



EHUOPC Meeting – 18th May 2026

Attendees:

Liz Pelling (Chairman Elite) (LP), Dawn Bonner (Chairman Conference) (DB), Sean Edwards (NPUA Chair) (SE), Mark Everard (ME), Debbie Garner (DG), Simon Gillett (SG), Matt Harrison (MH), Ann Hopkins (AH), Jonathon Hull (JH), Hamish Jamson – in part (HJ), Louise Knipe (LK), Peter Mackintosh (PM), David Monger (DM) Gary Stent (GS), Julian Warburton (JW)

The Meeting opened at 19:30 on Tuesday 18th May 2026 via Teams conferencing.

LP expressed thanks to all OPC for their support to members and the development of umpiring throughout season 2025/26

1. Apologies for Absence

Lee Barron – (EHUSSC Chair) (LB), Jade Bloomfield (JB), Charles Hallows (CH), Hannah Harrison (HPP represented by DM)

2. Minutes of 9th December 2025 Meeting

No matters arising not covered elsewhere in the meeting.

3. Updates from NPUA Exec/EHUSSC

NPUA Exec Update: SE

SE thanked OPC for its continued support of NPUA members during the season.

Conference: The annual NPUA Conference will be held at the East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham on 5/6th September. All members are encouraged to attend this valuable development opportunity.

Members can register for conference at [NPUA Conference 2026](#), and offset expenses from season 25/26 towards costs by contacting the NPUA treasurer, Richard Kirk treasurer@NPUA.co.uk.

Expenses: Umpires are reminded to submit AND claim expenses for the season by 30th June 2026 or they will be considered as a donation to the Association. **ACTION: All members**

Development days were held on 25th April with N3/N4 umpires invited to University of Nottingham and Surbiton Premier League games. Events were attended by 15 members of the panels facilitated by Dawn Bonner, Debbie Garner and Annette Harvey with positive feedback from both.

Fitness update for 2026/7 Exec is looking at the fitness policy for next season with deadlines for tests to allow for parity with the three FIH windows. FIH have made it compulsory for all outdoor umpires to do three tests per season in July, March and November (Indoor only umpires – 1 test in November). NPUA Executive has notified all those on EHF lists to do the same, regardless whether on an FIH panel.

Rules of Hockey: FIH have issued rules for 2026. Implementation in England will be communicated once agreed with EH and updates will be included at Conference.

Discipline Reporting: David Elcock is stepping back as the NPUA Discipline Officer and a replacement is being recruited. A reminder to members that EH has introduced online reporting for Red Cards. This can be found on the EH website <https://www.englishockey.co.uk/governance/rules-and-regulations/discipline-and-misconduct/red-cards>.

Umpires to be encouraged to download a copy of the 'old' form [1.-Combined-red-card-misconduct-complaint-form-CLEAN-LD-EDIT.pdf](#) so that they are aware of information needed for completion of the report.

EHUSSC Update: LP on behalf of LB



Meetings held on 16 March and 11 May 2026.

Discussion primarily around operational factors of new panel structure, how the new assessment marking is working, the role of coaching and assessing, and International updates

3. Appointments Update (JW, JB, PM)

We have a total of 201 umpiring members (inc. candidates) excluding reserves and area reserves – a net gain post meeting of +4 umpires for the season. We have 21 who umpire both genders although some favour one/other. For the first time, we have increased the participation in the women's game, made up of some men's transfers and several new female umpires ex NYUP. However, we have several new umpires who still play making it difficult to appoint regularly with all women's games on a Saturday.

With thanks to the Areas for supporting EHL appointments. In general, requests to Areas have been far fewer this season (17 v 70 for 2024/25), helped by the many NPUA umpires who doubled up (37) or umpired from our reserve panel (18), or helped on the women's games if not appointed to men's games (52). The overall support was much appreciated by all the appointers.

JW: Overall, umpires have been very helpful in my first year as appointing. The end of season with the late Prem games and limited availability was the most difficult, but offered opportunities for development. Double headers remain a problem when they clash with half term. Next season, we will add place holders for Phase 3 of Premier.

PM: Overall good, with systems in place and constantly developing to share games amongst panel members. Appointing to the extremities in Conference was challenging at times, with umpires being asked to travel further on odd occasions.

UNIVERSITIES:

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 – Donovan Rothman & Julian Warburton

Vase – Lewis Gobson & Peter Tovey

Trophy – Jane Hallett & Chris Seeley

Men's

Championship – Chris Duerden & Neil Tallentire

Vase – Jonathan Gillespie & Mike McCartney

Trophy – Ben Garrod & Nick Lockhart

VARISITY: Oxford v Cambridge:

Women's: Ellie Hall and Sophie Parker

Men's: Jono Goold and Gregor Hofstede

Domestic Tournaments in 2026:

It has been a busy second half of the season with tournament appointing with the Mixed finals on 6th June and several junior events in the summer months to go to complete the season. Thanks were expressed to all NPUA members (too many to mention!) and the NYUP who supported the various events, as well as EHO who facilitated many junior and masters events. A big thank you to our Umpire Support team for the development of umpires nationally at these events too. A special mention to the NPUA Social team for posting some great content across the season showcasing representation across many of these events too.



