for most of the game – the feedback report will reflect where improvements are needed), poor (an umpire is often in a poor place for much of the game). A poor result on an assessment will mean an umpire will be asked to re-run their fitness test within a two-week timeframe, observed by a nominated watcher. A poor result on a coaching will result in an assessment.

Exceptions to the above notes are in the gift of EHUOPC, with fitness exemptions the gift of NPUA Executive.

### **Taking a Break from Umpiring (Extract from the 2024/25 Fitness test policy)**

Annual assessment is all about maintaining standards for elite national level umpiring. If an umpire takes a break, it is essential to NPUA that when they return to umpiring, they are fit to do so.

If a member has, for whatever reason, taken a break from umpiring (lasting longer than the current season) they will need to demonstrate their fitness and be re-assessed when they resume umpiring.

It should not be automatically assumed that the member would return to the panel they were on at the start of the absence, particularly if that absence was fitness related.

Those members who are inactive due to injury or a failed fitness test will continue to fall under the responsibility of their original panel lead, this will continue until such time as they return to umpiring or fall into the long-term break described below.

For clarity, and subject to the discretion of the Performance Committee to consider individual circumstances, the following will apply:

- Short-term break (within the current season having passed a fitness test at the start of the season) - return to existing panel, no assessment required (although a fitness test may be required at the discretion of the panel lead)
- Medium-term break (within the current season plus the following season) - fitness test required, then assessed and returned to the C panel (outdoor) or B panel (indoor), with Indoor / Outdoor Performance Committee discretion to reinstate at any panel following the initial assessment. Such a decision can be agreed by the relevant Performance Committee off-cycle from their formal meeting schedule
- Long-term break (greater than the current season plus the following season) - umpire should undertake games in their Area, pass the NPUA fitness test for a candidate, and then be re-nominated by their Area as a candidate