EHL FIXTURE DATES 2026/26

Premier Division – First half of the Season

Sat 26 September to Sat 28 November with an additional game on Sunday 25 Oct

The dates for the second half of the season will be confirmed once Season 8 Pro League dates have been confirmed.

The Division One and Conference league dates for 2026-27 are as below

Women's Division One & Conferences

Sat 19 Sep to Sat 28 Nov with a break on Sat 24 Oct

Sat 30 Jan to Sat 03 Apr with a break on Sat 13 Feb

Men's Division One & Conferences

Sun 20 Sep to Sun 29 Nov with a break on Sun 25 Oct

Sat 30 Jan to Sun 4 Apr (nb: games are on Sat 30 Jan and Sat 06 Feb* not Sun 31 Jan & Sun 07 Feb* otherwise all scheduled on Sundays) with a break on Sun 13 Feb

Games can be switched from Sundays to Saturdays or Saturdays to Sundays (or for example a Friday evening) with both teams and EHCD agreement. Reg 5.1.2. refers, with further details will follow in due course.

Availability Dates up to Christmas 2026:

Working on blocks of three seemed to help with availability changes. It was noted that areas still appoint in larger batches, which can lead to NPUA needing to take umpires back for EHL appointments.

BATCH 1 (short to allow for fitness updates)

Availability needed by August 25th

Umpires Published by September 7th: (Sept 19/20, 26/27)

Support Published by September 14th

BATCH 2

Availability needed by September 8th

Umpires Published by September 21st: (Oct 3/4, 10/11, 17/18)

Support Published by September 28th

BATCH 3

Availability needed by September 28th

Umpires Published by October 12th: (24/25: Prem only, Oct 31/Nov 1, 7/8)

Support Published by October 19th

BATCH 4

Availability needed by October 12th

Umpires Published by October 26th: (14/15, 21/22, 28/29)

Support Published by November 3rd

ACTION: LP to send GMS message to all members re availability as soon as fixtures are on the system.

5. Umpire Support (JH, MH)

271 assessor, 153 coach/coach candidate appointments were made during season 25/26. 58 appointments were also made to the Indoor programme. With over 400 appointments (800 reports!), it is disappointing to note that only 158 umpires (18% of those watched) have completed feedback on the US team, despite being sent a reminder on how to complete on GMS.



Strong availability continued throughout the season and we were able to appoint pairs of coaches/assessors on several matches to help with alignment. The only event causing issues with availability is the TA Cup in July, which unfortunately clashes with other events. We are working with EHO/NYUP to provide a suitable umpire support team.

Appointing everyone that is available each week still remains a challenge. We try our very best to get all umpire support a game, however, it's not always possible, particularly if there are restrictions or clashes with other roles such as umpiring, match officiating and club coaching.

David Ellcock has retired from NPUA duties, including as an Assessor and is thanked for his tremendous service to NPUA over many years in many different roles.

Congratulations to Andy Higgins, Robert Brownbridge, Ann Hopkins and Hannah Harrison who successfully completed their L3 coach award

Dawn Henning-Reeman completed her coach refresher and was added back to the panel

Congratulations to Robert Brownbridge who successfully completed his Umpire Manager assessment.

Umpire Support milestones during 2025/26:

Jackie Gibbs – 300

Margaret Hunnaball – 100

Liz Pelling – 400

6. Panel updates:

The NPUA panels have been designed to make movement within panels more fluid and based on current 'form'. This includes moving umpires to NPUA reserve panels who do not complete the fitness test by the summer deadline, with return to panel possible following completion and / or assessment, as well as those on N1, N2 and HPP who do not complete the second test by 18th January deadline. OPC will continue to monitor form, including availability, in making panel movement decisions.

Reports from Panel leads/mentors:

Panel leads / mentors provided a full update of their panels. Panel updates noted below by panel.

Hamish Jamson (M N1)

Welcomed Sam Church, Max Davidson, Jonny Downer and Chris Pelmore to the panel

Martin Twist is moved to reserve panel

Louise Knipe (W N1)

Panel Updates:

Welcomed Nikki Butcher, Max Davidson, Chloe McCall, Alex Miles and Tanya Sargeant to the panel.

Abby MacArthur and Lena McCrea are moved to the reserve panel

Gary Stent (M N2)

Panel Updates: James Barnes is returned to Men's N1

Ann Hopkins (W N2)

Panel Updates:

Nikki Butcher and Alex Miles moved to W N1 and achieved their National Badge



David Monger (HPP)

Panel Updates:

Congratulations to the first graduates of the HPP programme who have achieved their National badges during the season and moved to N1 panels:

Sam Church – moved to M N1

Tanya Sargeant – moved to W N1

Chloe McCall – moved to W N1

Chris Pelmore – moved to M N1

Max Davidson – moved to W N1 and M N1

A good first season for the newly established HPP panel, the aim of which is for members to have the potential to reach N1 level within three years of nomination. Membership on the panel is fluid and subject to several criteria. It's important to note that membership to HPP is not based purely on umpire performance – that is a given and must be maintained and excelled. Membership to HPP also requires engagement in non-umpiring activity including (but not limited to) contribution to WA chats, monthly development meetings and good availability. This is monitored closely and is reflected in all panel decisions.

Dawn Bonner (M N3)

Panel Updates:

Mike MacDowell and Phil O'Hagan moved to M N2

Gregor Hofstede is moved to HPP **ACTION: DB to pass details to DM/HH**

Debbie Garner (W N3)

Panel Updates:

Chris Peart has retired from umpiring at NPUA and is thanked for his long service and past work as an appointer.

Theresa Jolly has retired from umpiring and thanked for her long service. Theresa will continue in her Umpire Support role within NPUA.

Charles Hallows (M N4)

Panel Updates:

Gareth Hinds, Laurence Kimberley and Richard Perry moved to M N3

Mark Everard (W N4)

Panel Updates:

Molli Smith returned to W N4

Helen Sign is moved to the reserve panel.

Simon Gillett (Candidates)

Since the last meeting, following assessments we have 4 new L3s:

George Marshall – M N3, Murray Caughey, Dan Lovelace, Thomas Stoner – M N4

Following assessments:

Alex Miles has been transferred to M N3 panel and Harry Jarvis to W N3 panel



Four candidates remain on panel for Season 2026/27: W – Chris Butler & Lexi Rockhall; M – Muiris Capon-Telford, Ed Cade

Areas and NYUP should submit any new candidate nominations (including NPUA level fitness test for 2026/27 season) to SG as soon as possible and no later than 31st July **ACTION: SG to send reminder to Areas and NYUP**

NPUA reserve panel:

The following have either retired from NPUA umpiring or been on the NPUA reserve panel over 18 months. Return to NPUA is possible following Area recommendations:

Women's:

Katy Peart
Jane Taylor
Zoe Hall
Gemma Jones
Rachel Williams

Men's:

Mitchell Blakemore
Adam Genga (retired)
Tomas Holbrook
Gemma Jones
Laurie Linnell
Richard Shaw
James Wakeland

Milestones

Congratulations to the following members on achieving Milestones in EHL and Umpire Support (in **bold** new since the last meeting):

Liz Pelling – 400 US

Stephen Rice – 400

Eric Dickinson – 300

Jackie Gibbs – 300 US

Nick Padget – 300

David Savage – 300

Campbell Reeman – 200

Clare White – 200

Colin Anderson – 100

James Barnes – 100

Clare Barwood – 100

Jaime Cox – 100

Nku Davis -100

Stuart Fenton – 100

Rajiv Khanna - 100

Mark Oldfield – 100

Margaret Hunnaball – 100 US

Neil McInness – 100



Sophie Parker – 100

Steve Peruzza – 100

Chris Seeley – 100

Dan Stewart – 100

National Young Umpire Panel (NYUP)

NYUP now has a small committee looking after the development of young umpires at National level: Viv Carveth (Chair & England Hockey liaison), Mia Dewing, Max Davidson have Academy focus and Viv Carveth and Harry Raffan have Performance focus.

International Updates

Congratulations to our umpires:

Sophie Parker on achieving her FIH Indoor International panel status

Congratulations to our UMS:

Dawn Bonner on her FIH upgrade to Centre Panel Umpires' Manager and as an FIH Hockey 5s UM

Lee Barron for achieving his FIH Indoor Centre Panel and Outdoor International panel status

Matt Harrison for achieving his FIH Indoor International panel status

International retirements from FIH:

Louise Knipe and Margaret Hunnaball have both retired as FIH Ums, having achieved Leading Panel status and officiating at many of the top international tournaments in their illustrious careers. They will remain on the Continental UM list where they may continue to take appointments in Europe.

7. AOB

None

8. Date of next meeting:

29th September 2026 **ACTION: LP to send invitation**

TBC 8th December

It was suggested that the end of season meeting in 2027 be held in person. Dates to be sought after the December meeting.

The meeting Closed at 22:00 with thanks to attendees for their hard work on behalf of NPUA